

Tourism, driving engine for economic growth



President U Thein Sein delivers speech at opening of the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan — President U Thein Sein attended the opening of the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015 at Myanmar International Convention Centre-II, here, on Monday evening.

Before the opening ceremony, the President received tourism ministers from ASEAN countries, the secretary general of the UN World Tourism Organization and officials.

tion and officials.

The president delivered an address at the opening ceremony. He said: I am delighted to officiate the opening of the 34th ASEAN Tourism Forum which is the most important annual meeting in the context of tourism cooperation of ASEAN.

In the last year, 2014, Myanmar had successfully taken ASEAN Chairmanship and hosted the 24th and 25th ASEAN Summits and Related Summits in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar has worked together with other member countries and dialogue partners towards the realization of a politically cohesive, economically integrated and socially responsible ASEAN Community.

During this period of strategic political and economic reforms, there have been remarkable progresses in the respective sectors of the country.

In particular, the tourism and the telecommunication sector have achieved significant progress.

In the same year, Myanmar has attained a new milestone in its cultural identity and history by succeeding with its entry

of three Pyu ancient cities namely, Hanlin, Beikthano and Sri Kestha onto the World heritage List, as an outcome of the 30th Session of the UNESCO's World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015 takes place at an important juncture as the year 2015 marks an important milestone for the ASEAN Economic Community

which will be celebrated at the end of this year.

This year's theme for the ASEAN Tourism Forum "ASEAN: Tourism towards Peace, Prosperity and Partnership", captures the important elements that the ASEAN Tourism Sector can bring in for the ASEAN Economic Community.

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Poor farmers in Ayeyawady Delta see dawn of better life

By Aye Min Soe

KYEE CHAUNG (Ayeyawady Delta), 26 Jan — Poor farmers from Kyee Chaung Village in Bogale Township in the Ayeyawady Delta who suffered from under the onslaught of Cyclone Nargis more than six years ago

may have found a silver lining freeing themselves from the poverty trap.

"I want to borrow 450,000 kyat to grow a further 300 betel plants," Daw Ohn Myint Kyi, 57, told a loan officer of Pact Global Microfinance Fund (PGMF) as she stood alongside the four other mem-

bers of her lending group.

About 50 other women at the meeting of the members of the fund unanimously agreed to grant the proposed loan to Daw Ohn Myint Kyi when the loan officer sought agreements from them in three votes.

Daw Ohn Myint Kyi guaranteed the loan officer

that she would pay back K27,000 every two weeks to the fund until she settles the agricultural loan in a year.

It means she agreed to borrow money to do business from the fund with an interest rate of 2.5 per cent a month or 30 per cent a year.

The interest rate for social affairs loans is 2 per cent per month from the fund, which is very low compared to the interest rate they paid to private money lenders, according to local farmers. While some well-to-do families and those who were mostly unaffected by Nargis can avoid borrowing from the fund, 52 women from the 124 households in Kyee Chaung Village have registered as members of the microfinance fund and they are divided in groups comprising five to six members so they can guarantee each other when a member borrows money from the fund

in accordance with fund rules.

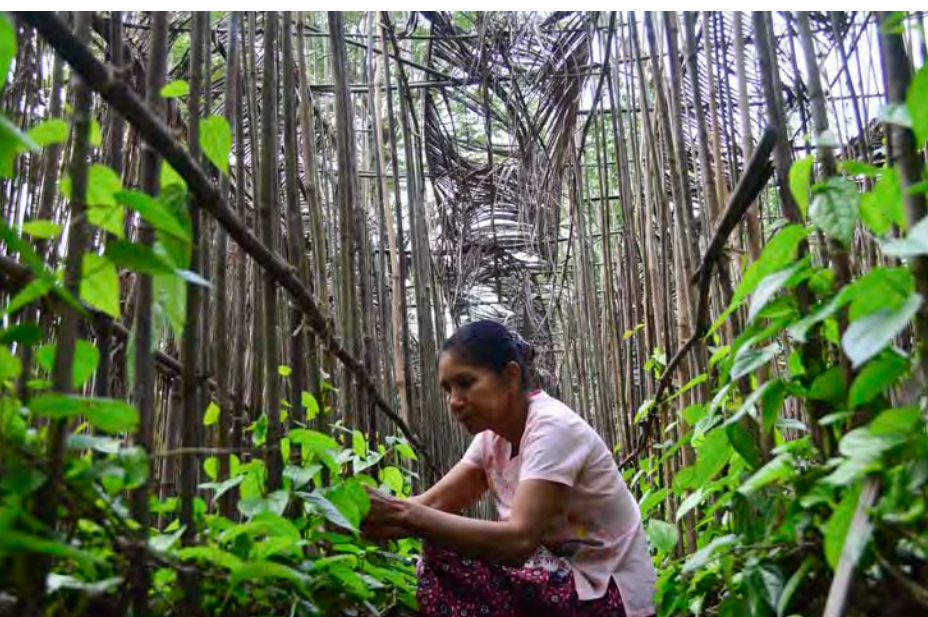
According to the fund, out of 585 villages in 86 village-tracts in rural areas, and 10 wards in urban in Bogale in the Ayeyawady Delta, credit components of the fund have reached to 429 villages, attracting 33,086 clients and 18,132 active borrowers.

So far, the fund has already loaned more than K10 million to women in the village of Kyee Chaung, said Khaing Khaing Oo, a loan officer for the fund.

PGMF is supported by the multi-donor Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), which works in Myanmar to alleviate poverty and hunger.

Before and after Nargis, the villagers, including Daw Ohn Myint Kyi, had no ways to do business as they had no capital and were burdened with debt.

When the rice harvest is low due to disease and



Daw Ohn Myint Kyi nurtures betel plants at her farm established with the use of loans from the Pact Global Microfinance Fund.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses 2015 Union Budget Bill



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw representatives focusing Union Budget bill.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—Pyidaungsu Hluttaw convened its fifth-day meeting Monday, with keeping records on separate funds of development projects in the message sent by President under 2014 Union Budget Bill, and discussing 2015 Union Budget Bill submitted by Ministry of Finance.

President U Thein Sein's message to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw included the use of K12.044 billion from separate funds for 12 projects—each one by Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Border Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and

Rural Development, Ministry of Construction, Mandalay region government, and Rakhine region government; together with two projects of Shan state government and three projects of Ayeyawaddy region government.

U Win Shein, Union Minister for Finance, sub-

mitted 2015 Union Budget Bill that emphasized on taxation policy.

The proposed bill suggested to promote tax-to-GDP ratio, expansion of basic tax, systematic scrutinizing on tax exemption and tax reduction processes.

Regarding government expense policy, the bill mentioned increasing expenses in education and education, prioritizing the immediate effective projects for public, systematic appointment of civil service staff, suspension of less-effective projects, salary increment for government employees, rural development programmes, power supply and water for households and agriculture.

Finance minister also submitted the estimated Union Budget for 2015-

2016 fiscal year, based on incomes of union-level departments, as well as foreign grants and loans.

He discussed salary increment for government staff and K37.492 billion for free medical treatment for them, with suggestion of K2901.763 billion for the salaries of civil service employees in 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The bill also elaborated macroeconomic situations of the State for 2015-2016 fiscal year, targeted rates for national production and service sectors, economic development, inflation, export volume, import volume, total trade volume, trade deficit and exchange rates.

The chapter of Public Finance and Management Reform System explained collaborations among Ministry of Finance, Hluttaw Public Accounts Commit-

tee, Office of Auditor-general of the Union, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Asia Development Bank, as well as development partner organizations from the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia.

National Planning Bill for 2015-2016 fiscal year, including projects and budgets under 2015 Union Budget Bill were discussed by officials from President's Office, Union Government's Office, Office of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Office of Amyotha Hluttaw, Ministry of Defence Services, Union Election Commission, Office of Auditor-general of the Union, Office of Union Civil Services Board, Nay Pyi Taw Council and Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Plan to improve Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank Law



Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—The Pyithu Hluttaw held the sixth day session on Monday.

With regard to the question on implementation of Sarpay Beikman's vision raised by U Soe Paing of Wundwin Constituency, Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway replied that Sarpay Beikman publishes books in translation and on technology to serve the interest of readers and to improve Myanmar literature standard.

U Myint Oo of Thantabin Constituency asked

whether or not there is a plan to disburse medium-term and long-term agricultural loans to the farmers for mortgaging farming rights certificate at any bank. Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Than replied that Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank disbursed loans to farmers in Bago Region by taking original certificates of farming rights. As there no instruction to take original certificates in disbursement of loans, the bank delivered loans to farmers in remaining regions and states by taking copies of certificates. The bank disburses loans to the farmers who really carry out farming works with endorsement of local authorities.

Disbursement of agricultural loans will be improved under the farming rights protection and interest promotion law and rules.

U Khin Maung Shwe of Tamu Constituency asked how to apply for vacant and virgin lands on a manageable scale and

whether there is plan to ease disciplines of application. The deputy minister replied that anybody may apply for farming rights on less than 10 acres of vacant and virgin lands on a manageable scale at region or state vacant land management work committee. The disciplines are aimed at scrutinizing the financial situation of entrepreneurs to do cultivation on over 50 acres of land. Scrutiny of financial situation will be eased for rural farmers and families on manageable scale works and there is no separate form for applying farming rights.

U Thein Tun of Kyaunggon Constituency submitted a proposal calling for disbursement of annual, short-term and long-term loans to farmers. The Hluttaw put it on record.

The deputy minister replied that amendment for existing Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank Law are submitted to the office of Attorney-General of the Union to improve the loan system for farmers.

MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw divided on religious conversion bill

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—Amyotha Hluttaw representatives were divided on the religious conversion bill on its sixth day session on Monday, with Representative U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State Constituency (6) saying enacting the bill will contribute to reduction of conflicts, stability and national interests while Representative U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Magway Region Constituency (4) was of the view that special care and enough time should be taken for enactment of an unbiased and meaningful law as the bill will force people to convert religion as its side effects and stoke the worry of national races instead of protecting the freedom



U J Yaw Wu of Kachin State Constituency (12).—MNA

of worship.

However, Representative Dr Banya Aung Moe of Mon State Constituency (7) said that the bill will not affect the freedom of worship and will encourage people of different religions to live in unity. Similarly, Defence Services Personnel

Representative Lt-Col Thein Lwin believed that the bill is in accordance with the state constitution and meets the international legal standards without preventing freedom of religious conversion. He said the bill systematize the conversion of religion.

Representatives U Nyan Lin of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (3) and U Phone Myint Aung of Yangon Region Constituency (3) proposed redrafting the bill while Representatives U Zonhle Htan of Chin State Constituency (2) and U J Yaw Wu of Kachin State Constituency (12) objected to it. Debate on the bill will continue on the seventh day session of the Amyotha Hluttaw. —MNA

ASEAN tourism ministers meet media

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—ASEAN tourism ministers held a press conference at Myanmar International Convention Centre-I in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday, attended by tourism ministers from China, Japan and Republic of Korea and officials of ASEAN Secretariat.

Union Minister for

Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung said that over 99 million of tourists visited ASEAN region in 2013, increasing 3% more than last year, according to the statistics of the World Tourism Organization. Globetrotters may browse the guidelines for visiting ASEAN through www.aseantssrc.org. On behalf of

ASEAN tourism ministers, he thanked China, Japan and Korea for promotion of ASEAN tourism sector.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum is being held in Nay Pyi Taw from 22 to 29 January.

The union minister and officials replied to questions raised by local and foreign media.—MNA

NATIONAL

Tourism, driving . . .

