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KEEP THE BOWL FULL

Purchase of rice for reserve expected to occur after summer paddy harvest

Soe Soe Yu

DESPITE a proposed plan to buy rice for state reserve following the possible impacts of El Niño, the rice purchases are expected to begin after the summer paddy harvest due to the recent hike in the price of rice, according to an official from the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

"The rice reserve scheme aims to ensure domestic rice sufficiency. It is impossible to buy rice at the moment due to the increase in local rice prices. So, rice purchases for reserve are expected to start at the end of April or the beginning of May," said Dr Soe Tun, vice-chairman of the MRF.

But the vice-chairman highlighted the importance of launching the rice reserve, giving a reason that no one knows how much El Niño will impact the country.

Myanmar has no rice reserve since last year, said Dr Soe Tun, predicting that the next government is expected to address the problem in August and September.

Describing the local rice prices as the highest in the world, Managing Director U Ye Min Aung of Myanmar Agribusiness

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Workers toss rice into the wind to remove sand and other impurities before transport. Photo: Aye Min Soe

Labourers, employers reach agreements to break EC deadlock

Workers are seen at a garmnent factory in Yangon. Photo: Aye Min Soe

Aye Min Soe

EMPLOYERS and representatives of employees reached five agreements to break the deadlock for finalising the Employment Contract (EC), according to Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM).

Following the government asking the two sides to seek ways to start finalizing the EC after the 31st January tripartite meeting in Yangon, employers and representatives of the employees held talks again on 8 January.

During the meeting, the two sides agreed to amend the controversial points in the EC in coordination with each other and to form a committee for drafting an employment contract, according to a statement released by CTUM Tuesday.

The two sides would work together to formulate the EC draft and to articulate it to employers, workers and the government, said the statement.

The 31st January tripartite discussion on finalising the Employment Contract (EC) between employers and employees of various manufacturing plants did not reach an agreement to set a deadline for the signing of the agreement by the remaining factories, companies and workers across the country.

The trilateral meeting included representatives from the government, employers and employees and it focused on the issues connected with 'probationary period for workers' and 'termination of contract' regulations prescribed in the EC contract draft, according to an official from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, who also attended the meeting.

The three parties will meet again on 13 February, and employers and employees will discuss the contract's sticking points.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw creates 15-member Joint Bill Committee

THE first regular session of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued for its second day with a focus on the process of forming a Joint Bill Committee yesterday.

First, Dr Myat Nyana Soe of Yangon Region Constituency 3 clarified the formation of the Joint Bill Committee, its duties and functions.

Next, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than informed parliamentarians of the formation of the 15-member Joint Bill Committee, naming Deputy Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U Aye Tha Aung as the chairman, U Tun Aung alias U Tun Tun Hein and U Zaw Min of Nawngkio Constituency as the vice-chairmen, Dr Myat Nyana Soe of Yangon Region Constituency 3 as the secretary and U Stephen of Kengtung Constituency as the joint secretary of the committee.

According to the second day of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session, its third day session is scheduled to be held today.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Japanese delegation visits Yangon East District Court

A 12-MEMBER Japanese delegation from the Japanese Federation of the Bar Association Committee on Intellectual Property (IP) Rights and the IP Lawyers Network visited Yangon East District Court yesterday.

The visit of the Japanese delegation was under a Myanmar-Japan cooperation programme to develop a project for effectuating the development of legal, judicial and relevant sectors in Myanmar and to draw necessary laws. The Japanese delegation observed a case hearing at the district court. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Officials conduct Japanese delegation around Yangon East District Court. PHOTO: MNA

Relief supplies for fire victims arrive in Namhsam from various parts of country

THE Namhsam fire victims received construction materials including bags of cement yesterday. Relief supplies for fire victims are arriving in Namhsam from various parts of the country.

The Shwetaung Group of Companies donated 6,270 bags of cement while other wellwishers presented other construction materials and foodstuff including rice and edible oil.

According to sources, 12 wellwishers donated K42,430,-000to the victims, and a cash donation centre received K84,409,000 yesterday.

Tatmadawmen, police force members and local people are taking part in the removal of debris in the fire-stricken town.

GSM service resumed in the town since 5 pm on Monday.—*Kyaukme IPRD*

Myanmar hosts workshop on public awareness of ASEAN Community

Participants of Workshop on public awareness of ASEAN Community pose for photo together with Union ministers and digintaries. PHOTO: MNA

A WORKSHOP on public awareness of the ASEAN Community took place at the Horizon Lake View Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, Dr Kan Zaw and U Aye Myint Kyu spoke on the occasion.

The workshop, set for two days, held discussions on matters of building the ASEAN Community in political, security, economic and socio-cultural sectors and the role of civil society organisations in the ASEAN Community.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Awareness Raising Workshop on ASEAN Community held

THE Opening Ceremony for the "Awareness Raising Workshop on ASEAN Community" was held at the Horizon Lake View Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the Opening Ceremony of the Workshop, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Kan Zaw, Union Minister for the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, U Aye Myint Kyu, Union Minister for the Ministry of Culture delivered their opening remarks related to the establishment of the ASEAN Community. Following the remarks of the Union Ministers, Mr. Achim Munz, Country Representative of Hanna Seidel Foundation, gave a speech.

Deputy Ministers and Permanent Secretaries of the Ministries responsible for the three ASEAN community pillars, and the Chairman of UMFCCI also attended the Session. A total of 50 representatives from Government Ministries, private sector and CSOs participated in the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop is to promote public awareness of ASEAN Community Building among all stakeholders including government officials, members of the private sector and the CSOs. The workshop was co-organised by the responsible ministries for the three ASEAN Community Pillars: Political and Security Community, Economic Community, Socio-Cultural Community: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Culture and the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

The workshop will continue until 10th February. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Presidential Awards for Excellent performance conferred on 33 groups by President

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein conferred Presidential Awards for Excellent Performance on 33 bodies yesterday for their endeavour for the country.

The presidential awards have been conferred annually since 2012 on those who strive for development of the country's economy and socio economic life of the people.

So far, 21 Buddhist monks and 460 people already recived the awards by the president.

Before the presentation, the president delivered an address.

President U Thein Sein poses for photo together with leaders of the groups conferred on president's excellent performance awards. PHOTO: MNA

(Following is an unofficial translation of the address of the president.)

I would like to greet all those who are present here including Union ministers, region/state chief ministers and regular ministers, distinguished guests and award winners.

Since taking office in April 2011, our government has aimed to fulfil the two common desires of the people in ensuring peace, stability and development. The government has presented excellent performance awards to those who strived for the growth of the country and for the socioeconomic development of the people since 2012.

For this year, organisations which have made great strides in the successful realisation of the government's sweeping reform process are set to be awarded.

Since 1 April, 2011, our government has been trying hard to turn the Tatmadaw government into a democratically-elected government, a centrally planned economy into a market economy and armed conflicts into a situation paving the way for ensuring a lasting peace.

Unlike other countries with a transition process to democracy focusing on political reform only, a sweeping reform process involving implementing of political, economic, administrative and private sector development matters took place in our country. Simultaneously, the government launched a peace process with the concept of ensuring development and democracy through peace.

Despite the strong desire of our government to build a new democratic nation, the country moved away from democracy in 1962 when it was brought under centralised control, including political and economic systems.

So, our government has strived to nurse our newborn democracy into a mature one. It is a great success that the country has achieved certain changes that have led to democracy after encountering challenges, difficulties and practical experience requirements.

The government, the people and Tatmadaw worked together to make a difference during the five-year period, bringing about democracy and positive developments to the second largest country , home to more than 50 million people, in the ASEAN region and with more than 60 years of armed conflict.

I would like to express my thanks to all those who believed and cooperated with me in implementing my policies.

I would like to also give special thanks to those from international organisations, local and foreign experts and non-governmental organisations who helped us realise our reform policies through the exchange of views and meetings.

Our government could have put the country on the right track to democracy. Now Myanmar is heading towards a bright future with stability and full potential for achieving democracy among other countries that have experienced the process of democratisation in the 21st century.

That's why excellent performance awards were presented to organisations for significant progress made during the past five years. The award presentation is a gesture of honouring leaders who led those organisations and their colleagues.

Our government's term is set to end soon but the country's reform process goes on. It is required for the progress achieved in the past five years to reach to a durable stage, and steadfast efforts are needed to see the completion of the process and to work to address the ongoing challenges.

So, I would like to stress the need to make our best efforts to promote the interest of the nation and its people whatever role you play without falling prey to racism, partisan or ideological differences.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President's Excellent Performance Award

Sr	Types of Awards
1.	Group striving for sustainability of Inlay Lake and environmental conservation
2.	Group striving for nationwide census
3.	Group striving for taking ASEAN Chair
4.	Group striving for successful holding of SEA Games
5.	Group striving for launching Presidential scholarship programme and upgrading of Yangon University
6.	Group striving for upgrading Yangon General Hospital and promoting health care services
7.	Group striving for preservation of ancient edifices
8.	Group striving for peace process
9.	Group striving for placing three Pyu cities on the UNESCO world heritage list
10.	Group striving for lifting economic sanctions on the country
11.	Group striving for establishment of special economic zones
12.	Group striving for ensuring external debt reliefs
13.	Group striving to become a member country of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
14.	Group striving for ensuring administrative reform
15.	Group striving for ensuring private sector development
16.	Group striving for ensuring electric sector development
17.	Group striving for successful holding of multi-party democracy general elections
18.	Group striving for handling international legal cases for the country
19.	Group striving for more collection of tax revenues
20.	Group striving for implementing green project
21.	Group striving for setting up of model farmlands and mechanization
22.	Group striving for ensuring social security
23.	Group striving to receive foreign aid, loans and developing projects in cooperation with development partners
24.	Group striving to ensure state defense, security, peace and stability and internal peace
25.	Group striving for the development of Nay Pyi Taw
26.	Group striving for transforming MRTV and newspapers
27.	Group striving for the promotion of investments
28.	Group striving for the setting up of One Stop Shop (OSS)
29.	Group striving for the development of Information and Communication Technology and telecommunication sector
30.	Group striving for the implementation of development undertakings in Ayeyawady Region
31.	Group striving for the development of the aviation sector
32.	Group striving for the implementation of development tasks in border regions including Rakhine State
33.	Group striving for the renovation of lakes and dams including Meiktila lake, Kyayni lake, Sittaung canal, Punhlaing river, Inlay Nadi lake and Htihlaing lake

Purchase of rice for reserve expected . . .

