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The four-point proposal approved by the first Union Peace Conference

1. To exert effort to finish the national-level political dialogues and the union peace conference successfully within three to five years to be able to reach the union agreement;
2. To convene the second union peace conference as soon as possible at an appropriate time;
3. To enable at least 30 per cent participation by women at different levels of political dialogues according to the political dialogue framework of nation-wide ceasefire agreement (NCA); and
4. To put on record and honour those who have participated in the nation-wide ceasefire agreement (NCA) and the Union Peace Conference.

WELCOME TO NAGA

Naga festival attracts well-heeled tourists

Aye Min Soe

WITH the presence of the head of State for the first time in decades, the annual new year festival of the Naga ethnic tribe kicked off on Friday, attracting around 50 well-heeled tourists.

The number of tourist arrivals has increased from more than 10 last year to 50 this year.

The festival is apparently attractive to photographers at home and abroad for photographing the hill tribe people, said U Tin Win, an art master who is famous for his hyper realistic paintings of the hill-tribe people, and has visited the festival for more than five consecutive years.

However, the cost to go there is very expensive for local photographers and the hilly area is not easily accessible, he added.

The number of tourists visiting the festival has reached around 120 since the festival was first held in 2007.

"I found around 50 foreign tourists there. Some had come from India," said Thura Zaw, a photographer from the Myanmar News Agency, who visited there to cover the president's trip.

The annual festival is held for two full days each January. The first day is set aside for rehearsing traditional dances, with the second day for the festival proper. Ethnic tribes people strut their stuff in the afternoon and



Naga ethnic people are dancing at festival ground at traditional new year festival in Lahe. PHOTO: MNA

evening in front of a clamoring throng of spectators.

Carrying dry rations on

their backs, Naga men and women from far away villages

have to trek up and down the

mountainous region to reach the festival. The event alternates between Leishe and Lahe towns

each year, and some must spend four to five days reaching the hosting place.

Metta Nanda Hospital put into service for monks, locals in Yetkansintaung area



President U Thein Sein unveils signboard of Metta Nanda Hospital in Yetkansintaung area of Madaya Township. Photo: MNA

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein opened the Metta Nanda hospital (16-beds) in the Yetkansintaung area of Madaya Township, Mandalay yesterday.

The Hospital, built with the contribution of the Daya Nanda Foundation and wellwishers is aimed at providing health care

services to the monks and local people living in the Yetkansintaung region in Madaya Township.

On his tour of the region the President was accompanied by Daw Nan Shwe Hmon, wife of Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, Commander-in-Chief of

Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Union ministers, the Mandalay region chief minister, senior military officers and officials.

The President and party observed Five Precepts administered by the Rector Sayadaw of the International Theravada Buddhist

University Agga Maha Pandita Dr Nandamalarbhivamsa, and offered provisions to the members of the Sangha led by the Rector Sayadaw.

U Ohn Kyaw, on behalf of Daya Nanda Foundation, handed over documents relating to the Metta Nanda Hospital to Un-

ion Minister for Health Dr Than Aung.

The Rector Sayadaw presented gifts to the President and party.

After unveiling the signboard of the hospital, the President, the Commander-in-Chief and party toured the hospital. — *Myanmar News Agency*

VP Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses conclusion of Union Peace Conference

VICE-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addressed a handover ceremony of a set of discussions compiled at the country's first Union Peace Conference at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In his address the Vice-President said that peaceful exchange of views on five agenda items at the five-day political dialogue demonstrated that trust has been built among stakeholder groups who have differences while the country is moving towards democracy.

Compared to international incidences of peace making, the country's political transforma-

tion and peacemaking processes are working within a short period of time, said the Vice-President.

He cited successful implementation of the processes as the first reasons for the President's attitude towards the concept that democracy is impossible without peace and internal peace cannot be achieved without democracy and the second reason for creating mutual trust through the new political culture based on negotiation.

He went on to say that discussions on topics at the UPC will be documented and brought into the future peace conference, hoping for better outcome to be produced in the time of the new government.

In his conclusion, the Vice-President called for making great strides in building a democratic federal Union that can ensure peace and prosperity and equality for further generations.

During the final day of the conference 15 representatives on behalf of seven stakeholder groups submitted a set of discussions on the given agenda items— political, economic, social issues, security and land and environment to the conference for approval. The submission of four proposals to the conference and the hand-over of a set of discussions to the Vice-President followed. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham greets representatives from ethnic group at Union Peace Conference. PHOTO: MNA

Nobel Myanmar Literary Festival kicks off

Ko Moe

NOBLE Myanmar Literary Festival kicked off yesterday at Myanmar Event Park, with a series of events including literary talks and book sales.

This year's festival is aimed at developing children literature, said Writer Pe Myint, chairman of the organizing

committee.

"As the youth of today prefer using technology to reading books, it is required to encourage reading habit since their childhood."

During the three-day festival, various events including talent shows in which children perform how well they can recite poems and do reading.

"I like to read children

stories, especially translated ones", Ma Htet Htet Lwin of Dagon BEHS No (1).

She expressed her feeling that many books she saw at the festival motivated her to more enjoy reading.

Festival goers also expressed their views on the festival, calling for more events aimed at motivating children to enjoy reading.

Press conference on UPC held

A PRESS conference on the country's first Union Peace Conference was held at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

U Khet Htein Nan, U Hla Maung Shwe, U Khin Zaw

Oo, Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong and Sai Kyaw Nyunt represent respective stakeholder groups while the UPC answered queries raised by local and foreign media at the press conference. — *Myanmar News Agency*

DOCUMENTARY PHOTOS OF PRESIDNET'S VISIT TO NAGA NEW YEAR FESTIVAL



U Ru San Kyuu, the chairman of Naga Self-administered region, puts the Naga traditional hat on President U Thein Sein. PHOTO: MNA



U Ru San Kyuu, the chairman of Naga Self-administered region, gives Naga traditional lance to President U Thein Sein. PHOTO: MNA



U Ru San Kyuu, the chairman of Naga Self-administered region, puts the Naga traditional hat on Senior General Min Aung Hlaing. PHOTO: MNA



Naga men strike wooden gong upon arrival at the festival ground in Lahe. PHOTO: MNA



Naga ethnic tribal men dance as they celebrate traditional new year festival in Lahe. PHOTO: MNA



Naga ethnic men dance around bonfire at night as they celebrate traditional new year festival in Lahe. PHOTO: MNA



Naga men line the street as they wait to welcome visitors to the new year festival in Lahe. PHOTO: MNA

Health Dept fights elephantiasis in rural areas

AS part of their efforts to fight elephantiasis in rural areas the Health Department has vaccinated villagers in Zayyar Thiri Township.

A team comprising health staff of the department fed the vaccines to residents of Thayettaw Village in Kyungyaung Village Tract on Wednesday.

During their field trip the team also gave talks on the disease, advising residents to take measures to rid the village of mosquitoes.

A rural health official also clarified the signs of infection after talking about the vaccine and its benefits.

The Ministry of Health announced the nationwide vaccination program in January, aimed at stamping out elephantiasis in the country.

The program was launched on 10 January and will end on the 19 January.



A nurse give elephantiasis vaccine to residents at Thayettaw Village in Kyungyaung Village Tract. Photo: Shwe Ye Yint

The program will also cover eight townships in Nay Pyi Taw, 19 in Sagaing, 28 in Mandalay, 22 in Magwe, 44 in Yangon, 26 in Ayeyarwady, 28 in Bago, 10 in Tanintharyi and 10 in Mon.

Officials of the Health Department will give the vaccination to all residents except for pregnant women and people who suffer from diabetes or heart conditions. — Shwe Ye Yint

Child abduction rumors makers to be exposed

MANDALAY Region Police conducted a press conference, refuting some rumors on social media informing abducting children in the region.

Mandalay Region Police Force would expose those who spread the rumors on social media on 13 January and would take action against them, said an officer at the press conference.

In the cases of child abduction in the social media, those

accused of abducting children are ordinary people who are suffering mental illness and under the influence of alcohol, he added.

He continued to say that rumors on social media for about two months ago caused misunderstanding between the local people and the accused.

In some cases, some accused have been taken to hospital as they were beaten by local people. — Maung Pyi Thu Mandalay

The World's Largest Book in Mandalay attracts tourists

WITH inscribed Buddha scriptures, the marble slabs in the compound of Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay has attracted most tourists who visited the second largest city of Myanmar.

There are 729 marble slabs inscribing the Buddhist scriptures that are also known as the world's largest book.

These stone inscriptions were carved in 1,222 Myanmar Era and completed in 1,230. The pagoda was built in 1,221 Myanmar Era.

Each marble slab is housed in a masonry shrine in the precinct of the Kuthodaw Pagoda. UNESCO listed Kuthodaw Pagoda on the Memory of the World Register in 2013. — Kay Khaing

Crime News

Three men injured in Toungoo

THREE men were injured in a motorbike accident on the Yangon- Mandalay road in Toungoo township on Monday.

According to an investigation, one motorbike was being driven by Ye Maung with U Maung Maung Gyi, on

board before the driver lost control and crashed into another motorbike at milepost 175/6-7 on the Yangon- Mandalay road.

The accident injured three men. Police are still investigating the case. — Ko Lwin (Swa)

Man arrested for selling uncensored films

AUTHORITIES seized uncensored films at a shop in Ward 70, Dagon Myothit (South) township on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off the police searched a shop selling the uncensored movies by Ko Aye Chan and

found 770 uncensored English movies, 55 uncensored Myanmar traditional dances movies. The local police station has filed charges against the man under Television and Video Law Section 32(B). — MPF



Ko Aye Chan. Photo: MPF

Drugs seized in Shan & Rakhine



Zaw Tun alias Saw Tun. PHOTO: MPF

A LOCAL anti-drug check point has seized 9,500 opium pills from a motorbike driver heading from Mongshu to Naung Cho. The driver was identified as one Sein Aung on Monday.

Similarly, members of the police discovered 274 opium pills at a house owned by one Khin Maung Zin in Ti Kyit village, Naung Ta-yar Town.

Local police further found two bags of drugs on one Zaw Tun alias Saw Tun and seized 11.3kilos of Marijuana. The suspect was travelling in an Aung Pyay Son mini bus at Ann Check point on Tuesday.

The police station has filed charges against all suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Law. — MPF

43,600 tablets of stimulants and 0.8,235 kilos of heroin in Mabein Township

AUTHORITIES seized stimulants and heroin at a hut in Lawah village, Mabein on 14 January. Acting on a tip-off, member of the police searched a hut inhabited by Hla Ein, and found 0.8235kilos of heroin and 43,600 tablets of stimulants. According to the investigation, police could have arrested another criminal called Ah Khway at Ah La Wah village.

Similarly, police further seized 0.002kilos of stimulants and 172 tablets of stimulants on Kyaw Soe Naing at Mai Yu Village, Muse township. Also, police seized 04.5kilos of Marijuana, two mobile phones and K50,000 from Vishnu Kumar who has entered the Shwe Let Yar teashop at Chan Aye Tha San township. The police station has filed charges against them under the anti-Narcotic Law. — MPF



Hla Ein and Ah Khway. PHOTO: MPF

Indonesia identifies militants, arrests others over attack

JAKARTA — Indonesian police yesterday named the five men they suspect launched this week's gun and bomb attack in Jakarta, which was claimed by Islamic State, and said they had arrested 12 people linked to the plot who planned to strike other cities.

