

President attends religious ceremony in Natogyi Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan — President U Thein Sein attended a religious ceremony at a pagoda in Natogyi township of Mandalay Region on Sunday morning.

The president presented offertories in kind to Bhaddanta Janita, the presiding Sayadaw of the Ngwetaung monastery in Mandalay, who later together with members of the Sangha consecrated religious objects to be hoisted atop the pagoda titled Maha Zeyathukha Lawka Chantha.

The president and his entourage went round the pagoda clockwise, carrying the consecrated objects as a

gesture of worship.

They offered foods to the Sayadaw and the members of the Sangha at a community hall at the pagoda.

The 81-foot-high pagoda was donated by the union minister of Transport and his family alongside the contributions from pious people.

Among dignitaries present together with the president were the chairman of the Union Election Commission, union ministers, the Mandalay Region chief minister, senior military officers, departmental officials, well-wishers and local people.—MNA



President U Thein Sein conveys a diamond orb to be hoisted atop Maha Zeyathukha Lawka Chantha in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region.

MNA

CTUM to submit suggestions for minimum wage level to Labour, Employment & Social Security Ministry

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 18 Jan— The Confederation of Trade

Unions Myanmar (CTUM) working together with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security

on setting a minimum wage, will send suggestions for setting an official minimum wage level for

workers. After its executive committee meeting slated to be held on 19 and (See page 2)



Labourers working at construction site of high-rise building in Yangon municipal area. Designation of minimum wage is expectation of labourers.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Debut performance of “Orchestra for Myanmar” to be held at end of January

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 18 Jan — The debut performance of Orchestra for Myanmar, a big musical concert presented by both local and international musicians, will take place on 31 January at the National Theatre in Yangon with the aim of turning out more talented local musicians.

The purpose of the show is to create an international-level training platform for young local musicians, the organizer said, expecting the orchestra will become a role model for young people and a symbol of friendship and peace.

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IKBZ (Monywa) gives compensation of insurance

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan— International Kanbawza Insurance Co., Ltd (IKBZ) of Sagaing Region Head Office (Monywa) gave insurance compensation at Win Unity Hotel in Monywa on 17 January.

Officials of IKBZ presented K22.1 million compensation for outbreak of fire at the building of U Maung Maung-Daw Myo Myo Lin in Monywa Industrial Zone on 28-12-2014 and K3 million of special travel insurance for demise

of Maung Shine Ko Ko in traffic accident of Kyei Sin Moe bus line.

Marketing manager U Myo Thant Zaw of IKBZ explained types of insurance of the company.

"IKBZ has so far opened 12 branches including Yangon Head Office to give insurance services to the customers. Sagaing Region office was commissioned into service on 4 November 2013," Deputy Managing Director U Nay Myo Aung told media.—MNA



An official of International Kanbawza Insurance Co., Ltd (IKBZ) presents compensation for insurance to U Maung Maung of Monywa Industrial Zone.—MNA

KIA fans regional instability with grenade and mine attacks in Kachin State

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan — A KIA trooper on a motorbike threw a hand grenade by stealth into the compound of the Lonkhin police station in Mogaung township in Kachin State on 15 January evening, injuring two policemen and their families, according to reports.

In similar fashion, another KIA trooper on a motorbike hurled two hand grenades into an extractive company near the village of Thayakon in Phakant township, but they failed to detonate and were safely destroyed by a government military column.

On 16 January, a mine dropped by a member of

the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) on a motorbike on a garage pile went off without harming anybody.

In the evening of the same day, two KIA members on a motorbike flung a grenade at security forces at the top of a bridge in Phakant, but it fell on the motorway and exploded near them.

A mine that a KIA group planted near a roadside drain in front a police station in Phakant went off on 17 January, damaging vinyl signboards erected on the compound of the police station.

Two KIA members on a motorbike threw a gre-

nade at the brick wall of a jade extraction centre in Lonkhin village, Phakant, which caused an explosion with no damage.

On Saturday afternoon, two bridges in two separate places in Mogaung township of Kachin State were burned by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), reports said.

One bridge was located at mile post 9/3 on Mogaung-Phakant road

one mile northwest of the 8th Mile Junction in Mogaung, and the other at milepost 9/7 about four furlongs in the northwest of that bridge.

In another incident, a KIA troop forced a backhoe driver to destroy four bridges in villages of Kunzaizup and Namkhai, causing transportation problems.

Local people are reported to be in a state of panic as the KIA is fanning instability in the region by blowing up public property.—Myawady



Pahok Creek Bridge burnt by the KIA in Mogaung Township.—MYAWADY

Security troops arrest hardcore of KIA (Kachin) with mines, related equipment

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan — Security troops searching motorcycles at the bridge near Seikmu Village in Phakant Township, Kachin State arrested a KIA hardcore.

At 9 p.m. on 15 January, they searched a motorcycle driven from Saihtaung Village to Phakant and arrested Naw Maing, 22, a hardcore of KIA (Kachin), son of U Tan Ja of Saingtaung, Phakant

Township, together with two remote-controlled mines, one remote and cells to be installed at the mines from a polyethylene bag on the motorcycle.

According to the investigation, the security personnel found one black bag, 100 metres from Seikmu Bridge and seized a .32 pistol, one magazine, four bullets and one grenade in the bag.

Myawady

CTUM to submit suggestions . . .

(from page 1)

20 January, CTUM will submit its policy paper with remarks to the ministry, Daw Phyto Sandar Oo, joint-secretary of CTUM, said Sunday, the last day of a three-day workshop on setting an official minimum wage for workers, in Yangon.

The official minimum wage for workers should not include bonuses, cost-of-living allowances and overtime fees, and working hours should be set at eight hours a day, she added.

The ministry has asked organizations representing employers and employees to submit their suggestions for setting a minimum wage level by 31 January, according to CTUM.

A survey to collect information to set a minimum wage level is expected to complete in February and all parties concerned are making efforts for setting

the minimum wage level in 2015, she added.

The survey being conducted in 108 townships by a national committee comprising governmental officials and representatives from employees and employers include information on daily expenses of families, sizes of families, regional price indices for basic commodities and income and the occupation of individual able-bodied family members.

The International Labour Organization, a UN agency, is also working in cooperation with the government and local research organizations to collect the data related to workers and wages in regions as well.

Pyithu Hluttaw enacted the minimum wage law in March, 2013 and the government approved the related by-laws in July, 2013.—GNLM

Debut performance of "Orchestra for Myanmar" . . .

(from page 1)

Musicians from the National University of Arts and Culture, the AOC Orchestra, Gitameit, the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), the International School Yangon (ISY), and British International School, among others participate in the orchestra.

Over the last few months, the founder of Live4Music Sebastian See-Schierenberg has been working on a ground-breaking project, involving young Myanmar musicians, to create the first orchestra in Myanmar.

It is scheduled to perform international songs, Myanmar songs and remixed songs, with the organizer inviting enthusiasts to join this free event.

The cultural exchange programme is organized

by UK-based charity Live4Music in partnership with KT Wong Foundation, the Ministry of Culture, the British Council and the Goethe Institute.

The orchestra has future plans to do a national tour across the country during 2015-2016 fiscal year to showcase the achievements and talents

of the orchestra as well as to audition and coach additional musicians from four corners of the country, Sebastian See-Schierenberg said.—GNLM



Sebastian See-Schierenberg together with musicians at the National University of Arts and Culture are making preparations for the debut concert of the Orchestra for Myanmar that will be held at the end of this month.

PHOTO: SEBASTIAN SEE-SCHIERENBERG

NATIONAL

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—The Myanmar Parliamentary Union held a meeting at Zabuthiri Hall of Hluttaw Complex, here, on Sunday.

In his speech, Chairman of MPU Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann stressed the need to coordinate systematic undertaking of Hluttaw tasks including amendment of region and state Hluttaw rules and issuance of development affairs law and rules as the MPU rules has been issued.

Vice chairman of the MPU Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint urged those present to draw a timetable for enactment of bills in the remaining tenure of the Hluttaw.

MPU discusses issuance of municipal law and rules



Secretary of the union Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa reported on minutes of the 6/2014 meet-

ing and progress of works.

Speakers of region and state Hluttaw discussed issuance of laws and rules in regions and states, amend-

ment of region and state Hluttaw rules, issuance of municipal rules and tasks relating to Hluttaw.

MNA



Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint attend coordination meeting of Myanmar Parliamentary Union.—MNA

Athletes join sports trials for Myanmar teams to take part in 28th SEA Games

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Myo Hlaing viewed the sports trials for the 28th SEA Games to be held in Singapore in 2015.

Athletes participated in the sports trials in 200-metre and 400-metre races,

400-metre hurdle, 800-metre triple jumping, discus, 3000-m hurdle, chain shot put and pole vault events at Wunna Theikdi stadium, here, on 17 January.

The director-general urged the athletes to set new records of the SEA Games in the sports trials.

The director-general and party visited the Wunna Theikdi swimming pool at which men and women swimmers joined the sports trials.

They presented prizes to the winners in the men's and women's 200-metre freestyle events.—MNA



Athletes working on all cylinders in sports trials in race at Wunna Theikdi Stadium. SPED

India releases 300 Myanmar fishermen

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—India authorities released 150 Myanmar fishermen Saturday after being kept at a camp in Port Blair, the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a union territory of India.

U Aung Khaing, deputy director general of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and Indian authorities made several discussions for the release of 396 Myanmar fishermen who accidentally entered territorial waters of India for various

reasons including storms, engine failure and sinking of boats.

U Khin Maung Aye, Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development, and members of fishery associations welcomed the first group of fishermen from Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine state at Yangon International Airport at 12:30 pm on 17 January and provided them with money and clothes before they were sent back homes.

These fishermen were arrested by Indian authorities after the remaining 96 fishermen will be brought back by flight on the next day. U Aung Ko Win, chairman of Kanbawza Bank paid for the cost of one flight for taking back these fishermen.

On Sunday, 150 more Myanmar fishermen arrived at Yangon International Airport. Those fishermen were from Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions and Rakhine State.—MNA

Wellwisher donates heavy machinery to Public Works



Union Minister U Kyaw Lwin poses for documentary photo with Managing Director Ms Dana Dong of Myanmar Fiber Optic Communication Network Co., Ltd.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—Myanmar Fiber Optic Communication Network Co., Ltd donated construction heavy machinery at Sedona Hotel, here, on 17 January.

Managing director Ms Dana Dong of Myanmar Fiber Optic Communication

Network Co., Ltd handed over documents related to the heavy machinery to Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lwin.

At the ceremony, the company presented eight kinds of heavy machinery to Public Works.

On Sunday, the union

minister inspected progress of Yaygyawkale Bridge on Twantay-Maubin road and Maubin-Kyaiklat road. He also viewed implementation of a 600-foot-long Wunkawei bridge being built by Bridge Construction Project Group (12) of Public Works on the road.—MNA



Officials meet Myanmar fishermen released from camp in Port Blair, India.—MNA

Departmental personnel, people carry out sanitation at Shwedagon Designed Pagoda (Myawady)



MYAWADY, 18 Jan—Deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo of Myawady District, Township Administrator U Khin Maung Zaw and officials, members of

Myanmar Police Force, fire brigade and social organizations together with local people participated in sanitation and growing of saplings around the construction site

of Shwedagon designed pagoda (Myawady) on Thi-hathana Hill in Myawady, Kayin State, on 17 January morning.