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Public Corporation Limited said at a meeting between the Ministry of Commerce and rice traders recently that it is hard to purchase rice for reserve due to rice price hike.

According to the managing director, there are enquires from foreign countries regarding the exporting of rice to Myanmar.

It is needed to launch the scheme in order to control increasing rice prices in the domestic market and to respond to climate change, said Dr Soe Tun.

According to the MRF vice-chairman, MRF suggested the government buy between 200,000 and 500,000 tonnes as reserve stock.

Tritone 8 miles junction condominium project launched

THE Tritone 8 miles junction condominium project is going to be implemented near 8 miles junction on Pyay Road in Mayagon Township, Yangon, with US$150 million investment by the Living Square Co and Korea-based Hanwha Corporation.

With the aim of fulfilling the housing needs of Yangon residents, the project has been initiated on 2.034 acre of land, beginning last June.

It is estimated the structure will be finished by the end of 2018.

The project includes 424 apartments in three towers, car parking allowing 774 vehicles, a luxury shopping complex, swimming pools, gyms, sauna and indoor golf range.

Home automation systems, 23 escalators and security system will be installed within the condominium.

Each apartment will be between 1,700 and 2,300 square feet.

It will be the first condominium being installed with advanced technology, a project manager said.—*Soe Win (MLA)*

A scale model of Tritone 8 miles junction condominium. PHOTO: SOE WIN (MLA)

Crime News

Car burglars arrested in Nay Pyi Taw

THREE young men suspected of stealing money from parked cars along the Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, were caught in the act yesterday and arrested by police on 7 February.

Acting on a tip-off, police from the Shwedwingon Myoma Police Station, led by Sub-Inspector Thet Shwe, were patrolling the car park when the gang of burglars arrived in a ProBox car and attempted to steal money from parked cars.

Chit Oo Maung, 22; Kyaw Min Naing, 27; and Zin Lin Aung (Aka Zin Lay), 25, are all from Lewe Township.

The police seized a knife, a pair of pliers, seven pencil-sharpening knives, two screw drivers, two catapults, two flashlight, a Zenith watch, K10,000, three mobile phones and the burglars' ProBox car.—*Ko Ko Nay*

Chit Oo Maung, Kyaw Min Naing and Zin Lin Aung (Aka Zin Lay). PHOTO: KO KO NAY

Two 12-wheel trucks collide head-on

TWO 12-wheel trucks collided head on between mile posts 272/ 4 and 272/ 5 on the old Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw, on 6 February. One truck was driven by one Aung Than Oo from Wandurin, while the other truck was driven by one U Tin Aye from Kalaw. The trucks collided at 1:30am on Saturday.

The accident took place near Nweyet Village. Driver U Tin Aye from Kalaw received some cuts and bruises in the accident. Legal action has been taken against both drivers.—*Kyemon 092*

Yabba and firearm seized in Hpa-An

A LOCAL anti-drug squad seized Yabba at Kannar road, Hpa-An township, Kayin State on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, members of the police arrested Aung Zaw Htet, 31, Min Min Oo, 28, Kuon Sit Paing alias Pho Aung, 26, Saw Myint Oo Kyaw alias Naw Htoo, 22, and Aung Tun Win alias Kalarlay, 23 with 91 Yabba.

When interrogated, the suspects admitted that they had received the pills from one Kyaw Soe Lwin, 32.

Local police station has detained the five men while searching for Kyaw Soe Lwin.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined investigation team comprising officers and staff from Mon Police station discovered a gun of Germany manufacture during their raid on his place. The police are filing charges against the man. — *Tun Tun Htway (Hpa-An)*

Aung Zaw Htet, Min Min Oo, Kuon Sit Paing alias Pho Aung, Saw Myint Oo Kyaw alias Naw Htoo, and Aung Tun Win alias Kalarlay. PHOTO: TUN TUN HTWAY

A 22 wheel vehicle turning over. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWAR)

A 22 wheel vehicle turned over

A 22 wheel vehicle driven by Aung Kyaw Soe, 25, turned over when he lost control on Yangon-Mandalay road, near Nyaung Pin Gaing village, Yedashe, Bago region on Sunday.

The driver of the vehicle was not injured.

The driver is being charged for his careless driving by police station.— *Ko Lwin (Swar)*

South Korea says working with US, Japan on 'strong' North Korea sanctions

SEOUL/WASHINGTON — South Korean President Park Geun-hye spoke with US President Barack Obama and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe yesterday, agreeing to work for "strong and effective" UN sanctions against North Korea following its weekend rocket launch.

North Korea says it put a satellite into orbit on Sunday, but the United States and its allies see the launch as cover for Pyongyang's development of ballistic missile technology that could be used to deliver a nuclear weapon across the Pacific Ocean.

In a telephone conversation yesterday, Park and Obama agreed various sanctions outside the UN were also needed to punish North Korea, Park's office said in a statement.

"The two leaders agreed for the two countries to cooperate closely for the adoption of strong and effective sanctions resolutions as a united response by the international community against the North's nuclear test and a rocket launch using ballistic missile technology," the presidential Blue House said.

The UN Security Council on Sunday strongly condemned North Korea's rocket launch and promised to take action, while Washington vowed to ensure the 15-nation body imposed "serious consequences" on Pyongyang as soon as possible.

However, China, North Korea's key ally and a veto-wielding member of the United Nations Security Council, has resisted harsh sanctions sought by the United States and South Korea following the North's 6 January test of a nuclear device Pyongyang claimed is a hydrogen bomb.

A senior US official said on Monday that China agrees any new UN resolution on North Korea will include additional sanctions and go beyond previous steps, but Washington is urging Beijing to put even more pressure on Pyongyang.

China is in "unique position" as North Korea's neighbour and ally to compel it to abandon its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes, the official told Reuters.

"It's clear to me that our Chinese friends have indicated that the UN Security Council's response will include sanctions and does need to go beyond previous resolutions," he said.

"The key of course is what exactly are the specific actions that we are going to take together and that's the focus of our efforts right now," the official said. "We have made clear that China can do more and needs to do more."

Proposed sanctions have not been made public, but one diplomat told Reuters that Washington was hoping to tighten international restrictions on North Korea's banking system. Beijing was reluctant to support that step for fear of worsening conditions in its impoverished neighbour, the diplomat said.

This week, the top US military commander will discuss North Korea's latest satellite launch with his Japanese and South Korean counterparts as part of efforts to strengthen military ties between the three countries, US defence officials said on Monday. The United States and South Korea announced after the missile test they had begun formal discussions about the possibility of deploying an advanced missile defence system to which China has objected, arguing it could undermine its strategic deterrent.—*Reuters*

South Korean President Park Geun-hye. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Thai-US security ties still feel chill of 2014 coup

Thai soldiers carrying various national flags participate in a parade during the opening ceremony for Cobra Gold military exercise at a Royal Thai Marine corps headquarter in Chonburi, east of Bangkok, on 9 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

SATTAHIP, (Thailand) — The largest multilateral military exercise in Asia-Pacific kicked off yesterday in Thailand, with the United States maintaining a scaled down presence due to a 2014 coup in Bangkok and calling for a swift return to democracy. The exercise, attended by some 27 countries this year, also comes amid rising tension in the region following North Korea's latest rocket launch.

It also follows an attack in Jakarta last month that killed eight and was claimed by Islamic State, the radical group's first assault on Indonesia.

The Cobra Gold military exercise has been held annually in Thailand for more than three decades but the United States scaled down its presence following a May 2014 coup by the Thai military.

"As in 2015 when the exercise was significantly refocused and scaled down in light of the military coup, in 2016 it will remain somewhat reduced in size... to reflect US concerns about Thailand's political developments," US Ambassador to Thailand Glyn Davies told reporters.

"Diplomatic ties are not on hold with Thailand. Certainly the military ties are not on hold with Thailand."

Washington has sent 3,600 troops for this year's exercise, the same as last year, said Major Dave Eastburn, a spokesman for the US military.

Thailand's junta, known as the National Council for Peace and Order, has faced repeated criticism for what rights groups say is a deepening slide into authoritarianism since the army took power.

Following the coup, the US responded by freezing $4.7 million of security-related aid and cancelling some security cooperation. The United States and others have called for a swift return to democracy for Southeast Asia's second-largest economy but, with the election timeline ever-sliding, how soon polls will take place remains unclear. The military generals running Thailand have previously made a new constitution a prerequisite for a general election but last month Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said the vote would go ahead in mid-2017, even if it had to be held under an old constitution. Since the coup, Thailand, a long-time Washington ally, has cosied up to regional superpower China, which says it supports the Thai military government. —*Reuters*

Earthquake measuring 5.7 magnitude felt in New Zealand capital

WELLINGTON — New Zealand's capital city Wellington was rocked by 5.7 magnitude earthquake yesterday, according to the country's earthquake monitoring service.

The quake's epicenter was 35 km (22 miles) southeast of St Arnaud, a small town in the north of the country's South Island, at a depth of 62 km (13 miles), according to Geonet's website.

Reuters witnesses felt shaking in Wellington, which has a population of around 450,000. There were no initial reports of damage or injury.

Earthquakes are common in New Zealand, whose two islands lie along the Australia-Pacific tectonic plate boundary. A shallow 6.3 magnitude earthquake devastated the South Island's Canterbury region in 2011, resulting in nearly 200 deaths and leveling Christchurch, the country's second largest city. —*Reuters*

Hong Kong riot police fire warning shots in bloody street clashes

HONG KONG — Hong Kong riot police fired warning shots yesterday during angry clashes that erupted when authorities tried to remove illegal street stalls set up for Lunar New Year celebrations, the worst street violence since pro-democracy protests in 2014.

Protesters prised bricks from the sidewalk to hurl at police, while others toppled street signs and set fire to rubbish bins in Mong Kok, a gritty neighbourhood just across the harbour from the heart of the Asian financial centre.

As many as 48 police were injured in the clashes, a police spokeswoman said. Hong Kong television showed police officers being beaten with poles and sticks as they lay on the ground.

Many protesters and police were also shown with blood streaming down their faces. The police spokeswoman also said 24 protesters were arrested.

Police said two warning shots were fired into the air, with pepper spray and batons also used to disperse the crowd. Television footage showed the shots were fired as protesters surrounded several traffic police, pelting them with rubbish, bricks and bottles and wrestling one of them to the ground.

The remains of burned bins and flower pots, chunks of brick and broken bottles lay scattered along the world-famous Nathan Road shopping strip later on Tuesday morning. A taxi with shattered windows was parked nearby.

