THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Volume I, Number 136 | 10th Waning Day of Tabodwe 1376 ME | Friday, 13 February, 2015

President U Thein Sein meets armed ethnic groups, political parties

President U Thein Sein meets armed ethnic groups and political parties at the Myanmar International Convention Centre No. 2.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb— President U Thein Sein met with armed ethnic groups and political parties at the Myanmar International Convention Centre No 2 in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday. First of all, the president cordially greeted the leaders of political parties.

In his greetings, the president said internal peace is the most urgent need for the country and it cannot be denied that the wish and desire of all the people is also peace, emphasizing the importance for materialization of the solution reached at the talks.

Then, the president said there are different points of view and stances in a country where there are weaknesses in terms of development and unity.

Despite hardship and challenges, they are to be overcome with honesty and trust as the common desire of all parties is the wish for peace, the president continued, adding that it is undeniable that peace process is a long journey as it is based on the policy of finding solutions through political dialogues.

Afterwards, the president urged the attendees to make all-out efforts for peace so that the trust and expectation of the people will not be in vain as it has been over four years since peace efforts were made.

Then, the president said that despite the efforts to sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement on Union Day, it cannot be signed as intended and it is necessary to make a commitment to hold political dialogues without fail so that the hope of the people is not in vain.

The president recounted that talks were held with armed ethnic groups to sign the Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation and all the participants do not want people to lose hope.

In conclusion, the president urged leaders of armed groups to support the deed of commitment. Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann said that signing the deed of commitment is the result of goodwill towards restoring peace desired by the people, urging the national brethren to move forward to the goal of

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Myanmar wants to see 50 per cent of households electrified next year

By *Ye Myint*

YANGON, 12 Feb — Making strides towards providing all households with electricity access by 2030, Myanmar envisages that nearly half the country's more than 9 million households will get access in the 2015-2016 FY, the Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe said.

Despite an increase in per capita consumption of electricity from 104 kWh to 190 kWh since the time of the new government, only 33 per cent of households have access to electricity across the country, he added.

The latest data indicated Myanmar, with a population of over 52 million, has more than 3.2 million electrified households, up from about 2.1 million households in 2010. About 30,000 villages of more than 60,000 have access to grid-based electricity in rural areas.

He highlighted the need to pay attention to unelectrified households, numbering 7.2 million.

Pointing out the expected rise in electricity consumption, reaching more than 4,500 MW in 2020, an increase from current electrification of 2,340 MW, the Union minister called for generation of more than 2,000 MW for 7.2 million more households to get electrified. A World Bank-funded electrification project in Myanmar will be able to create electricity access for 1.7 million households only, he said.

According to the World Bank, Myanmar's electricity access is expected to improve in the first five years from 2015 to 2019 with there being a feasibility of implementing about 1.7 million additional grid connections. It suggested more than 517,000 connections have to be made each year after 2019 to meet the 2030 national electrification target.

Myanmar, which has several sources for generating electricity, has the lowest electrification rate in Southeast Asia.

According to the ministry, the country sees a 15 per cent increase in power demand every year, expecting to hit 4,531 megawatts in 2020, 8,020 in 2025 and 14,542 in 2030.— *GNLM*

Photo of Baluchaung No.2 Hydropower Plant with installed capacity of 168 MW which serves as a major electric power source producing around 10 per cent of electricity generation in Myanmar.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

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President U Thein Sein meets leaders of armed ethnic groups

President U Thein Sein cordially greets one of the leaders of 13 armed ethnic groups at Myanmar International Convention Centre No 2.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — President U Thein Sein met with leaders of 13 armed ethnic groups at the Myanmar International Convention Centre No 2 in Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday.

In his greetings, the president described Union Day as an auspicious red-letter day engraved in the mind of all national races leaders who highlighted the importance of unity among them for gaining independence more than 60 years ago. It is an undeniable fact that the peace process initiated by his government is being gradually translated into a process allowing a political guarantee, he continued.

He said today's gathering of the leaders of national races showing ties of brotherhood is proof of a political guarantee with the hope for peace. On the delays in signing the nationwide ceasefire accord, he stressed the need to build trust to delete concerns and doubts of the people longing for peace, calling for making a pledge.

The president said he "heartily agreed" with a strong desire of leaders of some armed ethnic groups on the pledge that would assist the nationwide ceasefire accord and political dialogues, expressing his view that the deed of commitment for peace and national reconciliation would serve as a boost for the ongoing peace process, thereby having effect on the people's hope for peace to prolong. The president called on ethnic leaders to sign the deed, saying that it is a binding promise, not a legal agreement. Political parties will be dialogue partners in the upcoming political dialogues, he added.

In his conclusion, the president said the signing of the deed on the "auspicious red-letter day" will mark an important milestone on the road towards peace and national reconciliation, urging those present not to let the situation escape from their grasp.

Next, leaders of KNU, RCSS/SSA, UWSA Special Region-2, SSPP/SSA and PNLO expressed their views on ongoing peace process.

Then, Union Minister U Aung Min made a supplementary report on the process.

Afterwards, the president made concluding remarks, calling for the opening of the peace door prior to holding political dialogues as the government entered its fourth year and pointing out that the peace process is a matter that involves a long journey as peace cannot be built overnight. He showed his understating of discussions of some groups to seek approval of their own organizations. He then called for quick implementation of the process.

Also present at the meeting were the Union ministers, UPWC Vice Chairman U Thein Zaw, the deputy attorney-general and delegation members.

MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attends ceremony to mark 68th Anniversary of Union Day

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — A flag hoisting platoon together with national races hoisted the State Flag in commemoration of the 68th Anniversary of Union Day at the square of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall on Thursday morning, attended by Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham.

The vice president, attendees and the Guard of Honour saluted the State Flag.

Dr Sai Mauk Kham read out the message sent by President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of 68th Anniversary of Union Day 2015.

Union ministers, senior military officers of the office of Commander-in-Chief (Army), judges of the supreme court of the union, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers, officials, national race delegates and guests were in attendance.—*MNA*

Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation

February 12, 2015

We, the signatories to this Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation, pledge, in order to achieve lasting peace in Myanmar, to work together towards realizing the goals envisioned in this Commitment in the spirit of responsible action, transparency and accountability.

1. Aiming to safeguard sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity on the basis of the peace process; and building a Union based on democratic and federal principles in the spirit of Panglong and in accordance with the outcomes of Political Dialogue to ensure freedom, equality, justice and self determination for all citizens;
2. Striving together at the outset to conclude the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement without delay while recognizing that a nationwide ceasefire is vital for the political dialogue process;
3. Establishing a new political culture of ending long-existing armed conflicts and solving grievances through dialogue instead of resorting to force of arms; and striving together to promptly hold an all inclusive political dialogue process;
4. Working together to promptly draft the Framework for Political Dialogue after concluding the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and commencing political dialogue prior to the 2015 General Elections in accordance with the Framework on Political Dialogue;
5. Undertaking jointly to prevent armed clashes and confrontations between various armed groups and to refrain from taking actions or measures that will harm the peace process;

All signatories to this Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation promise to endeavor together for the success of the peace process in order to achieve peace and national reconciliation desired by all citizens.

Nay Pyi Taw
February 12, 2015

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham salutes State Flag on the occasion of 68th Anniversary of Union Day.—MNA

President U Thein Sein meets...

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peace. He added that the Hluttaw will support the desire for peace and the peace process and Hluttaw representatives will never tolerate speech and behaviour that damage national solidarity and national reconciliation. In conclusion, the speaker urged organizations and national brethren to cooperate under the leadership of the president so that the desired peace can be restored through the talks.

Afterwards, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint said that the country has suffered due to civil war and different ideologies since independence was regained and therefore relentless efforts are being exerted for the peace process. He added that today is the time to restore peace through political means and urged the attendees to materialize the peace process as soon as possible as long-term conflicts are detrimental to the country.

Later, Vice Chairman of Union Peace-making Work Committee Union Minister U Aung Min, representatives of political parties, armed ethnic groups and ethnic affairs ministers took part in the discussions.

The talks concluded with remarks by the president. The president said it can be seen that the discussions express the common desire for peace and recognize the efforts for peace, adding that stability is a prerequisite for peace.

Then, the president continued to say that political dialogues can be held only when the door for peace is open and he urged all to exert concerted efforts for peace so the nationwide ceasefire agreement can be signed.

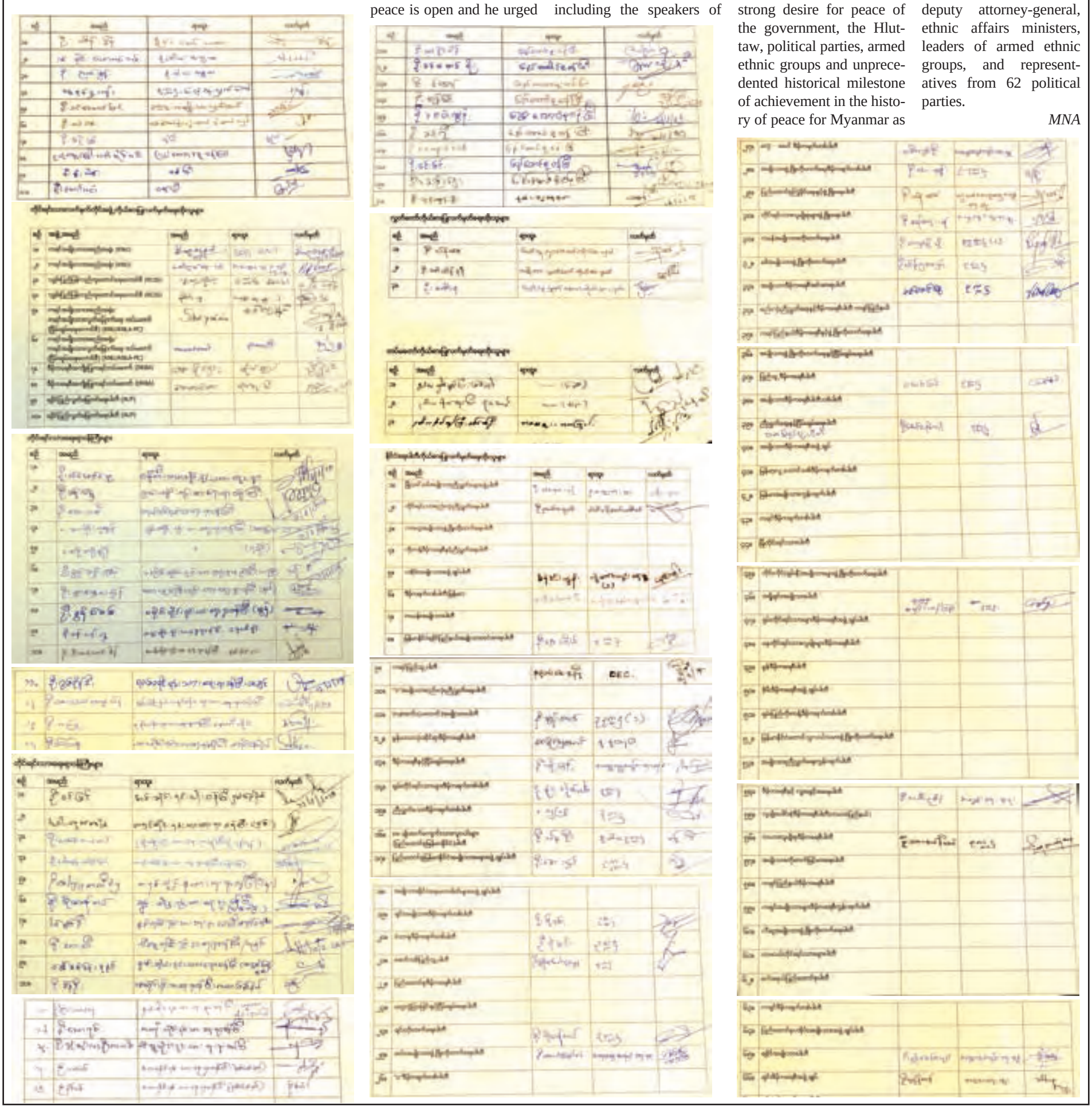
Today's talks focused on signing the Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation and leaders of armed ethnic groups, political parties, representatives and ethnic affairs ministers unanimously supported the deed of commitment.