As investigators pieced together clues from the radical group's first attack on Indonesia, neighbouring Malaysia said it had arrested a man in Kuala Lumpur who had confessed to planning a suicide attack in the country.

"We ... have carried out acts of force. We have done searches, we have made arrests and we have obtained evidence connected with the terrorist bombing at Sarinah," Jakarta police spokesman Mohammad Iqbal told a news conference.

"We will not say how many people or what sort of evidence we have as it will upset out strategy. Be patient, when the case is closed and things are clear we will disclose them."

Seven people, including the militants, were killed in Thursday's attack near the Sarinah department store in the Indonesian capital's commercial district. About 30 people were hurt.

Police held up pictures of the dead and wounded at the news conference, including a man who kicked off the siege by blowing himself up in a Starbucks cafe.

Another attacker, who opened fire with a gun outside the cafe, was named as Afif. A National Counter-Terrorism Agency spokesman said Afif had served seven years in prison, where he refused to cooperate with a de-radicalisation programme.

The brazenness of the Jakarta assault, which had echoes of marauding gun and bomb attacks such as the Paris siege in November, suggested a new brand of militancy in a country where extremists typically launch low-level strikes on police.

Police spokesman Anton Charliyan said the Jakarta five and the 12 others who were arrested had plans to attack cities elsewhere in Indonesia, including Bandung, which lies some 120 km (75 miles) southeast of the capital.

"There were general plans targeting certain places like police and government offices, foreigners or those cooperating with foreign entities," Charliyan told reporters.

In Malaysia, the country's police chief said a suspected militant who was arrested in a metro station in Kuala Lumpur on Friday had confessed to planning a suicide attack.

Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar said the 28-year-old Malaysian planned to carry out the attack in the country after receiving orders from a foreign member of Islamic State (IS) in Syria.

"The suspect is also responsible for hanging IS flags at several locations ... to warn the government to stop arresting IS members in Malaysia," Khalid said in a statement.

No details were given about where and how he planned to attack.

Khalid said three other people suspected of being supporters of Islamic State were arrested this week at Kuala Lumpur airport after they returned from Turkey.

Malaysia has been on high alert since Thursday's siege in Jakarta. Security has been beefed up in public areas and borders have been tightened to prevent jihadis getting into the country.

Earlier on Saturday, Indonesia said it had shut down at least



Indonesian police stand guard at the site of this week's militant attack in central Jakarta, Indonesia on 16 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

11 radical websites and several social media accounts, including several on Facebook that expressed support for the Jakarta attack.

"We are monitoring many websites and public complaints about this," said Ismail Cawidu, a public relations official at the communications ministry.

The government also sent letters to social media companies such as Facebook, Twitter and Telegram requesting radical material be immediately blocked or

taken down, Cawidu said.

The alleged mastermind behind the Jakarta attack, an Indonesian citizen fighting with Islamic State in Syria, is believed to have used social media extensively to share his beliefs about the group and communicate with contacts in Indonesia using blog posts and mobile messaging apps. Authorities believe there are at least 1,000 Islamic State sympathizers in Indonesia, which has the world's largest Muslim population.—Reuters

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North Korea says peace treaty, halt to exercises, would end nuclear tests



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — North Korea yesterday called for the conclusion of a peace treaty with the United States and a halt to US military exercises with South Korea to end its nuclear tests.

The isolated state has long sought a peace treaty with the

United States, as well as an end to the exercises by South Korea and the United States, which has about 28,500 troops based in South Korea.

"Still valid are all proposals for preserving peace and stability on the peninsula and in North-

east Asia including the ones for ceasing our nuclear test and the conclusion of a peace treaty in return for US halt to joint military exercises," North Korea's official KCNA news agency cited a spokesman for the country's foreign ministry as saying early yesterday.

Asked if the United States would consider a halt to joint exercises, US State Department spokesman John Kirby said it had alliance commitments to South Korea.

"We are going to continue to make sure the alliance is ready in all respects to act in defence of the South Korean people and the security of the peninsula," he told a regular news briefing.

Asked earlier this week about North Korea's call for a peace treaty, the State Department reiterated its position that it

remained open to dialogue with North Korea but said "the onus is on North Korea to take meaningful actions toward denuclearization and refrain from provocations."

The two Koreas remain in a technical state of war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

North Korea said on 6 January it had tested a hydrogen bomb, provoking condemnation from its neighbours and the United States.

Experts have expressed doubt that the North's fourth nuclear test was of a hydrogen bomb, as the blast was roughly the same size as that from its previous test, of a less powerful atomic bomb, in 2013.

Pyongyang is under UN sanctions for its nuclear and missile programmes.—Reuters

Skittish Bali tourists avoid top tourist spots after Jakarta attack

DENPASAR (Indonesia) — Indonesia's President Joko Widodo ordered more police at hotels, airports, shopping malls in the resort island of Bali and across the country after Thursday's attacks in Jakarta by Islamic State militants.

Government officials fear the Jakarta attack, in which seven died including all five mili-

itants, could revive memories of Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005 and hinder the president's efforts to nearly double tourist arrivals to 20 million people by 2019.

Indonesia's economy is already growing at its slowest pace since the financial crisis.

"I'm a little scared but honestly there is probably more

police out there right now," US tourist Mike Rosenthal told Reuters on one of Bali's famously beautiful beaches.

"I'm probably safer now — just got to be careful, stay low and avoid tourist areas."

Travel and tourism directly contributed around \$23 billion to Indonesia's economy in 2014, or about 3.2 per cent of gross do-

mestic product (GDP), according to a report from the World Travel & Tourism Council.

At Bali's airport, tour guides said they were confident that any drop in business would be only temporary. "There is no problem. Bali is safe," said Yan Xiang Zhao, a tourist who had flown in from Taiwan with two friends.—Reuters

Westinghouse eyes India reactor deal in time for possible Modi US visit



US President Barack Obama (R) meets with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the climate change summit in Paris, November 30, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW DELHI — Toshiba Corp's Westinghouse Electric hopes to clinch a deal to build six nuclear reactors in India by end-March, its CEO said, in time for a possible visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Washington to attend a global nuclear summit.

A Westinghouse team is already in India to negotiate the deal, Chief Executive Daniel Roderick told Reuters, but talks are likely to go down to the wire, as the crucial issue of nuclear liability insurance for suppliers remains unresolved.

The aim, however, was to make a "commercially significant announcement" during Modi's expected US visit in March and sign a final contract later in the year, Roderick said, narrowing the timeline on a deal that an Indian official had said would be disclosed by June.

The contract would give a big boost to India's \$150 billion nuclear power programme, and a broader push to curb greenhouse

gas emissions.

"We need to see the details of the insurance company and how the insurance will work at a level beyond what we have seen so far," Roderick said in an interview. "And that needs to happen in the next 30 to 45 days."

India has launched an insurance pool with a liability cap of 15 billion rupees (\$222 million) to assuage suppliers' concerns, after a 2010 law gave the state-run operator Nuclear Power Corp of India Ltd (NPCIL) the right to seek damages from them in the event of an accident. Roderick said that while the concept gave Westinghouse confidence to go ahead with a potential deal, the company still needed details of how the liability scheme would work before it can agree on commercial terms.

The NPCIL did not respond to requests for comment on the deal, which was put on the fast-track when President Barack Obama visited India in January last year. The Westinghouse deal

would be the first nuclear commercial power project since the United States and India first struck an agreement to cooperate in the civil nuclear arena a decade ago, and would underscore a growing strategic partnership between the world's two largest democracies.

An Indian foreign ministry spokesman declined to comment on Modi's travel plans.

A US diplomat, however, said the United States had invited Modi to the 13 March - 1 April Nuclear Security Summit and that Washington was thinking of turning the trip into a full-fledged official visit, which would give the Indian leader a similar reception as Chinese President Xi Jinping.

India has given two sites to US companies — Westinghouse and a nuclear venture between General Electric Co and Hitachi — to build six reactors each.

In December, an Indian official told Reuters that GE had yet to decide on whether it would move ahead with the plan. Spokesman Christopher White said GE was still interested, but added that the March timeframe was "totally dependent on the finalization of the insurance plan".

Roderick said that if the GE-Hitachi deal did not eventually go through, Westinghouse would rather the Indian government gave it the site than "Russia or somebody else".

He said that while Modi's office was driving the deal, other government authorities also had to hasten the process. "It is just going to take everyone deciding to have this done by March," Roderick added.—Reuters

Australia should apologise for ejecting nine welfare workers

PERTH — The Australian government should apologise for ejecting nine welfare workers from an immigration camp on Nauru for alleged misconduct after a report cleared them of any wrongdoing, one of the aid workers told media yesterday.

The government-ordered independent report into the deportation of nine Save the Children employees from the Australian government's immigration detention centre on Nauru in October 2014 after raising concerns from asylum seekers' about sexual harassment from guards was released late on Friday.

The report, by former chief executive of the high court Christopher Doogan, found that the welfare workers were fired under political pressure and that there was "no evidence or reliable information" for their dismissal.

The Pacific island of Nauru is home to one of Australia's controversial refugee detention centres.

It hosts about 500 asylum seekers and has been widely criticized for harsh conditions and reports of systemic child abuse.

Natasha Bulcher, who was employed by the Save the Children Fund in the immigration detainee camp, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that she was "disappointed" that the report didn't include an apology.

The government's decision

to deport the workers "is clearly stated as having been made on the basis of no evidence," Bulcher said.

The staff and Save the Children deserve compensation, chief executive Paul Ronalds told the ABC on Friday following the report's release.

"We've said from the start that these were some of our most talented and hardest working staff and the idea that they would fabricate cases of abuse or encourage children to self harm was always absurd," Ronalds said.

Under Australia's immigration policy, asylum seekers attempting to reach the country by boat are intercepted and sent to camps on Nauru, located about 3,000 km (1,800 miles) north-east of Australia, or on Manus island in Papua New Guinea.

Human rights groups, including the UN Refugee Agency, have criticised the harsh conditions at the detention centers and deemed them inappropriate for the care of children.

Logs from the immigration department showed in the year to July 2015 there were 188 incidents of self-harm involving detainees at Nauru, the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper reported on Saturday after obtaining the information under freedom of information laws.

These included individuals swallowing insect repellent and dousing their bodies with boiling water, the newspaper reported.—Reuters

Taiwan opposition leader Tsai wins presidential vote

TAIPEI — Taiwan's independence-leaning opposition leader Tsai Ing-wen won the island's presidential election yesterday after the ruling party admitted defeat, a result likely to usher in a new round of uncertainty with giant neighbour China.

A source with Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) told Reuters that the party was working on Tsai's victory speech. She was expected to speak within the hour.

"Eric Chu disappointed everyone. We lost. The Nationalists have been defeated," Nationalist presidential candidate Chu said, surrounded by sombre-looking supporters, some in tears, adding he had also resigned as party chairman. Outside DPP headquarters, supporters also cried, but for joy.

"The Taiwanese people despise the party that gets too close to China," said Jeff Chang, 35.

Anita Lin, 37, said she was "thrilled".

"Taiwan's future is not in China. It's in the world."

Tsai will be thrust into one of

Asia's toughest and most dangerous jobs, with China pointing hundreds of missiles at the island, decades after losing Nationalists fled from Mao Zedong's Communists to Taiwan in the Chinese civil war.

