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President U Thein Sein takes salute of parade columns at flag-hoisting ceremony of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day 2015, the Grand Military Review parade

President U Thein Sein takes salute of parade columns at 67th Anniversary Independence Day's Grand Military Review parade in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — President U Thein Sein delivered an address at the flag-hoisting ceremony of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day 2015 and the Grand Military Review parade in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday.

Also present on the occasions were Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of President U Thein Sein, Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nang Shwe Hmon, Vice President U Nyan Tun and wife Daw Khin Aye Myint, dignitaries and their wives, diplomats, leaders of political parties, border guard forces, responsible persons of 12 armed ethnic groups, officials and service personnel.

At 4.20 a.m., the Guard of Honour hoisted the flag of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and the national races saluted the flag.

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Members and elderly people seen at opening ceremony of home for the aged in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Yangon, established by Save the Aged, a local NGO.—PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

Save the Aged opens new home in suburban Yangon

By *Khaing Thanda Lwin*

YANGON, 4 Jan — As part of an effort to reduce the elderly-care gap in Myanmar, Save the Aged (STA), a local nonprofit organization, on Sunday opened its first home for the aged in Yangon.

The house is located in a quiet place in Dagon Myothit (South) here.

Currently, the place has no access to a power supply. But STA members put more effort to install a transformer worth nearly K 20 million with the contributions of well-wishers, according to Nwe Yin Win from the financial commission of the organization.

The new facility can house about 50 persons. Currently, 13 elderly people are staying there. STA is planning to put some 34 people into this safe place.

A local home-care provider said there are many neglected older persons in the country who are in urgent need of health care and accommodation.

According to a survey, nine per cent of the country's total population is more than 60 years old, 10 per cent of whom are in need of care.

As the world sees demographic changes, senior citizens are expected to outnumber the middle age group in the future, as a result of declines in marriage and child birth. Founded by local youths, Save the Aged has plans to build more homes for the aged with a view to providing hapless older people.

STA has helped needy older people for five years.

GNLM

Main objective of our reforms is to enable people to enjoy peace and development democratically

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan—*President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein delivered an address on the occasion of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day flag hoisting ceremony 2015 and the Grand Military Review ceremony at the pavilion in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday morning.*

The following is the full text of the speech delivered by President U Thein Sein.

My Fellow citizens and distinguished guests,

It has been 67 years today since the Republic of the Union of Myanmar stood tall as an independent and sovereign nation among the international community, throwing off the yoke of colonialist with the firm determination to bring about peace and development for all national people based on cardinal virtues such as justice, liberty and equality.

The first anniversary of the independence, which fell on 4 January 1949, was held at the special pavilion in front of the City Hall where the first President Sao Shwe Thaik took the salute of the People's Nursing Units and Amateur Fire Brigades headed by the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), military police, Yangon police and military bands. Moreover, fighter planes of the Tatmadaw (Air) saluted the President by flying overhead. Starting from the sixth anniversary of the independence, which fell on 4 January 1954 during the time of President Dr Ba Oo, the Independence Day ceremonies were held with the Grand Military Review parade on Pyay Road. In the course of parliamentary democracy era from 1949 to 1962 during which Sao Shwe Thaik, Dr Ba Oo and Mehn Win Maung were presidents, the Independence Day ceremonies were held on a grand scale with the Grand Military Review parade.

The Grand Military Review parade, which has not been held for 53 years since 1962, will be held again on the occasion of the 67th Anniversary of the Independence Day at a time when the country is in transition to democracy.

Starting from 1 April 2011, we have launched a transition from an old system to a new system of multiparty democracy with the sole purpose of fulfilling the people's desires. Nowadays, the two common aspirations of people of over 50 million are peace and socio-economic development. Therefore, the main objective of our reforms is to enable the people to enjoy peace and development democratically.

Thanks to cooperation amongst the government, the parliaments, the people and the Tatmadaw together with the active participation of all stakeholders, we have been able to engage in the democratic transition in a smooth and subtle manner in more than a year into our reform initiatives.

In the course of the democratization, we had to take time in establishing the legislative, executive and judicial pillars in accordance with the constitution. And we had to extensively engage in the redrawing, amending and annulling relevant laws, bylaws, rules and regulations necessary for development of political, economic and social sectors. Of those works, some have been accomplished while some are still going on. All these works are democratic and they are foundation of peace, rule of law and socio-economic development of the people.

In order to make the democratic transition a success, we have been taking all necessary steps in political, economic and social reforms. Towards this end, we have launched sweeping reforms step by step as the first wave, the second wave and the third wave with a pragmatic approach based on prevailing situations. And we are now in the third wave. At present, the people have been able to enjoy the fruits of the reforms. During this implementation of the third wave, relentless efforts are to be made for the people so that they will be able to enjoy the fruits of the reforms soonest.

Learning form the lessons of the past that Myanmar lagged behind other countries in development due to prolonged internal conflicts in the course of its history, we are working hard to ensure peace. As we have already reached an agreement on basis principles such as signing a nationwide ceasefire agreement, forming ceasefire monitoring groups, establishing a union based on federalism, holding all-inclusive political dialogues, we are now in the process of signing a nationwide ceasefire agreement. Only when a nationwide ceasefire is reached, can the lives and property of the people in conflict area be more safeguarded, and will armed conflicts between the two parties be avoided. So, this has been highly regarded as a matter of utmost importance.

While our reform process has achieved successes, there still exist challenges to overcome. Further consolidating the reform process already in place, entrenching democratic practices, forging political dialogues through peace process and holding free and fair general elections in 2015 are challenging lying ahead of us. To overcome those challenges, amendment of constitution will be carried out in accordance with the laws depending on prevailing political situations of the nation.

Of the four reform processes being initiated, political reform is the most crucial, complicated and subtle. Political stability is required for peace and stability as well as security of lives and prosperity of the people. We need to draw lessons from the plight of other countries that introduced democratization almost the same time we did stemming from internal conflicts and wars. To avert this, it is imperative for us to work together.

Holding such a grand military review parade today is tantamount to honouring of heroes who fought for independence and steadfastly safeguarded sovereignty and the independence as well as exhibiting the gradual entrenchment of democracy in the nation.

Although the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the independence belong to different political backgrounds, communities, races and regions, they shared a common purpose in sacrificing their lives for the nation and the people. Therefore, each and every citizen is to work together for perpetuation of sovereignty and emergence of a modern and developed nation.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that although over new government has experienced unexpected challenges and difficulties during its tenure, it has been able to stand firmly on its track. We will maintain friendly relations with all nations based on independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy aiming at world peace and peaceful co-existence among nations. As we are committed to moving forward and fostering a better future for the people, I would like to call upon the entire people to work in unison in the interest of the Union.—*MNA*

President U Thein Sein, wife Daw Khin Khin Win host dinner to mark 67th Anniversary Independence Day

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win hosted a reception and dinner to mark the 67th Anniversary Independence Day 2015 on the lawns of the Presidential Palace, here, on Sunday evening.

The president and wife cordially greeted the dignitaries.

It was also attended by Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife, Vice President U Nyan Tun and wife, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and wife, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint and wife, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife, the Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, the Chairman of the Union Election Commission, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, deputy speakers and wives of Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, union ministers, the attorney-general of the union, the chairman of Union Civil Services Board, senior military officers, deputy ministers, Hluttaw representatives, representatives of political parties, armed ethnic groups, departmental heads, ambassadors and their wives, resident representatives of UN agencies and their wives.

MNA

***President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win greet diplomats at Independence Day reception and dinner.*—MNA**

President U Thein Sein takes . . .

(from page 1)

The president took salute of the Guard of Honour and parade columns. He inspected the parade columns by car. The artillery troops honoured him with a 21-gun salute. Next, the President, guests and parade columns saluted the State Flag and then took a two-minute silence in paying tribute to the fallen martyrs and Tatmadawmen.

The President delivered an address on the occasion. *(The full text of the speech is reported separately.)*

The President took salute of the Guard of Honour and parade columns of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air), Myanmar Police Force, social organizations and those from regions and states. Meanwhile, fighter planes of Defence Services (Air) saluted the President by flying overhead.—*MNA*

President confers honorary medals on generous contributors to national solidarity and security

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — It takes a country moments to lose sovereignty but years to win it back, President U Thein Sein said in a speech delivered on Sunday at a ceremony to award gallantary medals to people for their generous and arduous contributions to national solidarity and nation building.

Honorary titles have been conferred on the Independence Day for many years. All the citizens are to safeguard the Independence of the State and carry out task for peace and stability and modernization of the nation.

The president said there has had a tradition in the country that honorary medals are given on this auspicious day to whoever has worked strenuously for national security, rule of law and all-round development of the nation.

The president talked of his government's measures being taken to ensure a balance among legislative, executive and judicial powers, calling for all national people to safeguard independence as a national concern.

The government held the ceremony to confer honorary titles on the deserved persons in 2012. However, similar ceremonies could not be held in 2013 and 2014. As such, titles will be conferred on the outstanding persons for three years.

He continued that winners of honorary medals will motivate younger generations to follow suit.

The government will provide K200,000 and certificates of honour each to 569 senior citizens aged 100 and above. The money comes from the fund set up with 25% of monthly emoluments of the president, the vice presidents, union ministers and deputy ministers, according to the president.

He called for award winners to urge their younger generations to follow in their footsteps, noting that it is a blessing to honour those to whom honour is due.

President U Thein Sein presented Pyidaungsu Sithu Thingaha Medal to Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and medals for bravery (Thura medals) to nine defence service personnel.

MNA

***President U Thein Sein confers Thura title on Sgt Than Htay Aung.*—MNA**

Government to provide cash assistance from 25% monthly emoluments of President, Vice Presidents, union ministers, deputy ministers to the aged to mark 67th Independence Day

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — The Union Government will provide K200,000 each to the people aged 100 and above across the country to mark the 67th Independence Day.

The President, the vice presidents, ministers and deputy ministers have set up a funds with contribution of 25 per cent of their monthly emoluments to it and the government will use the funds to provide cash assistance to 169 men and 400 women aged 100 years old and above across the country.

The government will also present a certificate of honour with sign by the president along with the cash assistance to them through Nay Pyi Taw Council and regional and state governments.

The government has also invited the aged who are 100 years and above old to inform their respective regional governments.

The program of the government is a part of the eight-point national-level strategy for social welfare which publicized on 30 December, 2013.

The program focuses on assisting in welfare of expectant women and children aged less than two years, disabled people, welfare of children aged between 3 years and 15 years, granting social pensions to the aged, providing nutrition to school children, conducting vocational trainings and assisting in providing social welfare services for the aged and the people.

A social welfare and natural disaster preparedness working group was established during the Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum in January, 2013 and the working group has been carrying out its tasks in cooperation with related ministries, NGOs and INGOs.—*MNA*

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends presentation ceremony of gallantary medals

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — Building and possessing an admirable armed force is the best guarantee for preserving independence and sovereignty, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said in his speech at the presentation ceremony of defence services medals for 2013 and 2014 held at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday.

The senior general added that one who is brave enough to sacrifice one's life for national defence is the characteristic of noble men and such ones are of great help for national defence force, saying that presenting defence services medals every year indicates that defence services of Myanmar are composed of such people.

Duty to defend the territory of the mother land, interests of the nation and life and property of people is the national duty related to every citizen and performing the duty by sacrificing life is the most noblest capability admired by every human and country, the senior general continued, adding that defence services of Myanmar are trying their best to sacrifice most and acquire least in carrying out duty of national defence.