The clashes broke out after police moved in to clear "hawkers", or illegal vendors who sell local delicacies, trinkets and household goods from makeshift streetside stalls. The hawkers, a common sight on Hong Kong's bustling streets, quickly attracted a strong social media following under the hashtag #FishballRevolution.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying told reporters at a hastily called news conference that the city's government strongly condemned the violence.

Secretary for Security Lai Tung-kwok said police were investigating "indications" that the clashes had been organised. When asked about the warning shots, Lai said police had taken all necessary actions.

The protesters had dispersed by 8am local time (0000 GMT) but more than 100 had confronted police in a tense, pre-dawn stand-off during the Lunar New Year holiday, when most of the city is shut down.

Police told Reuters they were awaiting orders about security plans for Tuesday night.

Paul Lee, a 65-year-old security guard, said: "This is not the first time there has been violence in Mong Kok."

"I am deeply disappointed in the government," he said.

The underground train station for Mong Kok, a bustling shopping district packed with street markets, shops and high-rise residential buildings, was closed temporarily. —*Reuters*

Protesters break a pavement for bricks to be thrown at riot police at Mongkok district in Hong Kong, China, on 9 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

Pakistan probe: no evidence links militant group to Indian air base attack

ISLAMABAD — A special investigation team set up in Pakistan to probe a deadly assault on an Indian air base last month found no evidence implicating the leader of the group India blamed for the attack, Pakistani security officials said yesterday.

The officials said the team interrogated Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar and his associates and found no evidence linking him with the 2 January attack on the Pathankot air base in northern India that killed seven Indian military personnel.

"We searched their homes, seminaries, hideouts and also examined their call records for past three months and found nothing dubious," a security official with links to the investigating team said.

The raid on the air base stalled efforts to revive bilateral talks between the nuclear-armed neighbours after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an unscheduled visit to his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, in December.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars since becoming separate countries in 1947, two of them over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

A spokesman for India's foreign ministry declined to comment on reports of the special investigation team's findings.

In January, Pakistani authorities detained Azhar and several members of Jaish-e-Mohammad, sealed offices belonging to the outfit, and shut down several religious schools run by the group.

The security officials said on Monday that Azhar remained in custody, but did not say whether authorities were considering his release.—*Reuters*

Campaign continues for Australian submarine contract

CANBERRA — An Australian submarine contract continued to be fiercely contested by Japan, France, and Germany yesterday, with the French bidder seemingly taking a swipe at Japan's submarine capability.

The Australian government is accepting confidential bids for a contract to construct between eight and 12 submarines for the country's navy, with a preference for the fleet to be built locally in Adelaide.

Sean Costello, CEO of the Australian subsidiary of French defense firm DCNS, told the Australian Defence Magazine Conference that awarding the contract to DCNS would further strengthen the relationship between Australia and France. "Where Australia selects France it selects enduring, geopolitical alignment and surety of supply," he said.

In what national broadsheet The Australian called a "thinly disguised swipe at Japan," Costello told the conference that, as the only nation with full submarine power, France was the logical choice.

"France is a complete submarine power and has national policies to remain so. A complete submarine power is one that can safely design, build, operate and sustain any class of submarine on an enduring basis," he said.

"Whatever the future holds, only cooperation with complete submarine power provides Australia with strategic choices."

Costello's comments came after *The Financial Times* reported that the United States has expressed concern over France's security measures regarding highly sensitive US military secrets. This has led to speculation in Australian newspapers that France is less likely to be chosen for the contract. Representatives from Japan's contender, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd., toured Adelaide-based shipbuilder ASC with the South Australian premier and minister for defence yesterday.—*Kyodo News*

Shark nets fail to protect swimmers on Australian beaches

CANBERRA — Shark nets used at most Australian beaches to protect swimmers do nothing to reduce the chance of being attacked, a new research has revealed.

Analysis of data compiled over 50 years by Laurie Laurenson, from Victoria's Deakin University, has found no correlation between the population of sharks and the number of attacks.

Laurenson suggested that measures such as nets and drum lines that were designed to lower shark populations were not making people any safer.

"I can show statistically that there is no relationship between the number of sharks out there and the number of attacks," Laurenson said in comments published by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) yesterday.

"It's just simply not there ... I'm surprised that it's not there but it's not there."

Barry Bruce, a shark expert at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), said while shark nets have caught sharks it does not mean they have prevented attacks.

"If you're dead you can't bite anybody. What we don't know is whether that shark would have ever bitten anybody and we don't know how many sharks swam through that area that didn't get caught," Bruce said yesterday.

A net, such as those used on Australian beaches, is a fishing device rather than a barrier, Bruce said. "It's a couple of hundred meters long, there might be two at a beach which is many, many kilometers long.

They are set at a depth offshore where they don't reach to the surface so thy only come up six meters or so from the bottom in 10 meters of water. In some respects you have to be an unlucky shark to get caught," he said.

In a three-month period in 2014 drum lines in Western Australia (WA) caught 172 sharks, 163 of which were tiger sharks and none were great whites.

However, Laurenson's data reports that tiger sharks have not killed anyone in WA for over 20 years.

There were 18 recorded shark attacks in Australia in 2015 according to the International Shark Attack File published on Tuesday resulting in two fatalities in New South Wales and Tasmania respectively.—*Xinhua*

From beyond the grave, 'Iron Lady' Thatcher haunts Britain's EU debate

LONDON — A quarter of a century since Margaret Thatcher was deposed by her own party, Britain's 'Iron Lady' has stirred a row: Would the hero of Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative party have voted to leave the European Union?

Thatcher, who died in 2013, grappled with Britain's EU relationship, supporting membership while in power but also scolding Brussels with a ferocity which ultimately triggered the party coup which ended her premiership in 1990.

When former foreign policy aide Charles Powell suggested Thatcher would have supported the essence of Cameron's EU deal and voted for membership in a referendum likely in June, he prompted an angry response from many other Thatcher fans.

"It must be a new low for the stay in campaign when they turn to the dead to support them," said Conservative lawmaker John Redwood who once worked as Thatcher's chief policy adviser.

"I find it disappointing that Lord Powell should presume to be able to communicate with the dead and tell us what they are thinking," said Redwood, who opposes EU membership.

Beyond the sensitivities of enrolling a deceased leader into a political campaign, the intensity of the row illustrates both the depth of feeling in Cameron's party as well as the ambiguity of Thatcher's own legacy.

In a vote that both supporters and opponents agree will shape Britain's 21st century fate, both sides are invoking the authority of both Thatcher and her hero Winston Churchill to support their cases. Supporters of membership say a British exit, or Brexit, would ditch attempts by Thatcher to preserve Britain's global clout by hedging European integration with a 'special relationship' with the United States.

But opponents say neither leader would have accepted Britain should submit to what they say is a doomed European super-state that punches below its weight on the world stage and stumbles from crisis to crisis.

"Margaret Thatcher's heart was never in our membership of the EU. But I am convinced her head would continue to favour staying in on the conditions now on offer," Powell said.

"There were certainly times as prime minister when her frustration with Europe boiled over. The one thing I never heard her propose was Britain's withdrawal from the EU."

Addressing a turn towards more overt scepticism about Europe after she left office, Powell said she later made incautious remarks about Europe but that he did not believe that was the real Thatcher speaking.

Thatcher, as leader of the opposition, supported membership of the EU's forerunner in a 1975 referendum but after winning power in 1979 she threatened to halt payments to the EU unless Britain got a refund, known as the rebate. While supporting the broader ideas of uniting Europe in her 1988 Bruges speech, Thatcher also said that Britain had no interest in "a European super-state".

Despite her fears about German dominance of Europe after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, she agreed to take sterling into the Exchange Rate Mechanism, which was intended to reduce exchange rate fluctuations ahead of monetary union.—*Reuters*

Eight died, 150 hurt in train crash in Bavaria: police

Members of emergency services work at the site of the two crashed trains near Bad Aibling in southwestern Germany, on 9 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAD AIBLING, (Germany) — Eight people were killed when two trains collided head on in southeast Germany yesterday, police said, adding about 150 people were injured, including 50 seriously.

The collision took place on a single track and one train was derailed, said a police spokesman.

The cause was unclear and police said that, alongside the rescue effort, investigations were starting into establishing what had happened.

The crash between two local passenger trains happened at 6.48am local time (0548 GMT) near Bad Aibling in the southern state of Bavaria near the border with Austria.

Dozens of rescue teams were on site and helicopters carried some of the injured people to nearby hospitals. The area was sealed off. The trains' operator, Meridian, is part of French passenger transport firm Transdev, which is jointly owned by state-owned bank CDC and water and waste firm Veolia.

It runs train, tram and bus networks in 19 countries and had revenues of 6.6 billion euros in 2014. State-owned Deutsche Bahn is responsible for the track. The line has a system that makes a train brake automatically if it goes through a red light.

Police will hold a news conference at 12.00 local time (1100 GMT).—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Taiwan developer arrested on suspicion of negligent homicide

TAINAN — Prosecutors in the southern Taiwan city of Tainan have arrested the developer of a building which collapsed during an earthquake yesterday killing at least 39 people, a government legal official said yesterday.

Hsiao Po-jen, director of the legal affairs department of the Tainan city government, told Reuters the developer had been arrested on suspicion of negligent homicide, according to information he received from local police.—*Reuters*

Two corpses found in Mexico after apparent abduction

MEXICO CITY — The remains of two young people who disappeared in eastern Mexico have been identified, authorities said on Monday, in a case that echoes the 2014 abduction and apparent massacre of 43 students that sparked international outrage.

The people were part of a group of five Mexicans abducted weeks ago by state police in the state of Veracruz and handed over to members of a local criminal group, according to sources familiar with the investigation.

The skeletal remains of the two youth were discovered at a ranch in Tlalixcoyan, Veracruz, about 240 miles (390 kilometres) from the capital, where authorities also found evidence of drugs and illegal fuel storage.—*Reuters*

Four killed in crash of Russian military helicopter

MOSCOW — Four people were killed when a Mi-8 helicopter owned by the Russian Defence Ministry crashed on Monday in the Pskov region of northwest Russia, local news agencies reported, quoting the ministry.

TASS said the helicopter was on a training flight when ground control lost contact with it.