She will have to balance the superpower interests of China, which is also Taiwan's largest trading partner, and the United States with those of her freewheeling, democratic home.

Tsai risks antagonising China if she attempts to forcefully assert Taiwan's sovereignty and reverses eight years of warming China ties under incumbent President Ma Ying-jeou of the Nationalists, whose forces retreated to Taiwan in 1949. There was no immediate reaction from Beijing.

In a statement carried by state media earlier in the day, China's Taiwan Affairs Office repeated it would not get involved in the election, saying only that it was "paying attention to across the Taiwan Strait".

A 16-year-old Taiwan singer with a South Korean girl band

inadvertently shot to the top of the election agenda on polling day after she publicly apologised for holding a Taiwan flag, prompting China and Taiwan to trade accusations. The election comes at a tricky time for Taiwan's export-dependent economy, which slipped into recession in the third quarter last year. China is also Taiwan's top trading partner and Taiwan's favourite investment destination.

Support for the DPP has swelled since 2014, when hundreds of students occupied Taiwan's parliament for weeks in the largest display of anti-China sentiment the island had seen in years.

Tsai has the tide of history against her. Ma and his predecessors all failed to bring about a lasting reconciliation with China, which considers Taiwan a rogue province to be taken by force if necessary. Shots were traded between the two sides as recently as the mid-1970s. At stake are relations with an ascendant and increasingly assertive China under President Xi Jinping.—Reuters



Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairperson and presidential candidate Tsai Ing-wen casts her ballot at a polling station during general elections in New Taipei, Taiwan, on 16 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Austria says to turn back migrants aiming to pass through Germany



Migrants stay in queue during heavy snowfall before passing Austrian-German border in Wegscheid in Austria, near Passau in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

VIENNA/LJUBLJANA — Austria said on Friday it would deny entry to migrants intending to pass through its northern neighbour Germany rather than apply for asylum there, prompting Slovenia to its south to announce a similar move to avoid becoming a refugee bottleneck.

Slovenia and Austria, straddling the route of asylum seekers trekking from the Mediterranean toward wealthy northern Europe, acted after Germany began turning back migrants aiming to pass through to points further north, mainly in Denmark and Sweden — which have both tightened border controls to stem the influx.

Germany has been sending a few hundred migrants back over its border into Austria every day since the start of January, Austrian police said. Many of those barred lack valid documents but seek to travel onwards to Sweden.

“What is the situation currently on the German-Austrian

border? That only those who want asylum in Germany are being let through, and those who want to travel onwards are sent back,” Austrian Interior Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner told state broadcaster ORF. “We will stop them directly on our southern border (with Slovenia) as of the end of next week,” she said.

A Slovenian interior ministry official said later that Slovenia would have to follow suit in order to avoid a buildup of migrants in the tiny Alpine state of 2 million people.

State secretary Bostjan Sefic said Slovenia was liaising with Austria, Germany and other countries on how to control the migrant flow, which has kept up despite frigid winter cold.

“The states have agreed that a joint solution has to be reached,” Sefic told reporters. He said Slovenia would have to act on its own in the event that no joint solution was agreed.

Hundreds of thousands of migrants have streamed through

Slovenia and Austria into Germany since September, when the countries threw open their borders to a wave of people fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Germany itself has taken in 1.1 million migrants, the vast majority of those to have entered Europe over the past year. But it is rethinking its open door refugee policy in the face of increasing difficulties housing migrants and a spate of sexual assaults on women by young male asylum seekers.

Only about 90,000 have applied for asylum in Austria last year but fears about migrants have nevertheless contributed to a rise in support for the nationalist far right.

Government ministers from the Social Democrats and their junior coalition partner, the Austrian People’s Party, have said more must be done to reduce the number of people arriving, though they have disagreed on how to achieve that.—Reuters

Iran oil headed for India, Europe, with sanctions lifted

SINGAPORE — With Iran ready to resume business as usual with the world under a historic nuclear deal, Tehran will target India, Asia’s fastest-growing major oil market, and old partners in Europe with hundreds of thousands of barrels of its crude.

Iran expects the United Nations nuclear watchdog to confirm on Friday it has curtailed its nuclear programme, paving the way for the unfreezing of billions of dollars of assets and an end to bans that have crippled its oil exports.

Tehran plans to lift exports by 500,000 barrels per day (bpd) post-sanctions and gradually raise shipments by the same amount again, adding to a global

glut and likely putting more pressure on oil prices which have already dropped 70 per cent since 2014, to below \$30 per barrel.

Iran has 22 Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) floating off its coast, with 13 fully or almost fully loaded, mapping data on Thomson Reuters’ Eikon showed, carrying enough crude to meet India’s import needs for almost a week.

A senior Iranian source close to supply negotiations said that the country — which has the world’s fourth-biggest proven oil reserves — was targeting India as its main destination for crude.

“Indian crude demand is growing faster than other Asian countries. Like our competitors,

we see this country as one of the main targets for Asian sales,” said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iran hopes to raise its exports to India by 200,000 bpd, up from the 260,000 bpd currently shipped under sanctions’ restrictions, the official said.

At the right price, Indian refiners said they were keen to import more from Iran, as demand for fuel soars on 10 per cent annual growth in car sales, a rate that is now faster than China’s.

“We have a long-lasting relationship with Iran and post lifting of sanctions we will evaluate the scenario,” said L K Gupta, managing director of India’s Essar Oil.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Obama congratulates Mexican president on arrest of drug boss Guzman: White House

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama spoke by phone on Friday with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto and congratulated him on the arrest last week of drug kingpin Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, the White House said.

The two leaders also discussed broader security and economic issues and they agreed on the importance of taking steps to advance the approval of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact, the White House said in a statement.—Reuters

European rights body ‘deeply concerned’ at Danish migrant rule reforms

COPENHAGEN — Europe’s human rights and democracy body said on Friday it was “deeply concerned” at proposed changes to Danish immigration laws that make it harder for migrants to stay in Denmark.

The proposals include using migrants’ valuables to pay for their stay, delaying family members joining migrants for three years, allowing detention in some cases and adding “integration potential” as a condition for accepting asylum claims.

Parliament is expected to vote on 26 January on the proposals, which the United Nations has also criticised.

In a letter to Immigration Minister Inger Stojberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muiznieks, said, “I have repeatedly stressed that asylum seekers and immigrants should not be considered as criminals,” he wrote, in reference to proposals to detain migrants in “special circumstances”.—Reuters

South Africa to import millions of tonnes of maize due to drought

CAPE TOWN — South Africa, previously an exporter of grain, will have to import five to six million tonnes of both white and yellow maize due to a severe drought, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Senzeni Zokwana said on Friday.

Combining with the predicted regional needs such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland, import needs will be at 10.9 million tonnes covering other commodities such as soya and wheat, the minister said at a press briefing in Pretoria.

From the food security perspective, South Africa’s infrastructure might struggle to cope with the volume of maize imports required if a drought exacerbated by the El Nino weather phenomenon further decimates the local crop, Zokwana said.—Xinhua

Two foreigners detained on suspicion of skimming bank card information in Finland

HELSINKI — Finnish police have arrested two foreigners on suspicion of stealing bank card information in Finland, reported local media on Friday.

The suspects have installed skimming devices on a number of ATMs in different areas of Finland, and skimmed data of hundreds, if not thousands of debit cards, said Finnish daily *Ilta-lehti*.

Janne Saari, Detective Chief Inspector of the Uusimaa Police Department, told *Ilta-lehti* that information obtained by skimmers were used in foreign countries to make cloned cards, which have been used successfully.

The information held by police showed that cloned cards have undergone significant cash withdrawals in the Far East.—Xinhua

Viet Nam expects to receive 8.5m international visitors in 2016

HANOI — Viet Nam is expected to welcome some 8.5 million foreign visitors and 60 million of domestic travellers in 2016, official sources said on Friday.

The country’s tourism sector will strive to earn some 370 trillion Vietnamese dong (about 16.8 billion US dollars) in revenue, the Viet Nam National Administration of Tourism said on its website.

A meeting was held here Friday to review the sector’s performances in 2015 and set directions for 2016.

In 2015, Viet Nam received some 7.9 million foreign visitors and 57 million domestic travellers, earning 337.8 trillion Vietnamese dong (15.4 billion US dollars), the highest annual tourism revenue so far. The Southeast Asian country has implemented various measures to lure more visitors recently, including visa-waivers and cut in visa fee for foreign guests.—Xinhua

OPINION

Democracy, autocracy and laissez-faireism

Khin Maung Aye

LEADERSHIP comes in basically three forms— democratic leadership, laissez-faire leadership and autocratic leadership. Among them, the democratic style of leadership is the most favoured type as revealed by a survey which involved interviews with the leading entrepreneurs and employees. According to the researchers who have conducted the above-mentioned survey, there are two things that have made the successful democratic leaders different from the autocratic leaders and laissez-faire leaders. Quite distinct from the autocrats, the democratic leaders let those who report to them know the insights of the issues they have to handle and want them to show they have confidence in themselves,

taking their own initiatives. Unlike the laissez-faire leaders, the democratic leaders are involved in the decision-making process whereas the former have delegated the authority to the experts. This being so, the democratic leaders are burdened with their multifarious duties while the laissez-faire leaders can lead a comfortable life, granting laissez-aller i.e. unrestrained freedom to their subordinates.

Our point here in this regard is the question of which type will be best suited for our country. Most people will choose the democratic style. In that case, we will need good and able leaders who have self confidence, who are well qualified, who prefer self actualisation to positions, power, rights, perquisites and a decent enumeration package etc. Even with such leaders it would be wise of us to look at the strong cases of the United States of America, which is widely accepted as the leader of democracy these days. Even a glance at the leadership style of the US presidents will reveal that the most successful presidents are not always democratic. Depending upon the situation, they were sometimes autocratic and practiced laissez-faireism. John F. Kennedy is found to have exercised a proper combination of democracy and laissez-faireism. This charismatic

leader has been autocratic in the case of the Cuban missile crisis whereas he has pursued laissez-faireism when he delegated authority to the experts in the case of Apollo Satellite Program. Jimmy Carter is another strong case. Although he was very often flanked by experts, he was sometimes found to be autocratic, not seeking the expert opinion, merely assigning tasks directly to inexperienced subordinates who listened to his orders. The Global New Light of Myanmar would, therefore, like our people not to expect all-time democratic style leadership from the new democratic regime.

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.

A Visit to Thaton

Dr. Saw Mra Aung

WHEN the bus which left Yangon at 9 am arrived at the Sittoung Bridge, I woke from the light doze with a jolt. I looked at my watch to find that it was already 11 am. I, rubbing my eyes, glanced cursorily right and left down from the bus and saw some vestiges of the old Sittoung Bridge bombed during the Second World War on the right and turbid water flowing sluggishly under the bridge. I was aware that the landscape changed abruptly on the other side. Flat alluvial plains on both sides of the car road all the way were no longer seen. Instead, both sides of the road were laterite ridges covered with rubber plantations stretching away as far north as the forested Kyaikhtyoe Mountain standing vertiginous and green and as far south as the sea extending miles and miles. Our bus paused at Mupalin and we gulped our lunch down at one of the restaurants strung in a line on the road-side, fraught with hurrying passengers. Then the bus continued on its journey.

