

President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Serbian President, PM

NAY PYI TAW, 15 Feb—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Tomislav Nikolic, President of the Republic of Serbia and His Excellency Mr Aleksandar Vucic, Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Serbia, which falls on 15 February 2015.

MNA

Commander-in-Chief meets Myanmar Press Council (Interim)

NAY PYI TAW, 14 Feb—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met members of Myanmar Press Council (Interim) here on Saturday.

The third meeting focused on explanation about prevailing clashes between government troops and Kokang renegade groups in Laukkai, eastern Shan State.

The Senior General said that investigations in 2009 found that Kokang renegade groups were manufacturing illegal drugs and



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing highlights clashes between government troops and Kokang renegade groups in Laukkai in meeting with members of Myanmar Press Council (Interim).—MYAWADY

Student protesters can now retrace their steps home as their demands having been met

YANGON, 14 Feb—A coordination meeting took place here on Saturday to discuss action plans relating to the outcomes of

four-party talks held on 11 February on the amendment of the National Education Law, officials said.

The first session of

the meeting focused on the amendment, addition and repeal to individual sections of the law, with discussion groups being the

Ministry of Education, the Education Promotion and Implementation Committee, the National Network for Education Reform and

the Leading Committee for Democratic Education Movement.

Prof Dr Aung Tun Thet, moderator, urged all the sides to show understanding in negotiations, saying that the enthusiasm of the youths, the maturity of the adults and the exper-

tise of the specialists, when combined, will ensure a better future.

Discussions on the amendment will continue, following an agreement on the draft, he said.

Dr Kyaw Thu, who was also a moderator, (See page 3)

Traditional papier mâché cow toys seen as last hope for saving a traditional Myanmar folk art

By Aye Min Soe

BAGO, 14 Feb—While demand for some traditional animal papier mâché toys is falling fast,

papier mâché cows are still handily beating out imported plastic toys and stuffed animals at pagoda festivals.

“As long as farmers

and children exist in Myanmar, our cow toys can dominate other imported toys,” says U Kyin Soe, a papier mâché toy maker, “because farmers use

oxen and cows and their children are familiar with them.”

He learnt the art of making papier mâché toys (See page 8)

International Monetary Fund trims Myanmar growth outlook

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 14 Feb—The International Monetary Fund revised its projection for Myanmar’s real economic growth that was forecast at the October annual meeting at 8.5 percent in 2014 to a decelerated 7.8 percent this fiscal year from 8.3 percent in previous fiscal year.

The revision is due to slower growth in the agricultural sector, said Yang Yongzheng who led a recent IMF team’s visit to Myanmar from 28 January to 5 February, in a statement released on Wednesday on conclusion of a nine-day mission to the country.

The IMF also warned of inflation which is forecast to pick up to around 6 percent year-on-year in 2014-2015 FY, up from 5.8 percent in 2013-2014 FY.

It also pointed out the

country’s net international reserves fell to \$4.5 billion at end-December due to an increase in the trade deficit to 5.5 percent of GDP caused by a 25% rise in imports in April-December while export growth was flat.

The country’s economic outlook is “favourable” over the medium term, but there has been a noticeable increase in downside risks for near term, Yang warned in the statement, noting fiscal risks that are likely to result from spending pressures, including a potential large increase in public-sector wages that will lead to a rise in inflation expectations.

“The external current account deficit could widen further, and shortfalls in foreign direct investments and other capital inflows could result in slower reserve accumulation,” Yang added.

(See page 3)



A child plays with cow toys.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar Maritime University to conduct master's degree courses as of next year



Union Minister U Nyan Tun Aung confers degree on a graduate student at convocation of Myanmar Maritime University.—MNA

YANGON, 14 Feb — Myanmar Maritime University (MMU) will conduct master's degree courses as of the next year, Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung Saturday said at the 9th convocation of the university. The main commitment

of the MMU, which is under the Ministry of Transport, is to develop human resources by producing qualified naval architects, ocean engineers, marine engineers, marine electrical systems and electronic engineers, port and harbour engineers, river and coastal engineers and navigation officers, according to the ministry.

At the convocation, held in conjunction with a ceremony to award outstanding students, the MMU conferred bachelor degrees and diplomas on about 500 students, an official said.

Since its establishment in 2002, Myanmar Maritime University, the premier university of maritime education in Myanmar, has offered only bachelor's and post-graduate diploma courses.

In his speech on the occasion, U Nyan Tun Aung said, "Under the ministry's strategic transport development policy, relentless effort are being made for air and marine sector development to comply with the rules set by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)." —GNLM

Union FM sends message of felicitations to Serbian counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 15 Feb — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Ivica Dacic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Serbia, which falls on 15 February 2015.—MNA

Central Organizing Committee for Myanmar War Veterans Organization

Announcement No. (1/2015)
14 February, 2015

1. Kokang renegade groups headed by Phon Kya Shin mounted attacks on a military headquarters, a local self-administration office, a prison, a police outpost and an army base in Laukkai as of 8 February 2015. We feel terribly sad to hear from the mass media that the government troops suffered losses from heavy fighting in an attempt to protect the lives and property of the people and safeguard the interests of the country and that the attacks destabilized the region of Laukkai.

2. We are always respectful to and proud of members of the armed forces and their families who have risked life and limb in justified warfare to defend the sovereignty and integrity of the country. We seriously condemn the act of Phon Kya Shin-led Kokang renegade groups as a threat to the stability, peace, sovereignty and integrity of the country.

3. We, the Central Organizing Committee for Myanmar War Veterans Organization, hereby declare our whole-hearted support to the government troops who are engaged in justified warfare and pledge our combat readiness hand in hand with the Tatmadaw.

Central Organizing Committee for Myanmar War Veterans Organization

Government troops seize bodies, weapons from Kokang renegade groups

NAY PYI TAW, 14 Feb — Government troops clashed with Kokang renegade groups Saturday in Laukkai while combing the area to restore stability of the region.

The two sides exchanged gunfire in the morning when the military forces tried to enforce security in the area that has been infiltrated by Kokang renegade groups.

After the fights ended at around 7 p.m. the military could seize 98 small weapons, ammunition and 13 bodies of the armed group, with the eight were arrested in

serious injuries.

Government forces are still taking security measures in Laukkai and nearby areas.

Myawady

National Sports Festival continues for second day

NAY PYI TAW, 14 Feb — The 4th National Sports Festival 2015 continued for the second day at designated sports venues.

Men's 200-m 5-oar event and men's 10-oar events were held at Ngalaik Dam.

Thiha Aung (Yangon) secured first prize in men's 200-m freestyle event, Shoon le Maw Oo (Yangon), first in women's 200-m freestyle event while Yangon stood first in men's/women's freestyle event.

The international and Myanmar traditional chess tournaments were held at Wunna Theikdi Social Zone.

Cyclists participated in the record setting contest on the track outside Wunna Theikdi Stadium.

Tennis event took place at Wunna Theikdi tennis court, badminton at Wunna Theikdi gymnasium-C, Cricket at the training grounds of Wunna Theikdi, golf at City Golf Court, and Taolu event of Wushu at Wunna Theikdi Gymnasium-A.

MNA



A map shows clash between Tatmadaw and renegade troops of Kokang in Laukkai Region.—MYAWADY

Lanmadaw BEHS No 1 gets new building

YANGON, 14 Feb—A school building identified Thanlwin was opened at Basic Education High School No 1 in Lanmadaw Township, here, on Saturday.

Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Dr Tin Shwe and officials unveiled the stone plaque of new school building.

Chairman of Shwetaung Group U Aik Tun explained donation for construction of the school building. Wellwishers do-



nated note books and cash to the school through the headmistress.

Shwetaung Group

has donated over K20 billion for construction of 83 schools and four hospitals.—MNA

Medal tally in 4 th National Sports Festival 2015 on 14-2-2015				
State/Region	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Yangon	29	19	12	60
Mandalay	13	14	13	40
Rakhine	4	3	4	11
Shan	2	3	5	10
Bago	2	3	3	8
Kayah	2	-	2	4
Ayeyawady	1	3	2	6
Kachin	1	3	-	4
Mon	1	2	3	6
Magway	1	2	2	5
Kayin	1	-	2	3
Taninthayi	-	3	4	7
Sagaing	-	1	1	2
Nay Pyi Taw	-	1	1	2
Chin	-	-	-	-

NATIONAL

Commander-in-Chief meets...

(from page 1)

weapons in their area; however, Kokang leaders denied the reports; they still refuted photo evidences of weapon factory and attacked and arrested police members who were dispatched for investigation.

The government troops seized heavy weapons and ammunition during their offensive which lead 14 police members to be killed by Phon Kya Shin group before running away to neighbouring country.

In 2013, he then recruited forces of the same ethnicity to be able to control Laukkai and to topple self-administered government and take power with the help of some ethnic

armed groups.

On February 9, they robbed eight weapons from militia from Taukshwe village, turning into clashes with government troops.

The Commander-in-Chief also said that the 12th ACDFIM forum in Malaysia from February 9 to 11 agreed to foster co-operation of military forces among ASEAN countries.

He then answered queries of vice chairman and members of MPC.

Journalists from local media organizations—Sky Net, Tomorrow, 7Day, Messenger, Yangon Times and Eleven Media—met the Commander-in-Chief separately.

Myawady

Myanmar, Singapore focus on bilateral aviation services

NAY PYI TAW, 14 Feb—Deputy Minister for Transport U Zin Yaw and party during their trip to Singapore met Singaporean Minister of Transport Mr Lui Tuck Yew on 10 February and discussed reform process of Myanmar's Ministry of Transport, corporatization of its business organization based on own finance, bilateral aviation services and construction of Hanthawady International Airport.

Deputy Minister of Transport Mrs Josephine Teo of Singapore hosted a luncheon to Deputy Minister U Zin Yaw and

hold talks on extension of bilateral flights, flying of Myanmar National Airlines to Singapore, cooperation with Changi Airport Group of Singapore in Hanthawady International Airport, implementation of ASEAN region aviation agreements and ASEAN-China aviation agreements.

The deputy minister visited Singapore Aviation Academy, Changi International Airport, ATR Training Centre and Boeing Training Centre. On 11 February, the deputy minister arrived back from Singapore.—MNA

International Monetary Fund...

(from page 1)

The IMF mission chief stressed the need to prioritize spending and increase

tax revenues that are vital for the containment of next year's budget within the targeted 5 percent of GDP



Student protesters can now...

(from page 1)

called for the continuation of talks as agreed.

The second session started in the afternoon, with Union Minister U Hla Tun saying that the draft law as agreed in the first session met the students'

demands phase by phase.

"Since their demands have been fulfilled, student protesters can now retrace their steps home by cuddling the victory," he said.

The national education bill will quickly be submitted to the parlia-

A four-party talk among representatives of government, MP, NNER and students in progress.—MNA

ment for approval, he said, adding that the discussion groups issued a joint statement.

Respective working groups will continue to discuss to finalize the bill

at Yangon University on 15 February.

Among the participants were Union Ministers U Hla Tun, Daw Khin San Yi and Dr Ko Ko Oo.

MNA

Four-party talks agree to finalize bill amending national education law

YANGON, 14 Feb—Four-party talks on amendment of bill amending National Education Law agreed on Saturday to finalize the bill, according to the joint statement.