Accidents involving Mi-8 aircraft are frequent in Russia, which has been criticised for its poor air safety record. In June 2014, 15 people died when a helicopter crashed into a lake in the northern Murmansk region.—*Reuters*

Kurz: Sealing of borders would overburden Western Balkans

SARAJEVO — Austria does not want to simply close its borders and leave the Western Balkan states to deal with the refugee issue on their own, but rather to find a common solution to the problem, Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz said in Sarajevo on Monday.

At a press conference with Foreign Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina Igor Crnadak, he said that if Austria just closed the borders, the Western Balkans would be overwhelmed by refugees.

BiH is not being hit by the tide of refugees, but it would like to help overcome the crisis, Crnadak said, adding that Sarajevo was willing to assist and take on the responsibility.

During the conference, Kurz and Minister of Civil Affairs Adil Osmanovic signed a bilateral agreement on scientific and technical cooperation to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina. —*Tanjug*

Indonesia jails seven for supporting Islamic State

JAKARTA — An Indonesian court yesterday handed down prison terms to seven men accused of supporting Islamic State amid a security crackdown on the militant group's suspected sympathisers in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation.

Indonesia has been on high alert since a bomb and gun attack in the capital Jakarta last month claimed by Islamic State stamped the group's presence in the region for the first time. Eight people were killed, four of them the attackers themselves.

"What was proven was the defendants' intent to conspire in, assist, and prepare terrorism-related activities," presiding judge Syahlan, who only goes by one name, said, adding that it was not necessary to prove they had actually carried out any attacks.—*Reuters*

OPINION

To be true to the name fourth pillar

Khin Maung Aye

With the freedom of press granted by the incumbent government as part of the democratisation process, the media be it print or electronic or internet has greater influence upon the readers, audience and viewers. In addition, all the print media publications could have saved time, money and energy since then, as they were no longer needed to undergo pre-press censorship process handled by the Press Scrutiny Board under the Ministry of Information.

It is worth recalling that this censorship board was formerly under the ministry of home affairs in order to ensure that legal action could be taken against those who had violated the rules and regulations regarding publications. This censorship team is now handling chiefly the application for publication licences and registration. Nevertheless, the censorship is still there in the form of post auditing. They are still checking all the publications to find out if the printed materials are in line with the political policy of the incumbent government. Although the ministry of information has stopped pre-press censorship, it has provided a policy framework within which all newspapers, journals and magazines are to cover the news and report in an ethical manner.

It is true that legal action is very rarely seen taken against the violators these days. As the media industry has now the press council to intervene in cases of disputes, complaints and grievances on the part of either the publishers or readers or a third party affected by the news reports carried in the newspapers, journals and magazines. However, the press council cannot take legal action against the violators because media are not controlled by the law; they are monitored by journalist ethics. As ethics are not binding, the violators cannot have legal action taken.

This being so, it is of utmost importance for the journalists to be ethical. In this function, the authorities are necessary to promote the importance of strict abidance by the journalist ethics. The Global New Light of Myanmar would, therefore, like to urge all journalists to change their mindset to become law-abiding citizens and ethical journalists in order to be true to their existence as the fourth pillar.

Write for us

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

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

Global Literacy

U Khin Maung
(A retired diplomat)

NOW the world is rapidly changing. In the new millennium, information technology, IT, or digital revolution is gaining momentum and growing stronger with everyday. And IT tools, such as computer, the Internet, electronic mail or e-mail are very much in use in every part of the world. As regards the Internet, Mr. Kofi Annan, former U.N Secretary- General has said '' the internet is the fastest growing instrument of communication in the history of civilization and it may be the most rapidly disseminating tool of any kind ever''.

To the credit of the Internet, the world seems to be getting smaller and smaller. What happens in one part of the world is known to the other part within seconds or minutes. What a wonderful IT tool! Well, let's say it again, the world seems to be getting smaller and smaller, so much so that we do fondly call our world "the global village." And in this global village of ours, we make more and more contacts and communications with each other, states with states, peoples with peoples.

You may like it or not, the digital revolution is real and irreversible. With it, the world is changing, living. And in this living world, the English language has also become increasingly popular. Why? Simply because it has become a must - have tool. On the Internet, the 80 per cent of the web -pages are in English. So, to keep ourselves abreast of the changing world, we must have global literacy.

I hope, you may wish to ask me; what do you mean by global literacy? Well, let me put it this way. "Global literacy means the ability to access and converse with the rest of the world with IT tools, such as — computer, the Internet and the mastery of English language as the international lingua franca." With regard to the growing popularity of English, I would like to mention a news report as follows:

"English is already the second language in about 75 countries, the first language in more than 30 territories, and has far more speakers outside of Britain than in it.''

And now, I would like to present to you something about the Internet as follows: The Internet is the world's largest computer network. It is not a piece of software or hardware. It's a huge collection of computers, cables, and people. When people talk about the Internet, they generally aren't thinking of the physical computers, wires, routers and other gadgets that compose the network, but of the collection of people, software, and tools that they "see" online. To the technically minded, the Internet is a network of computer networks that talk to each other using Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) Internet Protocol (IP). TCP/IP is a set of rules that define how messages can be sent between computers. A communications protocol allows different kinds of computers using different operating systems to communicate with each other. That is important because the Internet isn't made up of any single type of computer system. Using TCP/IP, hundreds of different types of computers are able to communicate on the Internet. This common set of protocols makes it possible for a user plugged into any network on the Internet to communicate with people or software based on any of the other networks connected to the Internet. 'To most of the people who use the Internet, the Net isn't about networks, protocols, and operating systems: it's a community of people. A very large community, which we might even call it "a global village". The Internet is a locale, a place. It is the closest thing we've got to "Cyberspace", which is an electronic place where people and programs work, learn, and coexist (sometimes peacefully, sometimes not.)

Within the last few years the term "the Internet" has slipped into everyday language, invading our newspapers, magazines and even our TV sets. Loosely defined, the Internet is an international network — or rather a network of networks — at the heart of which lies a number of powerful and permanently linked computers. To join the Internet, you connect your computer to any of these computers, and are then able to talk to and disseminate information to every other computer on the Internet.

In this write—up, I would like to present only a few significant Internet-related terms and their definitions as follows:

(A) WWW = World Wide Web. It is probably the largest method of information dispersal on the Internet today.

(B) Protocol = It is an agreed standard for network devices to exchange information with each other.

(C) HTTP = Hyper Text Transfer Protocol. It is the method by which the web page data is transmitted.

(D) NNTP= It stands for Network News Transfer Protocol.

(E) Website = Website means the Internet storefronts that must stay open continuously for business.

(F) Web page = It is a page in the website allotted for the Internet user or the Internet company concerned.

(G) Home Page = It is the first page of a set of pages.

(H) Download = Transfer of files/data/ from one computer system to another (for copying/receiving).

(I) E-mail = It's a correspondence system by which you can transmit text, pictures, sounds and other digitized materials across the world in a matter of seconds.

(J) Newbie = A new user, who probably doesn't know a lot about the Internet.

(K) User's Network = It's known by several different names e.g. "usenet", "news" "newsgroups"

(L) Node = Any device that is individually identifiable to a network.

(M) Binaries = Binaries are not texts or files. They are pictures, programs.

(N) Netiquette = Network etiquette, a cultural code of conduct, a dignified, but not universally agreed standard of behavior expected on the Internet.

(0) Hacker = A technically savvy/wise computer enthusiast who derives joy from exploring other people's computer systems, although not necessarily with intent to damage.

(P) Upload = To send files/ data from one computer system to anoter.

(Q) Cyberspace = It's the electronic infrastructure of the late 20th century. Cyberspace encompasses a virtual universe of ideas and information.

(R) Software = We have two kinds of software.

(A) Freeware

(B) Shareware

(S) Freeware = Free of charge. You can download some files and information from the Internet without any payment for them.

(T) Shareware = You can use and try out some files and information form the Internet for a specified period of time – free of charge. After that, you have to make some payment to use it.

In conclusion, I would like to express my view that the "Internet" is not merely a dot.com. fad which will come and go. It's a tool of the digital revolution, a part of our daily life. It will keep on going. The Internet, in fact, is a great thing on which we can do so many cool things. So, let's go on learning to achieve global literacy and become a global citizen through the use of the Internet. But, may I advise you, sir, to think global, but to act local, by protecting, preserving, and propagating our values,roots, and identities.

Reference

(1) Your Internet Consultant, MR. Kevin Savet.

(2) Internet culture in easy steps. MR. John Smith.

(3) Compuspeak (B.B.C)

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Shortage of fertilizer befalls Thabaung township after sales increase

Fertilizer bags. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

THABAUNG, a township in Ayeyawady Region, sees strong sales of farmland fertilizers and pesticides, since the start of the new year has caused a shortage in availability of the products, it is learnt from agricultural supply shops.

A combination of an increase in crop damage from pests this year, and the fact that the first months of the new year is when farmers fertilize their crops, has meant there is more of a usage and demand for fertilizers and pesticides.

"We're having such goods sales of fertilizer at the minute, even to the point where well sometimes completely sell out of stock." said Daw Min Thaung, owner of an agricultural store in Thabaung township.

The fertilizers brands quickest off the shelves are Palay, Tisupar and Shwe Nagar, while an average bag of fertilizer fetches between 20,000-26,000 kyats. However, the current trend in sales has bumped up the price of a bag by 2,000 kyats, it is known.

"As we've had good sales of paddy this year, we need to be sure to use fertilizer [on our crops] to be able to withstand damages from pests and insure a bountiful harvest for the coming year." said U Thant Zaw Linn, from Hsate Thwar village.

The shortage in supplies of fertilizer can be attributed to a lack of large agricultural supplies in the main town and few wholesalers in rural areas, say agricultural store owners.

"In Thabaung right now, sales of fertilizer are good. We're selling more than in the year previous. Supply can't keep up with demand as there is only one [agricultural] shop per village." said a paddy trader, U Ko Oo.

The township of Thabaung boasts 70 village tracts comprising over 490 villages, while the main business activity conducted in the region is agriculture with an average cultivation acreage of up to 100,000 acres.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Myanmar migrants arrested in Thailand on suspicion of gambling

Those assisting with Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand have made it known that Thai police have arrested a group of football playing Myanmar migrants in the heavily Myanmar populated southern Bangkok township of Mahachai after being suspected of carrying out gambling activities.

"What's really going on here is the police looking [for an excuse to arrest Myanmar migrants] as they don't have a proper case against them. If Thai nationals place 10,000 or 20,000 bhat bets [on football games] then the police won't arrest them. They've made these arrests on purpose." explained Ko Ye Min from the Aid Alliance Committee for Myanmar Workers (AAC).

