

Speaker relates current constitution to federalism, which refers to integration rather than separation



Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint meet leaders of armed ethnic groups.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Feb—Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann and

Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint met delegates of ethnic groups here on Friday, officials said.

Speaking at the meeting, Thura U Shwe Mann stressed the importance of the action and attitude

of ethnic armed groups in building lasting peace as desired by the whole country. “The government and

the parliament also need to show genuine goodwill in the process”. (See page 3)

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets armed ethnic groups

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Feb—Commander-In-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said he empathized with the stances of armed ethnic groups and national races are to regard themselves as Myanmar by nurturing the same Myanmar spirit, at the meeting with armed ethnic groups who attended the 68th Anniversary Union Day ceremony at Bayintnaung Yeiktha in Nay Pyi Taw on

Friday.

He added that a country will exist only when there is unity, expressing his desire to leave good legacies.

The senior general cordially greeted the armed ethnic groups at the meeting.

Also present were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Chief of Staff (Army,

Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win and leaders of 13 armed ethnic groups.

The senior general said that senior military officers and leaders of armed ethnic groups facing one another at the meeting are national brethren from different parts of the country and all are moving forwards in unison along the path of multi-party democracy, the administrative system chosen by the people.

The senior general continued to say that stability is essential for moving forwards along the democratic path, adding the Tatmadaw has adopted the prerequisites for the country such as stability, solidarity and development of the country as its national policy.

Then, the senior general pointed out that it is heart-breaking to find innocent people without weapons as the victims of

conflicts between armed organizations and expressed his thanks to armed ethnic groups that are determined to proceed with the peace process by signing the deed of commitment for peace and national reconciliation on Union Day, before urging the armed ethnic groups that have not yet signed the deed to sign it in the interests of the people and the nation.

The Tatmadaw will never break the commitments made to the people and the country, said the

senior general, adding that clashes erupted between the Tatmadaw and renegade Kokang group in Laukkai area recently and news was released as it happened by announcing that the renegade Kokang group led by Phone Kya Shin started provocation by attacking people’s militias, police forces in villages and bases of the Tatmadaw, leaving casualties among Tatmadaw personnel.

The Tatmadaw has never attacked the headquarters and camps of recognized armed ethnic groups, but (See page 3)

Singapore’s real estate firm joins with Vietnam’s HAGL in \$550 million property project in Yangon

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 13 Feb—Rowsley Limited, real estate developer and architectural and engineering consultancy firm in Singapore, has joined Hoang Anh Gia Lai Joint Stock Company (HAGL) of Vietnam through a joint venture to develop a latter’s \$550 million property project in Myanmar.

The Singapore-based real estate developer announced the deal with HAGL, which wholly owns the HAGL Myanmar Centre in Yangon, on Thursday, saying Rowsley will invest \$275 million for a 50 per cent stake in the mixed-use development project.

Situated 11km from the airport and 7 km from downtown next to Inya

Lake in Yangon, the HAGL Myanmar Centre project is being developed on a land

area of 73,358 sqm with a land lease term of 50 years (See page 2)



Photo of Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Centre being developed on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road in Bahan Township, Yangon.—PHOTO: YE MYINT

Government’s press release calls on student protesters to stop their marches to Yangon

YANGON, 13 Feb — The government’s press release team on Friday issued a press release informing student protesters who are marching towards Yangon that necessary measures aimed at ensuring security, the rule of law and community peace and tranquility will be taken to prevent undesirable consequences from the entry of the boycott students’ columns into Yangon Region.

The press release said that an agreement had been reached on the 11-point demand at four-party talks

between the delegates from the government, parliament, NNER and action committee for democratic education movement on Wednesday.

Discussions had been made not to continue students’ march to Yangon at the meeting as the government had agreed on other points, said the press release, adding that an agreement to hold the next round of four-party talks on Saturday for realization of the meeting results had also been reached.

GNLM

INSIDE

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends ceremony to mark centenary birthday of General Aung San

PAGE-3

List of political parties that signed Deed of Commitment for Peace and National Reconciliation

PAGE-2

Amarapura, the second last old capital city IX

PAGE-8

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NATIONAL

Speaker relates current . . .

(from page 1)

The speaker urged ethnic groups to grasp the opportunity to make peace a reality, pledging the assistance of parliament in making the process smooth and adding that negotiations are the best way to restore national conciliation and internal peace.

U Khin Aung Myint briefed on the role the parliament play in the peace

process, emphasizing that the parliament is now working on constitutional amendment, which he said is key to the restoration of peace.

Political dialogues will follow ceasefire, with the speaker adding that some points relating to constitutional amendment need over 75% approval of parliament and others a nationwide referendum.

Ethnic groups present at the meeting were the Karen National Unity (KNU), Restoration Council of Shan State/ Shan State Army (RCSS/SSA), United Wa State Army (UWSA), Shan State Progressive Party/ Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA), National Democratic Alliance Army-Eastern Shan State (NDAA), New Mon State Party (NMSP), All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), Chin Na-

tional Front, Pa-O National Liberation Organization (PNLO), Arakan Liberation Party (ALP), and National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K).

In his closing remarks to the meeting, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann described mutual understanding, mutual respect and mutual trust as three crucial factors that can wipe out doubt and distrust. "Sincerity and trans-

parency will build understanding, then respect and then trust," he said, urging ethnic delegates to speak their minds.

The amendment of the State Constitution 2008 is related to national unity, national reconciliation and internal peace in one way or another, according to the speaker. He mentioned the new constitution should promise national integrity, stability and development, shape lasting peace

through the unity among national races, and add new momentum to democratic reform.

The current constitution is based on a form of federal democratic republic, he said, adding that federalism refers to integration rather than separation.

The justice and fairness of the sharing of power, wealth and resource require the easing of centralization, he pointed out.

MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attends ceremony to mark centenary birthday of General Aung San



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views equipment used by General Aung San.—MYAWADY

NAY PYI TAW, 13 Feb — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

said that Tatmadaw personnel are required to follow the guidance of General Aung San with all serious-

ness If they really respects and admires the founding father of Tatmadaw, General Aung San, at Centenary

Birthday of late General Aung San held at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday.

The senior general urged the personnel to practically repay the gratitude of General Aung San by swearing loyalty to the people while upholding the belief that the Tatmadaw will never be disloyal to national cause.

Present were wife of the senior general, Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, and senior officers and wives.

In his speech, the senior general said Myanmar

lost her sovereignty to colonialists as it did not possess a modern army at that time and a pragmatic concept emerged that a modern army must be built to ward off the colonialists and to regain independence.

Thirty comrades led by General Aung San went to Japan for military training to found Burma Independence Army on 27 December 1941 and it managed to regain independence after sacrificing the lives of Tatmadaw personnel and the people.

The Tatmadaw is working in the interests of the people and the country with the spirit nurtured by General and The Tatmadaw was able to emancipate the

country and the people from chaos during the post-independence period when ideological and racial conflicts dragged the country into a crisis, according to the senior general.

In conclusion, the senior general said that the Tatmadaw laid the foundation for democracy desired by the people during the era of Tatmadaw government and is now helping the government elected by the people to strengthen the democratic system. Then, Lt-Gen Thaung Aye and Brig-Gen Soe Win read out the papers on General Aung San's independence struggle and efforts for national unity.

The senior general and party viewed round the exhibition of rare photographs, personal items, manuscripts and quotations of General Aung San.

Myawady

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing...

(from page 1)

some armed ethnic groups fought together with the renegade Kokang group, according to the senior general who later said that the stance of the groups that were involved will have to take responsibility for their involvement in the provocative attacks while ceasefire talks were being held must be taken seriously.

The senior general said that the Tatmadaw will hold a press conference soon as there are narcotic drugs in border areas of Myanmar territory and the Tatmadaw will have to combat and eliminate narcotic drugs that are threatening not only Myanmar but also the world.

The Tatmadaw will combat narcotic drugs effectively as a national cause since the problem damages the image of the country in the international community, the senior general said.

He added that it is nec-

essary for national brethren who are residing in Myanmar, which has its own territory, to work for national solidarity with the Union Spirit, saying the outcome of unity is working towards the common goal that will generate common benefits.

The senior general explained that only when stability and unity are in place, efforts can be made for national development and he does not want youths to work in other countries in abject misery as they have the abilities and opportunities to work at home.

It is necessary to devel-

op the abilities and create the opportunities for youth to work in the country and Myanmar national races who are abroad for various reasons have been allowed to come back home in accordance with the law, the senior general said.

The senior general continued to say that the

strength of a country lays inside it and only when all the people residing in the country are united, the internal or national strength can be built.

In conclusion, the senior general urged all to work for internal strength with farsightedness, expressing his hope that all the

leaders at the meeting who can guide their groups and possess sound experience make right decision for the country. After the speech of the senior general, leaders of armed ethnic groups extended greetings and posed for documentary photos with the senior general.

Myawady



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing poses for documentary photo with leaders of armed ethnic groups.—MNA

MANDALAY, 13 Feb— The fine arts association of Mandalay University organized the Union dancing and music concert on the lawns of the main building at Mandalay University on 11 February.

Deputy Director-General Dr Thein Win of Higher Education Department (Upper Myanmar), Pro-Rectors Dr Thida Win and Dr Nu Nu Yi of the university, faculty members, students and guests.

The deputy director-general and the pro-rector cut the ribbon to open the concert.

Students from 18 majoring subjects performed traditional dances of Kachin, Kayah, Mon, Kayin, Shan, Pa-O, Rakhine and Chin ethnics; and families of Myanmar Department, Kyaukse elephant dance and U Shwe Yoe dances.

Mandalay University stages Union dancing and music concert



Mandalay University Hluttaw representative U Rector Dr Maung Thin Tin Maung, faculty member and family, Amyotha bers and students pre-

sented K120,000 each to troupes.

Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Asel Bridge under construction on Ma Mya Creek in Myanaung Tsp



MYANAUNG, 13 Feb — Asel Bridge on Htugyi-Shwegyin Road linking Myanaung Township and Ingapu Township, Ayeyawady Region, will be opened soon to give smooth transport service to the local people.

A 100 feet long and 12 feet wide bridge is being built across Ma Mya Creek.

Department of Rural Development allotted the fund for construction of the bridge in 2014-15 fiscal year. Thitsa Lun Say Company is constructing the bridge. Officials of the District and Township Rural Development Departments inspect progress of construction tasks weekly for meeting standard.

Win Bo (Township IPRD)

Mandalay Region observes 68th Anniversary of Union Day

MANDALAY, 13 Feb— Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint attended the ceremony to mark the 68th Anniversary of Union Day at Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay on 12 February.

The chief minister read out the message sent by the President on the occasion of the Union Day.

It was also attended by Hluttaw representatives, departmental officials, members of the region election sub-commission, representatives of political parties,

faculty members and local people, totaling about 3,200.

The chief minister and

party saluted the State Flag when the band played the National Anthem.

After the ceremony,

the chief minister cordially greeted national brethren.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



China-ASEAN Youth Football Tournament to kick off on 4 March

YANGON, 13 Feb— Myanmar U-15 team under the Myanmar Football Federation will take part in the China-ASEAN Youth Football Tournament in Dongxing City of Guangxi Province of the People's Republic of China from 4 to 11 March 2015.

The tournament will comprise host China U-15, Myanmar U-15, Malaysia U-15 and Vietnam U-15 teams. They will play the tournament through round-robin matches. Two top teams will meet in the final match for securing championship trophy.