(from page 1)

According to the UN-WTO Tourism highlights, the international tourist arrivals in 2013 grew by 5% with 1.08 billion arrivals and international tourism receipts of US\$1159 billion in 2013. This contributed to 9% of worldwide GDP, 1 in 11 jobs and 6% of the world's exports which has highlighted the importance of tourism to global economic prosperity and stability.

With regard to ASEAN tourism performance in 2013, the total international arrivals to the region was 99.2 million with a growth of 11.73%. The intra-ASEAN Travel accounted for 45.6 million arrivals which was 46% of international arrivals. This illustrates how significant ASEAN is for both inbound and outbound tourism.

I am pleased to note that the ASEAN Tourism Sector has seen considerable positive growth in the consecutive years. This intra-regional travel growth is significant and also supports the theme of "ASEAN for ASEAN".

When we look at the Myanmar Tourism Sector, 2012 marked a tourism milestone for Myanmar as the country welcomed over a million tourists for the first time. We saw another milestone with visitor numbers reaching 2.04 million in 2013 with an increase of 93.04%. Last year, we received 3.08 million visitors with an increase of 51%.

If we continuously maintain the existing growth rate, we can expect to receive nearly 4.5 million visitors in 2015. If we can promote more peace, stability, and relaxation for travel restrictions for both international and regional tourists, the arrivals in 2015 can increase up to 5 million.

As you all know, tourism is a driving engine for economic growth. It has also been associated with various negative impacts on culture, nature and socioeconomic conditions of the host country.

Therefore, "Myanmar Responsible Tourism Policy" and "Policy on Community Involvement in Tourism" have been successfully adopted with

the close collaboration of International Development Partners to achieve equitable economic growth and environmental and cultural sustainability.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism who is responsible for overseeing the systematic development of tourism has adopted the "Myanmar Tourism Master Plan (2013-2020)" with assistance from the Government of Norway and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It is a road map for the sustainable development of Myanmar tourism.

As a result of the public-private-people collaboration, Myanmar has now become an emerging tourist destination in the world and received "Best in Travel AEC Country Award 2014" presented by Lonely Planet Traveller.

During this Forum, I believe, through the meetings and consultations in the past few days, you had fruitful and productive outcomes and also a great networking opportunity among the members and Dialogue Partners.

Secretary General of UNWTO Dr Taleb Rifai made a speech.

The Editor in Chief of Lonely Planet Traveller presented Best in Travel AEC Country to Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung.

The union minister presented best ASEAN marketing and promotional campaign award to Datuk Dr. Ong Hong Peng, best ASEAN cultural preservation effort award to Ms Regina Lopez and best ASEAN travel article award to Ms Desiree Bandal.

Officials presented best ASEAN conservation efforts award and best ASEAN airline programme award to the winners.

In the evening, the President hosted a dinner to the guests at MICC-2.

The ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015 will be held up to 27 January.—MNA

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung accepts Best in Travel AEC Country from Editor in Chief of Lonely Planet Traveller.—MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attends reception to mark 66th Anniversary of Republic Day of India

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham poses for documentary photo with ambassadors and officials of UN agencies at the reception to mark 66th Anniversary of Republic Day of India.—MNA

YANGON, 26 Jan — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attended a reception to mark the 66th Anniversary of Republic Day of the Republic of India at Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, on Monday evening.

It was also attended

by Lt-Gen Myint Soe and Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Tun Tun Naung, deputy ministers, ambassadors and military attachés of foreign missions in Yangon, resident

representatives of UN agencies and guests.

The vice president and Indian Ambassador Mr Gautan Mukhopadhyaya took positions on the dais. Attendees saluted respective countries. The Indian Ambassador extended greetings.

The vice president posed for documentary photo together with those present at the reception.

The guests were entertained with dances and songs by the cultural troupe from Manipur State of India.

MNA

ASEAN plus 3 Tourism Ministers Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan — The 14th Ministers Meeting of ASEAN, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea was held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre (1) in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung and Vice Chairman Ms Du Yill of China Nation-

al Tourism Authority jointly presided over the meeting.

In his opening speech, the union minister said that members of the ASEAN are actively engaging in tourism conferences, workshops, exhibitions and promotion activities with China, Japan and Korea and arrangements are underway to invite the three countries to such events of the ASEAN.

The union minister added that the assistance of the ASEAN-China, ASEAN-Japan and ASEAN-Koreas centres are of great benefit for the regional association. Cooperation for tourism with the three countries, enhancement of qualities of tourism services, marketing, information sharing, human resources development in tourism

sector, signing MoUs with the three countries, joint declaration of the ASEAN and the three countries and future cooperation were discussed at the meeting.

After the meeting, the participants viewed round the tourism exhibition at the centre.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Committee chairman receives British guests

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan — On behalf of the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo and Chairman of Bill Committee U T Khun Myat received Professor Sir Jeffrey Jowell QC, Director of Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law of the United Kingdom and party at the hall of Hluttaw Complex, here, on Monday.

They discussed legal affairs and parliamentary affairs.

MNA



Old students hold 7th respect paying ceremony



NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—The seventh respect paying ceremony took place at No 1 Basic Education High School in Pyin-

mana on 25 January.

Patron of the organizing committee Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee

U Hla Myint Oo and chairman U Hla Myint elaborated on arrangements made for holding the ceremony.

Former students per-

formed dances to the audiences. The former students donated K17.5 million to over 90 retired teachers. On behalf of the teachers, Sayagyi U Kyaw Nyunt gave words of advices.

Ko Gyi Kyaw (Pyinmana)

Writers share knowledge about literary affairs

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan — A literary talk was given at Shweintaung Mahasi meditation centre in Ward 6, Lewe, on 24 January.

It was organized by former students who pursued education at Basic Education High School No 1 in Lewe from 1985 to 2008.

Writers Ledwinthar Saw Chit, Maung Sein Win (Padeegon) and Nyi Min Nyo gave talks on literary affairs to the audiences.

Township IPRD



Health staff vaccinate children under 15 against infectious diseases



A health staff vaccinates school girl against measles and German measles.

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—The mass immunization of measles and German measles commenced on 19 January across the nation.

On 24 January, the vaccination was given to students at Central Basic

Education Middle Schools in Lewe.

Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Su Su Tun of Lewe Township Hospital (100-bed) and health staff gave vaccination to the students and educative talks

on infectious diseases of measles and German measles.

The first immunization will be given up to 27 January and the second immunization to the children under 15 from 19 to 28 February, midwife Daw Hla Win Maw told reporters.

Likewise, health staff of Myingyan Township Health Department vaccinated children against two diseases at basic education schools and monastic education schools in Myingyan, Mandalay Region.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Sacred tooth relic of Buddha conveyed to 22 townships of Ayeyawady Region

MYAUNGMYA, 26 Jan —Under the instructions of the Ayeyawady Region chief minister, a sacred tooth relic from Shwemuhthaw Pagoda in Patheingyi is being conveyed to 22 townships in the region from 22 January to 6 March.

On arrival at Myaungmya from Labutta, the tooth relic was welcomed by local people at Pinlelay suspension bridge. The local people paid homage to the sacred tooth relic and made donations.

After going round downtown in Myaungmya, the sacred tooth relic is being kept at the temporary pavilion on the platform of Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha Image in Myaungmya for two days.

In the evening, local people recited religious verses at the tooth relic. According to the schedules, the tooth relic proceeded to Einme at 7 am on 26 January.

Aung Min (District IPRD)

Central Command team champions in senior event of invitational volleyball tourney

MANDALAY, 26 Jan — The prize presentation for winners in Mandalay Invi-

tational Volleyball Tournament was held at the sports ground in the provost unit

in Mandalay Royal City on 24 January.

Central Command's

senior team beat Mandalay City Development Committee 3-2 in the final match.

The chairman of Mandalay Region Volleyball Subcommittee and officials presented prizes to the winning teams.

It was also attended by secretary of the subcommittee U Myint Swe, umpires, coaches and managers of volleyball teams and enthusiasts.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

An official presents championship trophy to Central Command team.



LOCAL NEWS

Shopkeepers join hands with FSD personnel in fire drill

MYINGYAN, 26 Jan—Shopkeepers and personnel of Fire Services Department jointly organized the fire drills at Myoma market in Myingyan, Mandalay Region, on 23 January.

Head of Township FSD U Kyaw Thura and personnel together with shopkeepers used fire trucks, fire engines and extinguishers.

“Thanks to the fire drill, shopkeepers will have experiences of fire preventive measures,” said a member of the market committee.

It was supervised by District’s deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung, Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Maung Win, township level officials and shopkeepers.—Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)



ShinpinthadunU Pagoda’s Pujaniya commences in Natogyi

NATOGYI, 26 Jan — Under the permission of the pagoda’s board of trustees, over 600 shops and 100 plots for vendors are under construction as of 23 January to organize the Buddha Pujaniya of ShinpinthadunU Pagoda in Natogyi, Mandalay Region.

Chairman of the pagoda’s board of trustees U Thein Htaik told media that arrangements have been made for holding

entertainments to the pilgrims and people at the 57th Anniversary Buddha Pujaniya.

This year, a better plan has been adopted for allotment of plots for shops.

The pagoda festival is held in Natogyi from 1st waxing day of to the fullmoon day of Tabodwe yearly. This year, it will be held from 20 January to 3 February.

Htay Myint Maung

Private school founders discuss reform process in education sector

MANDALAY, 26 Jan — Under the arrangements of MBA graduates association (Mandalay), an educative talk on perspectives of international experts and private school founders over reform process in Myanmar’s education sector was held at Mandalay Swan Hotel on 25 January.

“Our country is undertaking reform process

in education sector. We held talks with the aim of sharing knowledge how to apply techniques and methods in the reform of education sector,” joint secretary Ko Win Aung of MBA Association told reporters.

The talk was opened with an address by PhaungdawU monastery Sayadaw U Nayaka. Mr Ewald Ro-

land Baumann-Farkas of Germany, Daw Hnin Hnin Maw (founder of CAE private school), Dr Hla Moe (education columnist Ko Gyi Thauung) and Daw Kyi Kyi Myint (Thamadi private school founder) of Meiktila gave talks on reform process in education sector.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Local and foreign experts discuss reform process in education in Myanmar.

Region minister presents certificate, cash assistance to the aged

YINMABIN, 25 Jan—A ceremony to present a certificate of honour given by the President and cash assistance to grandma Phwar Nyein residing in Ward A of Yinmabin, Sagaing Region, was held at her residence on 24 January.

Sagaing Region Minister for Forestry and Mines U Than Htaik

and officials presented K200,000 and certificate of honour given by the President in addition to K100,000 provided by Region Government to the grandma.

The older person who turned 100 on 7 September 2014 lives in Yinmabin together with her family.

Tun Ko Ko

Local youths study hotels and tourism services

NYAUNGSHWE, 26 Jan — The basic regional tour guide course No. 11/2015, jointly organized by Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and Shan State government, concluded at the hall of Inthar literature, culture and regional development association in Nyaungshwe, Shan State, on 23 January.

Shan State Minister for Planning and Economy U Aung Kyaw Nyunt made a speech. He together with

Intha National Race Affairs Minister U Win Myint presented prizes to outstanding trainees. Director of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism U Than Win gave certificates to the trainees.

Altogether 118 trainees studied various subjects on hotels and tourism services.

The regional tour guide courses were conducted in various regions ten times to turn out 1,070 trainees.

