

Productive loans offered to cooperative members in rural areas to ensure higher socioeconomic status



President U Thein Sein views power-tillers to be sold to farmers through installment.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan— Productive loans are aimed at reducing poverty and stabilizing incomes for people in rural areas and enabling them to afford education, health and living expenses, President U Thein Sein told a meeting with cooperative members in Kyaukse township, Mandalay Region, on Tuesday, officials said.

The financial assistance will help cooperative members have easy access to the purchase of agricultural machinery in installments.

The president admitted

that the country is still short of capital, investment, technology and human resources despite enjoying a wealth of natural resources, a moderate climate, and huge markets.

This prompts Myanmar to invite foreign investments to address the shortages, with the president stressing the need to view foreign loans as an investment in boosting local productivity.

He called for cooperative members to make best use of their loans and improve their socioeconomic

status in the same way as the government's systematic management of overseas debts for economic development.

Myanmar has set three goals to be achieved in 2020, which he said are the restoration of lasting peace, graduation from the Least

Developed Countries status and reaching a status of a middle-income country, according to the president. (See page 3)

BNI to open branches in Myanmar, S. Korea

YANGON, 27 Jan— PT Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI), Indonesia's fourth largest bank by assets, will open branches in South Korea and Myanmar this year, according to the country's ANTARA News Agency.

The unit to be opened in South Korea will be a full branch as requested, but the one in Myanmar cannot directly operate as a full branch, said Gatot M Suwondo, president-director of the publicly traded state lender, in Jakarta recently.

"In South Korea, apart

from facilitating investors, BNI also will serve Indonesian migrant workers. In Myanmar, BNI wants only to help promote investment cooperation between the two countries," Gatot said.

BNI adopted a strategy of "based on related business" to serve Indonesian business people seeking expansion abroad and to encourage foreign investors to do business in Indonesia, he added.

BNI also plans to open another branch office in Malaysia.

GNLM

World Maritime University, DMA ink MoU on collaboration in maritime industry

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 27 Jan— With the aim of promoting the role of Myanmar in the world maritime sector, the World Maritime University (WMU) and the Department of Marine Administration (DMA) signed a memorandum of understanding Tuesday in Yangon.

The five-year MoU is also aimed at creating a network to share experience and technologies between the two bodies, collaborating in the design of e-learning and learning management systems and implementing IMO regulations in Myanmar's shipping industry.

Under the agreement, the organizations will cooperate in prevention of oil spills, applied and research programmes, maritime safety issues, survey and updating of navigation aids in Myanmar territorial waters, effective port and shipping

management, environmental conservation, and maritime casualty investigations.

The World Maritime University conducts post-graduate courses under the

United Nations founded by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 1983. It produces many qualified graduates across the world annually, most from China.

Established in 1930, the Department of Marine

Administration is one of the departments under the Ministry of Transport in Myanmar.

There are more than 60,000 seafarers under the DMA. Of them, nearly 50 citizens who graduated (See page 9)



Acting President of World Maritime University Neil Bellefontaine and Director-General U Maung Maung Oo of DMA sign MoU in the presence of Union Minister U Nyan Tun Aung.—PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

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Ministries concerned make presentation of projects, budgetary matters to Hluttaw

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan — The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held sixth day session on Tuesday, with Union-level members from ministries concerned making the presentation of projects and budgetary matters included in National Planning Bill for 2015-2016 FY and 2015 Union Budget Bill.

Deputy Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development Dr Aung Myat Oo clarified works to be done for meat and fish production and targets, rural infrastructure development focusing on road

and bridge construction, community-based building, water supply and sanitation, electrification, sustainable career development and promotion of livestock breeding sector.

In his presentation, Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Win Than explained matters related to revenue and expenditure, loan and the ministry's aim to increase the countrywide telephone density from 75 percent to 80 percent in 2015-2016 FY.

Highlighting the pro-

cedures that support effective resource allocation and taxation, Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein reported on abolition of financial rules and regulations which are unsuitable to the present situation, measures for developing the banking system of Myanmar Economic Bank, the ministry's budget for 2015-2016 FY and foreign loans and interests.

Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Htin Aung also presented the ministry's budgetary mat-



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

ters including capital expenditure for the purchase of construction materials

and machinery. The seventh day session continues tomorrow. — MNA

The sixth day session of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in progress.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Farmlands sacrificed for new satellite towns in public interests

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan — U Soe Tint, Deputy Minister for Construction, at the Pyithu Hluttaw session here on Tuesday answered a query about the government plans for the loss of farmlands and the sale of apartments in installments.

"Farmland loss is due to establishing new satellite towns in public interests," he said, adding "The projects are real."

He spoke of the resettlement of affected people on plots measuring 20 feet by 60 feet and 40ft by 60ft, explaining that compensation have been made K 10,000 an acre of bare land and K20,000 per acre of land under cultivation.

He added the compensation was more than the then market value.

Regarding the sale of apartments in installments, he said low-price housing projects for ordinary people are under planning stage, with detailed calculations being made to ensure the purchase of apartments in long-term monthly installments.

As for a question concerning the relationship between the Pyu culture and the Bagan culture, Deputy Minister for Culture U Than Swe spoke of three Pyu cities that date back about 2000 years, quoting researchers as saying that there is evidence that the religion, culture, architecture and arts in Pyu era were discovered in Bagan before the

times of King Anawrahta.

Cultural evidences found in Bagan and shared by Pyu, Mon and Myanmar are of great significance to the culture of Bagan, he said, adding that the Bagan culture have derived from the Pyu culture.

An MP called for the government in her proposal, suggesting that a state-level supervisory committee be formed to deal with arbitrations likely to rise from product-sharing contracts between governmental ministries and foreign firms.

Responding to the proposal, Deputy Minister Dr Maung Maung Thein, who is also a member of the Myanmar Investment Commission, said that ministries differ from one another in their operations and that different

projects demand different contracts even in a single ministry.

Disputes involving international companies are to be settled by arbitration according to the New York Convention, which he said covers Myanmar and as a result the Supreme Court of the Union is working on it to write a law.

It is not an easy task to form a state-level committee to tackle disputes on contracts, with the deputy minister saying that contracting parties are fully responsible for the points included in contracts.

"The formation of a committee is against the open market system and will amount to the existence of centralization," he said.—MNA

Education Ministry to submit bill amending National Education Law to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw



Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa highlights amendment of provisions in National Education Law.—MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw discusses parental leave and business in ethnic armed group areas

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan — Amoytha Hluttaw discussed Tuesday three issues of parental leave for government employees, security for businesses in the areas of ethnic armed groups and modern railway system.

In response to the question of MP Dr Myat Nyana Soe, Chairman U Kyaw Thu of Union Civil Services Board explained female employees of civil service can enjoy six-month maternal leave, while the husband of that woman or the male employee of non-civil service woman cannot enjoy paternal leave.

However, the male employee can get one of the 10 types of two-week leave to take care her wife and new-born baby, but not

paternal leave, in accordance with Civil Service Law.

U Kyaw Thu also said the new mother can enjoy the full term of six-month maternal leave even though the baby died; however, the leave of her husband cannot be extended.

Regarding the question MP U Soe Thet, Deputy Minister at President Office U Aung Thein answered that the government and ethnic armed groups have reached an agreement that the latter's approval and discussions with both sides are needed to carry out development programmes and businesses in their areas where ceasefire agreement has been made.

The government has signed ceasefire agree-

ment with 14 ethnic armed groups, while KIA has agreed to ease tension.

For the question of Major Aung Kyaw Zaw, Deputy Minister of Rail Transportation U Myint Thein said two railways of Asia railway network of India- China-Thailand under the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and Kunming-Singapore railway will pass through Myanmar with standard gauge system.

The ministry is now producing dual gauge sleepers compatible with both meter gauge and standard gauge systems to upgrade railways across the country.

MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to review and amend provisions of the National Education Law. The Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw sent back a message to the President, citing that if Ministry of Education submits the bill amending the National Education Law with amendments to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Hluttaws and responsible persons will discuss it immediately.

A coordination meeting on amendment of some provisions demanded by the students was held at the Hluttaw Complex in Nay Pyi Taw on Tuesday afternoon.

Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and

Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa explained amendment of National Education Law.

Union Minister for Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi said that some points in the law will be amended amidst protests of students over the law and amendments will be submitted to the Hluttaw.

Deputy Minister Dr Daw Min Aung, chairmen and members of Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaw participated in the discussions.

The Ministry of Education will submit a bill amending the National Education Law to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

MNA



President U Thein Sein waves to departmental officials and local people in Kyaukse.

MNA

Productive loans offered to cooperative members...

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He called for cooperation with the government in bringing about peace, stability and rule of law to boost the country's economic growth.

U Kyaw Hsan, Union

Minister for Cooperatives, explained cooperative members what his ministry is doing for rural development, poverty alleviation and socioeconomic development by laying down and implementing

reform policies on a broader scale.

Projects for rural development and poverty reduction are aimed to bring down poverty rate to 16 percent from 26 percent in 2015 in line with the United Nations Millennium Goals, the union minister stated.

MNA

Union CIT Minister attends 14th TELMIN in Bangkok



Union Minister U Myat Hein attends 14th ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers' Meeting (14th TELMIN) in Bangkok, Thailand.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan—Union Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Myat Hein attended the 14th ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers' Meeting-(14th TELMIN) in Bangkok, Thailand, on 22 and 23 January.

The participants to the meeting held discussions with International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on 22 January and dialogue partner People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea on 24 January.

The 14th TELMIN focused on cooperation of ASEAN with dialogue partners in development of ICT in the region, implementation of ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2015, arrangements for drawing ASEAN ICT Master Plan 2020, payment to ASEAN ICT Fund, harmonization of radio frequency in the region, cooperation in emergency communication, planning for cyber security and smart application, and establishment of ASEAN Internet Exchange for building Internet linkage in

ASEAN region.

After the meeting, they released the Bangkok Statement.

Myanmar won the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Category at ASEAN ICT awarding ceremony.

While in Bangkok, the union minister met ITU officials, the deputy minister of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan and the minister of Communications and Information Technology of Indonesia.

MNA

Vice President U Nyan Tun to pay visit to Thailand

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan—U Nyan Tun, Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will pay an official visit to Thailand in the near future to attend the 3rd Myanmar-Thailand Joint High-Level Committee (JHC) Meeting for the Comprehensive Development in Dawei Special Economic Zone and its Related Project Areas to be held in Bangkok at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Pridiyathorn Devakula, Deputy Prime Minister of Kingdom of Thailand.—MNA

Shwegyin Nikaya holds 19th annual meeting

YANGON, 27 Jan—The 19th Shwegyin Nikaya Sangha meeting took place at Hsekeindayama Monastery in Hmawby Township, here, on Tuesday.

State Ovadacariya Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Mandalay Maha Withokdayon Waso Sayadaw opened the meeting.

Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy Dr Ashin Nanisara read the advice of the Sangharaja of Shwegyin Nikaya.

MNA

Union Minister for Religious Affairs U Soe Win supplicated on religious affairs.

Bhaddanta Dhammarakkhita of Pawkunuwita Thiri Vinayalankara monastery of Sri Lakna supplicated on Shwegyin Nikaya affairs in Sri Lanka.

The meeting was attended by 38 monks from the US, Germany, Russia, Australia, China, Korea, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Japan and over 1,000 local members of the Sangha.