Myanmar U-15 team comprises goalkeepers Htet Waiyan Soe, Han Nang Soe and Waiyan Tun,

defenders Min Myat Thu, Hein Soe, Bo Bo Aung, Sithu Moe Khant, Aung Aung Zin, Pyae Phyto Maung, Phyto Wai Kyaw and Win Ko Ko Tun, midfielders Pyae Sone Naing, Ye Win Tun, Arkar Kyaw, Tun Sai, Okkar Phyto, Thiha Zaw, Phone Min Khant and Htet Phyto Wai, forwards Kyaw Kyaw Htet, Win Naing Tun, Hein Htet Aung and Thet Paing Htoo.

The team will be led by manager U Soe Nyunt, head coach U Than Lwin together with assistant coach U Tin Maung Win, goalkeeper coach U Myint Oo, physiotherapist U Aung Aung and media officer U Nay Myo Kyaw.

MFF

REGIONAL

Okinawa mulls suspending preparations for US base construction



Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga attends a Press conference in the prefectural capital, Naha, on 13 Feb, 2015.
KYODO NEWS

NAHA, (Japan), 13 Feb — Okinawa Gov Takeshi Onaga said on Friday he is considering using his power as the prefectural head to order suspension of the Defence Ministry's preparations for constructing a US military base in the southwestern prefecture.

"I will use every means to fulfill my campaign pledge," he told a Press conference, referring to his gubernatorial election commitment to block the US base construction.

The possible suspension could affect the Japanese government's plan to build the base on reclaimed land in waters off the Henoko district of Nago as

a replacement for the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station located in a densely populated area south of Nago. The governor is considering issuing an order under the prefecture's fishery-related rules that regulate work affecting the seabed and reefs, a prefectural official said.

Onaga's predecessor Hirokazu Nakaima last August approved an application by the ministry's Okinawa Defence Bureau for the preparatory work in a 172-hectare area.

But a citizens' group has claimed that the bureau, in preparing for a drilling survey, has dropped concrete blocks to mark off restricted areas outside the approved location.

The prefectural government has asked the bureau about the specific locations where blocks have been dropped.

The bureau's earlier report to the prefectural government says concrete blocks weighing 10 to 45 tons have been dropped at dozens of locations so that floats can be affixed to them.

The bureau has so far insisted that no separate approval is required for the block-dropping operation.

Kyodo News

Business leaders say clock is ticking for embattled Australian PM Abbott



Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott

SYDNEY, 13 Feb — Australian business leaders are fuming over government instability that has become "poisonous" for investor confidence, and doubt that conservative Prime Minister Tony Abbott can reverse his leadership's downward spiral within six months.

Private anger bubbled over after Abbott emerged wounded this week from a leadership challenge within his ruling Liberal Party, a confrontation that also damaged the traditionally close relationship between his party and business leaders.

Australia's business leaders almost unanimously united behind Abbott when he pledged during his 2013 election campaign to end the instability that marked previous center-left Labour Party

governments.

Within months Abbott's pugilistic style and policy missteps — from his handling of the economy to awarding Queen Elizabeth's husband Prince Philip an Australian knighthood — have proved hugely unpopular with the public and divisive within his party.

The uncertainty that has created has become "poisonous" for investor confidence, said Kate Carnell, CEO of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"Do we feel like, 'okay, everything's okay now?' We don't. We feel like he's been given ... six months to deliver and I don't think there is a huge, overpowering confidence that that's going to happen," Carnell told *Reuters*.

His obsession with

political "trench warfare" against the opposition Labor Party rather than reforming Australia's wobbly economy was reflected in this week's unemployment figures, which jumped to 6.4 percent from 6.1, the worst since 2002, she said.

"We don't want him to focus on beating Bill Shorten," Carnell said, referring to the Labour Party leader. "We want him to focus on running the country."

On Wednesday, the head of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia echoed Carnell's fears in unusually sharp public criticism of the government from a business leader and he was soon joined by David Thodey, CEO of Telstra, Australia's largest telco.

"The business community is looking for stability in leadership and stability in vision for the country.

That's what we need because as a business we work off certainty," Thodey told a news conference.

Abbott's trouble with business began early in his tenure, said Peter Chen, political science professor at the University of Sydney. His refusal to pursue industrial relations reform,

a failed push for paid parental leave funded by a tax on industry, and lack of policy focus has broken any remaining support from industry.

"They don't just dislike him, they kind of actively hate him because he is so quixotic," Chen said.

Several sources said a move to replace Abbott with Communications Minister Malcolm Turnbull, a millionaire lawyer and former investment banker, would be welcomed.

A Sydney-based financial services lawyer said Turnbull would be a welcome change because of his center-right views and business background.

"We need somebody who is moderate, and it is Turnbull who can get us some stability.

Businesses will be very happy with a change," he told *Reuters*, on condition of anonymity.

Abbott is working against the clock if he to win back the business lobby.

On Friday, a Labour government was installed in Queensland state after a massive swing against the incumbent conservatives that was also seen as a referendum on Abbott's rocky tenure.—*Reuters*

Bangladesh ferry capsizes with about 200 passengers aboard, two bodies recovered

DHAKA, 13 Feb — Two bodies had been recovered shortly after an overloaded ferry carrying some 200 passengers sank on Friday afternoon in the middle of a river in southern Bangladesh, police said.

"Bodies of two passengers have been recovered," said a police officer who preferred to be unnamed.

He said that the wooden ferry, carrying some 150-200 passengers, capsized in Payra river at around 1:15 pm local time on Friday. A rescue vessel has been called in to boost local efforts to salvage the ferry, said the officer. The ferry capsized as it developed cracks after it struck a submerged island, he added. According to the

officer, the authorities still don't know how many people remained missing.

But the officer confirmed that most of the passengers, who survived by swimming, were rescued shortly after the ferry capsized at a confluence of the river in Borguna district, some 300 km south of capital Dhaka.—*Xinhua*

Three crew members on crashed MSDF helicopter confirmed dead

TOKYO, 13 Feb — Three crew members aboard a Maritime Self-Defence Force helicopter that was found crashed on Friday on a mountain in southwestern Japan have been confirmed dead, the Defence Ministry said.

The three were found around the crash site on a mountain in Ebino, Miyazaki Prefecture. The OH-

6D helicopter left Kanoya base in neighbouring Kagoshima Prefecture at 9:19 am on Thursday on a training flight and went missing after a radio communication at 11:05 am that day.

The Self-Defence Forces and police resumed search operations on Friday after they were unable to locate the helicopter the previous day.

Plane captain Lt Cmdr Tadahiro Yamamoto, 39, was found trapped under the helicopter with another male crew in his 40s. The remaining victim, a male in his 20s, was found outside of the helicopter.

A Maritime Staff Office research team is conducting a probe into the cause of the accident.

Kyodo News



Firefighters work at the site of a car pileup accident in Seoul, on 11 Feb, 2015. At least two people have been confirmed dead, with 65 others including seven Chinese injured, in a car pileup accident on Yeongjong Grand Bridge in Incheon, west of South Korea's capital Seoul, local media reported on Wednesday. —XINHUA

10 killed, 150 injured in train derailment in India

NEW DELHI, 13 Feb — At least 10 people were killed and more than 150 others injured in a train derailment in the southern Indian state of Karnataka on Friday, a senior police officer said.

"The mishap happened when nine coaches of Bengaluru City- Ernakulam Intercity express train derailed near state capital Bengaluru. While seven people died on the spot, those injured have been admitted to a local hospital," he said, on

condition of anonymity.

Local TV channels showed footage of rescue workers trying to pull out those feared trapped in the coaches of the train which runs between Bengaluru and Kochi in the neighbouring state of Kerala. "Initial reports suggest a boulder may have fallen on the track," a senior railway official was quoted as saying. A probe has been ordered into the incident, he added.

Xinhua

Red Cross, Japan working together for nuclear disarmament: ICRC chief



International Committee of the Red Cross President Peter Maurer attends a Press conference in Tokyo on 13 Feb, 2015. Following his visit to the atomic-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Maurer said the ICRC and the Japanese government are committed to working toward nuclear disarmament.
KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 13 Feb — The president of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Friday after visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki that the ICRC and the Japanese government are committed to working toward nuclear disarmament.

“The humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has been a common concern of the Japanese government and ICRC since August 1945,” ICRC President Peter Maurer told a Press conference in Tokyo after visiting the two cities, both devastated by US atomic bombs in 1945.

He said his visit to Japan has been an “opportunity to underline our commitment for the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and for the credible process of comprehensive

nuclear disarmament.”

After meeting Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other government officials, Maurer said he felt Japan is “strongly committed” to moving forward the existing framework including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Maurer also said his organization and the Japanese government have many areas of interest in common, such as humanitarian assistance in the Middle East and Africa.

“We hope that the support from Japan for the ICRC’s activities will continue in the future and eventually even grow as we expand our operation of activities,” he said.

Regarding journalists’ activities in Syria and Iraq, parts of which are controlled by Islamic State

milantants, Maurer said he “would not recommend (journalists) to enter those areas in the present situation.”

“We know that it is extremely difficult to access Islamic State group-controlled areas in a safe way at the present moment,” he said. Though the Red Cross provides humanitarian assistance to such conflict areas as Syria and Iraq, long-term efforts are needed to secure safe access, as it has to negotiate with many actors, Maurer said.

On Japanese journalist Kenji Goto, who was killed recently by Islamic State militants, Maurer said the Red Cross was contacted by Goto’s family in November regarding his whereabouts. He declined to go into detail.

Kyodo News

Eight Ukrainian servicemen killed in past 24 hours despite peace deal



Members of the Ukrainian armed forces ride on armoured personnel carriers (APC) near Debaltseve, eastern Ukraine, on 12 Feb, 2015.
REUTERS

KIEV, 13 Feb — Eight Ukrainian service personnel have been killed and 34 wounded in fighting against separatists in eastern Ukraine in the past 24 hours, a Kiev military spokesman said on Friday, despite a four-power peace deal worked out in Belarus.

“In the Donbass (eastern Ukraine), this night was not a calm one. The enemy shelled positions of the ‘anti-terrorist operation’ forces with the same intensity as before,” a statement by the military said.

Fighting had been particularly intense around Debaltseve, a key railway junction linking the two main rebel areas, where separatists had used rockets and artillery to attack government forces holding the town, the statement said.

“Following military action and shelling ... Ukraine lost eight service personnel and 34 others were wounded,” military spokesman Vladyslav Seleznyov said.

Reuters

News organizations back safety guidelines for freelance journalists

NEW YORK, 13 Feb — More than two dozen news organizations and advocacy groups have agreed to back international safety standards for freelancers in the wake of kidnappings and killings of journalists around the world.

The document calls for news organizations that employ full time staffers and freelance journalists “to actively join in a shared commitment to safety and a new spirit of collegiality and concern.”

The guidelines and practices released on Thursday at Columbia University’s Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma were drafted by an international group of freelancers, foreign correspondents, news executives and advocates.

The signers include Reuters, the Associated



A sign outside a shop remembers James Foley in his hometown of Rochester, New Hampshire on 20 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

Press, Bloomberg, the BBC, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and USA Today.

“Reuters is proud to

join an unprecedented alliance of top news organizations to work to protect the freelance journalists who play such a vital role

in news coverage worldwide,” Reuters Editor in Chief Stephen J. Adler said in a statement.