The defence services are performing their duty in accordance with their four oaths sworn every day by defence services personnel, according to the senior general, who also said that he would like to honour the noble spirit of those who preserved the fine tradition of the defence services with their noble sacrifice.

There goes a saying ones who are brave would never die and if they do so, they would never go to the hell because preserving independence and sovereignty which amounts to prestige and precious gems of a country means sacrificing life for the interests of nation, people and religion or donation of life, according to the senior general.

In 2008 State Constitution, the main armed force for the Defence of the Union is the Defence Services and the Defence Services shall lead in safeguarding the Union against all internal and external dangers, the senior general pointed out, concluding that those who deserve will be honored every year on the occasion of the independence day.

Afterwards, the senior general conferred defence services medals and certificates of honour to the winners. Present at the ceremony were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, wife of the senior general, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief Army Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, the union minister for defence and wife, the union minister for border affairs and wife, the chief of general staff (Army, Navy and Air) and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, recipients of the titles and the certificates of honour and their heirs apparent and guests.

Similar ceremonies were held in military commands to confer medals on 331 defence services personnel on Sunday.—*Myawady*

***Senior General Min Aung Hlaing poses for documentary photo with gallantry title winners.*—MYAWADY**

Pobbathiri Township holds State flag hoisting ceremony

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — A ceremony to hoist the State Flag was held at Pobbathiri Township General Administration Department on Sunday. A police platoon led by IP Aung Aung hoisted the flag on the occasion.

Township Administrator U Htet Aung Phyo read the message sent by President U Thein Sein on the occasion. A total of 120 departmental personnel and guests were in attendance.

The sports festival to mark the Independence Day was held at Kyitaunggan Sports Ground. Local children and adults participated in 10 sports events.

Shwe Ye Yint

MYANAUNG MARKS INDEPENDENCE DAY: ***Police and local people salute State Flag at flag hoisting ceremony of 67th Anniversary Independence Day at the independence monument of people's square in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 4 January.*—WIN BO (TOWNSHIP IPRD)**

Nyaunglebin Township holds flag hoisting cermeony on Independence Day

NYAUNGLEBIN, 4 Jan —The State flag hoisting ceremony of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day was held in Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, on Sunday.

It was attended by Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Kan, departmental officials, members of Fire Brigade, Police and Red Cross Brigade.

At the ceremony to mark the Independence Day at Basic Education High School No 1 in Nyaunglebin, the Township Administrator read the message sent by President U Thein Sein.

It was also attended by Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Soe Myint, Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Tin Aung, Township Education Officer Daw Khin Than Nu and township level officials.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

DaikU Township gets upgraded gravel road

DAIKU, 4 Jan — In commemoration of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day, a ceremony to put Myatkitha gravel road into service was held on the road in DaukU Township, Bago Region, on 1 January.

DaikU Township Development Affairs Committee constructed the road in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Min Swe and Township Administrator U Nyein Tun Kyaw made speeches.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Min Swe, Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Tin Myint and the township administrator U Nyein Tun Kyaw formally opened the road.

The township DAC upgraded a laterite road to the gravel one in Setkwin Ward. The new road is 900 feet long and 10 feet wide. Thanks to the upgraded road, local people have easy access to Yangon-Mandalay Highway all the year round.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Agriculture Department introduces combine harvesters in harvesting paddy

TAUNGTHA, 4 Jan — A demonstration on use of combine harvester was held on a five-acre monsoon paddy plot of U Saw Htay in Thayagyi Village-tract in Taungtha Township, Mandalay Region, on 2 January.

Head of Myingyan District Agriculture Department U Myint Lin, in his speech, stressed the need for use of quality paddy strains and good agricultural pattern for boosting production of crops. Farmers need combine harvesters to be used in cultivation of triple cropping in the irrigated areas. It is necessary to transform manual to mechanized farming so as to solve shortage of labourers in agriculture sector.

Township and township level officials and local farmers viewed use of combine harvesters in the paddy plot.

Kyaw Myo Naing (Taungtha)

Zabuthiri Township inaugurates two asphalt roads leading to villages

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— Nay Pyi Taw Council constructed two asphalt roads leading to Shadaw and Gonminin villages in Zabuthiri Township on 3 January.

The asphalt roads were commissioned into service at the pandal beside the road, attended by Vice Mayor U Than Kyaw Htoo.

Director (Engineer) U Aung Moe of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee explained construction of the asphalt roads.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Myo Nyunt, committee member U Kyaw Myint and deputy commissioner of the district U Zaw Lwin Oo formally opened the road.

The council member and officials met local people at No 73 Basic Education Primary School in Yegyigon Village and explained development tasks in the township. They presented treated mosquito nets to local people.

The entrance road to Shadaw Village is 1,700 feet long and another road to Gonminin Village, 1,500 feet long and 12 feet wide.—*Shwe Kokko*

Opening of Bohkoelon Bridge marks Independence Day

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — The inauguration ceremony of Bohkoelon Bridge was held in Lewe Township on 1 January.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Myint Swe explained development tasks being undertaken by the council in Lewe Township.

Deputy Director (Engineer) U Soe Naing Oo of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee reported construction of the bridge.

Council member U Myint Swe, Committee member U Kyaw Myint and Township Administrator U Hla Shaung formally opened the bridge and strolled along it.

The bridge is 120 feet long and 14 feet wide wooden facility. Its opening ceremony was aimed at contributing to development of transport for the local people.

Shwe Kokko

Nyaunglebin Township holds baby show

NYAUNGLEBIN, 4 Jan — In honour of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day, the baby show was held at Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region, on 3 January morning.

Chairperson of Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association Daw Nang Shwe Nwe made a speech. Health Staff Daw Kyu Kyu Aung explained the purpose of holding the baby show.

Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Kan, the Chairperson of Township MCWA and officials presented prizes to the babies.

It was also attended by mothers of children from Nyaunglebin, Pyuntaza, Madauk and Peinzalok towns and departmental officials.—*Nay Lin (Nyaung*lebin)

School official awards outstanding students

MYANAUNG, 4 Jan — The prize presentation for outstanding students took place in conjunction with the farewell ceremony for teacher Daw Win Win Khaing at Basic Education Primary School in Letpan Ward, Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 3 January.

Departmental officials extended greetings. A school official presented prizes to outstanding students from KG to grade 5. The students presented songs to the audiences.

It was attended by the deputy township education officer, school heads of urban area, teachers and parents.

Nay Win Zaw (Myanaung)

Villagers get knowledge about prevention of animal diseases

Departmental officials lecture prevention of infectious animal diseases to villagers in Taninthayi.

TANINTHAYI, 4 Jan — A ceremony to open the animal infectious disease control course was opened at Taninthayi Township General Administration Department in Taninthayi Region on 2 January.

Township Administrator U Kyaw Thu made an opening speech.

Staff Officer of Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department Dr Zaw Myint Aung explained the purpose of conducting the training course.

Altogether 20 trainees from village-tracts attended the two-day course on 2 and 3 January. Officials of Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Department of Rural Development and Department of Fisheries gave lectures on infectious diseases of animals and ways to prevent them.

Nanthayi-Htein Win

Youths join football tournament in Chanmyathazi Tsp

MANDALAY, 4 Jan — In commemoration of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day, Myayinanda Ward administer supervised the Sein Myint Mo Cup football tournament in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay, on 3 January.

Mandalay Region Hluttaw representative U Tun Win, member of advisory group of Mandalay City Development Committee Dr Hla Kywe and Chairman of Township Football Subcommittee U Myint Oo made speeches.

Before the tournament, two youth teams of Myanmar Football Academy (Mandalay) played a tune-up match.

A total of 27 football teams from Myayinanda Ward are taking part in the tournament.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

Thailand pledges harsh penalty on aviation violation

BANGKOK, 4 Jan — Thailand's transport officials have been urged to stringently enforce aviation laws with harsh penalties to curb safety-threatening acts, after a lantern sucked into a plane engine caused flight cancellation.

Officials have been asked to crack down on activities that disrupt aviation operations, including the illegal broadcast of community radio waves, *Bangkok Post* quoted a source at the Transport Ministry as saying on Sunday.

Thailand has an aviation safety legislation with stipulation that anyone found to have conducted activities threatening to aircraft be subject to a jail term of five to 20 years, and life sentence or even death penalty under more serious circumstances, according to the source.

The move came after a Thursday incident in which pieces of a hot-air lantern were found in the engine of an Airbus A320 plane at Chiang Mai airport, causing immediate cancellation of the flight.

Transport Minister Prajin Juntong subsequently ordered a study of measures to prevent aviation accidents caused by lanterns and Bang Fai rockets.

The threat to aircraft is growing more significant as releasing lanterns and firing Bang Fai rockets have become popular entertainment activities all year round, deputy permanent secretary for transport Woradech Harnprasert said.

The Department of Civil Aviation will sign an agreement with relevant organizations in the coming week, with the goal of better regulating the release of lanterns, especially during major festivals, department director-general Somchai Phiphutthawat said.

It has been proposed that only a specific size of lantern made from fireproof materials should be allowed, and they should be released only at specific times and locations, Somchai said.

Xinhua

Digital connectivity should become basic right in India: Modi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

NEW DELHI, 4 Jan — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said on Saturday that digital connectivity should become a basic right in the country just like the right to schooling.

"Digital connectivity should become as much a basic right as access to school," Modi said while addressing the Indian Science Congress in Mumbai.

He also assured the scientific community of cutting red tape and called for their cooperation in "transforming" the country. "You will have no better supporter than me. In turn, I seek your help in transforming India," the tech-savvy prime minister told the scientific community. "We need to put science, technology and innovation at the top of national priorities. Above all, we must restore the pride and prestige of science and scientists in our nation."

Xinhua

US embassy in Indonesia issues security alert for city of Surabaya

A woman rides a motorcycle through the Dolly area of Surabaya on 24 March, 2014.—REUTERS

JAKARTA, 4 Jan — The US Embassy in Indonesia issued a security alert on Saturday for its citizens in the country's second biggest city Surabaya.

"The US Embassy has been made aware of a potential threat against US-associated hotels and banks in Surabaya, Indonesia," the embassy said in a statement on its website. "The US Embassy recommends heightened vigilance and awareness of one's surroundings when visiting such facilities," it said. The statement gave no further details. Indonesia is considered to have been largely succesful in cracking down on homegrown militant groups following multiple attacks in the 2000s targeting foreigners and state institutions. But authorities have raised concerns in recent months over hundreds of Indonesian citizens attempting to travel to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside militants of the Islamic State organization.

Reuters

More AirAsia wreckage found but weather frustrates divers

PANGKALAN BUN / JAKARTA, (Indonesia), 4 Jan — A multinational team searching for a crashed AirAsia passenger jet found another large underwater object believed to be part of the plane, but persistent bad weather hampered efforts on Sunday to locate its black box recorders and recover bodies of victims.

Indonesian officials say five pieces of wreckage have now been pinpointed on the sea floor off Borneo, where the Airbus (AIR.PA) *A320-200* crashed a week ago with 162 people on board.

Divers were sent to investigate the debris early on Sunday, but diving had since been suspended due to bad weather, the head of Indonesia's search and rescue agency, Fransiskus Bambang Soelistyo, said.

Flight QZ8501 crashed into the Java Sea last Sunday, about 40 minutes after taking off from Indonesia's second largest city Surabaya en route for Singapore. There were no survivors.