The meeting held at Yangon Region Hluttaw Building at 9:30 a.m. and the agreement includes the Amendment of the Bill will be submitted to Hluttaw af-

ter it has been finalized on Sunday.

After a marathon discussion for nearly nine hours, government officials, members of National Network for Education Reform, parliamentarians and Leading Committee for Democratic Education Movement made the agreement based on 11 points discussed on Wednesday.—MNA



deficit, highlighting the importance of broadening the tax base, improving tax compliance and minimizing exemptions to mitigate the risk of the large proposed increased in pub-

lic-sector wages that could reduce spending in health, education, and infrastructure "absolutely" needed to boost the country's growth potential.

He noted that fiscal decentralization should refrain from more fund allotments to region/state governments without a corresponding devolution of responsibilities, also highlighting the importance of strengthened natural resources revenue management.

The IMF in the statement welcomed the coun-

try's introduction of treasury securities auctions last month, describing it as a move to establish a non-inflationary alternative to the CBM deficit financing and helping develop the financial market.

It noted that maintaining a flexible exchange rate is critical for Myanmar to absorb external shocks and build up its international reserve buffer, urging state-owned banks to take part in the auctions and interbank trading.

The Fund acknowledged the progress modernizing the financial sector and strengthening supervision and stressed the need of implementing modernized regulations given the expected entry of foreign banks.

"The CBM should employ measures that

would prevent excessive flows and implement rules on foreign exchange lending that avoid excessive risk-taking. The issuance of new domestic licenses for policy banks should be carefully controlled to minimize risks," it added.

During their mission to Myanmar, the IMF staff met with Union Minister at the President's Office U Soe Thane, Central Bank of Myanmar Governor U Kyaw Kyaw Maung, Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw, Deputy Minister for Finance Dr Maung Maung Thein, as well as other senior officials, parliamentarians, and representatives from the private sector, according to the statement.

GNLM



Photo of a view of downtown Yangon showing high-rise buildings and Independence Monument.

PHOTO: YE MYINT

Rice offering marks centenary of General Aung San

MANDALAY, 14 Feb—In commemoration of the centenary of General Aung San, a ceremony to offer meals to 1,500 members of the Sangha was held in front of the organizing committee office in Mandalay on 13 February.

Moreover, officials of the organizing committee donated meals to 10 venerable Buddhist monks at U Hla Thein Beikman.

“The commemorative celebrations will continue till 15 February. The photos, paintings, sculptures and historical documents are being displayed at the Beikman from 10 to 15 February,” member of the organizing committee U Shwe Htoo told media. The



centenary organizing committee has plans to hold the commemorative celebra-

tions on the significant days related to General Aung San and distribute pamphlets to

the people in 2015.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Zi Village becomes electrified village in Natogyi Township

NATOGYI, 14 Feb—According to the whole township electrification project, a ceremony to launch supply of electricity was held in Zi Village, 35th of its kinds in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region, on 8 February.

Union Minister for

Transport U Nyan Tun Aung switched on the power control to electrify the village.

The union minister, Township Administrator U Kyaw Naing and Township Electrical Engineer U Ye Htet Hein cut the ribbon to launch the electrification

for over 200 households in the village round the clock.

Thanks to the union minister, a total of 35 villages are enjoying electricity round the clock, the township electrical engineer told media.—*Khin Zar Mon Myint (Law)*



Petrified Wood Park opens for public observation

MYINGYAN, 14 Feb—Managing Director U Htay Aung of No 3 Mining Enterprise under the Ministry of Mines visited the petrified wood park of Tree Jade Company in Natogyi, Mandalay Region, on 11 February.

He was pleased for observing invaluable petrified woods at

a single place and he welcomed arrangements of the park for public observation, the managing director told media. He viewed four trunks of petrified woods, 100 pieces of rare petrified woods and production of finished goods made of petrified woods.

Khin Zar Mon Myint (Law)

28 townships to recruit new assistant surgeons, dentists in Mandalay Region

MANDALAY, 14 Feb — Examinations were held for picking out assistant surgeons and dentists to be appointed at vacancies of hospitals in 28 townships in Mandalay Region.

A total of 768 candidates applied for 56 vacancies of assistant surgeons and six dentists. As of 7 February, they joined the

interviews at the Mandalay Region Health Department, said an official.

A total of 655 candidates applied for 56 posts of assistant surgeons and 113 for six dentist posts. Authorities are making arrangements to appoint qualified ones in the vacancies as much as possible.—*Aung Ye Thwin*

Athletes of Myawady District to represent Kayin State in Sepak Takraw, tennis in NSF

MYAWADY, 14 Feb — A Sepak Takraw and ground tennis teams representing Kayin State will take part in the National Sports Festival from 13 to 28 February in sports grounds and gymnasiums in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the office of Myawady District General Administration Department, deputy commissioner U Lwin Ko Oo gave words of encouragement to athletes, managers and coaches.

A total of 15 teams from re-

gions and states including Nay Pyi Taw Council Area will take part in 27 sports events of festival. The sports contingent from Kayin State will participate in over 20 sports events.

Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

Staff to get apartments at housings in Natogyi Township

NATOGYI, 14 Feb — Arnt Min and Myintmo construction companies are building two three-storey staff quarters in Natogyi Township under the a five-month assignment of Department of Human Settlement and Hous-

ing Development.

A 102 feet long and 25 feet wide three-storey staff quarter is under construction in the compound of Public Works beside Myingyan-Mandalay Road in Ward 8, Natogyi,

Mandalay Region.

Both companies have to complete construction of the staff quarters within five months, an official of Arnt Min Construction Company told media.

Htay Myint Maung



LOCAL NEWS

MYANAUNG, 13 Feb— In commemoration of the centennial birthday of General Aung San, people of Myanaung Township honoured the national leader by unveiling the general's bronze statue near Koetaungpyae Pagoda on Yonpwe Street in Myanaung, Ayeyawady Region, on 13 February.

Township Administrator U Min Min Tun unveiled the General's bronze statue.

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

Win Bo (Township IPRD)

Myanaung unveils bronze statue of General Aung San on centennial birthday



Mandalarians mark Myanmar Children's Day

MANDALAY, 14 Feb — A ceremony to mark the Myanmar Children's Day was held at the hall of No 16 Basic Education High School in Mandalay on 13 February.

Students sang a song entitled, "Martyr Aung San".

Mandalay District's deputy commissioner U Win Zaw Naing made a speech and presented prizes to winners in the high and middle school level essay and poem recitation contests and traditional sports events.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



Faculty members of Mdy medical universities hold talks with delegates of Nagoya University

MANDALAY, 14 Feb— Professor Sakabibara, Director of Nagoya University in Japan and party paid a visit to Mandalay University of Medicine on 30th street in Mandalay on 11 February.

They met with officials of the university in holding a discussion that focused on exchange of learning medical education between the medical universities of two countries.

Rector of the university Rector Professor Dr Tin Maung Han explained the history of the university and academic matters.

Rector Professor Dr Tin Maung Han, Acting

Rector Prof Dr Thida of Mandalay University of Nursing and faculty mem-

bers held talks with director Professor Sakabibara and party on coopera-

tion in medical academic matters.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Rural lake under maintenance to irrigate farmlands

NATOGYI, 14 Feb—Water is one of the main resources for growing various crops. Only then will sufficiency of water contribute towards high yield of crops.

Natogyi Township Irri-

gation Department is maintaining Leduta Lake near Padaung Village under the arrangement of Mandalay Region Government.

Gadaykyaw Company is upgrading the lake to be

a 2,500 feet long and 14 feet wide with the use of heavy machinery. It can irrigate 25 acres of farmlands, an official of Township Irrigation Department told media.

Mandalay Region Government has spent over K600 million on repairing 25 rural lakes in 2014-15 fiscal year in Natogyi Township.—*Khin Zar Mon Myint (Law)*

MGH admits over 55,000 patients in 2014

MANDALAY, 14 Feb— According to the statistics, Mandalay General Hospital admitted over 50,000 patients in 2014.

Due to allotment of larger amount of health budget by the government as of 2013, the hospital could install modern hospital and medical equipment so as to provide health care services to the patients, medical superintendent Dr U Win told reporters.

"As of 2013, the hos-

pital has been giving free surgical operations and test to any patient at the emergency unit. Health staff are giving health care facilities to patients," he added.

The number of patients in 2014 is the largest during five years from 2010 to 2015. The hospital admitted 38,526 patients in 2010, 41,758 patients in 2011, 47,084 in 2012, 52,776 patients in 2013 and 55,099 in 2014.—*Aung Ye Thwin*



IPRD gives public digital library service to passengers at railway station

MYANAUNG, 14 Feb — Under the arrangement of Information and Public Relations Department, a public digital library service machine was installed at Myanaung railway station in Ayeyawady Region on 12 February.

The station gives free WiFi service to the passengers at its yard to read various books by downloading the files.—*Win Bo (IPRD)*

Abe visits tsunami-hit Iwate, Miyagi, says rebuilding at new stage

KESENNUMA, (Japan), 14 Feb — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday visited Ofunato in Iwate Prefecture and Kesennuma in Miyagi Prefecture, both of which were hit hard by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and said he feels rebuilding efforts are shifting to a “new stage.”

The trip to the northeastern Japan region ravaged by the natural disaster was Abe’s first since last October and is meant to demonstrate his desire to expedite reconstruction work ahead of the fourth anniversary of the deadly earthquake and tsunami on 11 March.

“I felt firsthand that rebuilding was finally moving to a new stage,” Abe told reporters after inspecting in the port city of Kesennuma a garment manufacturer founded after the disaster and a public housing facility that had just begun accepting people displaced by the tsunami.

Abe suggested that the government will focus on helping job creation and assisting efforts to provide mental health care to those affected by the disaster.

In Ofunato earlier in the day, the prime minister inspected a marine product processing company and a fish market.—Kyodo News

Survivors of WWII Manila battle seek apology from Japan

MANILA, 14 Feb — Survivors and descendants of the victims of a major battle in Manila during World War II pressed Japan on Saturday to apologize for atrocities committed by Japanese forces that left tens of thousands dead.

Juan Jose Rocha, head of Memorare Manila 1945 Foundation, a group of Battle of Manila survivors and descendants of noncombatant victims, said during a memorial ceremony that an apology by Japan “is long overdue.”

“The purpose of our group is not to recriminate, nor to seek compensation, but just to commemorate and request Japan to recognize what they did here,” Rocha said at the ceremony held in front of a monument erected by his group 20 years ago in memory of the 100,000 civilians who died during the battle in Manila that lasted from 3 February to 3 March, 1945.

Rocha said around 70,000 of the civilians who died were “victims of heinous crimes or massacres” perpetrated by the Japanese forces, while the remaining 30,000 died in crossfire between US-led Allied and Japanese forces. The battle ended almost three years of Japanese military occupation of the Philippines.

Rocha, who was 7 years old at the time, said among the noncombatant victims were his mother and 13 other relatives.

“The war is over. We are close friends now with Japan, as we should be. But history is history,” Rocha

said.

“We ask Japan, please stop trying to rewrite history. Come to terms with your past,” he said.