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Up and down trains on Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad get new coaches



MANDALAY, 18 Jan—Coaches of 33-up Mandalay-Myitkyina train and 34-down Myitkyina-Mandalay train (sleeper) were substituted with India-made coaches on 17 January.

The substitution of new coaches was held at No 1 platform of Mandalay Station.

Myanma Railways and Kachin Public Co Ltd carry out a joint-venture for running the 37-up and 38-down trains along Manda-

lay-Myitkyina railroad.

Thanks to substitution of new coaches, trains will run along the railroad sections on time for better transport of passengers, the Mandalay Region Minister for Transport told media at the ceremony.

A total of 60 up and down cargo trains are running along the railroad from Myohaung station to Myitkyina so as to transport consumer products and foods to people of

Kachin State. These cargo and passenger trains transport about 1,000 tons to 2,000 tons of commodities monthly.

Min Htet Aung
(Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Education fund shares cash assistance to university students

TATKON, 18 Jan—The education fund supervisory committee of No 1 Basic Education High School in Tatkon held a ceremony to provide cash assistance to university students for 2014-15 academic year at its hall on 17 January.

Secretary of the committee U Myint Oo explained cash assistance for

learning of university students. Officials presented cash assistance to the students.

At the ceremony, they gave K100,000 per month to one student from University of Medicine, K50,000 per month each to three students from University of Veterinary Science, six students from University

of Agriculture, one student from University of Aerospace Engineering and one student from University of Computer Studies, and K30,000 per month each to one student from Institute of Economics and eight student from Technological Universities.

Tin Soe Lwin
(IPRD)



Departmental officials discuss successful immunization of measles and German measles

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—Nay Pyi Taw Health Department, Nay Pyi Taw Education Department and departmental officials held talks on successful immunization of measles and German measles at the hall of Pyinmana Township People's Hospital (200-bed), here, on 16 January.

Head of Nay Pyi Taw Health Department Dr Daw Hla Hla Kyi explained salient points for the vaccination, dissemination of health knowledge about the two diseases to the

people and plans to vaccinate children against the measles and German measles in Nay Pyi Taw. It was also attended by departmental personnel, teachers and health staff.

Shwe Kokko



Farmers, staff of Agriculture Department join cultivation of summer paddy



MYANAUNG, 18 Jan—A demonstration on cultivation of Palethwe hybrid summer paddy was held on a model plot in Yaynitkwin village in Myanaung Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 16 January.

Summer paddy plants were grown on a model plot of 10-acre farm of U Ye Myint in the township.

Head of Township Agriculture Department Daw Maw Maw Than explained cultivation of summer paddy through good agricultural pattern (GAP).

Staff of the department demonstrated cultivation of Palethwe paddy on the model plot.

Win Bo (Township IPRD)

REGIONAL

Japan, India agree to enhance trilateral alliance with US

NEW DELHI, 18 Jan — Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj agreed on Saturday to strengthen the trilateral alliance with the United States Japanese officials said.

To that end, the two agreed to make efforts to realize a meeting of foreign ministers of the three countries at an early date, the officials said.

During the meeting, Kishida pointed out that promoting bilateral cooperation between Japan and India will contribute to resolve issues in the world and the region, Kishida told reporters.

The Japanese foreign

minister also told Swaraj that Japan's Self-Defence Forces will continue to participate in the joint naval exercises of India and the United States.

On the issue of bilateral relations, Kishida and Swaraj shared the view that the two countries should step up efforts to promote security ties by holding vice ministerial-level talks of foreign and defence ministers at an early date.

The two ministers also exchanged views over potential exports of the Maritime Self-Defence Force's US-2 amphibian aircraft to India, the officials said.

Kishida and Swaraj also agreed to ad-



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida makes a policy speech in the Indian capital New Delhi on 17 Jan 2015. Kishida vowed Japan would play a more active role in establishing international peace and stability. — KYODO NEWS

vance negotiations over a civil nuclear pact and economic cooperation to help build infrastructure in the emerging economy.

Kyodo News

Chinese leaders congratulate Vietnamese counterparts on anniversary of diplomatic ties

BEIJING, 18 Jan — Chinese leaders on Sunday sent a joint congratulatory message to their Vietnamese counterparts to mark the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China; Premier Li Keqiang; and top legislator Zhang Dejiang jointly signed the message addressed to Nguyen Phu

Trong, the party leader; Truong Tan Sang, the state president; Nguyen Tan Dung, the prime minister; and Nguyen Sinh Hung, the top legislator.

The Chinese leaders said that China and Vietnam are friendly neighbours and that friendly cooperation has always been the mainstream of interactions since the two countries established formal relations 65 years ago.

In recent years, the comprehensive strategic partnership between Chi-

na and Vietnam has maintained momentum with frequent high-level contacts and great achievements in various cooperation fields, bringing tangible benefits to the two countries and peoples, they said.

Against the background of profound changes in international and regional arenas, good-neighbourliness and friendship, enhanced political mutual trust and deepened cooperation are in line with the aspirations of the two peoples and their fun-

damental interests. They are also conducive to regional peace, stability and development, said the Chinese leaders.

The Communist Party of China and the Chinese government, they said, attach great importance to China-Vietnam relations and stand ready to work with Vietnam to carry forward strategic cooperation, bearing in mind a strategic and long-term perspective and the need to steer bilateral relations in the correct direction. —Xinhua

Brazil, Netherlands recall Indonesia ambassadors after executions

JAKARTA, 18 Jan — Brazil and the Netherlands recalled their ambassadors in Indonesia after the Southeast Asian nation ignored their pleas for clemency and executed six prisoners for drug offences on Sunday, the first executions under President Joko Widodo.

The five foreigners and one Indonesian were killed by firing squad shortly after midnight, the Attorney General's Office said. The foreigners were from Nigeria, Malawi, Vietnam, the Netherlands and Brazil.

Brazil recalled its ambassador in Jakarta for consultations and said the executions would affect bilateral relations.

"The use of the death penalty, which the world society increasingly condemns, affects severely the relationship of our countries," the presidency said in a statement published

by Brazil's official news agency.

The Netherlands, a former colonial power in Indonesia, also recalled its ambassador and condemned the execution of its citizen, Ang Kiem Soei.

"It is a cruel and inhuman punishment that amounts to an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity," said Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders.

Before the execution, the lawyer for Soei tweeted that Soei was thankful for the Dutch government's unsuccessful efforts and that he would stand before the firing squad without a blindfold.

Indonesia's president, who signed off on the executions last month, has taken a tough stance on the rule of law and pledged no clemency for drug offenders.

Indonesia resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap.

"This is a country that just a few years ago had taken positive steps to move away from the death penalty, but the authorities are now steering the country in the opposite direction," said Rupert Abbott, a Southeast Asia research director for Amnesty International.

Reuters



Dutch citizen Ang Kiem Soei sits in a Tangerang courtroom while awaiting sentencing, in this file picture taken on 13 Jan, 2003.—REUTERS

Over 2,000 families evacuated in C Philippines due to storm

MANILA, 18 Jan — At least 2,000 families have been evacuated in six provinces in central Philippines as tropical storm Mekkhala, locally known as Amang, battered the country, the state disaster management agency said on Sunday.

The Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said earlier that a 27-year old volunteer worker died after being hit by a soundbox due to a collapsed scaffolding caused by heavy winds brought by the storm in central Philippine city of Tacloban on Saturday shortly after Pope

Francis presided over a mass.

At least 26 domestic flights were also canceled due to bad weather. In addition, 11,600 passengers were stranded in eight regions due to rough sea condition.

Power supply was also cut in at least six provinces in the Visayas region.

The tropical storm has maximum sustained winds of 85 kph near the centre and gusts of up to 100 kph.

Residents in low-lying and mountainous areas of central provinces were alerted against possible flashfloods and landslides.—Xinhua

Archery event at Sanjusangendo temple in Kyoto



Wearing traditional attire, women who are or will turn 20 years old as of 1 April take aim at targets one metre in diameter and 60 metres away, during an archery event at Sanjusangendo, a Buddhist temple in Kyoto on 18 Jan, 2015. — KYODO NEWS

Pope makes emotional appeal for world's suffering children

MANILA, 18 Jan — An emotional Pope Francis, moved by the tears of an abandoned child, said on Sunday the world needed to “learn how to cry” over the plight of the millions of poor, hungry, homeless and abused children.

During a rally with young people, 12-year-old Glyzelle Iris Palomar asked him: “Many children are abandoned by their parents. Many of them became victims and bad things have happened to them, like drug addiction and prostitution. Why does God allow this to happen, even if the children are not at fault? Why is it that only a few people help us?”

The girl, who was rescued and found shelter in a Church-run community, broke down in tears and could not finish her prepared welcome. The Pope hugged her and later put aside most of his own pre-

pared speech to respond.

“She is the only one who has put forward a question for which there is no answer and she was not even able to express it in words but rather in tears,” he said, visibly moved.

“Why do children suffer?” the Argentine pope said, speaking in his native Spanish. An aide translated his words from his native Spanish into English for the crowd of about 30,000 young people on the grounds of a Church-run university.

“I invite each one of you to ask yourselves, ‘Have I learned how to weep, how to cry when I see a hungry child, a child on the street who uses drugs, a homeless child, an abandoned child, an abused child, a child that society uses as a slave?’” he said.

Children can be seen living on the streets of the

Philippine capital, like in many poor countries in Asia, surviving by begging and picking through garbage in vast dumps.

The United Nations says 1.2 million children live on the streets in the Philippines. According to the Child Protection Network Foundation, 35.1 percent of children were living in poverty in 2009, the last year such data was available. Nearly 33 percent of Filipinos live in slums.

Francis noted there were more men than women in the crowd and that it was a little girl who was able to move everyone.

“Women have much to tell us in today’s society. At times we are too ‘machista’ and don’t allow room for women,” he said, using the Spanish term for male chauvinist. The crowd laughed.

“But women are ca-



Pope Francis, in a rain poncho, attends during a Mass near Tacloban airport on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

pable of seeing things with a different angle from us, with a different eye, and pose questions that we men are not able to understand ... so when the next pope comes to Manila, let’s please have more women among you,” he said.

The Pope spoke at the university as huge crowds converged on a Manila park to see him wrap up his Asian trip with an outdoor

Mass expected to draw one of the largest crowds in Philippine history later on Sunday.

Organizers say as many as 6 million people might attend the afternoon service at Manila’s Rizal Park, more than about 5 million who flocked to a Mass there by Pope John Paul 20 years ago in Asia’s largest Catholic country.

The faithful began arriving at the sprawling park on Saturday night and police expect the crowd to flow over into surrounding areas.

About a dozen people were injured in a minor stampede when people rushed to get into the park, Johnny Yu of the Manila city disaster office said in a radio interview. He said some people jumped over steel railings and some concrete barriers were breached.