We were now heading for Thaton, an ancient Mon city, to attend the Mon-Suvannabhumi Seminar and Workshop to be held at Thaton Computer University on 29 and 30 December under the auspices of the Mon State Government at the invitation of Saya U San Win, who was an authoritative Mon historian and part-time member of the Historical Commission. As the bus was shooting along the car-road which passed through Kyaikhto and Bi-

lin Townships, the Kyaikhtyoe Mountain, the Alan Taya Mountain, the Sakka Mountain, the Kusinara Mountain, etc on the right side of the road and the Kelasa Mountain, an isolated uplift, a little far distance on the left were being left behind kaleidoscopically. The mountains and the car-road were separated by a large stretch of low hills and ridges wooded sparsely in some places and thickly in others. Lush, green tropical trees and bushes growing wild were everywhere on the road-side far and near I looked at – along rolls of hilllocks, the mountain ranges, etc on the right and in chains of laterite ridges and gullies with a steep gradient lowering towards the sea on the left. This indicated that the Mon State called "Ramannadesa" (The Land of Ramans or Rmens or Mons)" was very fertile and enjoyed favourable climate. While drinking in the breath-taking beauty of Ramannadesa, I suddenly reminisced about the etymological explanation of the word "Ramanna" by the Sanskrit-English Dictionary compiled by Vidyadhar Bide I had read some years ago thus: The word "Ramanna" has the Sanskrit equivalent "Ramaniya" and the Pali equivalent "Ramaneyyaka" meaning "lovely, pleasant, charming and delightful. Thus was I compelled to convince that Ramannadesa replete with enchanting, beautiful landscapes was fitted for its denotative meaning.

When the bus came to Naung Bo and Naung Kala Villages on the outskirts of Thaton, the Myathabeik Mountain Range which stood high above Thaton

came into view. The covered stair-cause leading up to the gilded pagoda at the top of the mountain was an attractive sight to any visitor who saw it at a great distance. He or she would surely feel peace and serenity. The bus came to Thaton at 2: 30 pm and we got down at the stop in front of the Shwezaryan Pagoda standing at the heart of the town. I found Thaton to be a thriving town with many ancient religious edifices like pagodas, stupas, monasteries, ordination-halls, etc, modern houses and some colonial styled houses and public buildings. Large, perennial trees growing in abundance and the Myathabeik Mountain towering above provided a good shade and a cool weather to the town. It was inhabited by the Pa-Os, the Karens, the Bahmars and other minor ethnic peoples in addition to the Mons. As it was a junction of the Yangon-Mawlayine car-road and the Pa-an –Mawlayine car-road, it was always bussing with the passengers en route and town-dwellers transacting commercial activities with the former. Scholars assert that the word "Thaton" is corrupted from the compounded Pali word "Sudhammapura", meaning "City of Good Law" through the intermediate terms "Sudhum and Sathum". But the traditional Mon chronicles claim that it derived from the Mon word "Go-thway-ga-hton", bearing the sense "The cave under the shady Banyan tree", that as the Myanmars, the Shans, and other ethnic peoples could not pronounce it articulately, "Go-thway-ga-hton" was gradually altered to "Thaton," after a long lapse of times and that it had been known

under different titles as Sudhammapura, Sudhammavati, Upadeva, etc throughout its history under the rule of a long line of 57 Mons kings until it was occupied by King Anawratha in A.D 1057.

The stream of my thoughts on history of Thaton was cut in on when some officials who welcomed us turned up and called out my name. We were transported by a motor-cycle carrier called "Toke –toke" in the local parlance to the Catubhummika Nhgetdwin Monastery where we were to put up. As it was situated across the precincts of the Shwezaryan Pagoda, we reached it within ten minutes. Saya U San Win ushered in us and after resting awhile, we were fetched by him to a large hall in the precincts, where many votive tablets with Buddha images in standing, seated and reclining manners in high relief were put on display. They totaled 1357. Never before had I seen such a great horde of votive tablets that my eyes widened in astonishment. The Buddha images assume different mudras (hand-gestures) like Dhammacakkamudra, Jhanamudra, Vittakamudra, Abhyamudra, Bhumi-phassamudra, Varadamudra, etc and various asanas (leg-postures) like Pallankasana, Maharajadhipatiasana, Maharajalalitasana, Padamasana, etc. The votive tablets depicts the Eight Scenes of the Buddhavamsa, the Four Scenes of the Buddhavamsa, etc including the birth of the Bodhisatta, the enlightenment of the Buddha, the preaching of the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the demise of the Buddha, the Buddha's victory over the Elephant Nalagiri, the Buddha's victory over the Mara, the descent of the Buddha from Tavatimsa, the sojourn of the Buddha in the Pariyyela Forest, etc. Besides, strangely, the vo-

tive tablets portraying the standing Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattas in Tribhanga manner was also found. Then we were introduced to Ven. Tikkhanyana, the presiding Sayadaw of the monastery, who then narrated to us that he had unexpectedly discovered such a large number of votive tablets in some layers stacked on the top of each other in August 2015 from the earth-stratum eight feet underneath the small stupa which was the grave-yard of the Nhgetdwin Sayadaw built within the precincts of the monastery about 105 years ago.

At about 4 pm, we paid homage to the Sayadaw and then rambled about downtown Thaton. The roads were lined with many large, shady old trees. It is found that Thaton was a pleasant well-laid out town with tidily-paved roads and a good drainage system. But I felt as if it, being an old town, was under the spell of a sort of chill. While walking, our empty stomach grumbled. So we scurried to a road-side fried gourd-fritters stall under a tall Kukko tree with its branches outstretching in all directions on the road-side in front of No. 2 Thaton Basic Education High School and ate fried gourd-fritters ravenously. Then we sat again at a tea-shop near-by. I footed the bill for tea and snacks we had. I was aware that tea and snacks in Thaton were much cheaper than those in Yangon. The tea-shops in Thaton were not as much congested with customers as those in Yangon. When I looked up northwards, the Myathabeik Mountain seemed to me to be towering above our heads. Many monasteries, ordination-halls, pavilions with a tiered roof, and other religious edifices clustered around its foot.

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Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

The Mingalar Zay fire is the second time in a row at the same building within a span of much less than a decade. In my opinion, it is totally unacceptable. Thorough enquiries, investigations and solution findings should be thoroughly conducted in order to prevent such undesirable mishaps in the future, not only for that market but also for all others.

This is the second time that a large fire gutted the Mingalar Zay. There were also other major fires that involved the

Yuzana Plaza shopping mall and the Mandalay Taloketan Zay. Those fires were blamed on the shock circuit. I wonder what or who will be blamed for the recent fire, probably the electrical fire again.

Though the fires may be started by shock circuit, they may not be the root causes. In my opinion, the shoddy-shoddy building designs and constructions, lack of control and supervision of the quality of constructions by the authorities concerned, lack of effective supervision of discipline of the shops concerning

the indiscriminate use of the electrical appliances---step-up transformers and electrical stoves and most importantly, the lack of adequate fire fighting systems incorporated into the building. Such buildings should be provided with workable fire hydrants, automatic sprinklers operated by smoke or flame sensors the instant the fire broke out and automatic fire alarm that would be sounded the instant the sprinklers are activated. These are the standard facilities that are required by rules and regulations in granting building construction permits in most other countries.

I sympathize with the shop owners of the Mingalar Zay, but they too are responsible in part for their mishap. Each and everyone must observe the rules and regulations set by the authorities concerning the prevention of fires. After what happened the first time they should have learned a good lesson and see to it that there is no second time.

The authorities too should take corrective actions to avoid a repeat. They should totally ban the use of all electrical appliances for cooking or boosting the voltage. They should provide adequate transformers in

order to get the required wattage and voltage to meet the consumers' needs. They should also strictly enforce the disciplines regarding the encroaching of the passageways by displaying the goods indiscriminately, restricting the movements for the shoppers. Such congested places also pose fire hazards and make firefighting difficult.

I hope the authorities concerned would come up with a viable solution to avert future market fires.

Your's truly,
Khin Maung Myint (MPT
Retired)

A Visit to Thaton

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A few colonial styled residences were found standing in a wide well-fenced compound in the northern part of the town. When evening came on, we, at the invitation of U Tin Shwe, uncle of Daw Su Su Myint, who was a member of our group, went to Naung Kala Village by Toketoke. It was a Pa-O village, which is named after Byatwi, the elder of the two Indian brothers who went ashore at Thaton during the reign of King Manuha after their ship-wreck in the high sea. All the villagers were generous, devoted Buddhists. Across the U Tin Shwe's house was the village monastery which was a newly-built three-storeyed edifice standing in a wide precincts with a large ordination hall and a gilded pagoda of a considerable height. As U Tin Shwe's house was a big, well-ventilated, wooden one in a large compound sheltered by trees of various sizes and with beds of seasonal vegetables, we felt as if we had escaped temporarily from the hustle-bustle of town. The hospitality of him and his family towards our group was incredible. They always kept us under surveillance to know whether we ate the foods served heartily or not. If we pecked at the foods, they immediately registered the disapproval and urged us to have more. So I felt uneasy due to their incredible hospitality, wondering whether I could be hospitable to that extent towards them if they visited my house in Yangon. To be open, I cringed at their treat, with the thought that my stomach could not digest all the foods served. To our amazement, there was no trace of mosquito. So we slept in the large house-hold shrine room with the windows open and with no mosquito-net set up, breathing cool fresh air. Apart from the occasional sounds of the engines of vehicles which ran along the high way passing through the village, complete silence fell over the village. So we could enjoy sound

sleep all night.

The next morning, we made for Thaton Computer University by Toke-toke, which is situated at Gaw Village, which is named after Ven. Buddhaghosa, who brought the Tipitaka from Sri Lanka to Thaton and compiled the Visuddhimagga in the 5th century A.D, to attend the Mon-Suvannabhumi Seminar and Workshop. It was graced by the presence of Chief Minister of the Mon State Government and some State Ministers including Dr. Min Mwe Soe, etc. It started at 9am. The Chief Minister delivered the opening speech. It was presided over by Dr. Kyaw Win, Secretary of the Myanmar Historical Commission, Dr. Toe Hla, a member of the same commission, Dr. Aung Myat Kyaw Sein, Acting Rector of Mawlamyine University and Dr. Soe Aung, Retired Rector of Mandalay University of Foreign Languages. U Kyaw Myo Win briefed on the finds excavated from Winka region in Bilin Township, Dr. Yin Yin Aye and Dr. Kyan Swan elaborated on geology and geography of Thaton. Dr. Nan Hlaing, arguing against the authorities of some senior local and foreigner scholars, dated Thaton to Palasena Period in an assertive tone on the scrutiny of the votive tablets bearing a figure of standing Buddha flanked by two figures of Bodhisatta discovered from the Catubhumika Nhwetdwin Monastery. Daw Nan Kyi Kyi Khaing explained interestingly about the unglazed finds excavated from the Catubhumika Nhwetdwin Monastery. Dr. Win Win Pyo summarized the arrival of Buddhism into Thaton region and U San Win spoke of his lifelong devotion to the study of Thaton. I noticed that this seminar was held to date the Old Thaton on the discovery of the votive tablets yielded by the excavation of the stupa within the precincts of the Catubhumika Nhwetdwin Monastery. In the light of Dr. Nan Hlaing's assertion, Thaton

might date back to Palasena Period. I had no objection to his assertion because I found that some Buddhas in the excavated votive tablets had some characteristics of the Buddha images belonging to Palasena Period such as Padasmasana, the short neck, neck-ornaments, Bhumiphasamudra, slim body with the swollen chest and slim waist, stupa-like or conical shaped hair-knot, etc. I was reminiscent of the finger-marked bricks found in the city-walls of Old Thaton, most of which were buried amongst residential quarters, during my previous visits to Thaton. Scholars accept finger-marked bricks as indicators for the first millennium. I also remembered the remark of Dr. Than Tun about the finger-marked bricks saying that the finger-marks on the bricks were employed as tallies in counting the number of the bricks already baked before the Mon alphabets (Pallava scripts) were arrived at Mon region and that as these scripts arrived in Mon region during the 7th century A.D, these bricks might belong to the earlier date than the 7th century. Besides, as a standing Dipankara Buddha image in Amravati style was found at Nandawya Monastery in Thaton, Buddhism was considered to have arrived in Thaton during Amravati Period (1st to 3rd centuries A.D). But I thought that only large-scale excavations could bring to light the history of Thaton. The seminar came to a conclusion at 4pm.