In his remarks during the ceremony, Kazuya Asakawa of the Japanese nonprofit organization Bridge For Peace lamented that most Japanese are not aware of the human tragedies of the Battle of Manila.

“Learning history is the first step. But it’s not enough. For more than 10 years, Bridge for Peace has been interviewing survivors, Japanese veterans, former Japanese soldiers, and victims of the massacres,” Asakawa said.

He urged the next generation of Filipinos and Japanese to hold further dialogue and said the friendship of the two peoples “will make the future.”

Ricardo Jose, a history professor at the University of the Philippines, said the commitment to remember the events of the Battle of Manila is not intended to rekindle feelings of anger but to give value and meaning to the lives that were lost.

“In looking back at the past, at what happened 70 years ago, we also look towards the future so that these tragedies will never ever be repeated,” he said.

Speaking at the ceremony, former Philippine President Fidel Ramos said that more than 1.1 million Filipinos died during World War II and irreparable damage was inflicted on the Philippines’ cultural heritage, especially in Manila.

Kyodo News

Indian PM expresses wish for stronger economic, trade ties with China

NEW DELHI, 14 Feb — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday expressed wish for stronger economic and trade ties between India and China.

During a meeting here with Wang Jiarui, vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, Modi said the visit by Chinese President Xi Jinping to India last September was highly successful and that the friendship between the leaders of the two countries is a driving force behind bilateral cooperations.

He said stronger cooperation in the fields of economy and trade is conducive for India and China to play a more important role in Asian and world affairs. Modi said the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of India is willing to carry out more exchanges with the Communist Party of China, especially in the fields of local governance, youth and women. Wang said the successful visit by President Xi to India last year has drawn a new blue print for China-India cooperation.

The year 2015 marks the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India, and China is ready to



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) shakes hands with Wang Jiarui, vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference and head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, during their meeting in New Delhi, India, on 13 Feb, 2015. — XINHUA

build closer development partnership with India, to which the Communist Party

of China is willing to make its contribution, he said.

Xinhua



Rescuers cut the outer shell of a crumbled compartment of a derailed train to pull out the body of a victim near Anekal, about 40 kilometers south of Bangalore, India, Feb. 13, 2015. At least 12 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. —XINHUA

6.2-magnitude quake jolts off Taipei, delays trains

TAIPEI / BEIJING, 14 Feb — An earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale jolted southern Taipei on Saturday morning, delaying trains that affected nearly 3,000 passengers.

The 6.2-magnitude earthquake wobbled areas off Taitung in eastern Taipei at 4:06 am on Saturday (Beijing Time), according to the China Earthquake Networks Centre.

The epicentre was monitored at 22.6 degrees north latitude and 121.5 degrees east longitude, or sea area as 33.6 km east of Taitung. The quake struck at a depth of 18.4 km, the centre said.

There have been no casualties in the first earthquake above the 6.0-magnitude that hit Taipei this year but railways operator said later at least 36 train services have been delayed as of 9:30 am due to the earthquake.

All railway facilities were checked before normal operations resumed, which led to delays of up to 45 minutes, the railways company said, adding there will be no compensation for the passengers because the delays were caused by a natural disaster.

Taipei’s earthquake monitoring department said that the quake can be felt to different extent in all cities felt to varied intensities. An unnamed tourist near the Sun Moon Lake in central Taipei told Xinhua that the bed was shaking for about half a minute. The quake was not clearly felt in Taipei.

Xinhua

Bilateral ties tested as Indonesia plans to execute Australians in drug cases

JAKARTA, 14 Feb — Bilateral ties between Indonesia and Australia were tested once again following plans of the Indonesian government to execute two Australian nationals for smuggling drugs into Indonesian territory.

Indonesian authorities are finalizing preparations related to the executions against the two Australian citizens, Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan, as their pleas for life were rejected by a local court in Bali earlier this month.

The executions will likely be conducted in the near future in a place outside Bali where they and the

rest of their gang, Bali Nine, were caught smuggling 8.2 kilogram of heroin worth 40 billion rupiah (about 3.1 million US dollars) into the country in 2005.

“In line with the calls submitted by several parties in Bali, the execution should not be conducted there. We are still studying places for their execution outside Bali,” Sudjonggo, head of Kerobokan jail where the two Australian convicts were imprisoned, was quoted as saying by local media on Friday.

Meanwhile, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop told local media that Australian tourists might

boycott Indonesia should the executions take place.

“I think the Australian people will demonstrate their deep disapproval of this action, including by making decisions about where they wish to holiday,” she told Fairfax radio Friday.

She had earlier said she would not rule out recalling Australia’s ambassador if the executions went ahead.

Responding to the developing situations concerning the execution plan, an Indonesian official at the foreign ministry said that Indonesia still regards Australia as its friendly country.—Xinhua

Jeb Bush hands out cash to win allies ahead of 2016 election

WASHINGTON, 14 Feb — Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush said on Friday he is giving out more than \$100,000 to fellow Republicans, in a sign that he is banking on his fundraising prowess to build allies across the country ahead of a potential White House bid.

The brother of former President George W Bush and son of former President George HW Bush has emerged as an early front-runner in what could be a crowded Republican field in the 2016 presidential election.

Bush's political committee, Right to Rise, announced it was handing out \$10,000 to Republican state parties in Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Nevada and Florida — states that will be among the first to hold nominating contests in the 2016 primaries that decide the party candidates for the election.

His committee also gave out \$5,200, the legal maximum, to 14 Republican lawmakers. Among the recipients: Senator Chuck Grassley and Representative David Young of Iowa; Senator Kelly Ayotte and Representative Frank Guinta of New Hampshire;



Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush addresses the Detroit Economic Club about his "Reform Conservative Agenda" in Detroit, Michigan, on 4 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

and Senator Tim Scott and Representative Trey Gowdy of South Carolina.

Bush has not yet formally declared his candidacy, but he has been aggressively raising money through his political action committee in a bid to secure the support of wealthy donors and party insiders.

"In the coming months, our PAC will continue to support conservative candidates and conservative policies that will ensure all Americans have the right to rise," he said in a statement.

Reuters

Japan, US to cooperate for success of Abe's US trip

TOKYO, 14 Feb — Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken agreed on Friday the two governments will cooperate for success of a planned visit by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the United States, the Foreign Ministry said.

The two governments are arranging for Abe's official trip between late April and early May for a summit with US President Barack Obama, according to diplomatic sources.

In a meeting with Blinken in Tokyo, Kishida expressed sympathy over the death of US aid worker Kayla Mueller who had been held captive by Islamic State militants, the ministry said.

Referring to the recent killing of two Japanese men taken hostage by Islamic State, an extremist organization operating in Iraq and Syria, Kishida said Japan "will never give in to terrorism" and that it will promote

the fight against terrorism in partnership with the international community.

He expressed appreciation for US cooperation and solidarity over the course of Japan's bid, which ended in failure, to rescue the two hostages.

In the meeting, part of which was open to the media, Kishida said that with this year marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, Japan will continue its commitment to peace and stability in the region and the world as a robust ally of the United States.

Blinken said that especially in the 70th anniversary year, the alliance "sets an incredibly powerful example for the rest of the world" about what is possible from the two allies working together for a common cause.

Kishida and Blinken also discussed the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and the crisis in Ukraine, according to the ministry.



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken shake hands before their talks at the Foreign Ministry in Tokyo on 13 Feb, 2015. They agreed to cooperate closely in enhancing counter-terrorism measures following the recent murder of two Japanese nationals by the Islamic State militants.—KYODO NEWS

In a separate meeting, Blinken and Vice Foreign Minister Akitaka Saiki reaffirmed bilateral and trilateral cooperation with South Korea in dealing with issues involving North Korea such as its missile and nuclear weapons development, as well as Pyongyang's past

abductions of Japanese nationals.

Blinken was on the last leg of his three-nation East Asian tour that has taken him to South Korea and China. It is his first overseas trip since taking up the post on 9 January.

Kyodo News

5,000 Hezbollah, Iranian fighters spearhead battles near Israeli borders

DAMASCUS, 14 Feb — As many as 5,000 fighters of the Lebanese Hezbollah backed by Iranian and Syrian fighters are spearheading the current battles against the rebels in southern Syria, close to the borders with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, a monitoring group reported on Saturday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the battle in southern Syria, specifically the triangle between

southern the capital Damascus, southern Qunaitera and northern Daraa provinces, aimed at capturing key hills and towns that fell to the rebels in recent months.

It said another 5,000 fighters could also join the battle upon the request of those fighters to consolidate their positions, mainly in Qunaitera. Meanwhile, the Syrian National Coalition,

the main opposition umbrella in exile, criticized the international community's inaction toward the battles in the southern region, in terms of the overt involvement of Hezbollah and other Iranian militants in the battles. The wide-scale offensive in southern Syria started last Sunday, and a Syrian officer told the Syrian state TV last week that the battles there are fought in cooperation

with Hezbollah. Both the opposition activists and state media outlets acknowledged the advancement of the Syrian troops and its allies in that region. Military experts believe that opening the southern front near Israel is part of Hezbollah and Iran's response to the presumed Israeli attack that killed an Iranian general and Hezbollah fighters in Qunaitera last month.—Xinhua

Obama denounces 'outrageous murders' of three US Muslims

WINSTON-SALEM, (NC), 14 Feb — US President Barack Obama on Friday described the deaths of three young Muslims gunned down in North Carolina this week as "brutal and outrageous murders" and said no one in the United States should be targeted for their religion.

The president's statement came as the US Justice Department said it would join the FBI's preliminary inquiry to determine whether the man accused in the Chapel Hill shooting on Tuesday broke any federal laws, including hate crime laws.

"No one in the United States of America should ever be targeted because of who they are, what they look like, or how they worship," Obama said in a statement, offering his condolences to the victims' families.

The families had called on Obama to insist that federal authorities investigate whether the murder suspect, 46-year-old paralegal student Craig Stephen Hicks, was motivated by hatred towards the victims because they were Muslim.

Police seized more than a dozen firearms and a large amount of ammunition from his home, according to search warrants filed on Friday, WRAL-TV reported.

Newlywed Deah Shaddy Barakat, 23, a University of North Carolina dental student, his wife, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, 21, and her sister, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, 19, a student at North Carolina State University, were killed in a condominium about two miles (three km) from the UNC campus.

According to the war-

rants, a friend of the victims' stopped police and directed them to the condo, where authorities found Barakat dead and bleeding from his head in the front doorway, the television station reported.

One of the sisters was found in the kitchen and the other in its doorway, according to WRAL-TV.

On Thursday, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan criticized Obama and other US leaders for their silence about the incident, which has garnered international attention and left some US Muslims feeling concerned about their safety.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Friday praised the three victims, who were all involved in humanitarian aid work, as representing the best values of global citizenship and said he was

deeply moved by scenes of thousands of people mourning their deaths.

A Justice Department spokeswoman said its Civil Rights Division and the US Attorney's Office for the Middle District of North Carolina would participate in the FBI inquiry announced in the case on Thursday evening.

Muslim advocates on Friday called the inquiries a key first step towards the full federal investigation they are seeking.

In a separate investigation, local police have cited a parking dispute as Hicks' motive but said they were also looking into whether religious hatred played a role.