Earlier at the university, the Pope asked for prayers for a 27-year-old volunteer who was killed by scaffolding that collapsed in strong winds during his visit on Saturday to the central Philippines city of Tacloban. He went there to comfort the victims of Typhoon Haiyan, which killed at least 6,300 people in November 2013.—Reuters

Okada wins DPJ presidential election

TOKYO, 18 Jan — Katsumasa Okada won the Democratic Party of Japan presidential election on Sunday at a time when the largest opposition party is struggling to regain public trust and become a serious contender for power.

Okada, a 61-year-old former foreign minister, defeated Goshi Hosono, a 43-year-old former DPJ secretary general, in a runoff after former health minister Akira Nagatsuma was eliminated in the first round of voting at a DPJ extraordinary meeting in a Tokyo hotel.

The new leader, whose term lasts until September 2017, is tasked with resurrecting the party in the face of overwhelming dominance by the Liberal Democratic Party in parliament.

His predecessor, Banri Kaieda, lost his seat in the House of Representatives election last month, leading to the DPJ leadership race.

In the campaign period, all three candidates pledged to regain public trust in the DPJ, which was in power between 2009 and 2012.

Okada offered a 300-day program to reform the party and a plan to demand that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s Cabinet rescind its decision to give the Self-Defence Forces a greater role overseas.

The Cabinet decided last July to change the government’s interpretation of the war-renouncing Constitution to allow Japan to defend allies under armed attack even if the country itself is not.

Hosono said the DPJ must present counterproposals against the Abe administration and show unity to give people the impression that the DPJ has changed.

Abe said before the lower house election the DPJ has criticized his economic policy package, known as “Abenomics,” but has not come up with specific ideas for bolstering the economy.

Nagatsuma stressed that there can be no sus-

tainable growth for the Japanese economy without correcting a widening wealth gap.

The December election for the 475-seat lower house saw the DPJ fail to reach triple digits in the number of seats, while giving Abe’s LDP and its junior coalition partner Komeito party a two-thirds majority again.

Votes cast by 132 DPJ lawmakers and one person slated to run in the next House of Councillors election in the summer of 2016 on the party ticket were added to mail-in ballots collected from party members in local assemblies, other DPJ members and registered supporters.

Kyodo News



Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie are greeted by an honour guard at Queen Alia International Airport in Jordan’s capital Amman on 17 Jan, 2015, upon their arrival from Cairo as part of Abe’s six-day Middle East trip.—KYODO NEWS

Iran, world powers review nuclear positions at latest talks

GENEVA, 18 Jan — Iran and major powers met on Sunday to take stock of their differences over its nuclear programme, as the Obama administration lobbied to stave off fresh sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The Geneva negotiations, held at the level of political directors, are the culmination of five days of talks in the Swiss city and Paris, including lengthy meetings between US Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Min-

ister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Helga Schmid, EU political director, chaired the closed-door talks at the EU diplomatic mission in Geneva, attended by officials from Iran and Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

Wendy Sherman, Acting Deputy Secretary of State, led the US delegation, while Iran was represented by deputy minister Abbas Araqchi. Neither spoke to reporters on arrival.

“Today is to take stock of where all the various meetings take us and how can we take this forward in a broad format,” a diplomat told Reuters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

US President Barack Obama warned lawmakers on Friday not to trigger new sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme, saying such a move would upset diplomatic talks and increase the likelihood of a military conflict with Tehran.

“Time is running short and it’s the hope of Beijing that all parties will seize that historical opportunity by racing against the time and by doing two things: first is to adopt a pragmatic and a flexible approach with wisdom and secondly is to demonstrate with possible and maximum political will, with resolute political decisions,” China’s envoy Wang Qun told reporters in Geneva on Sunday.

Negotiators failed in November to meet a

self-imposed deadline for clinching an elusive agreement seen as crucial to reducing the risk of a wider Middle East war. The new deadline for a final deal is June 30, but officials hope to reach an understanding on key parameters by the end of March.

The major powers hope to persuade Iran to curb its nuclear programme, which the West thinks is aimed at developing atomic weapons. Iran says the program is for civilian purposes.—Reuters

Greece's Syriza party widens lead over conservatives: poll

ATHENS, 18 Jan — Greece's anti-bailout Syriza party is solidifying its opinion poll lead over the ruling conservatives eight days before the country's election, a survey on Saturday.

The survey by pollster Kapa Research for Sunday's *To Vima* newspaper showed the radical leftists' lead widening to 3.1 percentage points from 2.6 points in a previous poll earlier in the month.

The national vote on 25 January will be closely watched by financial markets, nervous that a Syriza victory might trigger a stand-off with Greece's European Union and IMF lenders and unleash a new financial crisis.

The survey, conducted

on 13-15 January, showed that Syriza, which is running on a pledge to end austerity policies and renegotiate the



People walk past a banner with an image of opposition leader and head of radical leftist Syriza party Alexis Tsipras at the party's pre-election kiosk in Athens on 15 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

country's debt, would win 31.2 percent of the vote if the election was held now, versus 28.1 percent for Prime Minister Antonis Samaras' New Democracy conservatives.

The centrist party To Potami (River) ranked third with 5.4 percent.

The leading party must generally receive between 36 and 40 percent of the vote to win outright, though the exact threshold depends on the share of the vote taken by parties that fail to reach a 3 percent threshold to enter parliament.

The electoral system automatically gives the winning party an extra 50 seats to make it easier to form a government.

Reuters

Troops take to Belgian streets to guard against attacks

BRUSSELS, 18 Jan — Belgium is deploying hundreds of troops to guard possible terrorism targets, including Jewish sites and diplomatic missions, following deadly raids on an Islamist cell, the defence minister said on Saturday.

Up to 300 military will be stationed at locations such as the US and Israeli embassies in Brussels and NATO and EU institutions.

"It's very important to say that this wasn't a simple decision, but it was necessary, at a time when police are overly engaged, for the army to enter in a supporting role," Defence Minister Steven Vandeput told reporters.

Troops will reinforce police at least until Thursday, when authorities will review the national threat level, set at 3 on a scale of 4 this week.

The government raised the threat level after a raid in the east Belgian town of Verviers on Thursday in which police shot dead two gunmen. Authorities said the Islamist cell had been preparing an attack on police.

The first military company to be deployed on Belgium's streets was the Chasseurs Ardennais, an infantry unit from the Ardennes region.

Among the places the soldiers are protecting in Brussels is the Jewish Museum, which last May was the site of an Islamist attack, when a lone gunman burst into the then unguarded site and killed four people.

There will also be soldiers in Antwerp, the country's second largest city, which has a large Jewish community, the minister said.

"In Antwerp the largest threat is there," Vandeput said, referring to the Jewish community. "It is also where people are most worried." —Reuters



A Belgian paratrooper patrols outside a Jewish school in the central city of Antwerp on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

French truckers plan road blockages as wage talks loom

PARIS, 18 Jan — French truck drivers plan on blockages to disrupt traffic on key roads starting from Sunday evening as union members said they were preparing for a tough fight to secure a 5 percent pay rise at Tuesday's wage talks.

Unions have called on truckers to block access to fuel depots, major warehouses, the vast Rungis wholesale food market in the south of Paris, as well as roads around the capital's Roissy international airport.

"I don't expect them to yield unless they (employers)

have a knife to their throats," said Thierry Douine, who heads the transportation branch of the CFTC union, one of France's top five unions.

"In this industry, I gave up believing in Santa Claus a long time ago," he told Reuters.

Unions are also demanding bonuses equivalent to a month's pay, while employers have so far offered only a 1 percent wage rise.

Employers said they were prepared to raise their offer to 2 percent, but have ruled out a higher pay in-

crease, according to Nicolas Paulissen, an official at the FNTR national road transport association.

"Five percent is way out of reach for companies and it's totally out of sync with the situation. There's no industry that can offer 5 percent now in France," Paulissen told Reuters.

If the union's action runs beyond Tuesday, it could have an impact on economic activity, already cool as consumers sit out the winter sales season following attacks this month in Paris by Islamist militants

that killed 17 people.

Any major action could also become a headache for President Francois Hollande's Socialist government, which has seen a resurgence of popularity — albeit from low levels — on account of its handling of the attacks.

Truckers and farmers disrupted traffic around France for weeks in 2013 with go-slow operations against a planned tax on heavy road transport, forcing the government to eventually abandon the levy.

Reuters

France's Hollande defends freedom of speech after anti-Hebdo clashes abroad

PARIS, 18 Jan — French President Francois Hollande said on Saturday that anti-Charlie Hebdo protesters in other countries do not understand France's attachment to freedom of speech.

He was speaking a day after the satirical weekly's publication of a cartoon of the Prophet Mohammad sparked violent clashes, including deaths, in some Muslim countries. Demand has surged for *Charlie Hebdo's* first issue since two militant gunmen burst into its weekly editorial conference and shot dead 12 people at the start of three days of violence that shocked France.

A cartoon image of Mohammad on its front page outraged many in the Muslim world, triggering demonstrations that turned violent in Algeria, Niger and Pakistan on Friday. "We've supported these countries in the fight against terrorism," Hollande said during a visit to the southern city of Tulle, traditionally his political

fiefdom.

"I still want to express my solidarity (towards them), but at the same time France has principles and values, in particular freedom of expression."

The shootings in Paris were prompted by *Charlie Hebdo's* previous publication of Mohammad cartoons, a depiction many Muslims consider blasphemous.

In Niger, protesters set fire to churches and looted shops in the capital Niamey on Saturday in a second day of riots over *Charlie Hebdo's* publication of the image.

France's embassy in Niamey advised its citizens against going out in the streets.

Five people were killed on Friday in Zinder, the second city of the former French colony, while churches were burnt and Christian homes looted.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius condemned the violence in Niamey and Zinder and said France stood in solidarity



French President Francois Hollande

with Niger authorities.

Protests also turned violent on Friday in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi where police used teargas and a water cannon against demonstrators outside the French consulate. Several Algerian police officers were injured in clashes with demonstrators in Al-

giers after rioting broke out at the end of a protest.

"There are tensions abroad where people don't understand our attachment to the freedom of speech," Hollande said. "We've seen the protests, and I would say that in France all beliefs are respected."

Hollande has received a big poll boost for his handling of the attacks with his popularity rating surging to its highest level in nearly one and a half years.

His rating has jumped to 34 percent from 24 percent before the attacks, according to a BVA poll published on Saturday.

Produced by survivors of the attack, the latest edition of *Charlie Hebdo* shows a cartoon of a tearful Mohammad holding a "Je suis Charlie" sign under the words "All is forgiven."

A lawyer for one of the gunmen in the *Charlie Hebdo* attack said the man had been buried in the eastern city of Reims in an unmarked grave so as not to attract sympathisers.

Meanwhile, Belgium deployed hundreds of troops to guard potential terrorism targets. Two gunmen were killed on Thursday during an anti-Islamist raid in the town of Vervier.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 19 January, 2015

Heaven and hell

By Myint Win Thein

Law means the whole system of rules that everyone in a country or a society must obey, according to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. As laws are enacted in the interest of the majority of members of a society, every member of the society is required to abide by the

law. Another reason why they should abide by the law is that laws give protection to all members of a society.

The rule of law will always be challenged as long as legal action cannot be taken against every unlawful act. Action must be taken against anyone who commits crime whether it is a minor or major crime, whether it is committed by criminals or officials, whether the crime victim is a friend or an enemy. The rule of law will always be challenged as long as laws are not enacted in the interests of the majority of a society. When laws are enacted in the interests of the majority, it is highly unlikely that people will break a law that protects them and their interests as no one would do oneself any harm.