“At Reuters, we are

committed to providing the same levels of security, training, and safety equipment for freelancers as we do for staff reporters working in all the most dangerous places on earth.”

Bruce Shapiro, executive director of the Dart Centre for Journalism and Trauma, said in a statement, “The role of freelancers in reporting conflict and crisis around the world has grown in significance even as threats rise. “The news companies, freelance organizations and advocacy groups who came together to support the guidelines all understand that we are in a crisis which demands action.”

The world has grown increasingly hostile to journalists covering wars and dangerous places. At

the same, many news organizations, which are trimming costs, rely on freelancers for stories.

According to data from the CPJ, 61 journalists were killed last year, including 13 freelancers. Eight of the freelancers were murdered, including James Foley and Steven Sotloff who were beheaded.

The safety standards include first aid and hostile environment training, securing medical insurance for conflict zones, and having appropriate equipment such as helmets and vests when on assignment.

The organizations backing the standards said they mark “the first step in a long-term campaign” to get other media companies and journalists to adopt the guidelines.

Reuters

Japan, Russia hold talks in Moscow to discuss Putin’s visit to Japan

MOSCOW, 13 Feb — Senior Foreign Ministry officials of Japan and Russia held talks in Moscow on Thursday to lay the groundwork for a planned visit to Japan by Russian President Vladimir Putin later this year, Japanese officials said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama and his Russian counterpart Igor Morgulov discussed a decades-long territorial dispute and prospects for apost-

World War II peace pact between the two countries, the officials said.

Sugiyama and Morgulov skipped discussions on a postponed visit to Russia by Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, the officials said. Russia has taken the position that Kishida’s visit, which was put off following Russia’s annexation of Crimea in southern Ukraine last March, must precede Putin’s visit to Japan.

Sugiyama and Morgu-

lov also discussed the crisis in Ukraine and international terrorist activities including those involving Islamic State, with Sugiyama conveying Japan’s position that sanctions imposed on Russia by Japan, European countries and the United States should not adversely affect Japan-Russia relations, according to the officials.

The deputy minister-level meeting, initially set for August last year, was postponed after Japan im-

posed additional sanctions on Russia following Moscow’s Crimea annexation. The previous meeting was held in January last year.

After Japan’s surrender in World War II, the Soviet Union seized three islands and a group of small islets off Japan’s northernmost main island of Hokkaido. The dispute over their sovereignty has prevented Japan and Russia from concluding a peace treaty.

Kyodo News

Obama and Pakistan’s Sharif agree to meet — White House

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb — President Barack Obama and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif spoke by telephone on Thursday about counterterrorism and other issues, and agreed to meet, the White House National Security Council said on Twitter.

The two leaders “expressed the intent to meet at a mutually convenient

time,” the White House said, and agreed to continue to strengthen the relationship between the two countries.

Obama “welcomed the improved relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and noted appreciation for Pakistan’s efforts to combat terrorism,” the White House said.

Reuters

WORLD

UN Security Council moves to cut funding to degrade Islamic State

NEW YORK, 13 Feb — The UN Security Council on Thursday unanimously approved a resolution designed to cut off financing to so-called Islamic State and other terrorist groups and individuals, threatening to impose sanctions on those who trade smuggled oil that is believed to have become an important source of revenue for them.

Following a series of chilling hostage crises, the Security Council took the action aimed at bringing down terrorist groups in a show of international soli-

arity, stepping up pressures on the diplomatic front at a time when air raids have been launched and ground attacks are planned against them by some countries.

After the resolution — initially introduced by Russia — was passed, Moscow's Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin said, "We took yet another very important step in suppressing the funding of terrorists, first and foremost as a result of the illegal trafficking of oil."

US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha

Power said that the resolution is "part of a comprehensive strategy to degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL." ISIL stands for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, one of the acronyms used to describe the group.

The latest move comes after the Security Council held a special meeting of leaders in September where they passed a resolution calling on countries to tighten the movement of foreign terrorists increasingly flocking to hotspots such as Syria and Iraq, where the Islamic State group operates.

It also follows the killings of two Japanese citizens, a Jordanian pilot and an American aid worker blamed on the jihadist group. The resolution notes "the continued threat posed to international peace and security" by the Islamic State, the Al-Nusrah Front and other groups and individuals, expressing concern that they are raising funds from the smuggling of oil and historical and cultural artifacts.

Ransom payments to these groups are supporting their recruitment efforts, strengthening their oper-

ational capability to carry out attacks and encouraging more kidnapping, the resolution reaffirmed.

The document expressed the Security Council's "determination" to prevent kidnapping and hostage-taking by extremist groups and to secure the safe release of hostages "without ransom payments or political concessions."

On smuggled oil from terrorist groups, the resolution says any engagement in trade either direct or indirect "would constitute support for such individuals, groups,

undertakings and entities." The resolution is based on Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which paves the way for sanctions against those violating its provisions and drew more than 30 countries including Japan and Jordan as cosponsors. Stephane Dujarric, a spokesman for UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, welcomed the adoption of the resolution and took note of limiting militant groups' access to funds, saying that the fight against terrorism "goes much beyond just the direct military intervention."—Kyodo News

Pope tells Vatican administrators to be 'absolutely transparent'

VATICAN CITY, 13 Feb — Pope Francis, starting two days of closed-door meetings with the world's Roman Catholic cardinals, on Thursday called for greater efficiency and transparency in the Church's troubled central administration, the Curia.

Francis was elected in 2013 with a mandate from the cardinals who chose him to reform the Curia, and has made plain his determination to bring the Church's hierarchy closer to its 1.2 billion members. In brief, public comments before the meetings started, he said Church administrators should strive for "greater harmony in work of the various departments and offices, in order to realise a more efficient collaboration based on absolute transparency". The Italian-dominated Curia's power struggles and leaks were widely held responsible for Benedict XVI's decision two years ago to become the first pope in six centuries to resign. Last December, Francis delivered a stinging critique of the priests, bishops and cardinals who run the Curia, saying that careerism, scheming and greed had infected them with "spiritual Alzheimer's". The cardinals are the pope's closest collaborators in Rome and around the world, and were in Rome for a ceremony on Saturday to induct 20 new "princes of the church". The closed-door meetings, known as an extraordinary consistory, were due to hear reports on Vatican finances and on the worldwide crisis involving sexual abuse of minors by clerics, as well as Francis's project to reform the Curia. Cardinal Wilfrid F Napier of Durban, South Africa, a member of a council advising the pope on economic reforms, told the Catholic News Service on Wednesday that the group had run into resistance from some departments that had earlier enjoyed financial autonomy.—Reuters

France's Hollande says Egypt to buy Rafale fighters, frigate



French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (front) sits in a Rafale B jet fighter as Eric Carle, Dassault Aviation flight test engineer, looks on at the factory of French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation in Merignac, near Bordeaux, southwestern France, on 10 Jan, 2014. — REUTERS

BRUSSELS, 13 Feb — French President Francois Hollande said Egypt would order 24 Rafale fighter jets, a naval frigate and related military equipment in a deal to be signed in Cairo on Monday worth more than 5 billion euros (3.7 billion pounds).

The contract would make Egypt, aiming to upgrade its military hardware amid fears the crisis in neighbouring Libya could spill over, the first export customer for the warplane, built by Dassault Aviation.

It follows years of failed at-

tempts by France to export the plane.

"The Rafale fighter jet has won its first export contract," Hollande's office said in a statement.

"The Egyptian authorities have just let me know their intention of acquiring 24 Rafale planes, a multi-mission frigate as well as related equipment." The latter items consist of a Fremm warship and MBDA air-to-air missiles.

Hollande, in Brussels for a European Council meeting, added that the sale accord would be signed in Cairo on Monday by Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. The contract would be the first overseas for the Rafale, 14 years after it entered service and three years after Dassault Aviation entered exclusive negotiations to sell 126 of the combat jets to India.

Delays in finalising the Indian contract are expected to be discussed at a major Indian air show starting on 18 February.

Dassault is also in negotiations to supply the Rafale to Qatar and under increasing pressure to

sell the plane overseas.

The French government said last year it would slow the pace at which it takes delivery of Rafale jets, to just 26 over the next five years instead of 11 a year.

Paris and Cairo have enjoyed close economic ties in the past but turmoil in the north African state since President Hosni Mubarak was overthrown in 2011 left Western governments wary of signing deals, especially in defence.

With the rise to power of Sisi, ties have improved. Both sides are concerned by the rise of jihadist groups in Libya and Egypt. France secured its first major military contract in Egypt in about 20 years in 2014 with a 1 billion-euro (\$1.35 billion) deal to sell four naval frigates.

The Fremm is built by state-controlled DCNS, which is 35 percent owned by French group Thales. MBDA is a venture of Airbus Group, Britain's BAE Systems and Finmeccanica of Italy.

Reuters

Islamic State says it's holding 'Israeli spy' in Syria

JERUSALEM, 13 Feb — Islamic State said on Thursday it was holding an Israeli Arab who had posed as a foreign fighter in order to spy for Mossad, an account denied by Israel and by the man's family, who said he had been kidnapped.

In an interview published by Islamic State's online English-language magazine Dabiq, Muhammad Musallam, 19, said he had joined the insurgent group in Syria so as to report to the Israelis on its weapons caches, bases and Palestinian recruits.

After his conduct aroused the suspicion of Islamic State commanders, Musallam was quoted as saying, he broke cover by phoning his father in East Jerusalem, leading to his capture. "I say to all those who want to spy on the Islamic State, don't think that you're so smart and that you can deceive the Islamic State. You won't succeed at all," he said, ac-



Said Musallam, an Israeli Arab whose son, Muhammad, is being held by Islamic State in Syria as an alleged spy, holds his photograph in his East Jerusalem home on 12 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

cording to Dabiq.

"Stay away from this path. Stay away from helping the Jews and the murtaddin (apostates). Follow the right path."

Musallam's father, Said, denied his son was a spy, saying he went missing after travelling as a tourist to Turkey. Muhammad then phoned home, saying he had been abducted to neighbouring Syria but could buy his way out, his father said.

"He said, 'Dad, I need \$200

or \$300 so they will let me go,'" Said Musallam told Reuters. Before he could send the money, he said, another man phoned to inform him Muhammad had escaped his captors but had been seized by Islamic State. An Israeli security official said Musallam travelled to Turkey on 24 October in order to fight for Islamic State in Syria. "He went on his own initiative, without his family's knowledge," the official told Reuters. Asked whether his statement

constituted a denial that Musallam was an Israeli spy, the official said: "You can understand it that way, yes."

Worried that members of its 20-percent Arab minority might travel to Syria or Iraq to join Islamist insurgent groups and then return radicalised and battle-ready, Israel has stepped up monitoring and prosecution of suspected would-be volunteers.

Turkey draws many Israeli Arab holidaymakers. It is also a major conduit for foreigners who slip across the border to help insurgents trying to topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Muhammad Musallam worked as an Israeli firefighter, his family said. A friend of his who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity said Musallam had posted pro-Islamic State messages on social media. Reuters could find no social media accounts under Musallam's name.—Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 14 February, 2015

Mutual acceptance, tolerance and respect go a long way

By Kyaw Thura

There is no single nation across the world in which a single racial group lives. The world itself is a multiracial society. In other words, it is a multicultural society. Naturally opinions differ between one race and another. It is prudent to adapt to diversity and learn to cultivate mutual acceptance, mutual

tolerance and mutual respect.