Neighbours said Hicks, who posted anti-religion messages and a photo of a gun he said belonged to him on his Facebook page, was



A makeshift memorial for Deah Shaddy Barakat, his wife Yusor Mohammad and Yusor's sister Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, who were killed by a gunman, is pictured inside of the University of North Carolina School of Dentistry, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina on 11 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

known in the condo community as someone prone to grow angry over parking troubles and noise.

Mohammad Abu-Salha, the father of the two female victims, told CNN that his daughter Yusor had said Hicks made her feel uncom-

fortable after she moved into a neighbouring condo where her new husband lived.

"Daddy, I think he hates us for who we are," Abu-Salha said his daughter told him, according to CNN.—Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 15 February, 2015

Curable if treated in good time

By Aung Khin

One child is diagnosed with cancer every three minutes somewhere in the world. International Childhood Cancer Day on February 15 is dedicated to the more than the estimated 250,000 children diagnosed with cancer each year worldwide. It is not like other commemorative day, but a day for people around the world to stand up and speak out for kids with cancer, survivors and their families.

Cancer is horrible for people of any age, and

it is especially so for kids and their families. It is estimated that childhood cancer has an incidence of more than 175,000 cases per year in the world, with an approximate mortality rate of 96,000 per year—80 percent in the developing world.

Many developed countries have also unfortunately seen a slow increase of childhood cancer rates each year. In the United States, an estimated 15,780 children and adolescents ages 0 to 19 were diagnosed with cancer in 2014.

The most common cancers in children are leukemia (34 percent), brain tumors (23 percent), and lymphomas (12 percent). Pediatric oncology is the branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer in children.

According to the 2014 report of US National Library of Medicine, an estimated 85 to 92 percent of Myanmar children with cancer are undiagnosed or not receiving treatment. Abandonment of treatment is as high as 60 percent.

Many Myanmar families cannot afford the costs for treatment and supportive care. More measures are needed to support development of preventive, diagnostic, curative and palliative care for children's cancer in Myanmar from the outset.

Local and international partnerships are essential in the interim to support and provide assistance to Myanmar children who are suffering from cancer—a curable disease if treated early.

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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.



U Kyin Soe is making small-sized cow toys to send them to the market.

PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Traditional papier mâché cow toys...

(from page 1)

at the age of 9 and toured around pagoda festivals along with his art master to sell their home-made toys.

The 60-year old papier mâché artisan rejected the recent report in a week-

ly-journal that the Burmese folk art of papier mâché is facing extinction because the toy market in Myanmar is increasingly dominated by imported plastic toys and stuffed animals.

Myanmar's papier

mâché toy artisans, including U Kyin Soe, who consider the demand for papier mâché toys at pagoda festivals as a reliable barometer for the future of the traditional folk art have seen a decrease in demand for papier mâché animals, but not cows, at the festivals.



A child gazing at cow toys.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Some traditional toys such as jockeys, dolls, nurses, zawgyi alchemists with supernatural powers, zebras, dogs, and elephants have even disappeared from the markets.

But the papier mâché cows are in greater than ever at pagoda festivals that attract mostly people from rural areas, said U Kyin Soe as he worked his wonder with waste paper from a weekly journal and home-made glue to trans-

pagoda festival had turned into a festival of cow toys due to the high demand for the toys at the festival.

And demand for cow toys at the shops at the famed Shwedagon Pagoda remains as high as ever, said U Kyin Soe who supplied his art works to the shops there before he moved to Bago, about 50 miles north-east of Yangon.

The traditional cow toys attract not only local children but also children

shops near the pagoda and to customers who order custom-made toys directly from him.

"I have to store cow toys from U Kyin Soe during the rainy season to sell them to visitors in the opening season because the demand is high then," said U Maung Hla, who has opened a souvenir shop near the Hinthagon Pagoda and is one of the main customers of U Kyin Soe.

Children from rural



U Kyin Soe paints small-sized cow toys to supply to his customer who place an order for 200 toys from him.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

form a wooden cow into a work of traditional art.

The artisans now generally make their papier mâché toys with used paper from weekly journals because it is easier to find that raw material than paper cement bags, which have also been used.

U Kyin Soe still clearly remembers that a member of the Pagoda Board of Trustees of Kyaik-khauk Pagoda about 4 miles east of Yangon telling him about a decade ago that the

from diplomatic schools and others in Yangon.

U Kyin Soe was invited even by a diplomatic school in Yangon to entertain the school children and after the show the headmaster hired him to teach making papier mâché cows to the children for 15 days.

Now settled at Bago's Hinthagon Pagoda, which attracts both local and foreign visitors, the hand-made toy art master has been delivering his products to several toy

areas prefer the cow toys to other toys, but children from the cities are not quite as enamoured with them, he added.

But U Kyin Soe doesn't mind the varied tastes.

"I challenge foreign-made toys. Cow toys continue to keep beating them in Myanmar because majority of our country's population are farmers," said U Kyin Soe with confidence.

GNLM

ARTICLE

The Outcomes of 3rd MDCF and New Resolution: towards Sustainable Development Goals after Millennium Development Goals

Nanda Hmun
Director-General
Ministry of Culture

Since Myanmar is about to embark on the next phase of its remarkable journey to the democratic state, a journey that has propelled it to the top tier of the Dream of Myanmar people and which will lift hundreds of people out of poverty in a remarkably short period of time. This new transformation with firm destination, a clear roadmap, and a deep sense of responsibility has undertaken with Three Waves: Myanmar's first wave of reform dealt with the introduction of a multi-party democratic system and the transition from the old to a new system, while the second wave of reform put emphasis on strategies for executive, economic, political and social reforms which have been supported by the international community. The Third Wave calls for the emergence of a new, strong democracy alongside higher living standard for the people.

Moreover, the political reform is the most critical and the most subtle of all, it has been called by the President on the government bodies and the public to cooperate in order to avoid internal conflicts similar to those of some countries which are in a transitional period. Since Myanmar has been left behind by the lengthy conflicts and instability further than others in terms of development, political parties are urged to avoid confrontation and enter into negotiation as a gesture of practicing political culture for a stable and peaceful political reform. With regard to the measures being taken in line with the Framework on Economic and Social Reform, changes in taxation systems, alleviation of some trade and investment rules, arrangement for the launch of an e-government system and projects for rural development and poverty alleviation are being called for.

Most international organizations expressed on Myanmar's transition in 2011, following decades of isolation, and the way

it embarked on an unprecedented reform process, raising hopes for a new democracy. These reforms have been welcomed by the international community along with the rising levels of aid. These Cooperations of Development Partners supports are helping Myanmar to reduce inequality, provide essential services, build resilience, and promote sustainable investment.

By aiming for higher quality, more inclusive, and more sustainable growth and those Reforms, which outline the reforms needed to reach the destination. These reforms are ambitious to overcome those challenges of Myanmar since its Independence. Keeping its financial stability, environmental sustainability, and the global rules of the game through those forum for this kind of cooperation, made a strengthened partnership with Myanmar and its Development Partners. They are in fact part of aspirations that will secure the "Myanmar dream" for the next generation.

The initiatives of the government by adopting a people-centered approach in line with the Framework on Economic and Social Reform (FESR) were done by reforming the 10 priority areas such as finance and revenue, relaxation of restrictions on trade and foreign investment, development of the private sector, education and health sectors, food security and development of the agricultural sector, transparency in government, the mobile phone and internet systems, and development of the basic infrastructure. The administrative and management reforms as the third stage of the reform process is now being undertaken. In order to help achieve economic growth and raise the living standard for all citizens, the government is striving to foster good governance and promote clean government throughout the country.

Various reforms were undertaken within twenty one months of its assumption of duty. Because of these reforms, the international community has made significant changes in their respective policies towards

Myanmar, most visibly in the last six months. Starting from 2013 Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum (MDCF) was held mainly because the international donors who wish to help and partner with Myanmar in its reform process would like to know the priority sectors and areas in the country's reform strategy and development plans.

We have witnessed that the government's economic policies focusing on the development of the agricultural sector, creation of a modern industrialized country, narrowing the development gap between States and Regions as well as urban and rural areas, establishing an accurate and reliable statistical data base, and improving the statistical data collection system are on their right tracks. While cooperating with donor countries and organizations in accordance with the five principles of the Paris Declaration—ownership, alignment, harmonization, result-oriented, and mutual accountability—the importance of the effectiveness of development assistance for developing countries are mainly prior.

We also convince the improvements in the living standard of citizens only when all stakeholders in the social and economic sectors work together. These stakeholders may come from the government, the general public, the private sector, civil society organizations ranging from local non-governmental organizations (INGOs) to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and the international donor community. While taking the driver's seat, all ministries have been urged to effectively utilize the development assistance receive in ways that will help achieve the millennium development goals and strengthen the relationship with the development partners. In order to ensure the effectiveness of the development assistance, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism has to be instituted. By regularly sharing information about the projects and the programs that are being implemented with development partners will enhance economic growth,

and utilize the technological knowhow and resources, received from the international community.

One of the Milestones of the achievements during these years is that government can hold the First Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum which was held from 19 to 20 January 2013, the Second Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum from 27 to 28 January 2014 and the Third on 7 to 8 February 2015 respectively in Nay Pyi Taw. At the 1st MDCF, "**Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation**" was adopted and made public. The Nay Pyi Taw Accord includes both the Government of Myanmar and development partners' commitments and obligations. It is observed that the Government's commitments under Nay Pyi Taw Accord are also in conformity with the current reform processes being undertaken by the Government. Moreover, to strengthen cooperation with global partners to ensure better public service delivery, President U Thein Sein highlighted in his Speech at the 1st MDCF on the National Comprehensive Development Plan (NCDP), which consists of a set of four five-year plans covering a twenty year period from 2011-2031, as part of the second stage of the reform process to enhance economic development and raise the living standard of Myanmar people. The 1st MDCF was held with the Theme: "Partnerships for Actions, Implementations for Success".

During the 2nd MDCF, to maintain and accelerate the momentum of development processes, the theme of Forum was chosen as "**Accelerating Actions for Progress through Enhancing Inclusive Coordination**". By that theme, we are committed to accelerate our progress with actions; we will achieve tangible results and outcomes through enhancing coordination between the government and development partners, and making our development cooperation to become more inclusive process. Since in 2014, Myanmar has projected 9.1% GDP growth rate for the fiscal year 2014-

2015. In order to achieve this targeted growth rate, we systematically managed and utilized development aids and concessional loans, technical assistance, attract local and foreign investment which will support the development of our country. The Government has also formulated first five-year national development plan as well as Myanmar Comprehensive Development Plan. In this regard, these can help our Development Partners to better align their aids, supports and assistance with the country's development priorities and plans, to continue cooperating with the Government in our reform processes and make their development aids more effective.

Even during its 30 months of assuming the Office, the Government has undertaken four phases of reform process with momentum; namely political reforms, economic reforms, public administration reforms and private sector development reforms. Due to the first phase of political reform measures, favorable conditions for national reconciliation have been created and mutual understanding with the ethnic minority groups has been built in our country.