The deed of commitment was signed by representatives, including the president, vice presidents, 14 union ministers, five Hluttaw representatives, including the speakers of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Amyotha Hluttaw, the chairman of the Union Election Commission, three representatives from the Tatmadaw, armed ethnic groups including KNU, RCSS, KNU/KNLA (Peace Council), DKBA, 29 ethnic affairs ministers, and 55 representatives from political parties. The remaining armed ethnic groups will sign the deed of commitment after discussions have been held and approved by their organizations.

The signing of the deed of commitment is firm proof of goodwill and strong desire for peace of the government, the Hluttaw, political parties, armed ethnic groups and unprecedented historical milestone of achievement in the history of peace for Myanmar as all agreed to build a union based on democracy and federalism.

Present at the talks were President U Thein Sein, Vice Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, Chairman U Tin Aye of the Union Election Commission, Union ministers, Hluttaw representatives, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), the deputy attorney-general, ethnic affairs ministers, leaders of armed ethnic groups, and representatives from 62 political parties.

MNA



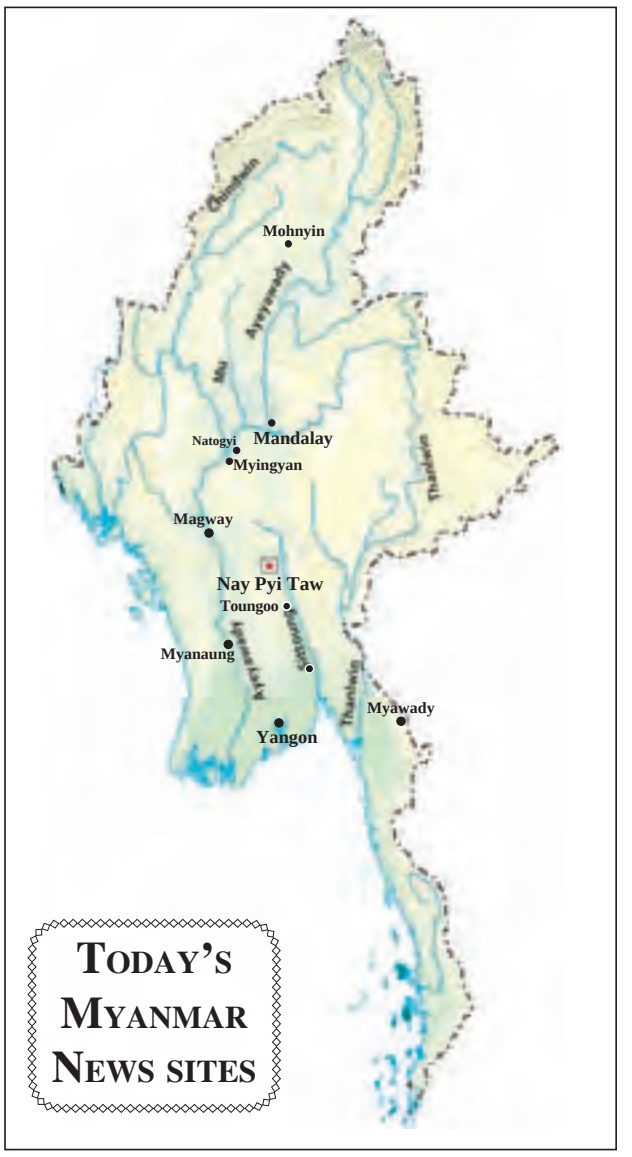
Rural village in Mogaung Tsp gets development facilities

MOHNYIN, 12 Feb— Opening ceremonies of a rural dispensary, new school building, library building and diversion weir were held in Kondangyi Village, Mogaung Township, in the first week of February.

Kachin State government allotted fund for construction of these structures.

"The state government allotted K88.8 million for construction of the village dispensary building. Union Solidarity and Development Party donated a land plot worth K8.5 million for the dispensary. The state government funded K16.6 million and people donated K16 million for construction of a new school building. Myanmar Libraries Foundation donated K500,000 and local people K2.8 million to construction of the village library. The state government allotted K19.138 million for building a diversion weir to irrigate 120 acres of farmlands," Kachin State Hluttaw representative U Kyaw Myint of Mogaung Township told media.

Erection of 1,528 lamp-posts is being carried out along a 23 miles long route from Kondangyi Village to Hopin for electrification of local people. As a result, they will enjoy electricity next year, he added.—*GNLM-001*



Myanmar-Thai friendly golf tourney honours Union Day

MYAWADY, 12 Feb — In commemoration of the 68th Anniversary of Union Day of Myanmar, a Myanmar-Thai friendly golf tourney was held at Mya Sandi golf course in Myawady, a border town of Kayin State, on 11 February.

Chairman of Mya Sandi Golf Club U Khin Maung Myint and officials of Mae Sot golf club in Thailand launched the golf tournament.

Officials from Myawady and Mae Sot awarded winners in the tournament.

Tun Tun Oo (Myawady Town)

Toungoo District IPRD displays documentary photos, books

TOUNGOO, 12 Feb —The photo, book and wall magazine show marked the 68th anniversary of Union Day and centennial birthday of General Aung San at Toungoo District Information and Public Relations Department as of 1 February.

Basic education students, trainees from Toungoo Education College, members of Toungoo Township Philanthropist Association, departmental staff and local people visited the show.

Biography and documentary photos of General Aung San, excerpts from his speeches, documentary photos of Myanmar Children's Day and 500 books in Myanmar and English were displayed for public observation.—*GNLM-017*

Sluice gate under construction to prevent bank erosion in Ottarathiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Phone Zaw Han and township administrator U Myat Soe of Ottarathiri Township inspected progress of Nattaungchaung sluice gate in Tetshein Village in Ottarathiri Township on 11 February.

Officials of the construction site reported that upon completion, farmlands from Tatshein, Tatthein and Ywatha villages will be free from bank erosion.

The council member and party visited Basic Education High School in Tatshein Village where they cordially conversed with teachers and students.

In Pantaungkha Village, the council member and officials met local people and discussed socioeconomic development.

Shwe Ye Yint

Ox, Milch Cow and Goat Show kicks off in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 12 Feb —The third Myanmar Ox, Milch Cow and Goat Show and Contest, organized by Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development and Mandalay Region Government was opened at the compound of the region department beside Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Pyigyidagun Township, Mandalay, on 11 February.

Union Minister U Ohn Myint and Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint formally opened the show and contest and visited booths of departments under the ministry, foodstuff, medicine and animal products booths, bulls, milch cows, goats, pigs and poultry showed by breeders.

Mandalay Region breeds 2.13 million of domestic species of cows and 170,000 milch cows to produce 200,000 viss of milk per day. The region government disbursed K206 million to cow breeders and K322.9 million loans to goat breeders.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Wellwishers donate provisions to members of the Sangha at Maha Muni Buddha Image

MANDALAY, 12 Feb — The 26th rice offering ceremony was held Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay on 11 February.

Local people, religious associations and social groups offered rice and provisions to over 850 members of the Sangha under the supervision of the Pagoda's Board of Trustees. They donated provisions worth over K250,000 each to 853 members of the Sangha, said a member of the pagoda's board of trustees.

"Number of wellwishers increased this year. Some wellwishers could not enter the sheds crowded with donors," he added.

Ko Bo Min Tun of Mahaaungmye Township said, "We have been donating provisions to members of the Sangha yearly since my older generations. Our donations are aimed to fulfilling needs of Buddhist monks."

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Children from philanthropic schools join sports contests in Lewe Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement organized the sports contest in commemoration of the Myanmar Children's Day at the hall of Samataung Philanthropic Home in Lewe Township on 12 February.

Children from philanthropic schools participated in 25 sports events.

Director of Nay Pyi Taw SWD U Tun Oo and officials opened the contest and presented prizes to the winners.

Than Naing (Zabuthiri)

Rural people get station hospital in Kanma Tsp

MAGWAY, 12 Feb — A ceremony to put a station hospital into service took place in Gyopin Village, Kanma Township, Magway Region, on 9 February.

Deputy Minister for Information U Pike Htway and Deputy Minister for Health Dr Daw Thein Thein Htay unveiled the signboard of the hospital.

The deputy minister for Health said that the government implements the plans to narrow development between rural and urban areas. It spent K58 million on construction of staff quarters, she said.

Deputy Minister U Pike Htway said that the station hospital will actually benefit the local people in health care services.

On the occasion, wellwishers donated K6 million to the medical fund of the hospital.

The station hospital can accommodate patients at 16 beds in providing health care services to the local people of Gyopin Village and 22 surrounding villages.

Magway Region IPRD

Myawady Township observes 68th anniversary of Union Day

MYAWADY, 12 Feb — A ceremony to mark the 68th Anniversary of Union Day was held at Mya Sandi monument ground in Myawady, Kayin State, on Thursday.

Myawady District's deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo read the message sent by the President on the occasion of the 68th Anniversary of the Union Day.

The deputy commissioner and officials presented prizes to winners in the essay contest in commemoration of the union day and certificates of honour to contributors to the union day celebration.

The ceremony was also attended by township departmental officials, political parties and social organization members.

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

A child participating in storytelling and poem recitation contest in commemoration of the Myanmar Children's Day at Nan Htaik Yadana Pre-Primary School under Social Welfare Department in Wunna Theikdi Ward in Zabuthiri Township on 11 February.
THAN NAING (ZABUTHIRI)

Opening of rural road honours Union Day

Myingyan-Sakha gravel road becomes a drive for development of rural areas in Myingyan, Mandalay Region.

MYINGYAN, 12 Feb — A one-mile long gravel road was commissioned into service in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region, on 10 February.

Township Administrator U Tun Thein Aung explained construction of the gravel road.

Mandalay Region Minister for Transport U Kyaw Hsan, deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and head of district Rural Development Department U Kyaw Min Naung cut the ribbon to open the road.

Rural Development Department funded K35.699 million for construction of the road in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Thitsa Khaing company built the road linking Myingyan and Sakha village.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Thai PM bites bullet on growth, eyes fast trains to tourist hotspots

Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha (C)

Photo shows the Shinkansen 700, bullet train

BANGKOK, 12 Feb — Thailand plans to build high-speed railway links connecting Bangkok to tourist destinations south of the Thai capital modeled on Japan's bullet trains, Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said on Thursday.