Myanmar has been a multicultural country for thousands of years, a factor that calls upon us to recognize different ethnic groups as family. Statistically, the country is home to over 135 national races following different faiths and having different cultures. Each of them possesses their own ethnic individuality, but they are all Myanmar people.

Myanmar belongs to all national races.

Given the existence of the ethnic diversity of Myanmar society, mutual acceptance and mutual tolerance are essential and should therefore be regarded as the best we can hope for. We need to have great prescience in maintaining that unity in diversity is not a dream as long as people from different origins, different religions and different cultures learn to respect each other's religion and culture. Otherwise, we are sure to get bogged down in a morass of hatred, prejudice

and vengeance.

If we have to hate someone for holding opinions different from us, we are our own enemy number one. The point is that our minds keep swinging with time or age. For example, what we find interesting now may not be our favourite some time later. All in all, multiracialism works only when we all show, acceptance, tolerance, and respect for each other's religion and ethnicity. Only then will peace prevail.

Write for us

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

Amarapura, the second last old capital city IX

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

Amarapura under King Mindon

KING Bagan was successful in the maintenance and renovation of his capital city Amarapura. Outstanding religious monuments and public facilities he carried out, described in the previous article "Amarapura, the second last capital city VIII" [in this esteemed daily the Global New Light of Myanmar on 2-2-2015] attested his ability in urbanization. But external affairs especially in his relations with colonial powers of the West, he proved a failure. Patriotic, dauntless and well-intentioned though he was in exerting his efforts to retrieve the lost territories of Myanmar kingdom to the British in the first Anglo-Myanmar war of 1824-26, he was backward in the contemporary world politics or rather mis-informed regarding the Anglo-French colonial rivalry engulfing Asia particularly South East Asia. Ill-advised and misinformed King Bagan thought that he could get back Rakhine and Taninthayi by a diplomatic game of playing France against Britain. Turning to France for military assistance in terms of modern arms and ammunition across the French Indo-China border in case of another war with the British, he made rapprochements with the French. But he was unaware of or not informed of the "divide and rule policy" of these two colonial powers. The British after estab-

lishing the British Indian Empire in the sub-continent of India and beyond and the French after establishing French Protectorates in Indo-China [which came to be known as French Indo-China] agreed to divide and rule policy. By an Anglo-French Entente Cordiale the two powers reached a mutual understanding to halt their colonial extension – the French would stop westward move, the British would stop eastward move by keeping Siam [Thailand] as a buffer zone between them.

Therefore, when the second Anglo-Myanmar war broke out in 1852 on the flimsy pretext of the British, King Bagan was defeated. No French military assistance from across the Myanmar-French Indo-China border came and his backward armies were utterly defeated by the British. Although the British Home Government in London was not in favour of further expansion and was adopting the policy of "thus far and no further", the British India Government under the then Governor-General Lord Dalhousie pursued "Forward Policy" over-ruling the Home Government. Dalhousie was backed by the British mercantile community, eyeing for Myanmar cheap cotton and vast China market for their textile products via Myanmar border town Bhamo, only 40 miles to Yunnan

Province of China.

As King Bagan failed in his external affairs and lost war with the British, Myanmar Hluttaw turned to Prince Mindon to replace King Bagan. Prince Mindon knew that Myanmar army was backward and weapons were obsolete. He preferred to avoid confrontation with the British until his country became modernized. So with the support of the Hluttaw, Prince Mindon and his younger brother Prince Kanaung with their adopted son Po Hlaing [later Yaw Mingyi U Po Hlaing] and their followers escaped to Shwebo – the land of victory of King Alaungpaya, from where they staged a coup. They deposed King Bagan and Mindon ascended the throne in 1853 and his younger brother Prince Kanaung as Crown Prince.

King Mindon stopped war with the British and till the last moment he tried to prevent the British from further annexation of Myanmar territory. But it was too late. Lord Dalhousie ordered to annex the entire economically resourceful Province of Pegu. Thus half of Myanmar kingdom was annexed to the British Indian Empire. Lower Myanmar became "British Burma".

Peaceful, pious and diplomatic, King Mindon stopped the war with the British, but he never concluded the peace treaty. He began to feel uncomfortable to continue to reside in Amarapura. Though auspiciously named Amara-pura Immortal city, Amarapura was waning after 62 years of grandeur and glory, just as

the eternal city of Rome declined after nearly 500 years of heydays. That is the Law of Impermanence Lord Buddha had preached. Amarapura was the capital city twice with an interregnum of 13 years [1824-1837] during which it ceased to be a capital city. Like King Bodawpaya who resided at capital city Inwa for a yearly and a half and moved to Amarapura, a new capital city he founded, King Mindon resided in Amarapura only 5 years, and he moved to a new capital city Ratanapon he founded in the year 1857 and moved in that year.

King Mindon did not do anything for the urbanization or renovation of Amarapura. On the contrary, he was responsible for moving of major Buddha Images from Amarapura to his new capital city Ratanapon and dismantling many of the palace and public buildings to be used in his new palace "Mya Nan San Kyaw".

In the second year of King Mindon's reign at Amarapura that is 1855, Lord Dalhousie sent a British diplomatic mission led by Arthur Phayre to King Mindon at Amarapura to negotiate with him regarding the British annexation of the Province of Pegu, as well as to gather information about all aspects of upper Myanmar. Attached as members of the mission were one photographer Linnaeus Tripe and one painter Colesworthy Grant to obtain representations of scenes and buildings and places. They published their works as Burma

Views which was widely distributed and well received. In it we can find Amarapura as it was, before King Mindon moved his capital to Mandalay.

After King Mindon moved to Ratanapon, Amarapura remains as Myo Haung [Old City] or commonly called Taung Myo [South City] lying to about 7 miles south of Ratanapon. What King Mindon spared and left behind still remain in Amarapura as silent witness to its glorious past. The following may be briefed as places of archaeological and touristic interest.

The ruined city laid out in a perfect square with brick walls, three gates on each side, totaling 12 gates had one wooden spired pavilion on each, now in ruin. The moat surrounding the city walls is lined with brick now overgrown with all kinds of water lily.

Within the city, the only surviving masonry structures are the Royal Treasury and the Record Office. At each corner of the palace city still stands a pagoda "Myodaunt Zedi".

Not far from the south wall, outside the city, stands Patho-daw-gyi pagoda built by King Bagydaw in 1820. It is an imposing stupa, with three lower terraces adorned with marble slabs with scenes of Jataka stories carved in bold relief. The history of the pagoda is recorded on an inscription stone pillar and on a large alloy bell dedicated to the pagoda still hung in a big pavilion in the precinct.

In addition to U Pein wooden bridge, Taungthaman Kyauk Taw Gyi Temple and Amarapura Bakaya

monastery already described in the previous articles there is an unusual architecture in Amarapura which is Nagayone Phaya, a vaulted pagoda with a big statue of Naga [dragon]'s hood over it.

Within the city, now surrounded by paddy fields and farm lands, the tombs of King Bodawpaya and King Bagydaw are located with inscriptions of their short biographies.

To the north-east of the city are the sites of two big wooden monasteries built by chief queen of King Thawawaddy and their daughter in 1843. These two monasteries in their heydays were museum of a sort for all Myanmar visual arts objects of exceptional quality were deposited there by way of dedication. Unfortunately, these monasteries were destroyed during the Second World War.

There are other buildings of historical interest, such as the reconstructed Chinese Temple which was built in the time of King Hsinbyushin, after the termination of Sino-Myanmar wars and signing of peace treaty by which the two countries agreed to exchange diplomatic missions every ten years. [Decemial Missions].

Tomb of Amat Kyi U Paw Oo, tomb of Thai King who became monk in Amarapura, burial sites of Neolithic age and world renowned Buddhist learning and meditation centre "Maha Ganda yon Kyaung Taik, Saunder weaving school are later additions to the list of places of interest in Amarapura.

(concluded)

LOCAL NEWS

MFF to hold General Aung San Shield football tournament as of 2015

YANGON, 13 Feb—In memory of late national leader General Aung San, Myanmar Football Federation will hold the General Aung San Shield football tournament instead of the MFF Cup knockout football tournament as of this year.

The General Aung San Shield tournament had been held as of 1957 but it could not be organized due to various reasons.

The General Aung San Shield will allow participation of football clubs from first and second divisions.

MFF improved its football standard by holding the Myanmar National League Cup in 2009 for professional footballers.—MFF



Students participate in essay contest to mark birthday of General Aung San, Myanmar Children's Day

YINMABIN, 13 Feb—An essay contest in commemoration of the centennial birthday of General Aung San and Myanmar Children's Day was held at Basic Education High School in Yinmabin, Sagaing Region, on 11 February.

A total of 72 students of basic education schools

participated in the contest classified as three levels: the first level for the students between 8-10 aged, the second 11-14 aged and the third 15-18 aged.

Officials presented prizes to the winners in the essay contest at the different levels on 12 February.—Tun Ko Ko

Wushu athletes representing Mandalay Region under training

MANDALAY, 13 Feb — Officials of Mandalay Region Wushu Subcommittee met athletes, coaches and manager of Mandalay Region Wushu team that will take part in the 4th National Sports Festival, at Bahtoo Gymnasium in Mandalay on 11 February.

Deputy Director of Sports and Physical Education Department U Wai Zin, Vice Chairman of Wushu Subcommittee U Thet Wai of Asia Energy and officials enjoyed skill demonstration of Wushu athletes.

The team led by head coach U Kyaw Aye and

seven coaches comprises seven men and five women in Sanshou attack event and 14 athletes in the Taolu event.

The players are under training with the assistance of Mandalay Region government.—Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Nyaunglebin Tsp celebrates 68th Anniversary of the Union Day

NYAUNGLEBIN, 13 Feb — A ceremony to mark the 68th Anniversary of the Union Day was held at the sports ground of No 1 Basic Education High School in Nyaunglebin, Bago Region,

on 12 February morning.

Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Kan and departmental officials, social organization members, teachers, students and local people were in attendance.

The township administrator read out the message sent by President U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 68th Anniversary of the Union Day.

Nay Lin (Nyaunglebin)

Mandalarians enjoy vegetables and fruits show and contest

MANDALAY, 13 Feb—The 13th Mandalay Mayor's Trophy Vegetables and Fruits Show and Contest is being held at the Kandawgyi Public Park in Mandalay from 12 to 18 February, attended by Chief Minister

of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint and ministers.

The show and contest displays flowery arrangements, seasonal flowers, flowery plants, orchid, rose, bonsi, fruits, vegetables and fruit arrangements.

Mandalay Mayor Mandalay Region Minister for Development Affairs U Aung Moun and officials presented first, second and third prizes to the winners.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)



Traditional sports events mark centennial birthday of General Aung San



MANDALAY, 13 Feb—In commemoration of the centennial birthday of General Aung San, the traditional sports events, poem recitation and essay contests were held in seven townships of

Mandalay District as of 7 February.

The centennial birthday of the general was celebrated in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay. On 12 February, traditional sports events

were held for the people.

In the evening, Yar Pyae Anyeint troupe and Yadanabon Than Htay Aung performed entertainment to the local people.—Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

Battle lines emerge in US Congress over Obama Islamic state war plan

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb — House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner said on Thursday Republicans want a “strong, robust” authorization for military action against Islamic State, underscoring sharp differences with Democrats over President Barack Obama’s plans for the campaign.