The second phase of economic and social reforms has been implemented with the people-centered approach. Due to these reform processes, we have achieved good socio-economic development outcome for our country. We have also achieved 7.3% GDP growth rate in 2012-2013 which exceeded more than projected growth rate of 6.7%. This is one of the tangible results of economic development achieved through successful cooperation and collaborations among the State, our People and our development partners.

Here again in 2015, on its remarkable reform process and tackling with its challenges, we are able to hold this 3rd MDCF under the Theme: "**Building Upon Foundations-Focusing Towards Future Inclusive Development**". Discussion at a two-day forum centred on development pathways of strategic importance to Myanmar,

human capacity enhancement, land resources management, social protection, rural development and poverty alleviation, the framework for economic and social reforms, policies for national development projects, foreign aid, and future cooperation. The forum also discussed matters related to elections, peace processes and business transactions with development partners. The Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, chaired the Day One forum and the discussions of progress on the implementation of the Nay Pyi Taw Accord for Effective Development Cooperation were presented by the Deputy Minister for MNPED and Advisor to the President.

At the 3rd MDCF, the Joint Statement by the European Union was released and expressed their positive views and commended what the Government of Myanmar for all they have achieved and remarkable process of reform, signaling their commitment to engage the country on another path, to listen to aspirations of the people and to work towards improving their lives. Another remarkable significance of 3rd MDCF was that the new Aid Information Management System (AIMS) been provided by EU was launched on the first day of the Forum. EU also committed to continue their technical assistance and increase development assistance in the main areas like peace building, governance-including police reform and elections-rural development, health education, and trade and private sector development.

When we try to make a review on those assistance and partnerships, we can clearly see that they also pledged to strengthen government capacity to lead Myanmar's development efforts and engage with public and private actors in the planning and implementation process, the development assistance to be more effectively use for all citizens, including the most vulnerable, and help them benefit from and be involved in shaping Myanmar's transition.

(To be continued)

Yemeni Houthi fighters fire on protesters after clashes kill 26

SANNA, 14 Feb — Tens of thousands of Yemenis demonstrated in several cities on Saturday against the rule of the Shi'ite Muslim Houthi movement whose gunmen fired on protesters in the central town of Ibb and wounded four, medics said. It was the second day of nationwide demonstrations against the Iranian-backed Houthis in less than a week after its dissolution of parliament this month unravelled security and sent Western and Arab embassies packing.

Activists said they were enraged by the death on Saturday of Saleh al-Bashiri, who they say was detained by gunmen as they broke up an anti-Houthi protest in Sanaa two weeks ago and was released to a hospital with signs of torture on his body on Thursday. There was no immediate comment from the Houthis.

Yemen's upheaval has drawn international concern as it shares a long border with top world oil

exporter Saudi Arabia, and the country is also fighting one of the most formidable branches of al-Qaeda with the help of US drone strikes.

Heavy clashes between Houthi fighters and Sunni Muslim tribesmen fighting alongside al-Qaeda militants in the southern mountainous province of al-Bayda on Saturday killed 16 Houthi rebels along with 10 Sunni tribesmen and militants, security officials and tribal sources told *Reuters*. The state faces collapse in impoverished, strife-torn Yemen two weeks after the Houthis took formal control of the country and continued an armed push southward.

France, the United States, Britain, Germany, Italy and Saudi Arabia have closed their missions in the capital Sanaa and withdrawn staff, citing security concerns. Spain and the United Arab Emirates announced the closure of their embassies in Sanaa on Saturday.—*Reuters*



Anti-Houthi protesters shout slogans during a demonstration against the Shi'ite Muslim militia group in the southwestern city of Taiz on 14 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS



Supporters of the "Mercy Campaign" hold stickers as they distribute them to passing motorists during a campaign to draw attention to two Australians, Myuran Sukumaran and Andrew Chan, who are on death row in Denpasar on the Indonesian island of Bali on 31 Jan, 2015 in this photo taken by Antara Foto.—REUTERS

UN chief appeals to Indonesia to stop death row executions

UNITED NATIONS, 14 Feb — United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appealed to Indonesia on Friday not to execute prisoners on death row for drug crimes, including citizens of Australia, Brazil, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria and the Philippines.

Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap. Five foreigners were among six people executed last month, the first executions since President Joko Widodo took office in October.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Ban had spoken with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi on Thursday "to express his concern at the recent application of capital punishment in Indonesia."

"The United Nations opposes the death penalty under all circumstances," Dujarric said in a statement on Friday. "The Secretary-General appeals to the

Indonesian authorities that the executions of the remaining prisoners on death row for drug-related offences not be carried out." Indonesia's Attorney General HM Prasetyo said this month that two Australians — Myuran Sukumaran, 33, and Andrew Chan, 31 — are among eight prisoners due to be executed after Widodo rejected their clemency pleas in January.

Nationals of Brazil, Malawi, the Netherlands, Nigeria and Vietnam were executed by firing squad in January. The case of the two Australian men threatens to strain already fragile relations between Australia and Indonesia. The two were identified as leaders of the so-called Bali Nine, a group of nine arrested on the resort island in 2005 and convicted of attempting to smuggle some 18 lb (8 kg) of heroin to Australia. Other members of the group have been sentenced to long prison terms.

Indonesia's foreign ministry spokesman said

the death penalty was in accordance with Indonesian law and did not conflict with respect for human rights as governed by the constitution.

"The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that the death penalty can be imposed for the most serious crimes," spokesman Armanatha Nasir said by text message.

"Indonesia is of the view that drug crimes constitute most serious crimes that have indiscriminately made millions of victims suffer and caused many deaths."

Australia is pursuing a last-ditch deal with Indonesia to save its citizens, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said on Thursday. She said last month she would not rule out recalling Australia's envoy if the executions went ahead. Brazil and the Netherlands recalled their ambassadors in Indonesia, and Nigeria summoned Indonesia's ambassador in Abuja, after last month's executions.

Reuters

G-7 "concerned" about ongoing battle in run-up to Ukraine cease-fire

WASHINGTON, 14 Feb —The Group of Seven major nations voiced concern on Friday about continued fighting in eastern Ukraine in the run-up to the recently negotiated cease-fire between Ukrainian troops and separatists.

The United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan in a joint statement warned of possible additional sanctions against Russia if the promised truce that takes effect Sunday is broken.

The G-7 countries said they "welcome" the agreement on the planned cease-fire reached by Russia and Ukraine as well as France and Germany on Thursday after their marathon talks in Minsk. Implementation of the so-called Minsk Package "offers a way forward to a comprehensive, sustainable and peaceful resolution to the crisis in eastern Ukraine," the G-7 said.

"However, the G-7 remains concerned about the situation in Ukraine, in particular in view of the fighting around Debaltseve," causing numerous civilian casualties, it said.

The G-7 urged "all sides" to adhere strictly to the provisions of Thursday's cease-fire deal.

The G-7 "stands ready to adopt appropriate measures against those who violate the 'Minsk package' and therefore intensify the costs for them," it said.

Kyodo News

Greece promises to do 'whatever we can' as debt talks cheer markets

BRUSSELS, 14 Feb — The Greek government promised to do "whatever we can" to secure a deal with its international creditors next week, cheering investors as experts from both sides began technical talks on Friday to lay the ground for an accord.

Fear of financial chaos have seen savers taking their cash out of Greek banks. Banking sources said this was the reason the European Central Bank offered more emergency funding for Greek banks on Thursday until after crunch talks among euro zone finance

ministers on Monday.

Greek markets rose strongly after new prime minister Alexis Tsipras, elected on a promise to scrap a bailout deal he says has impoverished millions, agreed to have aides sit down with officials from the European Union, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund - commonly known as the "troika". However, the Dutch finance minister, who will chair a meeting on Monday of euro zone colleagues, continued to play down the chances of a rapid conclusion to negotiations on Monday. "I'm really still

very pessimistic about that now," Jeroen Dijsselbloem said. "Greeks' expectations of the Greek government are sky high," he added. "But the possibilities, given the state of their economy, are very limited. So that still needs a huge adjustment and I don't know if we can figure that out as soon as Monday."

A spokesman for Tsipras, who had accepted Dijsselbloem's offer of the technical talks during a first encounter with fellow EU leaders at a Brussels summit on Thursday, said: "We will do whatever we can so that a deal is found on Monday."

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras addresses a news conference after a European Union leaders summit in Brussels on 12 Feb, 2015.
REUTERS



On Wednesday, euro zone finance ministers failed even to agree a broad common statement on how to maintain funding for Greece following the expiry at the end of this month of the three-year-old bailout pack-

age - hated by many Greeks along with the troika that has enforced its terms.

Tsipras wants a new financial package, freed of unpopular terminology and the most burdensome conditions. But Germany, backed

solidly so far by the other 17 euro zone states, insists his government should extend the current terms for some months, giving it time to develop a new strategy if it wishes. Greek spokesman Gabriel Sakellariadis also said that if euro zone finance ministers failed to get a deal in Brussels on Monday evening, that would not be catastrophic. That view is not entirely shared in some other European capitals, especially those like Berlin and Helsinki where any deal with Greece will need to be ratified by local parliaments.

Reuters

WORLD

Gov't urged Japanese woman in October not to go to Islamic State areas

TOKYO, 14 Feb — A Japanese woman who went missing with her French husband in November was urged by the Japanese government in October not to go to areas controlled by the Islamic State militant group after public authorities were alerted that she was planning to go.

According to a written response to an opposition lawmaker approved by the Cabinet on Friday, the Foreign Ministry asked the woman not to travel to Syr-

ia, much of which is controlled by Islamic State, in mid- and late October.

The government said it does not know whether the woman is currently in Islamic State territory.

The woman and her husband, who is of Algerian descent, are both Muslims in their 20s and have said they want to engage in humanitarian activities, according to the authorities.

The couple left Narita airport near Tokyo for Tur-

key, which borders Syria, in early November.

In a separate response to criticism over Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech in January pledging \$200 million in non-military aid to "countries contending with ISIL," the government said it was "natural that ISIL, which is threatening the entire international community, would be mentioned."

ISIL is an acronym referring to Islamic State.

Kyodo News

US moving to resupply Jordan's military with munitions



A Royal Jordanian Air Force plane takes off from an air base to strike the Islamic state in the Syrian city of Raqqa on 5 Feb, 2015.— REUTERS

WASHINGTON, /AMMAN, 14 Feb — The United States is readying plans to resupply Jordan with munitions in the coming weeks, possibly including precision-guided arms, expediting support for the kingdom as it expands its role in air strikes against the Islamic State (IS), officials say.

The State Department and Pentagon declined

comment on any future moves to assist Jordan with requests for weapons. But several US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that planning was well underway to help replenish Jordan's supplies of ordnance.

US efforts to expedite delivery of munitions and other weapons follow a vocal appeal from Jordan's

King Abdullah to American lawmakers last week for greater US support.

A source close to the Jordanian government told *Reuters* the kingdom believed its supplies of bombs are being stretched too thin as it expands its role in strikes following the Islamic State's grisly execution of a Jordanian pilot.