Prayuth heads a military government that is looking for big ticket schemes to stimulate growth in Thailand, Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, which is still struggling to regain traction following the putsch last May.

During an official visit to Japan this week where he met Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe, Prayuth rode the Shinkansen, or bullet train, from Tokyo to Osaka, prompting him to consider a similar network for Thailand.

"I would like to see it happen for tourist destinations like Pattaya and Hua Hin using funding from the state and the private sector," said Prayuth, referring to beach destinations south of Bangkok.

"I am inviting interested parties to fund and support this idea which should happen in the very near future," he added, giving no further details.

The Thai government last month said it would begin building a 400-billion-baht ($12.23 billion) rail project jointly with China in September, something that could be a boon for Thai trade and tourism.

China is seeking to gain a strategic foothold in Thailand, as Bangkok-Washington ties have soured since last year's coup.

Thailand and Japan signed a memorandum of intent on Monday to develop Thailand's existing standard-gauge railway lines and improve urban rail links in Bangkok with Japanese expertise.

Thailand's economy experienced zero growth in the first half of 2014 and will report its full-year 2014 growth on 16 February, which the Bank of Thailand forecasts at 0.8 percent.

Reuters

1-year prison term given to ex-Korean Air VP over "nut rage"

SEOUL, 12 Feb — A former Korean Air vice president was sentenced to one year in prison on Thursday for obstructing aviation safety last December by ordering a plane to return to the gate because she was angered over being served macadamia nuts in an unopened pack instead of in a bowl. Prosecutors had sought a three-year prison term for Cho Hyun-ah, 40, a daughter of the airline's chairman.

The so-called "nut rage" incident at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York on 30 December caused widespread public anger in South Korea and attracted global attention.

Cho was said by witnesses to have flown into a tantrum on plane, harshly scolding the female flight attendant who served the nuts for having failed to abide by the Korean Air manual when serving first class passengers, and ordering the pilot of the Seoul-bound flight to return the aircraft to the departure gate, which it had already left, to offload the chief purser over the incident.

In a court hearing on 2 February, Cho, who has been in custody since 30 December, apologized for her conduct and insisted she was unaware the aircraft had already left the gate. She resigned as Korean Air vice president for cabin service four days after the incident.

A key issue was whether the court would accept prosecutors' argument that she violated the law, which bans passengers from pressuring crew members to deviate from the flight route.

Cho also faced charges of physically and verbally assaulting the female flight attendant as well as the cabin crew chief.

Kyodo News

Photographers take photographs of a bus transporting Cho Hyun-ah, also known as Heather Cho, daughter of chairman of Korean Air Lines, Cho Yang-ho, at the Seoul Western District Prosecutor's office in Seoul on 12 Feb, 2015.
KYODO NEWS

More ships likely to join search for MH370: Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, 12 Feb — Malaysian Transport Minister Liow Tiong Tai said here on Thursday that more ships may join the search for the missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in the South Indian Ocean.

The transport minister told local reporters that the government is currently in discussions with China on the matter, hoping that such a move would become a reality.

"We will add more vessels with China's cooperation and hope to increase the number of vessels searching for MH370," he said.

Right now there are four vessels in the South Indian Ocean and they are currently searching the ocean floor for a sign of the plane. Malaysia has officially declared the incident as an accident and all 239 people on board the flight presumed dead as months of underwater searches have not found anything relating to their aircraft.

Xinhua

Japan to assist ASEAN integration, boost alliance with US

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida

TOKYO, 12 Feb — Japan vowed on Thursday to continue assisting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations toward its goal of a "more integrated, prosperous and stable ASEAN" that provides the foundation for "peace and stability for the whole region."

Calling the Japan-US alliance the "cornerstone" of Japan's diplomacy, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said in an address to the Diet that Tokyo will boost security ties with Washington, including by revising bilateral defence cooperation guidelines later this year to further enhance deterrence.

In the wake of the killings of two Japanese men who were held hostage by Islamic State militants, Kishida said Japan will "extend as much nonmilitary assistance as possible to moderate Muslim nations" as part of a global campaign to stem extremism in Africa and the Middle East, where the Islamic State and other terrorist groups are active.

With this year marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Japan, on the basis of its remorse for the past, will continue to follow the path of a peace-loving nation, with determination not to repeat the suffering brought about by the devastation of war in the last century, according to Kishida.

Japan has resolved to contribute more actively to peace and stability in Asia and other parts of the world, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's policy of "proactive contribution to peace based on the principle of international cooperation," he said.

"The strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific region remains severe," Kishida said.

The foreign minister expressed hope for developing Japan-China relations through increased dialogue and cooperation at various levels.

Kishida said that as this year marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties between Japan and South Korea, Tokyo hopes to build "future-oriented and multilayered cooperative relations" with Seoul through "mutual efforts."

He also promised future-oriented cooperation involving Japan, China and South Korea, saying he will try to ensure that a trilateral foreign ministerial meeting, which he said he hopes to hold at an early date, will lead to a trilateral summit among the leaders of the three countries.

Kyodo News

Japan to fulfill humanitarian role against terrorism: Abe

TOKYO, 12 Feb— Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed on Thursday to make Japan fulfill its responsibility as a humanitarian aid donor in the international fight against terrorism.

The pledge came during his policy speech in a House of Representatives plenary session after the Islamic State militant group's recent murder of two Japanese hostages.

Abe went on to talk about his reform plans for Japan's agriculture, medical services, social security programme, education and overall economy and security legislation.

"We feel profound grief for the victims of terrorism," Abe said, referring to the tragic consequences of the Islamic State hostage crisis. The prime minister then condemned the group's "outrageous" acts, reiterating what he said on 1 February when the second of the two captives, freelance journalist Kenji Goto, was found to have been beheaded: Japan will never give in to terrorism.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gives his policy address to the House of Representatives plenary session on 12 Feb, 2015, in Tokyo. — KYODO NEWS

"We will continue to provide humanitarian assistance such as food and medical aid," Abe said. "Japan will fulfill that responsibility in the international fight against terrorism." Abe has denied Islamic State's allegation that Japan has donated money to kill the extremist group's people and expressed his intention of stepping up nonmilitary, humanitarian assistance.

Also in the speech, Abe urged Japanese citizens to debate amending the Constitution, which no prime minister has ever done. Abe has voiced his intention of amending the supreme law while in office, calling it his Liberal Democratic Party's long-held goal since its founding in 1955.

The war-renouncing Constitution was drafted under Allied occupation of Japan after World War II ended in 1945.

Japan will continue its path as a pacifist nation and will try to be trusted by the world by making proactive contributions to global peace and stability, Abe said. Abe also pledged to implement his reform plans, calling them the most drastic for Japan in the postwar era and thus tough to achieve.

"A message we received from the general election is we should move forward on the road to reform even more strongly under a stable political environment," Abe said.

The LDP won a two-thirds majority with its junior coalition partner Komeito party in the December lower house election.

Kyodo News

Foiled Australia attackers vowed to 'strike necks and kidneys' of victims

SYDNEY, 12 Feb — Two men behind what Australian police called a foiled attack linked to Islamic State referred in a seized video to "stabbing the kidneys and striking the necks" of their intended victims, Prime Minister Tony Abbott said on Thursday.

Australian counter-terrorism police on Wednesday said they had thwarted an imminent attack after arresting two men in Sydney and seizing knives, a video and a flag associated with the militant group.

Police said the men, aged 24 and 25, were arrested after a raid on a home in a western Sydney suburb on Tuesday and had been charged with planning a terrorist act.

Abbott, who said he was shown the video by Australian Federal Police, gave the most detailed account of the video's contents to date, outlining what appeared to be a plot to stab or behead Australian citizens.

"... Kneeling before the death cult flag with a knife in his hand and a machete before him one of those arrested said this: 'I swear to almighty Allah, we will carry out the first implementation for the soldiers of the caliphate in Australia'," Abbott told parliament.

"He went on to say ... 'I swear to almighty Allah, blond people, there is no room for blame between you and us. We only are ... stabbing the kidneys and striking the necks'."

Australia, a staunch ally of the United States and its action against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown Islamist radicals since last year.

It raised its national terror threat level to "high" for the first time in September, when hundreds of police conducted raids after receiving information that IS supporters planned to conduct a public beheading.

Australia believes at least 70 of its citizens are fighting with the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, backed by about 100 Australia-based "facilitators". Abbott last year committed Australian aircraft and special forces to assist in the battle against IS in Iraq, introduced tough new laws on foreign fighters and gave security forces enhanced powers.

In December, two hostages were killed when police stormed a central Sydney cafe to end a 17-hour siege. The gunman, Man Haron Monis, a self-styled sheik with grievances against the Australian government who sought to align himself with the Islamic State group, was also killed. — *Reuters*

Philippine military leadership denies move to oust Aquino

MANILA, 12 Feb — The Philippine military leadership denied on Thursday any coup plot against President Benigno S Aquino III, whose leadership is being rocked by the tragic death of 44 police commandos on the hands of alleged Muslim rebel group whom his administration is currently engaged on a peace process.

Harold Cabunoc, public information chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said that based on initial consultation with ground commanders, "we have not received any feedback confirming the reports which were spread by some quarters." He also said that the AFP leadership has established an " excellent" monitoring system where troop movements and suspicious activities were directly reported to the leaders along the military's chain of command.

"The AFP has brought to bear so much lessons learned from previous experiences both good and bad that matured the AFP into what it is now, a highly professional organization dedicated to its mandated constitutional duty where coup rumors and recruitment will find no place," Cabunoc said.—*Xinhua*

The summit forum of the international seminar on the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road is held in Quanzhou, southeast China's Fujian Province on 12 Feb, 2015. The seminar opened here on Wednesday. —XINHUA

UN starts preliminary talks on Security Council reform

NEW YORK, 12 Feb — The UN General Assembly on Wednesday held a meeting on Security Council reform, thought to be preliminary consultations before intergovernmental negotiations set to begin shortly.

Noting this year marks the 70th anniversary since the Security Council took on its primary role of maintaining peace and security, General Assembly President Sam Kutesa said it is now time to move the process forward. "This is a historic opportunity for the Security Council to adapt to the new realities and constructs of our world," Kutesa said.

Japan has been advocating reform jointly with Brazil, India and Germany, forming the so-called Group of Four.

Representing the G-4, Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations Motohide Yoshikawa reiterated the group's position that both the permanent and nonpermanent members should be increased in the most powerful body of the organization. "This model will lead to general convergence on increased representation of developing countries in both categories," he said.

"We also see nearly all member states, except for a few, supporting an expansion of the council to a number in the mid-20s" from the current 15 — five permanent and ten nonpermanent seats. Another group, called Uniting for Consensus, including countries such as Italy, Pakistan, South Korea, is against expanding permanent members with veto powers. Italian Ambassador Sebastiano Cardi said on behalf of this group, "We are convinced that accountability and inclusiveness would make the Security Council work better. This is why the UFC cannot accept a reform that would exacerbate the already exclusive nature of the Security Council by further limiting access to the council and the sharing of its work." Preliminary talks are scheduled to continue through Thursday with representatives from more than 80 countries speaking.