A day after Obama sent his proposed authorization to Congress, Boehner told a news conference he and his fellow Republicans wanted to give US military commanders enough flexibility to defeat the militant group wherever it exists.

“I want to give our military commanders the flexibility and the authority they need to defeat the enemy,” Boehner said.

“If we’re going to win this fight, we need a strong robust strategy and a strong, robust authority.”

While Republicans said Obama included too many restrictions in the plan, such as a pledge there would be no “enduring” involvement by US ground troops, the president’s fellow Democrats worry the plan is too broad.

Many Democrats — particularly the most liberal members of the House — said they wanted a blanket prohibition

on US ground combat forces. Some also called for geographic restrictions on combat, which are not in Obama’s draft proposal.

Both the Senate and House must approve the war authorization for it to take effect.

Leaders of both chambers promise to hold hearings and briefings in the coming weeks as lawmakers debate and amend the proposal.

The House Democratic leader, Nancy Pelosi, acknowledged that it will be difficult for Obama’s measure to pass. “It is going to be hard” for Republicans and Democrats to reach consensus, she told a weekly news conference.

Republicans control a majority of seats in both the House and Senate, but there are too many objections from members of both parties for the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) to pass without bipartisan backing.

Obama has also called for both parties to get behind the plan, in order to show the world — and Islamic State militants — a united front.

Boehner was asked if he thought a plan could pass. He did not give an answer, saying only, “Let’s take it one day at a time.”

Reuters

Islamic State fighters seize western Iraqi town — officials

BAGHDAD, 13 Feb — Islamic State insurgents took control on Thursday of most of the western Iraqi town of al-Baghdadi, threatening an air base where US Marines are training Iraqi troops, officials said.

Al-Baghdadi, about 85 km (50 miles) northwest of Ramadi in Anbar Province, had been besieged for months by the radical Sunni Islamist militants who captured vast swathes of northern and western Iraq last year.

“Ninety percent of al-Baghdadi district has fallen under the control of the insurgents,” district manager Naji Arak told Reuters by phone.

Militants attacked al-Baghdadi from two directions earlier in the day and then advanced on the town, intelligence sources

and officials in the Jazeera and Badiya operations commands said.

The officials said another group of insurgents then attacked the heavily-guarded Ain al-Asad air base five km southwest of the town, but were unable to break into it.

About 320 US Marines are training members of the Iraqi 7th Division at the base, which has been struck by mortar fire on at least one previous occasion since December. Pentagon spokeswoman Navy Commander Elissa Smith confirmed the fighting in al-Baghdadi. She said there had been no direct attack on the air base, adding: “There were reports of ineffective indirect fire in the vicinity of the base.”

An Iraqi defence ministry spokesman declined to comment on the situation in



Sunni volunteers take part in a parade as they prepare to fight against militants of the Islamic State, in the town of Amriyat al-Falluja in Anbar Province, on 8 Jan 2015.—REUTERS

Anbar.

The death toll from the fighting was not immediately clear.

Most of the surrounding towns in Anbar fell under Islamic State control after the group’s rapid advance across the Syrian bor-

der last summer.

Elsewhere in Iraq, five civilians were killed when bombs went off in two towns south of Baghdad, police and medical sources said. Such attacks are not uncommon in and around the capital.—Reuters

Jordan’s air force resumes raids against Islamic State



A Jordanian woman lights a candle near a poster of Jordan’s King Abdullah (R) and a poster depicting Jordanian pilot Muath al-Kasasbeh during a candlelight vigil in solidarity with the family of Kasasbeh, who was burnt alive by the Islamic State, in Amman on 7 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

AMMAN, 13 Feb — Jordanian air force jets bombed the hideouts of Islamic State militants in Syria on Thursday, state television said, resuming the intensified raids that it first launched last week in retaliation for the

killing of a pilot.

King Abdullah has vowed to avenge the burning to death of pilot Mouath al-Kasasbeh by Islamic State and has ordered his commanders to prepare for a bigger military role in the

US-led coalition fighting the militants in both Syria and Iraq.

“The airforce has bombed and destroyed selected targets of the Daesh criminal gang this afternoon,” it said. “Daesh” is a derogative term for the militants.

The raids are the first the Jordanian military have announced since three straight days of aerial bombing that ended last Saturday.

However, Jordanian military experts say the kingdom may soon struggle to sustain the intensity of air strikes, given the limited supply of F-16 jets at its disposal.

King Abdullah told US lawmakers in Washington last week that Jordan needs precision munitions, aircraft parts and night vision equip-

ment.

Separately, an army source said a squadron of F-16 fighters which arrived earlier this week in Amman from the United Arab Emirates had conducted a second series of sorties on Thursday against Islamic State targets.

A Jordanian military source said the kingdom had begun lending crucial logistical and intelligence backing to the Iraqi military as it prepares for a major offensive in coming months to regain control of the northern city of Mosul, which fell to the militants last year.

Another military source ruled out Jordan joining any ground offensive against Islamic State but said the country’s elite special forces could have an important role to play.

Reuters

UN says Yemen collapsing, on brink of civil war

UNITED NATIONS, 13 Feb — The United Nations warned on Thursday that Yemen is “collapsing before our eyes”, on the brink of civil war and prime for al-Qaeda militants to grow stronger in the country as talks on a political settlement continue.

Al-Qaeda and other Sunni Muslim militants have stepped up attacks since rival Iranian-backed Shi’ite Muslim Houthi fighters from the north seized the capital in September and started expanding across the country.

The Houthis have sidelined the central government in Yemen, which borders oil giant Saudi Arabia.



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

The country is also home to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, one of the global network’s most active arms that has carried out attacks

abroad.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and his special envoy to Yemen, Jamal Benomar, briefed the Securi-

ty Council on Thursday.

“Yemen is collapsing before our eyes. We cannot stand by and watch,” Ban told the 15-nation council. “We must do everything possible to help Yemen step back from the brink and get the political process back on track.”

Benomar said negotiations on a political settlement had yielded “good progress”, but were still delicate.

“Yemen is at a crossroad — either the country would descend into civil war and disintegration or the country would find a way to put the transition back on track,” he said via video link

from Sanaa.

“The current instability is creating conditions which are conducive to a reemergence of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula,” he said.

Al-Qaeda-affiliated fighters seized an army base in southern Yemen and held soldiers prisoner on Thursday. The United States, Britain and France have closed their embassies in Sanaa.

Benomar also warned that the local currency could collapse if a political settlement was not secured in the coming days.

Qatar’s UN Ambassador Sheikhha Alya Bint Ahmed Bin Saif Al Thani, speaking for the Gulf Coop-

eration Council, a six-nation bloc comprising energy-rich Gulf states, urged the Security Council to take action.

“It is a coup against the legitimate government in Yemen,” she said. “We should bring pressure to bear on the Houthi to stop using force and to withdraw from all governmental institutions.”

Britain’s UN Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said that Britain and Jordan were planning to draft a resolution on Yemen that he hoped could be adopted within days. He declined to elaborate on what the key elements of the resolution could be.—Reuters

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World's oceans clogged by millions of tons of plastic trash



Trash is left scattered along Atalaia beach during the peak of the summer vacation season in Salinópolis, Para state, on 17 July, 2014.— REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb — The world's oceans are clogged with plastic debris, but how much of it finds its way into the seas annually? Enough to place the equivalent of five grocery bags full of plastic trash on every foot (30 cm) of every nation's coastline around the globe.

That's according to scientists who released research on Thursday estimating that a staggering 8 million metric tons of plastic pollution enter the oceans each year from the world's 192 coastal countries based on 2010 data. Based on rising waste levels, they

estimated that more than 9 million tons would end up in the oceans in 2015. Experts have sounded the alarm in recent years over how plastic pollution is killing huge numbers of seabirds, marine mammals, sea turtles and other creatures while sully-ing ocean ecosystems. China was responsible for the most ocean plastic pollution per year with an estimated 2.4 million tons, about 30 percent of the global total, followed by Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Egypt, Malaysia, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

The United States was the only rich industrialized nation in the top 20, and it ranked No 20. Coastal EU nations combined would rank 18th. The trash encompasses just about anything imaginable made of plastic including shopping bags, bottles, toys, food wrappers, fishing gear, cigarette filters, sunglasses, buckets and toilet seats.

"In short, you name it and it is probably somewhere in the marine environment," said Kara Lavender Law, a research professor of oceanography with the Massachusetts-based Sea

Education Association. The estimates were based on information including World Bank data for trash generated per person in all nations with a coastline, coastal population density, the amount of plastic waste countries produce and the quality of their waste-management practices.

"I think this is a wake-up call for how much waste we produce," said University of Georgia environmental engineering professor Jenna Jambeck.

The researchers calculated that 275 million tons of plastic waste was generated in the 192 coastal countries that year, with an estimated 8 million tons entering the ocean and a possible range between 4.8 million and 12.7 million tons.

"The most pressing need is to capture plastic waste to prevent it from entering the environment," Law said. "This means investing in waste management infrastructure, especially in those countries with rapidly developing economies." "In high-income countries, we also have a responsibility to reduce the amount of waste, especially plastic waste, that we produce," she added. The research was published in the journal *Science*. — Reuters

Furry forerunners: Jurassic arboreal, burrowing mammals unearthed



Skeletal and life style reconstructions of *Agilodocodon scansorius*, a docodont mammaliaform is shown in this illustration courtesy of University of Chicago released to Reuters on 12 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb — It may not have been the most opportune time to be a furry little critter, what with all those hungry dinosaurs and flying reptiles hanging around. But early mammals still managed to make their mark during the Jurassic Period.

Scientists on Thursday described fossils unearthed in China of two shrew-sized creatures that represent the oldest-known tree-climbing and burrowing mammals and show that early mammals had claimed a variety of ecological niches.

Agilodocodon scansorius, an omnivore that lived about 165 million years ago, possessed paws with curved claws for climbing, limb dimensions characteristic of other tree-dwelling mammals and flexible elbow, wrist and ankle joints good for scrambling up trees with agility.

Its spade-like front teeth, similar to some New World monkeys today, allowed it to chew into bark and eat tree gum or sap.

Docofossor, a mole-like insect-eater that lived about 160 million years ago, boasted shovel-like paws for digging, teeth similar to later burrowing mammals that forage underground and sprawling limbs ideal for underground movement.

University of Chicago paleontologist Zhe-Xi Luo called *Docofossor* a "dead ringer" for today's African golden mole.

Traits in *Docofossor*'s fingers are so similar to that mole that the researchers suspect the same genes

may be responsible even though the two creatures belong to different branches of the mammalian family tree and are separated by 160 million years.

The earliest mammals are thought to have appeared roughly 200 million years ago, arriving on the scene during the Mesozoic Era with dinosaurs ruling the land and flying pterosaurs keeping an eye out for a quick snack. The earliest-known bird did not appear until about 150 million years ago.

"Before the 2000s, it was generally thought Mesozoic mammals could not diversify much in the dinosaur-dominated ecosystem," Luo said.

But Luo said this notion has been undercut by discoveries in recent years of fossils of many Mesozoic mammals with numerous specializations including swimming, tree-living and digging.

"Simply put, our distant mammalian relatives explored ecological niches that were just as varied and interesting as many modern mammal groups," Luo said.