Islamic State's release of a video early this month showing pilot Muath al-Kasaesbeh burnt alive in a cage has triggered a public backlash in Jordan and sharpened the focus of Arab allies contributing to the war effort. Jordan is among a group of Arab countries, which includes Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, that have joined US air strikes on IS, which controls large swathes of Iraq and Syria. The UAE this week said it had resumed its airstrikes on IS. —*Reuters*

Iraqi army repels attack on base hosting US Marines, officials say



Tribal fighters take part in a military training to prepare for fighting against Islamic State militants, at the Ain al-Assad military base in Anbar Province on 15 Nov, 2014. REUTERS

BAGHDAD, 14 Feb — About 25 Islamic State fighters led by several suicide bombers attacked Ain al-Asad air base in Iraq's Anbar Province on Friday but were repulsed by Iraqi security forces guarding the perimeter who killed most of the assailants, the Pentagon said.

Rear Admiral John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary, told reporters in Washington that US Marines training Iraqi military troops at the sprawling base were about 2 miles (3.5 km) away and were not involved in the fight.

US forces scrambled drones and Apache helicopters to assist but the fighting was over by the time they arrived and they never fired a shot, said Army Colonel Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman.

Kirby said the latest information from Iraq indicated the attack was carried out by "somewhere in

the neighbourhood of 20 to 25" Islamic State fighters and was led by several suicide bombers, some of whom evidently detonated their vests.

The battle took place at the perimeter of the base and it was not immediately clear whether the attackers were able to penetrate into the facility. Kirby cautioned that the information was preliminary and some details could change as Iraqi officials get a better understanding of how the attack unfolded.

"It does appear now that most, if not all of them, were wearing Iraqi uniforms," Kirby said of the attackers.

Militants from the jihadist group had attacked the Ain al-Asad base and the nearby town of al-Baghdadi a day earlier, leading to sporadic clashes in the town overnight.

An Iraqi official said Islamic State had been cleared from most of

al-Baghdadi, with the remaining fighting centred around a police station.

That conflicted with reports from a tribal leader who said the jihadists were still in control of much of the town. Kirby said US assessments indicated Islamic State fighters were in control of al-Baghdadi.

Ongoing clashes and poor communications in the area made it difficult to confirm such reports.

Al-Baghdadi has been besieged for months by Islamic State, which captured swathes of northern and western Iraq last year, prompting a campaign of US-led air strikes and the deployment of hundreds of US military advisers to the country.

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.

Reuters

Kurds regain Syrian villages from Islamic State

BEIRUT, 14 Feb — Kurdish forces backed by US-led air strikes have re-

gained control of at least 163 villages around the Syrian town of Kobani after

driving back Islamic State militants in the past three weeks, a group monitoring

the conflict said on Saturday.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that although the Kurds had recaptured many villages since winning back Kobani in late January, their progress had been slowed by renewed clashes to the west and southwest of the town, where Islamic State had redirected its fighters.

The battle for the predominantly Kurdish town, known as Ayn al-Arab in

Arabic, became a focal point for the US-led air campaign against the al-Qaeda offshoot in Syria.

Islamic State controls large areas of northern and eastern Syria, including a strip of territory across the northern Aleppo countryside and a corridor stretching southeast from Raqqa Province to the frontier with Iraq.

The Syrian Kurds, who also received military support from Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga forces, said they drove Islamic State from the town near the Turkish border on 26 January. US-led forces have carried out almost daily air strikes on Islamic State targets around the area since late last year.

The Kurds were joined by several hundred rebel fighters in the battles for areas surrounding the town, the Observatory's founder Rami Abdulrahman said. The rebel groups included the Shams al-Shamal brigade and the Raqqa Revolutionaries Brigade, anti-Islamic State fighters from northern Syria who had battled alongside the Kurds to win back territory.

Islamic State's advance on Kobani last year with heavy weapons drove tens of thousands of residents over the border into Turkey. The Kurds, armed with mainly light weapons, called for international help and the town now lies in ruins.—*Reuters*



A fighter of the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) walks around damaged buildings in the northern Syrian town of Kobani on 30 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

First flight of HondaJet planned in Japan in April



File photo taken in July 2014 shows Honda Motor Co's HondaJet small aircraft, being unveiled for the first time to the general public during an air show in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Honda Aircraft Co President Michimasa Fujino said on 13 Feb, 2015, that it will show off the flight of the HondaJet for the first time in Japan in April. —KYODO NEWS

Tokyo, 14 Feb — Honda Motor Co will show off the flight of its HondaJet small aircraft for the first time in Japan in April, its aircraft development subsidiary's president said on Friday.

Honda Aircraft Co President Michimasa Fujino unveiled the plan to reporters in Asahikawa, Hokkaido. The first HondaJet for mass production successfully made its maiden flight last June in the United States.

A test-ride event of the aircraft is now being planned for government

officials and the press in Japan, with Fujino saying the company is considering a route between Narita airport near Tokyo and a regional airport.

Wealthy individuals are targeted as potential buyers of the small aircraft.

The company has already received orders for more than 100 HondaJets in the United States and Europe, with the delivery planned to start by the end of June.

Honda has yet to decide the release date of the aircraft in Japan.

Kyodo News

Austria calling on UN members to back anti-nuke statement

VIENNA, 14 Feb — Austria has called on members of the United Nations to back a written statement denouncing nuclear weapons and pledging to work toward banning them, diplomatic sources said. In the statement, distributed to all UN member states in mid-January, Austria "calls on all states parties to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty)...to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons."

The move is aimed at giving momentum to discussions on nuclear disarmament ahead of a meeting to review the cornerstone treaty from late April and 70 years on from the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is expected to meet resistance from nuclear weapons states including Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States. Japan, which is protected by the US nuclear umbrella and opposes an outright ban, is facing a difficult decision. A Japanese government official said, "We will make our stance clear by the review conference." The statement is based on an earlier one at the third international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear arms held in Vienna in December. It does not directly address the creation of a nuclear ban treaty. The Austrian government is seeking as many UN members as possible to express support for the statement and plans to present the results at the NPT review conference to be held in New York from 27 April to 22 May. —Kyodo News

Mexico must probe thousands of 'disappearances' — UN

GENEVA, 14 Feb — A United Nations watchdog called on Mexico on Friday to probe and prosecute alleged complicity of state forces in thousands of "disappearances", including a notorious case of 43 students believed murdered last year.

Mexico's delegation told the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances at a review last week that 11,300 people were unaccounted for. Amnesty International said in a statement that more than 22,600 had gone missing in the past eight years amid "a huge problem of impunity".

In their findings, the committee's 10 independent experts said they had received information that "illustrates a context of generalised disappearances in a great part of the territory (of Mexico), many of which could be qualified as enforced disappearances".

"Enforced disappearances" are those linked to detention or abduction by state agents such as police

or security forces, or their allies, who conceal the victim's fate.

"The state has informed us that in contrast to the thousands of enforced disappearances that we assume ... there are exactly six persons put to trial and sentenced for this crime," committee member Rainer Huhle told a news briefing.

The panel urged Mexico to establish a special prosecutor's office to lead investigations and prosecutions.

It said Mexican authorities should step up searches for all missing, including migrants from Central America who have vanished on their way to the United States, and share DNA samples from unidentified bodies.

In a statement, Mexico's government said it was fully committed to improving the way the country handles disappearances. Mexico's Attorney General Jesus Murillo has said there is no doubt that the 43 students were mur-



Relatives hold up posters of some missing students from Ayotzinapa Teacher Training College during a news conference, at the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre in Mexico City on 9 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

dered last September and their remains incinerated and dumped into a river in the nearby town of Cocula.

Officials say they were abducted by corrupt police officers, who handed them over to a local drug gang. The former mayor of the southwestern town of Igua-

la has been arrested.

Parents of the students met the UN panel to appeal for help in seeking justice, saying they had no faith in the government's ability to investigate the crime.

"The grave case of the 43 students subjected to enforced disappearance

in September 2014 in the state of Guerrero illustrates the serious challenges Mexico is facing in terms of the prevention, investigation and punishment for enforced disappearances and searching for the disappeared," the UN panel said. —Reuters

Canadian police say Valentine's Day mass shooting plot foiled

TORONTO, 14 Feb — Canadian police said on Friday they foiled a plot in which at least two people allegedly planned to commit a mass shooting in the East Coast province of Nova Scotia on Valentine's Day.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said in a statement the plot involved a 19-year-old man from Timberlea, Nova Scotia, and a 23-year-old woman from Geneva, Illinois.

Police said they obtained information that suggested the two had access to firearms and intended to go to a public venue in the Halifax, Nova Scotia, region on

14 February to kill people, and then themselves.

The police statement did not suggest a possible motive, but officers told a media briefing they would not characterize it as a "terrorist event."

"I would classify it as a group of individuals that had some beliefs and were willing to carry out violent acts against citizens, but there's nothing in the investigation to classify it as a terrorist attack," said Nova Scotia RCMP Commanding Officer Brian Brennan, according to CBC News.

"I can tell you that it's not culturally based."

Evidence suggested two other Nova Scotia males, aged 20 and 17, were involved, though their role is still to be determined, police said.

Police said they found the 19-year-old male dead at a residence early on Friday and the 20-year-old male and 23-year-old female were arrested at the Halifax airport. The 17-year-old male was arrested elsewhere.

"We believe we have apprehended all known individuals in this matter and eliminated the threat. We are not seeking any further suspects at this time," the statement said. —Reuters



A duplex home where a 19-year-old man was found dead is shown in Timberlea, Nova Scotia, on 13 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ER TURKU VOY NO (065W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ER TURKU VOY NO (065W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 15.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Shooting at Dallas airport as prisoner tries to escape

HOUSTON, 14 Feb — A shooting happened at an airport in the US city of Dallas on Friday when an inmate who was being transported tried to escape and got shot by an officer escorting him.

The incident occurred on Friday afternoon at Terminal C of Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, according to the Dallas Morning News. The prisoner, who was being moved from Utah to Oklahoma and was staying at the Dallas airport for a layover, was escorted to a restroom where he assaulted the officer and was shot in one of his hands. The prisoner fled the restroom and tried to escape but was tackled by another officer waiting outside. Both the prisoner and the first officer were sent to hospital.

The officer suffered multiple injuries to his face and head, officials said. Airport spokesman David Magana said the resulting investigation prompted the closure of the public area around the checkpoint counter near the site where the incident took place. No gates or flight operations were affected. No one else was injured.—Xinhua



Students assist the 24th International Book Fair Cuba 2015 in Havana, Cuba, on 13 Feb, 2015.

XINHUA

Indonesia sticking on tough anti-drug policy

BOGOR, (Indonesia), 14 Feb — The Indonesian government remains sticking on its stance that it will impose stern actions against the violation on drug use and is ready to take the risks of the policy, Secretary of Cabinet Andi Widjajanto said here on Friday.

The official made the remarks following the public warning from Australia to possibly avoid visiting Indonesia during holiday and find other alternative destinations if Indonesia executes two Australian

citizens, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, who are on death row on drug cases.

“Yes,” Widjajanto said, “all the decisions must have risks.”

The official reaffirmed that President Joko Widodo had decided to take stern action on drug cases.

Both Chan and Sukumaran were convicted to death penalty in February 2006 for involving in plot to smuggle over eight kg of heroin to Australia from Bali in 2005.

