THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. II, No. 270, 7th Waxing of Pyatho 1377 ME | Saturday, 16 January, 2016

President attends Naga traditional New Year celebration PAGE 3

VP Sai Mauk Kham attends Kayah State Day celebration PAGE 3

ANALYSIS

Change but not frequently PAGE 8

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Government provides land for illegal Sittwe squatters

SOME residents residing in illegal squatter settlements in the capital of Rakhine State, Sittwe, are to be relocated to areas in the Mingan quarter.

It is known from the Minister of Rakhine State, U Mya Aung, that the population according to the official household register of those living in the squatter settlement was initially around 550 people.

"There is approximately 550 households on the register. Those households included on the register were issued with slips." he said.

The Rakhine State government released a statement on Tuesday explaining that those illegal squatters, whose names were not included on the household register, would not be relocated and had to remove themselves within a week from the current location at which they are residing.

However, a squatter in the northern neighbourhood of Anaute San Pya has said that the State government relocation initiatives lack transparency because households of those not residing in the squatter settlement became included on the list.

"Some of those households got on the register because they were close with those who were overseeing the collection of the households for it. There were also those who bought their way onto the register. Since my name didn't get on, I'm in a situation where I'm finding myself having to move out," Said a woman living in the squatters area.

It is known that those currently residing in the squatter neighbourhood originally paid money to the local administrator of the neighbourhood to live there.

There are a number of various squatter settlements in Sittwe and according to a statement released by the Rakhine government, the first squatters facing eviction are those residing on an area of 16.8 acres of burnt land in the Anaute Myaute San Pya quarter. They have seven days to move out or will face legal action under the town and village land act.

Residents came and built houses on areas burnt down during religious conflict which erupted in the town of Sittwe in 2012. Warnings have been issued by State government to those squatters for them to relocate to areas that have been provided for them, but difficulties remain for those squatters not included on the register.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

A ship carrying logs is seen in the Yangon River in September 2014. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Ministry of Forestry denies offer from Chinese timber enterprises

THE Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry stated that discussions with Chinese companies for the construction of a timber logging zone in the Myanmar – China boarder regions of Kachin and Shan States is just rumour.

"It's mere hearsay. There was nothing presented by any Chinese companies. They didn't come here for any kind of discussion." exclaimed the general manager of the Planning and Statistics Division of the Myanmar Timber Enterprise.

The refutation by the Ministry was in response to reports that spread meetings they allegedly held with Chinese representatives for discussion on the implementation of a timber cutting and extraction zone, as well as a timber planting area, in strategic locations close to the Myanmar – Chinese boarder.

On Wednesday a total of 141 civil society organisations (CSOs) responded to the news reports by sending a formal letter of objection to the Ministry of Forestry and a Chinese company by the name of the Blue Moon Fund, an investment provider in the logging trade and enterprises between the two countries.

"[The offer from the Chinese] cannot be permitted. The granting of permission for such activity would likely result in undesirable land confiscations. There could be reverberating repercussions for the Myanmar

See page 3 >>

INSIDE

Union Peace Conference continues for fourth day
PAGE 2

The dream of the children
PAGE 8

Price instability forces rubber farmers to cut trees
PAGE 4

Myanmar to see tourism boom in 2016 with cruise ship visitors
PAGE 9

Parliamentarians discuss national planning bill

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

THE 13th regular session of the first Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued on its 31st day session yesterday, with parliamentarians holding discussions on projects set to be implemented in the fiscal year 2016-2017 in accord with the National Planning Bill.

Daw Sandar Min. PHOTO: MNA

U Tin Htay Aung of Yezagyo constituency supported the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development in its policies and plans for the 2016-2017 FY.

In her discussion, Dr May Win Myint of Mayangone constituency stressed the need of funds for emergency aid as most has been used to respond to natural disasters that occurred in previous years.

Daw Sandar Min of Zabuthiri Constituency asked authorities concerned to reconsider the situation of the Pharmaceutical and Foodstuff Industries under the Ministry of Industry if its income is equal to expenditure.

U Than Lwin of Chauk constituency called for the formation of an Energy Commission that can lead the country to reaching its GDP targets in the energy sector.

In his discussion, U Win Than of Thabaung constituency called on officials concerned to continue seeking ways and means to supervise the projects and protect them against possible crises if the Parliament is informed of the country's financial situation every two years.