Kyodo News

PERSPECTIVES

Friday, 13 February, 2015

Natural resources mean nothing without human resources

By *Kyaw Thura*

AS has often been mentioned in mass media throughout successive governments, Nature does favour our country when it comes to natural resources. On the one hand it is encouraging that our country is rich in natural resources, but on the other it is discouraging that the country is short of human resources.

It stands to reason that developing human resources is central to economic, social and educational development. It is therefore appropriate to define the development of human resources as enabling people to sharpen their latent talent and dormant caliber for the betterment of their social status, thereby contributing to their own communities and the nation as a whole.

We still lag far behind many of other countries in the region and the world in investing in the development of human resources. This might have resulted from failure to address structural challenges deeply rooted in national policies which are yet to increase employment, expertise, productivity, and income.

To turn the tide, we should make conscious efforts to help the private sector contribute to national infrastructure development while making best use of public-private partnerships. It is widely believed that infrastructural development will offer opportunities to people, including marginalized groups.

Reliable socio-economic policies and strategies will foster human resources and human capacities as well. Only then will we be able to guarantee the well-being of individuals and realize sustainable, inclusive, equitable development at the national level.

The point is that development strategies for human resources should be part of national development planning on all fronts. A country, no matter how rich in natural resources, will no doubt remain poor as long as it turns a blind eye to the development of human resources.

Write for us

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

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

DECISIVENESS

Kyi Mun

Decisiveness means: (1) Having a decided or definite outcome or result; e.g. A decisive battle (deciding which side wins the war).
(2) Showing decision; Definitely, conclusively or positively.
(3) The ability to make decisions quickly with confidence and determination.

Since it is very important to be decisive in some cases, kindly let me analyze the meaning of DECISIVENESS in the following way:

D *for* Definite Purpose
E *for* Energy
C *for* Compelling Passion
I *for* Initiative
S *for* Seeing Through
I *for* Inspiration
V *for* Vision & Values
E *for* Earnest Will
N *for* Not Going Forward Is To Turn Back
E *for* Endeavour
S *for* Strengths
S *for* Strategy

DEFINITE PURPOSE

Definite means determinate, distinct, precise, clear, not doubtful or uncertain. And purpose means: Object to be attained; thing intended, intention to act, resolution, determination. Purpose also means: That which one means to do, get, be etc; aim; plan; design; intension.

If we are to amount to something, some attainment or some achievement, we must have a definite purpose. That means we have got to have a vivid and clear-cut vision and values, goal and objective, aim and object. In plain language, we must have a definite idea of what we passionately want to be, to have and to do. We have got, at an early stage in life, to form a very distinctive ambition. It means we must begin our life journey with a definite destination. We must begin our life with the end in mind, with all our heart and with all our strengths. We cannot afford to doubt, hesitate or waver.

ENERGY

Energy means: Force, vigor, activity, capacity to do things and get things done; power (of a person) available for working, or as used in working; apply (devote) all one's energies to a task. Energy also means the physical and mental strength that makes you able to be active.

In order to have energy, we have got to take care of our health, fitness and strength. We must also take care of our emotional strength and stability and stamina. And we must cultivate and fortify our stamina and staying power.

COMPELLING PASSION

Compelling means: Rousing strong interest, extremely interesting or exciting. And passion means: Strong feeling or emotion; anger; sexual love; strong enthusiasm.

So, compelling passion means a strong drive, force, impelling urge. It all means we should have a compelling passion to be successful, happy and peaceful in our lives. It means we should be hot or cold, but never be lukewarm. We must lead a fervent, effervescent life.

INITIATIVE

Initiative means: (1) Ability to originate, set going, admit, introduce; enterprise; first step; lead.
(2) First or introductory step or move; capacity to see what needs to be done and enterprise enough to do it.

Successful people usually have a few but strong attributes in common, such as initiative, resourcefulness, decisiveness, common sense, courage and character. In terms of personal quality, inspiring individuals usually have initiative, intent, integrity, indomitability, and iron will. They take the first step, they lead and they inspire. They also improve themselves continually.

SEEING THROUGH

Seeing through means seeing the truth, the reality, things as they objectively are the potential and the ultimate. Seeing through means seeing in one's mind's eyes the destination of the journey, the summit of the mountain. People of decisive dimension or caliber see the ultimate blue, clear sky through the dark clouds. Such decisive people strategically see the ultimate victory through all obstacles and difficulties.

INSPIRATION

Inspiration means: (1) A sudden good idea about what you should do or say. (2) The state of being given encouragement or good ideas about what you should do. (3) A person, experience or place etc., that you get inspiration from. (4) To be inspirational to somebody, to make someone feel encouraged to be as good, successful etc., as possible.

When a person is inspired or encouraged, he or she can be decisive to be or not to be, or to do or not to do something. If there is little or no inspiration or incentive, one is liable to be doubtful, wavering, skeptic or indecisive. It means that self-motivated persons are more decisive in making a decision. Knowledge, information, experience or exposure are helpful to be decisive. Single-minded people are usually more decisive than people of unfocused mind. It means focus or concentration of mind is conducive to be decisive. And inspired people are more focused or better concentrated people with better motivation.

VISION & VALUES

Vision is what you see yourself to be in the future. Vision is what you believe you could become in the future. It is your dream. It is your whole inspiration. It is the meaning of your life. In that vision, you (must) live and move and have your being.

Values mean beliefs and ideals that you hold highest in your life. Your core values are the beliefs that you deem most precious in your life such as HONESTY, HONOUR, HIGH THINKING, HIGH ACHIEVEMENT, AND HIGH CARING & SHARING.

NOT GOING FORWARD IS TO TURN BACK

St. John said: **"Not to go forward is to turn back, and not to be gaining is to be losing".**

In the Bible it is said: **"This one thing I do. Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the MARK".**

Keep on keeping on no matter how hard the going may be!

ENDERAVOUR

"Actions are ours; consequences belong to heaven"; someone had said. A Jewish proverb says: "The wisdom of life is to endure what we must and to change what we can". One of the best examples of endeavour is:

"Let there be all skins,
Let there be all bones,
Let there be all sinews,
Let me be dead; but
I'll not rise until
I attain full Enlightenment".
- The Buddha-To-Be
(Prince Siddhattha, The Recluse)

STRENGTHS

There are FIVE KINDS OF PERSONAL STRENGTHS, viz.:

✓ Physical Strength	(PS/PQ),	Health & Fitness	Body
✓ Mental Strength	(MS/IQ),	Vision & Strategy	Head
✓ Emotional Strength	(ES/EQ),	Passion & Values	Heart
✓ Spiritual Strength	(SS/SQ),	Service & Selflessness	Soul
✓ Achievement Strength	(AS/AQ),	Character & Competence	Life

Organizational Strengths are:

- Human Resource
- Financial Resource
- Technological Resource
- Material Resource
- Information Resource

STRATEGY

Strategy means STRATEGOS (in Greek) which means: **The Art of the General.**

The Art of the General, in turn, means:

- ❖ Out-Generalling the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Thinking the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Witting the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Planning the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Preparing the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Performing the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Organizing the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Renewing the (Enemy) General
- ❖ Out-Reinventing the (Enemy) General

A strategy is carried out with a meticulous Plan of Action.

CONCLUSION

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Ref: Oxford Dictionary

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co.,Ltd.

President U Thein Sein hosts Union Day commemorative reception and dinner in capital city

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — President U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win hosted a commemorative dinner in celebration of the 68th Anniversary of Union Day in the capital city of Nay Pyi Taw on Thursday, officials said.

The president and wife extended cordial greetings to members of parliament, leaders of armed ethnic groups, chairpersons of political parties, ministers for region/state ethnic affairs and delegates.

Also present at the dinner were Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham and wife Daw Nan Shwe Hmon, Vice President U Nyan Tun and wife Daw Khin Aye Myint, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint and wife Daw Khin Pyone, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Chairman of the State Constitutional Tribunal U Mya Thein, Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, union ministers, high-ranking military officers and departmental officials.

Cultural dance troupes of national races entertained the president and dignitaries with a variety of traditional dances, following the dinner.

The president and wife also cordially greeted the cultural dance troupes.

MNA

MoU signed for implementation of Namli and Hunban hydropower projects

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — The signing ceremony of MoU on Namli and Hunban hydropower projects was held at the Ministry of Electric Power, here, on Wednesday.

The projects will be implemented on Namli and Dunban creeks near Sadon, Waingmaw Township, Kachin State, through JV/BOT systems.

It was attended by Union Minister U Khin Maung Soe, representatives from Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, departmental heads, and officials of Yunnan Baoshin Electric Power Co Ltd and local entrepreneur's Chan Rin Khu Development (mineral exploration) Co. Ltd. Feasibility study will be conducted for both projects to check environment impact assessment.

Namli Project will generate 165 megawatts and Dunban Project, 130 megawatts to be supplied to development of the nation including Kachin State through power grid.

MNA

Government troops make efforts to bring stability to Laukkai

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb — The main responsibility of the defence services is to protect the life and property of people and safeguard the security and interest of the country. Members of the defence services are shouldering their tasks of warding off any threats to public safety at considerable risk to their own lives.

The government troops were engaged in fighting with Kokang renegade forces in Laukkai on 9 February as the latter seized eight small arms from a people's militia in Tautshwe village north of Kunlong town.

The engagement claimed four lives of army officers and seven of other ranks, wounding 13, followed by two other engagements that caused the army to suffer 5 losses with two wounded.

The government troops suffered 30 deaths with 8 wounded from heavy fightings. In an another engagement, the government troops drew supporting fires from a military helicopter, losing an officer.

Acting on tips that a 200-strong Kokang renegade force was planning to attack a military headquarters in the Kongyan area, the government columns sent supporting troops to the headquarters and could save it and encountered small arms fired from afar on 11 February.

On 12 February morning, they shelled the military headquarters from afar, killing one.

From 9 to 12 February, 13 clashes broke out between the government troops and the Kokang renegade groups, with the former carrying out five airstrikes during the military operations. So far, the fighting has left government forces with 47 dead, 73 wounded and five vehicles destroyed.

The Kokang renegade groups were carrying out military operations to capture Laukkai before the Union Day, but the government forces could frustrate their plan thanks to the cooperation of local people.

The Kokang renegade groups were found to be good at military maneuvering with the use of scores of heavy weapons including anti-aircraft machine guns.

According to reports, Myanmar has informed China of the incidents that occurred on the border.

The local government of Shan State has imposed a curfew, but the current situation in Laukkai has returned to normal thanks to the joint efforts of the government troops and police forces. —*Myawady*

A map shows clashes between Myanmar Tatmadaw and Kokang renegade troops

A photo shows location of enemy in fighting at Laiklai region.—MYAWADY

Ceasefire agreed for eastern Ukraine after Minsk summit

***Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko (L), Russia's President Vladimir Putin (2nd L), Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko (R), Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel (C) and France's President Francois Hollande pose for a family photo during peace talks in Minsk on 11 Feb, 2015.—*Reuters**

Minsk, 12 Feb — The leaders of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine have agreed a deal to end fighting in eastern Ukraine, participants at the summit talks said on Thursday.

The deal reached after all-night negotiations in the Belarussian capital Minsk included a ceasefire that would come into effect on 15 February, followed by the withdrawal of heavy weapons.

The news came as Ukraine was offered a $40-billion lifeline by the International Monetary Fund to stave off financial collapse.