Xinhua

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 Fuel Lab	1 Lot	USD
(2)	MPPE/MCY/CAP/T/8 (2014-2015)	120 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	3 sets	USD

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

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

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Train-bus collision kills 16 near Mexico-US border

MEXICO CITY, 14 Feb — A train hit a coach, leaving at least 16 people dead

and 30 others wounded on Friday night near the Mexico-US border, local author-

ities said.

The accident took place in the town of Anahuac, Mexico's northeastern Nuevo Leon State, at 18:40 pm Friday (GMT 0040 Saturday).

Jorge Camacho Rincon, head of the local state Civil Protection Department, told reporters that the injured have been sent to two area hospitals.

Jorge Ovidio Mendoza, another local official, explained that the coach's driver was trying to cross the railway regardless of an incoming train.

There were 60 people aboard the bus, exceeding its capacity, he added.

Mexican army and local police rushed to the site after the incident.

Xinhua



A member of Civil Protection inspects the site of traffic accident in Anahuac Municipality, Mexico, on 13 Feb, 2015. At least 16 people died and 22 others were injured on Friday in the collision between a bus and a train in Anahuac Municipality.—XINHUA

BRICS cooperation expands to population issues

BRASILIA, 14 Feb — The BRICS bloc of emerging economies has adopted a five-year agenda to jointly tackle population issues, including women's rights, aging and migration.

Ministers and high-level envoys from bloc members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, which have a combined population of nearly 2.9 billion, announced the decision late Thursday in Brazil's capital Brasilia, following three days of talks.

The approval of the 2015-2020 agenda means the bloc, which has already consolidated cooperation in political, financial and economic fields, will now work together on social and demographic matters.

Alexandre Ghislene, director of human rights and social affairs at Brazil's Foreign Affairs Ministry, said the measure helps bolster not only the bloc, which includes

four of the world's 10 most populous nations, but also “south-south cooperation.”

“BRICS countries want to share our experience not just among ourselves, but also with other developing nations that are interested,” Ghislene said.

President of Brazil's National Population and Development Commission Ricardo Paes de Barros highlighted the importance of cooperation, saying China has rich experience in migration management during its urbanization as well as in training, health care and education.

Brazil can learn from China how to manage the floating population, increase the presence of women in the workplace and reduce maternal mortality, said Paes.

Deputy Minister of China's National Health and Family Planning Commission Wang Pei'an underscored the importance of adequately attending to an aging population, especially in a country with

200 million people over the age of 65, to offer this segment a better quality of life.

Russia's Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection Sergey Velmyaykin said “aging and waves of migration” are among the problems affecting bloc members, so it makes sense to work together towards “mutual goals.”

His Indian counterpart, SK Sikdar, noted only 30 percent of India's population currently lives in urban areas, but the figure is expected to reach 90 percent in the next 70 years, leading India to take an interest in others' experience in rural-to-urban migration.

The next BRICS ministerial meeting on population issues will be hosted by China in 2018, along with a series of technical meetings over the coming years on each of the agenda's six themes.

Xinhua

WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 15th February, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region, Chin and Shan States, generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Gowns steal the show in new 'Cinderella' movie, actresses say

James Franco joins Stephen King's adaptation



Actresses Helena Bonham Carter and Lily James (R) arrive for the screening of the movie 'Cinderella' at the 65th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin on 13 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

BERLIN, 14 Feb — The gowns almost steal the show in the new Disney live-action version of "Cinderella", actresses Lily James and Helena Bonham Carter said on Friday at the film's world premiere, but neither would recommend their dresses for street wear.

James, in the title role, wears a gorgeous blue confection by British designer Sandy Powell for the ball where she and the

prince, played by Richard Madden, sweep each other off their feet — but the British actress said the ball gown and other outfits she wore were very constricting.

"They kind of do pretty much all the acting sometimes for you," she told journalists at the Berlin International Film Festival where Disney's animated version of the fairytale also made its debut 65 years ago.

"They're so magical and you put them on and you suddenly stand different and you feel different and then it's all part of that magic — but they were quite painful, they fit so tight."

Bonham Carter, who plays the loopy fairy godmother, electrifies the screen in a silver-white number that glows in the dark — courtesy of 4,000 LED lights powered by a 15-pound (7 kg) battery pack she said was attached to her posterior.

"I was a walking lamp," Bonham Carter said, adding it had not crossed her mind that she would be acting at night for the scene where she turns a pumpkin into a coach, mice into horses and fits Cinderella out with the gown and glass slippers.

"There was a lovely young man, Belgian, who came all the way from Belgium, from (electronics company) Philips and he'd come and turn me on ... before we'd start shoot-

ing," Bonham Carter said, to laughter.

"But it was an extraordinary dress ... It was a magnificent creation."

Designer Powell said she had had a lot of fun making the gowns.

"I think for me the biggest challenge was to live up to the expectations of Cinderella and not disappoint every six-year-old with something that didn't work," she said.

"The story is a costume-designer's dream. You get to do the good, kind princess and the handsome prince and then the baddies and the baddies really are the best fun," she said.

Cate Blanchett, dolled up like a high-society courtesan, plays the evil stepmother, while Sophie McShera and Holliday Grainger, in pastel and polka-dot horrors, play the stepsisters.

The film, directed by Kenneth Branagh, opens next month.

Reuters

LOS ANGELES, 14 Feb — James Franco is set to take part in '11/22/63', an adaptation of King's novel of the same name which is about a time-travel John F Kennedy assassination.

The thriller from J J Abrams' Bad Robot Productions and Warner Bros TV will be a nine-hour miniseries, reported Ace showbiz.

In the upcoming project, Franco, 36, will play Jake Epping. He is a high-school English teacher who travels back in time to early September 1958 and tries

to prevent President Kennedy from being shot.

Epping's mission, however, is threatened by Lee Harvey Oswald and the past which doesn't want to change.

The '11/22/63' project was announced last year.

"I've been a fan of Stephen King since I was in junior high school. The chance to work with him at all, let alone on a story so compelling, emotional and imaginative, is a dream," Abrams said in a statement back then.

PTI



James Franco

Oscar winner behind 'Birdman' filming daunted by one long shot

LOS ANGELES, 14 Feb — Cinematographer Emmanuel Lubezki was finishing the complex filming of "Gravity" when director Alejandro G Inarritu approached him with a daunting proposal: To film "Birdman" in a way that makes the movie appear to be one continuous shot.

In an interview with Reuters, Lubezki said his first thought was: "I hope I don't get to do this" because it was such a big challenge and I didn't want it to be gimmicky."

Known popularly as "Chivo" ('goat' in Spanish), Lubezki is a favourite to win the Academy Award on 22 February for best cinematography, a year after the Mexican earned his first for space thriller "Gravity."

"Birdman" is also a front-runner for best picture.

A seven-time Oscar nominee, the 50-year-old Lubezki has what Inarritu describes as "beautiful talent and exquisite taste," and together they have created a "terrific



Emmanuel Lubezki poses with his award for best cinematography for his film 'Gravity' at the 86th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 2 March, 2014.

REUTERS

process." They are now making their second film.

When Inarritu won the Directors Guild award last weekend, he joked with "Gravity" director and fellow Mexican Alfonso Cuarón about their "shared secret weapon."

Still, Lubezki gives Inarritu full credit for the idea of the long, unbroken shot: From the

beginning, the director wanted to immerse the audience in Riggan Thomson, played by Michael Keaton, and the collapse of his life as the former superhero actor attempting a comeback in his own Broadway play.

"He wanted this one shot not to be completely objective, so that made it very hard," Lubezki said. "The shot is sometimes very subjective, so you are feeling what he is feeling and you are watching what he is watching, and then goes back to reveal the environment."

It was a formidable challenge for the actors to be filmed in long takes, accustomed as they are to working in tiny bursts of scenes. Keaton felt the full burden.

"He realized that this was no joke, that he had to learn all the dialogue and go through this whole emotional grind in very, very, long takes," Lubezki said.

Only recently did Lubezki realize that "Michael Keaton is playing, like, five characters" in Riggan's different states of mind.

"Sometimes he goes from one character to another, to another, in the same take with no safety net, so it is really, really hard," he said.

The whole undertaking would have been much more taxing for Lubezki if Inarritu had gotten his wish of truly doing the movie in one unbroken shot, in a theatre that had everything they needed.

"I just got lucky that we couldn't find a theatre to do all the guts of the theatre and all the hallways and dressing rooms that worked," he said. "And because of that, we had to chop."

When they were nearly done shooting and they started to put a lot of the movie together, Lubezki said he suddenly felt "the pay-off was immense."

"I have seen a lot of movies that have very long shots, but I have never seen a movie that is partly a comedy, that uses the close-ups these ways," he said. "There was something very special about it."

Reuters

Visual effects, sound, technical wizards awarded before Oscars

BEIJING, 14 Feb — The Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences handed out its Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards to the visual effects, sound and technical wizards two weeks before the Oscars.

It's typically held two weeks prior to the Oscars, and though the average moviegoer probably wouldn't recognize many of the award winners, who play vital part of making movies.

From the team which made it possible to digitally curl and trim outrageous hair in "The Hobbit" trilogy to the inventors of a high-speed car chase camera used in James Bond film "Casino Royale", some of the most ingenious behind-the-scenes innovators were awarded at the ceremony held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The event gave awards to 58 individuals for 21 scientific and technical achievements. The big ones went to Dr Larry Hornbeck and David Winchester Gray.

Veteran sound engineer and Dolby Laboratories executive David W Gray was awarded for his groundbreaking work on movie sound. Hornbeck was awarded for the invention of a digital micromirror technology, the Digital Micromirror Device (DMD), used in DLP Cinema projection.—Xinhua

50 Cent disagrees with West's comment on Beck's Grammy win

LOS ANGELES, 14 Feb — Rapper 50 Cent says singer Beck deserves to win the Album of the Year Awards in Grammys over Beyoncé.

The rapper said Grammy trophies sometime go to the wrong artists but disagreed with West's statement about how Beyoncé

Knowles was more deserving, reported Ace Showbiz. "(Beck) produced the record, he wrote the record. There's 11 producers on Beyoncé's album — Kanye, being a producer and a writer should see that, but you get jaded," he said. West even crashed Beck's Grammy acceptance speech.—PTI

Rapper 50 Cent said Grammy trophies sometimes go to the wrong artists but disagreed with West's statement about how Beyoncé Knowles was more deserving.

PTI



GENERAL

China stresses tourist safety for coming holidays

BEIJING, 14 Feb — The State Council, China's cabinet, has called for strengthened safety measures for tourists for the upcoming dual holidays after a deadly stampede in Shanghai on the New Year eve.

"(Related departments) should be on alert of potential risks and keep a strong sense of responsibility so as to map out sound arrangements and safety measures to ensure the security of tourists' lives and assets,"

said a circular from the cabinet on tourists' safety for the Spring Festival holiday and the Lantern Festival in early March.

The circular cited the deadly stampede in the Bund, Shanghai's riverfront tourist hotspot where 36 were killed on 31 December while people gathered to usher in the new year. The tragedy saw 11 local officials punished.

"The lessons from the Shanghai stampede and

similar accidents should be well learned," it said.

According to the document, local governments at or above the county level are responsible for coordinating efforts to ensure tourists' safety within their jurisdictions, and detailed obligations must be delegated to specific people.