It is known the aforementioned Myanmar migrants living in the Mahachai suburb were rounded up and arrested by police during one of their habitual Sunday football playing sessions.

The aforementioned migrants support group followed to assist the migrants on February 6 where they were being held in custody at the Htachayay police station.

The AAC urges those Myanmar migrant workers living in Thailand not to take part in gambling activities involving football, but to just play purely for fun.

"We just want Myanmar migrants to play normal football, not even for a bet of 10 bahts.

In accordance with current Thai law, legal action can be taken against those even betting over bottles of water. That's why we don't want people to place any bets on the football they play, but just play for fun." added Ko Ye Min.

There were over half a million Myanmar migrant workers residing in Thailand in 2014, while a migrant worker survey this year puts numbers above 600,000.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Gold fish lovers on the increase in Mandalay

GOLDFISH breeders in Mandalay have expanded their market to fulfil the needs of local goldfish lovers, selling different species of the variously coloured fish.

Goldfish breeders in Mandalay thronged with buyers. PHOTO: TAINTAMAN

"We currently display various kinds and sizes of goldfish in plastic bags for sale at a place in front of the Mandalay Palace moat two days per week, with prices ranging from K2,000 (US$1.58) to K15,000 ($11.87)," a breeder said.

"We also sell glass boxes to keep goldfish in".

"Oranda, Black Moor and Bubble Eye species see high demand, more so than others in the region."

A pet lover elaborated on his feeling of keeping fish, saying that he believes keeping goldfish bring good financial luck.—*Taintaman*

Mushroom growers see better prices

FARMERS in Magway Region generate handsome profits from their family mushroom farming businesses, locals say.

Mushroom farming has been increasing in Kyauktan Village in Minbu Township, Aungmyitta A, B and D wards in Magway Region within a year.

"We usually cultivate mushroom seeds in seven foot long and 3 foot wide tanks for two weeks. The easiest and simple techniques for mushroom growing help farmers produce between six and twelve viss (1.6 kilograms) per tank," said Tin Tin Lynn, a grower from Aungmyitta Ward.

She added; "We normally sell our produce at least K3,200 (US$2.53) per viss to buyers, mostly from markets across the region including Kantha Market, Mingalar Market and Magway Myoma Market."

Farmers also see a high demand for dried mushrooms as a vegetarian society in Magway Region prefer mushrooms over other vegetables because of its powerful health benefits.—*Zwe Htet Shin*

Mushroom farmers preparing the Mushroom before sending the market. PHOTO: ZWE HTET SHIN

Russian firepower helps Syrian forces edge towards Turkey border

BEIRUT/ONCUPINAR, (Turkey) — The Syrian army advanced towards the Turkish border on Monday in a major offensive backed by Russia and Iran that rebels say now threatens the future of their nearly five-year-old insurrection against President Bashar al-Assad.

Iranian backed-militias played a key role on the ground as Russian jets intensified what rebels call a scorched earth policy that has allowed the military back into the strategic northern area for the first time in more than two years.

"Our whole existence is now threatened, not just losing more ground," said Abdul Rahim al-Najdawi from Liwa al-Tawheed, an insurgent group. "They are advancing and we are pulling back because in the face of such heavy aerial bombing we must minimise our losses."

The Russian-backed Syrian government advance over recent days amounts to one of the biggest shifts in momentum of the war, helping to torpedo the first peace talks for two years, which collapsed last week before they had begun in earnest.

The Syrian military and its allies were almost five km (3 miles) from the rebel-held town of Tal Rafaat, which has brought them to around 25 km (16 miles) from the Turkish border, the rebels, residents and a conflict monitor said.

Syrians line up as they wait to cross into Syria at Oncupinar border crossing in the south-eastern city of Kilis, Turkey on 8 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

The assault around the city of Aleppo in northern Syria has prompted tens of thousands to flee towards Turkey, already sheltering more than 2.5 million Syrians.

In the last two days escalating Russian bombardment of towns northwest of Aleppo, Anadan and Haritan, brought several thousand more, according to a resident in the town of Azaz.

Aleppo, Syria's largest city before the war with 2 million people, has been divided for years into rebel and government-held sections. The government wants to take full control, which would be its biggest prize yet in a war that has already killed at least 250,000 people and driven 11 million from their homes.

Rebel-held areas in and around Aleppo are still home to 350,000 people, and aid workers have said they could soon fall to the government.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan was quoted at the weekend as saying Turkey was under threat, and Ankara has so far kept the border crossing there closed to most refugees.

There are now around 77,000 refugees taking shelter in camps on the Syrian side of the Turkish border, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said on Monday. He said that a worst-case scenario could see as many as 600,000 at Turkey's border.

After around a week of heavy Russian air strikes, Syrian government troops and their allies broke through rebel defences to reach two Shi'ite towns in northern Aleppo Province on Wednesday, choking opposition supply lines from Turkey.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she was "appalled" by the suffering of Aleppo, blaming primarily Russian bombing and suggesting it violated a UN Security Council resolution Moscow signed in December.

Kerem Kinik, Vice President of the Turkish Red Crescent, told reporters at the Oncupinar border crossing that Syrians were fleeing Russian strikes in panic. The closure of the road to Aleppo risked a much larger scale repeat of crises in Ghouta, a besieged Damascus suburb, or even Madaya, a blockaded town were residents have starved.

"The route to Aleppo is completely closed and this is a road that was feeding all the main arteries inside Syria. Unless this is reopened, you will see Aleppo falling day by day into a similar situation as in Madaya and Ghouta and you will see a deepening humanitarian crisis," he said.

"They are hitting any vehicles that are on the move, they are hitting aid trucks," he added. "We really urge that the Russian attacks on Azaz and Aleppo should stop, because if there is such a policy to clear this area of all human beings... then we may not be able to cope with the influx."—*Reuters*

PM calls for peace on Haiti's first day with no president

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Protesting Haitians should end weeks of sometimes violent street marches and join a dialogue to create a transitional government, Prime Minister Evans Paul said on Monday, during his first day as the temporary head of the troubled Caribbean nation.

Paul was prime minister under former President Michel Martelly, who left office on Sunday without an elected successor after a botched election saw a second round of voting cancelled due to the protests.

Under an 11th-hour agreement at the weekend, Paul will stay in office until parliament chooses an interim president.

"We should demand peace and dialogue. That is the only weapon that we should use, it is dialogue," Paul told Reuters.

"We don't need to mobilise people on the streets anymore, because all the demands expressed on streets are now on the table of state institutions."

Under the agreement, Paul, who made his own run for the presidency in 2006, would be succeeded by a consensus prime minister once parliament chooses a president.

A presidential runoff due to be held last month was scrapped after protesters took to the streets in force and opposition candidate Jude Celestin threatened to boycott the vote over allegations that fraud in the first round favoured ruling party candidate Jovenel Moise, who came first.

The protests have left one person dead.

A group of eight opposition leaders that includes Celestin rejected the weekend agreement, saying parliament was elected in the same tainted election and should not choose an interim administration. The group wants a Supreme Court judge to choose the next leader instead.—*Reuters*

US defence intelligence chief predicts increased ISIS attacks

WASHINGTON — Islamic State is likely to step up "the pace and lethality" of its attacks in the months ahead as it seeks to fan the flames of international conflict, the director of the US Defence Intelligence Agency said on Monday.

Speaking to a security conference, Marine Corps Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart linked his warning to the militant group's establishment of "emerging branches" in Mali, Tunisia, Somalia, Bangladesh and Indonesia. He also said he would not be surprised if Islamic State, which has created a self-proclaimed Caliphate across swaths of Syria and Iraq, extended its operations from the Sinai Peninsula deeper into Egypt. "Last year, Daesh remained entrenched on Iraqi and Syrian battlefields and expanded globally to Libya, Sinai, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and the Caucasus," Stewart said, using a derisive Arabic acronym for Islamic State. "Daesh is likely to increase the pace and lethality of its transnational attacks because it seeks to unleash violent actions and to provoke a harsh reaction from the West, thereby feeding its distorted narrative" of a Western war against Islam, he said.—*Reuters*

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 12th February (Friday) Union Day 2016, being a public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BATAM VOY NO (009N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BATAM VOY NO (009N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10.2.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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 Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S FAR SHIPPING LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HAJ WALID VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HAJ WALID VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10.2.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-1 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 Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S DINAMAR CO LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KARIN VOY NO (001)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KARIN VOY NO (001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.2.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T. where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S X-PRESS FEEDERS
Phone No: 2301185

5-yr-old girl becomes youngest 'Doctor of Yokai Monster'

Okayama Prefecture shows Mana Umemoto, who became the youngest "Doctor of Yokai Monster" at age 5 in Bizen on 2 December 2015. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

OKAYAMA — Mana Umemoto has become the youngest person ever to be awarded the title "Doctor of Yokai Monsters."

Mana from Bizen, Okayama Prefecture, western Japan, had just turned 5 when it was announced in late November that she had passed the beginners' level exam that tests knowledge of "yokai" creatures of Japanese folklore. Her fifth birthday was 8 November.

The exam was started by the Sakaiminato chamber of commerce and the Sakaiminato tourism association in the coastal city in the neighbouring Tottori Prefecture.

Shigeru Mizuki, late author of the popular yokai comic and animation series called "GeGeGe no Kitaro," was born and grew up in Sakaiminato.

"It was easy," said Mana, who scored 76 out of 100 in the exam. She started preparations just two weeks before the test, which was held in Sakaiminato on 25 October.

Mana, who was among 127 successful candidates, was 10 months younger than the previous youngest person to be awarded the monster doctorate.

In the beginners' exam, candidates need to identify some 50 yokai monsters and select their correct birthplace and characteristics.

Mana was 3 when she first developed an interest in yokai when she saw them in an atlas.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity to teach her hiragana characters and the geography of Japan," Madoka Umemoto, Mana's mother, said.

Madoka used stuffed toys to help her daughter understand the complex history of yokai monsters and made eight trips with her to Mizuki Shigeru Road in Sakaiminato, where more than 100 bronze statues of Mizuki's cartoon characters are displayed.

Mizuki died of multiple organ failure just a few days after Mana received notification of her test result. Mana always follows through on what she starts, said Madoka. She has studied English since she was 2 and last October passed Grade 4 of the Eiken practical English proficiency test, a level aimed at junior high school students. During the Tanabate festival held at her kindergarten last July, when it is customary to write one's wishes on a piece of paper and tie the paper to a bamboo tree, she wrote she dreamed of being Kitaro. She later explained to her mother that she wants to be Kitaro, one of the yokai monsters, "because he is strong and cool."