The Minsk summit agreement offered hope for eastern Ukraine, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman said.

"After 17 hours, negotiations in Minsk have finished: ceasefire from 15 February at zero hours, then withdrawal of heavy weapons. Therein lies hope," Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said on Twitter.

"We have managed to agree on the main issues," Russian President Vladimir Putin said.

The four leaders had committed to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, according to a joint declaration distributed by the Kremlin.

"The main thing which has been achieved is that from Saturday into Sunday there should be declared without any conditions at all, a general ceasefire," Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko told journalists.

French President Francois Hollande said there was still much work to be done on the Ukraine crisis, but the agreement was a real chance to ameliorate the situation.

He said separatists, who had at one point appeared to reject the deal, had signed up to it.

Merkel and Hollande joined Poroshenko and Putin for a marathon negotiating session that began early on Wednesday evening and continued into Thursday morning.

The summit discussions came as separatists tightened the pressure on Kiev by launching some of the war's worst fighting on Wednesday, killing 19 Ukrainian soldiers in assaults near the railway town of Debaltseve.

As the fighting escalated, Washington has begun openly talking of arming Ukraine to defend itself from "Russian aggression", raising the prospect of a proxy war in the heart of Europe between Cold War foes. The outcome of the Minsk talks is expected to influence discussions at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday, when sanctions against Moscow will be on the agenda. A deal would likely mean a softer line toward Moscow. Merkel and Hollande were expected to arrive late for the Brussels meeting but would urge the European Union to support the Minsk deal.

Reuters

UN Secretary-General's Message on World Radio Day

13 February 2015

On World Radio Day, we celebrate a medium that captures the imagination and brings people together.

Every year, United Nations Radio broadcasts over 1,200 documentaries, news items and editorials over the airwaves.

This year's observance of World Radio Day highlights the importance of radio to the world's 1.8 billion young women and men.

Radio matters for youth across the world.

As the international community shapes new sustainable development goals and a new global agreement on climate change, we need to hear the voices of young women and men, loudly, strongly and urgently.

UNIC/ Yangon

EU leaders to urge stricter border checks in counter-terror drive

Brussels, 12 Feb — European Union leaders are set to call on Thursday for stricter checks on travellers entering the passport-free Schengen area and increased information-sharing as part of a revamped counter-terrorism strategy following the Paris attacks.

Spain had suggested that the agreement governing the 26-nation Schengen zone might have to be amended to permit more border checks on people suspected of terrorist links after 17 people were killed in a wave of violence in France last month that began with an attack on satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*.

EU leaders meeting in Brussels later on Thursday will say that more can be done under the existing rules to strengthen checks on travellers entering or leaving the Schengen zone without changing the agreement or undermining the right to free movement within the passport-free area, which covers western Europe.

"We agree to proceed without delay to systematic and coordinated checks on individuals enjoying the right of free movement against databases relevant to the fight against terrorism," the leaders will say in a statement, according to a draft copy seen by *Reuters*.

EU governments have been searching for ways to stop Europeans going to fight with Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq.

Concern has risen since a Frenchman believed to have returned recently from fighting with rebels in Syria was arrested in May over the killing of four people at the Jewish Museum in Brussels.

The 28 heads of state or government will also urge the European Parliament urgently to adopt a plan for countries to share airline passenger data.

Lawmakers have resisted endorsing the system for sharing data, known as the Passenger Name Record (PNR), on the grounds it would infringe people's privacy. Under pressure to drop their opposition in the wake of the Paris attacks, members of the European Parliament pledged in a resolution on Wednesday to aim to finish work on the PNR law by the end of this year.

***European Union flags flutter outside the EU Commission headquarters in Brussels on 2 Feb, 2015.—*Reuters**

The leaders will call for police to step up information sharing and closer cooperation between EU members' security services and in the fight against arms trafficking.

They will also urge EU governments to quickly implement stronger rules to prevent money-laundering and terrorist financing and to effectively freeze assets used for financing terrorism.

They will call for "adequate measures to be taken, in accordance with national constitutions, to detect and remove internet content promoting terrorism or extremism."—*Reuters*

Russia has high assessment of relations with North Korea — ambassador

Pyongyang, 12 Feb — Several celebrations and various events are planned for 2015 in the framework of the Year of Friendship between Russia and North Korea, Russian Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Alexander Matsegora told *TASS* on Thursday. The 70th anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) and National Liberation of Korea will also be celebrated in 2015.

Matsegora said Russia had a rather high assessment of the development of relations with North Korea. "An active political dialogue is maintained at the highest and high level. The leaders of the two countries regularly exchange messages. In November 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed in Moscow North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's special envoy, a high-ranking member of the ruling Workers' Party Choe Ryong-hae. It was the main event in the bilateral relations in 2014," the ambassador added. Talking about the level of cooperation between the two countries, Matsegora said: "Taking into account the considerable unused potential, we are not yet satisfied with the level of its development.

A lot has to be done in this direction in the future." Special hopes are pinned on economic cooperation, the ambassador noted. Among top priorities in this sphere, Matsegora named adopting settlements in rubles and implementing trade and investment projects by the formula "Russian goods and investment for Korea's mineral resources." Russia also hopes for three-side economic cooperation with DPRK and South Korea, Matsegora said. Several three-party projects are currently being developed, including transfer of Russian electricity to the South via the North Korean territory, participation of the Russian business in the Kaesong Industrial Region, and laying of the transit gas pipeline, the ambassador said.

Itar-Tass

Three dead, 10 injured in blast at Petrobras platform in Brazil

Rio de Janeiro, 12 Feb — At least three people were killed, 10 injured and six missing in an explosion at a platform of Brazil's state oil giant Petrobras in the southeast of the country, the company said on Wednesday.

According to a Petrobras statement, the blast occurred on Wednesday afternoon and was caused by a gas leak at FPSO Sao Mateus, located 120 km off the coast of Aracruz in Espirito Santo state. The company said the injured have been sent to hospitals in Vitoria, capital of Espirito Santo state, for treatment.

A total of 74 people worked on the platform, which has a capacity to produce 2.2 million cubic meters of natural gas per day.

A Navy ship and two aircraft have headed to the site to help with the rescue, and an investigation to find out the circumstances of the accident will be launched.

Xinhua

Al-Qaeda linked group says seized army base in south Yemen

ADEN, (Yemen) 12 Feb — Fighters from the al-Qaeda affiliated Ansar al-Sharia militant group have taken control of an army base housing a brigade in southern Yemen, the group said on its Twitter account on Thursday. There was no official comment from the government or the military on the claim. Residents and local news sites reported that the base in the southern province of Shabwa fell in heavy clashes after a siege lasting several hours.

Shabwa is a stronghold of al-Qaeda and like-minded militants. Ansar al-Sharia in previous years took advantage of Yemen's political chaos and unrest to seize entire districts and towns before being pushed back by the army.

Yemen is in the middle of a huge upheaval as the Houthis, a Shi'ite Muslim militia which is an arch enemy of Yemen's Sunni Islamist militants, consolidate their grip on power after sidelining the central government.

Reuters

Canada 'inclined' to extend mandate of forces in Iraq

Canada's Defence Minister Jason Kenney speaks during Question Period in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on 4 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

OTTAWA, 12 Feb — Canada is inclined to extend the six-month mandate of its military mission in Iraq, which comprises special forces on the ground as well as fighter bombers, Defence Minister Jason Kenney said on Wednesday.

Kenney said the right-of-centre Conservative government had not yet taken a formal decision to keep the forces in Iraq beyond the end of March. But his comments were the clearest indication yet from a cabinet minister that Ottawa was likely to do so.

"Our government believes that Canada has a role in fighting the so-called Islamic State terrorists, stopping their campaign of genocide, and we are inclined to continue with that fight," he told CTV television.

Canada has six fighter bombers taking part in US-led air strikes against Islamic State attacks as well as around 70 special forces members in northern Iraq.

US President Barack Obama on Wednesday sent Congress a request to authorize military force against the militants over the next three years.

Separately, Kenney told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp that Canada would not be committing ground troops to a combat mission in Iraq.

The Canadian special forces have exchanged fire with Islamic State militants at least three times since deploying to train Iraqi forces and also identify targets for air strikes.

Opposition parties say the clashes show Prime Minister Stephen Harper was not telling the truth when he assured legislators last year that the forces would not be involved in combat.—*Reuters*

Widow of Paris gunman in Islamic State territory — IS magazine

BEIRUT, 12 Feb —A magazine run by the Islamic State militant organization has published an interview with the French widow of a Paris hostage taker, its first official claim that Hayat Boumeddiene is in their territory, which spans parts of Syria and Iraq.

France launched a search for the 26-year-old after police stormed a Jewish supermarket where her partner Amedy Coulibaly had taken hostages, four of whom were killed along with Coulibaly. Authorities described her as armed and dangerous.

Turkish officials said last month that Boumedienne had been in Turkey five days before the shoot-out, and crossed into Syria on 8 January.

Wednesday's edition of Islamic State's online French-language magazine, *Dar al-Islam*, ran an edition on the attacks in Paris and included an interview with a woman who it said was Coulibaly's wife, although her name was not given. *Reuters* could not immediately verify the authenticity of the interview, which provided no photos or videos of Boumeddiene.

A French flag and flowers are seen as people pay tribute to the victims of a hostage taking at the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket, where four people were killed during a terror attack on Friday near the Porte de Vincennes in eastern Paris on 12 Jan, 2015.— REUTERS

Asked how she felt when she entered the 'caliphate', the term Islamic State uses for the territory it controls, she was quoted as saying: "I did not encounter any difficulties (getting here), it is good to live in the land that is governed by the laws of God."

She also said her husband had been an Islamic State supporter; Coulibaly himself had said he was carrying out the attack in the name of Islamic State.

Seventeen people, including journalists and police officers, were killed in three days of violence that began with the storming of the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* on Wednesday, 7 January, and ended with the hostage-taking at a kosher supermarket.

Two other gunmen were killed.

An official French police photograph shows Boumeddiene as a young woman with long dark hair hitched back over her ears.

French media released photos purporting to be of a fully-veiled Boumeddiene, posing with a crossbow, in what they said was a training session in 2010 in the mountainous Cantal region.

French media described her as one of seven children whose mother had died when she was young, and whose delivery-man father had struggled to keep working while looking after the family.

As an adult, she lost her job as a cashier when she converted to Islam and started wearing the niqab, the Muslim facial veil.

Reuters

Thousands protest against Houthi rule in Yemen after embassies close

SANAA, 12 Feb — Yemenis in the capital Sanaa and the central city of Taiz held the largest protests yet against a takeover by a Shi'ite Muslim militia group on Wednesday after the United States, Britain and France shut their embassies over security fears.

Hundreds massed in the capital against the Houthi fighters, who manned checkpoints and guarded government buildings they control. The militants, bedecked in tribal robes and automatic rifles, shot in the air and thrust daggers at the crowds opposing their rule.

Tens of thousands of people also carried banners and chanted anti-Houthi slogans in Taiz, which the militants have not taken.

The Iranian-backed Houthi movement has called its seizure of power a revolution and says it wants to rid the country of corruption and economic peril — though Yemen's rich Sunni Muslim Gulf Arab neighbours say it is a coup.