Next, the Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw announced that parliamentary approval will be sought on the National Planning Bill 2016-2017 as of 18 January.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Representatives discuss farmland and environmental issue at Union Peace Conference. PHOTO: MNA

Union Peace Conference continues for fourth day

THE Union Peace Conference continued into its fourth day in Nay Pyi Taw with representatives from seven stakeholder groups discussing five topics.

Questions raised on the third day were replied to and individual presentations were made.

Representatives from the respective stakeholder groups prepared papers for submission on the final day of the conference.

According to sources, three representatives each will be chosen for the submission of papers on each of the agenda items to the conference.

Stakeholder groups of the government and the Parliament are set to send two representatives each while the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organisations and political parties are set to choose three for the submission of papers.

One representative each is set to represent stakeholder groups of ethnic minorities and other invitees.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar Fisheries Federation seeks redrawing of Fishing Law

A SUBMISSION for the redrawing of the Breading, Salt and Freshwater Fishing Law will be made to parliament during the term of the new government, according to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation.

"We will make a submission to parliament for the drawing up of new legislation for the current salt water fishing law, freshwater fishing law and the fish breading law during the term of the new government." said the executive chairperson of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, U Han Htun.

After the decentralisation of decision making powers to State and Regional parliaments during the term in office of the current government, the longevity of granted freshwater fishing licenses has decreased from five years to one year, resulting in an increase in the number of fishermen and the gradual extinction of fish species.

The case for the requirement of a new law to prevent the extinction of fish species comes after the current practices of electrical fishing techniques in freshwater fishing enterprises, and the use of fishing nets with small holes in sea angling have been deemed to be having an adverse effects on fish numbers.

"In the past, fish were caught with nets that measured holes one inch in width. Now however, the width of holes in fishing nets is just one quarter of what they used to be. As a result, all kinds of small pregnant fish are being caught in the nets, depleting the numbers of fish in the ocean. There is a need to re-analyse the current law in order to mitigate such actions." explained the deputy chairperson of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, Dr. Toe Nandar Tin.

According to the Myanmar Fisheries Federation, the main objectives for redrawing the fishing law that will be included in the submission to parliament are the demarcation of shoreline and deep sea fishing areas; permission to be granted for the conduction of fish breading activities within irrigation channels; to take effective legal action against those who carry out electric fishing practices, as well as those from abroad profiteering from fishing in illegal waters.

It is known that the current Breading, Salt and Freshwater Fishing Law was enacted back in 1994.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives ROK Ambassador

THE speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) received Mr. Lee Baek-Soon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the call were U Hla Myint Oo, chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee, U San Shwe Aung, member of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission and officials from Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann welcomes Mr. Lee Baek-Soon, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar. PHOTO: MNA

President attends Naga traditional New Year celebration

President U Thein Sein delivers address at the Naga Traditional New Year Festival 2016. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein attended the Naga Traditional New Year Festival 2016 at the Shwepyitha sports ground in Lahe, Sagaing Region, yesterday.

In his address, the President delivered warm wishes for the Naga New Year celebration, stressing the need of keeping up the pace of the already-achieved peace and prosperity and to work towards a smooth transition.

Only with political stability will there be domestic tranquility as well as national economic development, thereby contributing towards ensuring better living standards for the people.

The President called for the collaboration of local people with the government's efforts to develop states and regions in various sectors that range from tourism to trade and investment, ensuring the availability of electricity and drinking water and creating job opportunities.

So long as mutual respect between Union brethren exists with a strong sense of belonging to the country, all the national races can co-exist forever in unity, said the President, urging the crowd to make great strides in transforming the nation into peaceful and developed one.

During the celebration, the President received the Naga traditional costume and a New Year gift presented by U Ru San Kyu, chairman of the leading body of the Naga Self-Administered Zone.

Accompanied by Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Union Ministers, regional chief ministers U Tha Aye and U Ye Myint, senior military officers from the office of Commander-in-Chief (Army) and officials, the President enjoyed performances of traditional dance troupes.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Thein Sein attends Bonfire Night of the Naga New Year Festival

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein attended a Bonfire Night held to mark the Naga traditional New Year celebrations for 2016 at the Shwepyitha sports ground in Lahe, Naga Self-Administered Zone in Sagaing Region yesterday.

Chief Minister U Tha Aye, U Ru San Kyu, chairman of the leading body of the zone, and U Naung Khun, vice-chairman of the organising committee, lit the bonfire.