When the seminar ended, we were brought to Kyarpan Ywa (Village of Lotus) in a saloon car by Ven. Kondanna, a lecturer from the Department of English Relating to Pitakas of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon). It was situated on the way between Thaton and Pa-an. As it had wooded Myathabeik Mountain in the background and natural lakes in the foreground, it was a pleasant village. I saw a large lotus made out of stucco at the entrance to the village. It was

surrounded on all sides by fields, plantations, forests, and natural lakes except the southern side bounded by the mountain. We all were fascinated by the beauty of the village and the winding high way skirting round the mountain bathing dreamily in the wooded mountain valley in the golden rays of the setting sun. We were fetched to the Kyarpan Basic Educational High School and introduced to some teachers gleaming with smiles from the school and served with dinner. Then U Kondanna led us to a make-shift stage built in the large grounds in front of the school and told us that eminent writers U Phone (Chemistry) and Akyidaw would conduct literary talks that night and that we should wait and listen to their talks. But he, saying that we would be too busy to do so, again took us to the Kyarpan Monastery which stood in the large precincts at western edge of the village. We stayed at his room awhile and went round the precincts fenced with bamboo-groves in lines. We were cooled down by a thick mass of foliage of the trees of different species growing abundantly in the precincts. I looked up and saw deep yellow rays of the dying sun dancing merrily on the tops of the high trees, a few of which slanting stealthily through the clumps of the trees. Then we paid homage to Ven. U Kusala, the presiding Sayadaw, and sent back to U Tin Shwe's house in Sayadaw's car. The next morning, we were sent by car to the Bayin-nyi or Bayin-ji Cave on the way about 12 miles from Thaton. We were refreshed by the wooded lands unexplored and gurgling, crystal-clear rivulets and creeks on the way. It is known that the term "Bayin-nyi or Bayin-ji" derived from the terms "Bayinyi-naung and Bayin-gyi". Legend has it that the cave was the place where Mon King Mahimsaraja engaged in meditation in ancient times and the hiding place of Princes Sihakumara and Cittakumara, sons of King Manuha, who evaded the pursuit of the enemy. It is a natural cave located in a large igneous intrusion standing out from the ground to the height of a few hun-

dred feet. I saw some people swimming about in the hot spring at the base of the mountain. My friends persuaded me to swim in it by saying that the water in it possessed medicinal efficacy. But I rejected it on the grounds that I brought no extra dress to change after the bath. The stair-way up to the cave was thronged with the pilgrims, some of whom were foreigners. Monkeys were monitoring them with watchful eyes from the tops of the trees lining the stair-way so that they could snatch away the snacks and properties of the pilgrims when they were distracted. The statue of the guardian spirit of the mountain was found erected on the side of the stair-way up to the cave. As the stair-way led steeply, we found ourselves out of breath when we arrived at the cave. The cave commanded a bird's-eye view of the plains below. We found many tiny votive tablets engraved on the entrance into the cave and some seated Buddha images inside. We left the cave at 11 am so that we could catch the bus which was to leave Thaton for Yangon at 2pm.

In conclusion, on our three-day stay in Thaton, we got a lot of knowledge on culture, history, religion and socio-economy of the ethnic peoples. Moreover, we could enjoy the chance of exposing ourselves to the nature, our tired minds being revived. So it was indeed a trip, so exploratory, so informative, so exhilarating and so inspiring. At the same time, it is suggested by the author that we should, at least once or twice a year if possible, go on exploratory trips to the regions of our national brethren - the Shan Plateau in the east, the high mountainous terrain in the north and the south-west, the low coastal plains in the west, the deltaic regions and the coastal lines in the south - in order that we will be able to get better understanding of these ethnic peoples and to promote our love for the nation, the people and the nature, thus consolidating the national unity and enhancing the spirit to cherish and conserve the natural environment.

Burkina troops retake hotel from Islamists

OUAGADOUGOU — Security forces ended a siege by al Qaeda fighters at a hotel in Burkina Faso's capital yesterday, killing three Islamist gunmen and freeing 126 hostages, the West African nation's security minister said.

At least 20 people are believed to have been killed in the attack on Ouagadougou's Splendid Hotel which began late on Friday. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the raid.

Simon Compaore said operations were still under way at a second hotel nearby, the Hotel Yibi, and security forces were trying to determine if some of the fighters were hiding there.

"The operations at the Splendid Hotel and the (nearby) Restaurant Cappuccino have ended. 126 hostages were freed, among them 33 were wounded," the minister told Reuters. "Three

jihadists were killed. They are an Arab and two black Africans."

A Reuters witness said that clashes ended after a period of sustained gunfire and explosions that appeared to focus on the Restaurant Cappuccino early yesterday.

Burkina Faso's new government, which was appointed on Wednesday following the election of President Roch Marc Kaboré in November, was due to hold an emergency cabinet meeting at 9am (4am ET).

The Splendid Hotel is popular with Westerners and French soldiers based in Burkina Faso.

A doctor who treated some of those wounded in the attack said they had told him that the attackers appeared to target Westerners.

However, the nationalities of those killed in the assault were not immediately known.—Reuters



French soldiers arrive at the site of the attack in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 16 January.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Syria tells UN: No one cares more about our people than Bashar government

UNITED NATIONS — Syria told the UN Security Council on Friday that no one cares more about the Syrian people than President Bashar al-Assad's government after the United Nations accused rival parties in the five-year conflict of war crimes by starving civilians.

The Security Council met to discuss the besiegement of some 400,000 people in Syria. The United Nations says half are in Islamic State controlled areas, some 180,000 in government areas and about 12,000 in areas controlled by opposition armed groups.

It is the second meeting the council has held on the issue this week after images emerged of starving civilians in the town of Madaya, which is besieged by pro-Syrian government forces. International relief organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) said it has confirmed 35 deaths from starvation in Madaya.

"The Syrian government is the government that is most mindful of its people," Syria's deputy UN envoy Mounzer Mounzer told the 15-member council.

"No one can claim to care

more about our people than we do, no other country, especially when it comes to providing assistance to areas under the control of armed terrorist groups," he said.

Aid reached Madaya on Monday for the first time in months and a UN official described seeing malnourished residents, some of whom were little more than skeletons and barely moving. The UN Children's Fund UNICEF on Friday confirmed cases of severe malnutrition among children in the town.

"The primary responsibility for this suffering lies with the par-

ty maintaining a siege," deputy UN aid chief Kyung-Wha Kang told the council. "It is, however, shared by those that conduct military activities in or from populated areas, thereby using civilians as shields and placing them in harm's way."

Humanitarian aid was also delivered on Monday to government-held villages of Foua and Kafra in Idlib province which are besieged by rebel forces.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said on Thursday that Syria's warring parties, particularly the government, were committing "atrocious acts" and "unconscionable abuses" against civilians.

The civil war was sparked by a Syrian government crackdown on a pro-democracy movement in early 2011. Islamic State militants have used the chaos to seize territory in Syria and Iraq, and some 4.3 million Syrians have fled the country.

The United Nations says at least 250,000 people have been killed, 6.6 million people in Syria have been displaced and 13.5 million need humanitarian assistance.

Kang said "the slow and bureaucratic procedures that have been imposed on humanitarian operations in Syria must be simplified and streamlined."

However, Mounzer said all measures and precautions needed to be taken to ensure relief workers were safe and that the aid doesn't fall into the hands of "terrorists."—Reuters

Iraqi force enters southern oil city to disarm tribal fighters

BASRA — Iraq has sent an armored army division and a police strike force into the southern oil city of Basra to disarm residents amid intensified feuding among rival Shi'ite Muslim tribes, local officials and security sources said on Friday.

Forces had been deployed earlier to restore calm to rural areas running north of the city towards West Qurna and Majnoon oilfields on Wednesday, but a local official reassured foreign companies their assets were secure. "The oil companies and oil sites and the roads leading to them are completely safe. There are no concerns in this regard," said Sabah al-Bazouni, head of Basra's provincial council.

The tribal fighting and military response are a sign of the growing problems that could face foreign oil companies, even though they operate far from areas of conflict with Islamic State.

The disputes have forced Baghdad to divert critical security resources from the frontlines with those militants in the north and west to the south, where oil fields account for more than 85 percent of production by the major OPEC member. "This security operation targets areas north of Basra that have an abundance of tribal clashes and will also include neighbourhoods inside Basra city in the future," said Jabar al-Saadi, head of the security committee at the Basra provincial council.—Reuters



Syrian Army soldiers monitor residents who said they have received permission from the Syrian government to leave the besieged town as they wait with their belongings after an aid convoy entered Madaya, Syria, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Spacewalk suspended after leak in US astronaut's helmet

CAPE CANAVERAL — NASA cut short a spacewalk on Friday at the International Space Station after one of the astronauts reported a leak in his spacesuit helmet, the US space agency said.

Tim Peake, who on the mission became the first astronaut from Britain to walk in space, and US astronaut Tim Kopra had finished the primary goal of their outing when Kopra reported a water ball had formed in his helmet.

The astronauts were not in any danger, but NASA curtailed the spacewalk as a precaution, flight director Royce Renfrew said during an interview on NASA TV.

Peake, 43, a former army major, blasted off to the station as part of a six-month mission for the European Space Agency in December, becoming the first Briton in space since Helen Sharman travelled on a Soviet space-

craft for eight days in 1991, and the first to do so under a British flag.

His mission has attracted widespread attention in Britain, with news channels beaming live coverage of the spacewalk.

"We're all watching, no pressure! Wishing you a happy stroll outdoors in the universe," British musician Paul McCartney said on Twitter.

About three hours into Friday's spacewalk, Kopra, 52, reported that his helmet pad was damp and a ball of water had collected in his helmet, prompting NASA to end the mission.

The leak increased as Kopra and Peake returned to the airlock.

"It was quite noticeable," Kopra later told ground controllers.

NASA tightened its flight rules after a spacesuit worn by Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano leaked during a spacewalk in July



British astronaut Tim Peake poses in his spacesuit aboard the International Space Station. PHOTO: REUTERS

2013, nearly causing him to drown.

NASA eventually tracked down the source of the problem and outfitted the helmets with absorption pads and breathing snorkels as additional safety measures.

Chief astronaut Chris Cassidy, who was Parmitano's partner during the aborted 2013 spacewalk, said the cold temperature of the water indicated a leak from somewhere in the spacesuit's backpack, which contains a cooling system.

In an interview on NASA

TV, Cassidy called it "a significant concern."