The meeting will be held up to 29 January.

MNA

ASEAN Tourism Conference continues

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan—The ASEAN Tourism Conference of the ASEAN Tourism Forum-2015 continued at Myanmar International Convention Centre-1, here, on Tuesday.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, President of Myanmar Tourism Federation U Yan Win and ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015 manager Chairman of MP

International Pte Ltd of Singapore Mr James Chia cut the ribbon to open the Travel Exhibition of ASEAN Tourism Forum 2015.

A total of 527 booths included in the TRAVEX of ASEAN Tourism Forum-2015.

The union minister delivered an address at the opening of forum.

At Royal Golf Club, tourism ministers of ASE-

AN countries and officials participated in the golf tourney. In the afternoon, officials of Myanmar and the Philippines clarified development of tourism sector in respective countries to media. The union minister attended the pre-opening of ASEAN Tourism Forum-2016 hosted by the Philippines at Thingaha Hotel in the evening.

MNA



Deputy Australian Ambassador Ms Carla Giuca welcomes Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung at the reception to mark National Day of Commonwealth of Australia in Yangon on 27 January.—MNA

Old medical students pay respects to retired faculty members

MANDALAY, 27 Jan—The respect paying ceremony of old students from Mandalay University of Medicine took place at Myanmar Medical Association (Mandalay) in Mandalay on 26 January.

Chairman of the organizing committee Dr Aung Myint extended greetings.

Old students from the university in 1970 academic year paid respects to retired faculty members and presented gifts.

On behalf of the faculty members, Professor Dr Bo Ni, Professor Dr Chit Maung and retired Rector U Win Maung gave words of advice.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



Chinese consul general donates solar lamps to rural areas in PyinOoLwin Tsp



MANDALAY, 27 Jan—The Chinese consul general donated solar lamps at the city hall in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Region, on 26 January.

Mandalay Region Minister for Electricity and Industry U Kyaw Myint spoke words of thanks.

Minister U Kyaw Myint, Deputy Speaker of Mandalay Region Hluttaw U Aung Htay Kyaw and the Chinese consul gen-

eral presented 165 solar lamps to Pinlein Village, 140 to Thaginton Village, 32 to Thabyekon Taunggyi Village, 46 to Thabyegon Village, 63 to Lesaw Village, totalling 446.

Also present at the ceremony were Deputy Region Electrical Engineer U Sein Win Myint, PyinOoLwin District electrical engineer U Zaw Myint Aung and officials.

Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Mandalay Region government arranges uplift of teaching skills of basic education teachers

MANDALAY, 27 Jan — The English proficiency skill course for basic education teachers concluded at the National Theatre in Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay, on 26 January.

Union Minister for U Win Pe Maung of

Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi delivered an address. Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint explained efforts of the region government for development of education sector.

Amarapura Partners presented gifts to the union minister, the chief minister and the region minister for social affairs.

The union minister and the chief minister presented certificates to the trainees.

The training course

was Mandalay Region Government and Amarapura Partners for uplifting teaching knowledge test of basic education teachers. A total of 171 teachers from the region attended the course.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Indian Consulate General observes Republic Day in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 27 Jan — A ceremony to mark the 66th Anniversary of Re-

public Day of the Republic of India was observed at the Indian consulate-gen-

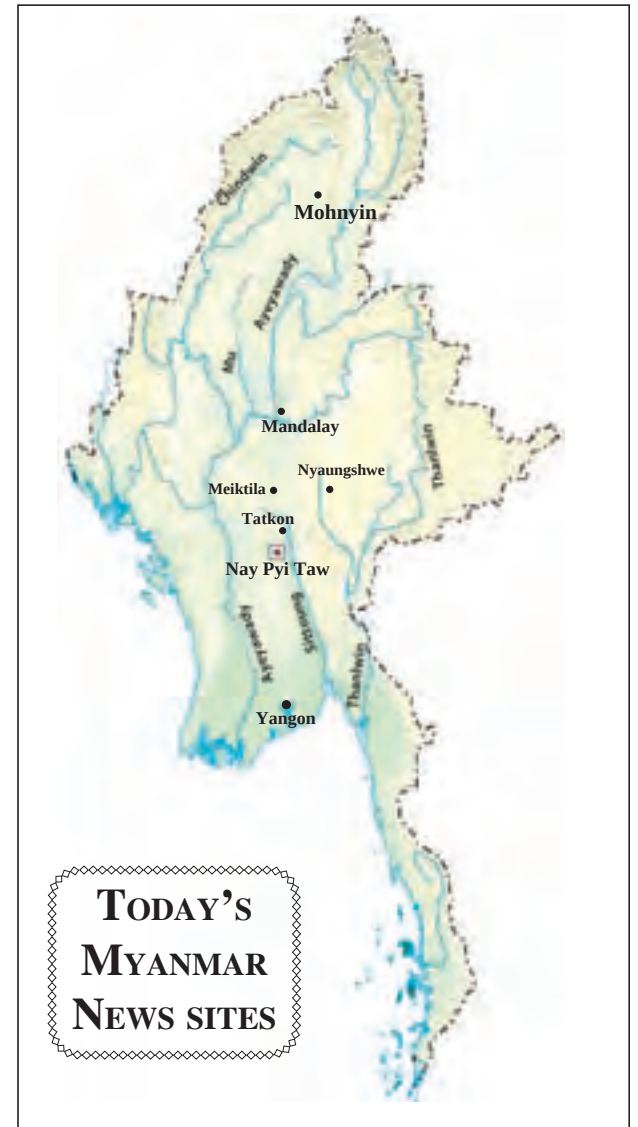
eral in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay, on 26 January.

Those present at the ceremony paid tribute to India's national leader Mahatma Gandhi statue. The Indian consul general read the message sent by the Indian President.

Cultural troupes from Mandalay and PyinOoLwin performed dance and song entertainment to the audiences.

The Indian consul general presented prizes to the winners in the junior and senior level painting contests in commemoration of the anniversary of Republic Day of India.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Distribution of stoves to conserve environment of Inlay Lake



NYAUNGSHWE, 27 Jan — A ceremony to distribute stoves to local people was held in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, on 24 January.

Shan State Minister for Forestry and Mining U Sai Aik Paung made a speech. Director of Shan State Forest Department U Maung Maung Win and Director of Shan State Environmental Conservation Department Daw

Sein Ma Ma explained advantages of using the stove for environmental conservation.

The ceremony was aimed at ensuring long-term existence of Inlay Lake and conservation of environment. Thanks to stoves, the local people will minimize use of firewood from the forests around Inlay Lake and Nyaungshwe Township.

Nay Myo Thurein



LOCAL NEWS

Basic livestock breeding course to increase income of rural people



NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan — Pobbathiri Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department opened the basic rural

livestock breeding workers at its office on 26 January.

Assistant Director Dr Aung Kyaw Oo of Ottara

District LBVD made an opening address. Staff Officer Dr Myint Thein of Pobbathiri Township LBVD explained the pur-

pose of conducting the training course for enabling the local people to have knowledge about systematic breeding techniques.

The training course will contribute to development of meat sector of the nation and increasing income of local people.

Similar training courses were conducted in 200 townships where the emerald green project is being implemented by Department of Rural Development. Altogether 10 trainees are attending the 10-day course.

Shwe Ye Yint

11 senior citizens residing in Meiktila District



MEIKTILA, 27 Jan— Eleven elder persons of

above 100 years old are residing in Meiktila District—six from Meiktila Township, one from Mahlaing Township, one from Thazi Township and three from Wundwin Township.

Of them, Daw Htwe from Myayawai Village in Meiktila Township turns 105 this year. She was born by farmer U Bo Mya and wife Daw Hla Yan in 1272 Myanmar Era (1909). At present, she is in good health condition.

Local authorities will present K200,000 and certificate of honour presented by the President to the elder persons in Meiktila District.—GNLM-018

Facilities of Tatkon Township sports ground to improve sports skills of athletes

TATKON, 27 Jan— Tatkon Township sports ground is being upgraded for enabling the local people

to take sports exercises with the use of modern equipment.

The archway of the

sports ground has been built on a grand scale. The entrance road to the sports ground was placed with concrete. The sports ground was facilitated with tracks, score board, gymnasium, outdoor ground for volleyball and Sepak Takraw events, water tanks, canteens, sports equipment shop and stands.

Four fitness sports equipment have been installed in front of the sports ground.

Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD)



Traditional medicine practitioners give health care to villagers

NAY PYI TAW, 27 Jan — Officials of Dekkhina District Traditional Medicine Department made trips to villages for providing health care services to the people with the use of traditional medicines.

On 25 January, Head of District Traditional Medicine Department U Hla Maw and staff went to Nyaungbintha village and sugar mill in Pyinmana and gave health care services to 250 people free of charge.

Together with the medical team, Head of Township Information

and Public Relations Department Daw Aye Aye Khaing and staff showed wall magazine on danger of narcotic drugs to the

local people and donated books and publications to “Pyinnya Alindan” library in Nyaungbintha Village.

Shwe Kokko



Local farmers to compete cultivation of Palethwe paddy for boosting production

NYAUNGSHWE, 27 Jan — The systematic nurturing of paddy was carried out in ThaleU village-tract in Nyaungshwe Township, Shan State, on 26 January.

Head of Township Agriculture Department U Zaw Win Tun explained use of good agricultural patterns for boosting production of Palethwe hybrid paddy to yield over 200 baskets of paddy per acre. Staff of the department demonstrated systematic nurturing of Palethwe paddy in summer.

In 2014-15, competitive cultivation of Palethwe hybrid paddy to produce over 200 baskets per acre will be held on 10 acres of



farmland in ThaleU Village, with participation of five farmers.—Nay Myo Thurein

Staff of Agriculture Department sowing paddy seeds through GAP.

Students enjoy international foods and cultural festival

MANDALAY, 27 Jan — Horizon International School (Mandalay) held the International Food and Culture Day at its school in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 26 January.

Deputy Speaker of Mandalay Region Hlut-taw U Aung Htay Kyaw, Mandalay-based Chinese Consul General Mr Wang Yi, Indian Consul General Dr Nandakuma and Chairman Mr Arif Gomleksiz of Mediterranean International Education Services Co Ltd formally opened the International Food and Culture Day. They viewed

sales of international foods and enjoyed the funfairs of students.

At the festival, responsible persons explained facts about Myanmar, England, the United States of America, the Philippines, Turkey, India and China to the students.

Students performed traditional dances and songs to the audiences.

Proceeds from the sales of goods will be donated to the multimedia classrooms and supply of purified water to schools in the region.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Obama ends day of Indian pageantry with \$4 billion pledge

NEW DELHI, 27 Jan — US President Barack Obama ended a landmark day in India on Monday with a pledge of \$4 billion in investments and loans, seeking to release what he called the “untapped potential” of a business and strategic partnership between the world’s largest democracies.

Earlier in the day, at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Obama was the first US president to attend India’s annual Republic Day parade, a show of military might that has been associated with Cold War anti-Americanism.

It rained as troops, tanks and cultural floats filed through the heart of New Delhi, but excitement



US President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama wave as they pose with India’s President Pranab Mukherjee (2nd L) and Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) during a home reception with several hundred Indian political and cultural figures at the Rashtrapati Bhavan presidential palace in New Delhi on 26 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

nevertheless ran high over Obama’s visit, which began on Sunday with a clutch of deals to unlock billions of

dollars in nuclear trade and to deepen defence ties.