Agilodocodon and *Docofossor* both belonged to a long-extinct early mammalian order called docodonts. *Castorocauda*, another docodont living at about the same time in the Jurassic Period whose fossil was unearthed in China in 2006, had beaver-like traits tailored for an aquatic lifestyle.

The research was published in the journal *Science*.

Reuters

Finland starts to build 5G test network

HELSINKI, 13 Feb — VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland and the University of Oulu have started building a 5G test network in Oulu, a north-western city of Finland, in cooperation with industrial partners, VTT said in a press release issued on Thursday.

In the test network, critical technologies can be developed and the performance of the novel technol-

ogies will be checked out in a realistic environment, said VTT. The test network have two components: a restricted network conducted by VTT and a public network set up by the University of Oulu. In the restricted network, companies involved in the project can test the functions of their technologies, while in the public network, network performance under heavy load can be examined. "In

the test network, we will develop new technologies, and build 5G test environment for the research purposes based on the technologies. It enables long-term cooperation among various actors in the wireless communications ecosystem," Atso Hekkala, project manager from VTT, was quoted as saying. VTT said that the test environment will have evolved into a full-scale 5G network,

which will be provided as a living lab for application and service testing, by 2020. The 5th generation wireless systems, also known as Tactile Internet, denotes the next leap in wireless communications. It offers a high level of multimedia and cloud-based services, as well as user equipment and other network devices, while reducing material and energy consumption.—Xinhua

China's Xiaomi to start small in US, with earphones and bands

SAN FRANCISCO, 13 Feb — Xiaomi [XTC.UL], China's largest smartphone company, will begin selling headphones, smart wristbands and other accessories online in the United States in coming months, taking its first tentative step onto Apple Inc's home turf without its signature Mi mobile devices. The company also said it is close to securing a manufacturing partner in Brazil, which will help it skirt punishing tariffs on imported electronics when it begins sales in Latin America's largest

economy in the first half of this year.

Xiaomi, a five-year-old upstart whose name means "Little Rice," came out of nowhere to become China's fastest-selling mobile brand. It has been rapidly expanding its global footprint through direct, online sales. The company was valued at \$45 billion (29 billion pounds) in a December funding round that drew investors ranging from Singapore's sovereign wealth fund to a private capital firm backed by Alibaba Group Hold-

ing Ltd co-founder Jack Ma. Its Mi devices, which scored with Chinese users because of their low cost and the company's heavy reliance on user interaction and feedback, are now sold online across Asia, including most recently India.

Brazil marks the company's first foray with smartphones outside of its home continent. Global operations vice president Hugo Barra said Xiaomi intends to begin selling its phones there in the first half of this year. The company is in "extremely advanced

discussions" with at least half a dozen manufacturing partners there, Barra, a former Google Inc executive, said without revealing names, which will help it side-step a roughly 60 percent tax on foreign electronics. The industry is particularly curious about Xiaomi's potential to make a dent in the United States, which is the world's biggest mobile market in dollar terms but one where phone sales are controlled by telecoms carriers and where Apple holds sway.

Reuters

South African parliament descends into chaos as Zuma gets hostile reception

CAPE TOWN, 13 Feb — South Africa's parliament descended into chaos on Thursday as opposition lawmakers were removed by force after disrupting Jacob Zuma's annual address, an unprecedented sign of discontent at his administration.

The President's first State of the Nation speech since his re-election last May had been billed as an opportunity to highlight the achievements of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and its plans for the year ahead.

But he received a hostile reception from lawmakers from the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by firebrand former ANC youth leader Julius Malema, who started to challenge him about graft allegations.



Members of Julius Malema's Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) (in red) clash with security officials after being ordered out of the chamber during President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation address in Cape Town on 12 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Zuma had barely begun speaking when EFF members began interrupting, demanding to ask the

president about when he would repay part of a \$23 million state-funded security upgrade of his rural

home.

A clearly angry Speaker, Baleka Mbete, warned several EFF members to sit

down before ordering they be removed by security officers, prompting a brief brawl in which several people were injured, witnesses said.

"We have seen that we are part of a police state," Malema, whose T-shirt was torn in the fracas, told reporters after being bundled out of parliament in a scum.

Lawmakers from the main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) also left the chamber.

Zuma then delivered his speech to claps and cheers of support from ANC lawmakers as he highlighted the strides South Africa has made since the end of white-minority rule two decades ago.

The president's popularity has been waning,

however, following what was seen as extravagant spending on his rural home at taxpayers' expense and as South Africa's economy has slowed sharply.

DA parliamentary leader Mmusi Maimane said Mbete's decision to call in security officers undermined democracy in South Africa, evoking how hard that had been fought for by the country's first black president, Nelson Mandela.

"She cannot escalate the issue by sending police into the chamber," Maimane told reporters outside parliament.

"It robs the people of South Africa of what President Nelson Mandela fought for, which is the upholding of the rule of the law and the constitution."

Reuters

Ex wife of dead Argentine prosecutor says 'stop politicising' case



Judge Sandra Arroyo Salgado, ex-wife of late prosecutor Alberto Nisman, speaks to a group of senators in Buenos Aires on 12 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

BUENOS AIRES, 13 Feb — The investigation into the death of an Argentine prosecutor who levelled criminal charges against the president has become too politicized and needs the involvement of a regional human rights commission, the dead man's ex wife said on Thursday.

Minutes before the Senate passed a bill creating a new state security service to replace the tarnished intelligence secretariat (SI) at the heart of the scandal, Sandra Arroyo called for calm as investigators probe the death of Alberto Nisman.

"Don't continue politicizing a case in which so much is still unresolved," she told a group of opposition senators.

"In my own name and that of my daughters, I ask the national public defenders' office to consider ... the possibility of taking the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights," a grim-faced Arroyo said.

The seven-member commission, an arm of the

Washington-based Organization of American States, handles rights cases in the Western Hemisphere.

Nisman's body was found in his bathroom on 18 January, a bullet in his head, a pistol by his side. He had been scheduled to take his case to Congress the next day accusing President Cristina Fernandez of trying to derail the criminal probe into a deadly 1994 bombing in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. Nisman's death has spawned conspiracy theories involving Fernandez, rival factions vying for control of the country's intelligence apparatus and a group of Iranians accused by the courts of bombing the AMIA Jewish community centre 21 years ago. Fernandez has said state intelligence agents who were fired in December planted the accusation that she conspired with Iran to clear the suspects in the AMIA bombing in order start trading Argentina grains for much-needed Iranian oil. The Senate passed the measure creating a new state security agency by a 38-7 vote. Fernandez says the SI has changed little since Argentina's 1976-83 military dictatorship, and needs to become more accountable. Opposition Senator Ernesto Sanz had called the proposal, which now goes to the lower house of Congress for debate, a "facade intended to ensure nothing really changes."

Reuters

Thousands flee Niger town after Boko Haram attacks

NIAMEY, 13 Feb — Thousands of civilians fled their homes in the southeastern Niger town of Diffa this week, officials said on Thursday, following waves of cross-border raids and suicide bombings by Nigerian militant group Boko Haram.

Attacks in Niger are deepening a humanitarian crisis in the remote border zone. The area, struggling to feed some 150,000 people who have run to escape violence in northern Nigeria, has seen around 7,000 arrive this week in Zinder, Niger's second biggest town some 450 km (280 miles) west of Diffa.

Niger's military said its forces had killed 260 Boko Haram militants and had arrested others in fighting since 6 February. A suspected local leader of the group

was arrested and several weapons including rocket launchers seized from his home. The International Rescue Committee, which supplied the population estimates, has teams working around Diffa and Zinder. Matias Meier, country director, said some families in Zinder, one of the poorest

regions in Niger, were having to host 20 people, while other displaced were sleeping in the stadium.

A local politician said the flow of people out of Diffa continued on Thursday even though the town was calm.

"Everyone wants to get as far from Boko Har-

am as possible," the politician said, asking not to be named.

The IRC's Meier said: "Those who went on the trucks are the lucky ones. Bus tickets are sold out until the end of next week. Many are just walking or going by bicycle."

A tout at Diffa's bus station said hundreds of mini-busses, coaches and trucks had ferried people out of the town. The cost of a seat in any vehicle travelling to Zinder had nearly tripled to 15,000 CFA francs (\$26), he said.

Boko Haram's insurgency has killed thousands in northeastern Nigeria. Regional armies are mobilising a joint force of 8,700 men to defeat the group that is increasingly threatening neighbouring countries.

Reuters



A mattress is seen strapped to the back of a car as people flee the violence from Boko Haram, in Adamawa in the north east of Nigeria on 31 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Colombia's FARC rebels raise minimum recruitment age to 17

HAVANA, 13 Feb — Colombia's leftist FARC guerrillas announced on Thursday that they would stop recruiting soldiers under 17 years old, the latest in a number of conciliatory steps as peace talks to end five decades of conflict with the government advance.

The group said it was raising the minimum age for recruits from 15 to 17 in a statement marking the end of the latest round of talks with the government. The two-year-old negotiations are taking place in Cuba's capital, Havana.

Colombia's government welcomed the move

but said it did not go far enough, citing international human rights law that sets the minimum age for participation in any kind of combat at 18.

"First, I don't understand why 17 years of age? The established norm is 18, and I don't understand why they've only gone halfway," President Juan Manuel Santos said in a speech in Colombia's Caqueta province to inaugurate an electrification project.

"Colombians would have received it with greater joy, if they said they would not only stop recruiting children under 18 but that they

would free those they have recruited. ... We will continue to insist upon that step," he said.

The FARC, or Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, has long been accused of forcibly recruiting minors or taking on underage volunteers in remote rural areas with few opportunities.

Defence Minister Juan Carlos Pinzon said on Thursday that half of the FARC members who have been demobilizing from the rebel force are under 18 or were when they joined. They usually perform tasks such as cooking or clearing

jungle paths while training as combatants.

The FARC's ranks have been roughly halved to around 8,000 by a US-backed military offensive that has run for more than a decade and pushed the group, and its smaller counterpart, the National Liberation Army (ELN), deeper into their jungle hideouts.

The FARC initiated a unilateral ceasefire shortly before Christmas as both sides seek to de-escalate.

The FARC and the government are negotiating a five-point agenda for peace.

Reuters

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

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WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 14th February, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

China entering New Year with fewer crackers, less pork, more thrift

Images of "Fai Chun" or Chinese New Year couplets, which read, "Wishing you wealth and prosperity" (3rd R) and "Progress in Year of the Goat" (2nd R), are shown on the facade of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre in Hong Kong on 12 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

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
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Workers evacuated in Namibian mine fire with fear of radiation leakage

SWAKOPMUND, (Namibia), 13 Feb — Over 1000 miners at an open-pit uranium mine in Namibia's coastal Namib Desert were evacuated on Thursday after a fire broke out.

The fire-hit Rossing Uranium is located near the town of Arandis, some 65 kilometres from the coastal city of Swakopmund. Its main shareholders are British-Australian mining co-operation Rio Tinto Group (69 percent), the Iranian government (15 percent) and the Namibian government (three percent).