Kopra and Peake had replaced a failed voltage regulator in the station's power system shortly after leaving the station's airlock at around 8am EST/1300 GMT.

They were scheduled to spend more than six hours outside the station, a \$100 billion research laboratory that flies about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth, on other maintenance chores.

That work will be rescheduled, NASA said.—Reuters

Brazil has record number of dengue cases in 2015

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil registered 1.6 million cases of dengue fever in 2015, a new record, up from the last record of 1.4 million cases in 2013, the country's Health Ministry announced on Friday.

The most populated southeastern region reported the highest number of cases, 1.02 million, or 62 per cent of the total cases.

The northeastern region had 311,500 cases, followed by the midwestern region with 221,000 cases, the southern region 56,100 cases and the northern region 34,100 cases.

April registered the highest incidence of dengue last year, with 229.1 cases for every 100,000 inhabitants.

After that, the incidence gradually fell until November, when it started to increase again, which is considered normal because warmer climates favor the reproduction of dengue-transmitting mosquitos, *Aedes aegypti*.

Dengue-related deaths reached 863 in 2015, also record high. The southeastern region also saw the highest death toll — 563, followed by the midwestern region, with 100 deaths.

Dengue is endemic to Brazil and epidemics are frequent in the country.

Lately, two other diseases transmitted by the *Aedes* mosquito, the zika virus and chikungunya fever, started to occur in the country, spreading quickly to all regions and causing an alarm, although unlike dengue, chikungunya and zika are not potentially lethal.

Zika used to be the least harmful of the three diseases, because its symptoms are mild compared to the other two.

But in recent months, authorities discovered that infections caused zika virus were responsible for a sharp and significant increase in cases of microcephaly in newborns.

Health authorities managed to find a connection between zika and microcephaly: many women who had babies with microcephaly in the past few months were infected with the zika virus in the early months of their pregnancies.

The discovery scared Brazilian women and prompted the government to intensify efforts to fight endemics of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitos.—Xinhua

Air pollution and traffic fumes tied to infertility risk

BOSTON — Women who live close to major highways where the air is polluted by traffic exhaust fumes may be slightly more likely to have fertility problems than women who live further away where the air is cleaner, a US study suggests.

Researchers followed more than 36,000 women from 1993 until 2003 and analyzed air pollution and traffic exhaust near their homes to see if what they breathed might be connected to their ability to con-

ceive. Over the study period, there were about 2,500 reported cases of infertility. Women who lived close to a major roadway — within 199 metres, or about a tenth of a mile — were 11 per cent more likely to experience this problem than women who lived farther from a highway, the study found.

"The risks are slight," said study leader Dr Shruthi Mahalingaiah, a researcher at Boston University School of Medicine, in an email.

But even the slight increased risk can present a big global public health problem, said Mark Nieuwenhuijsen, a researcher at the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology and the Barcelona Institute for Global Health.

"For an individual woman the results may not be that important because the risk of infertility only increases slightly, but for society as a whole it is important because so many women are exposed to air pollution," Nieuwenhuijsen added

by email. To look at the link between infertility and air pollution, Mahalingaiah and colleagues examined data on what's known as particulate matter — a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets that can include dust, dirt, soot and smoke — near women's homes and also assessed how close their residences were to major roads.

They focused on what's known as primary infertility, when women try to conceive for at least a year without success, as well as secondary infertility, which refers to couples who struggle with conception after having at least one prior pregnancy.

When women lived close to major roads, they were 5 per cent more likely to report primary infertility, an increase in risk that wasn't statistically significant, meaning it might have been due to chance.

But these women were 21 per cent more likely to report secondary infertility than women who lived farther away, and that increase was statistically significant, researchers report in the journal *Human Reproduction*.

This association was found even at relatively low concentrations of particulate matter, or less polluted air, although the connection became stronger as the pollution levels increased.

One limitation of the study, however, is that researchers didn't know the exact dates when conception efforts started or infertility was diagnosed, making it difficult to closely examine how the timing of pollution exposure might influence the odds of pregnancy.—Reuters



Chimneys of a power plant are pictured from a plane, on the outskirts of Beijing on 8 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Republican lawmakers worry about running on Trump's coattails



Republican US presidential candidate businessman Donald Trump and rival candidate Senator Ted Cruz cross paths during a break at the Fox Business Network Republican presidential candidates debate in North Charleston, South Carolina on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

BALTIMORE — The prospect of running for re-election with Donald Trump at the top of the Republican ticket was worrying some party lawmakers as they huddled for an annual retreat, where a few forecast trouble if Trump becomes the party's presidential nominee.

"Heaven help us," Representative Peter Roskam said when asked about it by a reporter. But the Illinois Republican quickly added, "I'm not going to comment on the presidential candidates at this point."

That reticence was shared by many lawmakers asked about running on Trump's coattails during an event in Baltimore where Senate and House

Representatives Republicans gathered to talk through their priorities for a coming year whose highlight is the November election. Some were not reluctant to express concerns.

Trump would not help Republicans if he topped the ticket, despite his appeal to Americans fed up with politicians, said Representative Justin Amash, a favourite of the conservative Tea Party movement who has endorsed Kentucky Republican Senator Rand Paul for president.

"He does appeal to the anger," Amash said of Trump, the outspoken real estate mogul who is front-runner to be the party's presidential nominee.

But he said Trump's "policy prescriptions will take us in the wrong direction, and it won't be long before many of those people are angry at him and angry at Republicans again."

The idea of Trump capturing the Republican nomination seemed highly unlikely just months ago, but it was sinking in as an actual possibility this week across the Republican Party.

In addition to voting for a new president, Americans will elect members of the Senate and the House on 8 November. In US politics, a party's presidential nominee has a big impact on the campaigns of candidates for both chambers of Congress.

At the party gathering, Republican leaders were keen to talk policy, not presidential politics. "What happens above us on the presidential ballot, you really don't control," Senator John Thune, a senior party leader from South Dakota, told reporters.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, of Wisconsin, said: "We are not sitting here thinking about who the nominee is going to be. We don't have time to think about that."

But in the hallways of the retreat, at a hotel on

Baltimore's restored waterfront, Trump was often the hot topic. He is leading national opinion polls ahead of the 1 February Iowa caucus, the first step in the nominating process.

Representative Jason Chaffetz said it was important to have a presidential nominee who will not "embarrass" the rest of the party's candidates as they defend the Republican majorities in both congressional chambers.

Chaffetz, who is from Utah, has endorsed Marco Rubio, a Republican senator from Florida. Polls show Rubio in third place behind Trump and Texas Senator Ted Cruz in Iowa.

"Marco Rubio is not going to embarrass us ... He's not as sensational in his comments as the others, but there's a good quality to that, and I think that's also something you look for in a president," Chaffetz said.

Among other proposals, Trump has called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the United States and a wall along the US border with Mexico to stop the flow of illegal immigrants.

Representative Tom Cole said Republicans' fate will be linked closely to the Republican nominee, whoever it is.—Reuters

Haiti faces one-horse race as opposition boycotts presidential vote

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Haiti's opposition presidential candidate Jude Celestin has announced he will not take part in a runoff election because he does not have faith in the process, in a move that could mean a shoe-in for the ruling party on 24 January.

Celestin said he would tell election authorities not to put his name on the ballot for an election in the poor Caribbean nation that he says is fraught with irregularities.

"Jude Celestin will not participate in the 24 January ballot, which will not be an election but a selection," Celestin told local station Kiskeya on Thursday.

The runoff was postponed in December after President Michel Martelly agreed to a demand from Celestin and other opposi-

tion candidates for an independent investigation into allegations of fraud in the first-round, held in October.

Celestin says corrective measures have not been taken that would guarantee the credibility of the upcoming vote, and he has refused to campaign. His rival, ruling-party candidate and favorite Jovenel Moise has been campaigning actively.

The independent investigators found a range of irregularities including incompetence of clerks at voting booths and in some cases attempts to rig the vote. The investigators called for a reshuffle of the nine-member electoral council tasked with organising the ballot, citing a lack of credibility, and urged dialogue to resolve the impasse.—Reuters



A man walks next to a ripped electoral poster of presidential candidate Jude Celestin in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on 15 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER) (1 / 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-062(15-16)	Data Processing Center and Data Acquisition Sercel (5) Items	US\$
(2) IFB-063(15-16)	Data Processing Software & Hardware Accessories (1) Lot	US\$
(3) IFB-064(15-16)	2900 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (3) Sets	US\$
(4) IFB-065(15-16)	Explosimeter (2) Nos	US\$
(5) IFB-066(15-16)	Telecommunication Equipments (2) Items	US\$
(6) IFB-067(15-16)	Portable Welding Machine with Complete Accessories (2) Sets	US\$
(7) IFB-068(15-16)	High Pressure Pump with Complete Accessories (2) Sets	US\$
(8) IFB-069(15-16)	Pipe Line Pigs (2) Items	US\$
(9) IFB-070(15-16)	Drill Track Guidance Tool (1) Set	US\$
(10) IFB-071(15-16)	4" ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5L Grade A (10,000)Meter	US\$
(11) IFB-072(15-16)	NDT Services for 20" Domestic Gas Pipe Lines (1) Lot	US\$
(12) IFB-073(15-16)	Steel Ball Valves (2) Items	US\$
(13) DMP/L-012(15-16)	Landing Leg (Landing Gear) for CNG Tube Trailer (10) Sets	KS

Tender Closing Date & Time - 10-2-2016, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 13th January, 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

Italy dispute with EU escalates as Renzi hits back

BRUSSELS — Italy's dispute with the European Union heated up on Friday as Prime Minister Matteo Renzi rejected calls by the head of the bloc's executive to tone down his criticism of EU policies on migration, banking and the budget.

"We won't be intimidated by sound bites," Renzi said in a pre-recorded interview with Canale 5's evening television news to be shown later on Friday, according to a Tweet by the channel's director.

"Italy deserves respect," Renzi reportedly added. He was responding to comments from European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker earlier in the day. "I think that the Italian Prime Minister, whom I respect a lot, is wrong to criticise the Commission at each street corner," Juncker told reporters in Brussels, hinting at possible domestic

reasons for the criticism.

"I keep my bitterness, which is big, in my pocket," Juncker added. Caught between the crossfire of two anti-euro opposition parties in Rome and wrestling with stubbornly low economic output after three years of recession, Renzi has opened up disputes with the EU on several fronts. Italy on Friday stood by its position to block an EU plan to set up a 3-billion-euro fund to help Turkey stem the worst inflow in decades of asylum seekers into Europe. Economy Minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa, following a meeting of finance ministers in Brussels, said resources to help Turkey can come from the EU budget and there needs to be more certainty on how the money is spent. In recent weeks, 41-year-old Renzi has openly attacked Europe and Germany for policies that he sees as biased to-

wards Berlin, and Renzi criticised German Chancellor Angela Merkel at an EU summit in December. Italy is also in talks with the Commission on whether it can be granted more fiscal leeway in its 2016 budget. "We have introduced a dose of increased flexibility against the will of some member states. Italy benefits from all the flexibility that has been introduced," Juncker said. In his interview with Canale 5, Renzi said the EU opened up to the idea of loosening the budget reins only after much insistence on Italy's part, Canale 5 director Clemente Mimun said on Twitter. The Commission will take a formal decision on the Italian budget in spring.