Both sides hope to build enough momentum to forge

a relationship that will help balance China’s rise by catapulting democratic India into the league of major world powers.

The leaders talked on first name terms, recorded a radio programme together and spent hours speaking at different events, but despite the bonhomie, Obama and Modi reminded business leaders, including the head of PepsiCo, that trade ties were still fragile.

India accounts for only 2 percent of US imports and one percent of its exports, Obama said. While annual bilateral trade had reached \$100 billion, that is less than a fifth of US trade with China.

“We are moving in the

right direction ... That said, we also know that the US-India relationship is defined by so much untapped potential,” Obama told the Indian and US business leaders. “Everyone here will agree, we’ve got to do better.”

Modi said US investment in India had doubled in the past four months and vowed to do more to slash the country’s notorious red tape and make it one of the world’s easiest places for business.

Obama said that US Export-Import Bank would finance \$1 billion in exports of ‘Made-in-America’ products. The US Overseas Private Investment Corporation will lend \$1 billion to small- and medium-sized enterpris-

es in rural areas of India.

Regarding renewable energy, a key focus for Modi, \$2 billion will be committed by the US Trade and Development Agency for renewable energy, Obama said.

Most significant was an agreement on issues that, despite a groundbreaking 2006 pact, had stopped US companies from setting up nuclear reactors in India and had become one of the major irritants in bilateral relations.

“Obama breaks N-deadlock,” ran the front-page headline of the *Mail Today* newspaper, which carried a photograph of Modi and Obama hugging each other warmly.

Reuters

Elite police unit chief sidelined over deadly militant clash in Philippines

MANILA, 27 Jan — The chief of the Philippines’ elite police force has been recalled over his handling of an operation at the weekend to arrest two wanted Islamic militants that left over 40 members of the security force dead, the interior minister said on Tuesday.

Manuel Roxas also said he had ordered an investigation into the operation that turned into a deadly 12-hour clash with Muslim rebels. The head of the Philippine National Police said the operation had not been cleared by top police officials.

Forty-four Special Action Force (SAF) officers were killed and 12 others

wounded in the firefight in Mamasapano town, Maguindanao on Sunday. Police said eight Muslim rebels were also killed in the clash, which shattered a ceasefire that held for three years.

“We have directed the administrative relief of SAF Director Leo Napenas from his current duties pending the outcome of this board of inquiry,” Roxas, the interior and local government secretary, told a news conference.

“He has been recalled back to Manila. He was given a chance yesterday to help retrieve the bodies of his men. ‘If there were lapses and someone is responsible for it, then he will be made

accountable.”

Roxas on Monday described the incident as a “misencounter”.

Nearly 400 SAF officers were involved in the operation aimed at arresting two militants who had taken refuge with fighters of the country’s largest Muslim rebel group, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

The two militants, Zulkifli bin Hir, a Malaysian member of the al-Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah militant group behind numerous bomb attacks in the Philippines, and Filipino Abdul Basit Usman, both carry a bounty on their heads.

Reuters

AirAsia crash report won’t include black box data — investigator



Indonesian soldiers show the cockpit voice recorder of AirAsia QZ8501 at Iskandar airbase in Pangkalan Bun, Central Kalimantan on 13 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

JAKARTA, 27 Jan — A preliminary report into last month’s crash of an AirAsia passenger jet that killed 162 people will not include an analysis of the black box flight recorders, an Indonesian investigator said on Tuesday.

The National Transportation Safety Committee will submit its initial findings this week to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) on AirAsia’s first fatal crash.

The Airbus AIR.PA A320-200 vanished from radar screens on Dec. 28, less than halfway into a two-hour flight from Surabaya, Indonesia’s second-biggest city, to Singapore. There were no survivors.

A multinational search and recovery operation has recovered 70 bodies so far and hoped to find more after locating the fuselage of the plane. But days of rough weather and poor underwater visibility have hampered navy divers’ efforts.

The preliminary report, which the ICAO requires within 30 days of the date of the accident, will include “information on the plane, the number of passengers and other information like that”, NTSC investigator Suryanto told Reuters.

It will not include analysis from the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder, both of which were recovered by divers from the bottom of the Java Sea.

Data from radar and the aircraft’s two “black box” flight recorders is providing investigators with a clearer picture of what occurred during the final minutes of Flight QZ8501.

Transport Minister Ignasius Jonan told a parliamentary hearing last week that, based on radar data, the plane had climbed faster than normal in its final minutes, and then stalled.

The NTSC will hold an annual media conference this week to talk about

the agency’s achievements over the past year. The agency is not expected to discuss details of its investigation into the AirAsia crash, said NTSC head Tatang Kurniadi.

The final report on the investigation, which will be made public, must be filed within a year.

Indonesia’s military halts recovery efforts for crashed AirAsia jet

Indonesia’s military on Tuesday halted search and recovery efforts for an AirAsia (AIRA.KL) passenger jet, navy officials said.

“The operation has been ongoing for 30 days so the joint team has been pulled out,” Rear Admiral Widodo, head of the navy’s western fleet, told reporters.

“We apologize to the families of the victims. We tried our best to look for the missing victims.”

Seventy bodies have been recovered.

Days of rough weather and poor visibility have hampered navy divers’ efforts to find more bodies and recover the fuselage of the plane. The Airbus AIR.PA A320-200 vanished from radar screens on 28 December, less than half way into a two-hour flight from Surabaya, Indonesia’s second-biggest city, to Singapore. There were no survivors.

The flight recorders have been recovered and are being analysed.

Reuters



File photo taken on 8 Dec, 2014 shows workers installing a subway for export to Brazil in CNR Changchun Railway Vehicles Co, Ltd in Changchun, capital of northeast China’s Jilin Province. China CNR Corporation Limited, a leading manufacturer of locomotives in China, announced a subway export contract with the United States on Monday. It is the country’s first foray into the US rail transit market. China CNR will sell 284 subway trains worth 4.118 billion yuan (670 million US dollars) to the transportation regulator in Massachusetts, to equip Boston’s Red and Orange subway lines, according to the announcement.—XINHUA

Japan OKs new strategy to address expected rise of dementia patients



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from L) addresses a ministers' meeting to decide a national strategy on dementia on 27 Jan, 2015, in Tokyo. It is estimated that the number of elderly people suffering dementia will reach around seven million in Japan in 2025. —KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 27 Jan — The government on Tuesday adopted a new strategy to bolster measures against dementia, expecting the number of patients to reach about 7 million in Japan in 2025 as the population

ages. The government aims to provide appropriate medical care and support for patients and their families and ensure closer cooperation across government ministries and agencies.

“We will pursue a framework and make it a model for the world,” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a meeting of relevant Cabinet ministers where the strategy was approved, referring

to dementia as a “common challenge” around the world.

In the draft state budget for fiscal 2015 starting April, the government increased its allocation for dementia measures to 16.1 billion yen, up 6.6 billion from fiscal 2014.

The government's adoption of the new framework comes as Japan deals with a growing number of dementia patients going missing or becoming victims of consumer-related fraud.

Roughly one in five elderly people aged above 65 will be affected by the progressive neurological condition in 2025, when postwar baby boomers turn 75 or older, a Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare study team has estimated.

The number of patients aged 65 or older was estimated at 4.62 million as of 2012.

The strategy features seven pillars such as introducing dementia diag-

nosis training in line with the government's goal to provide suitable medical treatment and care.

Another pillar of the strategy is to research and develop ways to prevent and treat the disease. By the end of fiscal 2015, the government will establish a system for early diagnosis of the illness and begin clinical trials of a cure by around 2020.

The government also aims to introduce in fiscal 2016 a scheme to enhance cooperation among primary care doctors, specialists and those involved in nursing care to provide support for dementia patients.

The new framework, dubbed the New Orange Plan, replaces the health ministry's five-year Orange Plan on dementia care implemented from fiscal 2013.

Abe announced his plans for a revised national strategy at an international conference on dementia care in Tokyo in November.—Kyodo News

Philippine defence chief to visit Japan this week

TOKYO, 27 Jan — Defence Minister Gen Nakatani said on Tuesday his Philippine counterpart will pay a three-day visit to Japan this week from on Thursday.

Ahead of their talks on Thursday, Nakatani and Philippine Defence Secretary Voltaire Gazmin are expected to sign a memorandum over bilateral defence cooperation, Nakatani said. On Friday, Gazmin is scheduled to visit the Self-Defence Forces' bases in Okinawa, where he will inspect maritime and airspace surveillance activities. The SDF monitors China's military activities around the Japanese-controlled, Chinese-claimed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

Some members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations including the Philippines have territorial disputes with China over the sovereignty of islands that are believed to be resource-rich in the South China Sea.—Kyodo News

Argentina says journalists safe after one flees, fearing for life



Damian Pachter, a journalist with the Buenos Aires Herald, stands in the arrivals hall at Ben Gurion International Airport near Tel Aviv on 25 Jan, 2015. REUTERS

BUENOS AIRES, 27 Jan — Argentina's cabinet chief on Monday said journalists could work safely in the country after the reporter who broke the news of the mysterious death of a state prosecutor fled to Israel, saying he feared for his life under the current government.

On 18 January, Damian Pachter was the first to report that prosecutor Alberto Nisman, who was in-

vestigating the deadly 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, had been found dead in his apartment from a gunshot wound to the head.

Nisman had been due to appear before Congress on 19 January, the day after his death, to face questions about his allegation that President Cristina Fernandez conspired to derail his investigation.

No arrests have been

made yet but lead investigator Viviana Fein said on Monday she had charged the man who lent Nisman the gun found by his body with illegally providing a weapon. The crime carries a prison sentence in Argentina of one to six years, Fein said.

Pachter said his phones were tapped and that he was being followed before he fled the country.

“For sure, there are strong tensions in terms of opinions ... but with the most absolute freedom of expression, and there is no type of obstacle for any reporter to express whatever he thinks,” Argentine cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich told a regular news conference. The government has come under fire for publishing Pachter's travel details on Twitter. Capitanich said it did so to shed light on a case of public interest.

Nisman was found dead late on 18 January, a gunshot wound to his head and a 22-caliber pistol by

his side along with a single shell casing. Fein said investigators had started examining footage from the surveillance cameras in the building where Nisman lived. Her team was also checking telephone calls and DNA samples that are being held at a “site of maximum security”. The authorities originally said evidence suggested the prosecutor had killed himself, but Fernandez later said the death was not a suicide. She did not say who killed him, and no one has been arrested. Social media has been seething with conspiracy theories, some pointing at Fernandez and her government. The government says it suspects rogue agents from its own intelligence services.

Pachter told website Infobae that he was unlikely to return while two-term Fernandez remained president. Fernandez is constitutionally barred from running in October's election.—Reuters

Russia's 12th humanitarian aid convoy for Donbas to be ready by 31 January

MOSCOW, 27 Jan — Russia's Emergencies Ministry plans to complete the formation of the 12th convoy with humanitarian aid for Donbas citizens by 31 January, the ministry's press service said on Tuesday. The convoy will consist of more than 170 trucks that will deliver over 1,500 tons of cargo. “There are foodstuffs, medicines, essentials, building materials and other life necessities,” the ministry said. The aid convoy will be formed in southern Russia's Rostov region in the ministry's Donskoy rescue center. Earlier on Tuesday, a humanitarian aid convoy

departed from the Moscow Region's Noginsk rescue centre.