Therefore, it is important to enact laws that are

in the interest of the majority members of a society and legal action is taken against anyone who breaks laws that give protection to a society as a whole. A society without the rule of law would be heaven for a few but hell for the majority of members of a society.

Write for us

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

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

Soup kitchens, Food, Water and Blood Donations that deserve a mention

By Kin Mg Oo

Before I recognized it, it reached nearly 5 months that I had been here, to be exact, at the Department of Clinical Hematology, Yangon General Hospital. At the very start of my stay, I busied myself with caring for my son suffering from Acute Myeloid Leukemia and running errands for him, hence the failure to notice an activity in the immediate vicinity. It is a pleasing scene that is worth mentioning for everyone to know. It is none other than a collectively done purified drinking water donation by a group of well-wishers with vested interests. "Going on a 7-day fast or going without water for a morning period will put you to a sure death", as a Myanmar saying goes. A scarcity of drinking water is a ubiquitous problem in our country. Our people are receiving cost-sharing and F.O.C health care services provided by the government more than before. It is undeniable that the water problem, albeit it is one of the basic amenities for the important place like this, cannot be dealt with properly. Much as most of the Yangonians know very well that water is a problem for all city dwellers, they are in the habit of paying little heed to the frugal use of water. Nowadays we all consume purified drinking water and it also, in return, consumes much of our budgets. The YGH can be said to be a confluence of patients from all walks of life as it can afford to give the best treatments and health care ser-

vices with the help of elite medical doctors and state-of-the art medical equipments. Among them, a few belong to the upper echelons, some are from the middle class and most are the poor. Especially, it will be more appropriate to be called a dependable place for poor patients with terminal illnesses. It is a real fact that some attendants, far from spending money on buying delicious and nutritious food for their patients, had ever been found to live on meager food available nearby at cheap price. As the saying "the early bird catches the worm" goes, they too are early risers to fetch water daily and sometimes glutinous rice together at this soup kitchen. Here, I think it needs to be described about the emergence of the Samaritan group. It was said that the very first donor occasionally offered glutinous rice and useful commodities to patients at the YGH, of their own accord. On seeing eager crowd queuing for alms, passers-by and other interested persons joined the donor to contribute their money into donation. Thus, it became a relatively large confraternity which can fulfill the requirement of the drinking water for needy patients to the extent of satisfaction. At a conservative estimate, the amount of purified drinking water donated daily would be 2500 liters. It may be small in amount in someone's opinion, but willingness of the well-wishers is great and we must acknowledge it. In such a hard time, a loaf of bread and a bowl of food may be

likened to ambrosia for hungry mouths. Come and get a vicarious thrill out of watching the above-said regular morning donation. In our country, there can be many a soup kitchen seen in many places, especially in our Buddhist Lent. They are open to all. Would that those well-wishers joined the philanthropic organizations' activities at such needy places. As known, there emerged in the country many independent non-profit organizations, charities and helpful foundations.

I am not finding fault with other's weakness. Admittedly, a lot of money is being budgeted for the health care of the public by the government, but it cannot solve yet all problems in all aspects of the nation to the full. Far be it from me to interfere in the administration work of the authorities concerned of the hospital, but I would like to give my humble advice that distribution of water to the wards and stopping the wastage of water be carefully supervised, so as not to face the water shortage problem. Due to the negligence of staff assigned for storage and distribution of water to all wards of the campus, there had been few occasions when we had no water to flush sewage down the toilet. On the part of patients too, they need to know the importance of energy and water they get free of charge. They should be concurrently warned not to be extravagant with water and to conserve energy. In fact, each and every one of us is responsible to actively and voluntarily participate

for the betterment of our society.

Another noble deed that should go other than uninformed is blood donation. As known by all, blood is vital for life and life depends on blood. Sometime in the past, we found it difficult to find blood donors when we needed to have blood transfused. At that time, blood can be said to be a precious commodity. Money cravers and money-grubbers tried to sell their blood at high price. In critical condition, people of wealth and influence could lavish much money to get blood. Yet nowadays blood drives and mass blood donation groups emerged. We needn't worry about our blood transfusion any longer, as much as before. Visitors coming to the National Blood Center daily as teams or individuals amount to a lot. Moreover, we can find out blood donors from posts in the facebook on the internet. Today there can be seen in our face-books critical appeals for rare blood, especially O negative blood and AB negative blood. In answer to mails of these appeals, there had been some donors who came, from afar, to donate blood, believing "Donating blood saves lives". What a meritorious deed it is! Without donors, we cannot get any blood. With increasing population in the world, demand for safe blood will still be greater than blood supply. Waiting period to donate blood is limited to 4 months from the previous donation. Plus, it is generally known that old people aged 55 and above are not al-

lowed to donate because of feebleness and unlikelihood to replenish blood taken out. We should not take getting urgently-needed blood easily for granted. To fulfill our needs, we can make money by working. It had been heard that artificial blood has been being tested to be substituted for human blood, but it is, until now, impossible to manufacture blood with the use of nowadays' advanced technology.

In the past too, our respected elders launched voluntary activities. For example, they founded the country's first blood bank facility at Yangon General Hospital in 1945, now known as the National Blood Center. In those days, however, mass media was not good enough to propagate their activities and launch campaigns as in the present time. And little chance went to them to accomplish plans and activities as much as they wished. Wonderfully enough, most of those activists in the philanthropic works are youths. In this age when most are claiming "Self, self, self", the obliging younger generation is de-

picting their noble inner self. A youth's mind is pure per se, as were ours in our younger days. But we had had a corrupt society. Who blackened us? Supreme power ruined men's spirit, leading to a bad environment. Thanks to the modern technology, we went past the age of knowledge blackout. Now our youths have an access to the global knowledge bank through internet. Thus, they came to see non-governmental organizations and accommodating youths contributing voluntary labor and giving humanitarian aids to victims subject to natural disasters and scourges of wars. Influenced by peer pressure, our youngsters emulated, taking part in voluntary works. Around us are still many youths idling their hours away, playing games, spending in cafes and chatting something unimportant online. If we can ignite their hidden capacities and lead them to a paradigm shift on life, I dare say that everywhere will be full of active citizens.

May all citizens involve in activities for the betterment of our society!

Farmers observe thriving mung bean plantations on model plot in Sittway

SITTWAY, 18 Jan—The field day of 10-acre mung bean was held in Pyidawtha Ward, Sittway, Rakhine State, on 14 January.

On the occasion, Rakhine State Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Thar Lu Chay said that Rakhine State government in cooperation with the departments concerned is striving for boosting production of agricultural produce.

Upon completion of a port being built by In-

dian government in Rakhine State, mung bean from the state can occupy market shares in India, he added.

Head of Township Agriculture Department U Tun Hla Phyu explained cultivation methods for beans and pulses. Local farmers viewed thriving mung bean plants.

At the ceremony, officials presented packets of 12 vegetable strain seeds to the local farmers.

Rakhine State IPRD

LOCAL NEWS

Fresh organic vegetables, fruits available at Agriculture Department in Nay Pyi Taw



NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan—Use of many inorganic chemicals in cultivation of vegetables and fruits causes dangerous diseases

to the consumers, according to the findings at health centres.

Agriculture Department under the Ministry of

Agriculture and Irrigation sells organic vegetables and fruits produced from 900-acre farmland to local consumers at its farm near

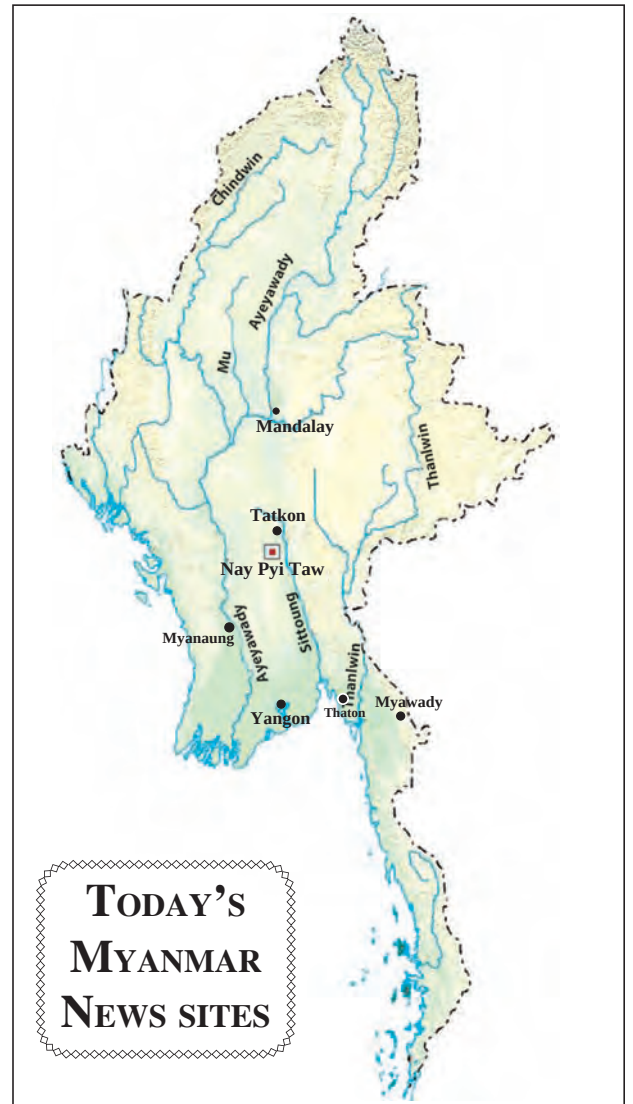
Yazahtani Road as of 6 January.

In addition to organic products, local people may purchase quality saplings to be grown on vacant areas.

Papaya (Thai strain), muskmelon, gourd, winged bean, string bean, aubergine, tomato (Korean strain), taro (Korean strain), Chinese kale and bitter melon are available at the shop.

“We sell fresh vegetables and fruits at reasonable prices to the consumers,” said Deputy Head of Section U Zaw Moe Htaik.

Ko Pauk
(Okkar Myay)



Mdy International Airport checks vegetables, fruits and flowers for past free

MANDALAY, 18 Jan — Officials check export and import of vegetables, fruits and flowers at Mandalay International Airport.

They issue phytosanitary certificates and import certificates for the agricultural produce for exports.

These certificates were drawn from Agriculture Department in Yangon Region in the past. As of August 2014, the certificates are available at the pest control section of Mandalay Region Agriculture Department.

The pest control sections have been opened at border trade areas in Lwe-jel, Maungtaw, Tachilek, Muse, Tamu, Myawady and Reedkhoda, Yan-



gon International Airport, Mandalay International Airport, Kawthoung and Kanpaiktee.

Region and State Agriculture Departments will extend opening of laboratories so as to issue phy-

tosanitary certificates to applicants.—*Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)*

Township Election Sub-commission distributes election law and rules books



NAY PYI TAW, 18 Jan — Ottarathiri Township Election Sub-commission held a ceremony to hand over books on election law and rules at its office on 16 January.

Chairman of the Township Sub-commission U Than Zaw and Deputy Township Administrator U Myint Zaw Htay made speeches.