To calm relations, Juncker will go to Italy at the end of February, in what will be his first visit to the country as president of the EU Commission.—Reuters

Fire blocks truck access to one side of Brazil's Santos port

SAO PAULO — Trucks carrying commodities and other exports were unable to reach the Guarujá side of Brazil's largest Port of Santos on Friday, a day after containers holding chemicals caught fire and sent poisonous gases into the sky.

A port spokeswoman said access would be restricted while firefighters snuff out the blaze that hit up to a dozen containers at the terminal operated by logistics company Localfrío.

The fire, which caused dozens of people to go to the hospital after breathing the noxious smoke, is considered under control, the spokeswoman said.

With trucks unable to reach the Guarujá side of the port, terminals there may have to rely on stocks, although some products are arriving by train.

Santos is Brazil's main commodities exporting port, but is still a few weeks away from receiving new crop soybeans to export. Brazil is the world's top ex-

porter of soybeans, sugar and coffee and the No 2 corn exporter.

Besides the Localfrío terminal, a neighbouring container terminal operated by Santos Brasil halted operations due to the fire.

But the other 53 terminals are operating normally with stocks, the port spokeswoman said. Representatives at TEAG and TEG bulk sugar and grain terminals in Guarujá said late on Thursday that loading continued despite the nearby fire.—Reuters



Smoke rises from chemical containers from logistic company Localfrío in Guarujá, Brazil, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Venezuela decrees 'economic emergency,' reveals depth of crisis

CARACAS — Venezuela's socialist government decreed an "economic emergency" on Friday that will expand its powers and published the first data in a year that shows the depth of a recession fuelled by low oil prices and a sputtering state-led model.

The central bank, which has been lambasted by critics of President

Nicolas Maduro's government for hiding statistics since the end of 2014, said the South American OPEC nation's economy shrank 4.5 per cent in the first nine months last year.

Inflation soared in that period to an annual rate of 141.5 per cent, the world's worst.

Venezuela's oil-dependent economy is forecast to perform abysmally

again in 2016. Maduro lost control of the National Assembly in a December election due to voter ire over the crisis.

The government's decree, which the opposition-led assembly says it has the power to approve or reject, sets a 60-day "economic emergency" and would give Maduro wider powers to intervene in companies or limit access

to currency.

"We are confronting a true storm," Maduro said during his state-of-the-nation address to Congress. "This is not Maduro's storm, as some believe, it is a situation throughout the country that affects every Venezuelan family."

He vowed the country would continue servicing foreign debt despite slipping international reserves,

negating growing Wall Street pessimism about a potential default this year.

He also insisted "the time has come" to raise heavily subsidized fuel prices. Economists say doing so is vital to fortifying foreign reserves, but it is a politically costly move that Maduro has avoided despite repeated promises.

National Assembly President Henry Ramos, a

longstanding opposition leader, offered a jocular 40-minute response in which he chided Maduro and his policies and laughed off the heckling of Socialist Party lawmakers.

"What angst there is here!" Ramos, 72, said at one point, sticking his tongue out at jeering legislators, during the rare opposition speech broadcast on state television.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MATHU BHUM VOY NO (1013W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MATHU BHUM VOY NO (1013W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 MOL (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (102N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY NO (102N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.1.2016 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 INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

DAWEI SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND ITALIAN-THAI DEVELOPMENT (MYANMAR) CO., LTD. INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

Open Tender is invited for a Myanmar local company to enter into a partnership with Italian-Thai Development (Myanmar) Co., Ltd. for developing and operating the rock production of the Bawah Quarry for the Initial Phase Development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone Project. The tender documents can be obtained upon request by emailing to this address: tender@daweindustrialstate.com. The proposal, complete in all respects, shall be submitted not later than 15:00 Hr. on Friday 22nd January 2016.

DAWEI SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND MYANDAWEI INDUSTRIAL ESTATE CO., LTD. INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

Open Tender is invited for Resettlement and Compensation Independent Expert Service for the Initial Phase Development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone Project. The detail information concerning the tender documents can be obtained upon request by emailing to this address: tender@daweindustrialstate.com. The proposal, complete in all respects, shall be submitted not later than 17:00 Hr. on Friday 22nd January 2016.

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Chris Rock calls Oscars 'White BET Awards'



Chris Rock. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Chris Rock, who is set to host the 88th Oscars, has taken a jibe at the lack of black nominees this time by calling the awards “White BET Awards”.

The BET Awards, established by the Black Entertainment Television network, annually celebrates African Americans and other minorities in music, acting, sports, and other fields of entertainment over the past year.

“The White BET Awards,” Rock wrote in reference to the network’s annual awards show while sharing a promo for the 28 February Oscars telecast, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

In the video, the comedian teases three reasons why viewers should tune in, “Presenter cleavage,” “Check out who died this year” and “I might curse.”

When the nominations for

the 2016 Academy Awards were announced on Thursday, the lack of diversity was immediately called out on social media when, for the second year in a row, zero black actors earned nominations in any of the four major acting categories.

Will Smith (‘Concussion’), Michael B Jordan (‘Creed’), Idris Elba (‘Beasts’), Samuel L Jackson (‘The Hateful Eight’), ‘Straight Outta Compton’ and ‘Beasts of No Nation’ have been listed among the snubs for black actors and movies focused on black stories.

Immediately after nominations, last year’s protest hashtag got an update when #OscarsStillSoWhite began trending on Twitter.

Al Sharpton, an American civil rights activist, was also quick to criticise the Academy. “Hollywood has a fraudulent image of progressive and liberal politics and policies,” he wrote on Twitter.

“We must take direct action to correct this.—PTI

Lawrence’s Globes ‘scolding’ taken out of context: Hathaway

LOS ANGELES — Actress Anne Hathaway has come out in support of her colleague Jennifer Lawrence, who has been bashed for telling a journalist off an interview at 2016 Golden Globes.

Lawrence, 25, scolded the foreign reporter for not looking up from his phone while asking her questions. Twitterati accused her of being rude to the journalist. 33-year-old Hathaway, in a long Facebook post, said the matter was taken out of context, according to *The Hollywood Reporter*.

“Dear the Internet, It’s become pretty clear that the Jennifer Lawrence ‘scolding’ was taken out of context and that she was dryly joking with a journalist who was indeed using his phone to take photos of her,” Hathaway began her post.

“Let’s not continue the sad but common practice of building people — especially women- up just to viciously tear them down when we perceive them to have misstepped. Jennifer is a beautiful, talented, wildly successful,

popular, FOUR TIME OSCAR NOMINATED young woman.”

Hathaway, an Oscar-winning herself,



Actress Anne Hathaway. PHOTO: REUTERS

asked fans to “please let us not punish her for these things” before signing off the post with a “Sincerely, A J-Law fan” fan and

the hashtags “#supportstrong-women?” “#imwithher?” and “#whycantwegiveloveonemorechance?—PTI

Vandal ‘ch-ch-changes’ sign in Texas capital to David Bowie Street

AUSTIN — A music festival organiser helped make the Texas capital of Austin a little bit funkier this week by putting up a skillfully crafted sign that dubbed a downtown road David Bowie Street.

The city of Austin, none too pleased about what it sees as vandalism to a street named for Alamo defender James “Jim” Bowie, will allow the sign to stay up until next week to honor the British music great, who died a few days ago and wrote hits such as “Changes.”

“We appreciate Austin’s reputation as the live music capital of the world and recognise David Bowie for all he did for the music industry and more,”

the Austin Department of Transportation said.

Roland Swenson, co-founder of the South by Southwest festival, put up the sign out of show of respect for the music great, a lawyer for Swenson said.

The festival is a global event celebrating music, tech and film that attracts tens of thousands of people annually.

Swenson and a friend, who is a sign maker, attached a nearly perfectly produced and readily removable sticker on the street marker, Perry Minton, an attorney for the pair, told Reuters. “They have told me they will bear all expenses involved in restoring the sign,” he said.—Reuters



A sign for Bowie Street in the Texas capital of Austin, named for a defender of the Alamo, is seen as it has been changed to ‘David Bowie Street’ to honor the music great who died a few days ago in Austin, Texas on 15 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Singer Celine Dion’s brother near death

LOS ANGELES — Canadian singer Celine Dion, whose husband died earlier this week, is facing another family crisis with a brother on the verge of death, a Montreal newspaper reported on Friday.

Daniel Dion, 59, one of her 13 siblings, has cancer and may have only a matter of days to live, sister Claudette Dion told the Journal of Montreal.

“It’s very painful. It’s a matter of days or hours,” she told the paper after visiting her brother in the hospital.

Celine Dion, 47, asked for privacy after she announced on Thursday the death of her husband and long-time manager, René Angélil, at the age of 73 after a long battle with throat cancer.

“He will be remembered as a gentle man, generous and kind, an unprecedented visionary, a modern Pygmalion, a

Renaissance man,” she said in a Facebook post. She has not made any recent comments on the site about her brother.

Angélil stepped down as Dion’s manager in 2014, turning her career over to a friend of the couple but he remained involved in business decisions.

The Canadian entertainment manager, who discovered Dion when she was 12-years-old and drove her career to stardom, married her in 1994 at a lavish wedding in Montreal’s Notre Dame Basilica.

The couple have three sons, René-Charles, 14, and 5-year-old twins Nelson and Eddy.

Angélil’s illness, first diagnosed in 1999, prompted Dion to put her career on hold in 2014, suspending her Las Vegas residency. Dion said he supported her later return to the stage.—Reuters

Tennessee couple with one of three winning Powerball jackpot tickets to keep jobs



Powerball jackpot co-winners Lisa and John Robinson (L) of Munford, Tennessee and Tennessee Lottery President and CEO Rebecca Hargrove (R) attend a news conference at the headquarters of the Tennessee Lottery in Nashville, Tennessee on 15 January.

PHOTO: REUTERS

NASHVILLE — A Tennessee couple holding one of three winning tickets for this week's record \$1.6 billion US Powerball lottery jackpot said on Friday they will keep their jobs because "you just can't sit down and do nothing."

Lisa and John Robinson of Munford, Tennessee, appeared at a press conference at the Tennessee Lottery's offices with their adult daughter Tiffany and black and white dog Abby and said they would take their \$528.8 million share in an immediate cash payment instead of annual payments over 29 years.

"We're going to take the lump sum because we're not guaranteed tomorrow," John Robinson said.

They will pay off their two children's student loans as well as their own mortgage and, after investing the rest of their newfound fortune, keep living in the same home, with the same jobs, in the Memphis suburb of Munford.

"Big fancy houses, elaborate houses, they're nice. But you have to clean them," John Robinson said.

Next week, he will return to his job at a distribution centre and Lisa to her position at a dermatologist's office, they said.

"That's what we've done all our life. Work. You can't just sit down and do nothing," he said.

Robinson recalled buying the lucky ticket on Wednesday just hours before the Powerball drawing. His wife asked him to buy tickets on his way home from work, so, even though he didn't feel well, he bought them at Naifeh's Food Mart in Munford.

At home, he laid out the four tickets, one representing each family member, and took a nap. His wife kept an eye on the televised drawing and leapt up when she realized one of the tickets matched.

"I was running down the hallway screaming and crying," Lisa Robinson recalled. "I said, 'You have

to check these numbers!' He was asleep and was like, 'Whaaa?'"

Once he had a good look at the ticket, he wanted to surprise Tiffany, who lives nearby. He tried to lure her over with a request that she bring him some headache medicine.