“The trucks from Noginsk will be joined by vehicles from other Russian regions and the formation of the 12th convoy is to be completed by 31 January,” the spokesman said.

Since mid-August 2014, 11 Russian humanitarian aid convoys have delivered more than 14,800 tons of relief supplies, mainly foodstuffs, medicines, building materials and primary necessity items to people in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Itar-Tass



The convoy will consist of more than 170 trucks that will deliver over 1,500 tons of cargo. ITAR-TASS

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 28 January, 2015

Shining future for ASEAN tourism

By Aung Khin

The tourism industry in ASEAN is shining like never before as the rising middle class among its more than 600 million people is a rich source of visitors for the region. With its great outdoors and rich and diverse culture, the region has the potential to be a strong global brand in tourism.

The roadmap of the region for the tourism industry includes promoting ASEAN as a single tourist destination and allowing visitors to trav-

el throughout the region using a single visa in the future. Some countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have done very well attracting tourists on their own. But as a region, ASEAN needs a more collective branding – a series of tourism campaigns that will go viral and bring visitors to multiple countries. The wholesale tourism business via “MICE” – meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions – could be integral to grabbing a greater market share.

Although topographical features would be a barrier for the region to build a European-like inter-state railway and road network outside mainland Indochina comprising Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and west Malaysia, a network of nautical highways across maritime destinations would be a viable option.

ASEAN’s Strategic Tourism Plan (ATSP) from 2011 to 2015 is ending this year. The first step towards the ATSP was the formulation of a concise vision of Southeast Asia’s tourism development for the next 10 years (2016 – 2025). The

first implementation period will be laid down for the new ATSP this year, with the formation of a task force for key responsibilities including developing the strategic direction, strategic actions, measures, outcomes and timeline of ASEAN tourism for the years 2016 – 2020.

ASEAN possesses a lot of potential to become a quality tourism destination offering a unique, diverse ASEAN experience by 2025 and will be committed to responsible, sustainable and inclusive tourism development. However, peace and stability are priorities to realize this expectation.

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2014 in Retrospect and Prospects for 2015

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

Sonu Trivedi

In most liberal democracies political institutions and traditions have taken decades, even centuries to develop and have achieved high levels of legitimacy and public acceptance. By contrast, a country like Myanmar is still in a fragile state searching for political form and institutions favouring democratization. In the aforesaid background, this article reviews crucial developments of the year 2014. However, the list of events is not exhaustive. An attempt is made to focus only on the significant happenings. It further looks at the prospects and critical variables of change and policy options for the current year 2015.

2014 in Retrospect

The 2014 has been an exciting and extremely important year for Myanmar as it took the rotating Chairmanship of ASEAN for the first time after joining it in last seventeen years since 1997. Credit goes to Myanmar for successfully carrying out its role as Chair of ASEAN despite its internal strife and volatility. It ended with the mega event of the Annual ASEAN summit and East Asia summit held in November at the capital city Nay Pyi Taw and handing over of the baton of Chairmanship to Malaysia for 2015. It was a rendezvous witnessing major world leaders visiting the

country and making it the focus of international media.

The year also witnessed country’s first Census held after a gap of three decades since the last one held in 1983. In spite of the logistics and security challenges, it was successful enough in conducting this headcount. Notwithstanding the criticisms of its inclusiveness, it is going to effect the internal dynamics and policy prescriptions for economic growth in the country. The Census data will allow the government to accurately estimate key economic indicators and other socio-economic data for sustainable development and economic planning. Though, the preliminary results were declared on 30th August 2014, the detailed economic indicators and data on ethnic composition would be released by May 2015.

Internally, nevertheless, sectarian violence dominated the domestic politics in Myanmar in 2014. This was visible in the outbreak of riots in July in the heart and the second largest city of Myanmar—Mandalay. The ongoing sectarian violence, which has been flaring now since almost two years, is no longer an internal affair of Myanmar alone. The outbreak of Buddhist nationalism in recent times may have a long term implications and its impact is going to be widespread influencing the security in the entire

region of Indo-Pacific.

In spite of continuous effort in the direction of ceasefires and peace dialogues, infighting and skirmishes have continued in the Kachin state and northern areas of Shan state. Continued clashes between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and armed forces in Myanmar has displaced a large section of ethnic nationalities who have been demanding greater autonomy bringing forth the issue of humanitarian assistance and human rights abuse. Fresh violence at Laiza in November 2014 is a witness to the fact that peace process has a long road ahead and miles to go before it achieves substantial results.

The issue of Constitutional reform was also high on the agenda in 2014 with the opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi carrying out signature campaign throughout the country in support of the Constitutional review process and amending Section 436 of the 2008 Constitution. This section deals with the constitutional amendment requiring the approval of over 75 per cent of parliamentary members. The petition by July 2014 was signed by around 5 million people and hailed as a breakthrough for democracy in Myanmar. Meanwhile, the Government had set up Constitutional Review Joint Committee to propose draft amendments to the 2008 Constitution, which has rec-

ommended changes to allow greater power sharing between the government and ethnic groups but largely remains silent on Section 436.

The issue of Proportional Representation (PR) also flashed up in 2014 as a part of electoral reforms in Myanmar. The proposal seeks to reform the electoral system from a first-past-the-post system to a proportional system before general elections scheduled for 2015. Proponents of a PR system argue that it would foster diversity in Myanmar’s nascent multi-party democracy and ensure that no votes would be wasted. Though, NLD and ethnic parties were firmly against such a proposal, it was strongly supported by the members of USDP. However, in a strange way in November 2014, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, announced that efforts to introduce proportional representation before the next general election were being quietly dropped. This was based on the advice of the Myanmar’s Constitutional Tribunal which suggested that the new electoral system would be unconstitutional.

Protest and contestations against the National Education Law in 2014 had been widespread on grounds of lack of autonomy for higher educational institutions and complete disregard for inclusive consultations. The provisions of the law have angered students and faculty who have held demonstrations in several cities around Myanmar. The

law seeks formation of a National Education Commission, which is feared to grant the government too much control over the educational institutions in the country thereby eroding their independence and autonomy in the longer run. Last week also witnessed protest march in Mandalay, against the controversial law which is supposed to curb academic freedom and it is expected that rallies would continue in Yangon and other educational centres throughout the country.

Prospects for 2015

Although, the country is witnessing rapid transformation and reforms, but still, it has a long way to go. With the elections due in the last quarter of 2015, there is a ray of hope for establishment of durable democratic order in Myanmar. But the process is not free from challenges.

The reform process, however, in Myanmar is scared by the reformists and hardliners in the army. The hardliners have become more concerned after the last by-elections when military backed USDP could just get one out of the 45 seats. This outcome has caused alarm within the ranks of the military and raising speculation about a backlash by hardliners. The reformist-minded President U Thein Sein has given a signal by saying that “conservatives who do not have a reformist mindset will be left behind, while the country is on its path to change”. Even the Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham has also

emphasized that “not only political, economic, administrative and social reforms are needed but there also needs to be a change to our mindset”.

The changing political dynamics with the entry of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her party in the Parliament is going to shape the future of political transformation in Myanmar. Her entry in the Parliament has been a means of legitimizing regime’s mandate to govern and enhance its own reform credentials. The regime needs her in the Parliament to bolster the authority of its own political system. However, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi needs the military perhaps more than anyone else if she is to advance politically and amend the Constitution, given a quarter of seats are reserved for the military.

Furthermore, being the leader of the largest opposition party, the dynamics which she shares with other opposition party is going to be a significant factor so far as the results of 2015 elections are concerned. So far, several ethnic based and minority parties have embraced NLD in the legislature as its presence boosts overall confidence and their strength in the opposition. Together, they have taken up subjects such as health, education, social security and environmental issues in the Parliament along with national reconciliation including ethnic peace deals, rule of law, political and constitutional reform.

(See page 9)

NATIONAL

World Maritime University...

(from page 1)

from the WMU are working in the governmental organizations.

As part of their efforts to promote Myanmar's maritime industry, the WMU and the DMA jointly organize the WMU Alumni Conference, which is being held on 27 and 28 January in Yangon. This is the first conference for Myanmar.

Administrative oversight for quality in maritime education and training (MET), education as a tool for the industry growth, and new priorities for MET are among the topics at the conference.

"The event is believed to provide an excellent opportunity not only to share knowledge and experience but an exceptional occasion to exchange information about the problems that we are individually facing," said U Maung Maung Oo, director-general of the DMA.

Acting WMU President Neil Bellefontaine said, "The regional conference is focused on Asia and Oceania. It is intended that future alumni conferences will be held with partner countries in other regions as well to further encourage invaluable relationship-building among graduates."

GNLM

Protest students and officials hold talks.
040

THE FOURTEENTH MEETING OF ASEAN PLUS THREE (CHINA, JAPAN AND REPUBLIC OF KOREA) TOURISM MINISTERS 26 January 2015, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar JOINT MEDIA STATEMENT

1. The Fourteenth Meeting of the ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea) Tourism Ministers was held on 26 January 2015 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in conjunction with the Eighteenth Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers (M-ATM) and the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2015. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. U Htay Aung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar and H.E. Mrs Du Yill, Vice Chairman of China National Tourism Administration. The Meeting was preceded by the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of ASEAN Plus Three (APT) NTOs held on 24 January 2015.

2. The Ministers were pleased with the growth in the arrival of international visitor where the APT region welcomed 241 million of visitors in 2014, an increase of 6.9% from 2013. The Ministers noted that intra-APT travel remained the main source of tourism growth in the region, accounting for 66 % of the total international visitor arrivals in 2013.

3. The Ministers welcomed the successful conclusion of the 17th APT Summit and the respective ASEAN Plus One Summits held on 13 November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar and encouraged the Plus Three Countries to continue to support the implementation of the 2012 Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity in order to further enhance connectivity in the region.

4. The Ministers commended the progress made in the implementation of the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan 2013-2017 including the APT Tourism Students Summit held on 19-26 October 2014 in both Bangkok and Pattaya, and the APT Media Familiarization Tour Programme to Pro-

mote tourism knowledge and skills development.

5. The Ministers noted the importance of development of framework to exchange ideas on tourism statistics for APT countries and new methods for tourism statistics in order to have a better understanding of the development of tourism in APT countries. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the progress made in implementing the APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan including the Nara Tourism Statistics Week held on 17-21 November 2014 in Nara, Japan.

6. The Ministers applauded the roles of the ASEAN-China Centre, ASEAN-Japan Centre and ASEAN-Korea Centre in promoting tourism and cultural exchanges between ASEAN and the Plus Three countries during the year 2014.

7. The ASEAN Tourism Ministers expressed their gratitude to China for the provision of complimentary booths at China International Travel Mart 2014, production of Discovery ASEAN and Taste of ASEAN which was screened on CCTV, live radio broadcast highlighting destinations in ASEAN, familiarization tour by Chinese media to ASEAN Member States, and workshop for tour operators.

8. The ASEAN Tourism Ministers also expressed their appreciation to Japan for ASEAN-Japan Centre's Annual Work Program for FY2014 which includes exchange program for youth, technical workshop on community-based tourism for BIMPS, tourism and exchange public relations activities, CLMV Travel Mart, theme-based tourism promotion, exchange program on capacity building and culture, and career development support for ASEAN Students in Japan.