Next, cultural troupes entertained those present with traditional dances and danced with them.

Afterwards, the President and the Chief Ministers U Tha Aye and U Ye Myint presented cash awards to Naga traditional dance troupes through officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

VP Sai Mauk Kham attends Kayah State Day celebration

VICE-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attended the celebration of the 64th Anniversary of Kayah State Day at Kyaukthar square in Loikaw, Kayah State yesterday.

Also present at the celebration were Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko and U Soe Thane, Kayah State Chief Minister U Khin Maung Oo, the Speaker of Kayah State Hluttaw, union deputy ministers, state ministers, parliamentarians, officials and locals.

First, the Vice-President read out the message sent by the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the 64th Anniversary of Kayah State Day, followed by U Taw Yal, Kayah State Minister for Planning and Economy, who also read out the messages sent by the Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw.

In his address on Kayah State Day, Chief Minister U Khin Maung Oo quoted President U Thein Sein as saying it is imperative to build national unity in the country as disintegration of national unity could lead to the disintegration of the country.

After the ceremony, the Vice-President observed booths on display to mark the Kayah State Day and presented awards to winners of sports events held in commemoration of the celebration.

The first celebration of Kayah State Day was held on 15 January, 1952. In the afternoon, the Vice-President and party visited Taungkwe Pagoda and made cash donation.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham presents prizes to winners of paddy pounding competition. PHOTO: MNA

Union Ministers enjoys sports events held to mark Naga New Year Festival

UNION Ministers U Hla Tun, U Win Tun and U Khin Maung Soe who accompanied the President on his Naga trip enjoyed sports events held to mark the Naga traditional New Year celebration at the Shwepyitha sports ground in Lahe, Naga Self-Administered Zone.

Together with Chief Ministers U Tha Aye and U Ye Myint, the Union ministers presented awards to the winners of the sports events that attracted more than 250 contestants.

Union ministers U Khin Maung Soe and U Win Tun and Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye visited the Kya-lway creek hydropower plant and Lahe Township Electrical Engineer's Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ministry of Forestry denies . . .

>> From page 1

public who are dependent on the country's natural timber resources." said a spokesperson of the Kachin Women's Network, Daw Khun Jar.

Criticism has been voiced by Myanmar CSOs over discussions held between the government of Myanmar and China at the start of 2015 over the legal trade of timber between the two nations.

According to a UK based Environmental Investigation Agency, the trade of illegal timber to China from Myanmar between 2000 – 2014 was valued at $2.7 billion, while the trade in extracted illegal timber during the same time period was worth even more at $4.6 billion.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Price instability forces rubber farmers to cut trees

Logs of rubber trees are piled in Thaton before transported to Yangon. PHOTO: KHUN (WIN PA)

DOWNWARD prices of rubber has caused farmers to resort to cutting down their trees and selling them in Thaton Township.

The yield from the trees is decreasing, causing another blow to farmers, said a farmer from the township.

"We are also experiencing shortages of workers for the rubber farming. We don't know which trees we should plant again on our farm," he added.

The fate of the rubber farmers have brought job opportunities to daily-waged workers in the area to cut the trees and transporting them to buyers.

A worker can earn from K8,000 to K10,000 per day from cutting and transporting logs of rubber trees.

Logs of rubber trees have been transported to Yangon market while branches are used as fire wood. For the collapse of the business, rubber farmers in Mon State put the blame on a lack of policy to control the rubber prices.—*Khun (Win Pa)*

Crime News

Almost 80 kilos of raw opium seized on highway

A LOCAL anti-drug check point has seized a cache of raw opium weighing 45 kilos from a number of bags belonging to seven passengers from 7J/PRO-BOX Van on Monday on the Mong Pan- Mong Tung road.

On Monday this week police discovered raw opium weighing 34.5 kilos in a car exiting from Mong Pan- Mong Tung. The vehicle was being driven by one Sai Hla Shwe with five passengers on board.

Local police further seized 11,400 yabba pills from a motorbike being driven by one Maung Hla on Sunday.

The police are filing charges against the suspects under the Anti- Narcotic Law.—*Mirror*

Suspects are seen with drugs seized from them. PHOTO: POLICE

Two men killed by car accident in Thaton

TWO men were killed on the spot in a car accident that occurred on the Yangon- Mawlamyine road in Thaton township, Mon State on Tuesday.

According to an investigation, a motorbike being driven by Khant Min Aung with passenger Ko Gani alias San Win Tun, crashed into a Probox being driven by one Nyi Nyi. The accident killed the two men on the motorbike. The vehicle driver was deemed guilty of careless driving.— *Thet Oo (Thaton)*

Chindwin River cruises draw foreign tourists

RISING numbers of foreign tourists are signing up for Chindwin River cruises, which offer views of Myanmar's natural landscape and encounters with ethnic minority communities and their cultures.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, foreign tourists enter Myanmar via international airlines, sea lines and border gates.

Tourists from neighbouring countries frequently visit Myanmar on motorbikes, bicycles and boats under arrangements by tour companies in cooperation with the ministry.

Chindwin River cruises become popular for holiday makers.
PHOTO: KYEMON

Royal Voyage Co. Ltd brought two groups, each comprising 16 British tourists, on trips along the river last December and this January, a spokesperson from the ministry said. They visited Monywa and Kalay townships and nearby villages along the river to observe traditional culture, customs and lifestyles of local people. Thanks to the government's sector-wide reforms, the country has seen a massive influx of tourists over the last several years.

Tourist arrivals up to the end of November last year reached more than 4.2 million, with the ministry estimating that the number will rise to 5 million by April 2016.

According to the ministry's master plan (2013-2020), tourist arrivals are estimated to hit 7.49 million in 2020.—*Kyemon*

Attempted child abduction in Madaya

POLICE have arrested a man for attempting to abduct a child near Lin Mwe Chaung village, Madaya township, Mandalay Region, on Thursday.

According to an investigation, four men stopped a car while heading from Thabeikkyin to Mandalay. The car was driven by one U Myo Naing with his wife.

Their seven-year-old girl, four-year-old boy and house maid were on board. One man entered the car and attempted to abduct the girl. However, the house maid was able to defend the child until U Myo Naing attacked the abductor. The other three suspects managed to escape from the scene.

Five people from a nearby village arrived with motorbikes to help hold the suspect. He was brought to the local police station. Local police interrogated Kyi Myint,32, and are still investigating the other three men.—*Soe Kyaw Thu Htway(Madaya)*

Kyi Myint.
PHOTO: SOE KYAW THU HTWAY (MADAYA)

Indonesia arrests three after attack, search on for more jihadis

JAKARTA — Indonesian police arrested three suspected militants in a pre-dawn raid and hunted down others across the country yesterday, a day after an attack by Islamic State suicide bombers and gunmen in the heart of the Southeast Asian nation's capital.

Just seven people were killed in Thursday's late-morning siege near a busy shopping district despite multiple blasts and a gunfight, and five of the dead were the attackers themselves.

Nevertheless, it was the first time the radical group has targeted the country with the world's largest Muslim population, and the brazenness of the attack suggested a new brand of militancy in a country more used to low-level strikes on police.

Police chiefs across the country were put on high alert, some embassies in Jakarta were closed for the day and security was stepped up on the resort island of Bali, a draw for tourists from Australia and other Asian countries.

Chief security minister Luhut Pandjaitan confirmed media reports that three people suspected of plotting an attack were arrested at a house in the city of Depok, just south of Jakarta.

However, Metro TV quoted Depok's police chief as saying that the men — which it described as a bomb-maker, a firearms expert and a preacher — were not linked to the Jakarta attack.

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo speaks with journalists after visiting a department store located near Thursday's gun and bomb attack in central Jakarta on 15 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Raids were also underway across other parts of the populous island of Java and on other islands to round up suspected militants.

"Now we are sweeping in and outside Java, because we have captured several members of their group, and have identified them," National Police spokesman Anton Charliyan said.

Returning to the area outside Jakarta's oldest department store, Sarinah, where Thursday's attack unfolded, the city's police chief said the rise of Islamic State was a cause for serious concern.

"We need to strengthen our response and preventive measures, including legislation to prevent them ... and we hope our counterparts in other countries can work together because it is not home-grown terrorism, it is part of the ISIS network," Tito Karnavian said, using another acronym for the Syria-based group.

Pandjaitan, the security minister, said his office was working with parliament to make changes to legislation that would allow preemptive arrests.

Experts agree that there is a growing threat from radicalised Muslims inspired by Islamic State, some of whom may have fought with the group in Syria. However, they said the low death toll on Thursday pointed to the involvement of poorly trained local militants whose weapons were crude.