Officials presented books on election law and rules to members of the township election sub-commission.

Shwe Ye Yint

Authorities allot K100 million of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund to wards, villages in Myawady Tsp

MYAWADY, 18 Jan — Allotment of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund was held at Thaungyin Hall in Myawady, Kayin State, on 16 January.

Deputy commissioner of the district U Lwin Ko Oo said as the development tasks are to be completed in the timetable, all departmental officials are to strive for completion of tasks with added momentum.

Vice Chairman of the Township Development Tasks Implementation Committee Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Saw Aye Myaing and Secretary

Township Administrator U Khin Maung Zaw explained progress of development tasks.

Officials allotted development funds to ward/village administrators for 2014-15 fiscal year.

The committee shared K12.2 million for four water supply tasks, K76.2 million for 17 rural roads and bridges, K11.6 million for development tasks totally amounting to K100 million to five wards and 11 village-tracts and one village-tract from Sukali Town.

Htein Lin Aung
(IPRD)



Gunmen hold Yemeni official to try to derail new constitution

SANAA, 18 Jan — Yemen's Houthi militia seized a top official on Saturday and threatened unspecified further steps to derail a proposed new constitution in a wrangle for power that threatens to bring down the government, raising fears al-Qaeda could benefit.

The draft constitution, formally launched on Saturday, aims to resolve big regional, political and sectarian differences in Yemen by devolving authority to regions, but has been bitterly opposed by the Houthis who fear it will dilute their power.

Western and Gulf Arab countries worry about insecurity in Yemen be-

cause of its border with top oil exporter Saudi Arabia and presence of an al-Qaeda wing that has claimed responsibility for the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* newspaper in Paris.

However, political chaos has accelerated since the Houthis, who demand more rights for the country's Zaydi Shi'ite Muslim sect, seized Sanaa in September and advanced into central and western areas where Sunni Muslims predominate.

The group said its gunmen "arrested" Ahmed Awad bin Mubarak, office director for President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and a former nominee for



Vehicles drive past the office building of Ahmed Awadh bin Mubarak, in Sanaa on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

prime minister, early on Saturday to stop him attending a meeting on the constitution.

In its statement on the al-Maseerah television channel, the militia said it

had become aware of what it called irregularities in both the draft constitution and how the government was attempting to make it law.

Houthi representa-

tives also pulled out of a meeting with Hadi and the country's other main political and regional factions to discuss the constitution, two attendees at the meeting told *Reuters*.

The new charter is the result of talks between Yemen's competing factions aimed at smoothing a political transition triggered by the departure of former leader Ali Abdullah Saleh who stepped down in 2012 after a year of street protests.

However, its proposal to divide Yemen into six federal regions is opposed by the Houthis, now the strongest group in the country, who instead sup-

port a plan by southern separatists for just two regions.

A powerful group of tribes backed by Saleh's party, the General People's Congress has also rejected the six-region plan, and urged the country instead be divided into much smaller governorates, analysts say.

The General People's Congress, also walked out of Saturday's meeting on the draft of the constitution, the attendees said.

Scores of people have already been killed in 2015 by al-Qaeda attacks and clashes between the Houthis and Sunni militants and tribesmen.

Reuters

Blast outside Algeria embassy in Libya wounds two guards



Civilians and security personnel stand at the scene of an explosion outside the Algerian embassy in Libya's capital Tripoli on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

TRIPOLI, 18 Jan — An explosion outside the Algerian embassy in Libya's capital Tripoli on Saturday slightly wounded two guards and damaged near-

by vehicles, officials and residents said.

Algeria and most other countries evacuated their diplomats in the summer during fighting

between rival factions who are battling for control of the oil-producing North African state three years after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi.

Two guards suffered minor wounds by the blast, officials in Tripoli and Algeria's state news agency said.

Libya's recognized government, which has been forced to work out of a rump state in the east, denounced the explosion in a statement as "cheap attempt" to undermine UN-sponsored peace talks which started this week in Geneva.

Tripoli is now controlled by a faction called Libya Dawn, which has set up a rival government.

The eastern-based government is recognized by the United Nations and Western powers. The

Tripoli administration is not, but still controls ministries, airports and some oil facilities.

The UN talks are aimed at forming a unity government, ending hostilities and putting a transition to democracy on track. But the Tripoli-based forces say the process had been rushed, and plan to vote on Sunday on whether to attend.

Fighting over the country's oil infrastructure has closed two major oil ports in the east and slashed Libya's oil output to around 300,000 barrels per day from the 1.6 million bpd produced before the civil war toppled Gaddafi in 2011.

Bombs exploded in November near the Egyptian and United Arab Emirates embassies.

Reuters

Morocco says it breaks up militant cell recruiting for ISIS

RABAT, 18 Jan — Morocco said on Saturday it had dismantled an Islamist militant cell sending fighters to Syria and Iraq to join Islamic State and mount attacks on returning home.

The cell, the latest of series of radical groups authorities say they have uncovered, had been active in the city of Meknes and the towns of El-Hajeb and El-Hoceima in the Northern Rif mountains, the interior ministry said in a statement.

It said the head of the cell had been in contact with Islamic State and had sent volunteers.

"According to intelligence reports, Moroccans fighting in Syria and Iraq have been trained in handling weapons and manufacturing explosives to perpetrate attacks once they return to Morocco," the

statement said.

"Some of the eight members of the cell have been convicted in other terrorism cases in the past."

A Moroccan security source told *Reuters* the government thinks nearly 2,000 Moroccans have fought in Syria's civil war and in Iraq with Islamic State.

"Some 200 have returned home and all of them were arrested, mainly at the airport when their flights landed," the source said.

The North African kingdom has suffered attacks in the past by militants. In 2011 a blast in a cafe in Marrakesh killed 15 people including 10 foreigners. It was the worst attack since 2003, when suicide bombings killed more than 45 people in Casablanca.

Reuters

Al-Qaeda in Syria says shoots down army cargo plane

BEIRUT, 18 Jan — The Syrian wing of al-Qaeda, the Nusra Front, said it shot down an army cargo plane filled with food and ammunition overnight in the northwest of the country.

Reuters could not immediately confirm the report, which appeared on the group's social media accounts.

State news did not mention the downing of

the plane, which the Nusra Front said happened near the army-controlled Abu al-Duhur military airport in Idlib province.

Several Syrian air force jets and helicopters have been shot down in Syria's civil war, which erupted after the government cracked down on pro-democracy protests in 2011.

A US-led coalition is

flying sorties in Syria to strike the hardline Islamic State group, an offshoot of al-Qaeda that is also fighting the Syrian army.

Last month, a Jordanian air force pilot was captured by Islamic State fighters after his plane was downed near the militant group's stronghold of Raqqa in northeastern Syria.

Reuters

No link to Belgian attack plot from those detained in Greece

ATHENS, 18 Jan — Greece said it had found no evidence linking people they detained for questioning on Saturday to a foiled Islamist plot to attack Belgian police.

Greek police detained over a half dozen people and were sending DNA

samples to Belgian counterparts. Belgian state broadcasters said authorities were seeking a Brussels man of Moroccan origin who was hiding in Greece. "We have not identified anyone related to the Belgian plot from the people we detained," a senior Greek

police official told *Reuters*. On Thursday, police killed two gunmen during raids in the east Belgian town of Verviers. Thirteen suspects were arrested throughout the country and two others held in France on Belgium's request.

Reuters

Two dead, 4 injured in Istanbul explosion

ISTANBUL, 18 Jan — At least two were dead and four injured in an explosion in a power distribu-

tion centre in Istanbul on Sunday.

Bombs were discovered in three different

places in Istanbul, one of them was exploded and the rest was under police control.—*Reuters*

Wearable devices have bright future in China



BEIJING, 18 Jan — A latest survey showed that wearable devices will become more popular in the Chinese market in the next five years.

For wearable health devices, 39 percent of respondents worldwide plan to buy one by 2020, but 65 percent of Chinese consumers surveyed already have an interest in buying one, according to a survey filed to *Xinhua* on Saturday by Accenture, a consulting and technology services company.

As many as 67 percent of Chinese consumers are likely to buy wearable fitness monitors and 73 percent wants smart watches in the coming five years, more than doubled 32 percent and 27 percent in the United States.

When buying wearable and other smart devices, Chinese consumers place features and functions as the most important factors.

However, user experience is lacking at the current time, as a staggering 83 percent of those surveyed across

the globe reported various problems when they use these new types of devices.

In China, the top three issues consumers face are “too complicated to use,” “set-up did not proceed properly” and “not visually or aesthetically appealing”. Only 1 percent of Chinese respondents said they did not experience any challenges at all, the survey said.

The survey was conducted online between October and November 2014, with 24,000 respondents in 24 countries, including China, Australia, Brazil, France, Turkey and the United States.

At present, wearable devices are marketed by a number of companies, including Apple Inc, China’s Xiaomi and Samsung from the Republic of Korea.

Xinhua

Magnetic fields in dark help formation of stars: Study

BERLIN, 18 Jan — High magnetization sets the stage for the formation of stars much more massive than the sun, said a study on Friday.

Magnetic fields in massive dark clouds are strong enough to support the regions against collapse due to their own gravity, said the study led by researchers at the Max-Planck-Institut für Radioastronomie.

This is demonstrated in observations of polarized dust emission from two of the most massive clouds in Milky Way, the “Brick” and “Snake”.

“For the first time we witness how magnetic fields thread a massive cloud and help stabilize the region while it gets ready to form

high-mass stars” said Thushara Pillai from the Max-Planck-Institut für Radioastronomie.

The high mass of these cores has puzzled researchers for many years, as the cores should quickly collapse due to their own gravity and destroy themselves before telescopes on Earth can detect them.

“The cloud would already be collapsing if there were no magnetic support”, said Thushara Pillai. “In that case the young forming cores would never become massive enough to form stars much larger than the Sun.”

The results are published in this week’s issue of the “Astrophysical Journal”.—*Xinhua*

British police arrest man over Christmas Xbox, Playstation hacks



People walk past the Playstation and Xbox booths at the 2014 Electronic Entertainment Expo, known as E3, in Los Angeles, California on 10 June, 2014. —REUTERS

LONDON, 18 Jan — British police said on Friday they had arrested a man in northwest England following the 2014 cyber attacks on Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox systems.

Both systems suffered long outages over Christmas

after a major distributed denial of service (DDOS) attack. A hacking group calling itself Lizard Squad, which had attacked

the two networks earlier last year, claimed responsibility.

“Officers ... have arrested a man in Southport, Merseyside this morning as part of an investigation into ‘swatting’ and computer hacking offences,” Merseyside police said in a statement.

The officers had worked closely with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the operation, it added. No further details of the arrest were immediately available.

Swatting is a term used to describe criminal activity by an individual or group who provide false information to law enforcement agencies in the United States, suggesting that a threat exists at a particular location so that police respond with tactical units.

Reuters

Alibaba’s latest mobile messaging effort: social networking for businesses

BEIJING, 18 Jan — China’s Alibaba Group Holding Ltd, the world’s biggest e-commerce company, is piloting a mobile messaging app aimed at marrying social networking with business, an Alibaba spokeswoman said on Friday, as the company expands its enterprise services.