Nay Myo Thurein

Vets to broaden horizon of local people in livestock breeding field

MOHNYIN, 26 Jan — Livestock breeding is to be carried out through correct techniques so as to development meat sector of the nation, Deputy Director Dr Win Oo of Mohnyin District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department told the opening ceremony of Community Animal Health Workers course at the office of Mohnyin Township LBVD on Monday.

Similar courses were opened in 200 townships including six townships of Kachin State simultaneously. Deputy Director U Aye Naing of District



Department of Rural Development, Staff Officer of Township LBVD Dr Wai Mon Htet and departmental officials were in attendance.

Staff Officer Dr Wai Mon Htet and officials will give training with 10 subjects to trainees up to 6 February.

GNLM-001

Training course enhances capacity of IPRD staff and officers

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan — The office work management course, concluded at the hall of Nay Pyi Taw Information and Public Relations Department on 25

January. The course was aimed at enabling staff of the departments in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area to have higher office work management skills.

Deputy Director of the department Daw Thin Thin Zin made a speech and awarded outstanding

trainees.

Assistant Director U Soe Paing presented completion certificates to the trainees.

Altogether 26 staff officers, heads of township departments and staff attended the course.

Tun Tun Win (Pyinmana)



'We have a deal': insurance may unlock India-US atomic trade

NEW DELHI, 26 Jan — Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Barack Obama unveiled a plan centered on insurance on Sunday that they hope will convince US companies to build nuclear power stations in India, but stopped short of demands to soften a liability law.

With the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy still fresh in India's mind, parliament five years ago passed a law that makes equipment suppliers ultimately responsible for an accident, a deviation from international norms that the companies found hard to swallow.

India's top diplomat, Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh, said the new plan was "squarely within our law".

"We have reached an

understanding, the deal is done," she said at a media briefing.

Details of the new plan were sketchy, but Indian and US diplomats said the idea was to transfer the financial risk to insurers in case of an accident.

"The India nuclear insurance pool is a risk transfer mechanism which is being formed by GIC Re and four other public sector undertakings in the general insurance business in India," foreign ministry joint secretary Amandeep Singh said.

After India and Washington first reached a nuclear deal in 2006, nuclear commerce worth billions of dollars was meant to be the centerpiece of a new strategic relationship, allowing New Delhi access to



US President Barack Obama stands next to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) waving as they leave after giving their opening statement at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 25 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

nuclear technology and fuel without giving up its weapons program. But the liability issue blocked progress.

GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy (GE.N) (6501.T) said it would review the governmental agreement in

due course.

"We believe a sustainable solution is one that brings India into compliance with the International Convention on Supplementary Compensation," the company, a joint venture

of General Electric and Hitachi Ltd, said in a statement.

Both GE and Westinghouse have already been given land in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh to begin construction of reactors.

India's foreign secretary Singh said there was a bilateral understanding that India's law was compatible with the Convention on Supplementary Compensation. India has yet to ratify the convention.

It is also likely that India will need a similar deal with Japan since many of the reactor components used by the joint US-Japanese companies come from there.

Toshiba Corp's (6502.T) Westinghouse Electric Co praised the developments on Sunday,

and said it looked forward to further meetings and discussions, including a planned "insurance seminar."

"Westinghouse is pleased that the US government and the government of India continue to make progress to resolve issues that will enable Westinghouse and other US companies to participate in India's growing nuclear energy market," the company said in a statement.

On Sunday, Richard Verma, the US ambassador in New Delhi, said the new plan was based on a memorandum of law and would not require new legislation at this stage.

Until recently, US officials have said that the best solution would be to change the liability law. —Reuters

Philippines says deadly clash a mistake, hopeful peace not derailed

MANILA, 26 Jan — The Philippines said on Monday a clash between security forces and Muslim rebels in which dozens of people were killed was a mistake and both sides said they were hopeful the violence would not scupper a peace deal the rebels are negotiating. Security forces said about 50 policemen and eight rebels were killed in what a top official described as a "misencounter" during an operation on Sunday to arrest two militants who had taken refuge with Moro Islamic Liberation Front fight-

ers. The rebels, fighting for 45 years in the south of the largely Christian country, have agreed to disband their force and surrender weapons in exchange for an autonomous government.

Interior Secretary Manuel Roxas said the police were hunting two "high-value" militants but police commandos ran into a group of rebels who thought the police were mounting an attack. "This was a misencounter," Roxas told a news conference in Cotabato City in the south of the country.

"We expect that naturally there will be impact but we are hopeful and confident this will not derail the peace talks."

Efforts to bring peace to the main southern island of Mindanao have raised hopes for the development of a long-neglected region rich in mineral resources.

The fighting has killed 120,000 people and displaced 2 million.

Mohagher Iqbal, head of the rebel peace panel, said the police failed to coordinate their operations with

the ceasefire committee. "They entered our area and attacked us, what are we going to do?" he asked. "What happened was self-defence." Iqbal said he was confident the peace deal would not be affected because both sides were committed to it.

The government and the rebels signed a truce in March 2014 but a final deal is still being worked out. The next stage of the process involves the Senate drafting a law on autonomy for the region.

Reuters

Deputy of Indonesia's anti-graft body to resign: agency official

JAKARTA, 26 Jan — The deputy chief of Indonesia's anti-graft agency will submit his resignation letter on Monday, days after the police named him a suspect in a false testimony case, an agency official said.

Police on Friday detained and questioned Bambang Widjojanto, deputy chief of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), for a case dating from 2010, fuelling tension between two law enforce-

ment bodies that have long had strained relations.

"Bambang will submit his resignation letter today," Johan Budi, KPK's deputy for corruption prevention, told Reuters.

Widjojanto, who told domestic media on Saturday he was considering resigning, was not immediately available for comment.

The head of the KPK, Abraham Samad, told domestic news website Detik.com on Saturday that he would not accept a resignation letter from Widjojanto, who is one of four KPK commissioners.

KPK supporters believe Widjojanto was named a police suspect in retaliation for the agency's decision to declare police general Budi Gunawan a bribery suspect on 13 January. That announcement led President Joko Widodo to delay Gunawan's appointment as the next police chief.

The police said its actions against Widjojanto were not linked to the agency. The apparent tit-for-tat actions reignite a rivalry between the graft-tainted police and the independent agency, popular among ordinary Indonesians for being a thorn in the side of the establishment. Resolving the situation will prove an early test for Widodo, who took office in October, pledging a clean government.

Reuters

Ex-Thai PM's party vows calm, US calls for inclusive politics

BANGKOK, 26 Jan — Former Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra's Puea Thai Party vowed on Monday it would not retaliate a five-year political ban imposed on the ousted leader, and a leading party figure said their movement could survive without the powerful family.

In a near identical repeat of her billionaire brother's fall from power, Yingluck was last week banned from politics for five years and indicted on criminal charges over her involvement in a state rice buying scheme that cost Thailand billions of dollars.

Yingluck's supporters say the charges against her are an attempt to limit the political influence of her brother, ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin

Shinawatra, and weaken his Puea Thai Party.

Anusorn Iamsa-ard, spokesman for the Puea Thai Party, said the decision to ban Yingluck from politics would not be a trigger for unrest.

"We will not use the decision to impeach [former] Prime Minister Yingluck as a trigger to organize political movements, that is not our intention," Anusorn told Reuters.

Thailand remains under martial law following a May coup which the army said was necessary to restore order after months of political unrest that left nearly 30 dead. The law, imposed nationwide, bans all political gatherings.

The ban and the legal case against Yingluck are the latest twist in a dec-

ade of turbulent politics that have pitted Yingluck and her brother Thaksin, himself a former prime minister, against the royalist-military establishment that sees the Shinawatras as a threat and reviles their populist policies.

Both led populist governments toppled in coups and were subjected to legal action and street protests by pro-establishment activists.

Thaksin fled Thailand to avoid a 2008 jail term for corruption. He has lived abroad since, but retains a strong influence over Thai politics.

In her first public sighting since she was banned from political office, Yingluck met with Assistant US Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific Daniel Russel in Bangkok



Yingluck Shinawatra

on Monday.

Russel, the highest-level US official to visit Thailand since the coup, called for a "broader and more inclusive" political process.

"The United States does not take sides in Thai politics. We believe it is for the Thai people to deter-

mine the legitimacy of the political and legal processes," Russel told students at Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University.

"We're also particularly concerned that the political process doesn't seem to represent all elements in Thai society."

Thailand's military-appointed legislature last week found Yingluck guilty of negligence over her role in a state rice buying scheme that paid farmers far above market prices for rice.

The same day, the attorney general's office said it would proceed with criminal charges against her for alleged corruption in the rice scheme. If found guilty by the Supreme Court, she could be jailed for up to 10 years.—Reuters

India's Republic Day: history, pomp and a parade



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L-R), US President Barack Obama, India's President Pranab Mukherjee and Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari attend the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on 26 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

NEW DELHI, 26 Jan — Barack Obama is the first US president to be guest of honour at India's annual Republic Day parade, a flamboyant display of the South Asian nation's military might and cultural diversity in the heart of the capital, New Delhi.

Despite intermittent rain, large crowds flocked to see the show on Monday morning and catch a

glimpse of the US president and his hosts, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Pranab Mukherjee.

HISTORY

India won independence from British rule on 15 August, 1947, but it was not until 26 January, 1950, that the nation declared itself a sovereign republic state with the adoption of its constitution. On that

day, Rajendra Prasad, India's first president, unfurled the national flag, and thereafter 26 January became a national holiday, Republic Day.

A SHOW OF MIGHT

India's military forces go on full display during the two-hour parade, with troops, rows of tanks, missiles and formations of horses and camels maneuvering down the wide Ra-

jpath (King's Way) boulevard. During the event, bravery awards are given to military personnel, civilians and children for showing "courage in the face of adversity". The event is presided over by the president, commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

CAMELS AND BALANCING ACTS

Several days before the parade, India's various armed forces units can be spotted along the route, practising for the big day. India's Border Security Force are regular favorites in the show, with their "Daredevil" motorcycle riders appearing in gravity-defying balancing acts and their camel contingents toting guns and musical instruments.

DIVERSE NATION

Throughout the morning, children from across the country perform in the parade and in past years, "tableaux", or floats, from different states and ministries have shown off everything from India's agriculture to its research in the Antarctic.

Reuters

Australia knights Prince Philip, sparking national outrage

PERTH, 26 Jan — Conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott has awarded Australia's highest honour to Prince Philip, husband of Queen Elizabeth, sparking a barrage of criticism across the country on its national day of celebration.

Prince Philip was made a Knight of the Order of Australia, awarded as part of the country's honours system announced on Australia Day, with Abbott saying it paid "tribute to an extraordinary life of service".

The award grated with republicans who want to sever ties with Britain and appoint an Australian president. "It's a time warp where we're giving knighthoods to English royalty," Opposition leader Bill Shorten told Australian radio.

Commentator and associate editor of the national daily, The Australian, Chris Kenny tweeted, "Just another own goal and an embarrassment for Australia on our national day".

Australia is a constitutional monarchy, with the

British monarch its head of state who acts in predominately a ceremonial manner but has the power to approve the abolition of parliament, which happened in 1975 toppling the then government.

Australians also questioned the procedure for issuing knighthoods, which are awarded solely on the recommendation of the prime minister to the queen.

Any Australian can nominate a fellow citizen for other honours. Abbott's surprise reintroduction of knights and dames in the country's honours system last year drew criticism that he was out of touch with national sentiment. At the time he said they were intended to recognize "pre-eminent Australians".