An Indonesian and a man of dual Canadian-Algerian nationality were killed along with the attackers. Twenty-four people were seriously wounded, including an Austrian, a German and a Dutchman.

Islamic State said in its claim of responsibility that "a group of soldiers of the caliphate in Indonesia targeted a gathering from the crusader alliance that fights the Islamic State in Jakarta".

Police confirmed that Islamic State was responsible and named an Indonesian militant, Bahrun Naim, as the mastermind.

They believe Naim leads a militant network known as Katibah Nusantara and is pulling strings from Raqqa, Islamic State's de facto capital in Syria.

"His vision is to unite all ISIS supporting elements in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines," Jakarta police chief Karnavian said.

Islamist militants from those three countries have a record of working together and several Malaysians are known to have carried out suicide attacks in the Middle East.

Indonesia has seen attacks by Islamist militants before, but a coordinated assault by a team of suicide bombers and gunmen is unprecedented and has echoes of the sieges seen in Mumbai seven years ago and in Paris last November.

In a recent blog post, entitled "Lessons from the Paris Attacks", Naim had urged his Indonesian audience to study the planning, targeting, timing, coordination, security and courage of the jihadis in the French capital.

Australian Attorney-General George Brandis, who was in Jakarta recently to bolster security coordination, told the Australian newspaper he had "no doubt" Islamic State was seeking to establish a "distant caliphate" in Indonesia.—*Reuters*

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

Ousted Thai PM Yingluck in court for corruption trial

BANGKOK — Former Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra appeared in court yesterday to face corruption charges that her supporters say are a ploy by the ruling junta to curtail the influence of her and her family.

Yingluck, whose government was overthrown in a 2014 coup, is the sister of ousted populist Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who was himself deposed in 2006 and, though now in self-exile, remains at the heart of a decade of divisive politics.

The charges Yingluck faces in the Supreme Court stem from her management of a rice subsidy scheme, a flagship policy that helped sweep her to office in a 2011 landslide but which critics say haemorrhaged billions of dollars.

She was banned from politics for five years in January 2015 after a military-appointed legislature found her guilty of mismanaging the scheme.

Yingluck, who denies wrongdoing, faces up to a decade in jail if found guilty.

"I have prepared myself," Yingluck told reporters outside the court. "I am confident that today we will do our utmost."

Prosecutors in the case are expected to present four witnesses on Friday. The trial is expected to last until late this year with final defence testimony slated for November. The military government says the rice scheme was riddled with graft and incurred billions of dollars in losses and distorted global prices that saw Thailand lose its crown as the number one exporter of the grain to India in 2014.

Thailand's decade of political conflict has broadly pitted the Bangkok-based royalist elite, which includes parts of the military and judiciary, against former telecommunications tycoon Thaksin and Yingluck and their big base of support centred in the rural north and northeast.

Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. PHOTO: REUTERS

Yingluck was greeted by more than 100 supporters as she entered the court.

"The prime minister of the people. You must fight," some supports shouted. Others shouted "We love Yingluck!"

Under the scheme, authorities bought rice at above-market prices but encountered trouble selling it, leaving millions of tonnes in stocks which the government is still trying to shift.

Some of the surplus is now rotten because of poor storage. The government last year said it would sell some 6 million tonnes to the industrial sector.

Yingluck has defended the scheme. In a letter sent to junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha in November she said that the attorney-general was deliberately rushing the case against her for political reasons. Critics of the scheme said it was a bid to lock in the Shinawatras' rural support, with urban taxpayers bearing the cost.—*Reuters*

China to back sanctions against North Korea for nuclear test

SEOUL — A senior Chinese military official said yesterday that China will join efforts to adopt a UN resolution imposing tougher sanctions on North Korea for its globally condemned nuclear test, according to a South Korean Defence Ministry official.

Rear Adm. Guan Youfei, director of the foreign affairs office of the Chinese Defence Ministry, conveyed the position to Yoon Soon Ku, director general on international policy at South Korea's Defence Ministry, the official said.

Guan said North Korea's latest nuclear test is a violation of UN resolutions and also an international agreement that prohibits the North from developing nuclear weapons.

At Friday's talks, the Chinese official also reiterated China's stance of being firmly opposed to North Korea's nuclear weapons development and nuclear tests.

Guan added that China's position is already known to the world and that Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi summoned the North Korean ambassador to China to deliver the position.

Friday's talks were the 15th of regular defence talks between the two countries' working-level officials, which have been held almost every year since 1995.

North Korea announced on 6 January that it had successfully carried out a hydrogen bomb test.—*Kyodo News*

14 people died, 27 injured in ski tour bus accident

NAGANO — Fourteen people died and 27 were injured when a packed ski tour bus crashed yesterday morning in central Japan in the worst bus accident in the country in decades.

The tour bus carrying 41 people bound for a ski resort veered off a road and rolled over in the town of Karuizawa in the central Japanese prefecture of Nagano around 2am.

Nine men and five women died, and most of the injured were teenagers and people in their early 20s, according to local police and firefighters.

The two drivers on the bus — 65-year-old Hiroshi Tsuchiya, who was driving at the time, and 57-year-old Keizo Katsuhara — were among the dead, according to the police and the bus operator, ESP. Keyth Tour, the travel agency that arranged the tour, said the passengers were aged 18 to 38.

Tokyo Metropolitan University said five of its students were on board and four of them have been confirmed injured, although their injuries were not life-threatening. It is still checking on the condition of the fifth student.

A 19-year-old female university student who went on the tour with a friend to snowboard told Kyodo News she was asleep when she felt the bus sway and heard passengers scream before she was thrown out of the vehicle. She sustained minor injuries to her neck and shoulders.

"I still cannot get hold of my friend who was sitting beside me," she said.

Passengers with relatively light injuries were seen shaking from shock in the winter temperatures as they waited for rescue alongside those who were seriously injured and bleeding, according to a local rescuer.

The injured were transported to hospitals from the accident site on National Route 18, some 2 kilometres south of Karuizawa Station.

The bus was en route to a ski resort in northern Nagano Prefecture after leaving Tokyo on Thursday night. The road was not frozen at the time of the accident, and no clear brake marks have been found, the police said.

The transport ministry set up an accident headquarters and conducted a special audit of the bus operator while requesting an accident investigation board to look into the case.

The Tokyo Labour Bureau separately searched the offices of ESP in Tokyo's suburban city of Hamura and of Keyth Tour in central Tokyo for possible labour law violations.

Police officers investigate the spot where a tour bus with 41 people bound for a ski resort veered off a road in Karuizawa town in the central Japan prefecture of Nagano on 15 January. The accident left 14 people dead and 27 injured. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

On Wednesday, ESP was slapped with an administrative disposition by transport authorities to suspend operation of one of the seven vehicles it owns for 20 days after failing to have its drivers undergo health checkups among other problematic practices, according to transport ministry sources. ESP director Takato Yamamoto apologised to the families of the passengers and said he will accept whatever dispositions are given over the case.

While the bus crashed on a road not included in its initially planned route, Yamamoto said drivers could decide not to take highways and take a different route to adjust arrival time.

Keyth Tour President Mankichi Fukuda, 38, apologised for the accident and said his company is putting priority on contacting the families of the passengers.

"We have been following the law (in managing tour safety)," he said, adding he believes there was no safety flaw.

The bus, which was carrying a full load of passengers, strayed onto the wrong side of the road and rolled over the guard rail. The vehicle sustained heavy damage and many passengers were trapped underneath, police said.

One of the female passengers made an emergency call just after the accident, according to the police.

The accident occurred at a time when the transport ministry had tightened safety measures for operators of highway buses following a series of fatal accidents linked to overwork by bus drivers.

The measures included limiting a driver's nighttime travelling distance to 400 km, thus requiring two drivers in longer distance travel as in the latest case.

The accident is the most deadly one on the road to occur since the police started keeping detailed records in 1990, although police officials said there were several other bus accidents with a large death toll in earlier years, including one in which a ski tour bus plunged into a river in Nagano Prefecture in January 1985, killing 25 people.—*Kyodo News*

Cambodia's new election committee selects current secretary-general for new term

PHNOM PENH — The leaders of Cambodia's new National Election Committee (NEC) yesterday selected NEC's long-serving secretary-general Tep Nytha as the committee's secretary-general for a new term, NEC Chairman Sik Bunhok said.

"This morning, NEC's nine members decided to choose Tep Nytha as the secretary-general in charge of administration and finance in the new (five-year) term," he told reporters after a selection session.

He added that the NEC also selected four candidates as the NEC's deputy secretaries-general.