The mine's emergency service evacuated all workers to safe areas after the fire broke out at the final product recovery plant of the mine, where uranium oxide is packed for export, according to a statement issued on Thursday afternoon by the mine. There were no injuries to the employees. Mining operations in the areas were not affected by the incident and continue as normal, the statement said. "The fire happened in a sudden and spread quickly within the plant. We had to call the fire brigades from Swakopmund and Arandis



Workers take photos of the fire-hit Rossing Uranium near the town of Arandis, some 65 kilometres from the coastal city of Swakopmund, Namibia on 12 Feb, 2015. Over 1,000 miners at an open-pit uranium mine in Namibia's coastal Namib Desert were evacuated on Thursday after a fire broke out.—XINHUA

to assist us," said a worker who declined to name himself. The fire was contained two hours later, however some workers feared a possible radiation leakage.

"Our only worry now is the possibility of a radiation leakage as this is the final plant where we pack

uranium," the worker said. The mine's spokesperson Botha Ellis said the mine is assessing and monitoring the situation.

"We are aware of such a possibility, but it is too early to comment on it as we are currently busy with the assessment and investi-

gation to find out the cause of the fire," Ellis said.

Discovered in 1928, the Rossing Uranium Mine is one of the largest and longest-running uranium mines in the world and in 2013 produced 3.4 percent of global output of uranium. —Reuters

SHANGHAI, 13 Feb — The coming Lunar New Year will be a damp squib for Ding Shen, the 34-year-old owner of Beautiful Scenery Fireworks, who like a lot of China's entrepreneurs is counting the cost of an economy growing at its slowest for nearly a quarter of century. "If you don't have money, you're not going to buy fireworks," said Ding, who runs a store in Shanghai and a factory in the south-central province Hunan. Fireworks, an essential part of the celebrations, are traditionally set off everywhere — on streets, in courtyards and even off rooftops — during the week-long holiday. But they are an expense that people can easily cut.

"We've seen our domestic sales drop 40 percent and the fundamental reason has been because of China's economic slowdown," said Ding. His comments were echoed by other firework makers who also listed stricter safety regulations and heightened concerns over air pollution as reasons for depressed sales. For many Chinese the coming year holds even less promise than 2014, when growth slowed to a 24-year-low of 7.4 percent. A weak property market, slowing inflation and deteriorating domestic and foreign demand all point

to further gloom.

As consumers tighten their belts, the price of pork — known as China's indispensable meat — has also been hit. Pork prices tend to rise in the month before the holiday. But this year, according to official data, they slipped, albeit marginally, to 24.8 yuan (\$4) per kilogram in January from 24.9 yuan in December. "Usually corporate gifts include pork products like dried meat but that has declined significantly this year," said Pan Chenjun, a senior analyst at Rabobank. Other analysts said record levels of pork production in 2014 also kept prices under pressure.

Bookings for the Lunar New Year Eve dinner on 18 February are as high as ever, according to Zhu Xiaochao, media manager for Xiao Nan Guo Restaurants, which serve Shanghaiese food in 80 restaurants across China.

Customers, however, were opting for cheaper set menus. On the Internet, some bloggers complained about their pathetic New Year bonuses — so-called "hongbao" because they are handed out in red envelopes.

"Our company gave me a bonus — three boxes of apples to share between six people, what is this!" said Weibo user 'Duzuo Chitang'. —Reuters

Jackie Chan's son released from jail in China after drugs charge

BEIJING, 13 Feb — Jaycee Chan, the son of kung fu movie star Jackie Chan, was released from jail in China on Friday after serving a six-month sentence on drugs charges, state media said, having been caught up in the government's aggressive anti-narcotics campaign.

The official *Xinhua* news agency said he was let out in the early hours of the morning having completed his sentence, taking into account time already served since he was put in detention in August.

The younger Chan, a 32-year-old actor and singer, was formally charged in December with "the crime of sheltering others to take drugs" after testing positive for marijuana, with police saying they found 100 grams of the drug at his home. He faced a maximum prison sentence of three years.

He is expected to hold a news conference in Beijing on Saturday.

Celebrities have been a major linchpin in the government's campaign to get tough on drugs.

Jaycee Chan is among a string of other mostly B-list celebrities detained last year by Chinese authorities on drug-related charges that have been publicised widely in both state and social media. They have included movie and television stars, film directors and a prominent screenwriter.

Illegal drugs, especially synthetic substances like methamphetamine, ketamine and ecstasy, have grown in popularity in China in tandem with the rise of a new urban class with greater disposable income.

State media has reported that Jackie Chan felt ashamed of his son's drug abuse and hopes that



Hong Kong actor Jaycee Chan attends a movie festival in Shanghai on 13 June, 2009.

REUTERS

one day he will speak out about the dangers of taking drugs.

The older Chan had served as a goodwill spokesman for the China National Anti-Drug Committee in 2009, promoting anti-drug education.—*Reuters*

Hosting Oscars better than being nominated: Neil Patrick Harris

NEW YORK, 13 Feb — Fun-nyman Neil Patrick Harris admits being nervous for his first hosting stint at upcoming Academy Awards but feels it is any day less pressurising than being a nominee.

The 41-year-old 'How I Met Your Mother' star is making his debut as a host at the 87th Oscar Awards on 22 February.

The actor spoke about anchoring the award ceremony in an op-ed piece for *The New York Times Magazine*.

"I'll admit that I'm nervous to host, but it's much less pressure than being a nominee.

"Your heart's pounding and you have 15 names that you pray to God you don't forget — and your name's not called," Harris

said. The Emmy-winning actor said even winning at times is stressful. "Or, even stranger, your name is called, and you're blinded by adrenaline and panic. That's much more nerve-racking to me than going out and saying, 'Our next two presenters are the stars of this movie, please welcome Brad and Angelina,'" he wrote.—*PTI*

Pierce Brosnan's home damaged in fire



Pierce Brosnan

NEW YORK, 13 Feb — A portion of Pierce Brosnan's home in Malibu has been damaged in a fire. According to KABC, the local ABC affiliate, about 50 Los Angeles County firefighters responded to the blaze, which broke out around 9:48 pm on Wednesday in the former James Bond actor's garage.

No one was injured in the fire. A distressed-looking Brosnan was pictured outside the house, which he shares with wife Keely Shaye Smith. The fire was controlled before it spread to the main part of the house.—*PTI*

Ben Affleck, Jessica Chastain, Viola Davis among Oscar presenters

LOS ANGELES, 13 Feb — Hollywood stars Ben Affleck, Jessica Chastain, Viola Davis, Kevin Hart, Shirley MacLaine, Chris Pine, Miles Teller and Naomi Watts will be presenters at this year's Oscars.

The Academy awards, hosted by Neil Patrick Harris, will take place on 22 February.

Affleck, a two-time Academy Award winner, received an Original Screenplay Oscar for 'Good Will Hunting' and a Best Picture Oscar for 'Argo'. His most recent role was opposite Rosamund Pike in 'Gone Girl'.

Chastain has received two Oscar nominations, one for Best



Hollywood stars Ben Affleck, Jessica Chastain, Viola Davis, Kevin Hart, Shirley MacLaine, Chris Pine, Miles Teller and Naomi Watts will be presenters at this year's Oscars.—PTI

actress for 'Zero Dark Thirty' and another in the supporting ac-

tress category for 'The Help'.

Davis has been nominated

for two Oscars, one for her supporting role in 'Doubt' and one for her leading role in 'The Help'.

Hart currently stars in the feature comedy 'The Wedding Ringer'.

MacLaine won an Oscar for her role in 'Terms of Endearment'.

Pine most recently appeared as Cinderella's Prince in 'Into the Woods' (2014).

Teller stars in the current Best Picture nominee 'Whiplash'.

Watts has twice been nominated for Actress in a Leading Role, for 'The Impossible' and '21 Grams'. — *PTI*

Whitney Houston's family pays tribute on third death anniversary

LOS ANGELES, 13 Feb — Members of Whitney Houston's family post tributes to the singer-actress on her third death anniversary.

As Houston's daughter, Bobbi Kristina Brown, remains hospitalised, the family has been praying for her but in the meantime they have taken a moment to honour their late relative, reported E!Online.

Tina Brown, Houston's sister-in-law, posted on Facebook a message about the Grammy winner.

"I miss you MY sister... Rip... I miss you sis, like crazy!"

she posted, adding she is "feeling heartbroken" in the status. She also included several photos of Houston.

Kristina's cousin, Jerod Brown, posted a lengthy message in honour of the 'My Love Is Your Love' singer and included the last photo he ever took with his aunt.

"You will never know the last moment you will experience, the last conversation you will have, the last photo you will take. Well this was the last photo we took with you auntie and if I would have known that I would've taken a few

more," he wrote.

"In life we forget to take a few more photos, share a few more laughs, shed a few more tears, overcome a few more struggles, mentor a few more people," he added.

Shayne Brown, Houston's nephew, wrote about his restlessness in anticipation of the tragic anniversary.

"Interview at 6 am but unfortunately I can't sleep way 2 much on my mind," he wrote. "So room service it is..." Houston died on 11 February, 2012, at the age of 48.

PTI



Lady Gaga to perform at Oscars

LOS ANGELES, 13 Feb — Pop sensation Lady Gaga has joined the lineup of stars performing at the Oscars.

Gaga, 28, will make a special tribute performance at the 87th Oscars, said show producers Craig Zadan and Neil Meron.

"Lady Gaga is a once in a lifetime artist who's musical evolution keeps growing. We are proud to have her perform on the Oscars for the very first time," Zadan and Meron said in a statement.

Producers have earlier announced singers Jack Black, Anna Kendrick, and Jennifer Hudson will participate in the ceremony.

Multiple Grammy-winning singer Gaga has so far sold over 27 million albums, 130 million singles, and over 4 million tickets globally to her award-winning live performances.—*PTI*



GENERAL

Icebreaker planning to tow Australian vessel from Antarctic ice

WELLINGTON, 13 Feb — A United States Coast Guard vessel is expected to reach an Australian fishing boat trapped in Antarctic ice early on Saturday, New Zealand's maritime rescue service said on Friday.

The Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ), which is organizing the rescue, said the skipper of icebreaker *CG Polar Star* had indicated he intended to tow the fishing vessel into open waters, if conditions permitted.

The 63-metre *Antarctic Chieftain* became trapped on Wednesday after damaging three of the four blades of its propeller.

RCCNZ Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator Greg Johnston said in a statement that the damage prevented the vessel from

returning to the open sea without assistance.

The vessel had a crew of 26 aboard, 13 of them New Zealanders. The New Zealand-flagged fishing boat, *Janas*, was also heading to the area to provide assistance if required.

The *Janas* was around 730 nautical miles (1,350 km) to the northwest and expected to reach the area early Sunday.

Weather conditions for all three vessels continued to be favorable, said Johnston. The *Antarctic Chieftain* was located at the eastern edge of New Zealand's search and rescue region, approximately 900 nautical miles (1,700 km) from McMurdo Sound.

The boat's hull was not damaged, and there had been no spill of oil from the vessel. —Xinhua

11 under quarantine after showing MERS-CoV symptoms in Philippines

MANILA, 13 Feb — The Philippine government said on Friday that 11 of 56 people who have close contacts of the nurse who tested positive for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome-Corona Virus (MERS-CoV) have manifested symptoms of the disease.

They are undergoing quarantine at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), according to the Department of Health (DoH).

The 11 individuals include the nurse's husband, who came home with her via Saudi Airlines Flight SV860 on 1 February.

The rest are health workers at the Evangelista Medical Specialty Hospital in San Pedro, Laguna where she first sought medical consultation on 2 February.