Abbott, whose popularity has fallen sharply in recent months, said he stood by the decision to award the knighthood to 93-year-old Prince Philip because "the monarchy has been an important part of Australia's life since 1788".

Reuters

Japan convenes 150-day Diet session amid hostage crisis

TOKYO, 26 Jan — Japan convened a 150-day regular Diet session on Monday, as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe continues to grapple with a hostage crisis that will likely spur debate about Tokyo's fight against terrorism.

Since the apparent killing of one of two Japanese hostages being held by a group thought to be Islamic State, Japan has been trying to secure the release of the other captive — freelance journalist Kenji Goto — through every channel.

The Diet session comes amid Abe's repeated calls for raising Japan's security profile abroad by making "proactive" contributions to global peace and security. Japan pledged \$200 million in "humanitarian and nonmilitary support," including providing aid to countries helping refugees from Syria and Iraq, before the hostage crisis.

Abe has portrayed the Diet session through 24 June as one to push for bold reform in various



Photo taken on 26 Jan, 2015, at the House of Councillors chamber in Tokyo shows the opening ceremony of a 150-day regular Diet session, with the attendance of Emperor Akihito. The session was convened as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe continues to grapple with a hostage crisis.—KYODO NEWS

sectors such as agriculture, labor, energy and medical care. One feature of Abe's growth strategy is to streamline Japan's powerful agricultural cooperatives.

"It's going to be an extremely important Diet session," Abe told a meeting of ruling Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers

for both houses of chamber. "We will seek passage of bills to reform bedrock regulations in areas including medical care and agriculture," he added.

Unified local elections are scheduled for April, when the prime minister's handling of the government and the hostage crisis could be tested. Despite a

convincing victory in the 14 December general election, candidates supported by the LDP have lost in multiple gubernatorial races since last year.

The government is expected to seek passage by early April of a 3.12 trillion yen supplementary budget for fiscal 2014 and a record-high 96.34 trillion

yen annual budget for fiscal 2015, after Abe put off a second sales tax hike until 2017 following a recession triggered by the previous increase last April.

Currently, the government plans to submit around 70 bills to the Diet, officials said. In addition, it plans to submit more than 10 bills to loosen restrictions on the Self-Defence Forces as the ruling coalition of the LDP and Komeito is expected to step up talks on security in early February.

Legislative work is needed for Japan to put into effect a Cabinet decision made in July to ensure a "seamless" response to various security threats, which includes the country's potential exercise of the right to collective self-defence, or defending allies under armed attack even when Japan is not.

Opposition lawmakers are expected to grill Abe over how he intends to compile a statement for the 70th anniversary on 15 August of Japan's surrender in World War II. The state-

ment will likely be scrutinized by Asian neighbors like China and South Korea.

The prime minister signaled on Sunday the wording of a landmark 1995 apology for the country's wartime aggression in Asia, or the Murayama statement, could be changed, saying he wants to reflect how his administration sees the issue.

"The prime minister indicated he may not stick to keywords in the Murayama statement, which could mean Japan sending the wrong message," Democratic Party of Japan leader Katsuya Okada told fellow lawmakers, as he expressed determination to face off with Abe, who heads the LDP. The 1995 statement was issued by then Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama.

It will be the first Diet session for Okada since he was elected leader of the country's main opposition party, which is struggling to rebuild itself and win back public support.

Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 27 January, 2015

Peaceful transition rests on stronger legislature

By Myint Win Thein

Every law gives protection to somebody or something. For example, the penal code protects the general public from criminal acts while environmental laws protect the environment from destruction. In the same way, a state constitution protects the rights of citizens in a country.

Therefore, it is important to study to whom or what a law gives protection. When it gives

protection to a great majority of a society, it is said to be lawful. When it gives protection to a tiny minority of a society, it is said to be oppressive. Once, the concept of enslaving man by man himself was a law. But society will not accept such laws.

In history, rulers enacted laws to protect their own interests at the expense of their subjects. They amended or enacted laws only when their interests were at risk or their power was challenged by a great majority of their subjects. Sometimes, it was too late for them to amend the laws and the result was violent overthrow of the ruler.

In a parliamentary democracy, such violent changes are prevented by the legislature whose paramount duty is to enact laws that protect the interests of the great majority of the society and amend laws that are enacted in the interests of a tiny minority. When a legislature is strong and

working in the interests of the majority, it can contribute to peaceful changes, but when it is weak, violence of the past may repeat.

For a legislature to be stronger, it needs to draft bills protecting the interests of great majority of people by itself rather than approving or amending those that are drafted by other institutions. Only then, will a society be able to change peacefully.

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Terrorism and Extremism: Two Separate Concepts

(The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author.)

Aung Zin Phyoo Thein

Perusing last week's edition of the Global New Light of Myanmar, I had come across a highly entertaining article which, though informative, had a number of minor drawbacks. Of these, the statement of how terrorism and extremism 'cannot be split up' was of particular note. In truth, there are several marked differences between the two entities. Simultaneously, though, they are united in a number of senses-the most obvious being the fact that both are exceedingly hard to define.

A dictionary definition of terrorism would refer to it as the use of violence to achieve a political aim. This definition fails to consider the intricacies of the term, and barely scrapes the surface. Terrorism in all sense is a liquid concept-a concept which is constantly evolving and transforming. In The Globalization of World Politics, a de facto Bible for international studies, Baylis and Owen refer to the term as contextual, and subjective to interpretation. Personal definition would state it as the usage of tools such as bombing, hostage taking extortion and at times murder in order to draw attention to a particular cause or to evoke a response from a certain authority, i.e. government.

As mentioned, terrorism is an evolving entity. Deeming it thus, there have been two main waves of

terrorism. The first wave was focused primarily on ideology-ranging from anarchism to Marxism and spanned from the late 1950s to the early to mid 1990s. The Japanese Red Army, Irish Republican Army, the Italian Red Brigade and the Baader Meinhof in Germany were characteristic of this era. These groups followed different ideological causes, yet one element was uniform-their struggle for legitimacy in the eyes of the world. This would be explanatory of their attacks, the majority of which were designed to minimize civilian casualty. These groups targeted individuals, such as Carlos the Jackal's infamous hostage-taking of OPEC delegates in Vienna in 1976, the Entebbe Hijacking in the same year or Lord Mountbatten's 1980 assassination by the IRA.

Towards the nineties, three highly disturbing trends emerged. The first was how attacks got increasingly indiscriminate, with more civilian lives being lost. In addition, terrorist networks became more complex and sophisticated, as evidenced for instance by the vast number of Al-Qaeda affiliates throughout the world, ranging from the Middle East to North Africa (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb) to South Asia (Lashkar-e-Taiba) to as far as Southeast Asia (the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines).

This in turn is further assisted by globalization, easing air travel and laws rendering borders almost non-existent, despite the beefed up security measures worldwide following 9/11.

What characterizes this second wave of terrorism is the third trend-religion as a fuel. Though tracing its roots to the Middle Ages, religion-inspired terror took hold following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Terror-leaning radicals saw their advantage, and used religion as a means to both justify their actions and lure vulnerable individuals into their cause. The modern terrorist has been aided by the increasing prominence of social media-employing it as a platform for recruitment. The ISIS terror group, for example, has excelled in this area, revolutionizing traditional radicalization through their expertly edited albeit graphic videos, available widely through the 'dark web'. The State Department attempted to reverse this through its own 'counter-radicalization' media, but this has so far proven a failure. Every month, hundreds of Westerners (from Europe and the US) flock to Syria via Turkey to join ISIS, and more disturbingly, the age group is slowly widening to include teenagers, some as young as 14. Westerners now make up the third largest number of foreign fighters, behind only Tunisia.

From this point, a movement to extremism is necessitated. Extremism is

an even more difficult term to define than terrorism, as it encompasses an even wider reach. Extremism is regularly seen to relate to ideas-yet likewise this is highly subjective. For example, the majority of us would view self-infliction of pain for religious and cultural purposes (such as the honor killings in India) as extreme, i.e. they espouse an extremist nature. But this is not shared by adherents, who regard their actions as a customary testament of their faith and a celebration of their tradition.

The primary distinction is that extremists do not necessarily take up violence. Basically, terrorists are extremists, yet not all extremists are terrorists. According to Barry Buzan, extremism represents a delicate crossroads for an authority-to act, or not to act; this action being determined by a number

of variables.

We cannot, for example, equate ISIS to extremist right wing political groups. UKIP, The British National Party (BNP) and the Golden Dawn Party in Greece are examples of such, yet I highly doubt that these parties behead kidnapped foreign journalists on camera. These extremist entities are also legal-to the point that in the most recent EU elections, two-thirds were won by such groups-a highly discomforting fact.

In conclusion, the disparities between these two terms should be kept clear in mind, though admittedly they tend to overlap in a number of respects, such as in how both are subjective. What is most important, however, is how we ap-

proach them-extremism should be under close monitoring, and not be allowed to foster violence in any sense, at which point it needs to be pacified and eradicated. Neo-Nazi groups provide such an example-the racial hate crimes they commit are not on the level of terror, yet must be reacted to and dismantled. Additionally, Australia had made this mistake in regards to Man Haron Monis, until the lives of two hostages were lost at his hands, and so had the US with the Tsarnaev brothers two years prior. 2014 has shown us the level to which terror can gain the upper hand. It is time to make 2015 the year we tackle them head on together, in full force.

Aung Zin Phyoo Thein (Undergraduate Student of International Relations at the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University, United Kingdom)



Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw signs the book of condolences for demise of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Yangon on 26 January.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers speech at Tatmadaw Central Organizing Committee

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Jan—As carrying out organizing tasks is unifying forces, it is necessary for defence services personnel to build internal unity of the defence services and unity between the defence services and the people, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, who also chairs the Tatmadaw Cen-

tral Organizing Committee, said at the 1/2005 meeting of the committee at the meeting hall of the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services (Army) on Monday.

Defending the nation together with people's power, defence services personnel are required to perform their duties not only from the military point of view but also

from the administrative, political and economic points of view, the senior general added. The senior general continued to say that welfare of personnel and their families including food, clothing, housing, transportation, carrying out manageable level farming, healthcare and education enhancement programs should be carried out for the internal unity of the

defence services while defence services personnel are required to abide by code of conducts for personnel and laws, rules and regulations. For the unity between defence services personnel and the people, it is necessary for the personnel to engage in regional development tasks, offer aids as soon as possible in the event of natural disasters, provide healthcare

for the needy people in remote areas and participate in promotion of life standards of rural people, the senior general said. In addition, the senior general pointed out that defence services personnel are also required to help departments in immigration issues like infiltration of people who are not nationals.

The Tatmadaw has appointed over 500 female

officers including 14 colonels, two of whom are performing duties as commanders, and 14 lieutenant colonels to reveal the power of women who make up over 50 percent of the population and plans are underway to appoint more female officers, according to the senior general. In addition, the Tatmadaw is inviting ethnic armed groups to the path for peace and is necessary to take measures for stability and the rule of law for the success of 2015 elections.—Myawady

MYINGYAN, 26 Jan—Police have charged students protesters with removing state flag in Myingyan Degree College on Monday afternoon.

A protest group led by Aung Hmaing San from Ba Ka Tha (All Burma Federation of Student Unions) and some local people marched around Myingyan Township in the afternoon.

A combination of 275 protesters arrived at Myingyan Degree College, and entered the campus, although the principal of college and academics tried to stop them.

In front of the main building, they replaced the State flag with the one of student union, ignoring the request not to do so by college security personnel.