The cabinet vowed to pursue the liabilities of officials for inadequate safety measures, slack supervision or duty negligence that lead

to severe tourist safety accidents. The circular called on local authorities to focus on mass gatherings and celebration activities, urging key tourist attractions and large hotels to map out emergency response plans in case of stampede and fire.

It also stressed safety checks targeting accommodations, shopping malls, passenger vehicles, cable cars, elevators and other facilities in popular tourist sites.—Xinhua

Germany returns books worth 2.5 million euros stolen from Italian libraries

MUNICH, 14 Feb — German authorities on Friday returned 500 historical books including original works by Renaissance scientists Galileo Galilei and Nicolaus Copernicus, stolen from Italian libraries three years ago, to Naples prosecutors.

Most of the books, worth around 2.5 million euros, were stolen from the Girolamini library in Naples, according to Italian prosecutors. German authorities seized them in a Munich auction house at the Italians' request.

The former director of the library, Massimo De Caro, was convicted of stealing the books and served a jail sentence before being put under house arrest.

"As director his role was to do all he could to protect and preserve the books. However, he reversed his function. By taking advantage of his position, he was



One of over 500 ancient books, with original editions of Galileo Galilei and Nicolaus Copernicus among them, is presented by German police during a news conference at the Munich Federal state police headquarters, on 13 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

able to remove books," said prosecutor Vincenzo Piscitelli, in Munich to collect the works.

"He deactivated the security alarm systems, carried out his activities

during night hours or during the holidays when library staff were not there. He was alone, he had the keys, everyone knew he was the director. Therefore he was able to work in complete

freedom," he added.

Prosecutors are still trying to discover how many books disappeared in total from the library, which is one of Italy's oldest and richest.—Reuters

Cursed striker Carroll faces another long lay-off

LONDON, 14 Feb — Type the name of West Ham United striker Andy Carroll into any internet search engine and you will be greeted with page after page chronicling various

failing parts of his body. You will also find a few more describing those all too rare days when he was fit enough to terrorise defences for club and country.

A torn knee ligament,

and surgery on Tuesday, means there will be no more of those this season for the man who cost West Ham a club record of around 16 million pounds (\$24.63 million) to sign from Liverpool

in 2013.

Past history suggests Carroll's recovery time will be anything but speedy.

"The recovery phase is expected to keep Carroll out for the remainder of the 2014/15 season," a club statement said.

It is a familiar tale of woe.

When Carroll finally made his move permanent in the summer of 2013, he spent the first half of the season sidelined with a foot injury more commonly associated with ballerinas.

On returning he scored twice in 16 appearances. Before the start of this season Carroll injured his ankle on a pre-season tour of New Zealand and needed surgery in the United States that kept him out until November.

Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(15-2-2015 07:00 am~ 16-2-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|---|--|
| * News | * Myanmar Masterclass: 3D |
| * The Iron Rider | * News |
| * Lady Pilot | * The Exhibition Hall of The Great Chronicle of Buddha |
| * News | * A Monk's Robe |
| * Continuation In Rural Tradition | * News |
| * News | * Lantern Floating Festival in Kyauk Kyi Township |
| * Sagaing: Gold Leaf | * Htan Taw Drums "Osi" |
| * Sagaing: Pe Kwe Kone Nat Festival | * News |
| * News | * Pet Fish Biz |
| * Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Jivitadana Hospital) (I) | * Pride of Myanmar — Bagan arts and handicrafts |
| * Entrepreneur: Dr Thin Nwe Win | * News |
| * News | * Pa O in the Union |
| * Food Trip (Episode-9) | * In the Studio "Zaw Lin Oo" |
| * Today Myanmar "Japanese Cuisine: Sushi" | |
| * News | |
| * U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (Part-II) | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(15-2-2015, Sunday)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 6:00 am | 7:00 am |
| * Alinka Wutyi Music Troupe | * Myanmar Video |
| 6:20 am | 8:20 am |
| * Game for Children | * Sing & Enjoy |
| 6:50 am | 9:25 am |
| * Fashion Show Music | * Myanmar Movie |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(15-2-2015, Sunday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 12:50 pm |
| * Paritta by venerable Min Gun Sayadaw | * Myanmar Movies (Part-1) |
| 6:30 am | 2:35 pm |
| * Physical Exercise | * Myanmar Movies (Part-2) |
| 6:40 am | 3:00 pm |
| * Documentary | * News/ International News |
| 7:00 am | 4:35 pm |
| * News/ Weather Report | * University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Second Year (Myanmar) |
| 7:30 am | 5:35 pm |
| * Head Line News | * People's Talks |
| 7:35 am | 6:30 pm |
| * National Sports Games | * Head Line News |
| 8:00 am | 7:00 pm |
| * News/ International News | * News |
| 8:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| * Business News | * Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society) |
| 9:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| * Weekly Entertainment | * News / International News / Weather Report |
| 10:35 am | 9:00 pm |
| * Documentary | * News |
| 11:35 am | * National Sports Games |
| * Amazing World | * Tasty Trip |
| 12:00 noon | * Sing & Enjoy |
| * News / International News / Weather Report | |
| 12:35 pm | |
| * Round up of the Week's International News | |



Andy Carroll (L) challenges James Chester during an English Premier League soccer match at Upton Park in London on 18 Jan, 2015.— REUTERS

Porto close gap at top in Portugal to one point

LISBON, 14 Feb — Yacine Brahimi scored the only goal of the game to give Porto a 1-0 victory over Guimaraes on Friday that closed the gap at the top of the table in the Portuguese league to within a single point of Benfica.

Brahimi's goal came in the 30th minute after Danilo's cross had been brought down by Oliver in the area and with one swift turn later, the Algerian was left with a relatively easy chance to slot home, which moved them to 49 points on the table.

With Porto due to

travel to Basel for their Champions League round of 16 game next Wednesday, they will be happy to have got the potentially tricky game out of the way before their European commitments.

They can now wait to see if Benfica (50) and Sporting (43) can maintain the status quo this weekend, with wins over Setubal and Belenenses respectively. Os Encarnados disposed of Setubal in midweek to reach the Taça de Liga (League Cup) final and must now play them for the second time in four

days on Sunday.

Sporting have the seemingly harder task where they must try to defeat a resurgent Belenenses side who are showing good form under coach Lito Vidigal and then need to restart their Europa League campaign against Wolfsburg next week.

Although Benfica have been temporarily pegged back, of the three leaders they appear to have by far the easiest run of fixtures ahead of them, with the added bonus of no European commitments to distract them. — Reuters

World Series of Boxing: Zhou Di of China beats Said of Morocco



Zhou Di (R) of China fights against Harnouf Said of Morocco during their men's 75kg match at the World Series of Boxing (WSB), in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province, on 13 Feb, 2015. China won with 4-1 in total. —XINHUA

Atletico squad is even stronger than last season — Juanfran

MADRID, 14 Feb — After they sold top scorer Diego Costa and fullback Felipe Luis to Chelsea, some predicted Atletico Madrid would struggle to repeat their achievements in 2013-14 when they won La Liga and reached the Champions League final.

The high-profile departures also included goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, who returned to parent club Chelsea after a loan deal, but defender Juanfran believes the arrival of the likes of Mario Mandzukic, Antoine Griezmann and, most recently, Fernando Torres means the current squad is even better.

Results on the pitch suggest he may be right.

Atletico are third in La Liga, three points behind Barcelona and four adrift of leaders Real Madrid

following their 4-0 humiliation of their city rivals at the Calderon last weekend.

They are also through to the last 16 of Europe's elite club competition to face Bundesliga side Bayer Leverkusen.

As Juanfran and his team mates prepare for Sunday's La Liga game at Celta Vigo, the Spain international praised the ability of the club and coach Diego Simeone to bolster the squad effectively and maintain the team's competitiveness.

"The club has made a big effort to keep great players and bring in other very important ones who have lifted the level of the team," Juanfran told a news conference on Friday.

"The squad is better every year ... and that speaks very well of the

work the club and the coach are doing," he added.

"It is very difficult for

Atletico Madrid to prevent key players leaving given what we are achieving.

"But this year, for me,

the squad is the best ever and I hope that next year it's better again so we can continue to challenge the

big clubs."

Atletico have proved they remain one of Europe's top teams and their drubbing of Real, who beat them in last season's Champions League final, was their second success against their neighbours in La Liga in 2014-15.

They also beat Real 2-1 on aggregate to win the Spanish Super Cup in August and knocked them out of the King's Cup 4-2 over two legs last month.

"The truth is we played a great match the other day but we have already put it out of our minds," Juanfran said. "For us they were three more points to help us in our goal of achieving great things. It has given us a lot of confidence to approach an extremely tough game against Celta." —Reuters



Diego Costa (R) shoots but misses during an English Premier League soccer match at the Liberty Stadium in Swansea, Wales on 17 Jan, 2015. —REUTERS

Serena, Bouchard pull out of Dubai event

DUBAI, 14 Feb — Australian Open champion Serena Williams has pulled out of this week's Dubai Tennis Championships, organisers said on Saturday.

Officials released a brief message on Twitter saying Williams and Canada's Genie Bouchard had withdrawn from the lucrative WTA event.

Williams recently won her sixth Australian Open title but the world number one sat out last week's Fed Cup tie for the United States because of a persistent, nagging cough. No reason was given for Bouchard's withdrawal, after she was awarded a wild card in the event. Venus Williams won the title last year and will be defending her crown at 15-21 February tournament. —Reuters

LONDON, 14 Feb — Louis van Gaal came under fresh attack on Friday over his style of play at Manchester United and acknowledged he was still struggling to come up with a preferred system.

Former England midfielder Paul Scholes labelled recent performances under the Dutch manager as "miserable" and questioned whether he was prepared to play risky, attacking football.

Van Gaal, who this week produced written charts to try and disprove West Ham United manager Sam Allardyce's suggestion that United were playing long-ball football, told a news conference he was not worried by the comments of former players like Scholes.

However, he said he was



Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal leaves the pitch after their English Premier League soccer match against Burnley at Old Trafford in Manchester, northern England on 11 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

still grappling with the right balance for a side that contains some of the world's best attacking talents in Angel Di Maria, Wayne

Rooney, Robin van Persie and Radamel Falcao.

"I have already played five or six systems and I am looking still for the balance," said Van Gaal whose side are in FA Cup fifth-round action against third tier Preston North End on Monday.

"In spite of the fact we are looking for the balance, our results are not bad and our defensive organisation is not bad. We also score a lot of goals so I cannot say I am very disappointed about that."

With United third in the Premier League, 12 points behind leaders Chelsea, a title challenge is unlikely but the FA Cup offers Van Gaal a chance to mark his first season with a trophy.

After labouring against

fourth tier Cambridge United in the fourth round though, he is taking nothing for granted.

"It is fantastic. I have already described, we have to play for the third time a lower team," he said.

"You know the world is against you, the environment is against you because everyone is with the underdog. But the chance that you can survive is higher because you are playing against lower qualities."

Van Gaal is waiting on fitness doubts Phil Jones, Daley Blind and Robin van Persie ahead of Monday's clash.

Jones limped off with a knee problem during the 3-1 win over Burnley on Wednesday while Blind suffered a blow to his head.

Reuters