

2016 NEW YEAR MESSAGE

Everyone has a duty

President U Thein Sein

I am confident that the year 2016 will create golden opportunities, both in politics and economics. However, seizing these opportunities requires unusual effort. People must be involved in the political process to achieve success in democratic reforms, to ensure sustainable peace, to guarantee freedom for each and every citizen, to ensure equal protection by the law and to promote the quality of life. All citizens are required to exert effort, preserving the patriotic spirit and being willing to be involved in nation-building tasks, performing whatever duties assigned on them. I make an earnest request to each and every citizen to struggle hard to achieve correct thinking. I wish all the people of Myanmar great success.



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Myanmar Peace Centre to host preparatory meeting for political dialogue

[Ye Myint](#)



A meeting of three stakeholder groups representing political parties, the government and ethnic ceasefire signatories was held at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon last month. PHOTO: YE MYINT

A MEETING to gear up for the country's first Union Peace Conference is set to start on 5 January and last three days at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon, according to an official from the centre.

Altogether, 15 representatives from five stakeholder groups will attend the meeting in preparation for the first session of political dialogue, said U Hla Maung Shwe, a senior adviser at the peace centre.

"The MPC will host the meeting set to run for three days from 5 January prior to the fourth round of the Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee meeting slated for 9 January in Nay Pyi Taw," said the senior adviser.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw passes two bills



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday approved the Legal Aid Bill and the Criminal Procedure Amendment Bill after discussing

them clause by clause.

The two bills previously aroused disagreement between the Amyotha Hluttaw and the

Pyithu Hluttaw. Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann discussed future steps to turn the bills into law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw passes two bills, approves three reports

THE Amyotha Hluttaw yesterday passed two bills and approved three progress reports submitted by committees.

The pesticide bill and the new plant varieties protection bill were brought before parliament by the Pyithu Hluttaw with

remarks. The Rights Committee, the Public Complaints Committee and the Strategic Study and Research Committee presented their progress reports and sought parliamentary approval.

The Internal and External Non-governmental Organisations

Committee and the Committee for National Races Affairs, Conflict Reduction and Peace Process also submitted their progress reports, which will come under discussion at the next session of parliament.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Patrol cars commissioned into service



Police step up efforts for enforcing the rule of law in Yangon Region with the use of new patrol cars. PHOTO: MNA

THE Yangon Region Police Force is now fielding 45 patrol cars which were provided by the Myanmar Police Force. The vehicles came into service on 30 December.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe sprinkled scented water on the cars at a ceremony

held at the Yangon Region Government Office. One officer and two other ranks will be in each car during patrols around Yangon.

The cars have been distributed to four district police force headquarters and the Yangon Region Police Force.

As part of their efforts to

enforce the rule of law in the region, the government of the People's Republic of China donated the cars to the Ministry of Home Affairs of Myanmar. The Yangon region Police Force will announce the contact numbers of the patrol teams to the public in the near future.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw approves amendments to two bills

THE Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) discussed and approved amendments to two bills, including the Presidential Security Bill, during its meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

U Tin Maung Oo from the Shwe Pyi Thar Constituency asked if the Ministry of Immigration and Population had a plan to amend the law and bylaw on issuing of household lists and citizenship identity cards to migrants and squatters.

In response to the question, the Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population replied that the ministry has no plans to amend the law and bylaw since the issue came from the internal migration of people.

While currently issuing citizenship cards to migrants and squatters, the ministry is facing difficulties in getting correct and complete information and documents from migrants and squatters as they are moving from one place to another frequently.

Regarding the question of MP T Khun Myat from Kalewa Constituency on fighting against narcotic drugs, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun said the government adopted a 15-year plan from 1999 to 2014 for the elimination of drugs and adopted a five year plan from 2014-2015 to 2018-2019 for the elimination of the production and use of drug, stepping up its efforts in the fight.—*Myanmar News Agency*

U Khin Maung Shwe.
PHOTO: MNAU Khin Maung Nyo.
PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar Peace Centre to host ...

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According to U Hla Maung Shwe, who is also a secretary representing the government, the UPDJC meeting is expected to run for three days until 11 January, ahead of the political dialogue, which is due to begin on 12 January in Nay Pyi Taw.

He confirmed his presence at the three-day pre-meeting in Yangon together with U Khin Yi and U Than Htay on behalf of the government.

Secretaries representing the stakeholder groups, including the government, parliament, Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organisations and political parties will consider topics slated for discussion at the first session of political dialogue, the secretary told The Global New Light of Myanmar.

Sai Kyaw Nyunt, representing the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, said political parties had made no preparations for the meeting.

"We will discuss subjects

on the agendas established by the stakeholder groups of the government and ethnic armed organisations," said Sai Kyaw Nyunt, who plans to attend the meeting as a secretary representing the political parties.

The main topics set to be covered at the first session of the peace conference include political, security, economic and social issues and land and natural resources policies.

"In my view, there will not be comprehensive discussions on the topics at the UPC, as the conference may last between one week and 10 days, possibly as long as two weeks," said the secretary representing the political parties.

He quoted Union Minister U Aung Min as saying no decisions will be made on the topics discussed at the UPC, and the first peace conference will serve as the foundation for the next government to work toward achieving lasting peace in the country.

New Year Messages

Chairman Sayadaw calls for fraternity, humanity in New Year greeting

Rev Dr Kumarabhivamsa

REV Dr Kumarabhivamsa, the Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, extended New Year greetings to the people of Myanmar yesterday, calling for the ideals of fraternity and humanity for the good of all mankind.

The Chairman Sayadaw quoted several of the people he met during his recent visit to China, saying the Lord's blessing enables Myanmar to enjoy favourable conditions for agriculture and reserves of gem stones.

"They envy our land rich in natural resources," the monk said, urging his audience to further buttress the brotherly affection among Myanmar's ethnic groups and live in harmony.

"If we act in unison, we will have food and resources in abundance and, as a result our Theravada Buddhism, we will flourish," he said.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Let's strive to promote Myanmar's image

Dr Nanda Mala Bhivamsa

Of the three strata of Myanmar society, the leaders of all religious faiths ought not to make irresponsible remarks or act in haste; they should instead be pious and bring benefit to the wellbeing of the general public. The regime ought to be wise and farsighted in making decisions and taking actions. As for the countrymen, they should be law-abiding and hardworking. Everybody should think of others whenever he has to do his business. He should avoid business that adversely affects other people. Let's strive to promote the image of Myanmar.



Wishing success to the national reconciliation process

**Vice President
Dr Sai Mauk Kham**

I wish all the Myanmar people physical and mental wellbeing. May the year 2016 witness the cessation of armed conflicts in certain states, and may people in all regions enjoy peace and tranquillity. I would also like to wish the national reconciliation process a success. May this process meet with success through political means.



Wishing all ethnicities freedom from worry

Vice President U Nyan Tun

I would like to point out that only when peace and tranquillity prevail throughout the country will the entire populace of indigenous people born within the Union be able to enjoy the fruits of national development. Moreover, only when there is equality among the national races will all nationalities be able to enjoy peace and prosperity. It is undesirable that only sustainable development and enduring peace can guarantee the flourishing of a genuine democracy. I wish our brother of all ethnicities freedom from worry and undivided unity.

Wishes for promoting national image

Lower House Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann

I wish entire populace happiness, freedom from all sorts of danger and the preservation of loving kindness toward one another. Nowadays, people can set a higher hope of a change for the better, feeling secure both physically and mentally. I hope you all will cooperate and coordinate among yourselves in performing whatever tasks are assigned to you. I wish you all to become good citizens who will promote the image of your motherland.

We need spiritual leaders

Upper House Speaker U Khin Aung Myint

I wish all Myanmar citizens physical and mental wellbeing, as well as legal protection abroad. As usual, we use this time to review what we have done in the past year. We must draw lessons and mend our ways of doing things. We also make New Year's resolutions. As for us, our resolution should be our commitment to participate actively in building up a peaceful, prosperous and modern nation. In this reform process, there are two sides: one is the role of the government, and the other is the role of the people. Citizens must be diligent and resilient. In this function, citizens must have the right outlook and the right attitude. Moreover, they must cultivate a habit of strict abidance by the law. As for the role of the government, they should also pursue a leadership style called spiritual leadership. In this regard, Mahatma Gandhi of India is a role model. I wish for you all to possess the four adhipatis.

Tatmadaw will cooperate with the new government

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

I would like to greet, on behalf of the entire Tatmadaw, all indigenous people on this auspicious occasion of New Year 2016 by wishing you physical and mental wellbeing. The Tatmadaw, for its part, has emphasised stability, unity and development, which are essential to the country, and is cooperating with the government to create unity. The year 2016 is a year of significance in which strengthening of democratic the system and accelerating of the development process are to be made. The Tatmadaw, following the tradition of performing national duties, will cooperate, as assigned by the constitution, with the new government, as well as with the people. I would like to emphasise that the Tatmadaw will continue to cooperate with the indigenous people in a united spirit to ensure a more stable, peaceful and prosperous nation in 2016. I again wish you all health and happiness.



What's your New Year gift?

Daw Aung San Su Kyi, Chairperson of National League for Democracy

In the time of the New Year, people give presents to friends and acquaintances. I would like our people to ponder individually what kind of New Year present they will give to their Union. What is required by the nation? It needs peace, unity and development. I believe each citizen has the right to fulfil these needs and has the ability to do so. That being so, my New Year message is for each and every individual to think over what kind of aus-

picious gift they will give to their country and their Union. I want you to review what you have done in the past year and think over what you need to do based on your review. Working for the nation will never end. You are all needed to work for it every day. I wish you physical and mental wellbeing, freedom from danger, fulfilling your dreams, and on top of that, I hope you will all bring the appropriate gifts for the development of the Union as well as for peace and prosperity.

A change for the better

U Thu Wai, Chairman of Democratic Party Myanmar

The New Year means a transition from the old to the new. Naturally, we will all wish for a change for the better. New Year's resolutions depend very much upon one's current situation, even in politics. Before Myanmar's independence, our people's task was to wrestle autonomy from the British colonialists, to free the country from the yoke of imperialism. But now, our resolution must be to achieve peace. Our citizens, the government, the political parties and the media are all needed to be involved in the peace process. Only when peace prevails can we keep our country abreast with the nations of the world.

Let's be united

Brig Gen Than Tin (Rtd)

I joined the army in 1942, during World War II, at the age of 16, to contribute to the peace and tranquillity in our country. Coordination is a must for the achievement of national tasks. Without unity, tasks are hard to accomplish. I am worried about unity. If we are to overcome all of our difficulties, all stakeholders must cooperate. Only then will peace and prosperity be achieved. As a war veteran, I would like to urge all stakeholders to be united and to work together in co-operation and coordination.

New Year Messages

A wish for all your desires to be fulfilled

Cardinal Charles Bo

I wish to the entire mass of Myanmar people an auspicious occasion. We are all excited about the New Year, with high hope, without which we cannot live meaningfully. I wish you all to be able to fulfil your wishes, to enliven your faint hopes. The year 2015 witnessed the Myanmar people's sympathy toward people who have fallen victim to the natural disasters, especially floods. Because we live in a society, unity matters most. If we are united, we will be able to build a peaceful, prosperous nation. We must cultivate a culture under which people cooperate and coordinate in seeking solutions to problems. May each and every citizen be able to fulfil their wishes while preserving love for everybody.

Wishing freedom from danger

U Hla Maung, Muslim representative, Myanmar Interfaith Group

I wish entire mass of people freedom from danger and peace. The interfaith unity committee also wishes all citizens health and happiness.

Wishing NCA achieve success

Rev. Dr Saw Margay Gyi Patron of Myanmar Interfaith Group

I wish for the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to achieve success as we all expected and eternal peace to prevail in the country. I also would like to wish for all the people to enjoy the fruits of the peace equitably. God bless all of you.

Observe precepts

U Aung Naing Hindu representative Myanmar Interfaith Group

I hope people professing different religious faiths will behave positively toward each other's religions. May people of different faiths disseminate the waves of loving kindness toward the people around them, observe their respective precepts and cultivate noble-mindedness.

peaceful community with the people of all faiths

U Sein Win Aung Buddhist representative Myanmar Interfaith Group

I wish to see a peaceful community with the people of all faiths. I would like to urge all the people to help each other to become a unified society, without forgetting the rights of each. I also wish for the prevalence of loving kindness among all the people in order for all to enjoy peace, physically and mentally.

Wishing to an end to racial conflict

U Ye Tun, MP

I wish for peace and prosperity in 2016. And I hope the armed conflicts taking place between ethnic armed organisations and the Tatmadaw will end during 2016. As change takes time, I want you all to be patient.

Government alone cannot make change

Daw Dwe Bu, MP

We have to live our lives with a new heart and soul in 2016. Actually, change cannot be effected by the government alone. All stakeholders are needed to participate in creating unity. I hope you all do not to embrace hatred but to cooperate with one another in a new spirit.

Wishing you all genuine democracy, peace

U Saw Thein Aung, MP

I wish all the people physical and mental wellbeing, as well as genuine democracy and genuine peace in the year 2016.

Wishing you all unity and peace

Dr Banya Aung Moe, MP

I wish all beings freedom from danger, as well as unity and peace.

Wishing for a federal union

U Khin Maung Swe, Chairman of National Democratic Force

I hope all stakeholders will participate in the change process. I wish for socioeconomic development, national reconciliation, national unity building, a democratic society and a federal democratic Union.

Embankment barrier posts thwart Waw Tsp farmers

THE farmers of Tamangyi and other nearby villages in Waw Township, Bago Region, are facing difficulties bringing their farm equipment across the embankment road along the Sittaung Canal; a concrete barrier constructed on the embankment road near Tamangyi Village obstructs the way. The farmers say their agricultural machines must reach the plantations in time for the harvesting season.

According to a local resident, the eight-foot barrier was built by the Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to prevent heavy vehicles from crossing the 18-foot-wide embankment road. The road, which crosses 30,000

acres of farmland, is used by villagers of three village tracts. There are six villages situated alongside the embankment road.

Farmer U Hla Htay says there is scarcity of field workers nowadays, and farmers have been forced to use more time-efficient machines. With the barrier, they will not be able to grow another crop in time, he added.

He said the machines now have to drive down from the embankment road, crossing the plantations, which is very arduous.

The farmers say they have faced many hindrances in their transition from traditional to mechanized agriculture methods.—*Ko Shwe Moe*



Concrete barrier posts are seen on the embankment of the Sittaung River. PHOTO: KO SHWE MOE

Famous Gok Teik Viaduct attracts floods of tourists



The Gok Teik Viaduct in Shan State. PHOTO: ANDLEYTRAVEL.COM

THE number of both local and foreign visitors is increasing day by day to the Gok Teik Viaduct located in Naungcho Township, Northern Shan State, a resident said.

Easing of rules for visitors by the authorities is one of the reasons why tourists choose to visit. In the past authorities set special rules for visitors.

The 2,260 foot (689 meter)

long bridge was opened in 1903. When completed, it was the largest railroad trestle in the world. The station master has organised necessary arrangements for visitors.—*Soe Win (Naungcho)*

Drains cleared in Mahaaungmye township

DRAINS on both sides of Seinpan road near the Seinpan market between 35th and 37th streets of Mandalay's city township of Mahaaungmye were cleared and cleaned by the Mandalay City Welfare Committee's

Cleaning Department on Monday. Committee members U Shwe Win and Dr Thwin Kyaw Kyaw inspected the works being done.

The gutters near the market, located on low land, had been

filled with earth blocking the drainage consequently caused flooding. As the drains have now been cleared water will flow into the Thingaza creek, said a Seinpan ward administrator.—*Thiha Ko Ko-Mandalay*

China blames weather for ship disaster, captain may be prosecuted

BEIJING — A formal inquiry has concluded that freak weather led to the sinking of a Yangtze River cruise ship in June that killed 442 people and recommended that the captain be investigated for possible crimes, media reported yesterday.

A cabinet-level investigation team concluded the disaster was “caused by strong winds and heavy rains resulting from a squall line accompanied by a downburst, a very rare weather phenomenon”, the Xinhua state news agency said, citing investigators.

The inquiry also uncovered problems in the shipping company’s management and regulatory supervision, and investigators had “suggested” 43 people be punished, Xinhua added.

Only 12 people survived when the Eastern Star capsized during the storm on 1 June. Many of the passengers were elderly tourists. It was China’s worst shipping disaster in seven decades.

While the captain, Zhang



The Eastern Star, the cruise ship which went down in the Jianli section of the Yangtze River in June, is seen in Jianli, Hubei province, on 30 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

Shunwen, tried to stabilise the ship it was overwhelmed by the sudden burst of wind and rain, and it took just a minute or so for

it to flip over, Xinhua said.

But the captain was also unaware of the risks associated with the extreme weather, it added.

Zhang should have his ship captaining qualifications cancelled and legal bodies should look into whether he is suspected

of any crime, it said, without elaborating.

The news agency did not identify the other 43 people recommended for punishment, but said they should get administrative punishments.

The shipping company has also been closed while it carries out “rectifications”, it added.

An initial investigation found that the ship was not overloaded and had enough life vests on board.

Experts who helped with the probe said a tornado, which had been thought to be the cause of the disaster, hit a nearby port minutes before the ship sank, but did not affect the river itself, Xinhua said. “The investigation also ruled out speculation that the Eastern Star was in a hurry before the accident occurred, as the bus scheduled to pick up the ship passengers in the next stop was late and the ship was actually slowing down its speed,” it added. The government has pledged there would be “no cover-up”. —Reuters

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer -

Nakagawa Kiyoshi
gnlmdaily@gmail.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
khinmaungaye@hotmail.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe
koayeminsoe2006@gmail.com

Chief Reporter

Ye Myint, uyemyint76@gmail.com,

Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg
jgold.news@gmail.com

Alec Wilmot
alec.wilmot.gnlm@gmail.com

Editors

Ye Htut Tin
mryehtuttin@gmail.com

Kyaw Thura, kthura.spk@gmail.com,
Myint Win Thein

journalist.sss@gmail.com

International news

Tun Tun Naing
tunyunaing@gmail.com

Reporters

Khaing Thanda Lwin
juniorlwin25@gmail.com

Tun Aung Kyaw
tunaungkyaw.31@gmail.com

Translators

Ma Than Htay,
Hay Mar Tin Win
haymarfat@gmail.com

Proof reader

Nwe Nwe Tun

Computer Team

Tun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,
Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:
adv.gnlm@gmail.com

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India asks authorities to take action to save choking capital

NEW DELHI — India asked authorities in and around its capital on Wednesday to crack down immediately on overloaded lorries, illegally parked cars and vehicles emitting visible smoke in the world’s most polluted city.

The state governments of Delhi and neighbouring Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have been asked to take immediate action to prevent parking in non-designated areas, launch awareness drives and check overloading of vehicles, federal

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said in a statement.

A plan to fit particulate filters in diesel vehicles has been put into immediate effect.

The state governments have also been asked to promote battery-operated vehicles, enforce the ban on burning of agricultural waste and control dust pollution at construction sites.

But environmentalists said such action plans needed to be pursued with greater urgency.

“The focus should be on the implementation strategy, ac-

countability, monitoring and compliance,” said Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director of the Centre for Science and Environment think-tank.

Reuters reported earlier this month that India is devising a plan to combat smog in New Delhi, rated the world’s most polluted city by the World Health Organisation.

From 1 January, New Delhi will also ban use of private cars on alternate days according to their registration numbers.—Reuters

Obama to host US-ASEAN summit in California 15-16 February

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama will host a summit with his counterparts from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations at the Californian resort of Sunnylands on 15 and 16 February, the White House said Wednesday. The first US-hosted summit with leaders from the 10 ASEAN countries will “provide leaders a forum to strengthen cooperation under the new US-ASEAN strategic partnership” on political, security, and economic issues, it said.

The United States decided to host the event as it and some

ASEAN members have been involved in disputes with China in the South China Sea.

The United States has criticised China for massive reclamation on submerged reefs and construction of facilities on artificial islands, allegedly including military equipment, in a disputed area of the sea despite complaints by other claimants.

The United States has taken no sides in the territorial dispute itself but has protested the unilateral actions by China. The US Navy sent a destroyer into what China claims to be territorial waters near one of the reefs

in October to demonstrate that Washington regards the area part of the international sea.

The United States and ASEAN reaffirmed the importance of “freedom of navigation including in and over-flight above the South China Sea” in a joint statement released when they launched the strategic partnership during the last summit in November in Kuala Lumpur. ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.—Kyodo News

Number of new adults in Japan down to 1.21m on New Year’s Day

TOKYO — The number of people aged 20 years old, the legal age of adulthood in Japan, is set to reach 1.21 million on New Year’s Day 2016, down 50,000 from the previous year, government statistics showed yesterday.

The new adults make up 0.95 per cent of Japan’s total population of around 126.83 million, falling below 1 per cent for the sixth straight year, according to the Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry. Of the 1.21 million, 620,000 are men and 590,000 are women. The year-on-year decline in the total number of new adults follows the first increase in 21 years in 2015 with many baby boomers becoming parents roughly two decades ago. The number of people aged 20 years old is expected to fall to 1.06 million in 2025, according to estimates by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. With 2016 the Year of the Monkey according to the 12-sign Chinese zodiac, the number of people born in previous such years in Japan stands at 9.91 million, with about 4.80 million men and 5.12 million women, the statistics showed. Around 2.4 million people aged 18 and 19 will join the electorate for the House of Councillors election in the summer of 2016, with the lowering of the country’s voting age to 18 from 20 to encourage political participation by young people.—Kyodo News

US-trained commandos in Philippines kill 10 militants

MANILA — US-trained army commandos in the Philippines killed 10 al Qaeda-linked militants in a clash on a southern island, a military spokesman said yesterday, as security forces intensify a search for foreign hostages.

A lieutenant was among eight Philippine soldiers killed or wounded in a clash with about 300 members of the Abu Sayyaf militant group on Jolo is-

land late on Wednesday, spokesman Major Filemon Tan told reporters.

“Our troops are pursuing the Abu Sayyaf who broke into small groups and withdrew to the interior of the island,” Tan said, adding that 15 militants had also been wounded in the fighting.

“This is part of our focussed military operation to free foreign hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf.”

Tan said the Abu Sayyaf group is holding two Canadians, along with a Dutch citizen, a Norwegian and a Japanese.

Last month, they beheaded a Malaysian captive, prompting President Benigno Aquino to order intensified operations against the rebels.

Tan said US-trained scout rangers had assaulted a rebel lair, triggering a three-hour battle. Troops

later fired artillery at the fleeing rebels.

There were no indications any of the hostages were in the area, he said.

The small but violent Abu Sayyaf, known for kidnappings, beheadings and bombings, is one of the most hardline Muslim rebel factions in the Muslim south of the largely Christian Philippines.

Two weeks ago, 13 Abu Sayyaf rebels were

killed in a clash on nearby Basilan island while 14 people died on Christmas eve when another Muslim rebel faction, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, staged attacks on Mindanao, the main southern island.

The government signed a peace deal with the largest Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, in March, promising autonomy in the south and ending a 45-year conflict

that killed 120,000 people and displaced 2 million.

Both the Abu Sayyaf and Bangsamoro guerrillas are opposed to the peace agreement and have vowed to set up an Islamic state in the southern Philippines.

While long known for links with al Qaeda and its Southeast Asian affiliates, the Abu Sayyaf group recently swore allegiance to Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria.—Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Participants of an elephant beauty contest are ready to perform in the final round during the 12th annual Elephant Festival in Sauraha, a tourism hub in southwest Nepal's Chitwan district, on 29 December 2015. Three elephants were selected for the final round in which an elephant named “Sambriddhi kali” won the contest. The Elephant Festival held from 26 December to 30 December was organised by Regional Hotel Association of Suraha to promote tourism and raise awareness about wildlife protection. PHOTO: XINHUA

30 students detained for trespassing at Japanese Embassy in Seoul

SEOUL — Around 30 university students were detained on suspicion of trespassing yesterday while holding an unauthorised rally in a building in central Seoul where the Japanese Embassy is temporarily located, according to police sources.

The students were protesting against this week's landmark deal between Japan and South Korea over women forced to work in Japan's wartime military brothels. The deal has generated opposition over reports that Japan stipulated the removal of a statue symbolising the issue of so-called “comfort women” in return for giving 1 billion yen (about \$8.3 million) to a fund to help those women.

According to witnesses, the students held up a

banner reading “The South Korean people reject the deal with Japan” near the entrance to the building. Some of them went up the eighth floor where the consular section is located and put up similar banners on walls in shared spaces. Earlier in the day, banners with messages such as “Apology and compensation” and “Protect the girl statue” were attached to windows in the building. On Wednesday night, protestors began a sit-in near the bronze statue located in front of the site where the Japanese Embassy is being rebuilt. In nearby Gwanghwamun Square, a protest gathering was underway Thursday against the agreement, with one banner reading “Scrap the insulting deal of (President) Park Geun-hye.”—Kyodo News

Pakistan contradicts Afghanistan on venue of next talks on Taliban

ISLAMABAD — A Pakistani official said on Wednesday that talks on how to restart a tentative peace dialogue with Afghanistan's Taliban insurgents would be held in Islamabad next month, contradicting an Afghan statement that they would be in Kabul.

The confusion over the venue highlighted the fraught, multi-country process to coax the Taliban to the bargaining table and end more than 14 years of war since the US-backed intervention to break the hard-line Islamist movement's grip in Afghanistan.

“Between 10 January and 15 January, the first meeting will take place in Islamabad, not in Kabul,”

Sartaj Aziz, senior adviser on foreign affairs to Pakistan's prime minister, told a press conference.

He said the meeting, involving officials from the United States, China, Pakistan and Afghanistan, had been decided on this month when Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Islamabad at the Heart of Asia conference.

On Tuesday, an official in Ghani's office said the talks would be held next week in Kabul, following the weekend visit of powerful Pakistani military chief, General Raheel Sharif.

The reason for the contradictory statements was not immediately clear

and Afghan officials could not be reached. Neither side has said Taliban representatives themselves would attend.

Diplomats have been working to revive the nascent peace process, which broke down in July following an initial round, after which news was leaked of the death of Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar more than two years earlier. The United States and China, which is planning to invest billions in Pakistan, have both pushed for peace talks.

However, some Afghan officials have opposed Pakistan hosting the talks, accusing their nuclear-armed neighbour of harbouring Taliban leaders and sponsoring the insur-

gency for its own regional strategy.

Pakistan rejects the accusation and says it has also suffered heavily from terrorism. On Tuesday, at least 23 people were killed and 75 wounded when a suicide bomber attacked a government office in northwestern Pakistan. The Taliban, which has grown in strength this year following the withdrawal of most foreign troops, has so far ruled out taking part in any talks as long as foreign troops remain in Afghanistan. But the movement has splintered into rival factions since the 2013 death of Mullah Omar was announced, with many rejecting the authority of the new leader, Mullah Akhtar Mansour.—Reuters

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Transport

Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River System
Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basic Management (AIRBM) Project

Tender No: AIRBM(G-2.1-11/2016)

1. Project Management Unit invites expression of interest from qualified contractors and suppliers for the following:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
1.	Renovation for DWIR building
2.	Equipment for DMH

- (Laptop, Desktop, Printer, Copier, LCD Projector, Scanner, UPS)
2. Further information and a copy of the detailed Terms of References (TORs) and invitation to Quote (ITQ) can be looked up in www.dwir.gov.mm (Search for International Cooperation world bank), www.mimu.info, www.moezala.gov.mm and UNDB online website.

3. The deadline for submission is (14.1.2016). If you need any further information for Item No.1, please email to aungmyokhaing77@gmail.com and tinaungwin23@gmail.com. For item no.2, uncle.laja@gmail.com and kohtinkyaw1@gmail.com and procurement Section, Directorate of Water Resources and improvement of River System postal code.11171, phone contact No.01-292236,01-291533.

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 4th January (Monday) Independence Day 2016, being public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.
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US preparing sanctions on Iran over ballistic missile programme

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama's administration is preparing new sanctions on international companies and individuals over Iran's ballistic missile programme, sources familiar with the situation said on Wednesday.

The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that the potential sanctions would target about 12 companies and individuals in Iran, Hong Kong and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for their suspected role in developing Iran's ballistic-missile programme.

US officials have said the Treasury Department retains a right under July's landmark nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers, including Washington, to blacklist Iranian entities suspected of involvement in missile development, the *Journal* said.

Iranian officials have said the country's supreme leader would view such penalties as violating the nuclear accord. "We've been looking for some time at options for additional actions related to Iran's ballistic missile programme based on our continued concerns about its activities, including the October 10th launch," an Obama administration official said.

"We are considering various aspects related to additional designations, as well as evolving diplomatic work that is consistent with our national security interests," the



An Iranian Emad rocket is launched as it is tested at an undisclosed location on 11 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

official said, on condition of anonymity. A team of UN sanctions monitors said in a confidential report seen by Reuters on 15 December that a medium-range Emad rocket that Iran tested on 10 October was a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead, making it a violation of a UN Security Council resolution.

Diplomats have said it was possible for the sanctions committee to blacklist additional Iranian individuals or entities over the missile launch. But they said Rus-

sia and China, which have opposed the sanctions on Iran's missile programme, might block any such actions.

Tehran has disputed the Western assessment that the Emad missile was capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.

The Journal said the planned Treasury Department sanctions concerned two Iran-linked networks involved in developing the country's missile programme and include many of the people involved.—Reuters

Germany's influx of refugees is an opportunity: Merkel

BERLIN — German society and the economy stand to benefit from the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees, Chancellor Angela Merkel said yesterday, repeating her optimistic mantra "we can do this".

In her New Year address to the nation, Merkel acknowledged that the integration of migrants, many of them Muslims fleeing war

in the Middle East, would cost Germany "time, strength and money". But the country was strong enough to cope, she said, pointing to low unemployment and rising wages.

"I am convinced that if we tackle the formidable task posed by the influx and integration of so many people in the right way today, then this will represent an opportunity for us tomorrow," Merkel

said in the text of a speech supplied by the government before she spoke. "It's true, we live in challenging times. But it's also true that we can do this, because Germany is a strong country."

Germany has taken in just over a million migrants this year, far more than any other European country. Merkel is one of the few European leaders to welcome them, arguing that Germany has a duty to shelter people fleeing conflict and persecution.

She has repeatedly rebuffed pressure to clamp down along German borders, telling Germans "wir schaffen das", or "we can do this". This stance led *Time* magazine to name Merkel its "Person of the Year" earlier this month. But at home, where local communities have complained of being overwhelmed by the influx, her own popularity ratings and support for her conservative party have suffered. Meanwhile, a new anti-immigrant party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), has risen to record highs of 8 to 10 per cent in recent polls. Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) remains the strongest party by far, despite the recent drop.—Reuters



Three-Year old Asna, four-year old Asra, 2-year-old Mohamed and five-month old Salva (L-R), siblings from Syria pose in front of a Christmas tree at a refugee shelter in an evangelical church in Oberhausen, Germany, on 22 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turbulence injures multiple Air Canada passengers, diverts flight

DORVAL — Turbulence on an Air Canada flight from China injured multiple passengers on Wednesday, forcing it to land in Calgary, Alberta, the airline said.

Twenty-one passengers were transferred to hospitals from the airport — eight with non-life-threatening injuries and 13 sent for observation, it said in a statement.

Air Canada flight 88 departed from Shanghai and was headed to Toronto, carrying 332 passengers and 19 crew.

The airline said it would be making arrangements to accommodate the other passengers, including those continuing on to Toronto, and that the incident was being investigated.

There was no immediate indication of what caused the turbulence.—Reuters

Crimea official says Ukraine has cut off power again

MOSCOW — A Crimean official said yesterday that Ukraine had cut off a major source of electrical power to the region, a month after saboteurs first plunged the Russian-annexed peninsula into darkness.

Kirill Moskalenko, a spokesman of the governor of Sevastopol city, said Ukraine has cut off the Kakhovka-Titan line to Crimea.

"The line has supplied the peninsula with 250 megawatts. Due to the lack of power supply, Sevastopol is receiving 150 megawatts instead of 195 megawatts," Moskalenko said, according to Interfax. Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, needs around 1 gigawatt of power.

Electrical power to Crimea was shut off at the end of November when saboteurs blew up pylons in southern Ukraine which supported the four lines that supplied Crimea with the bulk of its power. Ukraine nationalists then blocked access to the site and prevented Ukrainian energy workers from repairing them.—Reuters

Nigeria ready to negotiate release of Chibok girls with Boko Haram

LAGOS — Nigeria's government is prepared to negotiate with Islamist militant group Boko Haram to secure the release of around 200 schoolgirls kidnapped last year, if credible leaders are identified, President Muhammadu Buhari said on Wednesday.

"We are prepared to negotiate with them without any preconditions," Buhari told journalists in a televised interview.

Boko Haram seized the girls from their dormitories in the northeastern town of Chibok in April 2014, sparking international outrage.

He said there was no firm intelligence on the whereabouts of the girls or whether they are still alive.—Reuters

Twin suicide bombs in northeast Syria kill or wound dozens

BEIRUT — Twin suicide bombings hit two restaurants in a Kurdish-controlled city in northeastern Syria on Wednesday, killing or wounding dozens of people, a Kurdish official and a group monitoring the war said.

The explosions took place in Qamishli, near the Turkish border, the Kurdish YPG militia's Redur Xelil told Reuters. He said it had most likely been carried out by Islamic State, which the YPG is fighting in Syria's northeast, and that dozens were believed to have been killed or wounded.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 16 people were killed and more than 22 wounded from the blasts in an area inhabited by Christians.

It said there had been a third explosion in the city, but gave no further details.

The YPG has been the most effective partner on the ground in Syria for the US-led coalition that is fighting Islamic State. In October, it became part of the new US-backed alliance, the Democratic Forces of Syria.

The alliance launched an offensive against Islamic State in the northeastern province of Hasaka that month, later forcing it out of a town near the Iraqi border while Kurdish forces in Iraq seized the town of Sinjar from the jihadist group.

Islamic State has carried out a number of attacks in Kurdish areas in recent weeks, including one that killed dozens of people earlier this month.—Reuters

OPINION

Say no to yes-men

Kyaw Thura

IT is nice when we hear people say yes to everything we do and say. This attitude, however, lacks the potential to transform organisations, communities or the world as a whole, especially in this age of information and technology, when innovations receive greater attention than ever before. In fact, a yes-man is no more than a person who acts out of self-interest.

It should be noted that people of high

rank tend to indulge themselves in the company of yes-men and fall for their flattery. In addition, they are inclined to brush aside mavericks under the wrong conception that they do not fit in, failing to notice that those who make a difference play a vital role in getting the right result in the end. In other words, they are blind to the simple fact that creating an environment of saying yes to everything has a detrimental effect on the further success of their organisation.

It is therefore important to encourage people to develop innovative ideas of their own in the profession of their choice rather than thinking along the same pattern. Metaphorically speaking, oysters will not be able to produce pearls without some rubbish in them. Now is the time for leaders at all levels in all organisa-

tions and institutions to enable their staff to work in earnest and in peace of mind so as to remain competitive with their peers.

After all, the culture of accepting mavericks in the workplace should be listed among the New Year's resolutions of all decision makers. It is never too late to include it on the list.

Write for us

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

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

Stop Lying !

Khin Maung Myint

AS an ex-government employee, I knew full well how our government establishments used to function. Although I assume what I am going to write is also true for most establishments, I would confine my presentations to my experiences at certain establishments where I had served during my career.

It may sound a bit insulting to some, but lying was rampant in most establishments in my days and believe they are still going on. Every good officer and/or administrator knows that the right decisions are based on correct information and data fed. If the information and data are inaccurate or incorrect, the decisions would be wrong. However, we had lied all along. Sometimes, we have to lie because we are compelled to do it.

I have seen lying at all levels of the organizations in my days as a government employee. Lower echelon staff lied because they were lazy and could not fulfil their tasks in time and when the time came for them to report, they made up all sorts of false data and facts. However, most of the time it was the fault of those in the upper echelons who compelled them to lie.

An example of one such case was that while I was serving in a district security and administrative committee, we received a telegram in which we were instructed to submit a list of all the construction works going on in our district. The list must consist the names of the projects and the progresses made. The list had to reach Rangoon (Yangon) the next day. Of the ten townships in our district, nine were only ac-

cessable by river transports in those days. There was no telephone service in those nine towns and the telegraph service was unreliable, thus the only means of communication was by messenger. Just imagine what the district engineer of the department concerned would do. Although he had the names of the projects, he did not know the progresses up-to-date, as the monthly reports had not come in as yet. Thus, he made up the progresses by guesswork and submitted to us. We managed to send in the report in time. However, it was neither accurate nor correct.

Every paddy season, the department concerned not must conduct three surveys to estimate how much paddy will be produced that year. The first survey is to list the number of acres under cultivation. The second is to list the number of successful acres. The final survey is to harvest the paddy from a model plot that had been demarcated and measure the number of baskets produced to get the rate of yield. That figure is set as a norm for the whole surrounding area in calculating how much paddy that area would produce that season. It is done countrywide to get the total production for the whole country. I hope the readers will appreciate how important those data are. Even those data too were either guessed after asking some village representatives summoned to the house of the village chief or made up for those villages where the survey teams could not reach. The survey teams rarely went to the fields for various reasons. How could those data be accurate and so the decisions and plans made, based on those would be incorrect.

At one corporation, as it was

called in the past, I came across a very gross lie committed and that had been going on for years. When I was transferred to that corporation in 1985, I had to take charge of the administrative department, so manpower resources management was my job. A few days after I took office, one of my staff officers brought a letter for me to sign. When I read it, I found it was a forwarding letter to send a consolidated employee strength to the Immigration & National Registration Department. There was no appendix attached. So I asked that officer where the appendix was and he replied that he himself prepared it and that I did not have to worry about that. However, as I was curious, I insisted to see it.

When I checked, I saw some irregularities although I was new to that department and had never seen the strength returns before, as they were very glaring. I noticed the total number of male employees were about four times the number of female employees, which was quite unreasonable. I had seen that the number of females exceeded those of the male employees in almost every government department. In my department there was only just over twenty males, while the females numbered over eighty. It was almost the same in every department housed in our office building. Thus my common sense would not accept the figures in the returns.

When I asked that officer, an old hand, who had risen from the lower ranks and was supposed to be the most experienced at the office, to let me see the relevant returns from the various departments, States and Divisions (Regions) offices, he was unable to produce them. When I insisted that I needed to see them and until I was thoroughly convinced that the consolidated list was in agreement with them, I would not sign the letter. He tried to bluff his way out by telling me

that he collected the data by telephone. So I asked him to show me the telephone log book and again he could not comply with. He said they never kept telephone logs since he joined the service. He was not only a liar but an unloyal person who discredited his superiors by his statement to save himself.

I immediately sent telegrams, instructing all the departments and States and Division offices to send the strength returns by telegram or messenger as they see fit to be able so as to reach the head office at a certain date. When the returns came in, I found my assumption was right. The number of females far more exceeded the number of males. However, that did not solve the problem because the previous returns they had sent to the INRD were not much different from the one I declined to send. I put up the problem to my immediate superior but was instructed not to send the latest figures straight away, as it would be very glaring. So I asked for guidance as to how I should do it. He told me to adjust the returns gradually until the accurate figures are reached. At first I was reluctant to do as he instructed, but on second thought I reluctantly did it; I lied for the sake of the corporation. It took me about a year to arrive at the accurate figure. If I had my own way, I would have gone to the INRD in person and explained everything and settle the matter once and for all.

In another previous service, I had to take charge of paddy growing as a secondary job. My predecessor told me that during his time, the rice fields yielded at least fifty baskets per acre. However, when I enquired the neighbouring farmers, who were real professionals, I learned that their fields yielded only fifteen baskets per acre. The reason was that the area was occasionally flooded with sea water, the soil contained high level of salinity.

When I told them our fields yielded at least fifty baskets, the truth came out. According to them, our fields yielded less than theirs', but without knowing about the conditions of the soil, my predecessor guaranteed to the superiors that the fields could yield at least fifty baskets. Being a native of the Ayeyarwady Delta region, he must have thought they could be the same.

I learned later that when the time came to sell the paddy to the government purchasing depots, he bought the paddy on the black market to make good his guarantee. If I were in his place, I would admit my mis-judgement. Although I did not want to, I had to report the truth to my superior before the harvesting time. At first, my superior was reluctant to accept what I told him as the truth. However, after the harvesting, I proved I was right and then only did he accept my words.

The above examples are just a few, but I am convinced that I had made my point. If you will observe them closely, you are bound to notice how rampant the habit of lying is going on among our employees. It is not only the subordinate employees who are to be blamed for lying, but in most cases they are compelled to lie because of unreasonable orders from above.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that these undesirable habits of lying be stopped. Those in high positions should know the work loads and the restraints that the subordinate departments had to face and should be considerate in setting targets and fixing datelines. They should be reasonable. In my opinion, tight schedules and unreasonable targets and datelines set for the staff to accomplish an assignment, are the root causes of unnecessary lies. The superiors should know their own men so as to be able to decide who is telling the truth and who is lying.