A group of protest stu-

dents who marched against the National Education Law reached Myingyan on Monday after a night-stay in Ngahtogyi Township.

Five Buddhist monks led by U Visuddha from the Young Monks Union of Chauk Township and one from Pakkoku Township

joined with about 65 students in Natogyi Township, according to witnesses.

The protesters are using four vehicles carrying

campaign team, campaign stage, loudspeakers and foods. Some weary protesters are carried by some cars. They marched through My-

ingyan Township around 6:00 p.m. together with some groups before staying the night at Sunlungu Buddhist monastery.—040

Student protesters charged for taking down state flag



Student protesters taking down State Flag in front of main building at Myingyan Degree College in Myingyan Township.

Poor farmers in Ayeyawady . . .

(from page 1)

pests, the rice produced from their farmland is barely enough to pay back agricultural loans to the government, causing them to get into debt for ordinary living.

Even in years of good harvests, there is no certainty they will get a good price for their rice.

To feed their families and to start planting rice for the next season, they had to borrow money from private lenders at 8 to 10 per cent interest per month.

One year after Nargis, Daw Ohn Myit Kyi borrowed K70,000 from the microfinance fund for the first time and farmed pigs as a side job while her family was working paddy on their three acres of rain-fed rice fields.

As she kept her guarantee to the fund, the amount of money she is entitled to borrow from the fund has increased year by year, reaching K400,000 this year.

After struggling for three or four years, she tackled her debts with high interest rates owed to private money lenders and was able to send her three children to school until they completed their high school education.

"I can pay 27,000 kyat every 14 days to the (PGMF)," says Daw Ohn Myint Kyi with confidence, "because I have 500 betel plants and other vegetable plantations and I have earned 5,000 to 6,000 kyat every three days."

Besides, she will earn income from her new betel plants every 15 days once they are mature.

Like Daw Ohn Myint Kyi, other women from the village have also gained benefits from the microcredit scheme.

Daw Ei Khin, 45, is farming 100 ducks while planting rice in her family-owned rain-fed eight acre field. She borrowed K300,000 from the (PGMF)

last year to raise ducks and to establish vegetable plots.

However, some households, including families of old couples who have no women, cannot borrow money from the fund because the fund loans only to women because women have earned the trust of the fund, she added.

The microfinance design for agricultural and livestock loans of the Pact Global Microfinance Fund has given priorities to women because it is a majority of women who can participate in microfinance meetings during day while their husbands are working the farmland, according to the PGMF.

"However, men are not excluded," said U Myint Kyaw, LIFT's Microfinance and Business Development Officer. "PGMF provides microfinance services in villages where other NGOs are implementing development projects with LIFT funding. Among those villages, men's membership in mi-

crofinance is around 2.3 %," he added.

PGMF has also given social loans and loans to vulnerable households with very low interest rates. In addition, it has set up a fund for beneficiary welfare that provides lump sum compensation for economic

loss resulting from natural disaster, and client death benefits, he added. To qualify for loans from the fund, members have to participate in the non-formal business education programme of PGMF to learn about business, including profit, loss, weaknesses and strengths of

the small businesses that relates to both agriculture and non agriculture.

"We are out of debt. We don't need to borrow money with high interest rates from private lenders. We have no worries for our future," said Daw Ei Khin.

GNLM



When villagers understand how to value loans and their businesses for getting out of poverty, they are ready to receive loans from the Pact Global Microfinance Fund.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Greek leftist leader Tsipras claims victory over austerity

ATHENS, 26 Jan — Greek leftist leader Alexis Tsipras promised on Sunday that five years of austerity, “humiliation and suffering” imposed by international creditors were over after his Syriza party swept to victory in a snap election on Sunday.

With about 92 percent of votes counted, Syriza was set to win 149 seats in the 300-seat parliament, taking 36.3 percent of the vote, 8.5 points ahead of the conservative New Democracy party of Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. Samaras conceded victory but only the final result, expected in the early hours of Monday will show whether Syriza has won the 151 seats that would allow it to rule alone.

Nevertheless, the 40-year-old Tsipras is on course to become prime minister of the first euro zone government openly opposed to the kind of severe austerity policies which the European Union and International Monetary Fund imposed on Greece as a condition of its bailout. “Greece leaves behind catastrophic austerity, it leaves behind fear and authoritarianism, it leaves behind five years of humiliation and anguish,” Tsipras told thousands of cheering supporters gathered in Athens. Financial markets reacted nervously to the victory of Tsipras, who has prom-

ised to renegotiate Greece’s debt agreements, fearing potential conflict with other euro zone governments that could put more strain on the currency bloc.

The euro slid to near an 11-year low and US stock futures fell as Asian markets opened on Monday.

Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, has insisted Greece must respect the terms of its 240 billion euro bailout deal, which saved the country from bankruptcy but at the cost of bitter sacrifices by the Greek people. As thousands of flag-waving supporters hit the streets of Athens, some shedding tears of joy, Germany’s Bundesbank warned Greece it needed reform to tackle its economic problems. Syriza’s campaign slogan “Hope is coming!” resonated with voters worn down by huge budget cuts and heavy tax rises during six years of crisis that has sent unemployment over 25 percent and pushed millions into poverty. “We hope our expectations will be fulfilled,” said 47-year-old teacher Efi Avgoustakoushe. “On Monday in class, we’re not allowed to comment and take sides but we will be smiling.” Tsipras said he would cooperate with fellow euro zone leaders for “a fair and mutually beneficial solution” but said the Greek people came first. “Our pri-



Head of radical leftist Syriza party Alexis Tsipras waves while leaving the party headquarters after winning the elections in Athens on 25 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

ority from the very first day will be to deal with the big wounds left by the crisis,” he said. “Our foremost priority is that our country and our people regain their lost dignity.” He has promised to keep Greece in the euro and has toned down some of his rhetoric but his arrival in power would mark the biggest challenge yet to the approach adopted to the crisis by euro zone governments.

Syriza’s victory is likely to encourage other anti-austerity parties which are winning support across Europe, such as the Podemos movement in Spain.

But it might also strengthen the hand of mainstream leaders including French President Francois Hollande and Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi who argue that ortho-

dox austerity policies have failed to produce the economic growth which Europe needs to recover fully from the global financial crisis.

Hollande expressed in a statement his “desire to pursue the close cooperation between our two countries in service of growth and the stability of the euro zone”.

Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja was more forthright, saying he believed the result would change the debate in Europe and put more emphasis on growth and employment. “This is a slap at what I see as a very right-wing economic policy in Europe,” Tuomioja, a Social Democrat, told the website of the *Helsingin Sanomat* newspaper.

However with Greece’s economy unlikely to recover for years, Tsipras faces

enormous problems and his victory raises the prospect of tough negotiations with European partners including German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Greece’s bailout deal with the euro zone is due to end on 28 February and Tsipras’ immediate challenge will be to settle doubts over the next installment of more than 7 billion euros in international aid. EU finance ministers are due to discuss the issue in Brussels on Monday. If Syriza falls short of a majority, Tsipras will have to try to build a coalition with smaller parties or form a minority government with ad-hoc support from others in parliament. “It’s a historic win,” said Athens-based political analyst John Loulis, adding that Tsipras would have to form a coalition to prevent renewed instability. “He has no other option, the last thing the country needs would be another round of elections. Negotiations are likely to begin immediately, and both the small Independent Greeks party and centrist To Potami party, said they would be willing to support an anti-bailout government. If Syriza requires support to govern, it may find itself hostage to its partners’ demands, raising questions over how durable a Tsipras government would prove.

Reuters

Hoax caller impersonating spy chief put through to UK PM Cameron

LONDON, 26 Jan — The British government said it was reviewing security procedures after a hoax caller claiming to be the director of Britain’s GCHQ eavesdropping agency was put through to Prime Minister David Cameron on Sunday. In a separate hoax call to GCHQ, also on Sunday, a mobile phone number for its director Robert Hannigan was given out. The government said the number provided is not used for calls involving classified information.

“The Prime Minister ended the call when it became clear it was a hoax. In neither instance was sensitive information disclosed,” a spokeswoman for Cameron’s office, Number 10 Downing Street, said in a statement.

“Both GCHQ and Number 10 take security seriously and both are currently reviewing procedures following these hoax calls to ensure that the government learns any lessons from this incident.”

All government departments have been now put on alert for such calls, she added. — Reuters

Dacic: Serbia wants better ties with African Union states



ADDIS ABABA, 26 Jan — Serbia wants to develop good relations and economic and political cooperation with African Union member states, Serbian First Deputy Prime Minister Ivica Dacic, who is also foreign minister, said on Sunday.

The Serbian foreign minister, who will take part in the 26th session of the Executive Council of the African Union in Ethiopia on Monday, told reporters that Serbia, as the legal successor of Yugoslavia, wants to develop good relations with its traditional friends in Africa.

Former Yugoslav president Tito, one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, “had a major role and significance for African countries and we want to continue that tradition,” Dacic said, adding that, for this reason, Serbia will attend future African Union meetings.

There is a long-standing friendship between Ethiopia and Serbia, and Serbia wants those relations to be as good as possible and develop faster, Dacic said.

“We want to have as many political visits and

consultations as possible and develop economic cooperation, which can be better than it has been so far,” the foreign minister said.

“I have come here as a friend to friends,” Dacic noted. As announced earlier, while in Addis Abeba, Dacic will meet with Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and other senior officials of the Commission, including Deputy Chairperson Erastus Mwencha and Commissioner for Peace and Security Smail Chergui.

Also announced are Dacic’s meetings with the Ethiopian foreign minister, as well as with the foreign ministers of Algeria, Angola, Morocco, Kenya and other African countries, with which Serbia seeks to further improve bilateral relations and political dialogue, in particular economic cooperation, for which there are significant possibilities and a mutual interest.—Tanjug

Russia’s independent political course real cause for Western sanctions

MOSCOW, 26 Jan — Russia’s independent political course and restoration of its economic might were the real cause for Western sanctions against Moscow, while the conflict in neighbouring Ukraine was an excuse to initiate the sanctions, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said. “The real cause was the assumed course towards the independent development of our country, the course towards the independent political policy, the course towards the restoration of the economic might of our country,” Rogozin said in an interview with Rossiya-1 television channel.

The deputy premier said that the United States and its President Barack Obama personally as well as the European Union are using the events in Ukraine as a tool to exert pressure on Russia.

“Ukraine is an excuse and the real cause is where

we [Russia] are heading,” Rogozin said adding that the European Union “unfortunately suppressed its will to independent thinking and obeys NATO logic.”

The West started imposing sanctions on Russia since March 2014 over the events in Ukraine. First, an early EU summit stalled the talks on a visa-free regime and a new base agreement on Russia-EU cooperation. Further on, the sanctions were grouped into three categories — personal, corporate and sectoral.

By the beginning of September, some 420 Russian individuals and 143 companies had been put on the sanction lists of the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Switzerland and Norway.

The sectoral sanctions imposed for a term of one year include an embargo on the supply of arms to Russia and the importation of

Russian weapons and related materials, a ban on the delivery of dual-purpose products and technologies to Russia, as well as innovative technologies for Russia’s oil extracting industry.

In mid-September, the European Union published new sanctions against Russia in its official journal.

Russia fully banned from 7 August, 2014 the imports of meat, fish, cheeses, milk, vegetables and fruits from western countries that had imposed economic sanctions against Russian citizens and companies.