Earlier Rukman Soleh, weather bureau chief in Pangkalan Bun, the southern Borneo town where the search operation is based, had said there could be a break later on Sunday in the wind and heavy seas that have dogged recovery efforts all week.

"Weather should provide the search effort with a window of opportunity today, with lower waves expected for the next two days," he said.

Speaking at the same morning briefing for pilots, Air Force Lt Col Johnson Supriadi said efforts would be divided between recovering bodies and locating wreckage and the all-important cockpit voice and flight data recorders.

Until investigators can examine the recorders the cause of the crash remains unknown, but the area is known for intense seasonal storms and BMKG, Indonesia's meteorological agency, has said bad weather was likely a factor.

"The flight document provided by the BMKG office shows fairly worrying weather conditions for the aircraft at cruising level on the chosen route," the agency said in a report.

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

An Indonesian Navy seaboat (R) picks up items retrieved from the Republic of Singapore Navy vessel RSS Valour in this handout photo provided by Singapore's Ministry of Defence, released to Reuters on 4 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

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, 49 percent owned by Malaysia-based AirAsia (AIRA.KL).

The objects that are the main focus of the search were located by ships about 90 nautical miles off the coast of Central Kalimantan province, on the island of Borneo. The largest object is around 18 metres long.

The suspected wreckage is lying in water around 30 metres (100 ft) deep, which experts say should make it relatively straightforward to recover if the rough weather abates.

Efforts to capture images with remote operated vehicles (ROVs) were frustrated on Saturday by poor visibility.

Thirty-one bodies of the mostly Indonesian passengers and crew have so far been recovered, including some still strapped in their seats. Many more may be still trapped in the fuselage of the aircraft.

The crash was the first fatal accident suffered by the AirAsia budget group, whose Indonesian affiliate flies from at least 15 destinations across the sprawling archipelago.

The airline has come under pressure from Indonesian authorities, who have suspended its Surabaya to Singapore operations saying the carrier only had a license to fly the route on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Indonesia AirAsia said it would co-operate with the transport ministry whilst it investigates the license.

A joint statement from Singapore's civil aviation authority (CAAS) and Changi Airport Group said that AirAsia had the necessary approvals to operate a daily flight between Surabaya and Singapore.

Reuters

Russian convoy with Donbas bound aid leaves for Rostov region

Moscow, 4 Jan — A Russian Emergencies Ministry truck convoy with relief aid for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions left for the Rostov region on Sunday, the Ministry's source told *TASS*.

The convoy comprising more than 60 trucks left the Emergencies Ministry rescue centre in Noginsk at 06:00 Moscow Time. The drivers have delivered the relief cargo to Donbas several times.

Viktor Yatsutsenko, the head of the National Crisis Management centre, said that the 11th relief convoy would consist of more than 120 trucks that would deliver more than 1,400 tonnes of relief aid, including food and baby food.

The truck convoy is expected to arrive in Donbas on 8 January.

Russia has sent ten relief convoys to the Donetsk and Luhansk regions since August. They have delivered more than 13,000 of relief cargo, mainly food, medical supplies and building materials to the conflict-stricken Donbas population. The tenth relief convoy brought New Year presents to the Donbas children late last year.—*Itar-Tass*

Indian intelligence warns of hijack attempt on Delhi-Kabul flight

New Delhi, 4 Jan — Indian intelligence agencies have warned that a Delhi-Kabul flight of India's carrier Air India may be hijacked by terrorists, said local daily *The Times of India* online on Sunday.

A high alert has been sounded after the intelligence input and the Indira Gandhi International airport in the Indian capital has been alerted and stringent checks of even the staff members have been instructed, said the report.

The authorities have put in place "multi-level" checking and have issued strictures to ensure they are followed judiciously, with additional ladder-point check put in place and the ground staff asked to thoroughly check all cabin baggage once the passengers boarded, said the report.

Commandos will also patrol the adjoining areas of the airport with machine gun-mounted vehicles. The number of flight marshals have also been increased and cabin crew have been asked to look out for problem elements, it added.

In 1999, terrorists hijacked an Air India passenger plane in southern Afghanistan's Kandahar city.—*Xinhua*

UN conference on disaster reduction to be held in Sendai in March

Tokyo, 4 Jan — The UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in the northeastern Japan city of Sendai from 14 to 18 March, with participants expected to adopt guidelines on bolstering countermeasures as climate change prompts serious natural calamities in various parts of the world.

The Japanese government will host the conference for the third time, after holding it in Yokohama in 1994 and in Hyogo Prefecture in 2005, hoping the upcoming conference will stress the importance of preparation based on lessons learned from the massive earthquake and tsunami that struck northeastern Japan in March 2011.

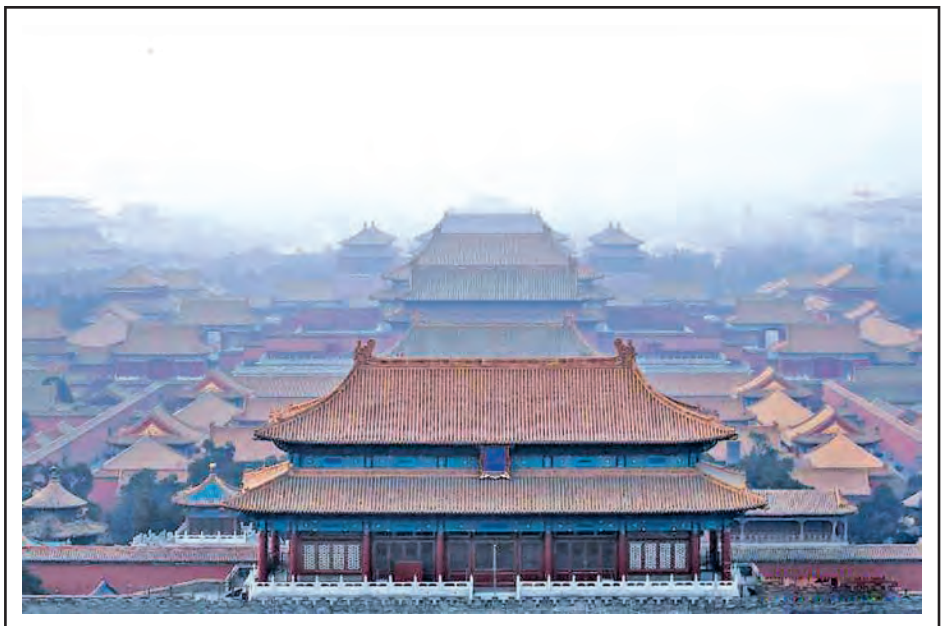
Japanese minister for disaster management Eriko Yamatani will chair the conference, with attendees at the meeting and related events expected to total around 40,000 people, including ministers, heads of international organizations and representatives of nongovernmental organizations from around the world.

The guidelines to be adopted at the third international conference are expected to incorporate the Hyogo action plan adopted at the previous conference, which stipulated the international community's approach to strengthening resilience to disasters through 2015.

The new guidelines are expected to stress the importance of disaster prevention measures and infrastructure investment in developing countries so that natural calamities do not hamper economic growth.

The Japanese government is expected to use the opportunity to showcase the country's disaster reduction technologies and expertise, while explaining the country's recovery from the March 2011 disaster.

Related symposiums and other events will be held in Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, also in northeastern Japan. Planned events include tours to disaster-hit areas, such as Tokyo Electric Power Co's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and the tsunami-struck city of Rikuzentakata in Iwate.—*Kyodo News*



The Palace Museum, or the Forbidden City, is shrouded in smog in Beijing, capital of China on 4 Jan, 2015. China's top meteorological authority forecast medium to severe smog in the country's northern regions including Beijing and Tianjin as well as the neighbouring Hebei Province on Sunday. Meanwhile, smoggy weather will also affect the country's eastern province of Jiangsu as well as the southwestern province of Sichuan on Sunday.—Xinhua

Seven killed in US drone strike in Pakistan

Islamabad, 4 Jan — At least seven people were killed and three injured in a suspected US drone attack on Sunday in a tribal area of northwest Pakistan, near the border with Afghanistan, security officials said.

They said that those killed in the strike on a compound of the Hafiz Gul Bahadar militant group in North Waziristan include an Uzbek commander. The drone fired two missiles against the compound, located in Lawramandi village of Dattakhel sub-district.

On 26 December, a drone attack on another compound in North Waziristan left seven suspected militants dead.

North Waziristan is a staging post by Pakistani Taleban and Afghan Taleban militants for attacks in Afghanistan.

The Pakistan Army is currently engaged in an operation against them in the area.

Kyodo News

Bangladesh bans political rallies

Dhaka, 4 Jan — A day ahead of an anti-government rally to demand a fresh parliament polls, Bangladesh police have imposed an indefinite ban on meetings, processions and rallies in capital Dhaka from Sunday evening.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) spokesman Monirul Islam in a press briefing said, "All indoor and outdoor meetings, rallies and human chains will be banned for an indefinite period in the capital city from Sunday evening to avoid any untoward situation."

Ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has condemned the government's move to ban all rallies and processions.

Tense political standoff over the demand for fresh polls under a non-party caretaker government system culminated with both the ruling and opposition parties calling rallies on 5 January in Dhaka to stage showdown.

BNP Chief Khaleda Zia announced its anti-government rally on Wednesday night. Following her announcement, Hasina's ruling Bangladesh Awami League (AL) party decided to take the streets of Dhaka on the same day, raising fears of violence.

Khaleda Zia has remained cordoned off inside her office in Dhaka's Gushan diplomatic enclave since Saturday night.

Police have also locked down the BNP's headquarters after searching it. Detectives arrested BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi at the party headquarters during the search.

Tensions are running high across Bangladesh as the country's political situation is once again heating up centering on the first anniversary of 5 January parliamentary elections, which 21 parties including ex-Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's BNP Party boycotted.

Khaleda Zia on Wednesday night at a press briefing tabled a seven-point proposal to the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasian's government for an immediate "inclusive general elections" under a non-party caretaker government.

BNP, which has no representation in the current parliament as it boycotted the 5 January parliament elections in 2014, reiterated its vow to unseat Hasina's government with movement.

Khaleda Zia announced a mass rally in Dhaka and across the nation on 5 January.

Khaleda Zia's 20-party alliance has been waging mass protests demanding for fresh national elections in the country under a non- party caretaker government.

The ruling party has ruled out the demand of holding immediate fresh elections. Political analysts say there is no alternative but to reach consensus over the caretaker issue to avoid further serious confrontation.

Scores of people were killed in wide spread violence over the last year's 5 January elections.—*Xinhua*

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 5 January, 2015

People must do what they ought to

By *Myint Win Thein*

Doing what should not be done and not doing what should be done seem to be quite opposite because the two acts stand at two extremes, but they have the same consequence — distracting from the correct way. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between what should be done and what should not be whenever, whatever one does.

When one does something that should not be done, one has to reap what one has sowed, but many of those who are not doing what should be done are still enjoying convenient lives by doing less work and making fewer mistakes. It is unfair for society to have the same effect for the action and the inaction that have the same consequence.

When people in public service do what should not be done, this will hurt the interest not only of themselves but also of the public and failing to perform one's duty properly will carry the same weight. Therefore, in order to serve the public interest as much as one can, it is important that one should surely do what one ought to by avoiding the two extremes of action and inaction.