Yemen had long been at the forefront of the US-led war against al-Qaeda, but the long-standing alliance between Washington and Sanaa appears to have ended for now. The US ambassador and diplomatic staff left the embassy on Wednesday, local workers said, a day after Washington announced it was closing the mission. Embassy workers had already destroyed weapons, computers and documents, they added. "Recent unilateral actions disrupted the political transition process in Yemen, creating the risk that renewed violence would threaten Yemenis and the diplomatic community in Sanaa," US State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki said.

Despite the embassy shutdown, White House Spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters on Wednesday that the United States was continuing to carry out counter-terrorism operations in Yemen in cooperation with Yemeni officials.

"There continue to be ... US Department of Defence personnel on the ground in Yemen that are coordinating with their counterparts in Yemen," he said.—*Reuters*

Anti-Houthi protesters demonstrate to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the uprising that toppled former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, in Yemen's southwestern city of Taiz on 11 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

Japan-N Korea unofficial abduction talks held in late January

TOKYO, 12 Feb — Japan and North Korea held unofficial talks in late January in Shanghai, China, on Pyongyang's ongoing investigation into the fate of Japanese nationals abducted decades ago, diplomatic sources said on Thursday.

Japan repeated its request for North Korea to report its findings promptly and honestly, following Pyongyang's launch of a new round of investigation last July in return for Japan's easing of sanctions.

Junichi Ihara, director general of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, attended the talks, according to the sources.

In the Shanghai talks, Japan also appeared to explain that pro-Pyongyang Koreans are now expected to be able to continue using the Tokyo headquarters building of the General Association of Korean Residents, the de facto North Korean embassy in Japan without diplomatic ties, according to the sources.

The fate of the property has been a major issue for North Korea.

Japan and North Korea previously held an official meeting last October in Pyongyang.

They agreed in July in Beijing that the first report on the abduction probe would be released sometime between late summer and early fall last year, but North Korea has not released it.

There is general consensus between the two sides that the investigation will be completed in a year — around this summer, according to Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga.

North Korea conducted investigations in 2002 and 2004 into its abductions of Japanese nationals in the 1970s and 1980s, but Japan rejected the results as unconvincing.

Pyongyang was quoted by Japanese officials as saying last October it will carry out the latest investigations "from a new angle regardless of past investigations' results."

Japan officially lists 17 nationals as abduction victims but suspects North Korea's involvement in many more disappearances. While five of the 17 were repatriated in 2002, Pyongyang has maintained that eight have died and four others never entered the country.—*Kyodo News*

Horses, including pregnant mares, run on a snow-covered field at Tokachi station of the National Livestock Breeding Centre in the town of Otofuke, Hokkaido on 12 Feb, 2015, to maintain health and ease giving birth. A total of 105 horses, including 57 pregnant mares, ran around the 800-metre oval field in four groups for winter exercise.—KYODO NEWS

Costa Concordia captain sentenced to 16 years for 2012 shipwreck

GROSSETO, (Italy), 12 Feb — The former captain of the *Costa Concordia* cruise liner was sentenced to 16 years in prison on Wednesday for his role in the 2012 shipwreck, which killed 32 people off the Tuscan holiday island of Giglio.

Francesco Schettino was commanding the vessel, a floating hotel as long as three football pitches, when it hit rocks off the island, tearing a hole in its side. A court in the town of Grosseto found him guilty of multiple manslaughter, causing a shipwreck and abandoning his passengers in one of the highest-profile shipping disasters in recent years. However the judges rejected a request that Schettino begin his sentence immediately. They ruled instead that would not go to prison until the appeals process is completed, which can take years.

The captain wept during his final testimony on Wednesday but did not return to the court to hear the verdict.

Prosecutors had asked for a prison sentence of 26 years for Schettino, who has admitted some responsibility but denied blame for the deaths that occurred during the evacuation. Some lawyers representing the victims said the sentence was inadequate.

Investigators severely criticized Schettino's handling of the disaster, accusing him of bringing the 290 metre-long (950 feet) vessel too close to shore. The subsequent shipwreck set off a chaotic night-time evacuation of more than 4,000 passengers and crew.

Ann Decre, the head of a body representing French survivors, said the verdict could not cover the human cost. "For me it's six months for each death. And the family of the dead people, it's not six months or 17 years for them, it's forever," Decre said outside the theatre that was turned into a makeshift courtroom.

Schettino was also accused of delaying evacuation and abandoning ship before all the 4,229 passengers and crew had been rescued. He said earlier in the trial that he had been thrown off the ship as it tilted. The court sentenced Schettino to 10 years for multiple manslaughter, five years for causing the shipwreck and one year for abandoning his passengers. He also received a one month civil penalty for failure to report the accident correctly.

He was left alone on the stand to answer for the disaster after the ship's owner, the Costa Cruises unit of Carnival Corp, paid a 1 million euro (0.85 million pounds at the time) fine and prosecutors accepted plea bargains from five officials. "Lots of people who were there and played a role were excluded today," Schettino's lawyer Donato Laino said outside the theatre. "We think the facts of the case were different."

He and Costa Cruises were jointly ordered to pay a total of 30,000 euros each in compensation to many of the ship's passengers as well as millions of euros in compensation to Italian government ministries, the region of Tuscany and the island of Giglio for environmental damage.

Earlier on Wednesday Schettino had rejected prosecution accusations he had shown no sense of responsibility or compassion for the victims, saying "grief should not be put on show to make a point."

The massive hulk of the *Costa Concordia* was left abandoned on its side for two-and-a-half years before it was towed away in the most expensive maritime wreck recovery in history. The last body was not recovered until 2014.

Schettino's defence team argued he prevented an even worse disaster by steering the ship close to the island as it sank. They said the sentence that was sought by prosecutors went beyond even sentences sought for mafia killers.

Reuters

Captain of the Costa Concordia cruise liner Francesco Schettino prepares to read a speech during his trial in Grosseto on 11 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Philippine rebels promise help on militants as peace bid stalls

MANILA, 12 Feb — Muslim rebels in the Philippines promised the government on Thursday they would help track down a wanted militant in a bid to save a peace process thrown into doubt by a clash in which 44 policemen were killed.

Efforts to end the decades-old insurgency by rebels from the minority Muslim community in the largely Catholic country have stalled since the Jan. 25 fighting on the southern island of Mindanao in which the 44 policemen and 18 rebels were killed.

Legislators drawing up a law to give Muslims in the area autonomy, the next step of the peace process, have suspended their work, demanding an investigation into the bloodshed.

The rebels' chief negotiator Mohagher Iqbal, told a Senate inquiry his group was willing to detain a militant bomb-maker, Abdul Basit Usman, and others hiding in their territory.

"Yes, we will help," Iqbal said when asked if the rebels would assist in the hunt for Usman.—*Reuters*

China Sky Ex-CEO to pay 2.5 million SG dollars civil penalty

SINGAPORE, 12 Feb — Huang Zhongxuan, the former chief executive officer (CEO) of China Sky Chemical Fibre Co, Ltd (China Sky), has agreed to pay a civil penalty of 2.5 million Singapore dollars (1.88 million US dollars) for making misleading statements and failing to disclose material information to the market thereby contravening the Securities and Futures Act (SFA), the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) said in a Press release on Thursday.

Under the settlement agreement with the MAS, Huang will also make an offer to surrender 10 percent of his shareholding in China Sky, equivalent to 15,416,121 shares. Huang can not assume the role of a company director or be involved in the management of any entity listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX) for three years.

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) of Singapore commenced investigations in February 2012 and subsequently in consultation with MAS and the Attorney General's Chambers, agreed to discontinue criminal investigations so that the civil penalty settlement could take place.

During the investigation, Huang admitted that he has made misleading statements to the market relating to China Sky's purchase and subsequent return of a plot of land in southeast China's Fujian Province, which is in contravention of Section 199(c) of the Securities and Futures Act (SFA).

The statements include misleading disclosures relating to the use of the Fujian Land, incorrectly depicting the transaction counterparty as an independent third party, and providing a false reason for the delay in the transfer of the land use rights to China Sky's subsidiary.

Huang has also admitted to contravening Section 203 of the SFA relating to China Sky's failure to make prompt and proper disclosure to the market in relation to the Fujian Land acquisition.

"MAS takes a strong stance against market misconduct and spares no effort in investigating possible transgressions," Said MAS' Assistant Managing Director (Capital Markets), Lee Boon Ngiap. "We will continue to work closely with other statutory agencies to enforce the law against those who commit offences in our securities markets, whether they are based in Singapore or overseas."

Xinhua

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MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE
EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT
INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

(a) DATE & TIME - (20-2-2015)(23-2-2015) (13:00) PM
(b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME
- TEAK LOGS (914) TONS
- TEAK HANDSAWN & CONVERSION (479) TONS
- HARDWOOD LOGS
PYINKADO / IN-KANYIN / HNAW / THITYAR / HTAUK KYANT / THINGAN / TAUNG THAYET / INGYIN/ SAGAWA
ABOUT (9280) TONS
- HARDWOOD HANDSAWN CONVERSION (PADAUK)/ (TAMALAN)
ABOUT (949) TONS
- IN-KANYIN SQUARE & SCANTLINGS (187) TONS

(c) PLACE - TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON.

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.myanmatimber.com.mm).
Contacts; Office Ph; 01528771, E-mail; Marketing 1 ppy@gmail.com

OPEN TINDER COMMITTEE
MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE

Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Invitation for Opened Tender (1/2015)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United State Dollars (CIF Yangon).

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Qty	Remark
(1)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/7 (2014-2015)	Petroleum Products Testing Equipment (Brand New) (ASTM Standard) For Mobile Fuellab	1 Lot	USD
(2)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/8 (2014-2015)	120 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	3 Sets	USD

2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 10-3-2015, 12:00Hrs
3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 11-2-2015 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Phone : 067-411487.

Planning Department
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No (6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(2/2015)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-143(14-15)	Spares for Kenworth Oil Field Truck (14) Items	US$
(2)	IFB-144(14-15)	1500 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (2) Sets	US$
(3)	IFB-145(14-15)	Spares for Down Hole Equipments (8) Items	US$
(4)	IFB-146(14-15)	273 KW Gas Engine Driven Generating Set (1) Set	US$
(5)	DMP/L-030(14-15)	Portable Fire Pump with Engine and Fire Assembly (3) Lots	Ks
(6)	DMP/L-031(14-15)	33 KV GCB Complete Set and 33 KV Current Transformer (2) Items	Ks
(7)	DMP/L-032(14-15)	Motor for SAFE and Intermech Compressor (2) Nos	Ks
(8)	DMP/L-033(14-15)	185mm^2, 4 Core, XLPE Cable (50) Meter	Ks
(9)	DMP/L-034(14-15)	SAE 15 W 40 Diesel Engine Oil (API-CF4) (1) Lot	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 9-3-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 9th February, 2015 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No (44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
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WEATHER REPORT

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair in the North Bay and West Central Bay and partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.
FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 13th February, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).
OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in the Upper Myanmar areas.

OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED

State Bank of India requires 60 to 80 Square meters(net) space for use as its Representative Office in A Class building around Downtown area with lease period upto 3 years with option to vacate with 3 Month prior notice, interested parties may send their offers in English through email at sbi.yangon@gmail.com (a copy to be marked to bankeyanil@gmail.com)

Upto 20.02.2015

Swedish tourist dies of suspected swine flu in western India

NEW DELHI, 12 Feb — A 70-year-old Swedish tourist on Thursday died of suspected swine flu in the western Indian state of Rajasthan, a health official said.