Her other dream is to become a doctor, so she care for her grandparents, who live next door, and cure them of their aches and pains.—*Kyodo News*

US researchers find new bacteria that causes Lyme disease

ATLANTA — Researchers have discovered a new bacteria that causes Lyme disease in humans, a US health agency said Monday.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, working with the Mayo Clinic and health officials from Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota, discovered the new bacteria, called Borrelia mayonii, the CDC said in a statement.

Previously, only one bacteria, Borrelia burgdorferi, was believed to cause human Lyme disease, which is transmitted through bites from by the blacklegged "deer" tick, the CDC statement said.

The new bacteria has so far only been detected in the upper Midwest region of the United States, the CDC said.

Researchers discovered Borrelia mayonii after studying blood samples of patients in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota who were suspected of having Lyme disease from 2012-2014, the CDC said. Samples from six out of 9,000 patients showed "unusual results" and prompted further study, the health agency said.

The newly discovered bacteria is similar to Borrelia burgdorferi in that it initially causes fever, headache, rash, and neck pain and later arthritis associated with Lyme disease, according to the CDC.

A deer tick, or blacklegged tick, Ixodes scapularis, is seen on a blade of grass, in this undated picture from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. PHOTO: REUTERS

But Borrelia mayonii adds nausea, vomiting and widespread rash, and causes a higher concentration of bacteria in the blood, the CDC said.

There are an estimated 300,000 cases of Lyme disease in the US annually, according to the CDC. The disease is rarely fatal, and most patients recover after a few weeks of oral antibiotics, the agency said.

The patients infected with the new bacteria were treated successfully with the same antibiotics used for those with Borrelia burgdorferi, the CDC said.

It is too early to say whether the newly discovered bacteria will be more or less dangerous than Borrelia burgdorferi, said Jeannine Petersen, a CDC microbiologist.

"We have fairly limited information in that our study described six patients," she told Reuters. "We need more patients in order to capture the full spectrum of those who might have less severe symptoms and those who might have more severe ones."

It is likely that the bacteria is a "recently emerged" organism since it did not appear in previous, extensive testing of blood samples of patients suspected of having Lyme disease, Peterson added.—*Reuters*

7th liver transplant death revealed with link to Kobe hospital

KOBE — A Japanese man in his 50s has died after receiving a living-donor liver transplant at a Kobe hospital last March, raising to seven the number of fatalities among the 10 patients who have undergone the operation at the facility, sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

The man received part of his sister's liver at the Kobe International Frontier Medical Centre and died in December, the sources said.

Reeling from the revelation last April concerning the high number of fatalities among its liver transplant recipients, the medical institution, which opened in November 2014, suspended medical operations in November last year and has pulled out of a Singapore clinic and a project in Indonesia as well.

The man, who was the seventh person to undergo a living-donor liver transplant at the hospital, had transferred to another medical institution in Kobe after the suspension of medical operations at the KIFMEC, according to the sources.

Following the transplant operation, the man's sister suffered complications in which the blood vessels in her liver clogged and she subsequently underwent two further operations to repair them, they said.

Of the 10 people who received living-donor liver transplants at the hospital, five died within a month of the operations.—*Kyodo News*

Sierra Leone discharges last known Ebola patient

FREETOWN — Sierra Leone's last known Ebola patient has been released from hospital, medical officials said on Monday, allowing authorities to begin a six-week countdown before declaring the West African country free of the virus once more.

Thirty-eight-year-old Memunatu Kalokoh was discharged on Friday, said Col Sahr Foday, the head of the Sierra Leone Army Medical Unit where she was admitted.

Kalokoh is the aunt of Mariatu Jalloh, the 21-year-old student who died of the virus last month in the same week that the World Health Organisation declared the region Ebola-free. The case triggered a country-wide hunt for people who may have come into contact with her. Kalokoh nursed Jalloh when she was sick.

Health ministry spokesman Sidi Yahyah Tunis said this meant the country had again started the 42-day countdown after which the outbreak will be declared over if there are no new cases. This represents twice the length of the virus's incubation period — the time elapsed between transmission of the disease and the appearance of symptoms.

Even after that, however, the WHO said cases like this one are likely to re-emerge as efforts continue to stamp out the virus that killed more than 11,300 people in two years, mostly in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea.

A health worker wearing protective gear stands outside a quarantine zone in a Red Cross facility in the town of Koidu, Kono District in Eastern Sierra Leone in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sierra Leone was first declared free of Ebola in November before Jalloh's case emerged and raised fears of a new upsurge. Health experts expressed concern that many of the routine procedures established to contain the virus were not carried out in her case.

Dozens of people who may have come into contact with Jalloh before she died remain missing, and the health ministry has urged them to come forward. That effort has been hampered by fear and suspicion in local communities.

"There will be no punitive action against them and we will treat them if they are sick," Tunis said.—*Reuters*

Politics, princess's trial cast Spain's King Felipe in testing role

Spanish King Felipe arrives for a meeting at Zarzuela palace in Madrid, Spain, on 28 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

MADRID — Sympathy for the Spanish monarchy is in short supply among the spectators heading into a theatre in Madrid's edgy Lavapies district, where an irreverent look at the former King Juan Carlos' fall from grace is playing to sell-out audiences.

His son and successor, King Felipe VI, who is trying to steer the crown through a period of sweeping change in Spain, also gets faint praise from the crowd.

The play, called "El Rey" (the King), is billed as a fresh look at the monarchy's place over the past 40 years and questions whether Juan Carlos really had a useful role in shaping modern Spain. It is less than flattering. Felipe, 48, took over the throne in June 2014 after his father abdicated following a series of embarrassing episodes. He is now facing his biggest test yet after the most fractured election result in decades left Spain without a clear government and thrust him into the role of broker between political parties.

At the same time, his sister Princess Cristina is standing trial on fraud charges, the first time a Spanish royal has been put before a criminal court. The new king's attempts to draw a line under the family scandals and modernise the monarchy have restored some of its popularity but scored few points with the theatre crowd in a neighbourhood known for its leftist roots.

"I suppose that given he is from a new generation, that he married a journalist, he might have a different attitude," said Jose Antonio Ortega, a retired theatre director waiting in the crowded bar to take his seat in El Teatro del Barrio. But Ortega doubted whether Felipe had any scope to bring change to an institution he sees as an anachronism. Others Spaniards may have embraced the monarchy's fresher, more frugal image under Felipe in the 18 months he has reigned. A poll in June 2015 showed a record 61.5 per cent approved of the parliamentary monarchy system, more than at the height of Juan Carlos' popularity.

Felipe has also managed to build up the type of personal following his father once enjoyed, with approval ratings of nearly 75 per cent.

Juan Carlos was at one time revered, largely for his role in smoothing Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy and in particular in foiling a coup attempt on 13 Febuary, 1981, when heavily-armed civil guards took over the parliament.

But a series of gaffes in recent years, including a luxury elephant-hunting trip to Botswana in 2012 at a time of severe economic hardship for many Spaniards, eroded a huge amount of support for the royals.—*Reuters*

Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Construction, Department of Highways
(Invitation for Prequalification)

Date: 9th February 2016

Loan Agreement No: MY-P6

IFP No: my-P6/JICA/ICB/PQ/15-16/001

1. The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (GOM) has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) toward the cost of the Procurement of Civil Works Contractor for Infrastructure Development Project in Thilawa Area Phase II. It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
2. The Ministry of Construction (the Employer) intends to prequalify contractors and/or firms for the Infrastructure Development Project in Thilawa Area Phase II (Access Road Project). The Project comprises of the following components:
   - Reconstruction/widening of the current single carriageway (2-lane road) to double carriageways (4-lane road) with median with a total length of 8.7km.
   - Relocation of the existing overhead/underground power lines (0.4kV, 6.6kV, 11kV and 33kV) to the underground about 45 km linear length.
   - Relocation of the existing overhead/underground communication lines (copper and optical fiber cables) to the underground about 51 km linear length in total.
3. It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in May 2016.
4. Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans (April 2012). The Eligible Nationality of the Applicants shall be Japan in the case of the prime contractor. In case where the prime contractor is a joint venture, such joint venture will be eligible provided that the nationality of the lead partner is Japan, that the nationality of the other partners is Japan and/or the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and that the total share of work of Japanese partners in the joint venture is more than fifty percent (50%) of the contract amount.
5. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the address given below, from 10.00a.m. to 4.00p.m.
6. The complete set of the PQ Documents are available in CD-ROM and will be obtained free-of-charge by interested Applicant(s) from 9 to 19 February 2016 on the submission of a written Application to the address below.
7. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address below **on 28 and 29 March 2016, from 10.00a.m to 3.00p.m. Myanmar local time** and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for Infrastructure Development Project in Thilawa Area Phase II (Access Road Project)."

U Win Pe

Director General

Director General's Office, Department of Highways, Ministry of Construction, Building No. (11), Nay Pyi Taw, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Tel: 067-407074, 067-407603, 095312243, 095070469, Email: winpe81@gmail.com, copy to: khinchit57@gmail.com, kyikyithwe@gmail.com, easterlily.eieimyo@gmail.com

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION Of MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ENERGY
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE
(INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)
(2 / 2016)

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-074(15-16)	600 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (2) Sets	US$
(2)	IFB-075(15-16)	900 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (1) Set	US$
(3)	IFB-076(15-16)	1500 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (4) Sets	US$
(4)	IFB-077(15-16)	Mud Agitator Unit with (15KW) Motor (4) Sets	US$
(5)	IFB-078(15-16)	Spares for GM 8V-71 Engine Ex Cementing Unit (21) Items	US$
(6)	IFB-079(15-16)	Assorted Sizes of Butterfly Valves(12)Items	US$
(7)	IFB-080(15-16)	Spares for Drawwork and Catwork(28)Items	US$
(8)	IFB-081(15-16)	Adaptors, Flanges and Gate Valves(24)Items	US$
(9)	IFB-082(15-16)	Rig Floor Handling Accessories (41) Items	US$
(10)	IFB-083(15-16)	Fire Fighting Truck (5000 L) (1) Unit	US$
(11)	IFB-084(15-16)	Low Bed Trailer (50 Ton) (2) Nos	US$
(12)	DMP/L-013(15-16)	Generator (18KVA) with Diesel Engine (1) Set	KS
(13)	DMP/L-014(15-16)	95mm^2 Cable, 1 Core, Aerial Bundle Cable, AL / XLPE (3500) Meters	KS
(14)	DMP/L-015(15-16)	10 HP Induction Motor Complete with Motor Starter (10) Sets	KS

Tender Closing Date & Time - 9-3-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 10th February, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph. +95 67-411097/411206

Ministry of Energy
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Invitation for Opened Tender (1/2016)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars (CIF Yangon) and Myanmar Kyats (MPPE Warehouse Yangon).