9. The ASEAN Tourism Ministers further expressed their gratefulness to the Republic of Korea (ROK) for their support to develop ASEAN Tourism through promotional activities and capacity building, amongst others, including the establishment of an official website of ASEAN-Korean Partnership <http://www.korea-asean.com>.

10. The Ministers expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government and People of Myanmar for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meetings.



Representatives of protest students agreed to discuss with gov't

TAUNGTHA, 27 Jan— Student protesters have agreed to discuss with the government in Nay Pyi Taw.

Nanda Sit Aung and Aung Hmaing San, representatives of protest students, said they have agreed to meet with Union Minister U Aung Min.

The agreement was reached after discussion between protest leaders and Director-General Dr Soe Win of Higher Education Department (Upper Myan-

mar), Director-General Dr Khaing Mye of Department of Myanmar Education Research Bureau, Rector of Mandalay University Dr Maung Thin and Principal of Myingyan Degree College Dr Ko Ko Myint on Myingyan-Taungtha motorway after they left Myingyan for Taungtha at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

The protesters together with some students and locals from Myingyan stayed the night at Monpin monastery in Taungtha Township. —040

2014 in Retrospect...

(from page 8)

However, given the ongoing tussle emerging within the NLD, the political scenario at present seems to be in a pandemonium. The NLD party suffers from lack of professionalism, centralized structure and leadership vacuum. One of the most challenging exercises at this point of time is to revitalize the party and introduce inner-party democracy which has so long been dominated by the 88 generation and aging political leaders. As the leader of the party, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has to reinvigorate faith in the party which suffers from internal splits and schisms due to the ongoing cleavage between the radical and the reformist

forces within the NLD.

Consolidating her position amidst the waves of sectarian violence and widening rift between Buddhist majority and Muslim minority is another formidable challenge faced by her and NLD before 2015 election. Given the rising expectations of the people of Myanmar, she has to keep up to all the potential challenges.

Nevertheless, resolving the ethnic issue will be Myanmar's biggest challenge now. Overcoming of sixty years old ethnic conflict will not be easy and the government will have to do a great deal to build the trust necessary to move beyond temporary ceasefires to resolve the underlying political issues. These developments, therefore, have a significant im-

plication for the dynamics of power struggle and future road map to the Presidency in Myanmar in the 2015 elections.

As for the possible leaders to appear in 2015, three are prominent: the reformist U Thein Sein, determined Thura U Shwe Mann and the charismatic Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Who heads the executive and who controls the legislature is an important issue vis-à-vis the current political landscape and the cleavages that exist between the reformists and hard-liners. The scenario, however, is complex.

The incumbent President U Thein Sein wants to remain clean and, therefore, there is a possibility that he would choose to step down. Health conditions have also

been cited by some political analysts as a possible reason. Meanwhile, Speaker of the lower house Thura U Shwe Mann has been projected as a strong contender for the Presidency. Given the determination and strong conviction of Thura U Shwe Mann, if he takes up the Presidency, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will have no option but to remain contended with the post of the leader of the House herself. But given the possibility of a fractured mandate in 2015, she will have a tough time managing the house. There are concerns that the demand for federal and ethnic reconciliation will be stronger by 2015. One of obstacles Daw Aung San Suu Kyi faces now is the absence of able administrators and team

members in the leadership of the NLD, which at present is facing a generational crisis. It would be difficult for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to run the cabinet with inept colleagues in the already degenerating party. There are fears that she will be able to manage the executive and pacify the hard-liners in the military.

Another possible scenario is heading towards a coalition government with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi being the nominal leader and the face of Myanmar for the world. The cabinet, on the other hand, would remain dominated by the current ruling party USDP, while Thura U Shwe Mann would extend his control and consolidate his position in the lower house. This seems to

be the most viable option which would help the country earn foreign investment and at the same time allow a focus on the internal reforms and transformation in Myanmar. But this could become a reality only through the constitutional reform process. Changing the current constitutional provision which bars her from contesting the Presidency and other stringent rules demands immediate deliberation and amendment.

This complex scenario of political change in Myanmar will be vital to the regional dynamics of Indo-Pacific in the future.

(Sonu Trivedi teaches Political Science at Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)

Greek leftist Tsipras sworn in as PM to fight bailout terms

ATHENS, 27 Jan — Greek left-wing leader Alexis Tsipras was sworn in on Monday as the prime minister of a new hardline, anti-bailout government determined to face down international lenders and end nearly five years of tough economic measures.

The decisive victory by Tsipras' Syriza in Sunday's snap election reignites fears of new financial troubles in the country that set off the regional crisis in 2009. It is also the first time a member of the 19-nation euro zone will be led by parties rejecting German-backed austerity.

Tsipras' success is likely to empower Europe's fringe parties, including other anti-austerity movements across the region's economically-depressed south. The trouncing of the conservatives represents a defeat of Europe's middle-ground political guard, which has dallied on a growth-versus-budget discipline debate for five years

while voters suffered.

Sporting his trademark no-tie look, the 40-year old former student Communist Tsipras became the first prime minister in Greek history to be sworn in without the traditional oath on a Bible and blessing of basil and water from the Greek Archbishop.

At a brief secular ceremony where he pledged to uphold the constitution, Tsipras told President Karolos Papoulias: "We have an uphill road ahead." In a symbolic move, his first action as prime minister was to commemorate Greek resistance fighters with red roses at a memorial in Athens to those executed by Nazis.

Defying predictions that he would turn from populist to pragmatist after taking power, Tsipras quickly sealed a coalition deal with the small Independent Greeks party which also opposes Greece's EU/IMF aid programme.

Syriza won 149 seats

in the 300-seat parliament with its campaign of "Hope is coming!", leaving it just two seats short of an outright majority and in need of a coalition partner. The Independent Greeks, at odds with Syriza on many social issues like illegal immigration, won 13 seats.

The alliance is an unusual one. The parties, at the opposite end of the political spectrum, share only a mutual hatred of the 240-billion-euro bailout programme keeping Greece afloat at the price of budget cuts.

Stavros Theodorakis, leader of To Potami, a new centrist party once seen as a potential Syriza coalition partner, said he could not join a government that included the Independent Greeks, whom he called "far right" and "anti-European". But he said he would wait to see the government's programme before deciding whether to support a vote of confidence in parliament.



Greece's President Karolos Papoulias (R) welcomes Alexis Tsipras, Syriza party leader and winner of the Greek parliamentary elections, before Tsipras' swearing-in ceremony as Greece's first leftist prime minister in Athens on 26 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

The tie-up suggests Tsipras will keep up his confrontational stance against Greece's creditors, who have dismissed his demands for a debt write-

off and insisted the country needs reforms and austerity to get its finances back on track.

"At first sight this looks like a very strange

marriage, but both parties share a strong opposition to austerity," said Diego Iscario, an analyst at IHS Global Insight.

Reuters

Fidel Castro appears to lend support to Cuba talks with US



Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro

HAVANA, 27 Jan — Retired Cuban leader Fidel Castro on Monday appeared to lend his support to talks with the United States in his first comments about his longtime adversary since both countries agreed last month to restore diplomatic ties.

But Castro stopped short of an enthusiastic endorsement of the rapprochement, announced on 17 December by his younger brother and Cuba's current president, Raul Castro, and US President Barack Obama.

"I don't trust the policy of

the United States nor have I had an exchange with them, but this does not mean ... a rejection of a peaceful solution to conflicts or the dangers of war," Fidel Castro, 88, said in a statement published on the website of Cuba's Communist Party newspaper *Granma*.

The United States and Cuba held historic high-level talks last week in Havana that are expected to lead to the re-establishment of diplomatic ties severed by Washington in 1961.

"Any peaceful or negotiated solution to the problems between

the United States and the peoples or any people of Latin America that doesn't imply force or the use of force should be treated in accordance with international norms and principles," Fidel Castro said.

"We will always defend co-operation and friendship with all the peoples of the world, among them our political adversaries."

He took power in a 1959 revolution and spent much of his 49 years in power railing against the United States, which never succeeded in many attempts to oust him.

He was finally forced into retirement in 2008 by poor health and was succeeded by his brother Raul, who is now 83.

"The president of Cuba has taken the pertinent steps in accordance with his prerogatives and the powers given to him by the National Assembly the Communist Party of Cuba," Fidel Castro said of his brother in the statement.

His silence on the issue had led to speculation over his health and whether he supported his brother's rapprochement with the United States.

On 12 January, he sent a letter to friend and retired Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona that squelched rumours he had died.

Reuters

Argentine president plans to dissolve spy agency after prosecutor's death

BUENOS AIRES, 27 Jan — President Cristina Fernandez plans to disband Argentina's intelligence agency amid suspicions that rogue agents were behind the mysterious death of a state prosecutor investigating the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre.

In her first televised address since Alberto Nisman was found dead with a single bullet to the head, Fernandez said on Monday night she would send Congress a bill creating a new security body that would be more transparent.

Nisman's death on 18 January, just a day before he was due to appear in Congress over his claims that Fernandez conspired to derail his investigation, has triggered a storm of conspiracy theories, including some directly against Fernandez. But her government says Nisman was tricked into making his allegations against Fernandez and then killed when he was no longer of use to those who led the conspiracy. It said the scandal is linked to a power struggle at the Intelligence Secretariat, or SI, and to operatives who had recently been fired. The SI, formerly known as the SIDE, has significant power and autonomy. In the "dirty war" directed by Argentina's military dictatorship of 1976-83, the agency spied on Marxist rebels, labour unions and other leftists.

Fernandez said the draft bill will be sent to Congress before she

travels to China at the weekend, and that legislators would hold extraordinary sessions in the February holiday period to debate the proposal. "We need to make the intelligence services more transparent because they have not served the interests of the country," said Fernandez, seated in a wheel chair and dressed all in white. The feisty leader said the intelligence services had changed little since the return to democracy but she steered clear of her usually frothy rhetoric after a week in which she has come under a barrage of criticism for her handling of the scandal. Nisman claimed the week before his death that Fernandez opened a secret back channel to Iran to cover up Teheran's alleged involvement in the AMIA bombing and gain access to Iranian oil. Fernandez has called the accusation absurd. Iran has repeatedly denied any link to the bomb attack. Opinion polls have shown few Argentines expect they will ever know how Nisman died. Thousands took to the streets last week to protest the slow pace of justice for the victims of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA center that killed 85 people and demanding answers to the questions around Nisman's death. The scandal around Nisman's death has created fresh turmoil in Argentina just 10 months ahead of a presidential election. Fernandez is constitutionally barred from seeking a third term.—Reuters

Amman considers releasing convicted terrorist in exchange for hostages

AMMAN, 27 Jan — Jordan may be willing to release a convicted terrorist in exchange for a Japanese journalist and a Jordanian military pilot believed to be held hostage by Islamic State militants, two members of the country's parliament told *Kyodo News* on Monday.

Bassam Al-Manaseer, chair of the Arab International Affairs Committee, and Ali Bani Ata, chair of the Japan-Jordan parliamentary friendship league, suggested in separate interviews that Amman may comply with the Islamic State's demand to release the convicted terrorist Sajida al-Rishawi from prison in Jordan if the group releases the Japanese journalist Kenji Goto and the pilot, First Lieutenant Muath al Kasaesbeh.