The countries that have slapped sanctions against Russia include the European Union member states, Norway, the United States, Canada, Australia and Japan. Russia’s food imports from these countries amounted to \$9.1 billion in 2013, according to the Federal Customs Service, of which the EU accounted for 66%.—Itar-Tass

WORLD

Assad seeks agreement over US air strikes in Syria

BEIRUT, 26 Jan— President Bashar al-Assad has said U.S.-led air strikes against Islamic State militants in Syria should be subject to an agreement with Damascus and Syrian troops should be involved on the ground.

Assad was speaking in an interview with the U.S.-based Foreign Affairs Magazine published on Monday.

“With any country that is serious about fighting terrorism, we are ready to make cooperation, if they’re serious,” Assad said, when asked if he would be willing to take steps to make cooperation easier with Washington.

Washington supports opposition forces fighting for the past four years to topple Assad, but its position has become complicated since Islamic State and other hardline groups emerged as the most powerful rebel factions.

Since Islamic State took over much of Syria



Syria's President Bashar al-Assad is seen during an interview with the American magazine Foreign Affairs published in Damascus on 26 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

and Iraq last summer, the United States has mounted regular air strikes against it. But it has rejected the idea of allying itself with the Syrian government despite them now having a common enemy.

When asked what he would like to see from the United States, Assad said Washington should pressure Turkey not to allow money and weapons into northern Syria and “to

make legal cooperation with Syria and start by asking permission from our government to make such attacks”.

“The format we can discuss later, but you start with permission. Is it an agreement? Is it a treaty? That’s another issue,” he said. Washington informed Damascus before it started strikes in Syria in September. The power of the hardline Islamists, including

Islamic State and the al Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front, makes it more difficult for the United States to find a suitable ally on the ground.

It plans to train and equip members of the mainstream Syrian opposition to fight Islamic State as part of its strategy to roll back the group’s gains in Syria.

A first group of about 100 U.S. troops will head to the Middle East in the next few days to establish training sites for Syrian opposition fighters.

Assad said the campaign should be backed up by the Syrian army on the ground. “The question you have to ask the Americans is, which troops are you going to depend on? Definitely, it has to be Syrian troops.”

The United Nations says 200,000 people have been killed in the civil war, which started with pro-democracy protests that were violently repressed.

Reuters

Abe vows to use “all possible means” to free Japanese hostage

Tokyo, 26 Jan — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday that Japan is determined to use “all possible means” to secure the release of a Japanese man held captive by a group thought to be Islamic State, as Tokyo sought cooperation from Jordan and other countries.

“We will use all possible means (to win his release) by seeking cooperation with other countries,” Abe told a meeting of his Liberal Democratic Party lawmakers. An image was posted online on Saturday of 47-year-old freelance journalist Kenji Goto holding a picture purportedly showing that 42-year-old Haruna Yukawa had been executed. Abe and other government officials have said the image is likely authentic.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said during a press conference that an audio message that accompanied the image is “highly likely” to be that of Goto.

“Experts are analyzing it but the government cannot deny (that the voice is Goto’s). It’s highly likely the case,” Suga said.

The top government spokesman said Abe instructed his Cabinet ministers to make all-out efforts to secure the release of the freelance journalist when they gathered at the prime minister’s office on Monday. The person speaking in the audio statement



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enters his office on 26 Jan, 2015, as the Japanese Diet convened a 150-day regular session. Abe is faced with a hostage crisis, in which one of two Japanese hostages being held by a group thought to be Islamic State is believed to have been killed.

KYODO NEWS

identified himself as Goto and explained that the photo shows “my cellmate Haruna slaughtered in the land of the Islamic caliphate.”

The Islamic State militant group’s radio service Al-Bayan said on Sunday in Arabic that the group has killed one of the two Japanese hostages in line with a warning given to Japan.

Japan has been scrambling to establish communication through various channels such as local tribes and religious leaders to urge the hostage takers to free Goto. With a local task force in Amman, Jordan is seen as a vital partner in securing his release.

Kyodo News

Nigeria repels suspected Boko Haram attack on Maiduguri city

MAIDUGURI, 26 Jan — Nigeria’s military repelled multiple attacks by suspected Boko Haram militants on Borno state capital Maiduguri in the northeast, security sources said on Sunday, but the insurgents captured another Borno town.

The assault on Maiduguri, with a population of around two million, began just after midnight. Sources at two hospitals said at least eight people

had died and 27, mostly civilians, had been injured. A second attempt to take the city’s airport in the afternoon was also repelled.

A raid on Monguno, 140 km (80 miles) north, began later in the morning and the town fell under militant control by the late afternoon.

“An exclusive coordinated air campaign has taken over from ground forces in Monguno, as

troops had to retreat from the location,” defence spokesman Major General Chris Olukolade said in an emailed statement.

The militants also simultaneously attacked another town, Konduga, which is 40 km (24 miles) from Maiduguri, but the military said it had thwarted the raid.

The army’s inability to quash the Sunni jihadist group is a major headache for President

Goodluck Jonathan, who is seeking re-election in February and who visited the state capital on Saturday as part of his campaign. Opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari had been due to arrive on Monday.

The elections are expected to be the most hotly contested since the end of military rule in 1999, with many fearing violence in the aftermath.

Reuters

At least 17 killed in protests on anniversary of Egypt uprising



Police keep guard in a vehicle as others disperse an anti-government demonstration in Matariya area, east of Cairo on 25 Jan, 2015. —REUTERS

CAIRO, 26 Jan — At least 17 people were killed on Sunday in Egypt’s bloodiest protests since Abdel Fattah al-Sisi was elected president, as security forces fired at protesters marking the anniversary of the 2011 uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak. Gunfire and sirens could be heard in Cairo into the night as armoured personnel carriers moved through the centre of a city where security forces had once again used lethal force against dissenters. A Health Ministry spokesman said at least 17 people had been killed at protests across the

country. The anniversary was a test of whether Islamists and liberal activists had the resolve to challenge a government that has persistently stamped out dissent since the then-army chief Sisi ousted elected Islamist president Mohamed Mursi in July 2013 after mass protests against his rule. Gunmen in a car opened fire on a security checkpoint near the pyramids, killing two policemen, and a bomb wounded two policemen outside a Cairo sports club, security sources said. During the day, riot police backed by soldiers in ar-

moured vehicles sealed off roads, including those leading to Cairo’s Tahrir Square, the symbolic heart of the 2011 revolt.

The heaviest death toll was in the Cairo suburb of Matariya, a Muslim Brotherhood stronghold. Special forces fired pistols and rifles at protesters, a Reuters witness said. Eight people, including one policeman, were killed, the Health Ministry said. People in Matariya chanted “down with military rule” and “a revolution all over again”. Some threw Molotov cocktails at security forces and fires raged

in the streets. In downtown Cairo, riot police with rifles and plain clothed men with pistols chased protesters through the streets.

Six people were killed in separate protests in Alexandria, Egypt’s second biggest city, Giza governorate outside of Cairo and the Nile Delta province of Baheira, security sources said.

Signs of discontent built up as the anniversary of the revolt against Mubarak approached, and a liberal woman activist, Shaimaa Sabbagh, was shot dead at a protest on Saturday.

Reuters

Experts to check ex-Okinawa governor's OK to US base transfer



Takeshi Onaga, governor of Japan's southernmost island prefecture of Okinawa, attends a press conference on 26 Jan, 2015, in the prefectural capital of Naha. He said a panel of experts will be set up before the end of January to examine the validity of his predecessor's approval of a landfill to relocate a US military base within the prefecture. —KYODO NEWS

NAHA, 26 Jan — Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga said on Monday a panel of experts will be set up before the end of January to examine the validity of his predecessor's approval of a landfill to relocate a US military base within the prefecture.

The six-member panel, which will likely include a lawyer and a professor well-versed in environ-

mental issues, is expected to hold its first meeting in early February, the anti-relocation governor said.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is forging ahead with the transfer of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from a densely populated area in Ginowan to a coastal area in Nago based on a bilateral accord with the United States.

Onaga, who was elected governor in November, said he would look into whether former Gov Hirokazu Nakaima's decision on the landfill project was legally sound.

"If the panel judges that the authorization has flaws, then I'd respect that conclusion as much as possible," Onaga told a press conference.

"Even if there are no flaws, my policy of not allowing a new base to be built in the Henoko district (of Nago) won't change

and I'd like to think about what to do," he said.

Since the former governor approved the landfill work in December 2013, the Abe government has maintained that it will "steadily" proceed with construction. Abe has given Onaga the cold shoulder and the two have yet to sit down for talks.

The local bureau of the Defense Ministry began installing a temporary pier in mid-January for the Japan Coast Guard to conduct security operations in waters around the construction site amid protests from local opponents.

The Futenma relocation is a sensitive issue in Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of US military installations in Japan. In Tokyo, thousands of protesters gathered outside the Diet on Sunday, urging the government to stop the construction project.

Kyodo News

Sales of surveillance cameras surge in South Korea after daycare abuse case

SEOUL, 26 Jan — Sales of surveillance cameras are surging in South Korea after a daycare centre worker was caught on camera earlier this month knocking a toddler to the floor, spurring calls for closer monitoring of schools and child care facilities.

Some parents have kept their children at home amid angry demands for measures to protect children, including more cameras and tighter screening of staff, as subsequent footage of other daycare abuse incidents emerged.

Police arrested the worker on 15 January. Prosecutors have yet to charge her. The education ministry said last week it planned to require that 90 percent of kindergartens install surveillance cameras by next year. Parliament has introduced a bill to require all daycare centers to install cameras, and is expected to pass it in March.

Auction, a large local online shopping outlet, reported sales of surveillance

cameras rose 40 percent from 9 to 22 January compared with the same period a year ago. G-Market, another online mall, said sales of surveillance cameras are up 37 percent in the past month. The sites did not give specific sales figures.

Auction cited the daycare abuse case and demand from child care centers, as well as rising camera use by hospitals and other public facilities, fuelling the rise in sales.

"It looks like there was a large impact with CCTV cameras because they are related to children's safety," said Kim Sun-seok, who manages the sale of digital products at Auction.

Lee Ki-sook of Ewha Women's University, who teaches early childhood education, said daycare centers also need to tighten staff certification procedures and increase wages to address the problem of abuse. "Installing CCTV cameras won't solve everything," she said.

Reuters

Iran's foreign minister summoned to parliament over walk with Kerry

DUBAI, 26 Jan — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is to appear before parliament following controversy over a promenade with his American counterpart during intense nuclear negotiations in Geneva, state media reported on Sunday.

Zarif, who leads Teheran's talks with "P5+1" — the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China — had a 15-minute walk down Geneva sidewalks with US Secretary of State John Kerry during discussions on 14 January aimed at reaching a settlement of the 12-year nuclear dispute between Iran and the West. Media images of the top diplomats from old adversaries strolling together in a foreign land provoked an outcry among Iranian hard-liners deeply wary of rapprochement with the "Great Satan".

On Friday, conservative-leaning prayer leaders heaped scorn on Zarif and President Hassan Rouhani for the "diplomatic slip-up" and newspapers said 21 members of parliament had signed a petition to call in the moderate minister to provide an explanation.

"Given the Great Sa-



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is pictured before a meeting with US Secretary of State John Kerry in Geneva on 14 Jan, 2015. REUTERS

tan's endless demands and sabotage during the course of the nuclear negotiations, there is no conceivable ground for intimacy between the foreign ministers of Iran and America," said the petition published in hard-line *Fars News*.

"Your exhibitionist walk together with (Kerry) along Geneva sidewalks was certainly outside the norms of diplomacy, so why don't you put a stop to such behaviour?" The row over the diplomatic stroll is the latest in a series of summons since Zarif took charge of the nuclear file in late 2013.