"She got someone else to bring it," he sighed. His plan foiled, Robinson spilled the good news to her over the phone.

"I said 'Tiffany, we got the winning numbers!' She said, 'No.' I said, 'Yup'," Robinson recalled.

He then consulted his brother, who works in finance and referred them to a financial advisor, who recommended a lawyer.

The couple, on their lawyer's advice, agreed to travel to New York on Thursday night to appear on NBC's Today show early on Friday.

Saying they had slept only one hour in the last 48, they excused themselves from the press conference to get rest.—Reuters

Women in Mumbai get first permits to drive auto-rickshaws

MUMBAI — Hundreds of women in Mumbai have won permits to drive auto-rickshaws, or tuk-tuks, through a lottery aimed at encouraging more women to take the wheel.

At least 467 women in the Mumbai metropolitan region and about 100 more in Maharashtra received the permits this week, and could be driving their three-wheeled vehicles in a couple of months, said Rajendra Navale, assistant Regional Transport Officer.

"This will help create jobs for women and encourage them," he said. "Abroad, women are even

driving taxis. We want to see women here also gain in confidence and earn a living, so we would like more women to apply for these permits."

The auto-rickshaws — which may be painted pink or peach to distinguish them from the tens of thousands of male-driven, black-and-yellow tuk-tuks that ply Mumbai's congested streets — will also give priority to women passengers, Navale said.

Women-only commuter trains and coaches are common in Mumbai and New Delhi because of sexual harassment.

Studies have repeat-

edly shown a link between safe transport and women's economic empowerment and ability to work and study. India's transport systems have come under increasing scrutiny after a young woman was fatally gang raped on a bus in New Delhi in 2012, a case that led to nationwide protests and forced authorities to tighten laws on sex crimes.

Delhi was ranked as having among the most dangerous public transport systems for women in a 2014 Thomson Reuters Foundation survey of 16 cities worldwide. —Reuters

Five works from Gurlitt art trove were looted by Nazis, task force finds

BERLIN — A task force set up by the German government to determine the ownership history of more than 1,500 art works discovered in 2012 has found that only five were wrongfully taken from Jews, drawing criticism from Jewish groups.

German tax inspectors discovered the art collection, which included works by Matisse and Picasso, during a raid on the Munich home of Cornelius Gurlitt. His father, an art dealer, had sold what Hitler dismissed as "degenerate" art.

After two years of research, the head of the task force, Ingeborg Berggreen-Merkel, presented the final report on Thursday.

She said that only five pieces had been confirmed as stolen Nazi art, although 499 were determined to

have a questionable history. Of the five, four were returned to heirs of their owners, including Max Liebermann's "Two Riders on a Beach" and Henri Matisse's "Seated Woman".

The announcement drew sharp criticism from Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress. He issued a statement on Thursday calling the results "meager and not satisfactory".

Lauder said he "expected Germany to do better, given that time is running out", and accused the task force of poor management of its work.

Jewish groups have been pressing the German government to move quickly, since many of the heirs of the Nazi victims are advanced in age.

Accused of carry-

ing out her work without sufficient transparency, Berggreen-Merkel said a dispute over the validity of the will of Gurlitt, who died in May 2014 at the age of 81, had made it difficult for the task force to be more forthcoming.

In the will, Gurlitt designated the Bern Art Museum in Switzerland as sole heir to his collection. A cousin is challenging that claim, arguing that Gurlitt wasn't in good psychological health when he wrote his will.

A court decision on the validity of the will is due in February. Culture Minister Monika Gruetters has announced Germany is setting up a Lost Art Foundation in the eastern city of Magdeburg, which will continue research into Gurlitt's artwork.—Reuters

mitv Myanmar International

(17-1-2016 07:00 am~ 18-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Scout
07:55	Am	Human Right Human Dignity International Film Festival
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Discovering Tribes: Akha- their life and customs (Part- I)
08:46	Am	Grow Back for Posterity "The dawn of development"
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Day In Bagan
09:46	Am	Natural Mineral Water
10:03	Am	News

10:26	Am	Between the Beaches: Chaung Tha Vs Ngwe Saung
10:36	Am	Shrinking Footprints
(11:00 Am~03:00 Pm) - Saturday 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
07:26	Pm	"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar Pottery
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: Auto Market Amid Policy Changes
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon: Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-3) His Public Service & Literary World
08:52	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Cubism
(09:00 Pm~11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)		
(11:00 Pm~03:00 Am) - Saturday 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)

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(17-1-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm

• Musical Programme

6:20 pm

• Myanmar Video

7:45 pm

• Fashion Music

8:00 pm

• Sat Kaw Ma (Magic)

8:25 pm

• Sing & Enjoy

9:40 pm

• Myanmar Movie

From 17.1.2016 (Sunday) 06:00 Pm
To 18.1.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Retiring Hewitt ponders ‘awkward’ opener against Duckworth



Switzerland's Roger Federer (L-R), Australia's Lleyton Hewitt, Belarus' Victoria Azarenka and Serbia's Novak Djokovic pose during Kids Tennis Day at Melbourne Park, Australia, on 16 January 2016. The Australian Open tennis tournament starts on 18 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

MELBOURNE — A centre court opener was always a certainty for Lleyton Hewitt at his Australian Open swansong but being drawn against a compatriot he has spent years mentoring was an ‘awkward’ surprise, the twice grand slam champion said.

Hewitt kicks off his record 20th and final appearance at his home grand slam against another wildcard in 134th-ranked James Duckworth, only the second time he has faced an Australian at the tournament.

The last time was in 2003, when Hewitt was top seed and at the peak of his powers, and a straight-sets rout of local battler Todd Larkham in the second round was the result.

With his role as mentor to the nation's next generation now formalised as Davis Cup captain, Hewitt, now world number 306, will take on a player who was seeking grand slam tips from him just before the draw was announced.

“Always bound to happen, wasn't it?” the battle-worn 34-year-old remarked dryly to reporters on Saturday.

“Especially now that I've got a second hat on, a full-time job as Davis Cup captain.

“Yeah, it's awkward, but in another way it's fun to go out there with Ducks. I've been helping him the last few years.

“(We'll) see how good a student he is. “Ducks was text messaging me yesterday morning before the draw was out.

“So, yeah, obviously I think both of us will look back on it. No matter what happens, it will be a satisfying enjoyment of going out there and playing against him.” The clash between Hewitt's roles also played out at the US Open, where Bernard Tomic, his successor as Australia's number one, edged him in a five-set match in the second round.

“(That) was really tough,” said the 2001 US Open champion Hewitt, who also won Wimbledon in 2002.

“I hit with Bernie about three days before we played each other. He was asking me things to help his service and stuff like that. That was really awkward.” Although long and colourful, Hewitt's record at the Australian Open has not been a stand-out among the grand slams, though he did make the 2005 final won by Marat Safin.

Bowing out in front of home fans seems a fitting conclusion to a career that began in earnest at Melbourne Park in 1997, when a 15-year-old Hewitt became the youngest qualifier to make the main draw.

Nineteen years on, Hewitt said he was still battling the pre-grand slam nerves and trying not to think about the Duckworth match as possibly his last.

“I just try to go out there and put on a good show,” he said.

“Hopefully the body holds up.”—Reuters

Champion Serena brushes off Australia Open injury concerns

MELBOURNE — Serena Williams brushed off concerns about her fitness on Saturday and declared herself “at 130 per cent” for her Australian Open title defence. The 21-times grand slam singles champion has played almost no competitive tennis since the US Open last September and pulled out of the Hopman Cup two weeks ago with knee inflammation. Pictures of the 34-year-old taking a time-out during training circulated on social media on Saturday, raising concerns she might not be fit to take on Camila Giorgi in the first round at Melbourne Park on Monday or Tuesday.

Williams, though, said the knee inflammation was no longer a problem — “it's actually really fine” — and any issues she had on the practice courts were simply the result of her heavy

training workload. “I'm a little tired today. I've been working so hard and doing so much work, so ... maybe I had a bad attitude out there,” the world number one and top seed told reporters. “I'm at 120, 130 per cent right now ... I actually wanted to have an easy day today. But to me in my mind ‘easy’ is just two hours of really intense working out.”

Williams said she would be relying on her vast experience to make up for her lack of time on court ahead of her 16th Australian Open, six of which she has won.

“I didn't have the match play that I've wanted to have,” she said. “But after playing for so many years on tour, I should be able to focus on that and the fact that I have played a lot of matches.”

A shock defeat to Italy's Roberta Vinci in the semi-finals

of last year's US Open denied Williams the chance of a single season grand slam after she had won the Australian and French Opens as well as Wimbledon.

Williams said she was neither prepared to discuss that missed chance nor would she contemplate her chances of achieving the rare feat this year.

“I don't think about it, I never thought about it really,” she said. “It was in front of me last year but it still wasn't there, so ...”

Williams also brushed off any thoughts that she might be suffering more from nerves this year because of her lack of on-court action over the last four months. “I don't have anything to prove,” she said. “I have nothing to lose. I can only gain. That's kind of how I look at it right now.”—Reuters

Bolt shocked by IAAF reports, against wiping records

KINGSTON (Jamaica) — Six-times Olympic champion Usain Bolt said he felt shocked and let down by the scandal-hit IAAF, but the Jamaican sprinter was against resetting athletics world records as the sport attempts to move on from the doping crisis.

Thursday's second instalment of a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report slammed the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), accusing its former head, Lamine Diack, of running a clique that covered up organised doping and blackmailed athletes as senior officials looked the other way.

The first part of the report by independent investigator Dick Pound, a former head of WADA, in November led to athletics superpower Russia being banned from competition for state-sponsored doping. Jamaican sprint

king Bolt, the biggest name in athletics with a plethora of titles, records and commercial deals, said the IAAF had failed their athletes.

“When I heard it was quite shocking for me to hear that because as far as I was concerned I think they were doing a good job to clean up the sport,” Bolt told Reuters in Kingston after collecting his sixth National Sportsman of the year award.

“So for me to hear something like this was quite shocking and you feel let down as an athlete to be wanting to actually help clean up the sport, and then something like this to come up about the body. “It's kind of a letdown, so hopefully there's no such thing, but we'll see what happen (with the investigations).”

Diack stepped down last year after 16 years leading the IAAF and was replaced by Briton Sebastian Coe.

The Senegalese is already under formal investigation in France on suspicion of corruption and money laundering linked to the concealment of positive drug tests in concert with Russian officials and the blackmailing of the athletes to allow them to continue to compete. The reports noted that Diack “sanctioned and appeared to have had personal knowledge of the fraud and the extortion of athletes carried out by the actions of the illegitimate governance structure he put in place”.

UK Athletics (UKA) released “A Manifesto for Clean Athletics” on Monday, calling for world records to be wiped clean and drug cheats to be banned for at least eight years in radical proposals aimed at heralding in a new era for the sport.

The 29-year-old Bolt, who set the 100 metre and 200m world records of 9.58 and 19.19 seconds in 2009 and shared in the 4x100m mark of 36.84secs in 2012, was against the proposal.

“As far as I'm concerned it's really pointless,” he said.

“What's done is done, you have to just move forward and try to make the upcoming championships and Olympics and the next (world) records as best as we can and just look forward to the future,” added the 11-times world championship gold medalist.

“You can't worry about the past, but try to build on the future.”—Reuters



Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt. PHOTO: REUTERS