"The woman tourist, Ann Marie, died at a hospital in the state' s Jodhpur town where she was brought to from the town of Jaisalmer on Wednesday. But her condition worsened and she was put on life- support. She died earlier in the morning," the official said, on condition of anonymity.

Over 100 people have died of swine flu in the state this year alone and this is the first case of a foreign national succumbing to the condition.—*Xinhua*

Three killed, dozens injured in train-bus collision in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 12 Feb — At least three people were killed and dozens of others injured on Thursday morning when a train struck a bus in Bangladesh's seaport city Chittagong, a police officer.

The officer of Chittagong Metropolitan Police who did not like to be named said the collision occurred at about 11:20 am local time.

He said "One man died on the spot while two others succumbed to their injuries at a hospital."

The cause of the accident was not immediately known.—*Xinhua*

***Campaigners express opposition to resuming operation of two idled reactors on 12 Feb, 2015, in front of the Nuclear Regulation Authority's Tokyo office. The regulator approved a report concluding that the Nos 3 and 4 units of Kansai Electric Power Co's Takahama nuclear power plant comply with new safety requirements.*—KYODO NEWS**

Police in Washington state fatally shoot man who threw rocks at them

WASHINGTON, 12 Feb — Police in Washington state shot a man to death who threw rocks at them, officials said on Wednesday, as a video published online appearing to show the incident drew criticism of the officers' actions.

The police shooting in Pasco, Washington comes amid heightened tension across the country in the wake of high-profile police killings of unarmed minorities, particularly in Ferguson, Missouri and New York City.

Officers Ryan Flanagan, Adam Wright, and Adrian Alaniz arrived at the parking lot of a Fiesta Foods grocery store around 5 pm local time on Tuesday, where suspect Antonio Zambrano-Montes threw rocks at them, Pasco Police Chief Bob Metzger said in a statement.

The officers attempted to use a stun gun to incapacitate Zambrano-Montes after he would not obey commands to surrender, before they opened fire and killed him, the statement said.

A video of the incident posted on YouTube and cited by local media showed the man running away from the three officers before he was killed.

In the 22-second video, the man moves across the street from the pursuing policemen. He turns to face them briefly, lifting his right arm as if to throw another object, when they open fire, according to the video.

Pasco Police Captain Ken Roske said when reached by *Reuters* on Wednesday night that the department had reviewed videos of the incident, but could not confirm their authenticity.

"They certainly look like the right intersections," he said, adding that the Tri-City Special Investigation Unit would conduct a full probe into the shooting.

The Seattle Times, which linked to the video on its website, reported that a few dozen people gathered outside Pasco City Hall in protest of the shooting on Wednesday.

In addition, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Washington called the incident "very disturbing," the paper said.—*Reuters*

Black Widow's past has sadness, says Scarlett Johansson

Los Angeles, 12 Feb — Scarlett Johansson has revealed that Black Widow's sad past will be revealed in the upcoming movie 'Avengers: Age of Ultron'.

In an interview with *W* magazine, she says, "In the sequel, you learn more about the sadness in her past".

Talking about how she landed the role, Johansson said, "People were surprised that I wanted to play a comic book heroine. But I loved 'Iron Man', and I met with Marvel to see what was possible.

"I had done my research, and the Black Widow character resonated with me. She is dark and has faced death so many times that she has a deep perspective on the value of life." 'Avengers: Age of Ultron' is set for release on 1 May in the US.—*PTI*

Taylor Swift's '1989' ties her previous record atop Billboard

Los Angeles, 12 Feb — Taylor Swift walked away empty-handed from the Grammys last weekend, but her consolation prize was yet another week with the best-selling album.

The pop star's "1989" notched its 11th week atop the weekly Billboard 200 album chart, tying her record for weeks at No 1 from her second studio album "Fearless," Billboard said on Wednesday.

"1989" tallied 108,000 sales units, including 77,000 albums and 308,000 song downloads, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan for the week ended on 8 February, and has occupied the top two spots in the 15 weeks since its release.

Only her hit single "Shake It Off" competed at the Grammys since "1989" was released too late in the year for consideration. The reformulated Billboard 200 considers album sales, song downloads and online streaming to compile an album's total sales units, but Swift does not give her work to streaming services.

The Now That's What I Call Music compilation, "Now 53," debuted at No 2, coming in ahead of albums from British singers Ed Sheeran and Sam Smith, the big winner at Sunday's Grammy Awards. Grammy winners and performers will likely see a bump in sales that will be reflected in next week's chart.

"Now 53" was on Swift's heels with 99,000 sales units — only albums since it has no song sales and no streaming activity.

Another newcomer to the top ten of the Billboard 200 was girl group "Fifth Harmony," debuting at No 5 with 80,500 units sold, including a heavy streaming component.

Singer Bruno Mars and producer Mark Ronson's hit "Uptown Funk!" was the top downloaded song for the sixth consecutive week with 319,000 in sales, a 12 percent decline from last week.—*Reuters*

I was broken post 'After Earth': Will Smith

Superstar Will Smith

Los Angeles, 12 Feb — Superstar Will Smith says he is positive for his upcoming film 'Focus' though the failure of 'After Earth' made him sad.

Smith, 46, said he hopes the new film will mark a transition in life, reported *People* magazine.

"For me, this film really marks a transition in my life and emotionally and in my career.

After the failure of After Earth, a thing got broken in my mind. I was like, 'Oh, wow. I'm still alive. Oh, wow. Actually, I still am me, even though the movie didn't open number one. Wait. I can still get hired on another movie.' "I realized that I still was a good person. So when I went into Focus, I completely released the concept of goal orientation and got into path orientation.

This moment, this second, these people, this interaction… It is a huge relief for me to not care whether or not Focus is number one or number 10 at the box office," he said. 'Focus' is expected to hit theatres on 27 February.

PTI

Jennifer Aniston, Sienna Miller, David Oyelowo to present at Oscars

Aniston missed out on a chance to get nominated for her role in 'Cake' while Miller co-stars in best picture nominee 'American Sniper' and 'Foxcatcher'.
PTI

Los Angeles, 12 Feb— Jennifer Aniston, Sienna Miller, David Oyelowo, Chris Pratt, John Travolta and Kerry Washington will present at this year's Oscars. The show, hosted by Neil Patrick Harris, will air on Sunday, 22 February.

Aniston missed out on a chance to get nominated for her role in 'Cake' while Miller co-stars in best picture nominee 'American Sniper' and 'Foxcatcher'.

Oyelowo portrayed Martin Luther King Jr in this year's Best Picture nominee 'Selma' though the Academy was criticised for not excluding his name in the best actor category.

Pratt starred in 'Guardians of the Galaxy' and 'The Lego Movie'.

Travolta is a two-time Oscar nominee, for his leading roles in 'Pulp Fiction' and 'Saturday Night Fever'. Washington is the star of the hit television drama 'Scandal' and received two Emmy nominations for her role.—*PTI*

Beyonce, Ed Sheeran pay homage to Stevie Wonder

Los Angeles, 12 Feb — Singers Beyonce and Ed Sheeran performed an energetic duet to pay homage to veteran musician Stevie Wonder at the official after-party of the Grammy Awards.

The event 'Stevie Wonder: Songs In the Key of Life– An All-Star Grammy Salute', at the Nokia Theatre on 10 February, saw the bigwigs of music industry paying tribute to the 64-year-old winner of 25 Grammys, reported *Us* magazine.

Beyonce, 33, and Sheeran, 23 belted out Wonder's classics such as 'Master Blaster (Jammin')', 'Fingertips Pt2', and 'Higher Ground'. "If you love Stevie Wonder like I love Stevie Wonder, I want you to stand up on your feet," Beyonce yelled, before taking a walk into the crowd and shaking hands with the musical icon himself.

Sheeran and Beyonce were then joined on stage by Gary Clark Jr, who performed a guitar solo. "We love you Stevie," Beyonce gushed at the end of their set, as she pulled Sheeran and Clark into a tight hug.

Tony Bennett, Tyler Perry, John Legend, Annie Lennox, Lady Gaga, Ariana Grande, Babyface, Pharrell and Jennifer Hudson, also honoured Wonder with their performances.

Beyonce and Sheeran belted out Wonder's classics such as 'Master Blaster (Jammin')', 'Fingertips Pt2', and 'Higher Ground'.—PTI

"I cannot leave this stage, this building, this planet without letting you all know that I love you," Wonder said, addressing the crowd, before being joined on stage by all his famous fans for a finale performance of his number 'Happy Birthday'.

PTI

Actress Angelababy attends fashion activity in Singapore, on 10 Feb, 2015.—Xinhua

Tiger Woods will not compete in golf until 'tournament-ready'

LA JOLLA, (CA), 12 Feb — Tiger Woods does not plan to return to the PGA Tour until he feels his game is "tournament-ready," the American former world number one said on Wednesday.

The 14-times major champion, who had back surgery last year, withdrew from last week's Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines, his second start of the season, after just 11 holes because of tightness in his back.

Based on his usual tournament schedule, Woods, 39, would be expected to compete next at the 26 February-1 March Honda Classic at Palm Beach Gardens in Florida.

"Right now, I need a lot of work on my game, and to still spend time with the people that are important to me," Woods said on his website. "I'd like to play the Honda Classic — it's a tournament in my hometown and it's important to me — but I won't be there unless my game is tournament-ready. That's not fair to anyone.

Tiger Woods hits his drive on the 12th during the first round of the Farmers Insurance Open golf tournament at Torrey Pines Municipal Golf Course in La Jolla, CA, USA on 5 Feb, 2015 .

REUTERS

"I do, however, expect to be playing again very soon." Woods has struggled badly in his first two events this year.

He posted the worst score of his professional career, with his short game in complete disarray, as he carded a mind-boggling 11-over-par 82 to miss the cut at the Phoenix Open last month.

He looked no better last week at Torrey Pines where he was two over par after 11 holes on the North course when he decided to pull out, his third withdrawal in his last nine tournaments.

"The last two weeks have been very disappointing to me, especially Torrey, because I never want to withdraw," said Woods. "Unfortunately, lately injuries have made that happen too often.

"This latest injury is not related to my previous surgery. I am having daily physical therapy and I am feeling better every day."

"My play, and scores, are not acceptable for tournament golf."

Woods, who has not won a major title since the 2008 US Open, is still adapting to the fifth swing change of his career, this time with new consultant Chris Como. The four majors have always been the top priority for Woods, who has a burning desire to eclipse the record 18 titles won by Jack Nicklaus. However, he will need to improve his game markedly if he is to be ready for the year's opening major, the 9-12 April Masters at Augusta National where he is a four-times former champion.—*Reuters*

Gov't panels call for flight increase at Haneda, Narita airports

TOKYO, 12 Feb — Two transport ministry panels on Thursday proposed measures to strengthen transport and social infrastructure through the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games including an increase in international flights at Tokyo's Haneda and Narita airports.

The proposals were submitted to Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Minister Akihiro Ota and the Cabinet is expected to approve them soon.