Sr.No	Description	Qty	Remark
(1)	200 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Sets	USD
(2)	600 IGPM Fuel Transfer Centrifugal Pump (Engine Driven)	2 Sets	USD
(3)	Fire Extinguisher	6 Items	Kyats

2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 9 - 3 - 2016, 12:00 Hrs
3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 8 - 2 - 2016 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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Migrant arrivals to Greece's Lesbos rise after days of bad weather

ON BOARD THE AGIOS EFSTRATIOS, (Greece) — They waved, cheered and let out sighs of relief as their rubber boat, packed with dozens of mainly Syrian and Afghan refugees, approached the Greek coast guard ship that would rescue them at open sea near the island of Lesbos.

After being pulled aboard one by one, the men, women, and children staggered, exhausted and relieved, to the boat's rear, where they huddled alongside strangers on Monday and waited quietly to be transported to the shore.

They were among more than 300 people, including scores of children and babies, rescued in under two hours from six rubber dinghies by the Greek vessel Agios Efstratios, patrolling near the Turkish border.

Greek Coast Guard officers move a baby from a dinghy carrying refugees and migrants aboard the Ayios Efstratios Coast Guard vessel, during a rescue operation at open sea between the Turkish coast and the Greek island of Lesbos, on 8 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

By early afternoon, more than 1,500 refugees and migrants reached the eastern Aegean island, a sharp rise in the rate of arrivals from Turkey after days of gale force winds and freezing temperatures.

Over a million people fleeing war, persecution and poverty in the Middle East and Africa have taken rickety boats across the Mediterranean to Europe since early last year. Over 50,000 people have arrived in Greece in 2016, the United Nations' refugee agency, UNHCR, says.

Thousands have died trying to reach Europe, and on Monday alone 27 migrants, 11 of them children, drowned off Turkey's Aegean coast as they tried to reach a Greek island, the Turkish coast guard said.

"We left from death," said 28-year-old Esma, face framed by a cream-coloured headscarf, who fled fighting in Syria's biggest city of Aleppo with her two children, hoping to reunite with her husband in Germany.

Sitting nearby, young girls consoled their crying siblings, one mother breastfed her hungry infant, while another woman kissed a copy of the Koran and held it up to her forehead.

For most on board, the hardest and most dangerous part of their journey will end once they reach Greece and continue their trek through the Balkans to wealthier northern Europe.

Eighteen-year-old English student Siba, who fled the Syrian city of Deir al-Zor, said her family spent 25 days trying to cross into Turkey from different entry points and five days on the Turkish coast, unable to board their boat to Greece because of choppy seas and storms.

Asked what drove them to leave Syria, she imitated the sound of explosions and said: "Our house is finished... My uncle is dead. He died in front of my eyes. His head was cut," she said.

Others spoke with sorrow of being forced to leave their homes. Mustafa, a 24-year-old mathematics student, also from Syria, said he longed for the time that refugees would be able to return safely to their country.

"No one wants to go. All the people want is to go back to Syria. If the war (ends), everyone will go to Syria and build the country," he said.—*Reuters*

Academy Award winner Sofia Coppola to direct first opera in Rome

ROME — Academy Award winner Sofia Coppola will make her operatic debut in May, directing a new production of Giuseppe Verdi's romantic tragedy "La Traviata", Rome's opera house said on Monday.

Coppola, who won the gold statuette for the screenplay of the 2003 film "Lost in Translation", was invited to direct the production by its patron, fashion designer Valentino Garavani, the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma said in a statement.

Garavani asked the American film director and producer to swap screen for stage after watching her 2006 historical drama "Marie Antoinette", in which

Sofia Coppola. PHOTO: REUTERS

the theater said she balanced "the classic and the modern".

Rome's opera house has long played second fiddle to its northern cousin, La Scala in Milan, and was plagued for years by financial losses, infighting and labour problems.

It finally returned to break even last year after cutting costs, accepting state funds and making peace with unions.

La Traviata will be supported by Garavani's foundation, making it the latest in a string of artistic initiatives to receive private funding after public money for the arts dwindled during Italy's three-year-long slump that ended in 2015.

Costumes will be designed by Garavani and the two designers who took over from him at the fashion house that still bears his first name. There will be 15 shows from 24 May to 30 June.—*Reuters*

Rihanna's 'Anti' scores Billboard 200 top spot

NEW YORK — Rihanna's new album, "Anti," officially took the top spot on the Billboard 200 album charts on Monday, a week after 1 million giveaway copies made it ineligible for Billboard consideration.

"Anti" sold 166,000 units, comprising album and song sales and streaming activity, in its second week of release, according to figures from Nielsen Soundscan.

That was enough to unseat Adele's "25" from the No.1 spot, while American rapper Kevin Gates' debut album, "Islah," took second place with 112,000 units sold.

"Anti," Rihanna's eighth album, was released on 27 January exclusively on online music platform Tidal. Through a deal with Samsung, a million copies were offered free to fans who signed up for Tidal membership, making "Anti" ineligible for Billboard charts rankings in the first week, since Billboard does not count sales of albums priced under $3.49.

British band Coldplay's "A Head Full of Dreams" got a chart bump ahead of Sunday's Super Bowl, where the group played the halftime show, rising to 16th place from 37th.

Coldplay and fellow Super Bowl artists Beyonce and Bruno Mars will have to wait until next week to see the chart impact of their performance on the most-watched annual TV event in the United States.

The only other Billboard 200 debuts were from Australian indie pop singer Sia, whose "This is Acting" album landed at No.4, and American YouTube star Charlie Puth, whose first studio album, "Nine Track Mind," came in at No.6.

On the digital songs chart, which measures online single sales, former One Direction singer Zayn Malik beat Drake to the top spot with 267,000 downloads of his "Pillowtalk" release.—*Reuters*

Beyonce to go on world tour from 27 April

LOS ANGELES — Pop star Beyonce has announced that she would embark on the "Formation" world tour from April.

The North American trek is scheduled to open on 27 April at Marlins Park in Miami, FL and hit stadiums across the country including Santa Clara, CA's Levi's Stadium where the Super Bowl game took place.

Beyonce, 34, will also visit Toronto, Detroit and New York until mid-June before starting the European leg later that month.

The "Formation" tour marks Beyonce's first solo tour since 2013's "Mrs Carter Show World Tour" which spanned two years and brought her to five continents.

Prior to this, she and husband Jay-Z joined forces for the "On the Run" tour.

Tickets for Beyonce's upcoming North American shows go on sale 16 February.—*PTI*

Beyonce. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thrilled 'Creed' nominee Stallone thought twice about going to Oscars

BEVERLY HILLS — Sylvester Stallone, thrilled to be back as an Oscar contender for the first time in 40 years, said on Monday he had thought twice about taking part in the Oscar ceremony because of the uproar over the scarcity of black talent in the contest.

Stallone, 69, is the only person from the boxing movie "Creed" to be nominated for an Oscar, although the film stars African-American Michael B. Jordan and was directed and written by Ryan Coogler, who also is black.

"I never thought I'd cross this threshold again," Stallone told reporters at the annual luncheon to celebrate all the Oscar nominees ahead of the Academy Awards on 28 February.

"I couldn't be more thrilled, and my daughters actually look at me now as an actor and not as a bad golfer," he joked.

Stallone was last Oscar-nominated for writing and performing the lead role in his 1976 movie "Rocky," which went on to win the best picture Academy Award without honouring his efforts.

He is considered a front runner for the supporting actor Oscar for reprising his role as Rocky Balboa, now a boxing trainer and mentor, in "Creed."

Stallone said he owed his success to Jordan and Coogler, who were among people of color, including Latinos and Asian-Americans, perceived as snubbed when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its nominees last month.

After black actor Will Smith and director Spike Lee said they would not attend the 2016 ceremony in protest, Stallone said he asked Coogler what he should do.

Actor Sylvester Stallone introduces a clip from the nominated film "Creed" at the 47th NAACP Image Awards in Pasadena, California on 5 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"(Coogler) said, 'Just go there and try to represent the film... We feel you deserve it, but eventually things will change.'

"I said, 'If you want me to go I'll go. If you don't, I won't. And he said, 'No, I want you to go.' That's the kind of guy he is."

The Academy has since announced plans to double the numbers of women and people of color in its ranks by 2020.

Australian director George Miller, whose action movie "Mad Max; Fury Road" is in the running for a best picture Oscar, told reporters he would think harder about diversity when making his next movie.

"I think what's good about what's happened, if there's a positive, is that it's alerted everybody to the problem. It's really interesting to me how television responded way earlier than I think cinema has in all countries in terms of diversity," Miller said on Monday.—*Reuters*

Hugh Jackman has another skin cancer growth removed

LOS ANGELES — "X-Men" star Hugh Jackman said on Monday he had another skin cancer growth removed from his nose, and urged people to wear sunscreen.

Jackman, 47, posted a photo on his Instagram account, showing a bandage across his nose. It was the Australian actor's 5th known basal cell carcinoma removal since 2013.

"An example of what happens when you don't wear sunscreen. Basal Cell. The mildest form of cancer but serious, nonetheless. PLEASE USE SUNSCREEN and get regular check-ups," Jackman wrote on the Instagram post.

Jackman, who also starred in the movie musical "Les Miserables," has, in the past, attributed his condition to not having used sunscreen while growing up in Australia.

He now gets checkups every three months, and has launched a range of sunscreens for children.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common form of skin cancer, afflicting more than 90 per cent of US skin cancer patients. Such carcinomas rarely spread, but if not removed, may damage or disfigure the surrounding tissue.—*Reuters*

As China tourists tighten belt, retailers face unhappy New Year

SYDNEY/HONG KONG — Watching a lone browser in his Sydney Chinatown shop, Bing Chen is worried business is being squeezed this Lunar New Year by what's ailing the world economy at large — the weakest Chinese economy in 25 years.