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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.

Byala, a Rakhine National Emblem

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

The ceremony to mark the 40th anniversary Rakhine State Day and to provide the Rakhine State with electricity from the national grid line was celebrated on a grand scale in the Vesali Sports Grounds in Sittwe under the auspices of the Rakhine State Government on the 15th December. The ceremony was televised live and I was transported with rapturous joy to see the people of Rakhine State wreathed in the smiles resulting from the feeling that electricity would be available to them at the rate of 35 kyats per unit, which was many times cheaper than that they had incurred in the past. Sharing this happiness with them, I , putting aside my work, spent the whole evening enjoying the Rakhine traditional dances performed with the accompaniment of the songs sung by nation-famous and local vocalists televised. Out of the dances, it was the Byala Dance with the accompaniment of a song composed about Byala that intrigued me most. Although Byala is one of the Rakhine emblems, little about it is today known even to Rakhine people. So no doubt it would be quite new to other ethnic peoples.

Byala, like Manusiha (man-lion), Makara (crocodile of the Ganges), Kinnari-Kinnara (fabulous male and female birds) and Bilu-pansway (friezes), is a mythical creature which embellishes religious structures, especially in Rakhine State . It is regarded by the Rakhines as a symbol bringing good luck and auspiciousness. It is assumed that the term" Byala" is corrupted from " Lala" through the intermediate terms "Vala and Bala". Some scholars think that it is the derivative of the Sanskrit word"Byal", whose English rendering is a mythical antelope. In the light of the Pali-English Dictionary written by Rhys Davids and Willian Stede, Pali word"Vala" means " a beast of prey." The word" Lala" written in Rakhine scripts is found on the exterior wall of the Shittaung Temple built by King Minbagyi in 1536 A.D.

To the Rakhines, Byala assumes an air of an amusing, innocent, lovely 6-month old baby with its tongue protruded. Besides, it connotes benevolence, faith, loving-kindness, peace, etc. Besides, as it is compared to a baby with its tongue protruded from time to time, it is also called" Sha-htoke-kay(mercy-appealing tongue-protruding baby)" in Rakhine. As it is a mythical creature made out of nine bodily parts of nine animals which are considered auspicious, it is called "Navarupa" in Pali. So far scholars have not known from which source it originates. However, according to Rakhine Pandit U Oo Tha Tun, who did research on Byala for many years, says that the practice of carving Byala figures in religious structures goes back to the time of King Dvecandra, who was the founder of Vesali City in the 4th century A.D. and that the practice survived up to the reign of King Minbagyi, a famous Mrauk U king (A.D.1531-A.D.1553). Generally, Byala figures are found on the interior and exterior walls of temples, the tops of back-drops of gateways, either side of the posts of the back-drops, the back-drops of the lion-thrones, the pedestals of Buddha images, etc. Besides, the railing posts of royal time signal drums, auspicious drums, royal ceremonial drums, wedding pipes (which are smoked by the bridegroom and bride at the Rakhine traditional wedding -reception) etc are decorated with Byala figures.

The nine different bodily parts of nine animals which make up Byala are tiger's canine, deer's eyes, parrot's tongue, elephant's trunk or dragon's crest, one horn of rhinoceros, horse's ear or elephant's ear, yak's tail or pea-cock's tail, the body of Toe (fabulous creature believed to inhabit the Himalaya). Each of the animal and bodily part has its own efficacy and meaning. Tiger's canine can remove every poison. Tiger conveys the senses of bravery, loyalty, repelling of dangers and being sensitive to aggression. A dancing pea-cock connotes happiness and peace, a striking pea-cock military affairs and a resting pea-cock tranquility respectively. Deer's eyes denote innocence, foreseeing of forth-coming dangers and freedom from various forms of danger. Parrot means quickness, politeness and good morality and parrot's tongue loveliness due to its ability to speak the human language. Elephant's ears imply cleverness, gentleness and easy comprehensibility. The elephant trunk bears the sense of protecting dangers and the crest of dragon the sense of protection from the bites of poisonous animals. The one-horn of rhinoceros has the senses of bravery, staidness, forbidding appearance, non-oppression. Yak's tail means sacredness and freedom from dangers, yak sacredness, concentration, good-look, pleasant-voice, curiosity, etc and pea-cock's tail the symbol of holy seats. The body of Toe conveys the senses of peace of mind, innocence, beauty and elegance.

Religious buildings with Byala figures are concentrated in and around Mrauk U , the last seat of ancient Rakhine kings. Some of them are the Shitthaung Temple half a mile north of the palace site of Mrauk U , the Andaw Thein Temple 68 feet north of the Shitthaung Temple, the Htukkan Thein Temple, the Kalaka -kala-ma-prun Pagoda at Kalaka Village, the Kay-bar Thein Pagoda near the bank of a creek west of the Phrapaw Pagoda, the Min Raja Gyi Temple on a hillock east of Pi-pun-kun Village, a Nat shrine close to the Zay Gyi Gate on the western palace wall of Mrauk U, the Ny-idaw- Nawdaw Phaya about half a mile east of the palace site, the Shantaung Pagoda a mile north of the palace site, the smoking-pipe made of stone at Phayabaw Monastery and the Tharapabbata Pagoda at the top of Tharapabbata Hill two furlongs north of Mrauk U.

In conclusion, ours is a country peopled by diverse ethnic groups. All of them have their own national emblems valued and preserved for ages. Their thoughts, ways of living, beliefs, practices, cultures and customs are embedded in their national emblems. Therefore, it is thought that interpretation of these emblems help understand the ethnic peoples well, thus strengthening the unity among them. It is suggested by the author that as now is a time when national reconciliation is being made, elaboration on the meaning of national emblems like the Hamsa (Brahminy duck) of the Mons, the Auk-chin(Indian pied horn-bill) of the Chins, the Phar-zi(Ceremonial bronze drum) of the Kayins, etc should be an important task in Myanmar.

Reference

U Oo Tha Tun and U Kyaw Tun Aung, Rakhine Byal, Zin-yadana-saw Publishing House, Yangon, 2014

Students, staff, family members take part in sports events to mark Independence Day

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— The festivities and sports events in commemoration of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day were held at the sports ground of Basic Education High School No 9 in Nyana Theikdi Ward in Zabuthiri Township on Sunday.

Together with students of BEHS No 9, 160 staff and family members from Ministries of Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Education and Health participated in nine sports events.

Officials awarded winners in the sports events.—*MNA*

Heads of State/Governments send messages of felicitations to President U Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — Foreign Heads of State/Government sent messages of felicitations to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From His Majesty King M.R. Bhumibol R.
The Kingdom of Thailand
His Excellency the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,
Nay Pyi Taw,

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, please accept, Your Excellency, my cordial felicitations and best wishes for your health and happiness as well as for the progress and prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and her people.

Our two countries have enjoyed smooth ties of friendship over six decades since the establishment of our diplomatic relations. I am confident that our flourishing cooperation in various fields of endeavours will continue to grow from strengthen to strength in the years to come.

Likewise, heads of State/Government from Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Russian Federation, Germany, Ireland and Saudi Arabia sent messages to the president.

Moreover, Vice President Bounnhang Vorachith of Lao PDR sent messages of felicitations to Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun.

MNA

MYANMAR GAZETTE

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — The President has confirmed the appointment of the following heads of service organizations on expiry of the one-year probationary period.

Name	Appointment
(a) Professor Dr Daw Mar Mar Win	Rector University of Veterinary Science Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development
(b) U Thurein Win	Managing Director Myanmar Railways Ministry of Rail Transportation

Large marble stone for Maha Thakyaranthi Buddha Image arrives in ACE Workshop compound in Nay Pyi Taw

***Large marble stone being lift by heavy machinery at ACE Company's workshop compound in Nay Pyi Taw.*—MNA**

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan— Under the supervision of Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Thein Nyunt and party, a large marble stone to be carved as Maha Thakyaranthi Buddha Image arrived at the compound of ACE Workshop in Pobbathiri Township from C Junction at the entrance of Dekkhinathiri Township on Sunday noon.

Along the route, Buddhist monks and people viewed the stone and made cash donations.

With the assistance of Two Elephant Family Company, the large stone could be placed at the designated position at the workshop compound. The stone was conveyed from Sagyin village at 8.10 am on 1 January. It spent one night each at Saga-in toll gate in TadaU Township, Thigon bus terminal in Meiktila Township and C Junction in Dekkhinathiri Township.

Along 222-mile long route, the people and Buddhist monks donated K6.97 million to the fund of carving the Buddha Image.—*MNA*

People enjoy Independence Day festivities, sports contests across the nation

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Jan — Ceremonies to mark the 67th Anniversary Independence Day were held across the nation on Sunday.

Ministries organized the Independence Day festivities and sports contests at staff quarters, schools, wards and villages of Nay Pyi Taw in the morning.

Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin, deputy ministers and officials together with local people enjoyed the festivities.

Holiday-makers and people visited National Landmarks Garden, zoo and, Water Fountain Garden in Nay Pyi Taw.

In the evening, roundabouts in Nay Pyi Taw, City Hall, ministries, Gems Museum and Jade Park were illuminated with multicolour lights.

Likewise, Mandalarians saluted the State flag in commemoration of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day in the early morning of Sunday, 4th January.

Chief Minister U Ye Myint of the region read the message sent by President U Thein Sein and took the salute of the Guard of Honour. The Chief Minister and attendees saluted the State Flag and paid tributes to the fallen leaders.

Festivities and sports contests were held in townships, departments and wards in the region.

MNA/Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Yangon Region holds Independence Day State Flag-hoisting and saluting ceremony

YANGON, 4 Jan — The State flag-hoisting and saluting ceremony to mark the 67th Anniversary Independence Day took place at the People's Square in Dagon Township on Sunday morning.

The people together with the flag hoisting platoon of Yangon Command headquarters saluted the State Flag.

At 7 am, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe took the salute of the Guard of Honour and the military band. They all saluted the State Flag and fallen heroes and Tatmadawmen.

The chief minister read the message sent by the President on the occasion of the 67th Anniversary Independence Day.

It was also attended by Speaker of Region Hluttaw U Sein Tin Win, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Tun Tun Naung, Chief Justice of the region high court U Win Swe, officials, social organizations and local people totalling over 3,300.

MNA

***Local people and staff participate in sports activities in commemoration of 67th Anniversary Independence Day in Yangon.*—MNA**

Obama's Cuba opening hits early obstacles, faces struggle with Congress

WASHINGTON, 4 Jan — Only two-and-a-half weeks after US President Barack Obama announced a historic prisoner exchange and re-establishment of long-broken ties with Cuba, his new policy is encountering obstacles that threaten to flare up when Congress returns next week.

Questions surrounding Havana's human rights record and the promised release of Cuban detainees have the potential to inflame anti-Havana passions on Capitol Hill, where the House and Senate are expected to hold hearings soon after they resume on Tuesday.

***A protester holds up a sign during a rally in solidarity with Cuban dissidents in downtown Miami, Florida, on 30 Dec, 2014.—*REUTERS**

Whether the obstacles amount in the long run to anything more than speed bumps on the way to wider detente remains to be seen. But at a minimum, they illustrate how benefits from Obama's ditching of a half-decade of US isolation of Cuba won't come quickly or without rancorous debate.