Ali Bani Ata

Amman has been in contact with the militant group through a third party, they said.

The interviews came after an image was posted online Saturday of Goto, a 47-year-old freelance journalist, holding a picture purportedly showing that the group had executed 42-year-old Haruna Yukawa, another Japanese

national believed to have been detained with Goto.

In an accompanying audio message, a man claiming to be Goto said the captors changed their demand to the release of al-Rishawi, who was convicted of an attempted suicide bombing at an Amman hotel in 2005, instead of a \$200 million ransom demanded earlier.

On such a swap plan of al-Rishawi for the Japanese journalist and the 26-year-old Jordanian military pilot who has been held captive by Islamic State since December, Japan's top government spokesman Yoshihide Suga declined to comment, saying the situation is "ongoing."

"We are not aware of that," Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga told a press conference in Tokyo on

Tuesday.

The Japanese government has not revealed details of negotiations with the Jordanian government, with a government source saying Tokyo is requesting Amman's cooperation to solve the situation.

Originally, Islamic State is believed to have sought a hostage swap between the Jordanian military pilot and al-Rishawi, an Iraqi woman on death row in Jordan.

Al-Manaseer, citing knowledge of Jordanian diplomatic policy, said it would be impossible for Amman to release al-Rishawi only in exchange for the release of the Japanese hostage Goto.

If such a hostage swap were made, the Jordanian pilot captured by Islamic State could be killed as he

would be no longer a candidate for hostage swap deals, Al-Manaseer said.

"We are afraid that Daish take out this pilot from the game. It means they want to kill him," he said, using an alternative name for Islamic State.

The best-case scenario would be a case where both Goto and the pilot will be exchanged for a death-row prisoner, Al-Manaseer said.

But Islamic State could raise its demand for Amman for such a deal, such as the release of other prisoners or a ransom, Al-Manaseer said, noting uncertainty of what Islamic State would demand in exchange for the release of the pilot.

"The most difficult thing is Daish is not clear about what they want," he

said. In addition to al-Rishawi, the release of another detained Iraqi terrorist in Jordan, Ziad Al Karboli, may be demanded by Islamic State in return for the release of the Jordanian pilot, *The Jordan Times* reported on Monday, citing analysts and reports.

In the end, how Amman will deal with the hostages issue will likely rely on the decision of Jordanian King Abdullah II, as he has vast authority over the country's policy decisions, observers said.

Yasuhide Nakayama, a senior Japanese diplomat overseeing Japan's task force to deal with the situation, said in Amman on Monday night, "Both governments (of Japan and Jordan) are working together by joining hands," to free the Japanese journalist and the pilot.

"We are going to strive to rescue Mr Goto with the full support of the Jordanian government," Nakayama said.

Kyodo News

Car bomb kills one in Egypt's Alexandria

CAIRO, 27 Jan — One person was killed by a car bomb, parked near a police station by suspected Islamist militants, in the Egyptian city of Alexandria early on Tuesday, security sources said.

The attack in Egypt's second-biggest city also wounded two people but there were no immediate details about the identity of the victims.

Security sources also said that unknown assailants had attacked a police station in western Alexandria with Molotov cocktails, setting it alight but causing no casualties. On Sunday, about 25 people were killed in anti-government demonstrations on the anniversary of the 2011 uprising that ousted veteran autocrat Hosni Mubarak. Activists accuse President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi of returning Egypt to authoritarian rule since the army removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power in 2013 and then mounted the biggest crackdown against Islamists in the country's history.

Sisi says he is committed to democracy in Egypt, a strategic US ally with influence across the Arab world.

Islamist militants have killed hundreds of police and soldiers since then-army chief Sisi overthrew president Mohamed Mursi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013.

A law enacted during Sisi's rule severely restricted demonstrations, dramatically reducing unrest in Egypt.

However, signs of discontent emerged in the run-up to the anniversary of the 2011 uprising that raised hopes of greater freedoms in the most populous Arab country.

Reuters

Bullets hit flydubai passenger jet at Baghdad airport

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan — Bullets hit a passenger jet operated by budget carrier Dubai Aviation Corp, known as flydubai, as it was landing at Baghdad airport, the company and officials said on Tuesday.

An aviation official and a security official told *Reuters* two passengers were lightly injured when three or four bullets hit the body of the plane on Monday evening but they were unable to specify the source of the gunfire.

Flydubai, Emirates Airlines EMIRA.UL, Sharjah's Air Arabia AIRA.DU and Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways suspended flights following the incident, in line with a directive from the United Arab Emirates' civil aviation authority.

"After landing at Baghdad International



A general view shows Baghdad International Airport in this on 25 Oct, 2012 file photo.—REUTERS

Airport (BGW) on 26 January 2015, damage to the aircraft fuselage consistent with small arms fire was discovered on flydubai flight FZ 215," a company

spokesperson said. The spokesperson denied that any passengers had required medical treatment and said an investigation was underway. The aviation

official said Iraq had briefly suspended air traffic on Monday following the incident but that most flights had resumed on Tuesday morning.—*Reuters*

closed in on them. Since then, police in Belgium, France and Germany have interrogated dozens of Islamist suspects, and in Paris last week French prosecutors asked for formal investigations of four men suspected helping prepare the 7-9 January attacks in Paris.—*Reuters*

French police arrest four in anti-jihadist raid

PARIS, 27 Jan — Special police forces in France arrested four men in the southern French town of Lunel on Tuesday in an operation aimed at breaking up jihadist networks, a police source said.

Two of them had returned from Syria, the source said.

The town of Lunel, in the Hérault region, has attracted attention after local media reports that as many as 10 of its residents sought to travel to Syria to fight alongside Islamists.

France has stepped up its fight to break up jihadist recruitment cells after 17 people were killed in three

days of violence by Islamist militants in Paris earlier in January.

The attacks, one at the headquarters of satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and the other at a Jewish supermarket, were launched by men who had connections to jihadist recruiters. All three were killed as security forces

Car bomb explodes outside hotel in Libya's Tripoli — witnesses

TRIPOLI, 27 Jan — A car bomb exploded in front of a Tripoli luxury hotel on Tuesday, witnesses said.

There was no immediate word on casualties. The blast happened in the parking area at the Corinthia hotel, the country's most prominent hotel located in the centre of the city.

Reuters

‘Life-threatening’ blizzard shuts down much of US Northeast



People walk through heavy falling snow in Times Square in New York on 26 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

NEW YORK, 27 Jan — A life-threatening blizzard barreled into the US Northeast, affecting up to 20 percent of Americans as it kept workers and students housebound, halted thousands of flights and prompted New York to ban cars from roads and shut down subway trains.

With memories still fresh of Sandy, a superstorm that ravaged the East Coast

in 2012, the governors of six East Coast states declared emergencies. The storm could affect up to 60 million people in nearly a dozen states.

The National Weather Service warned of a “life-threatening blizzard” that could dump as much as 30 inches (76 cm) of snow on parts of the region at rates up to four inches an hour.

Winds might gust up to 55 mph (80 kph) around New York City.

The National Weather Service in New York said roughly 5.5 inches of snow had fallen in the Manhattan’s Central Park by early Tuesday and nearly nine inches were recorded on parts of Long Island. NWS officials in Boston reported early on Tuesday wind gusting up to

70 mph at Nantucket Memorial Airport.

“Please stay home,” New Jersey Governor Chris Christie told residents, ordering all but the most essential government workers in his state home from Monday afternoon until Wednesday at the earliest. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo banned travel from 11 pm for all but emergency vehicles on roads in 13 counties, including New York City, suburban Westchester and Long Island, with the threat of a \$300 fine for violators.

“If you are in your car and you are on any road, town, village, city, it doesn’t matter, after 11 o’clock, you will technically be committing a crime,” Cuomo said. “It could be a matter of life and death so caution is required.” Additional driving bans in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey brought travel across the region to a standstill amid near white-out conditions.

Reuters

Vucic: We would like to be like Finland

HELSINKI, 27 Jan — Serbia’s Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic met in Helsinki on Monday with Finland’s Prime Minister Alexander Stubb to discuss Serbia’s EU integration, chairmanship of the OSCE, relations in the region and the situation in Ukraine.

Serbia is a very important country in the Western Balkans because of its EU integration, chairmanship of the OSCE and good relations with other countries, Stubb stressed.

Vucic thanked his colleague for support to Serbia’s EU integration, adding that joining the EU was a strategic goal.

Serbia would like to be like Finland, to get good results through hard work, Vucic emphasised.

The two discussed also bilateral cooperation, trade, which is on the rise, and a plan to bring more Finnish investors to Serbia.

Commenting on whether Finland supports opening the first chapters of the accession talks between Serbia and the EU, Stubb stated that his country could not influence those processes, but that it supported EU enlargement, and that he hoped the first chapters would be opened as soon as possible.

Serbia has to fulfil all its obligations first, Vucic underscored, adding that he also hoped the first chapters would be opened soon, but that his government was not working on it just for the sake of opening those chapters, but for the benefit of Serbia and its future.

He started his visit to Finland by taking part in a business forum organised by the Finnish national agency Finpro, which represents 550 Finnish companies.

Vucic briefed the Finnish investors on the reform process and the economic situation in Serbia, urging them to come in the greatest numbers possible and invest in the country.

We are not asking for charity, we have embarked on the reforms on our own, without external pressure, because we want to be a modern, economically stable, European country. We want a healthy economy and hard work, he said.—Tanjug



Serbia’s Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic and Finland’s Prime Minister Alexander Stubb.—TANJUG

US court refuses to release on bail Russian man charged with espionage

NEW YORK, 27 Jan — A federal court in Manhattan on Monday refused to release on bail a Russian citizen Yevgeny Buryakov, who had been arrested in the Bronx earlier on the same day by FBI officers on charges of espionage.

Judge Sarah Netburn decided Buryakov, 39, could not be set free on bail since he had all the reasons to flee the US. She also claimed that his ‘cover’ — a job at the New York office of Russia’s Vnesheconombank, according to some media reports —

“was blown”. State lawyer Sabrina Shroff who represented Buryakov’s interest in the courtroom declined to provide any comments to TASS. Attorney’s office in New York said on Monday Buryakov and another two Russian citizens, identified at Igor Sporyshev, 40, and Viktor Podobnyy, 27, had been gathering intelligence data for Russia and seeking access to information on new sanctions against Russian banks and the alternative sources of energy development in this country.

The attorneys claimed that all the three men were officers of Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).

Media reports suggested that Sporyshev and Podobnyy, both of them lower-rank diplomats, had left the US.

The data cited in the complaint the attorneys filed with the court suggested that Sporyshev had a staff member of the Russian trade mission in New York before November 2014 while Podobnyy had been an attaché at the Russian mission to the

UN before September 2013.

The Russian mission to the UN, the trade mission and the Consulate General in New York declined to comment on the situation.

“We didn’t get official information /on the situation/ and as for the unofficial one, we don’t comment on it,” the press service of the embassy in Washington told TASS. Diplomats on the embassy staff said, however, they were closely watching the developments through all the information channels available to them.—Itar-Tass

Eight French, two Greeks killed in NATO plane crash in Spain



Smoke rises after a Greek F-16 fighter plane crashed during NATO training at the Albacete air base in Albacete on 26 Jan, 2015. — REUTERS

MADRID, 27 Jan — Eight French nationals and two Greeks were killed and 21 people injured when a Greek fighter plane crashed during NATO training in Spain on Monday, Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said.