The proposed steps have been discussed since last April to improve Japan's air travel services, increase disaster resilience and strengthen social infrastructure. The panels propose that flights from the Japanese airports be connected to more foreign cities, increasing them from 88 cities in 2013 to around 140, the level seen at major airports in Asia such as Hong Kong International Airport and South Korea's Incheon and Gimpo airports.

Kyodo News

Angry Birds fly into Singapore to teach preschoolers

SINGAPORE, 12 Feb — A for Angry. B for Birds. The heroes of an addictive mobile game dishing out revenge on evil pigs have landed in a classroom in Singapore to prep kindergarten children the Angry Birds way.

Finland's Rovio, the company behind the game franchise, has partnered with local preschool Dreamkids Kindergarten to launch an Angry Birds Playground in the city-state, the fourth globally after openings in China last year.

A giant indoor tree house takes center stage in a classroom dotted with stuffed Angry Bird toys and matching wallpaper, while a large wall-mounted touch screen plays educational games.

The preschool programme, aimed at children aged between three and six, is based on the Finnish National Curriculum, widely considered one of the world's best education systems.

"Behind the Angry Birds Playground educational concept is a belief that fun and play are at the very center of effective learning," Rovio said in a statement.

*Dreamkids Kindergarten principal Dawn Choy shows how the Smart Board is used for educational games in class as teachers plan their lessons in an Angry Birds-inspired classroom environment in Singapore on 11 Feb, 2015.—*REUTERS

The programme was developed with the University of Helsinki along with partners such as US space agency NASA, National Geographic and CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research.

Dreamkids Kindergarten, which has just started advertising, expects classes to start filling up from mid-March. Preschool is not compulsory in Singapore but is a popular choice among parents who believe it helps children prepare for formal schooling and develop social skills.

There are nearly 500 kindergartens in the city, with about 68,000 children enrolled, according to 2013 data from the ministry of social and family development.

Rovio is battling a highly competitive mobile games market, despite brand merchandising and a spin-off animated TV series. But its newer games have not matched the popularity of the original Angry Birds, the most downloaded paid app of all time.

An animated Angry Birds feature film, a joint venture between Sony Pictures Entertainment and Rovio, is slated for release in July 2016.—*Reuters*

mitv Myanmar International

(13-2-2015 07:00 am~ 14-2-2015 07:00 am) MST

* Local News
* A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-2)
* World News
* General Aung San Museum
* Local News
* Snow Flakes…Scenic Confluence…To Kachin State
* World News
* Great Minds of Myanmar
* Local News
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* Kyaikhteeyoe: My Father The Porter
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* The Long-Lasting Royal Tradition
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* Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Ma Myint Zu"
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* Shan Novices To Be…
* World News
* Myanmar Union Day
* Local News
* Sai Htee Hseng or An Exceptional Music Star From Shan Plateaus (IV)
* Local News
* Myanmar Weaving
* World News
* A Glance At A Naga Family Life
* Local News
* Beautiful Mon Choral Dance
* World News
* MURAL PAINTING BAGAN

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(13-2-2015, Friday)

6:00 am
- Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

6:25 am
- Physical Exercise

7:30 am
- Head Line News

7:35 am
- Documentary

8:00 am
- News/ International News

8:35 am
- Current Affairs

9:35 am
- Weekly Entertainment

10:00 am
- News / International News

10:35 am
- MRTV's Youth Programme

11:35 am
- Science and Technology Programme

12:00 noon
- News / International News / Weather Report

12:35 pm
- CLEVER

1:40 pm
- Myoemanyeln Music Troupe (Part-5)

2:35 pm
- Traditional Boxing

3:00 pm
- News

4:35 pm
- Documentary

5:00 pm
- News

5:30 pm
- Head Line News

6:00 pm
- News / Weather Report

6:35 pm
- Hyper Sports

7:00 pm
- News

7:35 pm
- People Talks

7:50 pm
- (100) Birthday Anniversary Bogyoke Aung San

8:00 pm
- News / International News / Weather Report

9:00 pm
- News
- Amazing World
- Teleplay

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(13-2-2015, Friday)

6:00 am
- Sandaya Kun Zaw Music Troupe

6:15 am
- TV Drama Series

6:40 am
- TV Drama Series

7:10 am
- Song Programme

7:30 am
- Fashion Show

8:00 am
- Myanmar Series

8:20 am
- TV Drama Series

9:00 am
- TV Drama Series

9:40 am
- Musical Programme

10:00 am
- 40th Year Of ASEAN-Japan Friendship And Corporation

10:20 am
- Myanmar Video

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Friday, 13 February, 2015

Last-gasp Willian strike keeps Chelsea in the clear

Willian (L) of Chelsea celebrates scoring against Everton during their English Premier League soccer match at Stamford Bridge, London on 11 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

LONDON, 12 Feb — Willian's late strike snatched a 1-0 home win for Chelsea over a stubborn Everton side to maintain their seven-point lead over Manchester City who crushed Stoke City 4-1 in the Premier League on Wednesday.

Chelsea were frustrated before Brazilian Willian struck from 20 metres in the 89th minute to break the resistance of Everton whose midfielder Gareth Barry had been sent off just before the goal.

"It's beautiful to win in the last minute, and it's so sad (for Everton) to lose," Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho told BT Sport.

"They have to be very disappointed, they gave us a very difficult match. We are very, very happy and we think we deserve it. We risked a lot to try to win."

City kept pace with the leaders as striker Sergio Aguero scored twice, his first goals in over two months, to help the champions to their first league win in five matches at mid-table Stoke, who briefly made it 1-1 through Peter Crouch.

England midfielder James Milner and Frenchman Samir Nasri also struck for City.

An unlikely brace from substitute defender Chris Smalling and a late Robin van Persie penalty lifted Manchester United to an unconvincing 3-1 home win over struggling Burnley who had equalized through Danny Ings.

United leapfrogged Arsenal and Southampton into third in the table after the latter drew 0-0 at home to West Ham United, who had goalkeeper Adrian sent off.

West Bromwich Albion continued their resurgence under new manager Tony Pulis as Brown Ideye and Saido Berahino struck in a 2-0 home win over Swansea City to lift their team away from the relegation zone.

A second-half Frazier Campbell goal earned Crystal Palace a 1-1 draw against Newcastle United as manager Alan Pardew hosted his former club who had taken a first-half lead through a Papiss Cisse header.

Chelsea struggled without the presence of top goalscorer Diego Costa, who was serving the last game of a three-match suspension for stamping, in the face of a stout Everton defence.

Former Chelsea striker Romelu Lukaku should have given Everton the lead against his old club but Petr Cech saved with his legs from close range.

The close shave gave the hosts greater impetus to attack and with time running out they looked to have taken the lead when defender Nemanja Matic struck but he was ruled offside.

A melee between both sides followed and Everton midfielder Barry was given his marching orders after receiving a second yellow card before Willian struck the winner a minute later.

Argentina striker Aguero moved within one goal of the league's top goalscorer Costa after striking his 15th and 16th goals of the campaign in City's rout.

"We returned to our normal performance, especially in the second half. We scored three goals in the second half and had more chances," Manchester City manager Manuel Pellegrini told BBC Sport.

"The most important thing was to win and in the way we did today."

Smalling, who had previously scored only three league goals in his career, headed in a corner to give United the lead after six minutes with his first touch of the match, just 22 seconds after coming on for the injured Phil Jones, and he scored again just before the interval.

But the 3-1 win flattered Louis van Gaal's side, who were second best against 19th-placed Burnley for much of the match.

"I didn't like this performance today," the United manager said. "Of course, we have won and the result is fantastic. But after this match you cannot say that we are going up and I want to progress every match."—*Reuters*

Manchester United's Robin van Persie (R) scores his team's third goal from a penalty during their English Premier League soccer match against Burnley at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 11 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

Nishikori starts Memphis with three-set win

MEMPHIS, 12 Feb — Top seed and two-time defending champion Kei Nishikori held off Ryan Harrison for a three-set victory in the second round of the Memphis Open on Wednesday.

Nishikori came from behind to win 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 against the American qualifier, reaching the quarterfinals where he will face another qualifier, world No 156 Austin Krajicek of the United States, who upset fifth seed Ivo Karlovic in three sets.

"I never got a feel for the tension of my racket but still managed to win somehow," Nishikori said, after laboring through the match in one hour, 56 minutes. "I was able to play closer to the net from the second set onward, and pick up the points as I adjusted."

Two weeks after advancing to the last eight at the Australian Open, Nishikori lost the first set after being broken in the second game.

The fifth-ranked Nishikori could only convert three of 11 break points for the match and land just 52 percent of his first serves. He admitted he would have to pick up his game if he was going to win a third consecutive title.

"I've got to play much better," Nishikori said. "I have more confidence now so I can play under pressure."

Kyodo News

Kei Nishikori

Suarez shines in Barca Cup win over Villarreal

BARCELONA, 12 Feb — Luis Suarez had the Barcelona fans chanting his name after he set up Lionel Messi to score the opening goal in a 3-1 victory for the record winners in their King's Cup semi-final, first leg at home to Villarreal on Wednesday.

Barca's 10th consecutive success in all competitions, their longest winning streak since the end of 2010, put them in a strong position to advance to May's final after the return leg at the Madrigal in three weeks.

They would meet Athletic Bilbao, whose 23 Cup triumphs are only bettered by Barca's 26, or 2006 winners Espanyol, who drew 1-1 in their first leg at Bilbao's San Mames stadium.

Uruguay forward Suarez is taking time to settle in Spain after joining Barca from Liverpool in the close season but although he has yet to hit scoring form himself he has impressed with his link-up play and creativity.

He robbed the ball in the 41st minute at the Nou Camp before sprinting forward and laying a perfect pass into Messi's path for the Argentina captain to sweep a first-time shot past keeper Sergio Asenjo.

It was harsh on a well-organized Villarreal side, who had lost captain and midfielder Bruno Soriano to what looked like a serious leg injury around 10 minutes earlier.

Barca squandered a series of chances before the visitors levelled three minutes into the second period after home keeper Marc Andre Ter Stegen let a long-range Manuel Trigueros shot straight through his hands.

Andres Iniesta put Barca back in front a minute later when he fired a loose ball low into the net and Gerard Pique made it 3-1 in the 64th minute with a header from a Messi corner.

Messi would normally have taken the spot-kick when Barca were awarded a penalty for a Mateo Musacchio handball in the 70th minute but after he stepped aside to allow Neymar a chance the Brazil captain had his effort well saved by Asenjo.

Suarez won more appreciation from the home support in stoppage time when he almost caught Asenjo off his line with a lobbed shot from near the halfway line but the ball drifted narrowly wide with the keeper beaten.

"It was a good win but it could have been better," Pique said in an interview with Spanish television broadcaster Canal Plus.

"We know the Madrigal is a tough stadium to play at and we still have to win the tie," added the Spain international. "We are playing with a lot of confidence at the moment and that means we can react quickly when we concede."

Bilbao took the lead in the 11th minute at the San Mames thanks to a neat finish from forward Aritz Aduriz before Espanyol midfielder Victor Sanchez smashed in an equalizer 10 minutes before the break.

Reuters

Barcelona's Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi (R) celebrate a goal against Villarreal during their King's Cup semi-final first leg soccer match at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on 11 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

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www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
www.facebook.com/globalnewlightofmyanmar

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

"R/489 Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily."