

It is an opportune time to speed up efforts for national interests comprehensively including agriculture sector with strength of honest and hardworking peasants

NAY PYI TAW, 2 March — *The following is a translation of the speech delivered by President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of the Peasants' Day which falls on 2 March 2015.*

Esteemed peasants,

Today, the second of March, is a historic day that represents the entire peasant farmers all over the country. I would like to extend my warmest greetings to all peasant farmers and wish them all peace of mind and body, and greater success in their agricultural work.

The democratically elected government started taking office on 30 March 2011 and will soon enter its fourth year in office.

Over the past four years, the government has prioritized two primary objectives of national stability and soci-

oeconomic development. With a view to long-term national interests, an eight-point plan to combat poverty is underway. Tangible achievements have been witnessed in our constant efforts mainly exerted on agricultural development for rural farmers who constitute 70% of the entire population.

Being an agricultural country, Myanmar hugely relies on the farm workforce, which is why the government has made efforts to provide farmers with agricultural loans, enable them to secure vibrant markets for their produce and products, facilitate their technical input and productivity, support them with their losses claimed by natural

disasters, and enact laws to protect the rights and interests of smallholders.

Farmlands, which used to depend on rainwater, have now been irrigated so that multiple cropping can create more job opportunities and help farmers earn more incomes.

Measures are being taken to maintain the health of irrigation facilities built by past governments, while continuous efforts are being made to accomplish incomplete ones.

(See page 3)

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann meets with locals in Kyauktaga

NAY PYI TAW, 1 March — Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann met with Hluttaw representatives, ward and village administrators and locals in Kyauktaga Township on

Saturday and discussed regional development.

Also present were Pyithu Hluttaw Transportation, Communication and Construction Committee Chairman U Thein Swe, Member of Legal and Spe-

cial Affairs Commission U Khin Maung Tun, Hluttaw representatives, members of the region government, district and township level officials, town elders and locals.

(See page 3)

Migrant workers in Singapore expect effectiveness of mobile office programme

YANGON, 1 March— Myanmar migrant workers in Singapore expect effectiveness of mobile office which was recently formed by Migrant Workers' Centre to help the city-state's migrant workers.

MWC has launched a mobile office that will travel to areas such as Tuas, Sungei Kadut and Kranji to engage workers and help address some of their concerns including employment rights.

Than Aung, a Myanmar factory worker in Singapore, said, "We normally get labour rights from our company in accordance with Singaporean labour law. But we are still concerned about employment rights in remote areas."

More workers have come to Singapore this year for domestic works compared with previous years as this job can generate between S\$400 and \$600 per month, while hard labourers earn \$20 to \$22 each day.

However, most of the Myanmar workers enjoyed salary increment this year.

He also said a basic salary of security staff in this



A magnificent view on sky-scraper buildings in City State Singapore.

year reached to \$1,100, increased from \$950 last year.

"Many Myanmar migrant workers enjoyed salary increase about \$100 this year. I feel safe working here. Migrant workers can take medical leave 14 days each year by law and the company strictly observes labour law. If a worker does not have a certificate of safety measure course, it is almost sure that he would

not get any job in Singapore," another Myanmar migrant worker said.

When Singaporean companies could not produce profit in 2013 and 2014, the government subsidized them, especially for labour bonus as companies and workers have to give their income taxes to the government.

However, some migrant workers also made

complaints of long hours, bad pay and even abuse. While the majority of Singaporean households want foreign domestic workers to live in their homes, there are also concerned possible labour abuses behind the doors.

The estimated number of 150,000 to 200,000 Myanmar migrant workers are working in Singapore.

GNLM

Kokang nationals in Mandalay Region issue a statement denouncing the attack of Kokang renegade groups

MANDALAY, 1 March— Kokang national residing in Mandalay Region issued a statement denouncing the attacks of Kokang renegade groups that have caused losses of life and proper-

ty for the general public in the area. The statement also said that the insurgent groups attempted to overthrow the self-administered zone government and

(See page 3)

Six major airports receive safety upgrades

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 1 March— Six of Myanmar's major airports have received safety and security upgrades with the installation of new equipment purchased under a bilateral aid program, the Ministry of Transport said Saturday.

Under the Japan grant aid project, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) donated equipment and vehicles worth 1,233 million Japanese Yen to the ministry.

The equipment has been installed at Yangon International Airport, Mandalay International Airport, NyaungU, Heho, Thandwe and Dawei Airports.

The airports play a crucial role as they handle large numbers of passen-

gers, Deputy Minister U Zin Yaw said at a handover ceremony.

As part of the project for implementation of nationwide airport safety and security, the JICA on Friday handed over the documents related to the equipment to the ministry, an official reported.

According to the deputy minister, the airports are used by roughly 3 million passengers per year. The country has about 70 airports, with an estimated 4.4 million passengers every year.

He added the Japanese government is continuing its cooperation on the construction and management of Thilawa jetty.

GNLM

Japan grants US\$ 761,450 for four health and education projects in Kachin and Kayah States

YANGON, 1 March — Mr Tateshi Higuchi, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar, and Chairmen of the Committees from states concerned, signed the grant contracts for four projects on 18 February. Under these contracts, Japan's Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) scheme will provide a total of US\$ 761,450.

The project for construction of rural health centre in Mansay Village, Putao Township, Kachin State will be provided US\$ 170,616; construction of Lon Sha Tang Village Basic Education High School Branch in Putao Township, US\$ 273,520; construction of Sumparabum BEHS in Sumparabum Township, Kachin State, US\$ 181,920; and construction of Loilem Lay Village BEHS in Loikaw Township, Kayah State, US\$ 125,394.

The rural health centre in Mansay

Village, Putao Township was built in 2005. It had no delivery room, no medical storage room, and insufficient medical equipment. The Japanese government will support construction of one rural health centre building with staff quarter, lavatories, medical equipment and full furniture.

The government will support a two-storey RC building with eight classrooms and full furniture for Lon Sha Yang BEHS Branch in Putao Township. Likewise, with the assistance of the Japanese government, Sumparabum BEHS will have a one-storey RC building with five classrooms and furniture to admit 450 students. Loilem

Lay BEHS in Loikaw Township will have support of the Japanese government with one two-storey RC building comprising eight classrooms and furniture so as to admit over 1,400 students.—GNLM



Development of transport infrastructure discussed at meeting

YANGON, 1 March — At Sunday meeting here, Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung urged officers from the Inland Water Transport to put more effort into increasing new business and services in line with the new transport policies.

According to the new policies, staff will receive a good salary and facilities than before but they have to reform themselves, the minister said.

To fully support the economic development of the nation, laws for four state-owned transport enterprises—Inland Water Transport, Myanmar Airways, Myanmar Port Authority, Myanmar Shipyards—have already been enacted. The consequences of it, those enterprises are now independently carrying out their works, he added.

At the meeting, they also discussed the works for development of country's transport infrastructure.—MNA

Tatmadaw columns reopen Laukkai-Kongyan road for secure transport after occupying hills

NAY PYI TAW, 1 March — Military columns bravely fought and occupied point 1319 and strategically important hills near border post 129 and 23rd-mile area.

On Sunday, the Tatmadaw columns could reopen the Laukkai-Kongyan communication route for secure transport after occupying six hills of Kokang insurgents.

On 28 February, military columns discharging security duty seized 60 bullets of M-22, two berry caps, one photo album and two vehicles at a building in Napan Village.

At 11.30 am, Tatmadaw columns clashed with some Kokang insurgents in

a place, southwest of Laukkai and seized one dead body of the insurgents, one M-23 sub-machine gun, one pistol, one .22 rifle, two mines, ammunition and related materials and equipment.

At about 1.15 pm, Tatmadaw columns, acting on tip-off, searched four suspects but they fled from the scene. So, the military servicemen tried to stop the suspects by firing at them. In the incident, one of four suspects was dead and three remaining persons were arrested.

According to the investigation, the Tatmadaw columns combed the surrounding area and seized two boxes containing

1,000 electronic detonators each, eight black bullet proof coats, 30 bullet proof plaque, 50 uniforms with MNDAA badges, two caps with MNDAA titles, five bags of equipment and related materials, two packets of 30 green knapsacks and five bales of camouflage beds from the building.

At 8 pm, Tatmadaw columns searched 15 suspected persons near Sinkyaing Village but two of them opened fire at servicemen. In combing the area, the military columns seized one dead person, 12 suspects including two injured, three uniforms with MNDAA badges, 12 sets of uniforms without badges, four hats, one peak

cap, three gun proof caps, one Icon communication device, one Motorola communication device, one equipment, and two packets of heroin (about four grams).

In the incidents, Tat-

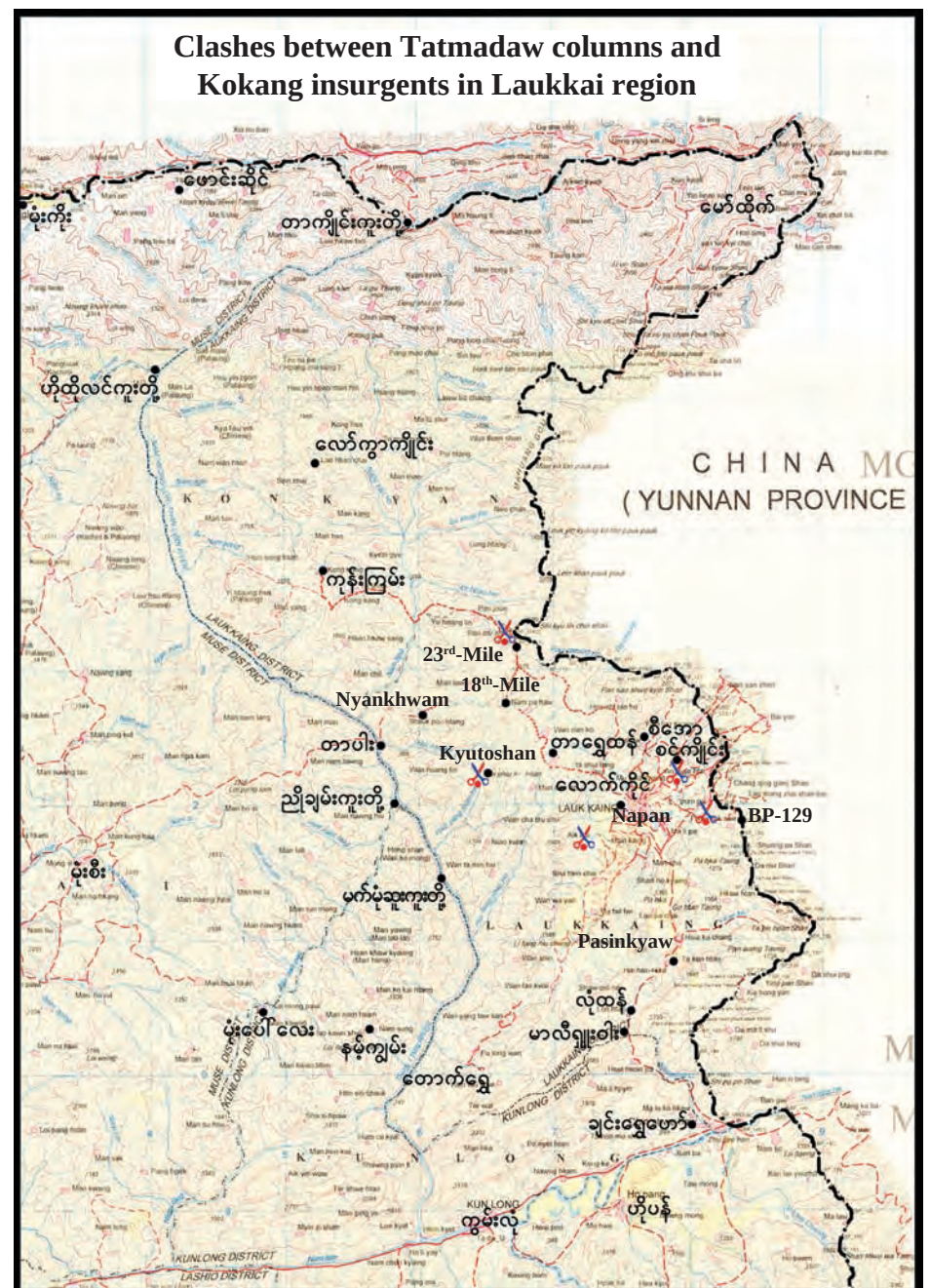
madaw columns seized three dead bodies, 331 rounds of ammunition, two rocket shells, two mines, 2,000 electronic detonators, two vehicles, two white powder packets believed to be heroin,

65 sets of uniforms and military equipment and arrested 15 persons. Four officers and other ranks sacrificed life for the nation and seven servicemen were injured.

Myawady



Photo shows materials and packets of equipment seized from Kokang insurgents.—MYAWADY



NATIONAL

It is an opportune time to

(from page 1)

In addition, short- and long-term plans are being made to introduce a shift from traditional to mechanized farming across the country, with the Nay Pyi Taw council area designated as the Union land.

To enable farmers to increase their per acre yields and ensure quality crops, agriculturalists disseminate scientific farming methods, which is like laying a solid foundation for the improvement of the agricultural sector.

Model plantations are being grown in all the states and regions simultaneously as part of raising agricultural awareness all over the country.

Encouragement is being given to agriculturalists to spread hybrid seeds to farmers on a broader scale so as to ensure crop quality and high yields.

Private sector has taken part in producing high-yield paddy seeds, a fundamental requisite for the farmers, to promote agricultural industry. This initiative has turned out a better opportunity for the farmers.

The government is helping in the production of value-added foods from agricultural products to be able to penetrate into global market which can help increase income of farmers.

In doing so, the cooperatives sector is making strenuous efforts for the contribution of farmers from seeding stage to sending the crops into the markets, by

forming cooperative groups across the country.

As strong markets are fundamentals for seasonal crops, the government is also making plans to establish wholesale markets with international norms.

Modern farming technologies, agricultural information, weather report and market figures are being broadcast from the Farmer Channel together with entertainment programmes for the relaxation of farmers. Song composition contests are also annually held to honor the farmers.

Esteemed peasants,

Foods, clothes and shelters are the requisites for daily lives of human beings, while food and nutrition are the basic necessities. Although the size of this planet cannot be expanded, the world's population is increasing annually. The present global population of more than 7,000 million is estimated to reach around 9,000 million in 2050, resulting in higher demand of foods.

As a result of global warming, the Earth is suffering from drought, heavy rains, excess snowfall, storms, earthquakes and tsunami waves. These natural disasters have impacts of food shortage and the world countries are seriously considering preparedness measures to overcome these problems.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been accelerating its encouragement for increased crop cultivation and production comprehensively for the food security of a population of 100 million the country will have in a few years as well as for exports of more produces to other countries.

It is an opportune time to speed up efforts for national interests comprehensively including the agriculture sector with the strength of very honest and hardworking peasants under the favourable weather conditions for agriculture with abundance of land and water resources.

In making the most effective use of the favourable conditions and take advantage of the opportune time, changing the mind-set to personally participate with the will for success in the efforts for keeping abreast of neighbouring countries, shifting to modern irrigated farming system, changing from traditional farming system to the mechanized one, substituting traditional seeds with modern high-yield seeds, educating peasants to reduce losses and wastage during the period from cultivation to harvest seasons, and production of high quality value-added products can realize the comprehensive development of the agriculture sector.

Esteemed peasants

The government has been accelerating its momentum to build the peaceful modern and developed democratic nation, which is the genuine will of all citizens, after finding out various ways and means.

I would like to urge all with all seriousness to march towards the goal by overcoming future challenges, barriers and difficulties after joining hands through thick and thin as travel companions aboard the same boat toward the same destination in the long-term interests of all citizens including peasant farmers.

Kokang nationals in . . . Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann meets with locals . . .

(from page 1)

called for prevention of such incidents in the future. It also requested the union government to restore the rule of law and the best administrative system and supported the martial law in the area. The statement said that Kokang nationals in Mandalay Region will cooperate in relief and resettlement efforts of the government agencies and urged other national races to follow suit.—Myawady

(from page 1)

In his speech, Thura U Shwe Mann said that it is necessary to nurture the habit of negotiation in Myanmar and to cooperate for the realization of the negotiated agreements, adding that administrative branch and staff are required to keep in touch with people so that they can fulfill the requirements of the people.

In conclusion, he urged all to cooperate for development of the country without racial, regional and ideological bias.

Then, officials reported to the speaker on regional development tasks and Thura U Shwe Mann fulfilled the requirements.

After the meeting, the speaker cordially greeted the attendees.—MNA

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann meets local people in Kyaukdaga Township.—MNA



Union Information Minister attends Myanmar Librarians Conference



Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut speaking at 2nd Myanmar Librarians Conference.—MNA

YANGON, 1 March — Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut made a speech at the Second Myanmar Librarians Conference held at the RUMFCCI building in Yangon on Sunday.

In his speech, the union

minister stressed the need for sustainable development of libraries and competence of librarians.

The conference was organized with the aims of exchanging ideologies and experience on library science, cooperating and understanding in encountering challenges faced by libraries, and promoting friendship among librarians and the role of libraries and librarians.

Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Foundation U Maung Maung, Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Association U Than Aung made speeches at the conference.

Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Union Minister for Information U Ye Htut, officials of Yangon Region Government and about 400 librarians attended the conference.

Group discussions were held at the conference and it will continue tomorrow.—MNA

Ninth white elephant emerges in Patheingyi Township



PATHEINGYI, 1 March — A 12-member group led by Deputy General Manager U Tun Tun Oo and Assistant General Manager Dr Sithu Wan Tun of Myanmar Timber Enterprise captured a female white elephant upstream of Thitpok Creek in Thilathkwa forest reserve in Patheingyi Township on 27 February morning.

The white elephant at about seven years old is

about 6 feet and 3 inches in height and 8 feet and 8 inches in body structure with pearl colour eyes and 2 feet and seven inches long tail. The white elephant has five nails on their front feet and four nails on their back feet. And its skin is pink.

The ninth white elephant is under training at Yaythoe Camp.

MNA

Lectures on electoral security process given to police officers



MYAWADY, 1 March — The electoral security course was conducted for police officers at the hall of the district police force in Myawady, Kayin State,

on Sunday.

Commander of Myawady District Police Force Police Lt-Col Moe Nyo and police officers from district police office gave lectures on specific points of security measures for electoral process.

The lectures included holding the 2015 general elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, and security measures to be taken before and after the elections.

*Tun Tun Oo
(Myawady Town)*

Bus lines elect new supervisory committee members

MANDALAY, 1 March — Mandalay Region Bus-line Supervisory Committee elected new committee members at its office in Mandalay on 26 February under supervision of Head of Mandalay Region Transport Planning Department U Zaw Win Khaing and officials.

Officials of election commission explained electoral systems for the new committee members.

Entrepreneurs and owners of bus lines elected

one chairman, one secretary, one treasurer and four committee members.

Head of Mandalay Region Transport Planning Department U Zaw Win Khaing urged the new committee members to systematically supervise smooth and secure transport services for the people.

The committee will run its tasks under the leadership of chairman U Aung Kyaw Lin and secretary U Saw Tin Hlaing of No 9 bus line.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Specialists provide free eye care services to patients

MYINGYAN, 1 March — To mark the birthday of Myingyan Sayadaw venerable Tipitaka Bhaddanta Gandamalabhivamsa, an eye care service was given to the local people for the fourth time at Theindaw Monastery in Natogyi, Mandalay Region, on Friday. Eye specialists and technicians in three groups carried out eye checkups at over 150 patients from eight wards and villages.

The medical teams found 16 patients who need to be performed surgical treatments at Myingyan General Hospital.

The venerable Sayadaw sponsored all costs of surgical operations for the patients at the general hospital. Thukha Chantha so-

cial association transported the patients to the hospital free of charge.

*Khin Zar Mon Myint
(Law)*



Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay) marks seventh anniversary

MANDALAY, 1 March — In commemoration of the seventh anniversary of Jivitadana (Free) Sangha Hospital, a ceremony to honour physicians and

wellwishers was held at the hospital on the circular road in Kandawgyi Lake in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay, on Saturday.

On the occasion, Pro-

fessor Dr U Meik appreciated for efforts of medical officers and staff and well-wishers in providing health care services to patients Buddhist monks.

Officials presented certificates of honour and gifts to physicians and health staff.

The hospital was commissioned into service on 18 April 2008, located on a 40-acre land. A total of 15 medical wards admit Buddhist monks and nuns. Since its establishment, the hospital has given medical treatment to over 84,000 patient monks and nuns.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Students can choose best school for their learning

MANDALAY, 1 March — A total of 79 private schools are planned to operate their tasks in 28 townships of Mandalay Region in 2015-16 academic year. According to the education department, school founders applied for opening of 44 schools in 2015-16 academic year, while two more founders renewed the

two-year temporary permits of opening the schools. Twenty-two founders also renewed the one-year test permit for their schools. In addition, 11 schools sought the approval to move to new venues. "The government allowed establishment of private schools in 2012-13 academic year. Parents of students need to check

the private schools whether these institutions have really held school permits from authorities. If not, students will face loss in their learning," an education staff told reporters.

So far, the government of Mandalay Region has allowed 69 private schools.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



A press conference on Saturday was held at Myawady District Police Force, where Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Moe Nyo clarified handling of criminal cases that happened in February, duty and functions of the police force to the media.—TUN TUN Oo (MYAWADY)

REGIONAL

ASEAN to remove more nontariff barriers to boost economic integration

KOTA BHARU, (Malaysia), 1 March — Trade ministers from 10 Southeast Asian countries pledged on Sunday to break down further nontariff barriers to boost intra-regional trade as they seek closer economic integration.

The trade ministers of member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations gathered for their annual retreat in Kota Bharu, the capital of Malaysia's northeastern Kelantan state, to chart the way forward for the grouping as it is poised to mark the formal establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community by end of this year.

Under the AEC blueprint, the grouping — with a combined population of over 625 million people — envisions an integrated

market and production base with free flow of goods, services and investments, skilled labour and capital.

It aims to boost intra-ASEAN trade further. In 2013, trade between ASEAN members amounted to \$608.6 billion, accounting for 24.2 percent of total trade in the region. It was a 32.9 percent increase from the \$458.1 billion recorded in 2008 when the AEC blueprint was first launched.

"The implementation of the AEC measures does not mean that ASEAN will become a single economic entity by 1 January, 2016, rather it sends a strong signal that positive measures have been put in place towards a more liberalized and integrated economic region," the ministers said in a statement at the end of

the one-day retreat.

At present, ASEAN members have substantially eliminated custom import duties and beginning 2015, 97.3 percent of the products traded in the region are duty-free.

The focus for the year, they added, will be on removing further nontariff barriers that impede trade, such as simplification of custom procedures, harmonization of standards, further liberalization of services and trade facilitation.

At a joint press conference, ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Economic Community Lim Hong Hin illustrated some of the common problems like multiple testing required for a product by different countries in the region and labeling requirements such as the use

of local language. Some of these have been resolved but there were still cases cropping up.

Malaysian International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed who chaired the retreat said they have identified 69 nontariff barriers and have resolved 45.

"We are committed to see more progress in the (removal) of nontariff barriers," he said.

Meanwhile, Mustapa said the negotiation for a trade pact between ASEAN and its six regional partners — Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea — is on track for conclusion by the end of this year.

The eighth round of talks for the initiative known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic

Partnership will be held in June in Kyoto, western Japan. Before that, some of the negotiating committees will hold a smaller "inter-session" meeting in April in Jakarta, Indonesia, he added.

RCEP is touted as the largest free trade deal as it will cover half the world's population and almost 30 percent of the global economy.

"We will make sure that the deadline of end (of) 2015 is achieved," Mustapa said. "The closer economic integration will make ASEAN an attractive region to do business."

The ministers also discussed concerns over the impact of falling oil prices for net-oil exporting economies in ASEAN like Indonesia and currency volatility including possible

capital flow reversal.

"This is where the implementation of ASEAN's regional economic integration can help member states overcome the challenges posed by global economic volatility," the ministers said in the statement.

"We expect ASEAN's economic performance to improve in 2015 to 5.1 percent, above the 3.5 percent global growth projection. We based this on the stronger demand in advanced economies, energized by the robust US recovery and several policy stimulus measures in the Eurozone and Japan," the ministers added.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Kyodo News

India raises fiscal 2015 defence budget nearly 8%

NEW DELHI, 1 March — India announced on Saturday an increase of almost 8 percent in the budgetary allocation for its defence for fiscal 2015 starting April to 2,467.27 billion rupees (about \$40 billion).

"We are pursuing a 'Make-in-India' policy to achieve greater self-sufficiency in the area of defence equipment, including

aircraft," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, adding that the country plans to manufacture defence equipment not only for its own use but also for export.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the "Make-in-India" initiative after assuming power last year in a bid to increase foreign investments with the objective of increasing pro-

duction, employment and income.

Laying a roadmap to achieve a fiscal deficit of 3 percent of gross domestic product in three years, the finance minister set the targets for the figure at 3.9 percent in fiscal 2015, 3.5 percent in fiscal 2016 and 3 percent in fiscal 2017.

To boost tourism in the South Asian country, Jaitley

also proposed providing visa-on-arrival services to visitors from 150 countries, up from the current 43.

Concerning nuclear energy, he said the second component of the Kundankulam nuclear power plant, set up in cooperation with Russia, will be commissioned during fiscal 2015 through 31 March next year.—Kyodo News



Photo taken on 1 March, 2015 shows a flower float during a grand flower float parade at the Flower Festival in Baguio City, the Philippines.—XINHUA



Staff members work at the Reception for Foreign Journalists in Beijing, China on 1 March, 2015. Foreign journalists reporting the third session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC) and the third session of the 12th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) began to register on Sunday at the Media Centre Hotel in Beijing. XINHUA

Opposition DPJ holds convention, vows to contest security legislation

TOKYO, 1 March — The main opposition Democratic Party of Japan pledged on Sunday to stand tough against the government's planned security legislation at the Diet as it held a party convention in Tokyo.

Adopting an action policy, the DPJ also lashed out at Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's "Abenomics" economic policy package as widening economic and social inequalities in Japan.

ities in Japan.

Party President Katsumasa Okada, who was elected to the post in January, was absent from the convention after undergoing retinal detachment surgery on Thursday.

The DPJ called for "cautious and sufficient" parliamentary debate on the legislation that will enable Japan to expand the role of its Self-Defence Forces. The government is expected to submit bills

on the legislation to the Diet after local elections in late April.

The party vowed to defend Japan's principles of peace and exclusively defence-oriented policy under the Constitution and draw people's attention to the "danger" of the Abe administration.

The DPJ, in power from September 2009 to December 2012, pledged to rebuild itself so that it would become attractive

enough again to be an alternative of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The party, admitting its "defeat" in the House of Representatives election last December, said it plans to expedite the restoration work because the next lower house election may be held at the same time of the House of Councillors election scheduled for the summer of 2016.

Kyodo News

Bangladeshi forces raid militant hideout in Chittagong town

DHAKA, 1 March — Bangladeshi special forces on Saturday raided a militant hideout in the southeast town of Chittagong, arrested four suspects and seized explosives and weapons, force commanders said.

Last Sunday, the special forces raided a training camp in Chittagong district operated by an Islamist militant network that was planning to carry out attacks in the country.

On Saturday, the Rapid Action Battalion recov-

ered 150 kg (330 pounds) of high explosives and a range of bomb-making material from the first floor of a five-storey residential building in the city.

The battalion said that the material was enough

to make more than 2000 bombs.

The raid on the building was launched after special forces arrested five people on 22 February at a camp in Banshkhali, a remote, hilly area of Chittagong, and found

firearms, ammunition and other training material.

"We had information about the militants from the earlier arrested militants," said Lieutenant Colonel Miftah Uddin.

Last month, Bangladeshi police arrested four

suspected members of Islamic State in the capital, Dhaka, including a regional coordinator for the militant group who told police they had been trained in Pakistan.

Reuters

Abe views Fukushima site for radioactively contaminated waste

FUKUSHIMA, (Japan), 1 March — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Sunday viewed a site in Fukushima Prefecture for interim storage facilities for radioactively contaminated soil and other waste generated in cleanup work following the 2011 nuclear disaster.

“I hope to speed up the decontamination work to ensure reconstruction,” Abe said as he looked at the facilities under construction from the roof of the Futaba town hall under the guidance of Futaba Mayor Shiro Izawa.

The mayor asked Abe for constant support for the town’s reconstruction given that the local authorities took the bitter decision to

host the facilities.

The central government plans to begin delivery of the waste to the interim storage site on 13 March, two days after the fourth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake that triggered the nuclear crisis.

The facilities are being built on about 16 square kilometres of land in Futaba and Okuma, both in the Fukushima Prefecture.

They are expected to be capable of storing 30 million tons of soil and other radioactive waste, such as burned ash, but they will not store highly radioactive waste generated in the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power

plant of Tokyo Electric Power Co.

Under the government plan, the radioactively contaminated waste will be kept at the interim facilities and be permanently disposed of outside the prefecture within 30 years, as requested by the prefectural government in accepting the storage plan.

The prefectural government has called on the state for legislation guaranteeing that the waste will be put to final disposal outside Fukushima Prefecture within 30 years.

A site for the final disposal of the radioactive waste has yet to be decided.

Kyodo News

Obama to veto bill letting Congress weigh in on Iran deal



US President Barack Obama

WASHINGTON, 1 March — President Barack Obama would veto a bill recently introduced in the US Senate allowing Congress to weigh in on any deal the United States and other negotiating countries reach with Iran on its nuclear capabilities, the White House said on Saturday.

“The president has been clear that now is not

the time for Congress to pass additional legislation on Iran. If this bill is sent to the president, he will veto it,” said Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman for the White House’s National Security Council.

The United States and five other major powers are seeking to negotiate an agreement with Iran to curb its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from economic sanctions.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act would require to submit to Congress the text of any agreement within five days of concluding a final deal with Iran.

The bill would also prohibit Obama from sus-

pending or waiving sanctions on Iran passed by Congress for 60 days after a deal. Meehan said United States “should give our negotiators the best chance of success, rather than complicating their efforts.”

Negotiations between the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany, Britain and Iran have reached a crucial stage, with a basic framework agreement due by the end of March. Republican Senator Bob Corker, one of the bipartisan group of sponsors of the bill, said it was “disappointing that the president feels he is the only one who speaks for the citizens of our country.” — Reuters

Australia announces new trial to improve aircraft tracking

CANBERRA, 1 March — Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss announced on Sunday that Australia will conduct a trial with Malaysia and Indonesia to more closely track aircraft through skies over oceanic areas.

Truss whose portfolio includes infrastructure and transport made the announcement in the Parliament House with Sir Angus Houston, Chair of Australia’s Air Traffic Control Manager, Airservices Australia. The announcement came just one week before the anniversary of the disappearance of Malaysian Airline MH370 on 8 March, 2014 with 239 passengers and crew on board.

Under the new trial, the minimum tracking interval for remote oceanic areas will be improved to every 15 minutes from the

previous tracking rate of 30 to 40 minutes. Over the continent, aircraft are already tracked in real time by radars or continuous position reporting to Airservices ground stations.

Truss said Airservices had worked closely with Qantas, Virgin Australia and global satellite provider Inmarsat to successfully develop the operational concepts and trial the new use of surveillance technology with selected aircraft domestically since the beginning of February.

Houston, who was once the Chief Coordinator of the Joint Agency Coordination Centre for the Search of MH370, said the trial is expected to expand to wider area in Queensland in April and by the end of the year to the whole airspace managed by Airservices Australia, which covers 11 per-



Australian Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss (L) and Sir Angus Houston, chair of Australia’s Air Traffic Control Manager, make an announcement at the Parliament House in Canberra, Australia on 1 March, 2015.—XINHUA

cent of the world’s surface.

The governments of Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed in principle to join the trial with Australia. Both governments are expected to have further talks in two weeks with the Australian government on how to implement.

The reporting rate will automatically increase in the event of an abnormal situation to every 5 minutes or less. Air traffic controllers are also able to set the rate to near realtime for individual aircraft if required.

Houston said any changes of up to 200 feet

in altitude or two nautical miles to the original route would trigger the automatic tracking of the aircraft.

Truss said that had there been the new system in place for MH370, heightened surveillance would have been triggered seven hours earlier when the aircraft changed direction and therefore left the search and rescue teams with more accurate information.

Houston warned that the new system is not a “silver bullet”. However, it is an important step forward toward early identification for any irregularities of aircrafts.

“This is not a silver bullet, but it is an important step in delivering immediate improvements to the way we currently track aircraft while more comprehensive solutions are developed,” Houston said.

The trial will use technology called Automatic Dependant Surveillance Contract (ADS-C) which establishes links between aircraft and air traffic control systems to provide information such as an aircraft’s position, speed, altitude and direction of flight. About 90 percent of the world’s long-haul, wide-bodied aircraft have been equipped with the technology.

As per the current search off the western coast of Australia, Houston said he is quite confident that the search for the 60,000 square kilometres priority area will be completed by the middle of the year. He also warned that as the southern hemisphere’s winter months coming, the weather conditions can be very challenging.

Xinhua

Cargo train links China’s Heilongjiang with Russia

HARBIN, 1 March — The first regular cargo train service linking northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province to central Russia left on its maiden voyage on Saturday.

The cargo train, which was carrying oil exploration equipment, pulled out of Xiangfang Railway Station in the provincial capital of Harbin at 10:50 am. It is expected to arrive in Biklyan, Russia, in 10 days.

Using the 6,578 km route costs 75 percent less than air transportation, said Li Tie from the Harbin Railway Bureau. It is expected that the service will result in increased exports from Heilongjiang to Russia. So far a number of mainland

cities — including Chongqing and Chengdu in southwest China; Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Changsha in central China; and Shenyang in northeast China—have rail freight services to Europe.—Xinhua

Photo taken on 28 Feb, 2015 shows the first cargo train to Biklyan in Russia pulling out of Xiangfang Railway Station in Harbin, capital of northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province. The regular cargo train service linking northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province to central Russia went into operation on Saturday. — XINHUA



Police in Germany's Bremen heighten security citing possible Islamist threat



Armed police officers guard 'St Petri Dome,' next to the town hall of the northern German city Bremen on 28 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

BERLIN, 1 March — Police in the north German city of Bremen warned on Saturday of a heightened danger from Islamist militants and said they had

increased their presence in the city centre and stepped up protection of the Jewish community.

They said in a statement they had searched an

Islamic culture centre, detained several people for identity checks and arrested one person in connection with the measures. A spokesman for the police declined to give further details.

"Since yesterday evening the authorities in Bremen have indications, based on knowledge from the police, the domestic intelligence agency and a federal authority, of an increased threat from Islamist extremists," the police statement said.

Earlier this month a carnival parade in the northern German town of Braunschweig was cancelled at short notice due to a threat of an Islamist attack.—Reuters

Greek PM accuses Spain, Portugal of anti-Athens 'axis'



Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras

ATHENS, 1 March — Greece's leftist Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras accused Spain and Portugal on Saturday of leading a conservative conspiracy to topple his anti-austerity government, saying they feared their own radical forces before elections this year.

Tsipras also rejected criticism that Athens had staged a climbdown to secure an extension of its financial lifeline from the euro zone, saying anger among German conservatives showed that his government had won concessions.

Greeks have directed much of their fury about years of austerity dictated by international creditors at Germany, the biggest contributor to their country's 240-billion-euro bailout.

But in a speech to his Syriza party, Tsipras turned on Madrid and Lisbon, accusing them of taking a hard line in negotiations which led to the euro zone extending the bailout program last week for four months.

"We found opposing us an axis of powers ... led by the governments of Spain and Portugal which for obvious political reasons attempted to lead the entire negotiations to the brink," said Tsipras, who won an election on 25 January. "Their plan was and

is to wear down, topple or bring our government to unconditional surrender before our work begins to bear fruit and before the Greek example affects other countries," he said, adding: "And mainly before the elections in Spain." Spain's new anti-establishment Podemos movement has topped some opinion polls, making it a serious threat to the conservative People's Party of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy in an election which must be held by the end of this year.

Rajoy went to Athens less than a fortnight before the Greek election to warn voters against believing the "impossible" promises of Syriza. His appeal fell on deaf ears and voters swept the previous conservative premier from power.

Portugal will also have elections after the summer but no anti-austerity force as potent as Syriza or Podemos has so far emerged there. In an interview published before Tsipras made his speech, Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho denied that Portugal had taken a hard line in negotiations on the Greek deal at the Eurogroup of euro zone finance ministers. "There may have been a political intention to create this idea, but it is not true," he told the *Expresso* weekly newspaper. Passos Coelho aligned himself with euro zone governments which have called for policies to promote economic growth but without trying to walk away from austerity as in Greece.

"We were on the same side as the French government, with the Italian and Irish governments. I think it's bad to stigmatize southern European countries," he said.—Reuters

Maduro says Venezuela detains US citizens; announces moves against US

CARACAS, 1 March — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Saturday his government had detained US citizens, including a pilot, on suspicion of espionage, in a move likely to strain already tense relations between Washington and Caracas.

Maduro also said his government would order a reduction in the number of US embassy staff in Caracas and prohibit some US officials from entering Venezuela in retaliation for a similar US measure last year. Venezuela would also require US citizens to obtain visas before visiting, he told a rally.

The Venezuelan president, long at odds with Washington, has renewed accusations in recent weeks that the United States is seeking to topple him.

Maduro's political opponents at home call this a smokescreen aimed at distracting from an increasingly severe economic crisis in the oil-exporting nation. Venezuela has been hard hit by the collapse of oil prices over the last nine months.

"We have captured some US citizens in undercover activities, espionage, trying to win over people in towns along the Venezuelan coast," Maduro said at a rally in Caracas adding one was a US pilot detained in the volatile border state of Tachira.

"In Tachira we captured a pilot of a US plane (who is) of Latin origin (carrying) all kinds of documentation," Maduro said, without offering details.

He said US politicians including former President George W Bush, former

Vice President Dick Cheney, and Senator Bob Menendez would be blocked from entering Venezuela.

Menendez in response said: "Being sanctioned by the Maduro regime will never deter me from speaking out against the ruin caused

by his government."

A spokesman for the US embassy in Caracas said he was unable to comment, citing a lack of any official diplomatic communication with the Venezuelan government.

Reuters



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro addresses the audience at the Diplomatic Centre in Port-of-Spain on 24 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Estonians vote; pro-NATO premier faces pro-Russian opposition

TALLINN, 1 March — Estonians voted on Sunday in a parliamentary election with centre-right Prime Minister Taavi Roivas favoured to form a new pro-NATO coalition and fend off a challenge by an opposition party that wants better ties with neighbouring Russia.

Roivas' Reform Party, which has stressed fears of Russian interference in Estonia after Moscow annexed Ukraine's Crimea region last year, led with

26 percent support in a final TNS EMOR poll on Friday against 22 for the centre-left Centre Party.

A free-marketeer and the youngest European Union leader at 35, Roivas is likely to be best placed to form a new coalition, even if the Centre Party wins the most votes.

Other big parties say they will not work with the Centre Party, which signed a 2004 cooperation deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin's United

Russia Party.

"Cooperation after the elections with the Estonian Centre Party would be very difficult for any of the other parties," Roivas told *Reuters*.

The Centre Party says other parties may drop opposition to cooperating after Sunday's vote in the northernmost Baltic state of 1.3 million people, where about a quarter are Russian speakers.

Estonians voted in partly sunny weather in temper-

atures above freezing, in a likely boost for turnover.

Other parties accuse Centre Party leader Edgar Savisaar, the mayor of Tallinn who was an interim prime minister from 1991-92, of failing to condemn Putin's actions in Ukraine.

They also say his party has misused public funds in Tallinn, a charge his Tallinn city controlled government denies.

The Centre Party, which gets about 70 percent of the Russian-speaking

vote, wants better ties with Moscow to guarantee security for the Baltic State that was part of the Soviet Union until independence in 1991.

It also says it wants to help the poor, by raising minimum wages to 1,000 euros (725 pounds) a month from 390.

It is unclear if the assassination of Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov in Moscow on Friday, by an unknown attacker, could affect the vote.

Partial results will be

published when polls close at 1800 GMT. It could take hours before results are clear.

Under Reform-led coalition governments, Estonia has been one of few NATO members to keep defence spending at a NATO goal of 2 percent of gross domestic product.

Estonia, a euro zone member since 2011, has the lowest public sector debt in the EU. Parties differ sharply over wages and tax policy.—Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 2 March, 2015

The importance of economic equality and growth

By Kyaw Thura

When it comes to social and economic inequality deeply entrenched in our country, the blame lies with the internal armed conflict, which has long weakened the administrative mechanism of successive governments. Clearly, persistent economic retardation can have negative effects on all ethnic groups

and the nation as a whole. In addition, slow-moving economy will not be able to create new job opportunities for fresh graduates. It is undeniable that sluggish economic growth is capable of destroying the dreams of the generations of today and tomorrow.

The root cause of economic inequality is likely to result from the unequal sharing of natural resources and their benefits. To avert national hazard, the central government should decentralize authority and administration in all the regions and states of the country. In every sense, the people of a state or region where resources are exploited should have the rights to enjoy the benefits derived from extractive projects. Yet, local governments are required to seek approval from the central government.

For instance, the central government should do everything in its capacity to satisfy the two

goals of human resources development and economic growth by laying down firm policies that will guarantee better life for the ethnic groups and create a more vibrant future for the economy as a whole.

All things considered, for national reconciliation to become a reality, there must be economic equality and growth, which will no doubt ease racial and political tensions.

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

Coca-Cola to bring the happiness journey to more cities across Myanmar in 2015

Tens of thousands more consumers to enjoy the Coca-Cola Uplifting Break experience through popular afternoon music shows

YANGON, 1 March — Coca-Cola Myanmar is extending its series of popular Happiness Journey music concerts themed around the "Coca-Cola Uplifting Break" experience to more cities this year. The Coca-Cola Happiness Journey was launched in Myanmar in 2013 with stops in Yangon and Mandalay and last year, the brand made successful Happiness Journey stops in other cities for the first time—Monywa, Pyay, Taunggyi, Patheingyi and Mandalay.

Coca-Cola will once again hit the roads of Myanmar with its specially-designed convoy of Coca-Cola trucks to host entertaining afternoon music shows featuring performances by popular artists Sai Sai Kham Leng, Eaint Chit, Mi Sandi, Bunny Phyto, Me N Ma Girls and Jet San Htun.

"Based on customer demand, we are continuing the Coca-Cola Happiness Journey, bringing our 'Up-

lifting Break' experience to even more cities in 2015," said Rommel P. Fuentebella, Marketing Director, Coca-Cola Myanmar. "Throughout the year, fans will have the opportunity to take a break and share an ice-cold refreshing Coca-Cola with friends, family and their favourite artists."

Today, Coca-Cola brought the Happiness Journey to Bago for the first time. Thousands of people enjoyed an afternoon of entertaining music performances by Eaint Chit, Mi Sandi and Ah Moon at a field near Bago City Hall, Phattan Street, Hanthawady Ward. The next stop of the Happiness Journey will be in Mawlamyine, Mon State, in end-March.

To be part of the Happiness Journey activities and attend the concerts in the various cities, people can redeem tickets by simply collecting six (6) Coca-Cola, Sprite or Max+



plastic bottle caps or cans and presenting them to the redemption booth staff to receive two (2) tickets to the event. Submitting a mix of bottle caps and cans is also allowed and the number of tickets a person can redeem is only limited by the amount of caps and cans they can collect.

The location of the ticket redemption booth in each city is advertised on promotional banners placed at participating consumer goods stores and provision shops across each of the cities. For the Coca-Cola Hap-

piness Journey stop in Bago, consumers visited redemption booths located at the entrance of Bago Myoma Market, the south entrance of Shwemawdaw Pagoda and in front of Bago University from 18 to 28 February.

"I was delighted to be part of each and every Coca-Cola Happiness Journey

stop in 2014 and am glad to be involved again this year. I felt appreciative see my fans in Bago enjoying a music-filled afternoon with Coca-Cola," said singing sensation, Eaint Chit.

Coca-Cola is promoting its "Uplifting Break" campaign across various media channels including television, print, radio and

Facebook throughout the year. For the latest information on the upcoming Happiness Journey activities and details on the locations of the ticket redemption booths in the various cities, please visit the Coca-Cola Myanmar Facebook page- www.facebook.com/CocaColaMyanmar.

GNLM

U-15 team thrash women's team 3-0 in tune-up match

YANGON, 1 March— Myanmar U-15 men's team played a tune-up match with Myanmar national women's team at Youth Training Centre in Thuwunna, here, on 28 February morning.

The U-15 team routed

the women's team 3-0 in the match.

The U-15 team will take part in the China-ASEAN youth football tournament to be held in Dongxing, Guangxi Province of China from 4 to 11 March 2015. Myanmar national

women's team will join the Brazil Olympic football qualifier in 2016.—GNLM

Players of both U-15 team and women's team controlling the ball to win over each other.—MFF



LOCAL NEWS

Businesses of residents, banking services rely on each other



NATOGYI, 1 March — Kanbawza Bank Ltd. opened its 207th branch in Natogyi, Mandalay Region, in the second week of February.

CB Bank and Ay-

eyawady Bank will give banking services at their branches to be opened in 2015 in Natogyi Township. Local residents said that as various businesses

nies engaging in petrified wood trading are booming day by day in Natogyi, banking services are also gaining development momentum.

Htay Myint Maung

University of Forestry (Yezin) turns out over 300 graduates in 2015



NAY PYI TAW, 1 March — The University of Forestry (Yezin) held the sixth convocation at its hall in Zeyathiri Township on Saturday. Rector Dr. Myint Oo conferred certificates of

M.Sc. degree on two graduates and B.A. degree on 333 graduates individually.

Faculty members, members of academic and management boards, guests and relatives of graduates

were also in attendance.

Since 1982, students have been learning the forestry subject in the Yezin campus, under the purview of the Department of Forestry at the Yezin Institute of Agriculture. In 1992, the Forestry Department was carved out and founded as the Institute of Forestry (Yezin). In 2002, it was renamed the University of Forestry (Yezin). The Bachelor of Science (Forestry) degree programmes used to take six years to complete but it has since been changed to five years.—*Shwe Ye Yint*

IKBZ Insurance presents compensation for damages of building



MANDALAY, 1 March — International Kanbawza Insurance (Mandalay Head Office) gave a compensation for damages in an earthquake at its office in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on 27 February.

A building of U Aye Gyi and wife Daw Thein Thein Wai of Podan Ward in Sagaing Township who took fire and earthquake insurances for their building at International Kanbawza Insurance Ltd.

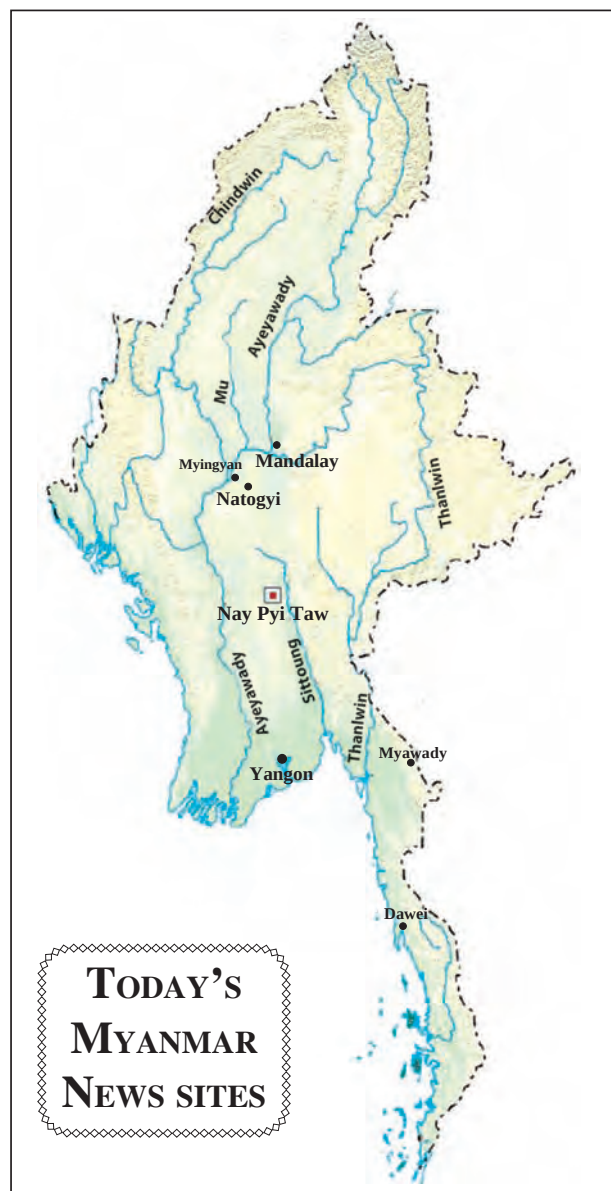
An earthquake of Richter Scale 5 that hit in the region at 5.47 p.m. on 27 November 2014 caused damages at the ceilings and walls of the building. The insurance company gave K8.073 million as the cost of repair to the owner of building.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Immigration staff explain specific points of Special Moe Pwint Project, before issuing of CSCs

MANDALAY, 1 March — Chanmyathazi Township Immigration and National Registration Department, Mandalay Region, held talks on implementation of Special Moe Pwint Project on issuance of citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible citizens at the hall in Chanmyathazi Ward recently.

Immigration staff members explained salient points of Special Moe Pwint Project. The staff also delivered the citizenship scrutiny cards to 225 eligible citizens with the assistance of local authorities. Local people are pleased for clarification of the project in issuance of the ID cards so as to save time and money.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Law officers must be reliable in ensuring rule of law and order

MANDALAY, 1 March — Law officers need to abide by Union Attorney-General Law, procedures, order and instructions in serving interests of the State and the people, Advocate-General of Mandalay Region U Ye Aung Myint told district and township law officers at a coordination meeting at his office on 27 February.

The advocate-general of the region stressed the need for law officers to improve their individual capacity and try hard to be-

come reliable law officers for the people in discharging duty of ensuring rule of law and order in their respective townships.

The law officers must provide assistance for tasks of the respective election sub-commissions, he added. A total of 58 law officers from district and township offices including Mandalay Region Law Officer U Soe Naing discussed administration, prosecution and judicial affairs.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Kurdish rebel leader in Turkey calls for disarmament congress



Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan (C), accompanied by Interior Minister Efkân Ala (3rd L) meets with pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) lawmakers Sirri Sureyya Onder (3rd R), Pervin Buldan (2nd R) and Idris Baluken (R) in Istanbul on 28 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

ISTANBUL, 1 March — Jailed Kurdish militant leader Abdullah Ocalan called on his followers to take a “historic” decision to lay down their arms, ac-

cording to a statement on Saturday, a crucial step in Turkey's drive to end a 30-year insurgency by Kurdish rebels.

Turkey's president,

Tayyip Erdogan, welcomed the call but cautioned the rebels had failed to deliver on previous pledges.

Sirri Sureyya Onder,

a lawmaker from parliament's pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), read a statement from Ocalan that urged the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to attend a congress on disarmament in the spring months.

“I invite the PKK to attend an extraordinary congress in the spring months in order to make the strategic and historic decision to abandon the armed struggle,” Onder said, quoting Ocalan, with whom an HDP delegation met this week.

Onder spoke live on television alongside Deputy Prime Minister Yalcin Akdogan, who said the move towards disarmament showed “an important phase in the resolution process has been reached,” after the two sides met briefly in Istanbul.

“We view this statement as important to accelerate the work on disarmament ... and for democratic politics to come to the

forefront,” Akdogan said.

The statement also attributed to Ocalan 10 measures that Kurds want to ensure peace, including a new constitution which Erdogan is also seeking — to imbue his office with more executive powers and to replace a charter drawn up by technocrats after a 1980 military coup.

Erdogan has risked a nationalist backlash to pursue an end to the insurgency that has claimed more than 40,000 lives, mostly Kurdish, since 1984, launching jailhouse talks with Ocalan — once derided as a “baby killer” — in late 2012.

“Of course calls are good, but what is most important is implementation. How much will implementation be reflected in the field ahead of an election?” Erdogan said at a news conference.

“I hope (they) will stand behind these statements.”

Reuters

Two billion euros of Egypt-French arms deal financed by loan from Paris: Sisi



Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi

CAIRO, 1 March — The French government loaned Egypt 3.2 billion euros to finance the recent multi-billion-euro purchase of French military equipment, Egypt's president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in an interview on al-Arabiya TV on Saturday.

Egypt signed an agreement this month to buy 5.2 billion euros worth of French weapons, including 24 Rafale combat jets made by Dassault Aviation, a multi-mission naval frigate, and air-to-air missiles. “The last equipment we got from France was with a French loan worth 3.2 billion euros and this loan was extended from the French government,” President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said in the interview. France said at the time the deal was agreed to that more than half the purchase price would be financed by French banks with a state-backed Coface guarantee.

Reuters

CCTV shows British schoolgirls at Istanbul bus station on way to Syria — media

ISTANBUL, 1 March — Security footage appears to show three British schoolgirls, believed to be on their way to join Islamic State militants, waiting for hours at a bus station in Turkey before travelling to a city near the Syrian border, media reported on Sunday.

British police and the girls' families have issued

urgent appeals for their daughters to return home after they flew to Istanbul from London on 17 February. Friends Amira Abase, 15, Shamima Begum, 15, and Kadiza Sultana, 16, are thought to have since entered Syria, British police have said.

European governments have called on Turkey to stem the flow of

foreign fighters to Syria, and British Prime Minister David Cameron has urged social media firms to do more to deal with online extremism, saying the girls appeared to have been radicalised “in their bedrooms.”

The CCTV pictures, dated on 17 February and 18 February, are from Bayrampasa bus station on the European side of Istanbul, which the girls reached

by metro from the airport, Milliyet newspaper said, citing police sources.

They say the girls spent 18 hours at Bayrampasa before boarding a bus to travel to Sanlifulfa, 50 km (30 miles) from the Syrian border region controlled by Islamic State militants.

Turkish police are trying to identify people seen in the footage helping the girls with their luggage at

the bus station.

Turkey has complained that Britain was late in notifying it about the girls' arrival.

Security forces estimate that about 600 British Muslims have travelled to the region to join the conflict, some with Islamic State, the extremist Sunni Muslim group that controls a swathe of territory in Syria and Iraq.—Reuters

US-led coalition launches air strikes on Islamic State targets

WASHINGTON, 1 March — A US-led coalition launched 11 air strikes in Iraq and nine in Syria since early Friday against Islamic State militants, the Combined Joint Task Force said.

Four of the strikes in Syria hit Islamic State positions near the border town of Kobani, the task force said in a statement on Saturday.

In Iraq, the coalition launched four strikes near the town of al Asad and three near Mosul.—Reuters

BEIRUT, 1 March — Syrian government forces have taken control of villages in southern Syria, state media said on Saturday, part of a campaign they started this month against insurgents posing one of the biggest remaining threats to Damascus.

The large offensive is backed by the Lebanese Shi'ite group Hezbollah and initially made swift progress before slowing. The gains, made on Friday and Saturday, mark a new push in the government campaign.

Syrian army takes villages in south



A man reacts as he stands on debris from his collapsed home after what activists said were air strikes by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in Marj Al Sultan, in the eastern Damascus suburb of Ghouta on 27 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Syria's state news agency SANA said the village of Tal Al-Majda in Sweida province and Tal Antar in Deraa were taken. Both are near Jordan.

The south is the last notable foothold of the mainstream, non-jihadist opposition to President Bashar al-Assad, who has consolidated control over much of western Syria after almost four years of civil war. Al-Qaeda's Syrian arm, the Nusra Front, is also active in the south and has clashed with western-backed rebels. Rival Is-

lamic State jihadists control much of the north and east of the country.

The offensive aims to shield the capital Damascus, a short drive to the north. The insurgents had made significant gains in the south in recent months, taking several military bases.

Hezbollah, a powerful Shi'ite Islamist group backed by Iran, has offered crucial military support to the Syrian government during the civil war, which has killed around 200,000 people.—Reuters

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Hyundai recalls more than 200,000 Elantras over steering problem

WASHINGTON, 1 March — Hyundai Corp is recalling 204,768 Elantras because of a power steering defect that might cause the cars to suddenly revert to manual steering, the company said Saturday in a report filed with US auto safety regulators.

The recall affects four-door Elantra sedans produced from 1 June, 2008, to 30 April, 2010, and 2009-10 model Elantra Touring hatchbacks, Hyundai said in a report on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website.

It said the defect might affect an estimated 3 percent of those cars.

“Steering control can be maintained; however, the vehicle will revert to a manual steering mode, requiring greater driver effort, particularly at low speeds. This could result in an increased risk of a crash,” Hyundai wrote in its report.

The carmaker said it had understood that the loss of power steering assist has not been considered a safety defect in the United States when manual steering was maintained. “More recently, however, the



The Hyundai logo is seen outside a Hyundai car dealer in Golden, Colorado, on 3 Nov, 2014. — REUTERS

industry has increasingly handled similar issues through safety recalls due to the greater driver effort at low vehicle speeds,” Hyundai said. “To remain consistent with that industry trend, Hyundai has decided to conduct this campaign as a safety recall.” The company did not say whether there had been any incidents involving the defect. — Reuters

Another H7N9 human case reported in E China

HEFEI, 1 March — February’s fourth human case of the H7N9 strain of avian flu has been confirmed in East China’s Anhui Province, the provincial health authorities said

on Saturday.

All four patients are confirmed to have had contact with live poultry, according to local authorities.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have

infected humans in March 2013. Humans are most susceptible to the virus in winter and spring.

So far at least 60 cases have been reported in south China’s Guangdong Prov-

ince. Several other Chinese localities including Shanghai, Fujian, Guizhou and Zhejiang have also reported human cases of H7N9 through this winter.

Xinhua

Growth in farmer-turned-labourers slows

BEIJING, 1 March — Growth in the number of former farmers pursuing non-agricultural work has slowed as more people are reluctant to leave their hometowns, official data showed on Saturday.

China had 274 million farmer-turned-labourers as of the end of 2014, and 168 million of them had moved to cities to seek work, according to data from the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS).

However, growth in the number of total non-agricultural workers and migrant workers slowed to 1.9 percent and 1.3 percent respectively in 2014, from 2.4 percent and 1.7 percent the previous year.

China has the world’s largest population of farmers. But their willingness to grow crops has waned as returns from the land are typically much smaller than those from working in cities, posing threats to the country’s food security. The trend is slowing, however, thanks to the government’s efforts to boost agricultural production.

The number of new workers coming from rural areas has been shrinking since 2011, said Vice Minister Yang Zhiming.

The annual increase of workers’ wages has also slowed down. Monthly salaries of migrant workers increased less than 10 percent to 2,864 yuan (around 470 US dollars) in 2014, down from 13.9 percent registered in 2013 and much lower than the 20-percent increase five years ago.

Despite a growing population rushing to cities, experienced laborers are still badly needed in China, which is trying to move up the global value chain by stimulating high-tech sectors with high value added.

The majority of migrant workers in China lack skills — only one third of workers have received training before employment. Workers that can be counted as having expertise in their field accounted for 19 percent of all those employed nationwide, while highly-skilled talent made up merely 5 percent, the

MHRSS data showed.

Chinese factories have started to meet trouble in finding qualified workers, while former farmers are familiar with the experience of being turned for jobs on the grounds that they lack skills.

The structural contradiction has become a normal state, Yang said.

The problem has emerged as a hurdle to industrial upgrading in China, which is mulling measures to reverse the situation.

The country plans to launch a mass training program to train 20 million migrant workers each year, according to Yang. “As of 2020, all young migrant workers will be able to learn a trade with subsidies from the government,” he said.

Measures including tax reduction will also be maintained to support companies in the tertiary sector, small and medium-sized enterprises and labor-intensive factories, usually generous employers of workers from the countryside.

In addition, seasoned migrant workers will be encouraged to return to their hometown and set up their own businesses, Yang said, estimating the size of this group at two million currently.

Xinhua



China says to implement drug distribution reforms

BEIJING, 1 March — China said on Saturday it would implement drug distribution reforms including centralization measures designed to cut prices and reduce corruption.

The State Council, China’s cabinet, said it urged drug manufacturers to negotiate directly with hospitals on payment for pharmaceuticals instead of going through middle men.

Authorities should also work to ensure the distribution of drugs to remote rural areas with underdeveloped modes of transportation in a timely fashion, the State Council said on its website.

Authorities should push forward centralization and standardization

measures in an effort to weed out corruption and lower prices, it added.

Fragmentation in China’s drug distribution has caused market inefficiencies. High drug prices have fueled a gray market for pharmaceuticals and caused tension with patients.

Beijing has said it plans to invest in rural healthcare to improve access to care for those in re-

mote areas.

Critics say bribery and other forms of corruption are rife in the healthcare sector, fueled by low pay for doctors and nurses. China has cracked down on high prices and corruption in the sector over the past year and in September fined GlaxoSmithKline Plc a record 3 billion yuan (\$489 million) for paying bribes to doctors to use its drugs. — Reuters

Job fair targeting Myanmar students in Japan held in Tokyo

TOKYO, 1 March — Japanese companies held a job fair in Tokyo on Saturday targeting students from Myanmar as they seek to recruit personnel who can become a bridge to expand their business in the South-east Asian country.

The job fair was held as an increasing number of Japanese companies are making inroads into the Myanmar market, including through infrastructure investment, seeing the large growth potential of the country’s economy.

A total of 17 companies that have already begun business in Myanmar in fields such as electronics, construction and railway operations participated in the forum, seeking to hire personnel with knowledge of technology or management as well as of the two

countries.

But the companies tended to offer positions in Myanmar, while some participating students expressed a desire to work in Japan.

“We are looking for personnel who are familiar with Japanese culture and have engineering skills. We want to expand our operations launched in Myanmar together,” an official of Panasonic Corp. said.

The electronics giant’s booth was especially crowded with students seeking to hear the company’s explanation.

A 31-year-old student of a Japanese language school said getting a job at a Japanese company is attractive because of the high salary and opportunity to brush up his Japanese.

Kyodo News

China’s February non-manufacturing PMI up, consumption robust

BEIJING, 1 March — China’s non-manufacturing activity picked up in February due to robust consumption during the Spring Festival holiday, an official monthly survey showed on Sunday.

The purchasing managers’ index (PMI) for the non-manufacturing sector recovered to 53.9 in February from 53.7 in January, according to a report released jointly by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing (CFLP).

The subindex of new orders climbed to 51.2, up from 50.2 a month ago.

China’s non-manufac-

turing PMI mainly tracks the business activities of the service and construction sectors. A reading above 50 indicates expansion, while a reading below 50 represents contraction.

The service sector subindex increased to 53.2 in February from 52.9 a month earlier. Zhao Qinghe, an NBS senior statistician, said the figure had been stable over the recent three months, indicating steady expansion. “Surging holiday consumption was one of the major driving factors as domestic spending in retail, catering, telecom and transportation grew rapidly in the period,” he added.

Xinhua

US-Israel ties fraying over Netanyahu speech, Iran talks



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu listens as US President Barack Obama (R) speaks, during their meeting in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on 1 Oct, 2014. —REUTERS

WASHINGTON, 1 March — As relations between President Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu hit a new low over the Israeli prime minister's

planned speech to Congress and a looming deadline for a nuclear deal with Iran, there are growing signs it could damage the broader US-Israeli alli-

ance. Already there has been some fraying of the usually strong relationship amid the frosty personal ties between the two leaders and a deepening divide

over the Iran talks, which Israel fears will allow its arch foe to develop an atom bomb.

US officials are fuming over what they see as an affront by Netanyahu over Obama's Iran diplomacy ahead of an end-of-March deadline for a framework nuclear agreement.

Israeli officials and hard-line US supporters are just as adamant in defending Netanyahu's right to take centre-stage in Washington on Tuesday to sound the alarm over the possible deal.

US and Israeli officials insist that key areas of cooperation from counter-terrorism to intelligence to cyber security have been unaffected and will remain so.

But the rift — shaping

up as the worst in decades between the allies due to its partisan nature — could have a real impact in some areas, making it harder for Israel to press concerns directly with senior US officials, for example.

As one former US official put it: "Sure, when Netanyahu calls the White House, Obama will answer. But how fast will he be about responding (to a crisis)?"

US officials last month even went as far as accusing the Israeli government of leaking information to the Israeli media to undermine Iran negotiations and took the unusual step of limiting further sharing of sensitive details about the talks. The rift is considered potentially far-reaching because it marks a dramatic departure from Israel's

long tradition of carefully navigating between Republicans and Democrats.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the "politicized" nature of Netanyahu's visit threatens "what undergirds the strength of the relationship", though he said there was shared interest in keeping the alliance strong. People on both sides, including current and former officials, US lawmakers, independent experts and Washington lobbyists, expressed concern about a broader fallout on ties.

At the same time many of them point to the two countries' history of being able to "compartmentalize" diplomatic disputes to preserve cooperation on other shared priorities.

Reuters

Blast in Kosovska Mitrovica downtown

KOSOVSKA MITROVICA, 1 March — An unidentified individual threw a hand grenade in the downtown of northern Kosovska Mitrovica and although certain damage was done, nobody was injured in the incident.

The blast occurred in front of a confectionery of a Gorani owner in the main street early on Saturday, around 6.30 am.

The grenade caused damage to eight cars parked in the street, as well as nearby shops and private apartments.

The window of the shop in front of which the blast occurred was also damaged in the incident.

According to reports by *Tanjug's* correspondent, the Kosovo Police Service has blocked the street and investigation is underway. In addition to members of the Kosovo police, KFOR troops are also present at the scene. The motives and the identity of the perpetrator are not known at this point.

The Serbian government Office for Kosovo-Metohija (KiM) condemned on Saturday the attack on the passenger bus near Banjica and the blast in northern Kosovska Mitrovica, and called on the Kosovo Police Service and EULEX to finally solve at least one incident which brought human lives and Serb property in jeopardy.

Noting that the Serbian government is invest-

ing maximum efforts in the normalization of relations in the province as the only way to establish trust among neighbours and all citizens of Kosovo-Metohija regardless of their nationality, the Office said that the attack on the passenger bus near Banjica, southern KiM, and the blast in the northern, Serb-populated part of Kosovska Mitrovica are not contributing to this end.

The Office called on the authorities not to allow the blast from Saturday morning, the fifth one that occurred in Kosovska Mitrovica since the beginning of the year, to remain unsolved. We call on the Kosovo Police Service and EULEX to act within their very extensive mandate and finally solve at least one incident that caused jeopardy to human lives and Serb property, such as the blast that hit Kosovska Mitrovica at dawn and caused damage to nine cars and 11 shops, and the stoning of the bus near Banjica late on Friday (in which one woman was injured), the Office stated in the release.

The Office recalled that EULEX said on Friday that the Kosovo police have matured enough to live up to international tasks, noting that it expects the identification of the attackers on the bus and the individual who threw the hand grenade in downtown Kosovska Mitrovica to prove this.—*Tanjug*

Britain's Prince William meets Japan quake-tsunami survivors



Britain's Prince William watches handwritten wall newspapers issued by the Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbun newspaper after the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake, as he visits the publisher in the city of Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan on 1 March, 2015. —KYODO NEWS

SENDAI, 1 March — Britain's Prince William expressed his sympathy on Sunday as he met survivors of the 2011 quake and tsunami during a visit to Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan. The 32-year-old Duke of Cambridge told a couple who lost their children in tsunami that he had also lost a loved one, referring to his mother Princess Diana's death in a traffic accident in 1997, during

their meeting in Ishinomaki, a Pacific coastal city severely hit by the disaster.

The couple gave the prince some decorations made of wood from the tsunami debris and an English oak for his family, as his pregnant wife, Princess Catherine, and their son Prince George are not with him on this trip.

At the *Ishinomaki Hibi Shimbun* newspaper, the prince viewed handwritten



Britain's Prince William talks with people as he visits an improvised shopping area for survivors of the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake in the town of Onagawa, Miyagi Prefecture, northeastern Japan on 1 March, 2015. —KYODO NEWS

wall newspapers issued by the publisher shortly after the 11 March, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake.

He also offered flowers in commemoration of disaster victims on a hill overlooking Ishinomaki Bay and land areas hit by the tsunami. On the hill children gave him paper cranes and he thanked them by saying "Arigato" in Japanese and telling them he will take the cranes home

as a souvenir for 1-year-old Prince George. In the town of Onagawa, he rang a "bell of hope" hung at an improvised shopping area for quake survivors after the bell was discovered among debris. Prince William, who arrived on Thursday on his first visit to Japan, visited Fukushima Prefecture on Saturday with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Kyodo News

UN chief condemns killing of Russian politician Boris Nemtsov

UNITED NATIONS, 1 March — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Saturday condemned the killing of Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in Moscow.

A statement released by Ban's spokesperson said the UN chief was shocked by the brutal kill-

ing of the Russian politician.

"The Secretary-General notes that an investigation into this murder has been announced, and he expects the perpetrators to be brought to justice swiftly," said the statement.

Nemtsov was shot dead in downtown Mos-

cow shortly before midnight Friday. Preliminary investigation shows that Nemtsov was hit by four shots and six shell casings have been found at the site.

The Russian Investigative Committee has launched a comprehensive investigation into the in-

cident, which is pursuing several lines, including the possibility of an attempt to destabilize the political situation in Russia, the internal situation in Ukraine and possible connections with Nemtsov's business activities or personal animosity.

Xinhua

GENERAL

Bahrain charges 17 bombing suspects

MANAMA, 1 March — Bahrain's public prosecutor has charged 17 people with forming a militant group and carrying out bombings that wounded security personnel, the state news agency said on Saturday.

The group had set off bombs in the island kingdom's Maqaba, Al-Janabiya, Budaiya and Qarya villages, prosecutor Ahmed Al-Hammadi was quoted as saying.

"The members had agreed to set up a terror cell to make explosives and weapons to carry out terror acts, target security forces ... and spread panic among people," he said, according to *Bahrain News Agency*.

Their trial will begin on 22 March and two of the defendants outside the country will be tried in absentia, he added. The Sunni Muslim-ruled country, home to the US Fifth Fleet, was swept by unrest in 2011 led by majority Shi'ites demanding political reforms. There have been a growing number of attacks using explosives, often targeting policemen.

Reuters

Cherry blossoms in Shizuoka



People take a stroll along a path lined with cherry blossoms in Kawazu, Shizuoka Prefecture, central Japan, on 28 Feb, 2015. — KYODO NEWS

Extensive tomb complex unearthed in suburban Beijing

BEIJING, 1 March — A massive tomb complex has been found in a southwest suburb in Beijing, the Beijing institute of cultural heritage said on Sunday.

The 70 hectare archaeological site consists of 129 tombs built over 1,100 years, spanning from the East Han Dynasty (25-220) to Tang Dynasty (618-907) and Liao (907-1125).

Some of these tombs have exquisite murals depicting people and furniture, and artifacts found so far have included pottery,

porcelain, lacquerware, and other funeral paraphernalia.

Archeologists say the complex is a rare discovery due to its size, time span and location.

The site was discovered due to a planned residential complex slated for construction on top of the site. A 2014 municipal cultural relics protection measure mandates that all plots of land must be screened for relics before development.

Xinhua

Bangladesh pays tribute to American blogger killed in machete attack

DHAKA, 1 March — Bangladeshis on Sunday paid tribute to an American critic of religious extremism killed in Dhaka, in the latest of a series of attacks on writers who support free thinking values in the Muslim-majority nation.

Avijit Roy, a US citizen of Bangladeshi origin, was hacked to death by machete-wielding assailants on Thursday after a book fair, sparking widespread condemnation from home and abroad.

His wife and fellow blogger Rafida Ahmed suf-

fered head injuries and lost a finger and remains in hospital in a serious condition.

The attack comes amid a crackdown on hardline Islamist groups, which have increased activities in recent years in the South Asian nation of 160 million people.

No arrest has been made.

People from all walks gathered with flowers at the Dhaka University premises on Sunday to pay their respect to Avijit, who came to his native city in mid-February and was due

to go back to the United States.

"Free thinking in Bangladesh is become a great danger, all the free thinkers are at great risk," writer Shahriar Kabir said.

"We want to know why the government failed to ensure the safety of him, despite knowing that he had been facing threats from the Islamist radicals."

Family members donated the body of Avijit to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for medical research to show respect for his wish.

Roy's family said Islamist radicals had been threatening him in recent weeks because he maintained a blog, "Mukto-mona," or "Freemind," that highlighted humanist and rationalist ideas and condemned religious extremism.

US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki called it "a shocking act of violence" that was "horrific in its brutality and cowardice" and said the United States was ready to assist the investigation.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric condemned the attack, and called for a swift and thorough investigation.

Media group Reporters Without Borders rated Bangladesh 146th among

180 countries in a ranking of press freedom last year.

In 2013, religious extremists targeted several secular bloggers who had demanded capital punishment for Islamist leaders convicted of war crimes during Bangladesh's war for independence.

Blogger Ahmed Rajib Haider was killed that year in a similar attack near his home in Dhaka after he led one such protest demanding capital punishment.

In 2004, Humayun Azad, a secular writer and professor at Dhaka University, was also attacked by militants while returning home from a Dhaka book fair. He later died in Germany while undergoing treatment.

Reuters

Investigators search for what triggered Missouri rampage

KANSAS CITY, 1 March — What led Joseph Aldridge to gun down seven people in a southern Missouri hamlet remained uncertain on Saturday, though authorities speculated that the death of the gunman's mother from cancer could

have triggered the rampage.

Aldridge, 36, embarked on a shooting spree late on Thursday in the rural community of Tyrone, going door-to-door in the wintry night, killing four relatives and three neighbours, and wounding another, before

fatally shooting himself, police said.

The massacre unfolded shortly after Aldridge's mother, 74-year-old Alice Aldridge, died from complications of metastatic lung cancer. Texas County Coroner Tom Whittaker said an

autopsy revealed the fatal condition.

Whittaker said Aldridge may have been triggered to carry out the killings by the discovery of his mother's body, but he added that authorities were considering other possible explanations.

"Why it went to this extent, we don't know and I don't know that we ever will," he said.

Most of the victims were found in their bedrooms, according to Whittaker.

At least two children in two separate homes escaped injury while their parents were slain, according to the Texas County Sheriff's Office.

One of the children, a teenage girl, fled to a neighbor's house where she called police. Her parents, Garold Aldridge, 52, and his wife Julie Aldridge, 47, were found dead in their home, the sheriff's office said.

Reuters



Police tape surrounds one of the crime scenes where gunman, Joseph Jesse Aldridge, killed seven people on Thursday night in Tyrone, Missouri on 27 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

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WEATHER REPORT

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 2nd March, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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



Leonardo DiCaprio will play Billy Milligan, who had 24 personalities, in his next film 'The Crowded Room'.

PTI

Leonardo DiCaprio to play guy with 24 personalities

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — Leonardo DiCaprio will play Billy Milligan, who had 24 personalities, in his next film 'The Crowded Room'.

The film will be adapted from the non-fiction book about Milligan, who was the first person to successfully use multiple personality disorder as a defense in a court of law, said *The Hollywood Reporter*. DiCaprio, 40, has been interested in playing him

stretching back to 1997.

Published in 1981, Keyes' book chronicles Milligan's story, including his court trial in the late 1970s in Ohio after being charged with robbery and raping three women on the Ohio State University campus.

In the preparation of his defense, Milligan, who died in December 2014, was diagnosed with multiple personality disorder.

Pleading insanity, he and his

lawyers contended that two of his alternate personalities committed the crimes without his knowledge. He was the first to use this defense, and the first to be acquitted for this reason.

Milligan's various personalities included Adalana, a lesbian taking responsibility for the rapes; Ragen, a Yugoslavian communist who admitted to the robbery; and Arthur, an uptight Englishman.—PTI

Will Smith sings on TV show



LOS ANGELES, 1 March — Hollywood star Will Smith performed a song while visiting a chat show to promote his new film 'Focus'.

Following his performances on 'The Ellen DeGeneres Show' and 'Late Show with David Letterman' earlier this month, the 46-year-old actor/rapper stopped by 'Jimmy Kimmel Live!' and treated the audience to his 1991 song 'Summertime' while DJ Jazzy Jeff danced in his seat as he appeared via video chat, reported *Ace Showbiz*. In an interview with the late-night show's host Jimmy Kimmel, Smith talked about his plan to return to music. The actor, who hasn't put out an album since 2005's 'Lost and Found', said, "I've been thinking about doing some music again. I've been having fun as I go." He also said that his son Jaden Smith had indeed been helping him and teaching him how to be a modern rapper.—PTI

Kardashians strike USD 100 million deal with E! network?



LOS ANGELES, 1 March —The Kardashian clan has reportedly signed a USD 100 million renewal deal with TV network E! for another four-year run of their family show 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians'.

The stars had threatened to walk from their longtime cable home in a hardball move that ultimately led to the deal, reported *Us* magazine.

A source close to the deal said that Kris Jenner was a lead negotiator for her family.

"This has been in the works for almost a year. Kris is a fierce negotiator. She was playing major hardball and threatening to leave," the source said.—PTI

Kristen Stewart joins Michelle Williams's film



Kristen Stewart has joined actresses Michelle Williams and Laura Dern in the indie drama known as the 'Untitled Kelly Reichardt Project'.

PTI

LOS ANGELES, 1 March —'Twilight' star Kristen Stewart has joined actresses Michelle Williams and Laura Dern in the indie drama known as the 'Untitled Kelly Reichardt Project'. Written and directed by Reichardt, the film is a series of vignettes that revolve around the lives of people in small-town Montana, reported *Deadline*. Stewart, 24, will play a young lawyer from Boise, who takes a teaching job several hours from her house. Despite her nerves about teaching, she is determined to prove to herself that she can do it. Soon after taking the job, Beth develops a close friendship with Jamie, a local woman, who is auditing her class.

James Le Gros and Jared Harris (*Mad Men*), and relative newcomer Sara Rodier also have been cast in the ensemble project, which is being produced by Neil Kopp and Anish Savjani.

Dern, 48, is set as Laura Wells, a lawyer in Helena who keeps going back into a bad relationship with Ryan Lewis (Le Gros), a married man who could not care less for his wife and daughter. Williams, 34, portrays Ryan's wife, Gina Lewis, who works in advertising with her philandering husband.—PTI

William Shatner cannot attend friend Leonard Nimoy's funeral

LOS ANGELES, 1 March — William Shatner cannot attend the funeral of his friend and "Star Trek" co-star Leonard Nimoy be-

cause of a prior commitment for a charity ball, the actor said on Twitter on Saturday.

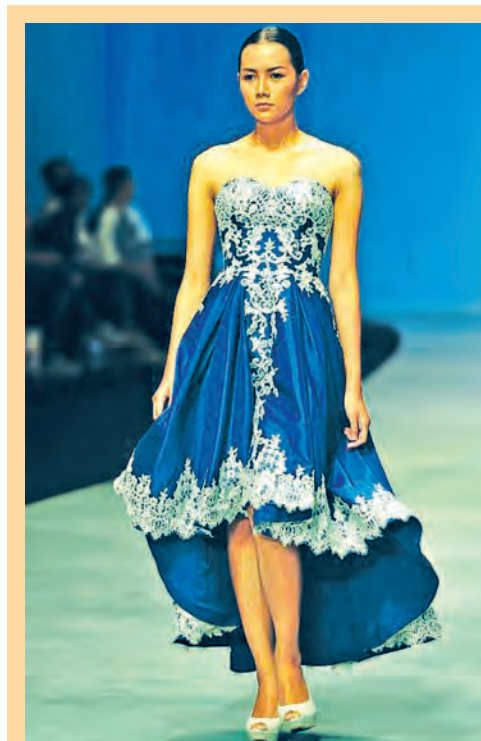
Shatner and Nimoy portrayed



A pedestrian walks past pictures of original Star Trek actors Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner painted onto store front security gates on Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2012.—REUTERS

the two best-known characters on the original "Star Trek" television series launched in 1966 and in a series of films, with Shatner playing the adventurous Captain Kirk and Nimoy as the logic-bound, half-alien Mr Spock Nimoy, who had battled chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), died on Friday at age 83 at his home in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles. Shatner said in a post on Twitter that he was in Florida, having previously agreed to appear at a Red Cross ball. "Leonard's funeral is tomorrow. I can't make it back in time," Shatner wrote, adding "I feel really awful. Here I am doing charity work and one of my dearest friends is being buried." *The Florida Weekly* reported the ball in Palm Beach would feature Shatner, actress Shirley MacLaine and singer Wayne Newton.

Reuters



A model presents a creation by Indonesian designer Albert Yanuar during the Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia, 28 Feb, 2015. Indonesian Fashion Week 2015 was held from 26 February to 1 March.

XINHUA

GENERAL

Murray scores twice and sees red as Palace beat West Ham

LONDON, 1 March — Crystal Palace maintained their revival under new manager Alan Pardew with a 3-1 Premier League victory at West Ham United on Saturday — their fourth win in seven matches since their former midfielder took charge.

Glenn Murray scored twice, either side of Scott Dann's header, and was sent off in an eventful afternoon for the Palace striker as his side climbed to the relative safety of 12th. Enner Valencia scored for West Ham after 76 minutes but it was too little too late for the Hammers whose season is unraveling after earlier challenging for the top four. "Up until the sending off, we were in total control, but we don't make it easy for ourselves," Pardew, who left Newcastle United to take over at Palace, told Sky Sports. "We saw it out and



Glenn Murray scores the first goal for Crystal Palace West Ham United during their Barclays Premier League at Upton Park on 28 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

we had some scary moments but it was nothing less than we deserved."

Murray's header, helped in by West Ham's Aaron Creswell's attempted clearance, gave Palace a fortuitous lead in the 41st minute before Dann doubled their advantage in the 51st minute with a powerful header.

Murray, in the thick of the action all afternoon, added his second in the 63rd minute with a glancing header but was dismissed six

minutes later for a second yellow card just moments before Pardew had planned to substitute him.

"It was a mixed afternoon for him wasn't it," Pardew added. "He could have had a hat-trick in the first half. He gets into the right positions.

"The sending off was a little bit unlucky because we were just about to sub him off. He has to go for the ball, and I don't think he deserved that. I spoke

to him at halftime. We all knew he was on a knife edge. "But I'm absolutely delighted with him. He was terrific. It shouldn't take away from a terrific performance."

Valencia's goal was scant consolation for West Ham who have won just two of their last 12 league games since climbing to fourth in mid-December. "I'm shocked," West Ham boss Sam Allardyce, whose future at the club has again been the subject of speculation, told the BBC. "Our level of performance wasn't where I expected it.

"It's disappointing when we've built expectation levels so high at home. It's about the basics, really. If we don't play to our best, we'll struggle.

"We warned the lads about Crystal Palace's set plays because 50 percent of their goals have come from set-plays. And we've conceded from two corners and a free-kick." — Reuters

Nadal reaches first final of year in Argentine Open

BUENOS AIRES, 1 March — Rafael Nadal, pushed to the limit in a high octane first set, made up for his semi-final defeat at the Rio Open a week ago by reaching the Argentine Open final with a 7-6(7), 6-2 victory over Carlos Berlocq on Saturday.

The world number four will meet a fourth Argentine in succession in the tournament, 2007 champion Juan Monaco, in Sunday's showpiece match looking for a 65th career title and record-equalling 46th on clay. The first set, with 74th-ranked Berlocq playing every bit as well as his



Drops of sweat come off Spain's Rafael Nadal as he serves during his tennis match against Argentina's Carlos Berlocq at the ATP Argentina Open in Buenos Aires, on 28 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

multi-titled opponent, went with serve before the Argentine ran up a 6-1 lead in the tiebreak.

However, Nadal fought back, saving five consecutive set points and then one

more to take it 9-7 on his first set point.

"Evidently, when you recover five points (in a row) as well as playing well you have to have some luck, you can't do it without luck. Carlos was playing bravely and serving well," Nadal told reporters.

"In the end I managed to be more dynamic and aggressive and place my shots well," said top seed Nadal, who has been working on a comeback to his best form after right wrist problems during the second half of last year.

The Spaniard wobbled early in the second set as he struggled with length on his drives but responded to having his serve being broken by breaking back for 2-2.

Gradually gaining bet-

ter length on his forehand, Nadal broke twice more on the way to comfortably taking the match, sealed when Berlocq hit a return long after an hour and 52 minutes.

Monaco beat 2011 champion Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-3, 6-7(6), 6-4 in a first semi-final lasting just short of 2-1/2 hours.

The 60th-ranked Monaco, who reached a career high number 10 in July 2012, failed to convert two match points in the second set before winning a dour baseline battle with an ace on his third.

The 30-year-old Davis Cup veteran has begun to recover his best form just when he was overlooked for Argentina's World Group first round tie at home to Brazil next weekend. — Reuters

Gov't to ask 48 entities to cooperate over cybersecurity

TOKYO, 1 March — The government will ask for cooperation from 48 entities in charge of the nation's key infrastructure such as provision of information when they are hit by major cyberattacks as part of efforts to strengthen countermeasures against such a threat, a government official said on Sunday.

The 48 entities designated by the basic law on cybersecurity enacted last November include Nippon Telegram and Telephone Corp, operators of highways, some of the Japan Railways group, NHK, the

Bank of Japan and the Japanese Red Cross Society, the official said. Ahead of hosting the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, the government sees cooperation as necessary to better prepare for growing cybersecurity threats and prompt recovery from damage as well as investigation into the cause of trouble, according to the official. The 48 entities were designated on 10 February as targets with which the government is asking for cooperation in the event of cybersecurity attacks, the official said, adding they will receive a request through the Cabinet cybersecurity center set up in January. — Kyodo News

Federer claims seventh Dubai crown



Roger Federer of Switzerland poses with his trophy after winning the final match against Novak Djokovic of Serbia on the fifth day of the ATP Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships on 28 Feb, 2015. Federer won 2-0 and claimed the title. — XINHUA

mitv Myanmar International

(2-3-2015 07:00 am~ 3-3-2015 07:00 am) MST

- | | |
|--|---|
| * News | * News |
| * Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations— Lacquawareware Making | * Taste of Myanmar (Glass Noodle Soup) |
| * News | * Entrepreneur — U Nyan Lin |
| * Mesmerizing Scenes or Image of Japan Part (1) | * News |
| * News | * Myanmar's Traditions and Culture "Tea" |
| * Bago: A City of Famous Historic Pagoda | * News |
| * Lucrative Businesses of Taninthayi Region | * On the River |
| * News | * Grow Back for Posterity "The dawn of development" |
| * Youth Film-Maker: Khin Su Kyi | * News |
| * Bagan: The Land of Pagoda | * Welcome to the Southern most part of Myanmar |
| * News | * Reflected Glory |
| * A Day Out With Sarah (EP-2) | * News |
| * Today Myanmar "The Lake, Inle" | * Interview with Israeli Ambassador |
| | * A Trip To The City of Rakhita, Rakhine |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(2-3-2015, Monday)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:05 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:25 am | 8:50 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:50 am | 9:30 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Musical Programme |
| 7:15 am | 9:45 am |
| • Fashion Show | • ASEAN CULTURAL FAIR 2014 |
| 7:30 am | 10:05 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Myanmar Video |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(2-3-2015, Monday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 2:30 pm |
| • Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | • Head Line News |
| 6:35 am | 3:00 pm |
| • Documentary | • News/ International News |
| 7:00 am | 4:20 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • 2015 University Entrance Examination (Myanmar) |
| 7:35 am | 5:00 pm |
| • Weekly Entertainment | • News/Weather Report |
| 8:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society) | • Socio Economic Scenes |
| 9:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Documentary (ASEAN) | • News |
| 10:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • People's Talks | • Documentary |
| 11:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| • MRTV's Youth Programme | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:00 noon | • Talk Show |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | 9:00 pm |
| 12:35 pm | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| • Tasty Trip | • TV Drama Series |
| 1:10 pm | |
| • Gitadagale Phwintbarohn | |

Myanmar U-15 team to participate in China-ASEAN Youth Football Tournament 4-12 March

YANGON, 1 March— Myanmar U-15 football team that will take part in the China-ASEAN Youth Football Tournament in Dongxing of Guangxi Province, the People's Republic of China, from 4 to 12 March 2015.

Members of the team in two groups will leave Yangon International Airport for China on 2 March. Both groups will meet in Kunming of Yun-

nan Province to go to Nan-ning International Airport, Guangxi Province.

On arrival at the airport, the football team will proceed to Dongxing in Guangxi Province.—MFF

Players of Myanmar U-15 team that will take part in China-ASEAN youth football tournament pose for group photo.



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Rooney provides timely reminder of United worth

LONDON, 1 March — Wayne Rooney provided a timely reminder to Manchester United manager Louis van Gaal that he can be a prolific Premier League goalscorer after he netted a brace in a 2-0 win against Sunderland to help United go third.

Van Gaal restored Rooney to an advanced position after trialing him in a number of positions across United's midfield — to accommodate misfiring pair Robin van Persie and Radamel Falcao — in the last two months.

The decision paid instant dividends at Old Trafford as Rooney scored goals in the 66th and 84th minutes to end an eight-game scoring drought spanning his midfield deployment.

On Friday, Van Gaal



Wayne Rooney celebrates after scoring the first goal for Manchester United from the penalty spot.—REUTERS

attributed United's struggles this season to the absence of a prolific forward such as Chelsea's Diego Costa or Manchester City's

Sergio Aguero.

With his return up front and subsequent brace, however, Rooney became the first player to

score at least 10 goals in 11 successive Premier League seasons.

Rooney has now netted 10 league goals, level

with injured Netherlands captain Van Persie while struggling Colombia forward Falcao has four.

"I think every player needs confidence and Wayne scored two goals and it shall lift his confidence of course," Van Gaal told Sky Sports.

Alongside Rooney's return to a more attacking role, Van Gaal also deployed two natural wide players in Ashley Young and Antonio Valencia as part of his 3-5-2.

Van Gaal had used the system in the past with limited success but was impressed by the often-maligned Young.

"Ashley played a good match and he gives us power and security at that side so I was pleased with him," the Dutchman said.

"We have played this

system already against Chelsea and Manchester City and Crystal Palace.

"At that time the balance was not as well as it was today so that was a big step in the process. You cannot always play in this system because it depends on so many aspects of your team and your opponents."

Before Rooney's second-half goals, including the first from the penalty spot, United were booed by their supporters after another lethargic and unimpressive performance in the opening period.

"I think the first half could have been better," Van Gaal added. "But the second half we controlled the match and we scored goals, we created chances and we didn't give any chances away. I'm very pleased."—Reuters

Barca hot on Real's heels after Suarez shines in Granada

MADRID, 1 March — Barcelona closed within a point of leaders Real Madrid after in-form forward Luis Suarez played a part in all three of their goals in a scrappy 3-1 victory at Granada in La Liga on Saturday.

Barca took the lead at the Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium when Ivan Rakitic smashed the ball into the net from close range after Granada defender Cala failed to clear a Suarez centre in the 25th minute.

Lionel Messi twice went close before Suarez ran on to a chipped Rakitic pass and slipped the ball under home goalkeeper Oier to make it 2-0 three minutes into the second half.

Barca appeared to be cruising against their second from bottom opponents but Granada pulled a goal back five minutes later when Marc Bartra felled Lassane Bangoura in the penalty area.

Fran Rico confidently stroked his spot kick past Claudio Bravo before Barca restored their two-goal lead in the 70th minute.

Suarez sped clear, left Oier floundering and unselfishly set up Messi to find the



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (2nd L) kicks the ball next to Granada's goalkeeper Oier Olazabal during their Spanish first division soccer match at Nuevo Los Carmenes stadium in Granada on 28 Feb, 2015.

XINHUA

empty net.

It capped another fine performance from Uruguay international Suarez who struck twice in Tuesday's 2-1 Champions League victory at Manchester City.

Messi fluffed two good chances in the closing stages when twice sent clear by Neymar, leaving the Argentina captain on 27 La Liga goals for the season, two be-

hind top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo of Real.

Barca have 59 points from 25 matches with Real on 60 from 24 ahead of their game at home to sixth-placed Villarreal on Sunday.

Champions Atletico Madrid are six points adrift of Barca in third and visit Sevilla, who are fifth, on Sunday.

Reuters

45-year-old Ikeyama rewrites own record

OSAKA, 1 March — WBO atomweight champion Nao Ikeyama rewrote her own record as the oldest fighter in Japan to successfully defend a title with a unanimous decision over challenger Norj Guro of the Philippines in Osaka on Saturday.

Ikeyama, who is 45 years, 5 months, won her second title defence after outpunching Guro, who is 21 years her junior.

"I came close to getting a knockout but I didn't get one, so I regret that part. My punches weren't effective," said Ikeyama, who improved to 8-2 with one knockout. "My only goal is to keep winning bout after bout. I really want to make my next fight a good one." WBO minimum flyweight Kumiko Seeser Ikehara claimed her first title defence but not in the way she would have liked: her bout against Filipina Jesebelle Pagaduan was ruled a draw after the 30-year-old Ikehara's forehead was split open from an accidental heat-butt at the end of the first round. The referee determined that it was impossible for her to continue due to the amount of blood.—Kyodo News