Signaling that it will continue to suppress dissent, the government of Cuban President Raul Castro on Tuesday detained more than 50 activists, dissident leaders said, to squelch a planned gathering in Havana's Revolution Square. And dissidents reported new detentions on Thursday. The crackdown brought sharp condemnation from the US State Department. All of those detained had been released by the weekend, dissidents said. There is also concern over when 53 people Washington considers political prisoners will be released and on what terms. A senior Obama aide said at the time of the 17 December announcement that Cuba had agreed to free them as part of the deal to restore diplomatic relations and that an unspecified number of them were already released. Raul Castro referred to Cuba's freeing of a group of persons the US "has shown interest in" as part of his announcement of the wider deal but didn't mention a number.

But Cuban dissident groups say they believe that most of them remain in some kind of detention. The White House has steadfastly refused to release the names of the 53 and has not shared the list with the dissident groups.

A source with knowledge of the agreed prisoner release told *Reuters* the delay stems from lack of a final deal on where the prisoners will go — leaving for the United States or Europe, or staying in Cuba. In the past the Cuban government has preferred that such prisoners leave the country when released. But some are likely to insist on their right to stay in Cuba and continue fighting for their political rights.

The confusion over those releases and the latest dissident round-ups have provided ammunition for congressional critics of Obama's Cuba policy. Those lawmakers have said they will seek to slow or block improved ties with Havana.

"The Castro regime's latest acts of repression against political dissidents in Cuba make a mockery of President Obama's new US-Cuba policy," said Sen. Marco Rubio, Florida Republican and a potential 2016 presidential candidate. "The fact that the regime continues to violate the human rights of Cubans like this shows that it has even less incentive to change its ways" after Obama's deal with Castro, Rubio said.

One early legislative fight over Cuba policy could come when Congress considers funding for the Department of Homeland Security. The $1.1 trillion government spending bill passed in mid-December funds DHS only until 27 February, because conservative Republicans want to gut Obama's executive orders on immigration reforms.

Reuters

FBI workers with foreign ties face unfair security checks

***FBI Director James Comey takes a question from a reporter during a news conference at the FBI office in Boston, Massachusetts on 18 Nov, 2014. —* REUTERS**

WASHINGTON, 4 Jan — Hundreds of employees with foreign ties working for the US Federal Bureau of Investigation are subjected to what they say are unfair aggressive background checks that have forced some to cut contact with family members abroad, the *New York Times* reported on Saturday.

All FBI employees are subject to security screening, but according to the story, those with foreign language skills and who have families or friends abroad find themselves facing more rigorous and more frequent security interviews, polygraph tests and reviews of personal travel, electronic communications and file downloads. In response to *Reuters*' request for comment, FBI spokesman Michael Kortan said he would let his comment to the *New York Times* stand. He told the newspaper that the FBI seeks to protect sensitive and classified national information while taking into account any impact on an employee.

The FBI created the Post-Adjudication Risk Management programme, or PARM after the 11 September, 2001, attacks. The move was prompted by concerns that employees and contractors with ties abroad could be coerced by foreign spies or organizations labelled as terrorist to reveal classified national security information.

Workers placed under PARM include Muslim and Asian workers who were hired as linguists or for other counterintelligence and counterterrorism roles. By 2012, the FBI ramped up its hiring of linguists by 85 percent, with Arabic, Chinese and Farsi considered among the high priority languages.—*Reuters*

Power struggle rips open Germany's Eurosceptic AfD party

BERLIN, 4 Jan — A power struggle over the direction of the upstart Eurosceptic party Alternative for Germany (AfD) burst into the open on Saturday when a group of deputy leaders attacked its founder Bernd Lucke and his plans to take sole control of the party.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, concerned about the rise of a party that attracts far-right voters and siphons off some of its support, hope the movement will self-destruct. In a letter seen by *Reuters*, five senior party figures told Lucke they were alarmed by his plans, denounced his "despot-like style of leadership" and summoned him to a meeting. It was the latest sign of strife in a party that has shaken up German politics, winning seats in the European Parliament and three German state assemblies, and has been hovering around 7 percent in most national opinion polls.

***Bernd Lucke, leader of Alternative for Germany (AfD) party walks after a news conference in the Bundespressekonferenz in Berlin on 15 Sept, 2014.* REUTERS**

The AfD, which first gained popularity with its opposition to bailouts for indebted euro zone countries, has also adopted an anti-immigrant stance. But party leaders are divided about those two directions.

Lucke, who founded the party in 2013, is keen to avoid a drift to the right, while co-chairs Frauke Petry and Konrad Adam want to see the AfD open up more to voters from the far right.

"We're writing to you because we're worried about party unity," Petry, Adam and others told Lucke. "It is no longer only 'your' party as you keep calling it, but a party of thousands. We want you to be ... one of three equal leaders."— *Reuters*

Mexico vigilante founder, 26 others arrested in 10 shooting deaths

MEXICO CITY, 4 Jan — The founder of a vigilante group in Mexico's restive western state of Michoacan was arrested on Saturday along with 26 followers for their alleged role in 10 deaths during a shootout with a rival group last month.

Hipolito Mora and his followers clashed in mid-December with a band led by Luis Antonio Torres, alias "El Americano," a former vigilante leader turned rural police commander.

The shootout took place in La Ruana, a town about 150 miles (241 km) from Morelia, the state capital, leaving 11 dead, including Mora's son. Both men and 35 others were brought in for questioning in December.

A state judge said on Saturday that enough evidence pointed to the involvement of Mora and his men to go ahead with the legal process, noting that the bullets that killed some of the victims matched the caliber of arms used by Mora's group.

Mora has three days to appeal and the court has until Monday to reach a decision on Torres and his followers, the judge said.

***Vigilante leader Luis Antonio Torres, alias "El Americano'', (C) is cheered by supporters as he and other vigilantes voluntarily surrender to state authorities to cooperate in a shootout investigation in the town of Buenavista Tomatlan, Michoacan on 30 Dec, 2014. —* REUTERS**

Michoacan has been torn by violence, prompting President Enrique Pena Nieto to send reinforcements to the state to wrest away control from a powerful drug gang last year. He forged an uneasy alliance with vigilante groups to restore order.

The unrest in Michoacan follows rising anger about a lack of security in Mexico, where the abduction and presumed massacre of 43 trainee teachers has sparked protests across the country. — *Reuters*

Thirteen Egyptians kidnapped in Libya

CAIRO, 4 Jan — Thirteen Egyptians were kidnapped in the Libyan city of Sirte, adding to seven that went missing last week in the war-torn North African country, Egypt's state news agency said on Saturday.

Libya is split between militias loyal to an internationally recognized government, which Egypt supports, and those allied to a rival government based in Tripoli that includes Islamist groups and politicians. The 13 reported kidnapped on Saturday were Coptic Christians and Egypt's foreign minister, Sameh Shoukry, had met with senior church officials on Saturday amid efforts to solve the crisis, state news agency *MENA* said. Magdy Malik, a Christian activist in Egypt, said that gunmen stormed a residence for expatriates in Sirte and abducted the thirteen Copts.

Egyptian Copts have been targeted in Libya before during the chaos that broke out when militias that fought together to oust dictator Muammar Gaddafi then trained their arms on one another.

Seven Egyptian Christians were found shot execution-style on a beach in eastern Libya last February.

Local reports have said a Coptic doctor and his wife were murdered in their home in early December, with their daughter's body later found. A formal diplomatic mission to retrieve the Egyptians would be difficult because much of Libya falls outside of the officially recognized government's control, an Egyptian foreign ministry spokesman said on Al-Hayat, a state-owned television station.—*Reuters*

Two men of Taleban stand handcuffed after being captured with weapons during an operation by Afghan policemen in Nangarhar Province, eastern Afghanistan on 3 Jan, 2015.—XINHUA

Greek survey gives leftists 3.1-point lead over conservatives

ATHENS, 4 Jan — Greece's radical leftist Syriza party led the ruling conservatives by 3.1 percentage points in an opinion poll conducted after it became clear that a snap election would be called, the pollster Rass said on Saturday.

The survey for Sunday's *Eleftheros Typos* newspaper was conducted on 29 to 30 December, after Prime Minister Antonis Samaras failed to have his candidate elected president by parliament.

The poll put support for Syriza at 30.4 percent against 27.3 percent for the conservatives of Samaras's New Democracy party, if an election were held now, a slight narrowing from a 3.4 point lead in a previous Rass poll last month. The election has been set for 25 January.

In the latest survey, the KKE communist party was third on 4.8 percent, followed by the centre-left To Potami with 4.7 percent, and the far-right Golden Dawn with 3.8 percent. The Socialist party Pasok, which rules in coalition with New Democracy, polled just 3.5 percent.

Syriza has led New Democracy in opinion polls for months, but its lead has narrowed in recent weeks.

Alexis Tsipras, opposition leader and head of radical leftist Syriza party, looks on as he speaks during a party congress in Athens on 3 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

In the poll, 74.2 percent agreed that Greece must stay in the euro zone "at all costs", and 24.1 percent disagreed.

The survey was conducted on a sample of 1,002 Greeks.—*Reuters*

At least 15 killed in 'Boko Haram' attack on Cameroon bus

YAOUNDE, 4 Jan — At least 15 people have been killed in an attack by suspected Boko Haram militants on a bus in northern Cameroon, a senior local security official and a businessman said on Saturday.

Over the last year, Boko Haram, which has killed thousands in its struggle to create a caliphate in northern Nigeria, has stepped up attacks on both sides of the border, forcing Cameroon to dispatch thousands of troops to its north.

"Boko Haram elements on Thursday attacked a bus that was transporting many passengers from Kousseri to Maroua and killed 25 persons on the spot," said a senior officer in the military's BIR rapid reaction unit deployed in the region.

The officer, who asked not to be named, said another 10 people had been severely injured and taken to Maroua hospital and he feared the death toll would rise. Maroua is the capital of the Far North region, which has seen the worst of the spillover of Nigeria's conflict. Cameroonian authorities were not available for comment on the attack, which took place in the evening of 1 January. However, a local businessman based in the north said travellers who reached the town of Maroua had confirmed the incident. Foncha Ngeh, who is based in Maroua, said travellers had told him there were at least 15 dead in the incident but many more had been injured and were being transported to Maroua for treatment. Ngeh said there had been a string of other attacks in the region, carried out by Islamists but also ordinary bandits targeting people travelling during the holidays with lots of cash.

Late last month, Cameroon had to call on its air force to help troops dislodge Boko Haram fighters who briefly occupied a military camp after hundreds of militants mounted a wave of attacks on five northern towns. Raids by Boko Haram have forced many Cameroonians living along the porous border to abandon farms, raising the risk of food shortages in the semi-arid part of the country.—*Reuters*

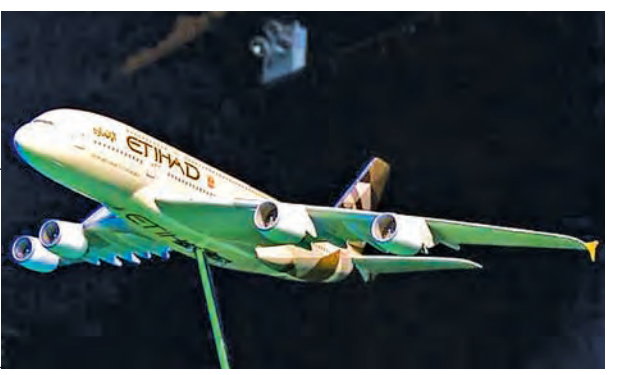
Fog causes severe disruption at Abu Dhabi airport — Etihad Airways

DUBAI, 4 Jan — Etihad Airways reported serious disruption to arrivals and departures for all airlines after fog forced the temporary closure of Abu Dhabi International Airport on Saturday.