In February 2014 he caused an uproar with public comments condemning the Holocaust and was subsequently summoned to parliament. Holocaust denial has been a staple theme of public

speeches in Iran for decades.

Teheran and Washington broke diplomatic ties after Iran's 1979 Islamist revolution, establishing tentative direct contact on specific cases such as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and more recently as part of the nuclear talks between Iran and "P5+1," under way since after President Rouhani's 2013 election. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has endorsed official interaction with the United States within the nuclear framework, leaving the field wide open for controversy.

Speaking to reporters in Teheran last week, Zarif sought to justify the private walk with Kerry: "We had a serious earnest session and perhaps there was a need to pause a few minutes and resume in another form. These

are quite normal in the world of diplomacy, especially since our hotel had no yard or garden and surrounding alleys were packed with curious journalists."

Despite resurgent criticisms, Zarif held another round of secret nuclear talks with Kerry on Friday in Davos, Switzerland. There has been no word of a breakthrough in the quest for a deal to curb Iran's atomic programme in return for lifting economic sanctions imposed as punishment on Iran in the past.

The United States and other Western countries have long suspected the Islamic republic of seeking nuclear weapons know-how, but Iran insists its programme is geared to production of non-fossil fuel and scientific research.—*Reuters*

AirAsia to scrap fuel surcharge on lower oil prices

KUALA LUMPUR, 26 Jan — Malaysia's budget airline AirAsia Group announced that it is abolishing its fuel surcharge effective on Monday for all group airlines following the drop in global crude oil prices. AirAsia Group Chief Executive Tony Fernandes said in a statement that the decision to end the surcharge was made in November 2014 in line with declining global oil prices. "We believe removing the fuel surcharge and reducing travel costs will be a huge boost to the tourism

industry," he said.

With the removal of the fuel surcharge, customers are now required to pay only the air fare, the administration fee and airport tax.

AirAsia, the largest low-cost carrier in Asia, is currently struggling with its first fatal accident since its founding in 1996. Flight QZ8501 crashed into the Java Sea during foul weather on 28 December while en route from Indonesia's Surabaya to Singapore, killing all 162 people on board.

Kyodo News

JFE Engineering to construct sewage treatment plant in Sri Lanka

TOKYO, 27 Jan — JFE Engineering Corp said on Monday it has received an order to design and construct a sewage treatment plant in Sri Lanka to help improve the quality of water systems in the fast-growing South Asian country.

The plant will be set up in the city of Kandy, which continues to discharge wastewater directly into rivers and lakes without proper treatment, by the end of May 2019, JFE

Engineering said.

The facility in Kandy, the second largest city in Sri Lanka and a UNESCO World Heritage site, will be able to treat 14,000 cubic metres of wastewater per day and respond to the needs of the city's roughly 70,000 residents, the firm said.

It will be the first time for Japan to use its official development assistance to construct a sewage facility in Sri Lanka, the firm said.—*Kyodo News*

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

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

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

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Turkey opens biggest refugee camp for 35,000 from Kobani

ISTANBUL, 26 Jan — Turkey opened its biggest refugee camp on Sunday to house 35,000 people fleeing fighting between Kurdish forces and Islamist militants in Syria's Kobani, national disaster management agency AFAD said.

Located in the south-eastern border town of Suruc, the tent city has two hospitals, seven medical clinics and enough classrooms for 10,000 children, AFAD spokesman Dogan Eskinat told *Reuters*.

He said months of fighting in Kobani had caused an influx of some 200,000 refugees into Turkey and that AFAD would see how the situation develops before deciding whether any more facilities should be constructed.

Turkey has some 24 camps housing 265,000 Syrian refugees with another set to open in Mardin next month, Eskinat said. More than 200,000 people have been killed and millions displaced in the Syrian civil war since March 2011.

The majority of Tur-



Internally displaced children walk inside Al-Karameh refugee camp beside the Syrian-Turkish border in the Northern Idlib countryside on 10 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

key's 1.7 million refugees live outside camps, sometimes on the streets and in shanty towns, causing tensions with the local population. Authorities have begun to transfer those living on city streets to camps.

Islamic State militants attacked Kobani more

than four months ago. Iraqi Kurdish forces were dispatched to help Syrian Kurds fight the advance and a US-led coalition has bombed Islamic State fighters and equipment to push the group east out of the city and surrounding villages.

The Kurds, who have secured effective self-rule in northern parts of Syria, now control around 90 percent of Kobani, said the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the war that has dragged on for four years. —*Reuters*

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 27th January, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27th January, 2015: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27th January, 2015: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 27th January, 2015: Fair weather.

Childbirths in S Korea fall in November

SEOUL, 26 Jan — Childbirths in South Korea declined in November last year due to a fall in marriages and rising burden for rearing children, a government report showed on Monday.

The number of babies born in November 2014 was 32,300, down 4.4 percent from a year earlier, according to Statistics Korea. It marked the second-lowest since the statistical agency began compiling

the data in 2000.

The record low was 31,972 tallied in December 2013.

The low birthrate came as couples refrained from having babies for rising costs to rear children amid delayed marriages caused by economic slowdown and growing living expenses.

The number of couples tying the knots in November was 23,600, tumbling 16.9 percent from a

year earlier.

South Korea has struggled to raise the birthrate on worries that lower working population may drag down growth potential of the economy.

South Korea's potential growth is estimated at 3.5 percent, and the Bank of Korea (BOK) cut its 2015 growth outlook to 3.4 percent from 3.9 percent.

The country's childbirths and marriages are

expected to hit a record low in 2014 given the fact that those figures tend to reduce further in December compared with November.

For the first 11 months of 2014, the number of births stood at 403,500, down from 404,500 in the same period of 2013.

During the January-November period, the number of marriages declined 5 percent from a year earlier to 271,300.

Xinhua

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Actors endorse showbiz satire 'Birdman' in march toward Oscars



The cast of Birdman, Andrea Riseborough, Emma Stone, Amy Ryan, Naomi Watts, Edward Norton and Michael Keaton pose backstage with their award for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — "Birdman," a satirical film about acting in the unforgiving world of show business, won top honours from Hollywood's actors on Sunday in an important show of support for its march toward the best picture Oscar.

The actors from "Birdman" won the best ensemble cast in a motion picture

from the Screen Actors Guild the day after the film from Mexican director Alejandro G Inarritu prevailed at the Producers Guild awards.

While the SAG award for the best ensemble cast does not always translate to a best picture win at the Academy Awards, it does indicate that actors, the largest voting bloc for the

Oscars, favour it over another strong contender, the coming of age tale "Boyhood."

Michael Keaton, whose own uneven career trajectory mirrors the travails of "Birdman" protagonist Riggan Thomson, said he was sure the 100,000 SAG members found a kindred spirit in the film.

"I think actors loved this movie for showing the courage the actors had, going out there and laying it out on the line," Keaton said backstage. "I think that is why respectfully they thought as a group we deserved to win the prize."

"Birdman" could cement its front-runner status for the 22 February Academy Awards if it takes the top Directors Guild Award in two weeks.

The individual acting Oscars appear to be sewn up after the SAG awards, which went to the four artists who won Golden Globes two weeks ago — Julianne Moore, Eddie Redmayne, Patricia Arquette and JK Simmons.

SAG members prized lead performances by two actors portraying extreme illness.

Moore won best actress for her role as a woman with early-onset Alzheimer's in "Still Alice," while British actor Redmayne took best actor for his portrayal of physicist Stephen Hawking, disabled by motor neuron disease, in "The Theory of Everything."

Reuters

Miss Colombia is crowned Miss Universe for 2015

MIAMI, (Florida), 26 Jan — A 22-year-old business student and model from Barranquilla, Colombia, was named Miss Universe on Sunday at the annual beauty pageant, beating out 87 other contestants from around the globe.

Paulina Vega, the granddaughter of tenor Gaston Vega, studies business administration at the Universidad Javeriana in Bogota and has been a model since she was eight years old, according to the pageant's website.

Vega triumphed over first runner-up, Miss USA Nia Sanchez, a 4th degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do from Las Vegas, Nevada, who won the US title in June.

Contestants from the Netherlands, Jamaica and Ukraine rounded out the five finalists at the 63rd annual pageant, which was broadcast on NBC from Florida International University in Miami.

Vega is the fourth woman from South America to win the pageant in the past seven years, with contestants from Venezuela taking the title last year as well as in 2007 and 2008.—Reuters



Miss Colombia Paulina Vega poses after being named a top 5 finalist, on her way to be crowned as Miss Universe, at the 63rd Annual Miss Universe Pageant in Miami, Florida, on 25 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Parents didn't want me to become actor: Benedict Cumberbatch

The 38-year-old actor said that his parents, esteemed theatre actor Timothy Carlton and Wanda Ventham who has appeared in episodes of 'Only Fools and Horses' and 'The Saint', urged him not to follow their footsteps into acting and rather become a barrister.—PTI



LONDON, 26 Jan — Acting might have been in his blood, but the 'Sherlock' star Benedict Cumberbatch says his parents didn't want him to become an actor.

The 38-year-old actor said that his parents, esteemed theatre actor Timothy Carlton and Wanda Ventham who has appeared in episodes of 'Only Fools and Horses' and 'The Saint', urged him not to follow their footsteps into acting and rather become a barrister, reported *Daily Express*. "Acting is a very odd, peripatetic, crazed, out of your control work and social schedule."

"It's very hard to plan a family life, yet alone know

where the next pay cheque is coming from so they worked very, very hard as my parents, and actors, to afford me an education whereby I had the opportunity and the privilege to try and channel myself towards other goals," Cumberbatch said.

"For a while, I wanted to be a barrister because there's definitely a crossover with criminal law — with trying to persuade an audience and a jury and a judge of the case and your client's story so I did go down that root for a little bit. I think they would have been very happy if I ended up there," he added.—PTI

Bradley Cooper's play heading to London stage

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — 'American Sniper' star Bradley Cooper will take his play 'Elephant Man' to London's Theatre Royal Haymarket in May. The play will start from 19 May and run till 8 August after its Broadway run will conclude on 21 February, reported *Aceshowbiz*. The 40-year-old actor plays a man named John Merrick, who has some body deformities. Instead of using prosthetics, the actor contorts his face and limbs to portray the character.

"Never did we think we would have the privilege to perform this show on Broadway, let alone in London. I'm honoured that Alessandro Nivola, Patricia Clarkson, the entire company and I have the opportunity to continue to tell his story," Cooper said in a statement. Nivola plays a surgeon, who is also Merrick's friend while Clarkson plays an actress, who introduces Merrick to high class society.

Cooper is nominated in Best Actor category at the upcoming 87th Academy Awards for his performance in 'American Sniper'.

He is vying for the trophy against Benedict Cumberbatch ('The Imitation Game'), Eddie Redmayne ('The Theory of Everything'), Michael Keaton ('Birdman') and Steve Carell ('Foxcatcher').

PTI

Miley Cyrus open to do 'Hannah Montana' reunion

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — Singer-actress Miley Cyrus says she would love to do a reunion of her hit musical-comedy 'Hannah Montana' provided she gets to play herself on the TV series.

'Hannah Montana' ran for four seasons from 2006-2011 on Disney channel. The series spanned a movie adaptation, 'Hannah Montana: The Movie', which was released in 2009, reported *E! Online*.