The app, called DingTalk, was quietly made available in December and is still in beta testing, according to its website. (www.dingtalk.com)

Capable of carrying conference calls and group messaging, DingTalk targets small- and medium-sized enterprises, many of which are already Alibaba’s customers. The company has 8.5 million active sellers on its various e-commerce platforms, according to Alibaba’s initial public offering prospectus.

It is not Alibaba’s first stab at a mobile messaging app and others have become hot property in the tech sector. The company’s arch-rival, Tencent Holdings Ltd, operates WeChat, known as Weixin in China, which has 468 million monthly active users and was estimated to be worth as much as \$64 billion by brokerage CLSA.

Underscoring the appeal of such apps, Facebook Inc in October completed its \$22 billion acquisition of WhatsApp.

But Alibaba’s previous attempt at a mobile messaging app, Laiwang, is seen by many analysts and industry

observers as a dud, with the Chinese market dominated by Tencent’s WeChat.

By going for smaller companies, DingTalk is chasing a target audience that already includes many Alibaba clients. This fits with its broader enterprise strategy, including the Alibaba Cloud Computing business, which also serves Alibaba’s merchants as well as other companies.

Reuters



The logo of Alibaba Group is seen inside the company’s headquarters in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province early on 11 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

EU says part of Amazon’s Luxembourg tax deal ‘cosmetic’

BRUSSELS, 18 Jan — Luxembourg took just two weeks to sign off a partly cosmetic deal that allowed Amazon (AMZN.O) to shift a large part of its European profits to an untaxed entity, according to EU antitrust regulators.

The European Commission, which rules on competition and subsidies in the European Union, announced in October that it had opened an investigation into a tax ruling struck in 2003 and published details of its case on Friday.

The investigation, one of a number into large international companies, focuses on whether Luxembourg broke EU state aid rules by allowing Amazon to operate almost tax-free in Europe.

Such inquiries have raised questions for European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, former long-time prime minister of Luxembourg, over his role in the country’s tax policies.

The document released on Friday described the online retailer’s structure, with a Luxembourg company functioning as the headquarters of its European operations and operator of all its European websites.

The net turnover of that company, which it called Lux-OpCo, was 13.6 billion euros (10 billion pounds) in 2013, about a fifth of worldwide sales of \$74.5 billion.—*Reuters*

New York Governor plans first trade mission to Cuba

NEW YORK, 18 Jan — New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is planning a trade mission to Cuba, the Governor's Office confirmed on Saturday. Details of the trip have yet to be announced.

Cuomo, who will be among the first high-profile US officials to visit Cuba since the Obama administration announced in December historic moves to normalize full relations with the Caribbean island.

The Democratic governor is to promote an initiative to attract foreign investment to New York State, said spokeswoman Melissa DeRosa.

"As part of the Global NY initiative, Governor Cuomo plans to lead a trade mission to Cuba. This is one of several such trips promoting New York that he plans to take in the coming term," she said.

On Friday, the Obama Administration implemented a package of new laws easing sanctions on Cuba, allowing a high level of exchange in trade and travel between the two neighbouring countries, which were locked in enmity for over half a century.

On Saturday, a delegation of congressional Democrats began a three-day visit to Cuba to discuss expectations for the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba.

A US embargo on Cuba has been in force for 54 years and can only be lifted by the US Congress rather than the president.

Xinhua



Examinees sit for the unified college entrance examinations at the University of Tokyo in Tokyo's Hongo district on 17 Jan, 2015, as the two-day event began across Japan with about 559,000 applicants and a record 849 public and private institutions taking part.—KYODO NEWS

Afghan Cabinet nominee wanted by Interpol for tax evasion

KABUL, 18 Jan — Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's nominee for agriculture minister in his new Cabinet is on an Interpol wanted list for tax evasion in Estonia, a fact Ghani's spokesman said was unknown to his office at the time of his nomination.

Interpol's website lists Mohammad Yaqub Haidari, 52, as wanted in Estonia for "large-scale tax evasion, fraudulent conversion" in cases dating back to 2003.

A spokesman for Ghani, Nazifullah Salazarzai, said on Saturday the presidential office was unaware Haidari had any legal troubles but was investigating.

Although Haidari has been on the wanted list for years, it was not widely known or reported in Afghanistan.

Ghani, who was sworn in as president last year to replace long-time leader Hamid Karzai, has vowed to root out widespread corruption and said he would choose his ministers based on their qualifications, not their connections.

Afghanistan was ranked as the world's fourth most corrupt coun-

try last year by the watchdog Transparency International. It has topped the list in previous years.

Ghani's Cabinet nominations were announced on Monday, after a wait of more than three months over negotiations with unity government partner Abdullah Abdullah, his former election rival.

Haidari confirmed on Saturday that he is on the Interpol wanted list but insisted he is innocent.

"I am being targeted by a political conspiracy. When you enter the world of business and politics, this is what happens," he told *Reuters*.

He said the taxes were owed not by him but by a person who bought a company from him that did business in Estonia.

A biography of Haidari compiled by the Afghanistan Analysts Network cited a recent television interview in which he said he once ran an agricultural import-export company that did business in eastern Europe and Russia.

His current business is focused on construction and information technology, as well as agricultural products, the profile said.

Reuters

Five Pakistani men held in Afghanistan over school massacre

KABUL, 18 Jan — Five Pakistani men have been arrested in Afghanistan in connection with the Taliban massacre of 134 school children in the Pakistani city of Peshawar last month, officials from both countries said on Sunday.

The five were detained last week after Pakistan sent a list of suspects to security services in the neighbouring nation, said the officials who asked not to be named.

Taliban gunmen opened fire in the military-run school on 16 December, killing nine staff and the students, many of them the children of army personnel, in the country's bloodiest massacre in years.

"We are investigating whether the five detained are the ones wanted by Pa-

kistan," one of the Afghan officials told *Reuters*.

Pakistan's Taliban is a separate organization from the Afghan Taliban, but both share the goals of toppling their respective governments and enforcing strict Islamist law across the region.

One of the Pakistani

officials said another 20-25 people had been detained in Pakistan but some had already been released.

A second Pakistani official said that talks were underway with the government for the transfer of the five prisoners in Afghanistan to Pakistan.—*Reuters*



An army soldier stands in the Army Public School, which was attacked by Taliban gunmen, in Peshawar on 17 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

No respite in Bangladesh violence over polls as death toll rises to 27

DHAKA, 18 Jan — An 18-year-old man died after unidentified attackers hurled fire bombs at the vehicle in which he was travelling early on Sunday in Southern Barisal, lifting to 27 the death toll from violence in Bangladesh's deepening political crisis since last year's disputed elections.

Bangladesh's government ruled out military deployment to establish order after the latest violence surrounding a standoff between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, leader of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The violence has worsened steadily since on 5 January, when protests erupted over last year's election, which was boycotted by the BNP.

"There is no such situation in the country requiring the deployment of the army-led joint forces," Asa-

duzzaman Khan, the junior minister for home affairs, told reporters on Sunday.

The truck passenger killed on Sunday was named by police as 18-year-old Mohammad Sohag. The driver of the vehicle jumped clear and escaped with minor burn injuries.

At least 30 people, including five police officers, have been injured in attacks on vehicles in Dhaka since Saturday night.

"The culprits won't be spared," Prime Minister Hasina said on Sunday while visiting a hospital to see policemen who had sustained severe burns. Authorities have blocked popular internet calling and messaging service Viber on security concerns, Jakir Hossain, spokesman for the Bangladesh telecoms authority said.

The renewed tension between the political rivals raises the spectre of a long, destabilising spell of unrest

for Bangladesh and its economy.

Khaleda has demanded that Hasina give up her post, with a new vote to be held under a neutral administration. The prime minister has rejected these demands and her government has tightened its grip by arresting key opposition leaders and clamping down on media.

Human rights groups have expressed concern over the violence and urged those involved in the conflict to exercise restraint, with a statement from United Nations human rights office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani also calling for "prompt, impartial and effective" investigation of all killings.

Hasina and Khaleda, both related to former national leaders, have nursed a long and bitter rivalry, and have dominated politics in Bangladesh for more than two decades.—*Reuters*

DPRK negotiator, former US diplomats meet unofficially in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 18 Jan — The chief nuclear negotiator of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and former senior officials and scholars from the United States were in Singapore on Sunday for a unofficial meeting over topics including the DPRK nuclear issue.

Leon Sigal, director of the Northeast Asia Co-operative Security Project

at the US-based non-profit organization Social Science Research Council, told reporters that the meeting will cover the DPRK's nuclear missile programmes.

"It's two ways of taking each other's temperature," he said.

The DPRK side is led by Ri Yong Ho, the DPRK's Six-Party Talks representative, while the

US team includes former US special representative for DPRK policy Stephen Bosworth, former deputy nuclear negotiator Joseph DeTrani, and Tony Namkung, former deputy director at Berkeley's Institute for East Asian Studies.

The two-day meeting, which is unofficial, is taking place at a local hotel behind closed doors.

Police were seen handling security matters, and the participants were seen stepping out for breakfast and lunch on Sunday.

The US Embassy in Singapore, which had been tight-lipped on details of the meeting, said in a statement that "this would be one of many Track 2 meetings held to discuss East Asia political and security issues."

"The US government is not involved in the proposed event," the embassy added.

Track 2 diplomacy often refers to non-governmental, informal and unofficial contacts and activities between private citizens or groups of individuals.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has recently con-

veyed its willingness to resume DPRK-South Korea summits and hold direct dialogue with the United States. It also said that the DPRK side is willing to temporarily suspend its nuclear tests if the United States, in exchange, suspends joint military drills with South Korea. The proposal was rejected by the United States.—*Xinhua*

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(Invitation for Open Tender)

1. Open tender is invited (only Indian Companies) by the Public Works of the Ministry of Construction of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for Feasibility Report and Detail Project Report of the following road upgradation projects under Grant assisted by the Republic of India.

Sr.	State	Name of Work
1.	Kachin	Myitkyinah-Swampabwon-Putaoh Road (218 mile)
2.	Rakhine	Kanyintan-Alathankyaw-Ahngumaw Road (49 miles 6 furlongs)

2. Selling period of Tender Documents

- (26.1.2015) to (30.1.2015)

3. Last Submission Date of Tender Documents

- 12:00 noon on 11.2.2015

6. Opening Date of Tender

- 13:00 hours on 24.2.2015

7. Tender Documents can be purchased with fifty thousand kyat (50000 Ks.) at the following address and for the detail information, please contact the office within office hours.

Tender Selection Committee, Public Works
Road Department, Office No.(11), Nay Pyi Taw
Tel: 067-407468, 407578, 407603, 407583, 407380



Firemen works at a liquefied gas station which exploded after a tank truck caught fire in the Jinzhou District in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, on 17 Jan, 2015. The explosion caused 4 injures who were sent to hospital for treatments.

XINHUA

Suspect in shooting of two Canadian police found dead

TORONTO, 18 Jan — The suspect in the shootings of two Canadian police officers in an Alberta casino on Saturday was found dead after being tracked to an unoccupied home, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police said.

The RCMP said the suspect's body was found when they entered the residence in a rural area east of St Albert, Alberta. The police did not disclose the cause of death but said they did not speak with the suspect or fire their weapons during their efforts to arrest him.