The airport was closed for a little more than an hour from 2.30 am local time, Etihad said.

"These conditions have resulted in unprecedented congestion at Abu Dhabi airport and will lead to knock-on delays throughout the network for the next 24 hours," the airline said in a statement.

Reuters



A model Etihad Airways plane is seen on stage before the unveiling of the new home jersey for the New York City Football Club in New York on 13 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

Islamic State kills 14 Libyan soldiers, official government says

BENGHAZI (Libya), 4 Jan — Supporters of Islamic State, the militant group that has overrun parts of Iraq and Syria, have killed 14 Libyan soldiers in the south of the country, the official government said on Saturday.

In separate violence, forces loyal to the internationally recognized government staged air strikes on the port of Misrata, a western city allied to a group that holds the capital Tripoli.

Both sides also fought with ground troops near the country's biggest oil port, part of a struggle between forces loyal to two rival governments allied to former rebel groups that helped oust Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 but now vie for power.

Western powers and Libya's neighbours fear Islamic State and other radical Islamists are seeking to exploit a power vacuum in the oil-producing nation.

The recognized government of Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni, which has been forced to work from the east since a group known as Libya Dawn linked to Misrata seized Tripoli last August, said Islamic State had executed 14 soldiers on a road north of Sabha, the main city in the south.

"Members of IS staged an attack... during which they executed 14 members of the Libyan army belonging to the infantry battalion 168," the government said in a statement, asking the international community to lift an arms embargo to help fight what it called terrorists.

A website called Islamic State in Libya claimed responsibility for killing 12 soldiers at the same location and posted a picture purporting to show the execution of one soldier.

A rival Libyan parliament in Tripoli denounced the killing, a Tripoli-based news agency said.

There have been attempts by Islamic State to open a branch in Libya at Derna, an eastern hot spot for radical Islamists. The US military is monitoring a nascent effort by Islamic State to train a couple of hundred fighters in eastern Libya, the commander of US forces in Africa said last month.

Thinni has accused the Tripoli government of relying on Islamists. It denies this and says Thinni is backed by former Gaddafi officers.

Saqer al-Joroushi, commander of an air force unit loyal to Thinni, said war planes had hit Misrata port and an air force academy located in the western city.

A state news agency loyal to the Tripoli government said two people had been wounded when several rockets hit a port building in the city located 200 km (125 miles) east of Tripoli.

Separately, troops loyal to Thinni said they had attacked a rival force which three weeks ago tried to seize the Es Sider oil port. Es Sider and the adjacent Ras Lanuf oil ports have been closed since the clashes started.

Reuters

China launches website on military weaponry procurement

BEIJING, 4 Jan — A website on military weapon procurement was officially launched on Sunday.

Under the General Armament Department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), weain.mil.cn provides information on the country's weapon and armament needs, relevant policies, procurement notices, enterprise lists and technology.

Private enterprises, military armament-purchasing departments and military industry groups as well as personnel can register on the website for consultation and further information.

According to the PLA General Armament Department, the new platform was established to cement military and civilian integration and aims to accelerate steps in armament procurement system reform, break procurement barriers, improve competitiveness and promote efficiency.

Since 2014, a series of policies have been issued to improve military and civilian integration, market access, information exchange, supervision, and security.

In May, 2014, the first "military and civilian integration forum" released around 200 items on weapon procurement, which attracted more than 100 private enterprises and scores of cooperation agreements were subsequently signed.—*Xinhua*

People gather outside the Las Cascadas Commercial Centre where a fire broke out in the town of Antiguo Cuscatlan, 12 km away from San Salvador, capital of El Salvador, on 3 Jan, 2015. According to information provided by rescue workers, more than 600 employees were evacuated from the shopping mall and the fire was finally controlled. — XINHUA

Dozens of soldiers killed in Nigeria attack: local media

ABUJA, 4 Jan — Dozens of soldiers were killed in an attack suspected to be a perpetration of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria's state of Borno, local media reported on Sunday, citing top ranking security sources.

The soldiers were caught unawares as the terrorists stormed the Multinational Joint Task Force base in the border town of Baga in Kukawa in the restive Borno State on Saturday, the security sources said. "We had a very ugly development in Baga on Saturday morning, when the Boko Haram insurgents went and dislodged the Multinational Joint Task Force there. All we know for now that it was a bad outing for the soldiers, because the base was practically dislodged, but one cannot say specifically the extent of damage caused on the base and the personnel for now," a senior security officer, who pleaded for anonymity, told the local Leadership Newspaper.

According to the local newspaper, the attack on that multinational security base was being handled with top secrecy by the military authorities in the countries that constitute the Multinational Joint Task Force.

The Multinational Joint Task Force is the major military deployment that has been frustrating the activities of terrorists in Baga, a fishing community that particularly shares border with Chad Republic. In the past two years, Baga has suffered several attacks in which the Boko Haram terrorists killed residents of the area, mostly fishermen. In November last year, suspected Boko Haram members allegedly ambushed and slit the throats of at least 48 fishermen during an attack.—*Xinhua*

Warehouse fire in NE China kills Five firefighters, no civilian casualties

BEIJING, 4 Jan — Five firefighters are now confirmed dead after a warehouse fire in the northeast of China. The fire broke out at midday in a lower-floor warehouse of an eleven-story residential building in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang Province. The warehouse collapsed after burning for around nine hours, killing the firefighters. Thirteen other firefighters and a security guard were injured. The dead firefighters were aged between 18 and 22. Around two thousand residents of the building were all evacuated, and no civilian casualties were reported. Authorities say it took hours to put out the fire because fire engines simply couldn't get near the building. A preliminary investigation indicates that the fire was caused by an overloaded electric heater. Relevant personnel have now been taken into police custody for questioning.

Firefighters in the city of China's Harbin were familiar with this type of scene, rising flames from a warehouse bellowing into smoke. It all began with a fire hazard in the form of garbage. Flames fuelled by flammable material quickly spread within the residential building. Fortunately, all residents survived the ordeal.

"I didn't know what happened then. My wife called me, and I ran out with just a towel," says a resident in the building.

"I smelled the heavy smoke first and then the security guards started to tell us to clear out," says Ma Jinguo, a merchant in the building. But less lucky were the firefighters. As flames continue to rage, a sudden collapse within the building 10 hours later and led to complications for the crew. "The building is losing stability, those people near it are all in danger," says Xu Zhiyong, instructor of Songbei District, Harbin Fire Conctrol Division. These dangers only spurred more fire fighters to step in and help their fellow colleagues. "I'm not on duty, but I cannot be sitting at home watching TV and seeing all this without chipping to help," Xu says.

The entire ordeal was only brought under control after 20 hours. With 5 fire fighters dead and 14 others seriously injured, it will be more than a test of patience for this team of heros who risked their lives for the safety of others.—*Xinhua*

Five arrested in India over kidnap and gang-rape of Japanese tourist

KOLKATA, 4 Jan — The police have arrested five men in connection with the alleged abduction and gang-rape of a 23-year-old Japanese tourist, officials said on Saturday.

The woman had filed a complaint through the Japanese consulate in Kolkata saying she had been staying in a budget hotel in the city in November when three local men who spoke Japanese befriended her and took her to the seaside resort of Digha in West Bengal. According to Kolkata police, she said they had robbed her of 76,000 rupees using her ATM card, and then taken her to Bodh Gaya, a major Buddhist pilgrimage and tourist centre in Bihar.

There, she alleged that two more men joined them and raped her. "We have arrested three people from Kolkata and two from Gaya in Bihar in connection with the incident," said Pallav Kanti Ghosh, a senior police official in Kolkata.

He said two of them had been charged with gang-rape.

The incident has again turned the spotlight on the safety of women in the world's largest democracy.

Millions of Indians took to the streets in 2012, after a medical student was gang-raped and killed in New Delhi, to demand official action to reduce the number of assaults on women.

Reuters

A demonstrator holds a torn poster during a protest in New Delhi on 29 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

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WEATHER REPORT

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 5th January, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin States, weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(23/2014)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-123(14-15)	Skid Mounted Double Pump Cementing Unit with Complete Accessories (Silo, Cutting Pot, Power Pack, Dryer & Compressor) (1) Lot	US$
(2)	IFB-124(14-15)	6" x 8" R Mixing Pump with 50HP Motor (2) Lots	US$
(3)	IFB-125(14-15)	Mud Agitator Unit with Motor (2) Lots	US$
(4)	IFB-126(14-15)	4" Dia Steel Line Pipe (3,000) Meter	US$
(5)	IFB-127(14-15)	Spares for Metering System (CNG Filling Station (5) Items	US$
(6)	IFB-128(14-15)	Komatsu (D 39 E x 22) or Caterpillar (D40A, P-3) Bulldozer (1) Unit	US$
(7)	IFB-129(14-15)	Spares for Kenworth Truck (14) Items	US$
(8)	IFB-130(14-15)	Data Acquisition Sercel 428 Telementry System (4) Items	US$
(9)	IFB-131(14-15)	Interpretation Workstation (1) Item	US$
(10)	IFB-132(14-15)	Electrical spares for D3 T2 Drilling Rigs (15) Items	US$

Tender Closing Date & Time – 2-2-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5th January, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

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600-year-old tower destroyed by fire in Yunnan

BEIJING, 4 Jan — Another fire in the southwest of China has destroyed the 600-year-old Gongchen tower, part of an ancient city gate in Weishan county in Dali prefecture, Yunnan Province.

The fire started at about 3 am on Saturday. Firefighters struggled for nearly 2 hours to put out the flames. About 300 square meters of the architecture was burnt down. No causalities have been reported and the cause of the fire is still under investigation.

The Gongchen tower was a city gate tower, which was built in 1390 during the Ming Dynasty. It was listed as a key cultural protection site in Yunnan Province. Last month, a fire engulfed an ancient Miao village in southwest China's Guizhou Province.

In 2006, China nominated the village as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

A crane is seen parked in front of the burnt "Gongchenlou", an ancient architecture built in Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), in Weishan County, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on 3 Jan, 2015. A fire broke out on the building early on Saturday and was extinguished two hours later. No casualties has so far been reported. — XINHUA

And in January last year, Dukezong Ancient Town, in the famous resort county Shangri-la in Yunnan Province, was also burned down in a fire. The so called "Moonlight City" is one of the most renowned resorts in Shangri-la, known for its well-preserved ancient Tibetan dwellings.

Xinhua

US appeals court denies request to delay Boston Marathon bombing trial

A photograph of Djohar Tsarnaev, who is believed to be Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, a suspect in the Boston Marathon bombing, is seen on his page of Russian social networking site Vkontakte (VK), as pictured on a monitor in St Petersburg on 19 April, 2013.
REUTERS

BOSTON, 4 Jan — A US appeals court on Saturday denied a last-ditch request by lawyers for accused Boston Marathon bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to delay his trial on charges of killing three people and injuring more than 260 in the attack.

Attorneys for Tsarnaev, 21, had also sought to have the trial moved out of Boston, the site of the 15 April, 2013, bombing, which stands as the largest mass-casualty attack on US soil since 11 September, 2001.