"Only if she, like, has an alter ego and is actually me. Reverse it all the way around. It would be fun. People would want to see it. Everybody loves a reunion. People want to see a lot of things that I can't do... on TV," Cyrus, 22, said.—PTI



GENERAL

Holders Arsenal progress as Cup shocks dry up

LONDON, 26 Jan — Premier League Arsenal, Aston Villa and West Ham United reached the fifth round of the FA Cup as calm returned to the competition on Sunday, ending a weekend, which reminded spectators that David can beat Goliath.

A day after Chelsea and Manchester City were stunned by Bradford City and Middlesbrough respectively, holders Arsenal beat second tier Brighton and Hove Albion 3-2, West Ham United overcame League One (third tier) Bristol City 1-0 and Aston Villa toppled Championship leaders Bournemouth 2-1.

Goals from Theo Walcott, Mesut Ozil and Tomas Rosicky helped Arsenal conquer an obdurate Brighton side and remain on course to defend the trophy they won last season after going nine years without silverware.

"It was hard work," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger told the BBC. "A typical cup tie where the other team never gives up."

"We had to fight until the end but overall we were always leading and missed a few chances as well."

"I believe that is where we won the game (at the start). The results from yesterday maybe got us on our toes and we got off to a quick pace, and I think that surprised Brighton."

West Ham United had substitute Diafra Sakho to thank for sparing their blushes against League



Arsenal's Mesut Ozil (R) scores a goal against Brighton and Hove Albion during their FA Cup fourth round soccer match at the Amex stadium in Brighton, southern England on 25 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

One Bristol City as the Senegal international headed Andy Carroll's cross home in the 81st minute to send the Hammers through to the fifth round.

Aston Villa, hoping the FA Cup would provide welcome respite from their Premier League struggles, also secured their place in the next round thanks to a 2-1 victory over Championship (second tier) leaders Bournemouth.

Carles Gil, who signed from Valencia earlier this month, scored a stunning effort to put Villa in front on 51 minutes before Andreas Weimann added a second.

Callum Wilson

scored a late consolation for Bournemouth, but Villa stood firm to deny the visitors a replay.

Arsenal fans would have been forgiven for feeling a little uneasy at a trip to the south coast after watching Premier League rivals Chelsea and Manchester City fall in round four.

But their nerves were calmed just 89 seconds in when Walcott neatly controlled Calum Chambers's cross and fired a shot past David Stockdale to score his first goal in over a year after a lengthy spell on the sidelines with an ankle problem.

Arsenal continued to pin Brighton back in their own half and German

World Cup-winner Ozil, making his first start since October, doubled the Gunners' advantage when he collected Rosicky's pass and slid the ball into the net.

Brighton gained a lifeline when Chris O'Grady held off Mathieu Flamini's challenge and kept his composure to strike the ball past Wojciech Szczesny.

Rosicky restored Arsenal's two-goal advantage with an exquisite volley from the edge of the box but Brighton striker Sam Baldock set up a nervy finish for the holders when he delicately clipped the ball over the on-coming Szczesny.

Reuters

US East Coast braces for 'historic' blizzard on Monday

NEW YORK, 26 Jan — A swath of the US East Coast from Philadelphia to New York City to Maine braced for a potentially historic blizzard on Monday expected to dump as much as 3 feet (90 cm) of snow and snarl transportation for tens of millions

of people.

The National Weather Service (NWS) on Sunday issued a blizzard warning for the northern section of the East Coast from Monday afternoon until Tuesday, placing states from New Jersey to Indiana

under winter storm watches and advisories. Airlines canceled hundreds of flights ahead of the storm.

"This could be the biggest snowstorm in the history of this city," New York Mayor Bill de Blasio told a news conference, saying the snowfall could reach up to 3 feet.

De Blasio told residents of America's financial capital and most populous city to stay off the roads and to "prepare for something worse than we have seen before."

The biggest snowfall on record in New York City came during the storm of 11-12 February, 2006, dropping 26.9 inches (68 cm), according to the city's Office of Emergency Management.

The NWS called the approaching system a "crip-

pling and potentially historic blizzard," with many areas along the East Coast expected to be blanketed by 12 inches to 24 inches (30-60 cm) of snow. The New York City area could be the hardest hit, with lashing winds and snowfall of 30 inches (76 cm) or more in some suburbs.

Delta Air Lines said on Sunday it was canceling 600 flights because of the blizzard warning for the East Coast, while United Airlines will cancel all Tuesday flights at airports in New York, Boston and Philadelphia. The carrier will limit operations beginning on Monday night at Newark, LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy airports in the New York area, a spokeswoman said.

Reuters



A snow shoveler crosses a street during a winter snowstorm in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 24 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

MITV

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(27-1-15 07:00 am~
28-1-15 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|--|---|
| * Local News | * In The Studio: Pohnne |
| * Responsible Tourism in Socio-Cultural Aspect | * Local News |
| * World News | * Myanmar Handicrafts |
| * Kind Hearted Pet Lovers | * World News |
| * Local News | * Pretty Play Things From Pakokku |
| * India-Myanmar Bilateral Ties | * Local News |
| * World News | * Interview with Israeli Ambassador |
| * Myanmar China Friendship Tour | * World News |
| * Local News | * Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Tin Moe Lwin" |
| * Skilful Marionette Performance of New Generation Artists | * Local News |
| * World News | * Chef Life: Cho Wut Yee |
| * On the River | * World News |
| * Local News | * "Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Tea |
| * A Day Out With Sarah | * Local News |
| * World News | * Youth Filmmaker (Kaung Sint) |
| | * World News |
| | * Kayah |

MRTV News Channel

(27-1-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 1:40 pm |
| • Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw | • Sing & Enjoy |
| 6:20 am | 2:35 pm |
| • Physical Exercise | • Mono Classical Song |
| 7:00 am | 4:00 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • News |
| 7:35 am | 4:35 pm |
| • Socio Economic Scenes | • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Second Year (History) |
| 8:30 am | 5:35 pm |
| • Head Line News | • People' Talks |
| 9:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • Documentary (ASEAN) | • Documentary |
| 10:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Weekly Entertainment | • News |
| 11:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society) | • Documentary |
| 12:00 noon | 8:00 pm |
| News / International News / Weather Report | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| | 9:00 pm |
| | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| | • Hluttaw Image |
| | • TV Drama Series |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(27-1-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 6:00 am | 8:55 am |
| • Travelogue Programme | • Musical Programme |
| 6:25 am | 9:05 am |
| • A-1 Soe Myint Musics | • Pyi Thu Ni Ti |
| 6:45 am | 9:25 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Teleplay |
| 7:10 am | 10:05 am |
| • Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than | • 40 th Year Of ASEAN-Japan Friendship And Corporation (Brunei Darussalam) |
| 7:25 am | 10:10 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Colour of ASEAN (Brunei Darussalam) |
| 8:10 am | 10:15 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Myanmar Video |

South Korea beat Iraq 2-0 to reach Asian Cup final

SYDNEY, 26 Jan — South Korea moved a step closer to burying their 55-year Asian Cup hoodoo when they grabbed a goal in each half to beat Iraq 2-0 on Monday and set up a final against Australia or United Arab Emirates.

Lee Jeong-hyeop gave the Taegeuk Warriors the lead with a 20th minute header and defender Kim Young-gwon lashed the second into the net five minutes after the break as the South Koreans reached the final for the first time since 1988.

Iraq, perhaps emotionally and physically drained by their dramatic quarter-final victory over Iran last week, played with plenty of passion but were unable to become the first side to breach the Korean defence in five matches in Australia.

Their hopes of another fairytale run to the title to match their 2007 triumph were washed away in the Sydney rain and it is twice champions South Korea



who will return to Stadium Australia next Saturday in search of a first Asian Cup crown since 1960.

South Korea had looked the most likely to score in a cagey opening to the match with Son Heung-min, the two-goal hero of South Korea's quarter-final victory over Uzbekistan, drawing a fingertip

save out of Jalal Hassan with a long-range effort.

A minute later and the Koreans were in front, Kim Jin-su curling a free kick into the box and Lee rising above the Iraqi defence to head down and into the net.

Iraq skipper Younis Mahmoud was making his presence felt up front but the Koreans are not a side

to be bullied at the back and he was more often than not battling alone in the first half.

Even the persistent rain that fell on Sydney all day was not able to dampen the spirits of a noisy crowd of just over 36,000, the South Koreans at one end with inflatable batons and the band of Iraqis at the other

accompanied by drums and whistles.

The Koreans had more to shout about but Iraq gave their supporters a lift with a flurry of attacks just before the break when winger Amjed Kalaf's raking drive forced Kim Jin-hyeon to get down low to push the ball across his goal.

The South Korea goal-

keeper gave the Iraqis the sniff of an equaliser when he rashly charged out of his area three minutes after the break but another two minutes on and his team's lead had been doubled.

The ball bounced around the area in an extended bout of aerial ping-pong from a Son corner before Lee Jeong-hyeop chested the ball down for Kim Young-gwon to hit it first time from the edge of the box past the despairing dive of Hassan.

Iraq were forced to press forward but clear-cut opportunities were still few and far between for them while Hassan had to be at his sharpest to deny long-range efforts from South Korean skipper Ki Sung-yueng and Son inside a minute.

Kalaf continued to cause problems with his pace but there always seemed to be a South Korean foot or head to cut out the final ball and prevent a scoring chance.—Reuters

South Korea's
Ki Sung-yueng
(L) controls
the ball during
their Asian
Cup semi-final
soccer match
against Iraq
at the Stadium
Australia in
Sydney
on 26 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

Serena avenges French Open loss to reach quarter-finals



Serena Williams of the US reacts after missing a shot against Garbine Muguruza of Spain during their women's singles fourth round match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 26 Jan, 2015. REUTERS

MELBOURNE, 26 Jan — Serena Williams avenged last year's French Open loss to Garbine Muguruza at the Australian Open on Monday, overhauling the hard-hitting Spaniard 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the quarter-finals. The 24th seed Muguruza stunned Williams in the second

round at Roland Garros and another upset looked on the cards as the rising 21-year-old tore through the first set with a barrage of winners from the baseline. Top seed Williams woke up and her serve, so often her saviour, became almost impenetrable.

After saving six break

points in a marathon second game of the deciding set, Williams then broke Muguruza twice before sealing the match when her opponent blasted a forehand long. Williams will play last year's losing finalist Dominika Cibulkova for a place in the semi-finals.—Reuters

Wawrinka exacts revenge on Garcia-Lopez

MELBOURNE, 26 Jan — Defending champion Stan Wawrinka avenged his early exit at last year's French Open with a 7-6(2), 6-4, 6-7(8), 7-6(8) victory over Guillermo Garcia-Lopez on Monday to book his place in the Melbourne Park quarter-finals.

The fourth-seeded Swiss lost to Garcia-Lopez in the first round at Roland

Garros in 2014 and did not have it easy against the 31-year-old Spaniard this time around either.

Wawrinka had to overcome a 5-0 deficit in the fourth-set tiebreak and saved five set points with some booming returns before setting up a clash with either Kei Nishikori or David Ferrer in the last eight.

There was a slightly embarrassing moment for organisers in the first set when the match had to be suspended for several minutes as water dripped from the roof of the refurbished Margaret Court Arena.

Court, the 24-times grand slam champion, had earlier attended the arena's official opening ceremony.

Reuters



Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland hits a return to Guillermo Garcia-Lopez of Spain during their men's singles fourth round match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 26 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS



Asian Cup Australia 2015




15:30 MST (27.1.2015)

Australia UAE

Asian Cup Australia 2015 Result

Korea Republic 2 - 0 Iraq