One of the two officers shot earlier on Saturday, Constable David Matthew Wynn, 42, remained in grave condition in hospital. The other, Auxiliary Constable Derek Walter Bond,



Police officers man the perimeter of a crime scene in St Albert, Alberta, where two RCMP officers sustained significant injuries after being shot at the Apex Casino on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

49, had been released after treatment.

The shooting happened around 3 am in St Albert, a bedroom community northwest of the provincial capital, Edmonton.

The officers were investigating a stolen vehicle

when they were shot. Police said earlier the suspect, who fled the scene, was a white male aged 25 to 35.

Police said they have tentatively identified the suspect and are working to confirm the information.

Reuters

France's Hollande sees popularity jump after attacks

PARIS, 18 Jan — French President Francois Hollande's popularity has surged to its highest level in nearly a year and a half after the deadly Islamist attacks in Paris — albeit from near record lows, a poll showed on Saturday.

Hollande, the most unpopular leader in modern French polling, has been broadly praised in the media and by analysts for his handling of the attacks.

His popularity rating has jumped to 34 percent, from 24 percent before the attacks, according to a BVA poll. That marked his best rating since May 2013.

Hollande rushed to the site of the first attack on 1 January, where two Islamist militants stormed the offices of satirical maga-

zine *Charlie Hebdo* and killed 12 people.

Four people were also killed by another gunman during a hostage-taking in a Kosher deli.

The following on Sunday, Hollande led a march with other world leaders that mobilized what some commentators said was the biggest crowd in Paris since its liberation from Nazi Germany in 1944.

The poll boost was not limited to Hollande. His Prime Minister Manuel Valls has seen his popularity climb to 44 percent from 35 percent before the attacks.

The improved image is a political boon for Hollande and his government as parliament begins debating a contested bill aimed

at injecting more competition into the struggling economy.

It also offers some relief to Hollande's Socialist Party, which has been bracing for heavy losses in regional district elections due in March.

The poll showed that the party's popularity had risen above that of the far-right National Front, which has struggled to formulate a coherent response to the attacks, for the first time since May 2014.

The poll for Orange and ITELE was conducted on 13-14 January. Nearly 1,300 people were questioned over the Internet after having been solicited by telephone.

Reuters

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WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 19th January, 2015: Rain are likely to be scattered in Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine States, isolated in Bago and Ayeyawady Regions, Kayah State and weather will be partly cloudy in remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Photographer documents life of ethnic Ainu for 30 years

KUSHIRO, 18 Jan — Taka Maesawa, a photographer from Nakashibetsu, Hokkaido, has published a photo book documenting the life of the Ainu ethnic minority in the northernmost Japanese prefecture for more than 30 years since 1983.

"I want people to know about the beautiful Ainu culture and the history of ethnic Ainu who have been discriminated against," Maesawa, 68, said in an interview.

"I hope my pictures depict what Ainu people are today and will convey it to future generations," said Maesawa.

The 110-page book titled "Ainu Minzoku — Inochi to Hokori" (Ainu Ethnic Group — Life and Pride) features about 100 Ainu and their life in Ainu Kotan villages near Lake Akan and Lake Kussharo in eastern Hokkaido. Kotan means village or community in the Ainu language.

The pictures include one of a woman dressed in traditional Ainu attire preparing for a dance and that of an Ainu ritual, "Icharupa," to console ancestors' spirits.

Maesawa also wrote about her interactions with one family which inspired her to start documenting

Ainu people.

Fukiko Goukon, 39, a traditional Ainu music singer who was born and grew up in an Ainu Kotan near Lake Akan, is documented from childhood through marriage and giving birth.

Maesawa "photographed me with love," Goukon said, expressing her gratitude to the photographer.

Ainu struggled to pass down their language and culture after the Japanese government implemented a policy of assimilation during the Meiji era (1868-1912).

But "we Ainu are still

here," Goukon said.

Referring to one photograph taken by Maesawa of Goukon and her grandmother, mother and daughter, she said, "This picture of our family proves that the heart of our ethnic people has been handed down over generations."

Maesawa published the book with financial backing from the Sapporo-based Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture and donated 250 copies to libraries and museums.

But following requests for more copies, she has decided on additional printing.—Kyodo News

Jay Chou, Hannah Quinlivan get married in UK



Singer Jay Chou and Hannah Quinlivan held wedding ceremony at the Selby Abbey in Yorkshire, Britain, local time on 17 Jan, 2015.—XINHUA

Julianne Moore's kids are not bothered about Oscars

LOS ANGELES, 18 Jan — Golden Globe-winner Julianne Moore says while she is over the moon with an Oscar nod for her performance in 'Still Alice', her kids are not interested in it. Moore is nominated in the category of best actress for the 87th Academy Awards, to be held on 22 February, reported *Us* magazine.

She is competing against Felicity Jones ('The Theory of Everything'), Rosamund Pike ('Gone Girl'), Reese Witherspoon ('Wild') and Marian Cotillard ('Two Days, One Night'). The 46-year-old actress said her children Caleb and Liv were more



Julianne Moore is nominated in the category of best actress for the 87th Academy Awards.—PTI

excited about her appearing in 'The Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part One'.

"They could take or leave the Oscars. 'Mockingjay' was a big deal!" Despite being considered a front-runner ahead of the prestigious ceremony,

Moore is determined not to get swept up by the buzz either. "I try to take it one day at a time. Otherwise, I get overwhelmed," she said. The actress played a professor grappling with Alzheimer's disease in 'Still Alice'.—PTI

Rihanna designs bags for charity

LOS ANGELES, 18 Jan — R&B star Rihanna, actress Sarah Jessica Parker, comedienne Rachel Feinstein, model Jourdan Dunn and author Leandra Medine have teamed up with an Italian fashion brand to design bags for charity.

The 26-year-old 'Rude Boy' hit-maker, Parker, comedienne Feinstein, model Jourdan Dunn and author Leandra Medine have teamed up with Fendi to personalize their own 3Baguette handbag as part of a charity project, reported *Women's Wear Daily*.

The five bags will be unveiled dur-

ing a cocktail party — hosted by Karl Lagerfeld, Silvia Venturini Fendi and the brand's chairman and chief executive officer Pietro Beccari — at their new flagship store on New York's Madison Avenue on 13 February and will remain on display for a month.

During that time the accessories will be available to buy from online auction site launch3baguetteauction.fendi.com, which will go live by the end of January. The profits will go towards a charity close to each of the celebrity's hearts.

PTI



'Kong: Skull Island' is set in 1971 in Detroit: JK Simmons

LOS ANGELES, 18 Jan — Oscar nominated actor JK Simmons has shared some details from his upcoming project 'Kong: Skull Island', saying the film is set in 1971 Detroit. The 60-year-old actor recently received a Golden Globe trophy and is nominated for the upcoming Academy Awards for his work in 'Whiplash', reported *MTV* online.

"When it first came to my attention, 'There's interest in you for a new King Kong,' I thought, 'Okay, why?'... But I met with Jordan Vogt-Roberts who's going to be directing it, and John Gatins who's gonna be writing, and Tom Hiddleston. "Jordan was just so passionate and so smart and there's such an interesting new take on it, and it's set in Detroit in 1971 which is where I grew up, and we're gonna shoot



JK Simmons

in Detroit during baseball season and I'll be able to go to Tigers games, so there's a lot to like about this movie," he revealed.

Simmons did not reveal more info regarding the plot or cast. Earlier this month, it was reported that Michael Keaton was in talks to take part in the Legendary project. 'Kong: Skull Island' is targeting a 10 March, 2017 release date.—PTI

Top tenor Kaufmann says ready for Otello, no Siegfried yet

LONDON, 18 Jan — Jonas Kaufmann, regarded as the world's best tenor, says he is ready to reward fans waiting for him to sing Verdi's highly demanding "Otello" by making his debut in the role at London's Royal Opera House in 2017. The opera world has been waiting expectantly for the 45-year-old German to sing more of the epic roles. Ahead of his appearance at Covent Garden in the title role of Giordano's "Andrea Chenier" next week, he told *Reuters* he is ready for Verdi's jealous Moor, but not for Wagner's naive hero Siegfried — another role his fans are eager for him to take.

"It's true, we're planning to do an 'Otello' together," Kaufmann said in a telephone interview after the Royal Opera

House's music director Antonio Pappano confirmed Kaufmann would sing the role during the 2017 season.

"On one hand you feel right to do it ... on the other hand it is not only a technical issue, it is also a lot of experience and how you pace yourself to keep the

stamina through such a demanding part," Kaufmann said.

He said he is wary of being typecast as a tenor who sings Otello, or Wagner's Tristan or Siegfried — all of which place huge demands on the voice.

"Once you've an-



German tenor Jonas Kaufmann (R) performs as Lohengrin and German soprano Annette Dasch performs as Elsa von Brabant during their rehearsal of the opera "Lohengrin" by Richard Wagner in Bayreuth, southern Germany in this on 17 July, 2010 file photo.—REUTERS

nounced it, literally every theatre wants you to do it, and of course it is nice and flattering but I always want to keep my repertoire as wide as possible."

So when might he sing Siegfried? "It's not going to come soon after Otello, no, no, certainly not," Kaufmann said.

Kaufmann also cherishes giving recitals of songs by composers like Schubert or Mahler and is one of the few singers who can sell out huge venues like Covent Garden and New York's Metropolitan Opera.

But he has no plans to follow the Three Tenors into stadiums, alone or in partnership with other singers.

"Whenever people would ask me whether I would do it, I think I would if the circumstances are right ... for instance for charity, so money not for my pocket. But let's see. It's not going to happen this year — and alone, certainly not."

Reuters

GENERAL

Troicki crushes Kukushkin to win Sydney title



Viktor Troicki of Serbia holds the men's singles trophy after defeating Mikhail Kukushkin of Kazakhstan at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney, on 17 Jan, 2015. —REUTERS

SYDNEY, 18 Jan — Serbian Viktor Troicki took a big step on his comeback trail after a doping ban by ruthlessly dismantling fellow qualifier Mikhail Kukushkin 6-2, 6-3 to win the Sydney International on Saturday.

The 28-year-old righthander, who returned to action last July after serving a one-year ban for missing a dope test, took just over an hour to claim his second

career ATP title.

A rampant Troicki won the last four games of the first set and was 4-1 up in the second when Kukushkin took a medical timeout to have treatment on his left thigh.

The Kazakh had made his way to the final without losing a set, including in his quarter-final victory over Juan Martin Del Potro, but his mobility had been key to his progress.

The world number 66 rallied to win the next two games for his only break of serve in the contest and offered hope of an extended contest to the neutrals on Ken Rosewall Arena.

Troicki, however, was just too strong and, roared on by vocal support from Sydney's ethnic Serb community, broke back before serving out the match to love, sealing victory with his 13th ace.

"We both came through the qualis so it was a tough week and we're heading to straight to Melbourne where we play on Monday," Troicki said after receiving the trophy from Australian tennis great Rosewall.

"There's no stopping."

Troicki will take a big boost in confidence into his first round tie at the Australian Open against Czech Jiri Vesely, who also won an ATP title as a qualifier on Sunday at the Auckland Open.