Jury selection in the trial at US District Court in Boston is due to begin on Monday. — *Reuters*

Belgrade airport serves record number of passengers

BELGRADE, 4 Jan — Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport has served more than 4.6 million passengers in 2014, recording a growth of nearly 32 percent, which places it among Europe's top airports, Acting CEO Sasa Vlaisavljevic said.

Vlaisavljevic expressed hope that the number of passengers will increase in 2015 and announced that around EUR 20 million will be invested in expanding the airport capacity.

"We will raise the capacity of the airport to 7-7.5 million passengers. The average passenger growth in Europe is 3.6-3.7 percent, and we will certainly exceed four percent in the next four years," said Vlaisavljevic.

He specified that over EUR 20 million will be invested in projects such as the expansion of the old and the reconstruction of the old terminal.

The cargo transport saw a rise of 24 percent compared to 2013, he added.

Nikola Tesla Airport is currently providing services to 26 carriers, or 35 including charter airlines. Serbia's national carrier Air Serbia accounts for some 50 percent of the air traffic.—*Tanjug*

First teaser of 'Ant-Man' revealed

Los Angeles, 4 Jan — Marvel has released a small trailer for 'Ant-Man'.

The 18-second clip – made up of just over 10 shots – ends with a note that the full teaser trailer will air during the premiere of Marvel TV show 'Agent Carter' on ABC on 6 January, reported *The Wrap*.

'Ant-Man' stars Paul Rudd as the superhero and his alter-ego Scott Lang, with Michael Douglas as the comic book original hero Dr Henry Pym.

'Bring It On' helmer Peyton Reed is directing. Evangeline Lilly, Corey Stoll and David Dastmalchian also star in the film.

Lang's daughter Cassie will appear in the movie and Lang is now "a master thief" instead of a con-man.

The 18-second clip — made up of just over 10 shots — ends with a note that the full teaser trailer will air during the premiere of Marvel TV show 'Agent Carter'.—PTI

Director Edgar Wright was initially slated to direct but as actress Evangeline Lilly has already revealed, it is thought his vision for the character did not fit in the Marvel Cinematic Universe and he consequently left the project.

'Ant-Man' is due for release on 17 July.—*PTI*

Godard movie 'Goodbye to Language' is critics group's top film

New York, 4 Jan — The National Society of Film Critics on Saturday named Jean-Luc Godard's 3-D film "Goodbye to Language" the best picture of the year, narrowly choosing it over Richard Linklater's acclaimed "Boyhood," for which Linklater won best director. The group, made up of 59 prominent movie critics from newspapers, magazines and other media outlets, chose Timothy Spall as best actor for "Mr Turner," about 19th-century British artist JMW Turner.

Marion Cotillard won best actress for "Two Days, One Night," a Belgian drama about a factory worker who must lobby co-workers in order to keep her job, as well as for her work in "The Immigrant," in which she plays a Polish woman who faces hardships upon arriving in New York in 1921.

Best supporting actress went to Patricia Arquette for "Boyhood," which chronicles 12 years in the life of a boy and which was filmed with the same actor over 12 years. JK Simmons won best supporting actor for "Whiplash," playing a hard-driving music teacher.

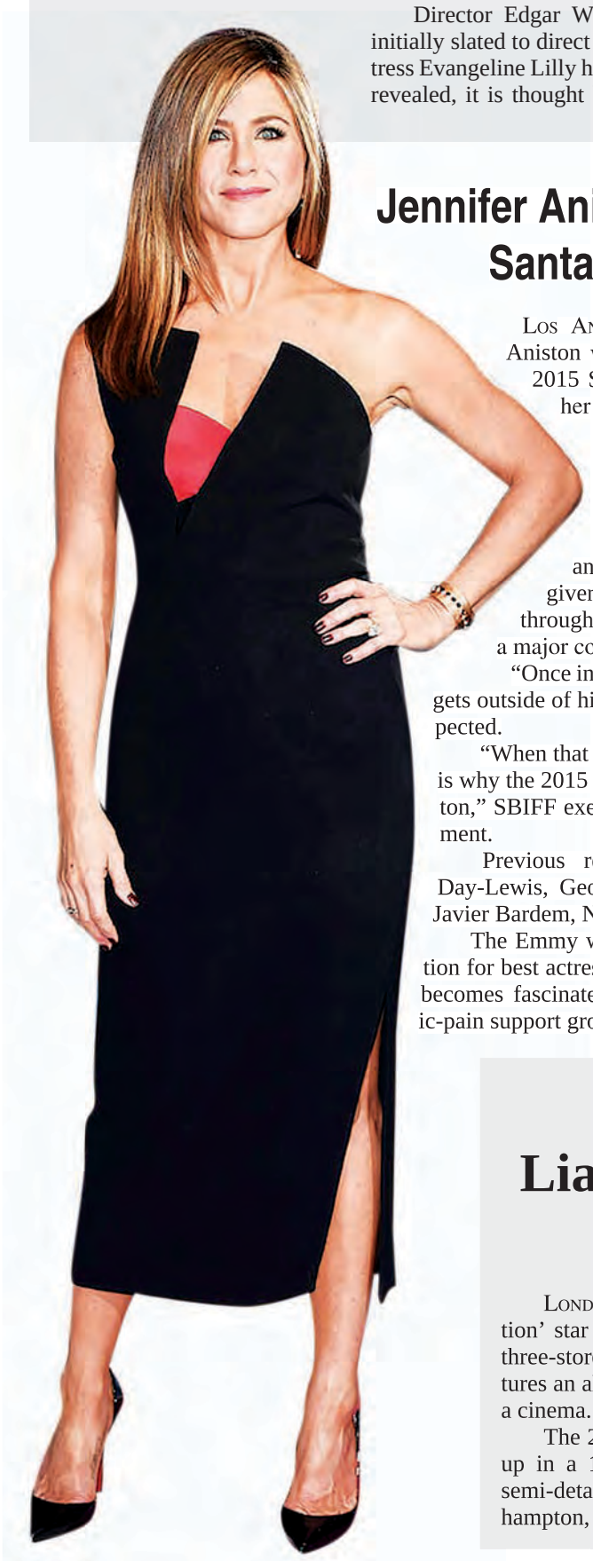
In choosing "Goodbye to Language" for their top honour, the critics departed from other groups such as the National Board of Review, the New York Film Critics Circle and even the Golden Globes, all of which ignored the film in their annual honours.

The inscrutable film, which even admirers called baffling, involves a married woman and a single man, and a stray dog. Shot in 3-D, a second film paralleling the first unfolds during the course of its 70-minute running time.

The critics awards are among the last in the run-up to the Oscar nominations, to be announced on 15 January in Los Angeles. The Academy Awards ceremony is slated for 22 February. Godard, 84, is among the world's most acclaimed directors, known for such classics as "Breathless," "Contempt" and Weekend." In other awards, the critics chose "Citizenfour," about Edward Snowden and the National Security Agency spying scandal, as best nonfiction, or documentary film, while "The Grand Budapest Hotel" by Wes Anderson won for best screenplay. Best cinematography went to "Mr Turner."

Film heritage honours went to a curator and film conservation manager at New York's Museum of Modern Art, and to Ron Hutchinson of The Vitaphone Project, which restores original soundtracks for early sound films.—*Reuters*

(3rd L-R) Producer Alain Sarde, cast members Christian Gregori, Jessica Erickson, Richard Chevallier, Zoe Bruneau, Heloise Godet and Kamel Abdelli pose on the red carpet as they arrive for the screening of the film "Adieu au langage" (Goodbye to Language) in competition at the 67th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes on 21 May, 2014.—Reuters



Jennifer Aniston to be honoured at Santa Barbara Film Fest

Los Angeles, 4 Jan — 'Friends' actress Jennifer Aniston will receive the the Montecito Award at the 2015 Santa Barbara International Film Festival for her performance in her latest film 'Cake'.

The 45-year-old star will be presented with the honour at Santa Barbara's historic Arlington Theatre on 30 January as part of the fest's 30th edition (27 January-7 February).

Montecito Award has been presented annually, since 2005 to a 'performer, who has given a series of classic and standout performances throughout his or her career and whose style has made a major contribution to film'.

"Once in a while a performer who we thought we knew gets outside of his or her comfort zone and shows us the unexpected.

"When that happens it is cause for celebration — and this is why the 2015 Montecito Award is bestowed upon Ms Aniston," SBIFF executive director Roger Durling said in a statement.

Previous recipients include Oprah Winfrey, Daniel Day-Lewis, Geoffrey Rush, Julianne Moore, Kate Winslet, Javier Bardem, Naomi Watts and Annette Bening.

The Emmy winner has received a Golden Globe nomination for best actress for her portrayal of an acerbic woman who becomes fascinated by the suicide of a woman in her chronic-pain support group.—*PTI*

'One Direction' star Liam Payne buys 5.1 million pounds mansion

London, 4 Jan — 'One Direction' star Liam Payne has bought a three-storey home in Surrey that features an all-weather tennis court and a cinema.

The 21-year-old star, who grew up in a 150,000 pounds three-bed semi-detached house in Wolverhampton, is now the proud owner of a three-storey home in Surrey that also features a 700-bottle wine store and ballet studio, reported *Daily Star*.

"The security is insane. Every part of the house and grounds are in camera isolation zones, many heat and motion monitored," a source said.—*PTI*

Greek police arrest fugitive Marxist guerrilla

ATHENS, 4 Jan — Greek police on Saturday arrested Christodoulos Xiros, a fugitive member of the Marxist guerrilla group on 17 November who had absconded while on leave from prison almost a year ago. Christodoulos Xiros, 56, is serving multiple life terms for his role in Greece's most lethal guerrilla group, which killed Greek, US and British diplomats before being dismantled in 2002. A police official said he had been arrested in Anavissos, a coastal town outside Athens. While on the run, Xiros had appeared in a video vowing to avenge the pain ordinary Greeks have suffered under international bailout programmes.

A 1 million euro (0.78 million pound) reward had been offered for his capture. Xiros' escape from prison in January 2014 was an embarrassment for Greek authorities and prompted the United States to call for authorities to use all means available to apprehend him. As in other European countries including Germany and Italy, a number of violent leftist groups were active in Greece from the 1970s and 1980s and authorities have been concerned about the prospect of a resurgence during the economic crisis. When arrested, Xiros was armed but made no attempt to resist. He was riding a bicycle near the house he had been renting, officials said. To disguise his appearance, the dark-haired fugitive had grown a beard and wore a blonde wig. Police are searching the home he had rented a few months ago in the area.—*Reuters*

***Greek member of 17 November urban guerrilla group Christodoulos Xiros (front) sits inside a court room in Korydallos prison, a few kilometres west of Athens on 2 Dec, 2005.—*REUTERS**

Pulis hails four-goal Berahino after West Brom romp

LONDON, 4 Jan — Tony Pulis watched Saido Berahino score four goals in his first match in charge of West Bromwich Albion on Saturday and dampened speculation about the striker's future by saying he was looking forward to working with him.

Media reports have suggested the new manager is prepared to sacrifice Berahino and use the funds from a 20 million pounds ($30.65 million) transfer to shore up his new club's fight for Premier League survival.

However, after seeing the player shine in the 7-0 drubbing of minor league Gateshead in the FA Cup third round, Pulis told reporters: "Saido Berahino is a very talented boy."

"I look forward to working with him as a player for however long I am here as manager."

Berahino's moods have been of concern at The Hawthorns in the past and he did not even celebrate his goals against Gateshead.