The F-16 crashed at about 3:20 pm (1420 GMT) shortly after taking off at a training centre in Albacete, 260 km (160 miles) south-east of the capital Madrid.

“There are also quite a lot of people injured ... 10 French people, 11 Italians,” Rajoy said in an interview with Telecinco TV.

The Greek fighter jet was carrying out a NATO training exercise at the Spanish base but something went wrong during the take-off.

“The plane lost power, crashing into the parking area for planes, crashing into various planes that were parked there,” the defence ministry said in a statement.

Two pilots on board were among the dead and other pilots and mechanics were underneath the plane in the parking area, according to Spanish media reports. French Mirage and Italian Alpha Jet planes were parked when the plane crashed, the

defence ministry said.

Five of the injured were taken to a specialist burns unit at La Paz Hospital in Madrid while the others were treated at a hospital in Albacete.

“I am deeply saddened,” NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in a statement.

“This is a tragedy which affects the whole NATO family. I express my heartfelt condolences to the loved ones and the nations of those who lost their lives, and I wish a speedy recovery to the injured.”

Reuters

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (RSU-427)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (RSU-427) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV PACIFIC DOLPHAN VOY NO (CAM055)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACIFIC DOLPHAN VOY NO (CAM055) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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AGENT FOR: M/S CAM SHIPPING CO. LTD**
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF 255R)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (YF 255R) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CMA CGM**
Phone No: 2301185

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 28th January, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region and 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: Decrease of night temperatures in Eastern Myanmar areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th January, 2015: Fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28th January, 2015: Generally fair weather.

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CIA drone strike kills al-Qaeda men in Yemen

SANAA, 27 Jan — A CIA drone strike on a car in Yemen killed three men believed to be al-Qaeda militants on Monday, officials said, in a sign US security operations would continue despite a political crisis in the volatile Arab country.

President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government quit on Thursday in a confrontation with an Iranian-allied armed group, depriving Washington of a staunch ally in its campaign

against al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The attack by a remotely piloted plane in central Marib province was the first since the departure of Hadi and signals Washington's campaign against AQAP is continuing, at least in its use of drones, despite his absence. AQAP claimed responsibility for deadly shootings in Paris on 7 January and American officials fear al-Qaeda will gain strength in Yemen's current

power vacuum.

US security officials had said on Friday the collapse of the US-backed government had disrupted Washington's counter-terrorism campaign, dealing a major setback to US efforts to undermine one of al-Qaeda's most potent wings.

Several US government sources indicated on Monday the latest strike was carried out by a CIA drone. A CIA spokesman declined to comment.—Reuters

Spielberg — 70 years after Holocaust Jews still face anti-Semitism



Director Steven Spielberg

KRAKOW, (Poland), 27 Jan — Hollywood director Steven Spielberg said on Monday he hoped that the Holocaust commemorations taking place in Poland on Tuesday will be a warning for future generations, in light of a rising tide of anti-Semitism and intolerance against Jews.

Spielberg was talking to Holocaust survivors in the southern Polish city of Krakow, ahead of the main event marking 70 years since Soviet troops liberated the Nazi German Auschwitz death camp.

"If you are a Jew today, in fact if you are any person who believes in the freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom in free expression, you know that like many other groups, we are once again facing the perennial demons of intolerance," the Oscar-winning filmmaker said.

The director won an Academy Award for Best Director for "Schindler's List," his 1993 movie about a German who saved more than a thousand mostly Polish-Jewish refugees during the Holocaust, warned of spreading anti-Semitism.

"(There are) Facebook pages identifying Jews and their geographic locations with the intention to attack and the growing efforts to banish Jews from Europe," said Spielberg.

"My hope for tomorrow's commemoration is that the survivors will feel confident that we are renewing their call to remember. That we will not only make known their own identities, but in the process help form a meaningful, collective conscience for the generations to come."

The commemoration on Tuesday at the site in southern Poland where the Nazis killed about 1.5 million people, mainly European Jews, between 1940 and 1945, may be the last major anniversary when survivors attend in numbers.—Reuters

James Franco finds his most despicable character in 'True Story'

PARK CITY, (Utah), 27 Jan — Killing an exaggerated version of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Sony's controversial comedy "The Interview" wasn't a problem for actor James Franco but he found challenges in playing real-life murderer Christian Longo for thriller "True Story."

"He's probably the worst person that I've ever played, just because I have such a great family and there's just something so horrible about killing your kids. So I have very little connection to him," Franco told Reuters.

"True Story," which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on Friday and will be released by Fox Searchlight in US theatres on 10 April, is based on the memoir of former *New York Times* journalist Mike Finkel, who formed a friendship with a murderer who used his name as an alias.

What unfolds is a complex relationship as Finkel, played by Jonah Hill, meets Franco's Longo, an Oregon man awaiting trial for brutally killing his wife and three children. The two men find common ground in writing but the dynamic wavers as each man strug-

gles with his search for intellectual credibility.

"I think it's to do with nemesis. I think it's a very male thing," said director Rupert Goold, who made his film debut with "True Story."

Goold, a British theatre director, said much of "True Story" played out like Shakespeare's "Othello," a story of male friendship and betrayal.

To prepare, Franco watched tapes of Longo testifying at his 2003 trial, which he called "chilling," but he opted not to visit the convicted killer currently on Death Row.

Reuters



Actor James Franco

Chinese actress buys into Alibaba Pictures as it warns of losses



Actress Zhao Wei

HONG KONG, 27 Jan — Chinese actress Zhao Wei has taken a major stake in Alibaba Group Holdings Ltd's film division, bringing some star power to a company that warned on Monday it could rack up losses of as much as HK\$600 million (£51 million) for 2014.

The star of "Shaolin Soccer" and "Red Cliff" and Huang Youlong, her husband, paid more than HK\$3 billion for 9.18 percent of Alibaba Pictures Group Ltd, according to Hong Kong stock exchange filings.

Zhao, considered one of the country's most bankable stars, and her husband made the acquisition through holding

company Gold Ocean Media Inc in December. Online commerce company Alibaba bought and renamed the film-making company for more than \$800 million last year, as it expands into movies and entertainment content. This month, Alibaba Pictures unveiled its first movie project under its new ownership, a romance to be produced by acclaimed Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai.

Those moves came as Chinese Internet rivals Tencent Holdings Ltd and Baidu Inc also began to explore forays into movie-making and film content.

But Alibaba Pictures itself continues to struggle. In August, the company disclosed accounting irregularities after an internal review.

Last week, it said it hoped to replace its auditors, Deloitte Touche Tomatsu, with PricewaterhouseCoopers.—Reuters



Kylie Minogue to headline Hyde Park gig

LONDON, 27 Jan — Singer Kylie Minogue is to headline a Hyde Park gig for the Barclaycard presents British Summer Time 2015 series.

The 46-year-old 'Can't Get You Out of My Head' singer will be supported by Grace Jones and Chic featuring Nile Rodgers on 21 June, reported Digital Spy.

"I'm so excited to perform at Hyde Park this summer. I have great memories of playing shows there and am looking forward to doing it all again! Given the amazing artists perform-

ing and that it will be the longest day of the year, I can't wait," she said.

Other acts confirmed to play at British Summer Time 2015 include Taylor Swift and The Who.

Senior Vice President at Live Events Jim King said, "We are thrilled to announce Kylie as the third headline for Barclaycard presents British Summer Time Hyde Park. Her live shows are always amazing and show why she still reigns supremely as Pop's Princess."—PTI

'Selma' director DuVernay to make Hurricane Katrina feature film

LOS ANGELES, 27 Jan — Ava DuVernay, the director behind the Oscar-nominated Martin Luther King Jr biopic "Selma," will write, produce and direct a feature film set in the time of Hurricane Katrina, the company backing the film said on Monday.

David Oyelowo, who plays King in "Selma," is in talks to co-produce and star in the film, described by Participant Media as "a sweeping love story and complex murder mystery," set during the time of the 2005 hurricane that slammed into the US Gulf Coast and deluged the city of New Orleans after levees broke.

DuVernay, the first African American woman nominated for a Golden Globe for directing, was hired by Participant Media, which was founded in 2004 by billionaire and former eBay President Jeff Skoll to produce entertainment programming that inspires social change.

The announcement comes less than two weeks after she was passed over for an Oscar nomination for best director, an exclusion that fuelled a debate over the lack of diversity in this year's Academy Awards nominations.

"Selma," a \$20 million movie from Paramount Pictures, did secure a Best Picture Oscar nomination.

Reuters

GENERAL

Talks over transfer system stall after FIFPro demands rejected

BERNE, 27 Jan — Talks aimed at reforming football's transfer system have broken down after European clubs and leagues refused to accept proposals to protect unpaid players, the players union FIFPro said on Tuesday.

The negotiations, which opened last March, have come to a standstill and FIFPro has called an extraordinary meeting of its Europe division in Athens on Wednesday to discuss the issue.

FIFPro said the European Clubs' Association (ECA) and the European Professional Football Leagues (EPFL) had failed to accept four key proposals to ensure contractual stability.

These included a proposal to allow a player to terminate his contract at 10

days' notice if he is unpaid for more than 30 days, and another entitling the player to financial compensation if his contract is terminated without just cause.

In such cases, players should be allowed to join another club without the restriction of any transfer window, FIFPro said.

ECA and the EPFL were not immediately available for comment.

"These reforms would make the contract of a professional player a two-way street," FIFPro secretary general Theo van Seggelen said in a statement.

"The situation can be contrasted to the rights of a club where a player breaches a contract, which would see him often responsible

to pay his own transfer value and subject to a mandatory ban.

"Transfer values have, of course, spiralled out of control and can see players liable for the payment of millions of dollars, something no other employee would have to bear.

"The transfer system is failing football and its players," he added.

Van Seggelen described the issue as the biggest problem in professional football.

"Every year, around 4,000 players file cases with FIFA either because their club has not paid them or the club has unjustly terminated the contract," he said.

"Due to the volume of cases, players have to wait several years for a hearing



Theo van Seggelen, the secretary general of FIFPro (Federation Interantionale Des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels) in Sydney on 30 May, 2008.

REUTERS

which, in over 90 percent of matters, is decided in favour of the player.

Reuters

Japan's publication sales drop 4.5% in 2014, largest fall on record

TOKYO, 27 Jan — Sales of books and magazines in Japan — excluding those in digital format — dropped 4.5 percent in 2014 from a year earlier to an estimated 1.6 trillion yen, the largest fall on record, a research institute said on Monday.

The sales declined for the 10th consecutive year,

mainly because a consumption tax hike in April dampened consumer demand, slowing the sales, the Research Institute for Publications said.

Book sales are estimated to have totaled 754.4 billion yen, down 4.0 percent, while magazine sales came to an estimated 852.0

billion yen, down 5.0 percent, with sales of weekly magazines falling sharply.

Sales of books and magazines peaked in 1996 with an estimated 2.7 trillion yen, meaning that the market shrank to two-fifths its size 18 years earlier.

With information readily available through smart-

phones and other electronic devices, digital publications have grown steadily in the Internet era, developing into a 101.3 billion yen market in fiscal 2013, up 31.9 percent from the previous year, according to Impress Corp, a publisher and Internet service operator.