Once ranked 12th in the world, Troicki's victory in his second Sydney International final will send him back towards the top 50 from his current ranking of 92.

He has made it clear this week that he believes his doping ban was unfair and paid tribute to his Australian coach Jack Reader and the rest of his team for sticking with him.

"They were with me throughout the hardest time that is behind me," he said.

"They stood by me and I really appreciate that."

Kukushkin said his injury had been a hangover from hip surgery he underwent three years ago and was not certain he would be able to face Malek Jaziri at Melbourne Park on Monday. —Reuters

Youth held over YouTube posts of snacks pierced with toothpicks

TOKYO, 18 Jan — A 19-year-old man was arrested Sunday in connection with YouTube posts showing snacks at supermarkets being pierced with toothpicks and scenes of what appeared to be shoplifting at convenience stores, police said.

The man, whose name

is being withheld because he is minor, is suspected of sneaking into a convenience store in Musashino, western Tokyo, around 7 pm on 5 January with illegal intent.

According to the Metropolitan Police Department, the man has admitted to the charge.

The youth, who had been on a wanted list after posting scenes apparently showing him on the run, was detained at JR Maibara Station in Shiga Prefecture after the police were informed that a person resembling the suspect was aboard a train heading toward Kyoto early Sunday

morning.

In a series of YouTube images posted recently, a youth who appears to be the person detained by police is seen shoplifting at convenience stores and piercing snacks with toothpicks at supermarkets in Tokyo.

Kyodo News



Britain's Andy Murray hits a shot during a practice session on Margaret Court Arena at Melbourne Park on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

MELBOURNE, 18 Jan — The draw has done few favors for Andy Murray at

Melbourne Park, but the Briton believes he has put in the off-season work to be

rewarded at the Australian Open.

Murray will be seeded sixth at the year's first grand slam starting on Monday, bunched on the same half of the draw as Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal, and with a possible fourth round match against Bulgarian danger-man Grigor Dimitrov.

"Obviously, (a) very tough draw. Very difficult draw," the Scot told reporters.

"It's very hard to comment on it. If you have to play all of those players, obviously it's going to be extremely difficult to come

through that.

"I'm aware of that. That's fine. But, yeah, often in these events, there are upsets. And then you just have to wait and see who you're playing in each round because it doesn't always work out as simply as that.

"I'm sure Rafa (Nadal) just now, if you said to him, 'Give me a semi-final spot', he'd be very happy with that coming off a tough injury.

"But it will be interesting to see how it goes. But definitely with the names you mentioned, it's very challenging."

A three-times runner-up at Melbourne Park,

Murray was unable to add to his two grand slam titles in 2014 after coming back from a major back surgery and parting ways with coach Ivan Lendl.

Since appointing Frenchwoman Amelie Mauresmo as Lendl's replacement, his team has had further changes with assistant coach Dani Vallverdu and fitness trainer Jez Green departing in November.

"It hasn't been weird. It's been, in my opinion, positive," the 27-year-old said of the transition.

"When things aren't working well, there's not a positive atmosphere, it's not

good for anybody.

"So when that changes and everyone's working together, that makes things better. So the last two months for me so far have been very, very good."

Though frustrated three times in the final, once by Roger Federer in 2010 and twice by Novak Djokovic in 2011 and 2013, Murray has thrived on Melbourne Park's blue courts where last year's quarter-final exit was his earliest in six years.

"I do like the conditions here. I mean, obviously hard courts is the surface I feel very comfortable on," he said.—Reuters

MRTV
Entertainment
Channel

(19-1-2015, Monday)

- 6:00 am
- Paritta By Venerable Min Gun Sayadaw
- 6:25 am
- Physical Exercise
- 6:45 am
- Documentary
- 7:00 am
- News/ Weather Report
- 7:30 am
- Head Line News
- 8:00 am
- News/ International News
- 9:35 am
- Documentary (ASEAN)
- 10:00 am
- News / International News
- 11:35 am
- Head Line News
- 12:00 noon
- News / International News / Weather Report
- 1:05 pm
- Gitadagale Phwintbarohn
- 2:00 pm
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti
- 3:35 pm
- Weekly Entertainment
- 4:00 pm
- News
- 4:45 pm
- University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) -Third Year (English)
- 5:40 pm
- Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)
- 6:00 pm
- News / Weather Report
- 6:35 pm
- Science and Technology Programme
- 7:00 pm
- News
- 7:35 pm
- People Talks
- 8:00 pm
- News / International News / Weather Report
- 9:00 pm
- News
- Documentary
- TV Drama Series

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MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(19-1-15 07:00 am~
20-1-15 07:00 am) MST

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- * Aesthetic Chinlone
- * World News
- * Myanmar Masterclass: Aung Thiha

Murray unfazed by 'extremely difficult' draw in Australia

China down DPR Korea 2-1 to cruise to last eight with 9 points

CANBERRA, 18 Jan — Mid-fielder Sun Ke scored twice to help China beat DPR Korea 2-1 and advance to the Knockout stage with a best-ever three straight wins as Group B leaders at the AFC Asian Cup before tens of thousands of Chinese fans here on Sunday.

China will challenge hosts Australia, runners-up of Group A, at the quarter-finals in Brisbane on 22 January.

Sun Ke, who scored the crucial winner in China's 2-1 victory over Uzbekistan, continued his heroic performance tonight at the nearly fully packed Canberra Stadium where most of the spectators are supporters of China. Sun quickfired in less than one minute after kickoff with a nice outstep stab inside the penalty area after Korean defender Jang Song Hyok made an error in clearing Jiang Zhipeng's long pass.

Sun doubled the advantage for China on 42 minutes with a diving header at the far post following Jiang Zhipeng's well-curved left wing cross. It's his third goal of the tournament and the 25-year-old attacker can compete for the golden boot prize of the tournament. Now Jordan's Hamza Al Dardour



Sun Ke of China scores his second goal during a group B match between China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the AFC Asian Cup in Canberra, Australia on 18 Jan, 2015.—XINHUA

leads the scoring table with his four goals in Jordan's 5-1 crush over Palestine. If Sun could do more in their quarter-final clash with Australia, he may catch or surpass Al Dardour's record.

The Koreans pulled one back in the 57th minute. Mid-fielder Jong Il Gwan rounded

Jiang Zhipeng after receiving Pak Kwang Ryong's left wing center at the far post and his low drive was wrongly cleared by the Chinese defenders on the goal line, the ball bounced back to the empty net after Zhang Linpeng slid it to hit striker Gao Lin. Jong could have levelled the

score if his dipping header two minutes later following Ro Hak Su's cross went a little bit lower. And the lively attacker missed another at the beginning of the second half when his bullet shot was parried by a focused keeper Wang Dalei.

China coach Alain Perrin

brought on most of his major line-up for the game, although China have secured the top place after two victories over Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan, and the Frenchman's players controlled the first half with much more possession and threats. Left winger Yu Hai's smart lobbing shot in a tight angle before the end of the break seemed to be goal-bound, but a Korean defender headed the ball out timely on the goal line.

However, in the second half, DPR Korea rallied and launched some fierce attacks to test their rivals defence, substitute forward So Hyon Uk nearly levelled in the 82nd minute with a powerful half-volley rattling the crossbar at the edge of the box. Sim Hyon Jin also missed a good opportunity two minutes later. So came close again in injury time with another header to be parried by Wang Dalei. The Koreans showed their courage and attacking ability, but the finishing was not accurate enough to change the result. The Koreans finally ranked the fourth at Group B after three consecutive defeats.

Uzbekistan came back from the dead to reach the Asian Cup quarterfinals for the fourth straight time with a 3-1 win against Saudi Arabia on Sunday.—Xinhua

Five-star Chelsea maul Swansea to surge clear

LONDON, 18 Jan — Chelsea ran riot at Swansea City by scoring four goals before halftime on the way to a 5-0 win that sent Jose Mourinho's side surging five points clear in the Premier League title race on Saturday.

Brazil midfielder Oscar and Spain striker Diego Costa grabbed two apiece inside the opening 36 minutes as Swansea were torn to shreds. Substitute Andre Schuerrle got his name on the scoresheet late in a more even second half.

"It was the perfect game, everything went in our direction," Mourinho, who will be hoping Arsenal can take points off second-placed champions Manchester City on Sunday, told Sky Sports.

Manchester United briefly climbed above Southampton into third spot, 12 points behind Chelsea, with second-half substitutes Marouane Fellaini and James Wilson on target in a 2-0 win at second-bottom Queens Park Rangers.

Ronald Koeman's Southampton again showed they cannot be dismissed as genuine contenders for a top-four finish when they won 2-1 at Newcastle United in the late kickoff.

On-loan Eljero Elia scored in each half for the Saints who have 42 points to United's 40.

Playmaker Christian Eriksen struck another late winner to give Tottenham Hotspur a seventh 2-1 league victory this season, at home to Sunderland, and lift them above



Chelsea's Oscar (2nd L) shoots to score a goal against Swansea City during their English Premier League soccer match at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea, Wales on 17 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Arsenal into fifth, three points behind United.

Seventh-placed Liverpool's upwards push gathered momentum when Fabio Borini and Rickie Lambert scored in a 2-0 victory at Aston Villa who have now gone five league games without a goal.

Crystal Palace recovered from 2-0 down to snatch a 3-2 win at fellow strugglers Burnley, their second consecutive league victory since Alan Pardew took charge taking them up to 12th.

Bottom club Leicester City's recent burst of form, which had earned them seven points from three games, ended in a 1-0 home loss to Stoke City, Spaniard Bojan Krkic scoring the winner.

Swansea have proved tough

opponents in south Wales since joining the Premier League in 2011 and had only suffered two home defeats this season, but they

were no match for a rampant Chelsea side who oozed class.

From the moment Oscar ruthlessly punished an errant pass by Gylfi Sigurdsson to put Chelsea ahead in the first minute the writing was on the wall for the hosts.

A slick one-touch passing move ended with Costa making it 2-0 after 20 minutes and the Brazil-born Spaniard made it 3-0 following more dozy Swansea defending.

Oscar's second, a cheeky dink over busy Swans keeper Lukasz Fabianski, was followed quickly by Willian striking the crossbar as Chelsea threatened to run up a rugby score.

However, the fizz went out of the visitors in the second half and they had to be content with one more goal when Schuerrle got the final touch to deny Oscar a hat-trick.

As eye-catching as Chelsea's football was, pragmatist Mourinho said the most important thing was winning matches.

"There is no history without titles," he said. "If we play fantastically well but we don't win cups I think in 20 years' time nobody will remember this team."

"Everybody wants the team to play very well — I am the first one — but we have to win competitions."

Manchester United were unconvincing in the first half at QPR but improved after the break when Fellaini replaced Juan Mata and Wilson came on for injured defender Jonny Evans. "It's a change in attack that brings lot of risk, but we have won 2-0 and I think it was deserved," Van Gaal said after United's third away win in the league this season.

Reuters

Asian Cup Australia 2015

 Iran	15:30 MST (19.1.2015)	 UAE
 Qatar	15:30 MST (19.1.2015)	 Bahrain

Asian Cup Australia 2015 Result

China PR	2 - 1	DPR Korea
Uzbekistan	3 - 1	Saudi Arabia