Pulis said: "There is always going to be transfer speculation and you can see why. He has great pace, great balance and scores goals."

"When I came here the chairman had not received any offer for him and we will try our damnedest to try and improve him."

"He can score a goal and he looks as though he's got the potential to be a good player." West Brom are fourth from bottom in the league.—*Reuters*

***Tony Pulis reacts during their English Premier League soccer match at the Boleyn Ground in London on 19 April, 2014.* REUTERS**

Trimmed Cerci can help Milan trim gap, says Berlusconi

MILAN, 4 Jan — New AC Milan signing Alessio Cerci has been half-jokingly ordered to shave off his scruffy beard by owner Silvio Berlusconi who believes the improving Rossoneri can do little more to better their squad.

Cerci will officially join Milan on loan from Atletico Madrid as part of the swap deal with Fernando Torres when the Italian transfer window opens on Monday and trained with the seventh-placed Serie A side on Saturday.

"We have been following Cerci for three years. Finally he has arrived and he has already promised me he will cut off his beard for his first match," Berlusconi told Milan Channel as he visited the club's training ground.

"This year we have two objectives as you know, third place in the championship, which is necessary to get back into the Champions League, and we also have our sights set on the Coppa Italia.

"I think we have the chance with this squad to return to being major players in Italy, Europe and the world.

I believe we don't need to wait for reinforcements to what we have now." The former Italian prime minister has been heavily criticized by Milan fans for their fall from grace in recent years after he vastly reduced the big spending which brought the club a raft of honours in the 1990s and 2000s.

Reuters

Alessio Cerci controls the ball during a 2014 World Cup Group D soccer match at the Pernambuco arena in Recife on 20 June, 2014. — REUTERS

Chinese airlines to cut fuel surcharges

BEIJING, 4 Jan — Chinese airlines will cut fuel surcharges for domestic flights due to a decline in fuel prices, airlines announced on Sunday.

Starting from 5 January, major airlines, including Shandong Airlines and Xiamen Airlines, announced that surcharges for domestic routes of 800 kilometres or less will be reduced to 10 yuan (1.63 US dollars) from the current 30 yuan.

The surcharges for routes longer than 800 km will be cut to 30 yuan from 60 yuan. It is the fifth time Chinese airlines have cut fuel surcharges since September 2014 and prices are now at a five-year low.

China has cut the retail prices of gasoline and diesel ten times since July 2014 in line with reductions in the prices of crude oil.—*Xinhua*

Four girls killed by lightning, snapped wire in rainstorm in Malawi

LILONGWE, 4 Jan — Three girls of the same family were killed by a lightning strike and another electrocuted to death by a snapped wire when a rainstorm ravaged Malawi on Friday night, local media reported on Saturday.

The four deaths brought to nine the death toll of extreme weather in Malawi in the ongoing rainy season.

An earlier update from the country's Department of Disaster Management Affairs said bad weather had killed five people, with 17 people seriously injured and a total of 4,933 houses, public and private institutions across the country demolished. Friday's stormy rains caused havoc in the capital, Lilongwe, and other districts. Reports confirmed that in Lilongwe a 10-year-old girl was electrocuted to death by a live snapped wire. In Kasungu, 140 km north of Lilongwe, reports indicated that three girls from one family, respectively aged 14, 9, and 6, were killed by a lightning strike.

The rainstorm also left hundreds of families homeless, and destroyed many buildings. The exact numbers are yet to be ascertained. Saulos Chilima, vice president of Malawi, said the government, in partnership with international charity organizations, would move in quickly to assist the affected families with immediate needs.—*Xinhua*

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(5-1-2015, Monday)

6:00 am
- Travelogue Programme

6:30 am
- Honour Song of Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein

6:50 am
- TV Drama Series

7:20 am
- Fashion Show

7:40 am
- TV Drama Series

8:25 am
- TV Drama Series

9:10 am
- Musical Programme

9:25 am
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

9:45 am
- Asean — China Cultural

10:00 am
- Myanmar Video

12:00 am
- Close Down

MITV MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(5-1-15 07:00 am~ 6-1-15 07:00 am) MST

* Local News
* Bagan arts and handicrafts
* World News
* Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon
* Local News
* Cruising To Precious Islands (Part-1)
* World News
* Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Ma Myint Zu"
* Local News
* Myanmar Chef (Japanese)
* World News
* The Pride of Myanmar "Traditional Handicraft"
* Local News
* YUFL
* World News
* In The Studio "Hseng Sam"
* Local News
* Today Myanmar "The Lake, Inle"
* World News
* Art Students: Theatrical Art
* Local News
* Continuation in Rural Tradition
* World News
* Kayah Style
* Local News
* The Land of Silver Mountains (Kayah State)
* World News
* Sagaing: Youth Leader
* Local News
* Chinlone & The Dreams of the players
* World News
* Kay Tu Mar Lar "The Decision"

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Monday, 5 January, 2015

Gerrard moving to US but yet to decide on club

LONDON, 4 Jan — Captain Steven Gerrard will join a US Major League Soccer team when he quits Liverpool at the end of the season but has yet to commit to a club, he said on Saturday.

The former England skipper announced on Friday that he was ending his time at Anfield and moving abroad.

"I can tell the supporters ... it will be America," Gerrard told Liverpool's TV channel.

"But I'm not over the line with any team just yet. I'm close and as soon as I know I'll make the announcement."

Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard gestures as he leaves the club's Melwood training centre in Liverpool, northern England on 2 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

The 34-year-old midfielder has made 695 appearances and scored 180 goals for Liverpool after joining the club as an eight-year-old.

Gerrard said the turning point in his decision to leave came when Brendan Rodgers told him he could no longer play every game.

"The key conversation or moment was when the manager sat me down not so long ago and said it was time to manage my games for me," he added.

"I'm bright enough to realise it is the right thing for everyone but when you've been a starter and a mainstay in the team for such a long time, it was a very difficult conversation.

"I accept it and I'll continue to give everything I've got whether I'm starting, coming off the bench or whatever," said Gerrard.

"I wish I'd met Brendan when I was 24 because I think I'd be sitting here talking about a lot of titles that we'd won together."

While Gerrard is unlikely to return to Anfield as a player, and has already ruled out featuring for another team against Liverpool, he said he could go back one day in another capacity.

"I'll only come back and serve the club if I feel as if I can help," he added.

"I wouldn't like to come back just to be Steven Gerrard the player and just be around. I'd like to help in whatever capacity that may be."

Gerrard's greatest moment in a Liverpool shirt was when he helped to inspire the dramatic comeback win over AC Milan in the Champions League final in 2005.

He suffered disappointment last May when Liverpool missed out on the league title. The team faltered late in the campaign when they appeared poised to become champions for the first time since 1990.—*Reuters*

Podolski meets Inter boss and says goodbye to Arsenal

MILAN, 4 Jan — Lukas Podolski's transfer to Inter Milan moved closer on Saturday when the Germany forward met coach Roberto Mancini at the Serie A side's training ground and said his goodbyes to Arsenal.

"The World Cup winner was at the Centro Sportivo Angelo Moratti today to get to know his new training ground and meet the Nerazzurri coach," an Inter statement said as media reported that a medical had been passed and he would soon sign.

The 29-year-old has become a bit-part player at Arsenal despite injuries to Olivier Giroud and Theo Walcott, with manager Arsene Wenger appearing to better trust the speed and skills of younger players such as Danny Welbeck and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Podolski, who joined the Londoners from Cologne in 2012, has still managed 31 goals in 82 appearances in all competitions and his shoot-on-sight policy seems to appeal to Inter, 11th in Serie A and in need of more firepower.

"New year, new beginnings. #ForzaInter #Mancini," Podolski wrote on his Instagram social media page having earlier wished Arsenal fans the best with Wenger's inconsistent side sixth in the Premier League.

"I can't express in words my gratitude towards Arsenal fans for all they have done for me in my years in London. Please know my heart always holds a place for you.

"I've loved every minute playing for Arsenal and I hope I have left my mark on the club and fans alike. Hopefully we shall meet again."

Wenger said on Thursday the club had received an increased offer from Inter for Podolski who has more than 100 caps for world champions Germany.

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

Reuters

Atletico use their heads to turn up heat on Real

BARCELONA, 4 Jan — Antoine Griezmann headed two goals for Atletico Madrid in a 3-1 victory over Levante that kept them on the heels of La Liga leaders Real Madrid on Saturday.

With new loan signing Fernando Torres watching from the stands, the in-form Frenchman nodded in a deflected Guilherme Siqueira cross after 18 minutes against a Levante side that struggled to cope with the physicality of the hosts.

Griezmann, who grabbed a hat-trick in Atletico's final game before Christmas against Athletic Bilbao, then notched his eighth league goal of the season in the 47th minute as he headed in after Mario Mandzukic's effort was saved by Diego Marino.

Substitute Nabil El Zhar deflected an Ivan Lopez shot into the net for sixth-from-bottom Levante before Diego Godin sealed the win with eight minutes to go thanks to another header.

"We should have finished off the game in the first half but we did not pressurise enough," Godin told reporters. "My goal calmed us down as we had become nervous after conceding.

"It was important for us to finish the year winning and also start with another victory."

Levante's goalkeeper Diego Marino (L) makes a save past Atletico Madrid's Mario Mandzukic (C) during their Spanish first division soccer match at Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, on 3 Jan, 2015. — **REUTERS**

Atletico are third and level on 38 points with Barcelona, who face Real Sociedad on Sunday when leaders Real Madrid, a point clear, take on Valencia looking to extend their 22-match winning streak.

Elsewhere on Saturday, a Nico Pareja free kick gave Sevilla a 1-0 victory over 10-man Celta Vigo that moved them up to fourth with 33 points.

Celta started well but were dealt a heavy blow when Carles Planas was harshly dismissed for bringing down Denis Suarez after 22 minutes.

Ten minutes later Hugo Mallo upended Vitolo 25 metres out and Pareja blasted the ball home with keeper Sergio Alvarez slow to react.

Eighth-placed Celta, who have lost six league games in a row, looked dangerous on the break but lacked a cutting edge and have now gone seven matches without a goal.

Villarreal's five match winning run in La Liga came to an end as bottom side Elche came from behind to draw 2-2.

Luciano Vietto and Ikechukwu Uche put sixth-placed Villarreal into a commanding lead but Jonathas and Victor Rodriguez brought the home side back on level terms still before half time.

Malaga were beaten 2-1 at home by Almeria and Deportivo La Coruna won 1-0 against Athletic Bilbao.—*Reuters*

Ajax sign teenage keeper from Barcelona

AMSTERDAM, 4 Jan — Dutch champions Ajax Amsterdam have signed teenage goalkeeper Andre Onana from Barcelona on a three-year contract, Ajax said on Saturday.

The 18-year-old, originally from Cameroon, has been the subject of interest from several European clubs but has done a deal until mid-2018 with Ajax. His contract with the Spanish club runs out in June.

Onana has been in Barcelona's youth system since 2010 and this season was promoted to their Under-19 side.

Onana played for Barcelona against Ajax in November in the UEFA Youth League, the continental youth competition for clubs competing in the Champions League, but he has not played a senior game.

Barcelona have another Cameroonian teenaged goalkeeper on their books. Fabrice Ondoa, 19, is expected to be first choice for his country at this month's African Nations Cup finals even though he has never played for his club's first team.

Reuters

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