In years gone by, Chen would stay open until the wee hours, selling kangaroo skins and Australian wool to crowds of Chinese tourists. But as the Year of the Monkey begins, stores like Chen's are seeing a drop in trade with newly budget-conscious Chinese either staying home or spending less.

"Our customers have halved," said Chen, standing by neatly stacked shelves at his Sydney store. "We had to work till 2am and there were still customers buying things but not any more."

While record numbers of Chinese are travelling outside the mainland — 109 million last year, according to researcher GfK — Chen's fears echo data showing growth in tourist spending is dropping off quickly.

The China National Tourism Administration in December forecast 2015 outbound tourist spending at $194 billion, according to state media. That equates to per tourist spending growth of just 1.5 per cent, compared with a 16.5 per cent rise the previous year.

China's slowing growth is also showing up in weaker tourism spending much closer to home than Sydney.

In Hong Kong, visits from the mainland were down 15.5 per cent in December, compared to the year earlier, according to the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

Streets in Sheung Wan District, lined with stores selling dried seafood and various tonics, are quiet rather than bustling. Shop owner Lin Ying Jui says trade for his abalone, edible birds nests and natural medicines is the worst in decades.

A store worker adjusts Australian products on display for sale in Sydney, Australia, on 27 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

"I have been here for around 20 to 30 years, this year's business performance is the worst," said Lin Ying Jui.

Fuelling growth in the overall number of Chinese tourists is a new breed of younger, independent travellers from the mainland. Countries like Australia are investing in targeting that market, and more than 100,000 Chinese nationals applied for visas to visit Australia in January alone, a record for a single month.

But numbers of large, elderly tour groups are dwindling in Sydney's Chinatown. How much they and others will spend over the Lunar New year remains to be seen, and traders are bracing for customers being picky where they once were spendthrift.

"Price is extremely important," said Chenchao Zhuang, chief executive of Chinese travel platform Qunar Cayman Islands Ltd. "Consumers will have a wish-list of places, and wherever has the deepest discounts, that's where they'll go."

Back in Sydney's Chinatown, shop owner Anna Liu said Chinese tourists — her target customers — "wouldn't even haggle" in the past as they bought handfuls of vitamins, honey and kangaroo and shark extract products.

"They are more reluctant to spend their money now," Liu said. "They are more careful, they look up the prices online before they come to compare."—*Reuters*

Nearly 112 million watch Super Bowl 50 on TV, below record

Overview of half-time show during the NFL's Super Bowl 50 football game between the Carolina Panthers and the Denver Broncos in Santa Clara, California, on 7 February. PHOTO: REUTERS

SANTA CLARA — Super Bowl 50 was the third most-watched Super Bowl in US history with 111.9 million Americans watching the game on television, ratings data showed on Monday.

The TV audience for Sunday's showdown on CBS between the Denver Broncos and the Carolina Panthers was below the record 114.4 million viewers who watched the Super Bowl in 2015, Nielsen figures showed.

The Super Bowl is traditionally the most-watched television event annually in the United States, and TV audiences have risen for five of the last six Super Bowl contests. The 2014 matchup drew 112.2 million.

The 2016 figures do not include audience numbers for people who watched the game online, many of them for free over Internet devices like Apple TV and Roku. CBS said some 1.4 million viewers streamed the game on CBS and NFL properties.

Sunday's Super Bowl also drew big numbers on social media, with some 200 million posts, comments or likes on Facebook during the game, and 3.9 million Tweets during the halftime show that starred Coldplay, Beyonce and Bruno Mars, Facebook and Twitter said.

Following the Super Bowl, a special live edition of "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" drew 21.1 million viewers, about three times the show's prior largest audience which occurred when Colbert took over as host in September 2015.—*Reuters*

Lock of John Lennon's hair could fetch up to $10,000 at auction

DALLAS — A lock of singer John Lennon's hair is expected to sell for more $10,000 when it is sold at auction later this month.

Heritage Auctions, which is selling the hair of the late singer, said it was clipped and saved by a hairdresser in Germany in 1966. "To the best of our knowledge, this is the largest lock of Lennon's hair ever sold at auction," the auction house said in a statement.

The sale, which will be held on 20 February, will include other items linked to the Beatles.—*Reuters*

mitv Myanmar International

(10-2-2016 07:00am ~ 11-2-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	The Richly Blessed Gem Land
07:52	Am	Famous pagodas of Sagaing
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Pa O in the Union
08:50	Am	Today Myanmar "Development for Child Literature"
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Outstanding Lady "Thin Zar Phyo"
09:39	Am	Conflict & Solution Between Man & Elephant
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	Gardener: King Orange Plantation
10:40	Am	Lucrative Myanma Rattan Industry

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Dawei - Tavoy, Travel To The Southern Part of Myanmar
07:45	Pm	Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi"
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations- Gem Stone Painting
08:45	Pm	Diary of a Fisherman

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

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Chelsea's Zouma faces six months out after knee surgery

LONDON — Chelsea's French defender Kurt Zouma will be out for six months after surgery on a knee injury suffered at the weekend, the Premier League champions said on Monday.

The prognosis means the 21-year-old is ruled out for the rest of the season and will also miss the European championship finals in his home country, which open with France playing Romania in Paris on 10 June.

The injury came just as Chelsea, whose hopes of retaining their domestic title are effectively over after a poor campaign, prepare to play Paris St Germain next week in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Chelsea said the centre back, who has made a big impression this season, injured his anterior cruciate ligament when he fell awkwardly in the 1-1 draw against Manchester United at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

"Kurt will undergo surgery in the next 48 hours and is expected to be out for approximately six months," the west Londoners said on their website (www.chelseafc.com).

Zouma has been on the fringes of his national team ahead of Euro 2016, earning his first cap last March and playing twice. He has made 32 appearances for Chelsea.

Since Guus Hiddink replaced sacked manager Jose Mourinho in December, he has started every game.

"I will have surgery this week & will come back stronger. Thank you everyone for all the messages," the player said on Twitter.

His absence could mean more regular starts for reportedly unsettled defender Gary Cahill, while the club might also want to re-consider the future of captain John Terry, who said recently he was not getting a new contract.

Chelsea's French defender Kurt Zouma. PHOTO: REUTERS

England international Cahill had fallen behind Zouma in the pecking order and was growing concerned about the lack of playing time impacting on his Euro 2016 ambitions.

Chelsea are at home to relegation-threatened Newcastle United in the Premier League on Saturday.—*Reuters*

Messi undergoes tests for kidney problems

LONDON — Barcelona striker Lionel Messi is expected to play in Wednesday's King's Cup semi-final against Valencia despite missing training on Monday to have tests on his kidneys, the La Liga club said.

"Barcelona striker Lionel Messi will undergo several tests on Monday and Tuesday to assess the evolution of the kidney problems he suffered last December," Barcelona said in a statement on their website (www.fcbarcelona.com). "Messi will return to his normal duties with the first team on Wednesday."

The Argentina international missed his team's FIFA Club World Cup semi-final in December as he was suffering from renal colic, a type of abdominal pain often caused by kidney stones.

Despite the problem, he played in the final three days later and has also played in all of Barca's league games since. Barcelona visit Valencia in the second leg of their King's Cup semi-final on Wednesday. The La Liga leaders take a 7-0 lead into the match. —*Reuters*

Barcelona's Lionel Messi. PHOTO: REUTERS

Confident Arsenal hopes to stifle Leicester charge

LONDON — Arsenal midfielder Aaron Ramsey hopes the North London can choke Leicester City's unexpected Premier League title charge after picking up their first win in five matches in Sunday's 2-0 win over Bournemouth. Arsene Wenger's men, who are third in the table after 25 games, host the table-topping Foxes on Sunday seeking to reduce the gap between the two sides to two points.

Arsenal were tipped to win their fourth league title under Wenger when they started 2016 on top of the league, however, they went off the boil in January, winning just one of their four league games that month.

"It was important to bounce back from the results we have had of late. So it was important to stay in touching distance of Leicester," Ramsey told British media.

"What they have done this season is quite remarkable but we have got to be right on it to get all three points. It was important to win at Bournemouth.

"Hopefully now we can take away this momentum and come away with a victory against Leicester as well. We are in a good position now and hopefully we can maintain this."

The importance of the clash was not lost on young right back Hector Bellerin, who has urged his team mates not to be overwhelmed by the occasion and just focus on picking up three points. "It doesn't matter who you play, you need to get the three points. Obviously, this will be one of the more important ones but we need to play it like any other game," the 20-year-old said.—*Reuters*

Matsuyama wins Phoenix Open for 2nd US tour title

SCOTTSDALE — Hideki Matsuyama defeated American Rickie Fowler in a four-hole playoff to claim victory at the Phoenix Open on Sunday.

After finishing off the final round with a bogey-free 67 for a 14-under 270 total and a share of the lead in regulation, Matsuyama two-putted for par on the fourth extra hole while Fowler shot a ball into the water at the TPC Scottsdale Stadium Course.

"My form wasn't at its best. It was a tough match but I was given a chance when Rickie missed No. 17," Matsuyama said of Fowler's bogey on the par-4 17th hole.

"My birdie putt on the 18th hole (in the final round) was the best putt of my entire career. I'm so glad to have won in front of a large crowd. Winning a second title was my goal for the year."

While Matsuyama is well-liked by fans, he was overshadowed by Fowler's popularity with the crowds that totaled over 618,000 in four days.

"Ninety-nine per cent were not supporting me. That made me want to win even more," said Matsuyama, a fourth-place finisher here in 2014, who missed a 16-foot putt a year ago that would have forced a playoff. On Sunday, Matsuyama, whose putter has rarely been kind to him, birdied from 17 feet on the final hole before Fowler sank a 10-foot birdie to force the playoff. "I was conflicted, but I thought if I hit it straight, it might go in so I firmly struck it," Matsuyama said. "I didn't feel anxious at all in the playoff." The loss was a bitter one for Fowler, whose maternal grandfather, Yutaka Tanaka — the man who introduced him to golf at the age of six — was in attendance. Tanaka had not seen his grandson win before. "I mean, the hard part is having, you know, all my friends and family and grandpa who haven't seen me win," said Fowler, whose middle name is Yutaka and who has his grandfather's name tattooed on his left arm. The victory moved up Matsuyama from 19th last week to a career-best 12th in the rankings. The 23-year-old posted his second win on the PGA tour and first since June 2014. Matsuyama became the second Japanese player to win more than one tournament in the United States after Shigeki Maruyama, who had three titles by 2003.—*Kyodo News*

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