Residents want authorities to remove wooden stakes along Sittaung River

RESIDENTS from Htantabin Township want the local authorities to remove stakes from a temporary wooden bridge along the Sittaung River as boats which pass through the river face many difficulties during

the rainy season because of their placement.

The temporary bridge was closed to local use when the new bridge linking Htantabin Township and Myinsu Village in Oak-twin Township, Bago Region,

was officially put into services.

It is not easy to remove the stakes as it is a long bridge but the current water level helps people remove them from the ground of the river.—*Ko Lwin (Swa)*



Wooden stakes of an demolished bridge in the Sittaung River. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWA)

Mining companies plant saplings on abandoned gold mines

THE No. 2 Mining Enterprise is trying to reduce its environmental impact by cultivating saplings on abandoned mine lands, according to a spokesperson of Sagaing Region government.

As part of effort to conserve the environment, over 20,000 saplings have been planted on 54.7 acres of abandoned mine lands in Homalin, Banmouk, Wuntho, Pinlelbu and Kawlin townships in Sagaing Region by 42 gold mining companies.

To promote the role of private sector, the state-owned enterprise has carried out joint-ventures with gold mining companies since the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The major aims are to raise gold production in the region to facilitate the economic development of the country and improve the socio-economic status of local people.

Eighty-eight companies carried out sector-wide develop-

ment activities to ensure access to essential services, including health, education, water and sanitation, transportation and electricity, in Banmouk, Kawlin, Wuntho, Pinlelbu, Kyunhla, Hteechaing, Homalin and Khanti townships.

Sagaing Region annually produces more than 830 ounces of gold. The gold mines in the area produced 964 ounces of gold last year.—*Myo Win Tun (Monywa)*

President sends a message of felicitations to the Republic of Cuba

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Raul Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, on the occasion of the anniversary of the Liberation Day of Cuba, which falls on 1 January 2016.—*Myanmar News Agency*

VP Dr Sai Mauk Kham receives UN delegation

VICE PRESIDENT Dr Sai Mauk Kham received a UN delegation led by United Nations permanent representative to Myanmar Ms Renata Nicola Dessallien at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the two discussed issues related to the peace process, the general election, development aid and humanitarian aids.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Thant Kyaw and Dr Sann Lwin.—*Myanmar News Agency*

VP U Nyan Tun meets US Senator

VICE PRESIDENT U Nyan Tun met a delegation led by US Senator Mr Thomas Cotton at the Diplomatic Hall of the Presidential Palace yesterday.

The two discussed promoting cooperation and friendly relations between Myanmar and the US, the success of the general election, internal peace, development and reforms in Myanmar.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Tin Oo Lwin, U Han Sein and Central Bank of Myanmar vice president U Set Aung.—*Myanmar News Agency*

SG Min Aung Hlaing receives US Senator Thomas Cotton

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing received US Senator Mr Thomas Cotton and his delegation at the Bayint Naung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the parties discussed the participation of the Tatmataw in the country's political reforms since 2011, promoting further cooperation between the two countries and between the two countries' armed forces.

The senior general was joined by Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win and senior military officers.—*Myawady*

Crime News

Murder in Thailand

A CASE of murder occurred in Ranong town, Thailand last Saturday. A Thai citizen who was apparently in love with a married Myanmar national entered her home while her husband was

away away and killed her for rejecting him. The Thai citizen suspect managed to escape police after fleeing the scene. Thai police have filed a murder charge against him.—*Kyaw Soe (IPRD)*

Man falls from train

A MAN was killed in a train accident that occurred on Monday at Ahlone train station. According to an investigation, Kyaw Soe Win, 29, who was on a train headed for Hlawkar train station from Yangon slipped at Ahlone

station and died on the spot.

The body was sent to Yangon General Hospital by Thanwaiga youth Funeral Services. Local police are investigating.—*Tin Maung Oo (Ahlone)*

Opium seized in Winemaw

AN anti-drug squad in Winemaw – Sadon road seized 2.5kilos of opium from a motorbike driver on Sunday. The police stopped

and searched a motorbike being driven by one Zaw Htway Aung and discovered the cache hidden on the vehicle.—*Ko Ye*

Woman dies in a car accident

A WOMAN was killed and another injured in a road accident that occurred between Pakokku and Myaing road on Monday.

A 6 wheel vehicle being driven by one Maung Soe alias Than Lwin Soe, 42, crashed into a motorbike being driven by one Phyu Thinzar, 22, with Daw Shwe Tin, 58, as her passenger. The motorbike driver died of serious injuries while the passenger was injured but survived. The vehicle driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by the police.—*Kyaw Zayar*

Man arrested for illegal weapons

POLICE have filed charges against one Kyaw Shwe, 52, for allegedly keeping a two foot long bludgeoning weapon and a box of gunpowder at his home on

Monday in Panmayae village, Kawlin township.

The man has been charged by police.—*Shwe Linn Pyat Sone*

Drunken man throws stones at train

POLICE have filed charges against a young man on suspicion of throwing stones at a train at milepost 225/15-16 between Ywartaw train station and Pyinmana train station in Nay Pyi Taw on 25 December.

According to their investigation, Nyein Chan alias Nye-

in Chan Soe, 19, became drunk and belligerent before throwing stones at a passing train for no discernable reason. His act of vandalism damaged two windows.

Local police have filed charges against him.—*Police IPRD*

At issue in UN Syria ceasefire plan — Who is a terrorist?

WASHINGTON — A UN plan to suspend Syria's nearly five-year-old civil war calls for listing which militant groups may be fought despite an eventual ceasefire, one of the toughest issues vexing diplomats trying to end the conflict.

A UN draft discussion paper obtained by Reuters includes eight "framework principles" to be embraced by all countries and rebel groups that sign on to a ceasefire. The ceasefire plan also lists issues still to be negotiated, including defining "those terrorist organisations against whom combat is allowed." The paper's authenticity was confirmed by two diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity. The diplomats stressed that the document was a draft, originally prepared by the United Nations, and they said multiple versions of the draft have been passed back and forth among US, UN and other diplomats.

The ceasefire idea, endorsed by the UN Security Council on 18 December at the urging of major powers and regional players that include the United States, Russia, Iran and Turkey, would exclude militant groups such as Islamic State, also known as ISIS, and al Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front.

Diplomats say the result could be a messy, partial ceasefire in which government and acceptable rebel forces stop shooting at one another but still go after Islamic State militants and other groups branded as terrorist.

With Nusra Front fighters scattered across northern Syria rather than concentrat-



Youths carry children through a site damaged from what activists said was shelling by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in the town of Douma, eastern Ghouta in Damascus, Syria on 30 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed in any one place, attacks on them could harm civilians as well as groups who signed on to any ceasefire, diplomats and analysts said.

Identifying the groups still subject to attack is a diplomatic task delegated to Jordan's government.

In a tangible sign of the difficulty, the Jaysh al Islam militant group has agreed to take part in the peace talks, yet its leader was killed on Friday in an air strike that rebel sources say was carried out by Russian aircraft.

The US State Department said the killing had complicated efforts to achieve a political settlement, a point it said US Secretary of State John Kerry made to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in a phone call on Monday.

Staffan de Mistura, the third UN envoy tasked with ending a civil war that has killed at least 250,000 peo-

ple and driven millions from their homes, has taken the lead in laying out the possible dimensions of a ceasefire, diplomats said.

De Mistura has said he hopes to open talks between the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government and opposition groups in Geneva on 25 January. Those talks will focus on trying to get the two sides to agree on a political transition for Syria.

Separate talks are underway about the shape of a ceasefire and the draft document obtained by Reuters addresses this.

Quick agreement seems likely on some framework principles, such as a recognition of Syria's territorial integrity, but others will be vexing. Among these is one to require the withdrawal of "foreign fighters unlawfully present in Syria."

That language could allow Assad to argue that

fighters from Iran, Russia, Iraqi Shi'ite militias and others that support him are in Syria at his invitation and therefore lawfully present — a stance sure to be resisted by opposition and rebel groups.

The document lays out three possible ceasefire models that could vary from one region of Syria to another:

- A ceasefire that excludes "undesired groups," presumably those deemed to be "terrorist."

- A ceasefire open to all who embrace the framework principles.

- A limited ceasefire that would reduce violence by barring the use of certain weapons.

Diplomats and analysts stressed the challenge of getting the Assad government and the opposition and rebel groups into talks, let alone to lay down their arms.—Reuters

Leaders urge full implementation of Minsk peace deal in 2016



Members of the self-proclaimed Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) ride tanks as they withdraw them further from the frontline outside Luhansk, Ukraine, in October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — The leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine agreed in a phone call on Wednesday that the Minsk peace deal for Ukraine must be fully implemented next year and said their foreign ministers would meet in one month to assess progress, the German government said in a statement.

The statement from deputy government spokeswoman Christiane

Wirtz also said that during the phone call the four leaders had stressed the importance of respecting the ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and pulling heavy weapons from the region. "The coming days should be used to consolidate the ceasefire," the statement said. Foreign ministers would meet in late January or early February to assess progress in implementing Minsk.—Reuters

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Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

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Dated 1st January 2016

kmma@kcyangon.com

Apple to pay Italy 318 million euros, sign tax deal

MILAN — Apple Inc will pay Italy's tax office 318 million euros (\$348 million) to settle a dispute over allegations it failed to pay taxes for six years, a source with direct knowledge of the matter said on Wednesday.

The maker of iPhones and iPads will also sign an accord next year on how to manage its tax liabilities from 2015 onward, the source said.

The deal comes as the European Union and national governments take a tougher stand against profit-shielding arrangements used by multinational companies.

Italian prosecutors have been investigating allegations that Apple failed to pay corporate taxes to the tune of 879 million euros in 2008-2013 by reducing its taxable income when it booked profits generated in Italy through its Irish subsidiary, sources told Reuters earlier this year.

"Apple will pay the tax agen-

cy 318 million euros and will sign a new tax accord for fiscal years 2015 onwards early next year," the source said.

The tax office earlier confirmed a report in *La Repubblica* newspaper that it had reached a deal with Apple, but declined to say how much the US company had agreed to pay.

The source said that while the judicial probe, which also involves three Apple managers, remained open for now, the settlement with the tax agency would likely have a positive impact on the investigation.

Apple could not immediately be reached for comment. Previously the company told Reuters that it is one of the largest taxpayers in the world and paid every euro of tax it owed wherever it did business.

The global financial crisis spurred cash-strapped governments to crack down on tax avoid-

ance and prompted complaints that companies cutting their tax bills to the bare minimum were getting an advantage in breach of EU rules.

The agreement with Italy comes as an EU tax ruling on Apple's dealings with Ireland is looming. The EU last year accused Ireland of swerving international tax rules by letting Apple shelter profits worth tens of billions of dollars from revenue collectors in return for maintaining jobs.

The ruling could have a "material" impact on Apple if it was determined that Dublin's tax policies represented unfair state aid, forcing the US company to pay past taxes for up to 10 years, it has said. Apple is one of several companies, including Google and Amazon, to become the target of tax inquiries in Europe and beyond.

The European Commission



A figure of Apple founder Steve Jobs is seen in a craft shop in Naples, Italy, in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

has already ordered Dutch authorities to recover up to 30 million euros from US coffee chain Starbucks and Luxembourg to do the same with Fiat Chrysler for their tax deals.

Apple is also facing criticism on its home turf in the United States because of the so-called inversion deals, whereby a company redomiciles its tax base to another country. — Reuters

Facebook fights for free Internet in India, global test-case



An attendee wearing a turban takes a picture before Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives for a town hall at Facebook's headquarters in Menlo Park, California on 27 September. PHOTO: REUTERS

MUMBAI — India has become a battleground over the right to unrestricted Internet access, with local tech start-ups joining the front line against Facebook Inc founder Mark Zuckerberg and his plan to roll out free Internet to the country's masses.

The Indian government has ordered Facebook's Free Basics plan on hold while it decides what to do.

The programme, launched in more than 35 developing countries around the world, offers pared-down web services on mobile phones, along with access to the company's own social network and messaging services, without charge.

But critics say the programme, launched 10 months

ago in India in collaboration with mobile operator Reliance Communications, violates principles of net neutrality, the concept that all websites on the internet are treated equally. It would put small content providers and start-ups that don't participate in it at a disadvantage, they say.

"India is a test case for a company like Facebook and what happens here will affect the roll out of this service in other smaller countries where perhaps there is not so much awareness at present," said Mishi Choudhary, a New York-based lawyer who works on technology and Internet advocacy issues.

Also at stake is Facebook's ambition to expand in its largest market outside the United States.

Only 252 million out of India's 1.3 billion people have Internet access, making it a growth market for firms including Google and Facebook.

In a letter seen by Reuters, the heads of nine start-up including Paytm, backed by China's Alibaba Group, and dining app Zomato, have written to the watchdog Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) urging it to ensure Internet access was allowed without differential pricing.

The executives said in the letter, dated Tuesday, that differential pricing for Internet access would lead to a "few players like Facebook with its Free Basics platform acting as gate-keepers". — Reuters

Sports Direct to pay workers above minimum wage in New Year

LONDON — Sports Direct (SPD.L), Britain's biggest sportswear retailer, said its employees would be paid above the national minimum wage from the start of the new year, after a review of its conditions for thousands of its workers.

The company, controlled by high profile businessman Mike Ashley, said on Thursday the cost of the pay rises is likely to be around 10 million pounds, on an annual basis.

Sports Direct had come under fire from media, investors and politicians for paying some of its workers less than the legal minimum, an allegation denied by the company. — Reuters

China's Huawei expects 2015 sales revenue to jump 35 per cent to \$60bn

HONG KONG — Huawei Technologies Co Ltd [HWT.UL], one of the world's largest telecom equipment makers, said yesterday it expects to post a 35 per cent jump in sales revenue for 2015, thanks to a strong performance across its business platforms.

The Shenzhen-based company, which competes with Sweden's Ericsson for the top spot in the global market for communications towers and other infrastructure, expects revenues to reach about 390 billion yuan (\$60 billion) for the year, acting Chief Executive Guo Ping said.

The company posted an operating margin of 18 per cent in the first six months of 2015, compared with 18.3 per cent in the previous half-year.

Huawei earlier this year set a target of 20 per cent growth in global revenue for 2015. — Reuters

China begins major environmental assessment on Antarctic Peninsula

ABOARD XUELONG — China's 32nd Antarctic expedition team started its most expansive marine environmental assessment in waters around the Antarctic Peninsula on Tuesday.

It has been planned that the assessment will cover 59 sites in about ten days.

The team will collect hydrographic, meteorological and other information to help understand the marine environment, climate features and their changing patterns, according to Jiao Yutian, head of the expedition team.

China launched its 32nd Antarctic expedition with the research vessel and icebreaker Xuelong (Snow Dragon) on 7 November. A team of 277 members between the ages of 22 and 61 from more than 80 domestic institutions will make the 159-day trip of 30,000 nautical miles. — Xinhua

Storm Frank batters northern Britain

LONDON — Torrential rain and gale force winds battered northern Britain on Wednesday, cutting power to thousands of homes and forcing some to evacuate flooded streets in the third major storm in a month.

The Environment Agency said Britain had faced an extraordinary period of severe weather and flooding in December, with consultants PwC warning that the latest deluge from Storm Frank could take total losses above 3 billion pounds. Further heavy rain was predicted to fall throughout Wednesday as the latest storm swept across northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, sparking warnings of more significant flooding.

A Chinook helicopter was being used to deposit sandbags. In the North Yorkshire town of Tadcaster late on Tuesday, part of an 18th century stone bridge crumbled into the racing river.

"The weather remains hugely challenging, with more rain threatening to cause further flooding in Cumbria and Yorkshire today and into New Year's Eve," said Craig Woolhouse at the Environment Agency.

Around 6,700 proper-

ties were flooded in northern England in the last week as river levels reached all time highs, while three severe flood warnings remain in place, meaning there is a danger to life.

In Northern Ireland and the Republic, roads flooded, flights were delayed and thousands went without power while in Scotland, local media reports said people were being evacuated from their homes in the north east town of Ballater by dingy.

PwC on Wednesday raised its estimate of insured losses from two earlier storms — Desmond and Eva — to between 900 million pounds and 1.2 billion pounds from an earlier range of 700 million to 1 billion pounds. "The storms this time have generated a far greater proportion of non-insured losses compared to the total economic damage," said Mohammad Khan, general insurance leader at PwC, in a statement.

"Many of the smaller and family-run businesses that have been impacted by Eva and Desmond will not have commercial insurance in place due to the impact of the recession and lower business volumes in recent years."—Reuters

Venezuela top court blocks four lawmakers-elect from taking office

CARACAS — Venezuela's Supreme Court on Wednesday blocked four newly elected lawmakers from taking office after a legal challenge by the ruling Socialist Party, which was roundly defeated by the opposition coalition in the 6 December congressional election.

The court's Electoral Chamber approved injunctions against the election victories of three lawmakers linked to the opposition and one from the Socialist Party, while it hears the legal challenge against them. All were elected in the rural state of Amazonas.

The court also agreed to hear legal challenges to the election of another six opposition deputies, but dismissed requests for similar injunctions in those cases, according to information posted on the court's website. It did not describe the arguments underlying the legal challenges. A court official contacted by Reuters said no one was available to comment.

As a result, four law-



A man walks in front of a building of the Venezuela Supreme Court in Caracas on 23 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

makers would be blocked from taking office when the new Congress opens on 5 January, while the other five would be allowed to do so while the court hears the legal challenge against them.

The opposition's Democratic Unity coalition won 112 seats out of 167 for a 67 per cent majority, driven by

discontent over the country's prolonged economic crisis and dissatisfaction with the government of President Nicolas Maduro.

A two-thirds majority gives the opposition expanded powers including the capacity to fire Maduro's cabinet ministers.

It was not immediately

evident what effect Wednesday's court decision would have on the opposition's majority. The opposition is accusing the government of seeking to chip away at its majority through legal challenges to the vote results and last-minute designations of Supreme Court justices.—Reuters

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on the 4th JANUARY 2016 (Independence Day) and 10th JANUARY 2016 (Kayin New Year day), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Yara International ASA, a company incorporated in Norway and having its registered office at Bygdøy alle' 2, 0202 Oslo, Norway is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademarks:

Viking

Reg. No. 4/12181/2012
(23.10. 2012)

မိုက်ကင်း

Reg. No. 4/12205/2012
(23.10.2012)

YaraMila Complex

Reg. No. 4/12201/2012
(23.10. 2012)

ယာရာမီလာ ကွန်ပလက်စ်

Reg. No. 4/12179/2012
(23.10. 2012)

Nitrabor

Reg. No. 4/12178/2012
(23.10. 2012)

နိုက်ထရဘော့

Reg. No. 4/12186/2012
(23.10.2012)

In respect of "Chemical use in industry, agriculture, horticulture and forestry; fertilizers." in **Class 1**.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the Marks shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, H.G.P
For **Yara International ASA**,

C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 1st January 2016

kmma@kcyangon.com

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Transport Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management (AIRBM) Project (Credit No.55590mm)(C1.4-8)

1. Project Management Unit invites expression of interest from qualified candidates for the said assignment (1) National project staff (2) National Environment and Social officer.
2. Further information and a copy of the detailed Terms and References (TORs) can be looked up in www.dwir.gov.mm (Search for international Cooperation world bank), www.mimu.info, www.moezala.gov.mm and UNDB online website.
3. The deadline for Submission of REOI is (14.1.2016) if you need any further information please email to, component1hic@gmail.com and winhlaing34@gmail.com.

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Yara International ASA, a company incorporated in Norway and having its registered office at Bygdøy alle' 2, 0202 Oslo, Norway is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademarks:

Viking Ship

Reg. No. 4/12192/2012
(23.10.2012)

မိုက်ကင်းရှစ်ပဲ

Reg. No. 4/12198/2012
(22.10.2012)

In respect of "Chemical used in industry, agriculture, horticulture and forestry; fertilizers" in **Class 1**;

"Ammonium nitrate for the production of emulsion explosives, including Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil explosives (ANFO), all for civil purposes" in **Class 13**; and

"Rental of farming equipment; professional consultancy and advisory services in the field of agriculture, horticulture and forestry" in **Class 44**.

Fraudulent or unauthorized use or actual or colourable imitation of the Marks shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, H.G.P
For **Yara International ASA**,

C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 1st January 2016

kmma@kcyangon.com

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Yara International ASA, a company incorporated in Norway and having its registered office at Bygdøy alle' 2, 0202 Oslo, Norway is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademarks:

Knowledge Grows အသိပညာဖြင့်ကြီးထွားစေရန်

Reg. No. 4/12177/2012
(24.10. 2012)

Reg. No. 4/12191/2012
(25.10.2012)

In respect of "Chemical products for use in industry, agriculture, horticulture and forestry; fertilizers; industrial chemicals, namely nitrogen based chemicals, including ammonia, ammonium bicarbonate, ammonium nitrate, dinitrogen tetroxide, nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, phosphoric acid, urea, calcium carbonate, calcium nitrate, potassium nitrate and sodium nitrate; formic acid and salts thereof; flocculants; industrial gases, speciality gases and welding gases, including acetylene, methyl acetylene, oxygen, nitrogen, argon, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, helium, hydrogen, neon, krypton, xenon, methane, deuterium and mixtures of said gases, all in gaseous, liquid or solid state; catalysts; cryogenic preparations" in **Class 01**;

"Paper, cardboard and goods made from these materials, not included in other classes; printed matter; bookbinding material; photographs; stationery; adhesives for stationery or household purposes; artists' materials; paint brushes; typewriters and office requisites (except furniture); instructional and teaching material (except apparatus); plastic materials for packaging (not included in other classes); playing cards; printers' type; printing blocks" in **Class 16**; and

"Rental of farming equipment; professional consultancy and advisory services in the field of agriculture, horticulture and forestry" in **Class 44**.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the Marks shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye, H.G.P
For **Yara International ASA**,

C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 1st January 2016

kmma@kcyangon.com

New Year Message

KZB BANK/ KBZ GROUP

wishes entire mass of
the people physical and
mental well being
on this auspicious occasion of
2016 New Year.



KBZ GROUP OF COMPANIES

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Uponor Infra Ltd., a company incorporated in Finland and having its registered office at Äyritie 20, FI-01511 Vantaa, Finland is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademark:

Weholite

Reg. No. 4/5233/2015 (28.4.2015)

In respect of "flexible pipes, not of metal" in **International Class 17**; and "building materials (non-metallic); non-metallic rigid pipes for building" in **International Class 19**.

Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the Mark shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Yee Mon Aung, H.G.P
For **Uponor Infra Ltd.**,
C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Botahtaung Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Dated 1st January 2016

yma@kcyangon.com

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (140W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (140W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ORINET OVERSEAS
CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV EVER APEX VOY NO (469N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER APEX VOY NO (469N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Jennifer Lawrence hates New Year's eve

LONDON — Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence has made no plans to celebrate New Year's eve because she hates the occasion.

The Hunger Games actress opted against attending a party to ring in 2016 because the pressure to have an amazing night leaves her feeling miserable.

"I really hate it. I've never had a good one - everyone's chasing a good time and it's always a

disappointment. I plan on doing nothing and then if something lands in my lap... But I always end up drunk and disappointed... 'Drunk and Disappointed' should be the title of my memoir!," she tells UK chat show host Graham Norton. During the interview, she also recalls her attempts at modelling early in her career, and she is glad pictures from one particular photoshoot are unlikely to surface.—PTI

Marriage is no longer important to me: Hilary Duff

LOS ANGELES — Actress-singer Hilary Duff is open to the idea of having a child out of wedlock, insisting marriage is "not important" to her after splitting from husband Mike Comrie.

The former "Lizzie McGuire" star filed for divorce from ice hockey player Mike in February, ending their four-and-a-half-year marriage.

The exes remain on good

terms for the sake of their three-year-old son, Luca, and Duff recently began dating again.

"I don't want to say I wouldn't get married again, but it's not important to me. I don't feel I would need to be married to have another child. If I felt strongly enough toward someone or if someone felt strongly about it, I might say OK. But it's not essential," she said.

Duff also opened up about her struggle to balance work with life as a single mother.—PTI



Victoria Beckham designing Eva Longoria's wedding dress

LONDON — Fashion designer Victoria Beckham will reportedly design Eva Longoria's wedding dress.

The 41-year-old designer has been asked to create the former "Desperate Housewives" actress's bridal gown when she and fiance Jose Antonio marry next summer, after they got engaged this month, reported Femalefirst.

"Posh is keen to expand the wedding dress side of the business, so it's a dream come true for her to land this gig. She knew she was doing it before Jose even proposed," a source said.

Longoria, 40, was previously married to American soap actor Tyler Christopher and then French basketball star Tony Parker.—PTI

British fashion designer, model and singer Victoria Beckham.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Taylor Swift releases the first look of new music video



PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — One day before the world premiere of her "Out of the Woods" music video, pop star Taylor Swift shared a first look on her social media sites.

"Are we out of the woods yet?" Swift, 26, wrote along with an image of her looking both

angry and frightened.

"Out of the Woods" will debut during the Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve show. The exact time release has yet to be announced.

Swift's latest song, co-written by Jack Antonoff, will

be the sixth official single off her popular 1989 album.

Ryan Seacrest and Jenny McCarthy will host the NYE celebrations live from Times Square while Fergie will host the Billboard Hollywood Party on the west coast.—PTI

Lamar wants to sweep Grammy Awards for hip-hop community

LOS ANGELES — Kendrick Lamar says he wants to win majorly the Grammy Awards for the hip-hop community.

With 11 nominations, the 28-year-old rapper comes one short of tying with Michael Jackson for scoring the most nominations in one night, reported People magazine.

"I'm still soaking that all

in. Michael will forever be the greatest. I'm glad it was at 11. I would never want to even think about putting myself on the same level as Michael, simply because I haven't put in the work that he did. It couldn't be a better number.

"Ultimately, for the hip-hop community, I would love for us to win them all. Because

we deserve that. Period. I want all of them. Because it's not only a statement for myself, but it's a statement for the culture. They're all important, because of the foundation the forefathers laid before me. Nas didn't get a chance to be in that position. (Tupac). So to be acknowledged and to actually win, it's for all of them.—PTI

Katie Price vows to lead healthy life in 2016

LONDON — Model Katie Price has revealed 2016 will be the year for her to lead a healthy life.

The former glamour is the proud mother of Harvey, 13, Junior, 10, and Princess, eight, Jett, two, and Bunny, 16 months, reported Femalefirst.

"I don't exercise, but in the

New Year I want to turn over a new leaf. Kieran (husband) is obviously a qualified nutritionist and as a couple we want to get more into healthy living. At the moment the kids eat healthily — they eat fresh food — but we don't.

"The gym (at home) will be finished at the beginning of next

year so we'll start working out. They say you are what you eat but in my case it's not true — I should be massive!" The couple are not planning to leave their house to celebrate the turning of the year, but will have lots of fun at home.

"We might have karaoke at the house, you know I like that.—PTI

Country superstar Blake Shelton to voice in 'The Angry Birds Movie'

BEIJING — Upcoming "The Angry Birds Movie" will hire Blake Shelton to voice the huge green pig who loves country music.

The "Hillbilly Bone" singer has confirmed the news, saying he is now up for this new challenge.

Shelton told Entertainment Weekly that he is voicing one of the pigs in the film, whose name is

Earl. He is also writing a song for "The Angry Birds Movie".

The country super star indicated, though he can write things about his life, he "don't have a whole lot of experience being shot out of a slingshot at pigs".

This 3D animated comedy, based on the popular video game, is set on an island where the birds

come into contact with mysterious green pigs.

The all-star voice cast includes a number of former Saturday Night Live alumni, including Bill Hader, Maya Rudolph and current SNL cast member Kate McKinnon. Other actors lending their voice to the film include Keegan-Michael Key and Josh Gadd.—Xinhua

ASLEEP IN JESUS

Dr. Tuwa A Krasu

Aged (79)

Dr. Tuwa Alec Krasu, beloved son of (Dr. Robin Krasu-Dr. Phyllis Krasu), beloved husband of Daw May Krasu (a) Daw Baby Chit, father of Thiha Daryl Krasu-Sakila, Debbie Krasu, grand father of Conrad James Krasu and Charlotte Phyllis Krasu, brother of Daw Stella Aung-U Than Tun Aung, Prof: Dr. Mary Krasu (Retd:), Jon Krasu-Betty McIntyre, passed away peacefully on the 25th December 2015 in Sydney, Australia at 7:00am local time. Friends & relatives, please accept this as the only invitation.

Bereaved family


Entertainment Channel

(1-1-2016, Friday)

6:00 am	9:05 am
• Alinka Wut Yee Music Troupe	• Musical Programme
6:20 am	9:15 am
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
6:40 am	9:30 am
• Musical Programme	• ASEAN China Cultural Show
7:00 am	10:00 am
• TV Drama Series	• Myanmar Video
8:35 am	Noon
• Teleplay	• Close Down

From 1.1.2016 (Friday) 06:00 hrs To 2.1.2016 (Saturday) 06:00 hrs
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.


Myanmar International

(1-1-2016 07:00 am~ 2-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Snow Flakes...Scenic Confluence...To Kachin State
07:48	Am	Myanmar Weaving
08:03	Am	News
08:24	Am	The Precious Lands Of Myanmar (Man dalay Region)
08:55	Am	Hip-Hop and Design
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Novitiation Ceremony in a Rural Township
09:51	Am	Sagaing: Guitars
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Hills Of Phowintaung And Shwebataung
10:44	Am	Myanmar Sculpture-Work of Art

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Myanmar Invites You
07:42	Pm	Tea
07:49	Pm	Mon Traditional Wedding
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	National Literary Icon & Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature: Sayar Zaw Gyi (Episode- 1) Childhood And Student Life
08:48	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Dr. Ko Ko Gyi

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

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

Life meets death in Cairo Necropolis



Children walk near an old car in a street in the Cairo Necropolis, Egypt, on 14 September 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAIRO — In a sprawling Cairo neighbourhood known as the City of the Dead, life and death are side by side.

Amid a housing crisis in Egypt, and with the population of the capital estimated at 20 million, thousands of people count themselves lucky to call Cairo Necropolis home.

For some in the neighbourhood of cemeteries, final resting place to hundreds of thousands of people over centuries, the graves themselves provide a livelihood: with people taking care of tombs, digging new graves, or selling flowers to visitors paying their respects on Fridays.

Others who live amid the tombstones are copper workers and carpet makers, their handiwork then sold in Khan al Khalili, Cairo's tourist market. Some families have lived here, away from the hustle and bustle of the capital, and in a country with a booming population of 90 million, for three or more generations. "Living with the dead is very easy and comfortable," says Nassra Muhamed Ali, 47. "It's the people who are living who harm you." Nassra, who lives there with her two brothers and 16-year-old daughter, says the relative peace and quiet of the area has its downsides. Some from outside the neighbour-

hood use the graves to deal drugs, with theft also an issue, she says. Her parents moved there after they married and worked tending the graveyards. Some moved to the neighbourhood after they were forced out from central Cairo in the 1950s.

It is the oldest burial site in the city, dating back as long as 1,000 years, near the Al-Azhar Mosque. Those buried there include famous actors, among them Farid al-Atrash and his sister Asmahan, who appeared in Egyptian movies until the 1960s.

A caretaker typically gets 150 Egyptian pounds (\$19) for each new grave dug for poor families, and

between 400 and 500 Egyptian pounds from richer customers, residents say. Of that, the gravedigger then receives between 50 to 70 Egyptian pounds. The cemeteries also bring in money for street vendors including a barber, available to shave the residents before Friday prayers, and a man selling fresh vegetables from his horse and cart. Another man on a motorbike sells milk.

Hisham, who makes carpets, came to the area 45 years ago with his mother. He has stayed in the cemetery ever since and worked to provide his four sons with an education. Ihab, one of them, is now an IT graduate.—Reuters


News Channel in Brief

(1-1-2016, Friday)

6:00 am	2:15 pm
• Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	• Myanmar Traditional Boxing
7:35 am	3:35 pm
• People's Talks	• Documentary
8:35 am	4:35 pm
• Current Affairs	• Weekly Sports Info
9:35 am	5:35 pm
• Weekly Entertainment	• Hyper Sports
10:35 am	7:15 pm
• MRTV's Youth Programme	• TV Drama Series
11:35 am	8:00 pm
• Science and Technology Programme	• News/ International News/ Weather Report
12:50 pm	8:35 pm
• Teleplay	• Documentary
1:10 pm	8:55 pm
• Talk On Old Film (Part-3)	• Documentary (ASEAN Economic Community (AEC))
1:50 pm	9:00 pm
• Documentary	• News
	• TV Drama Series
	• Amazing World
	• Channel Zero (Part-8)

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Changsha to offer 72-hour visa-free entry

CHANGSHA — Changsha, capital city of central China's Hunan Province, will offer 72-hour visa-free entry for international transit passengers starting 1 January, 2016.

The policy covers travelers from 51 countries, including 37 in Europe, six in the Americas, six in Asia and two in Oceania, Xiong Fangping, deputy secretary-general of the provincial government, said on Wednesday.

Travellers can enjoy a 72-hour stay in Hunan upon entry via the Changsha Huanghua International Airport, as long as they have third-country visas and onward tickets

to leave for a third country or region within 72 hours, Xiong said. Hunan plans to launch more international flights based on the 51-country list, Xiong said, adding that the move is expected to boost tourism.

One of the most popular tourist destinations in Hunan is Zhangjiajie, known for its scenic mountains. A new glass bridge, the world's longest and highest across the 400-metre-deep Grand Canyon at Zhangjiajie National Forest Park, will be open to the public on 1 May, 2016. The Changsha airport operates 48 air routes to 20 countries and regions, including 21 regular ones.—Xinhua

Benteke lifts Liverpool as Sunderland slump continues

LONDON — Christian Benteke condemned struggling Sunderland to a 1-0 defeat and sent Liverpool level on points with sixth-placed Manchester United in the last Premier League game of the year on Wednesday.

The Belgium striker broke through 22 seconds after the restart to bag his sixth goal of the campaign, the quickest second-half goal in the Premier League this season.

Nathaniel Clyne's long pass was deflected on by Adam Lallana to the lurking Benteke, who tucked it away from inside the area with Sunderland's defence caught napping.

Liverpool, who beat high-flying Leicester City 1-0 on Saturday with another second-half goal from Benteke, have 30 points from 19 games but Juergen Klopp's side are behind Manchester United on goal difference.

Sunderland remained second from bottom on 12 points after five straight defeats, seven points adrift of safety.

"Three points, really hard work," was Klopp's immediate verdict. "It's not the best we can do, we know this, but we had to fight."

"Everyone wants to end the year positively, we can and Sunderland can't but we take those

points, go home, sleep two times and on to the next game," he told the BBC.

Sunderland manager Sam Allardyce cursed Sunderland's bad luck.

"Such a lucky, lucky goal for Liverpool," he told Sky Sports.

"If they'd come out with some of the brilliance they've got from Coutinho or Lallana and beaten a couple of players and wrapped it in the top corner, then you have to hold your hands up," he added.

Goalkeeper Vito Mannone had produced several great saves in the first half including a stunning dive in the 26th minute to deflect a goalbound Roberto Firmino shot against the upright.

The Black Cats, with only three wins this season, also showed fighting spirit with Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet forced to palm over a Jermain Defoe effort in the 16th.

They suffered a setback on the half hour, however, when England midfielder Jack Rodwell was injured and replaced by Duncan Watmore.

Liverpool also lost their limping captain Jordan Henderson midway through the second half.

Benteke could have made it 2-0 in stoppage time but, clear on goal, he shot straight at Mannone.—Reuters



Sunderland's Yann M'Vila and Liverpool's Emre Can during Barclays Premier League at Stadium of Light on 30 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

Suarez double as Barca set record in Betis win

BARCELONA — Luis Suarez struck twice and Lionel Messi scored on his 500th appearance for Barcelona who set a new Spanish record of goals in a calendar year with a 4-0 win over Real Betis that lifted them top of La Liga on Wednesday.

Late strikes from Angel Correa and Antoine Griezmann gave Atletico a 2-0 victory over Rayo Vallecano while Cristiano Ronaldo scored a penalty and missed another as Real Madrid beat Real Sociedad 3-1.

Barcelona and Atletico have 38 points with the Catalan side having played a game fewer, two more than third-placed Real.

Messi slid home his 425th goal for Barca after 34 minutes to add to their lead which came from a Heiko Westermann own-goal following a controversial penalty.

The Argentine was harshly judged to have been fouled by keeper Antonio Adan and although Neymar slipped and hit the crossbar with his spot-kick, Westermann put the rebound into the back of his own net.

Suarez pounced twice in the second half to take Barca's goal tally to 180 this year, two more than the previous Spanish record set by Real Madrid in 2014.

"It has been a fantastic year and we wanted to finish it the same way," Messi told reporters.

"It will be difficult to improve on what we have done but we will try."

Atletico substitute Correa fired home from a Thomas Partey pass after 88 minutes and Griezmann sealed the victory over Rayo.

"It was a tough battle and we managed to break through at the end," Correa told reporters.

"He (coach Diego Simeone) just told me to go on and help the team to win and luckily we did."

Ronaldo blazed a spot-kick over the bar after 24 minutes but slotted home another three minutes before the break to put Real ahead. Sociedad substitute Bruma equalised for the visitors after 49 minutes before Ronaldo struck a volley through a crowded penalty area into the net midway through the second half.

Lucas Vazquez sealed the win with a goal after 87 minutes that will ease the pressure on coach Rafa Benitez.

Barca struggled to break down a well-organised Betis until

the penalty.

When the game opened up, however, Messi quickly added another from close range following an exchange of passes with Neymar.

Suarez slotted home a Sergio Busquets pass after the restart and with Betis stretched the chances continued to fall for the Catalan side.

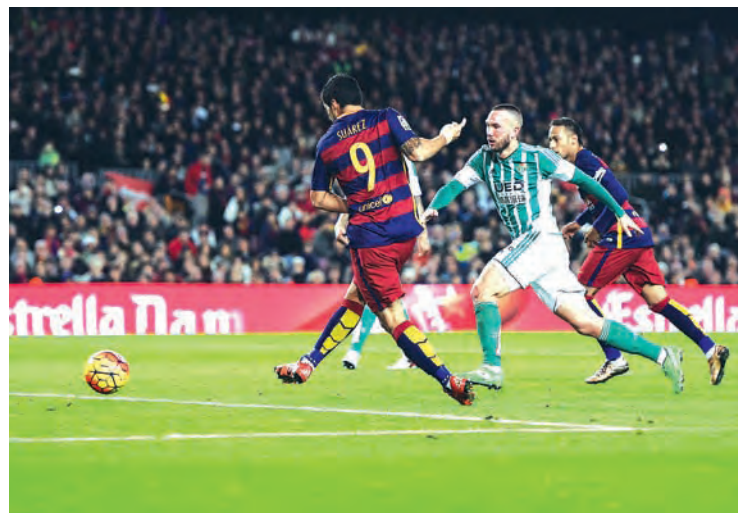
Neymar and Dani Alves both struck the woodwork with shots and Messi's free kick come back off the woodwork before Suarez fired home his second from inside the area.

Atletico's Yannick Carrasco posed the main attacking threat and went close with a couple of chances but generally there was little invention.

It was heading towards a stalemate when Correa showed his predatory instincts inside the area and struck the ball into the roof of the net.

Rayo were stunned and Griezmann took advantage to finish clinically from a Martinez pass.

Real won a penalty after a slight push from fullback Yuri on Karim Benzema but Ronaldo missed a penalty for the 15th time in his career with a poor effort that went over the crossbar.—Reuters



Barcelona's Luis Suarez scores his second goal during Spanish Liga BBVA at Camp Nou, Barcelona, Spain on 30 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

China plans to bid for AFC Asian Cup 2023

BEIJING — China is planning to bid to host the AFC Asian Cup 2023, said the official website of the Chinese Football Association (CFA) on Wednesday.

The tournament will be held in June or July 2023 with a total of 51 matches through 30 days. Twenty-four teams will be divided into six groups. The winners and runners-up of each group and the four best third-finishers will qualify for the knockout stage.

At least six cities and eight stadia are needed for the tournament. Moreover, the capacity of each stadium for the group stage, round of 16 and quarterfinals is at least 25,000, and that for the tournament's opener, semifinals and final is at least 40,000. The CFA said that it is consulting with all its members about the issue in a bid to select the qualified cities and stadia, and that the city willing to be a host must lodge its application before 20 March, 2016.—Xinhua