Kyodo News

New Philharmonic takes wing above Paris periphery

PARIS, 27 Jan — In the northeast of Paris, steps from the roar of the ring road, hundreds of thousands of aluminium birds soar across the angular carapace of the new Paris Philharmonic, their inlaid wings a lyrical counterpoint to the otherwise colourless spot.

With the opening of a new symphony hall far from the capital's elegant boulevards on former slaughterhouse grounds, Paris hopes to inspire a new generation of music lovers while revitalizing the Porte de Pantin area linking the city and under-served suburbs.

Two weeks after its official opening attended by President Francois Hollande and a host of dignitaries, workmen are putting the final touches to the roof, walkways and facade.

Designed by French architect Jean Nouvel, whose designs include Copenhagen's concert hall and the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the project has been controversial since its 2006 inception, both over its location and its price tag, now nearly doubled from a preliminary estimate of about 386 million euros (\$433 million).

In advocating a first-



A general view shows the new Paris Philharmonic Hall "Philharmonie de Paris" by French architect Jean Nouvel is this picture taken on 14 Jan, 2015 before its inauguration.—REUTERS

class symphony hall for Paris, Philharmonic President Laurent Bayle has cited "larger social stakes" — that it be accessible to all and that its primary aim be to introduce music of all kinds to young people.

That dovetails with a push by city and regional authorities for a Greater Paris to share municipal facilities and bring improved cultural access to those in outlying areas cut off by the "peripherique," the busy, multi-carriageway road that rings the city.

"The Philharmonic is the first landmark in the

future Greater Paris," said Bayle, calling the project a "marvellous addition to the east of Paris that is undergoing major change."

The building is next to the "City of Music" centre of smaller concert-halls, a music museum and exhibition space dating from 1995 around La Villette park.

About 30,000 visitors attended an open-house weekend at the Philharmonic that showed off the myriad sound-proof educational rooms where an array of drums, lutes, violins, trombones and other instruments await the young and curious.

While programming mid-week is more sophisticated fare, weekends offer many family events and parents can listen to concerts while their kids participate in workshops.

"It's not about lowering standards, we just have to show people that it's easy to go out and hear music," Philharmonic spokesman Philippe Provencal said.

The jewel of the building is the elegant 2,400-seat symphony hall, whose acoustic panels recall birds in flight. Panelled in blond wood and outfitted with black velvet seats, the hall has been designed with both sound quality and comfort in mind, such as the space allowing air to circulate behind the balconies.

The space can be configured 17 different ways for a maximum seating of 3,650. Disagreements with the administration over costs and technical issues led Nouvel to boycott opening night.

"We had a building that wasn't entirely finished and an architect who wasn't there — but it was a huge international success," spokesman Provencal said.

Reuters

mitv

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(28-1-15 07:00 am~
29-1-15 07:00 am) MST

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local News * Kyeikhteeyoe: Welcome All * World News * Myanmar Masterclass: Fantastic Art * Local News * China-Myanmar Bilateral Ties * World News * Myanmar China Friendship Tour * Local News * Serene and Happy Rural Life in Myanmar * World News * Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary * Local News * MYANMA OBOE * World News * Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local News * Responsible Tourism in Socio-Cultural Aspect * World News * Kind Hearted Pet Lovers * Local News * India-Myanmar Bilateral Ties * World News * Myanmar China Friendship Tour * Local News * Skilful Marionette Performance of New Generation Artistes * World News * On the River * Local News * A Day Out With Sarah * World News * In The Studio: Pphonne |
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MRTV
News Channel

(28-1-2015, Wednesday)

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| <p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw <p>6:25 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Exercise <p>7:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News/ Weather Report <p>7:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road to 28th SEA Games (Pétanque) <p>8:30 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Line News <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary (ASEAN) <p>10:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio Economic Scenes <p>11:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People' Talks <p>12:00 noon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News / Weather Report <p>12:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hluttaw Image <p>1:40 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Show (Part-1) | <p>2:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional Boxing <p>3:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>4:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / Weather Report <p>4:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Second Year (Maths) <p>5:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>6:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology Program <p>7:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News <p>7:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Line News <p>8:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / International News / Weather Report <p>9:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News / Weather Report • Hluttaw Image • Fine Arts-Boson of Dramatic Performance |
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MRTV
Entertainment Channel

(28-1-2015, Wednesday)

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| <p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travelogue Programme <p>6:20 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A-1 Soe Myint Musics <p>6:40 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>7:05 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fashion Show <p>7:25 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series | <p>8:10 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>8:55 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical Programme <p>9:05 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyi Thu Ni Ti <p>9:25 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (60th) Myanmar-Japan Symphony Orchestra-2014 (Classical Music) <p>9:45 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Movie |
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Early salvo sends hosts Australia into Asian Cup final

NEWCASTLE, 27 Jan — Hosts Australia rode two early strikes to a 2-0 victory over United Arab Emirates that sent them into the Asian Cup final for a second successive tournament at a rain-soaked Newcastle Stadium on Tuesday. The Socceroos, who lost to Japan in the final four years ago, will take on another East Asian power in South Korea on Saturday in Sydney looking to seal a first continental title at their third attempt. Defenders led the way for the goal-happy tournament hosts with Trent Sainsbury heading them in front after three minutes and Jason Davidson doubling the lead 11 minutes later.

The UAE stunned champions Japan in a penalty shootout to reach the semi-finals for the first time since 1996 but another upset never looked on the cards after Australia's early salvo. Attacking midfielder



UAE's goalkeeper Majed Naser (C) punches the ball clear against Australia's Tim Cahill during their Asian Cup semi-final soccer match at the Newcastle Stadium in Newcastle on 27 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Omar Abdulrahman did nothing to detract from his burgeoning reputation with some delightful touches and striker Ahmed Khalil hit the woodwork in the first half

but they were unable to create enough clear-cut chances. The wet pitch probably did not help but Australia, with Matthew Spiranovic restored to the back four after suspension, also defended well enough to contain Abdulrahman and his team mates. It was at the other end of the pitch that the Socceroos made the most important early impression to the delight of the majority of the crowd of 21,079.

Winger Robbie Kruse had his cross blocked after a burst down the right in the opening couple of minutes but when the corner came swinging into the box, Sainsbury rose unchallenged to head the ball into the net off the turf. The UAE had their best chance in the 10th minute when Abdelaziz Sanqour broke down the right flank and crossed for striker Khalil to hit the ball first time against the base of the post.

Australia were straight back on the attack, though, and after another surge down the right the ball was heading towards Tim Cahill in front of goal. Cahill was dragged

back as he was attempting a shot and Mathew Leckie then had an effort blocked but the ball fell to Davidson, who calmly drilled it low and hard into the goal.

The Australians were in no mood to sit back and protect their lead but the UAE kept their shape and gradually worked their way back into the contest. Khalil let fly with a long-range effort that flew past Mat Ryan and wide of the post in the 51st minute and Abdulrahman continued to probe for weaknesses in the Australian defence. Massimo Luongo, Australia's find of the tournament, had another impressive game in midfield and his curling effort came close to the target after 72 minutes. The Socceroos continued to press forward and Leckie forced a save out of Majed Naser in the 75th minute, although the referee failed to see it and awarded a goal kick.

The UAE probably deserved a goal but Ali Ahmed Mabkhout had his shot smothered by Sainsbury in the dying minutes to leave his tally for the tournament at four.—Reuters

Berdych ends Nadal tyranny on day of shocks

MELBOURNE, 27 Jan — Iron-willed Czech Tomas Berdych ended eight years of tyranny under nemesis Rafa Nadal to storm into his second Australian Open semi-final on Tuesday after Maria Sharapova inflicted another grand slam reality check on Eugenie Bouchard.

Stunned by Sharapova's 6-3, 6-2 demolition of the seventh-seeded Canadian, the Rod Laver Arena crowd were knocked off their seats by Berdych's 6-2, 6-0, 7-6(5) victory over the 14-times grand slam champion. Ekaterina Makarova had earlier set the tone on a cloudy day of shocks, dumping third seed Simona Halep 6-4, 6-0 to set up an all-Russian semi-final with Sharapova. But it was Nadal's humbling on a mild summer's day that rocked Melbourne Park to its foundations and shook the biggest monkey in the

men's game off the back of Berdych. The big-serving Czech's 17-match losing streak to the Spaniard was the equal longest in the professional era and after fending off Nadal in a tight third set, the seventh seeded Czech revelled in his 'Vitas Gerulaitis moment'.

"I start pretty well, but you're playing Rafa and you have to keep going to the last point," the 29-year-old said courtside. "We set up the great plan for today's game and it worked."

"I'm just putting myself in the best possible position right now, really trying to go one by one."

The first two sets were over in exactly an hour, with Berdych serving masterfully, saving all four break points conceded and sealing the match with a raking second serve that Nadal could only bunt back into the net cord. On the comeback

trail after injury and illness, Nadal battled hard to save three match points, but his second set whitewash was his first bagel since playing great rival Roger Federer at the 2006 Wimbledon final, adding to the surreal atmosphere over centre court.

"It was just not my day. I didn't play with the right intensity, the right rhythm," Nadal said. "It was a day when the opponent played better than me."

"I made him play very easy so you cannot expect to win quarter-finals ... helping the opponent to play well."

Berdych will play the winner of sixth seed Andy Murray and local hope Nick Kyrgios, who clash in the evening session.

Though similarly one-sided, it was old stager Sharapova maintaining her domination in the earlier quarter-final. Bouchard said she had learned a lot from her gutting French Open loss last year when Sharapova overhauled her from a set down, but nothing could have prepared her for the 78-minute demolition that Sharapova inflicted upon her. The Canadian wore a look of grim determination as she waited in the player's tunnel to make her centre court entrance, but it was masking a head full of nerves. She double-fault-



ed and committed two unforced errors to gift three break-points in the opening game. Her opponent used just one to break her before charging to a 3-0 lead. Completely dictated, Bouchard had nowhere to hide from her second serve which the strong-willed Russian feasted upon.

Sharapova was stingy, giving up only two break points for the match, none in the first set, and saving both.

In full flight, she swooped in for the kill with a string of smoking winners, sealing it with a crunching inside-out forehand.

As Sharapova blew kisses, Bouchard headed straight for the exits, biting her lip. "Am I happy that I was able to lift my game after having a couple matches where I wasn't satisfied? Yeah, absolutely," Sharapova said. "But the toughest is what's to come. I hope that

she froze, later admitting she had felt "a little bit too stressed" before a ball was struck. Makarova, however, was a bouncing, hustling ball of energy. She broke twice for a 3-0 lead before her opponent had blinked, pouncing on anything short and despatching the Romanian's top-spin bombs with disdain from the baseline.

The Russian lost focus only briefly in the second set, falling 0-40 in the second game, but saved all three break points before motoring to victory in 69 minutes. The 26-year-old lefthander, who describes herself as shy off-court, has not lost a set all tournament. Her matches have lasted a tick over one hour and 11 minutes on average and she will head into her clash with Sharapova fresh and in top form.

"I'm not shy on the tennis court. It's a big stage," she said. "I never beat (Sharapova), so it will be tough."—Reuters



ASIAN CUP Australia 2015		
Asian Cup Australia 2015 Result		
Australia	2 - 0	UAE