The nurse's mother-in-law and house helpers are also undergoing quarantine at RITM although they showed no symptoms at the moment, Sadie Janette Garin, DoH acting secretary, said in the press briefing.

"All 56 people yielded a negative result in the first round of tests using nose and throat swab samples. However, the 11 symptomatic patients will undergo another round of tests using sputum and rectal swab samples," she said.

Garin clarified that the nurse had 220 co-passengers on the flight she took. Ninety two of them have been located and agreed to be tested.

The government continued to call on the remaining passengers to contact DoH to be tested for the virus. —Xinhua

Even with Turkish Stream, Russia can't avoid sending gas via Ukraine



Gas pipes bearing the flag of Russia lie on the ground near the Serbian village of Sajkas, north of Belgrade, where Serbia ceremonially launched its leg of Russia's South Stream pipeline before the project was cancelled, on 10 Dec, 2014. — REUTERS

BRUSSELS/ESSEN/MOSCOW, 13 Feb — Russia's plan to cut out Ukraine as a

gas transit route is unrealistic because the EU will seek non-Russian gas rather than

build the links it would need to Moscow's proposed new pipeline to Turkey, industry sources and analysts say.

Last year, as violence flared in eastern Ukraine and Moscow faced new sanctions, President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia had axed the South Stream gas pipeline across the Black Sea to Bulgaria, designed to bypass Ukraine and ship gas straight to the European Union.

Russia's Gazprom has also said the EU will not receive any deliveries of gas via Ukraine after a current transit contract expires at the end of 2019. Instead of

the 63 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas that Europe was to receive via South Stream, Russia has proposed a new undersea pipeline to Turkey with the same capacity. Known informally as Turkish Stream, its first line of 15.75 bcm a year should be operational by 2017 and supply just Turkey.

Gazprom suggested the European Union should build its own link from an as-yet unbuilt gas hub at the Turkish-Greek border to take some 50 bcm from the new route proposed by Putin — an idea greeted with scepticism in Brussels.

Reuters

Rio governor relaxed over 2016 sailing sewage target

RIO DE JANEIRO, 13 Feb — The governor of Rio de Janeiro has said he will not be "frustrated" if the city fails to meet its clean-up target for the bay where Olympic sailing events will take place in time for 2016 Games.

Rio vowed to reduce the amount of raw sewage pumped into the picturesque Guanabara Bay by 80 percent, but Luiz Pezao said that goal may not be achieved by the time the Games kick off in August next year.

"Of course I want it to be ready for the Olympics but what I want is a legacy for the population," Pezao said at an event on Thursday. "I won't be frustrated (if we

don't attain it)," he said of the 80 percent goal.

Pezao said the amount of sewage treated before being dumped into the bay had increased from 17 percent to 49 percent and that local authorities were working to reach the target figure. The state's leading environmental official, however, said last month that Rio will be unable to keep its promise.

The clean-up of Guanabara Bay was a key part of Rio's bid and has long been a goal of various local governments.

Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been spent but the waters remain polluted. Olympic sailors, who visited the city for test



Governor of Rio de Janeiro state Luiz Fernando Pezao climbs into a car as he leaves Planalto Palace after a meeting with Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff in Brasilia on 28 Jan, 2015. —REUTERS

events, complained of floating sofas and animal carcasses in the water, described as a "sewer". Biologists last year said rivers leading into

the bay contained a bacteria, resistant to antibiotics, that can cause urinary, gastrointestinal and pulmonary infections. —Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(14-2-2015 07:00 am~ 15-2-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|--|--|
| * Local News | * U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-I) |
| * The Exhibition Hall of The Great Chronicle of Buddha | * World News |
| * World News | * Myanmar Masterclass: Performance Art |
| * A Monk's Robe | * Local News |
| * Local News | * A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-2) |
| * Lantern Floating Festival in Kyauk Kyi Township | * World News |
| * World News | * General Aung San Museum |
| * Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi" | * Local News |
| * Local News | * Snow Flakes...Scenic Confluence...To Kachin State |
| * Pet Fish Biz | * World News |
| * World News | * Great Minds of Myanmar |
| * Pride of Myanmar - Bagan arts and handicrafts | * Local News |
| * Local News | * Myanmar Wedding Dress |
| * Pa O in the Union | * World News |
| * World News | * Kyaukhteyyoe: My Father The Porter |
| * In the Studio "Zaw Lin Oo" | * Local News |
| * Local News | * The Long-Lasting Royal Tradition |
| * Food Trip | * World News |
| * World News | * Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Ma Myint Zu" |
| * Today Myanmar "Fast-food Franchise: Lotteria" | |
| * Local News | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(14-2-2015, Saturday)

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 6:00 am | 7:45 am |
| • Honour Song for Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein | • Dramatic Arts |
| 6:20 am | 9:10 am |
| • Teleplay | • Pyi Thu Ni Ti |
| 7:00 am | 9:25 am |
| • Fashion Show Music | • Musical Programme |
| 7:30 am | 9:45 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Myanmar Video |
| | 12:00 noon |
| | • Close Down |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(14-2-2015, Saturday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 1:35 pm |
| • Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw | • Round up of the week's Hluttaw News |
| 6:45 am | 2:10 pm |
| • Documentary | • Pyi Thu Ni Ti |
| 7:30 am | 3:00 pm |
| • Head Line News | • News |
| 7:35 am | 4:35 pm |
| • Hyper Sports | • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — First Year (Economic) |
| 8:00 am | 5:35 pm |
| • News/ International News | • Amazing World |
| 8:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • People's Talks | • MRTV's Youth Programme |
| 9:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • MRTV's Youth Programme | • News |
| 10:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • Science and Technology Programme | • Business News |
| 11:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| • Current Affairs | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:00 noon | 9:00 pm |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | • News |
| 12:35 pm | • Cultural Show (Part-4) |
| • Round up of the week's TV News | • Gitadagale Phwintbarohn |

Chelsea and Everton charged for mass scuffle

LONDON, 13 Feb — Chelsea and Everton have been charged by the FA after Wednesday's stormy Premier League encounter but Branislav Ivanovic will face no action for his clash with James McCarthy.

"Both Chelsea and Everton have been charged by the FA for failing to ensure their players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion and/or refrained from provocative behaviour," the governing body said in a statement on Thursday. Tempers flared in the 86th minute of Chelsea's 1-0 victory at Stamford Bridge as players from both teams confronted each other and Chelsea defender Ivanovic went unpunished after grabbing Everton midfielder McCarthy in an unseemly tussle.

Serb Ivanovic will face no action, however, after the FA said a three-member panel that reviewed the



Branislav Ivanovic (L) of Chelsea grapples with Everton's James McCarthy during their English Premier League soccer match at Stamford Bridge, London, on 11 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

incident did not agree it was a sending-off offence.

Chelsea, who are seven points clear at the top of the table, have been with-

out striker Diego Costa for the last three matches after he was banned for stamping. Manager Jose Mourinho was also recently fined

by the FA for suggesting there was a "campaign" to influence referees' decisions against his team.

Reuters

Coentrao joins long list of Real Madrid injured

MADRID, 13 Feb — Real Madrid had mixed news on the injury front on Thursday, with centre back Pepe returning to training

but fullback Fabio Coentrao joining a lengthy list of sidelined players.

Coentrao, like Pepe a Portugal international, had

picked up a calf muscle injury, Real said on their website.

The La Liga leaders and European champi-

ons did not say how long he would be out of action but local media reported he would not be available again for at least a week and a half. Real are already missing midfielders James Rodriguez, Luka Modric and Sami Khedira as well as Pepe's usual partner in the centre of defence Sergio Ramos. Carlo Ancelotti's side, a point clear of second-placed Barcelona at the top of La Liga, will look to bounce back from last weekend's 4-0 drubbing at champions Atletico Madrid when they host promoted Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday.

Reuters



Fabio Coentrao (L) fights for the ball with Giacomo Bonaventura during their friendly soccer match in Dubai on 30 Dec, 2014. REUTERS

Hazard signs new long-term Chelsea contract

LONDON, 13 Feb — Belgium forward Eden Hazard has signed a new five-and-a-half year contract with Chelsea, the Premier League leaders said on Thursday.

"I am very happy to sign a new contract with Chelsea," Hazard, who has been in dazzling form this season with 13 goals in 36 matches, told Chelsea's website (www.chelseafc.com).

"I always try to give pleasure to the supporters with my style of play and it is nice to know they appreciate my work."

Hazard was voted Chelsea's Player of the Year last season despite some criticism from manager Jose Mourinho who described him as not a team player.

But Mourinho believes Hazard has evolved into one of the world's best attacking talents and there is more to come. "He is already a top player and his evolution has been fantastic. He is still very young and he can become the best," Mourinho said. "I am very happy that Eden has signed a new contract. It shows he believes in the

club's coaching staff and players to help him be-

come the best player in the world."— Reuters



Eden Hazard of Chelsea celebrates scoring against Aston Villa during their English Premier League soccer match at Villa Park, Birmingham on 7 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Hodgson hints Kane and Ings are set for England call-up

LONDON, 13 Feb — Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane and Burnley's Danny Ings are set to be called up by England for the first time when manager Roy Hodgson names his squad next month for internationals against Lithuania and Italy.

Hodgson, holding a media briefing on Thursday, was full of praise for both players, who have impressed him with a series of outstanding performances for their clubs, and gave the strongest indication that they would be called up.

Kane, 21, has scored 23 goals for Spurs in all competitions while Ings, 22, has hit nine for Burnley, who are battling relegation from the Premier League.

He scored 26 goals for Burnley in the league and cup last season when they won promotion from the second tier.

Hodgson, looking ahead to the 27 March Euro

Hodgson has been aware of Kane's qualities for some time as he has played 10 times for England's Under-21s over the last two seasons.

Yet the manager admitted he has come a long way in that time. "Eighteen months ago Harry was not a starter in the Under-21s," he said. "He came on and he scored if I remember correctly, but there is no doubt he has moved on enormously since then." He also said that Ings, who has played seven times and scored four goals for the Under-21s, had impressed him this season. "We have the best of both worlds," the manager said. "Sometimes we have had to split centre forwards... this one is the target and that one isn't much of a target but does run behind the defenders."

"But with Harry and Danny you've got the best of both — both can do



Harry Kane of Tottenham Hotspur celebrates at the final whistle after defeating Arsenal in their English Premier League soccer match at White Hart Lane, London on 7 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

2016 qualifying tie with Lithuania at Wembley and a friendly with Italy in Turin four days later, also said he had no plans to employ captain Wayne Rooney in the central midfield role he has been playing for Manchester United. Describing Kane's impact, Hodgson said: "Playing games is important and if you can be a star in a top team like Tottenham at the age of 21 you are doing pretty well — Harry's only problem now is to keep that going for the next 13 years."

"The question might be 'is he worthy of a place ahead of Wayne Rooney, Danny Welbeck or Daniel Sturridge?' "Well that is something he will have to prove, and unless I give him a chance in the squad we will never know."

both jobs." Although they may get their chances next month, Rooney, now England's third highest scorer with 46 goals, remains Hodgson's first choice in attack even though he has been playing for United in midfield for much of this season. Asked if Rooney would play in a deeper role for England, Hodgson replied: "We will only use him in the position that suits the England team best and I don't know that that would be centre midfield. "He has been playing there for Manchester United because they think that's where he does his best job for them... but I don't think that would be his best position for us and I don't have any immediate plans to be play him there," he said.—Reuters