Tep Nytha, 61, who has held the post since 2002, defeated two other finalists — Heng Monychenda, director of NGO-Buddhism for Development, and Ya Navuth, executive director of NGO — Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility — for the position. The selection was made eight months after the new NEC was established under a political truce between the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP). The NEC's nine members included four each from the CPP and the CNRP, and one "neutral" person from civil society.—*Xinhua*

Sik Bunhok (C), Chairman of Cambodia's new National Election Committee (NEC), speaks to media in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 15 January 2016. The leaders of Cambodia's new NEC on Friday selected NEC's long-serving secretary-general Tep Nytha as the committee's secretary-general for a new term, Sik Bunhok said. PHOTO: XINHUA

Pakistan confirms postponement of talks with India

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan confirmed on Thursday the postponement of dialogue with India following the attack on an Indian airbase.

Pakistani officials had earlier stated that the "Comprehensive Dialogue" was scheduled to be held in Islamabad on 15 January.

Indian media quoted officials as saying that New Delhi wants some more actions on the leads it had shared with Pakistani authorities about the attack on the Pathankot airbase earlier this month. "Both countries are in contact to firm up date for the meeting of the two foreign secretaries," the Foreign Office spokesman, Qazi Khalilllah said.

The spokesman told his weekly briefing in Islamabad that joint efforts are required for elimination of terrorism from the region.

The comments came a day after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif constituted a committee to probe into the allegations of the alleged involvement of certain individuals in Pathankot incident in India, an official announcement has said. The team is comprised of military and civilian intelligence officials.

Unnamed Indian officials have been quoted as saying that the Pakistan-based "Jaish-e-Mohammad" group was suspected to be behind the attack.

A high level meeting presided over by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was informed on Wednesday that authorities have arrested some members of the group.

Indian media had reported that Indian officials had also shared some phone numbers which were used for contact with the attackers.

"Based on the initial investigations in Pakistan, and the information provided, several individuals belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammad, have been apprehended," the prime minister's office said. The offices of the organisation are also being traced and sealed. Further investigations are underway, a statement from the prime minister office said.—*Xinhua*

ASEAN condemns terrorist attack in Jakarta

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — ASEAN countries issued a statement yesterday, strongly condemning the terrorist attack in Indonesia's capital Jakarta on Thursday, which caused the loss of innocent lives, injuries, and damage to properties.

In the ASEAN foreign ministers' statement on the terrorist attack in Jakarta, ASEAN extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to the Indonesian government and people, especially to the families of the victims of this attack.

ASEAN member states commend the Indonesian security forces'swift and courageous actions in responding to the attack.

"ASEAN fully supports the government of Indonesia in bringing the perpetrators of these heinous acts to justice, and remains united and committed to working with the international community to further intensify its cooperation to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whom so ever it is committed", said the statement.—*Xinhua*

Angry Bavarian politician takes bus full of refugees to Merkel

BERLIN — An irate local politician from Germany's southern state of Bavaria took a bus carrying 31 refugees to Chancellor Angela Merkel's office in Berlin on Thursday as a protest against her open-door refugee policy.

The Syrians, escorted by police, arrived after a 550-kilometre trip outside Merkel's office, where a dozen German protesters, unconnected with them, were chanting "Merkel must go" in protest at her line on immigration.

Peter Dreier, head of the southeastern town of Landshut, acted on a threat he made to Merkel last year when he said his municipality could no longer cope with the number of arrivals.

"I think that we have to ensure the humane treatment of these refugees," Dreier said upon his arrival in the capital, travelling on the bus with the refugees.

"On this scale and within such a short time we simply can't guarantee that any more."

Authorities in Landshut had arranged for the refugees to be transferred into the hands of local authorities in Berlin. They did not get off the bus for an hour amid confusion over what accommodation had been arranged. Only asylum centres appeared to be available.

"I am a little disappointed since I've been in touch with the Chancellery and didn't expect the refugees to be sheltered at camps here in Berlin," Dreier said.

German newspaper *"Die Welt"* reported that Dreier eventually decided to pay for the refugees' immediate accommodation at a hotel out of his own pocket.

Government spokesman Steffen Seibert issued a statement in response to Dreier, saying that accommodating the hundreds of thousands of migrants who have entered Germany in recent months was the responsibility of federal states and municipalities.

"The government is aware that the current number of refugees is posing significant challenges throughout Germany and especially in Bavaria," Seibert said, adding that additional financial support was being provided to communities this year.

Dreier represents the Freie Waehler, a loose grouping of politicians who do not have a common policy, but campaign on individual issues.

Merkel is under increasing pressure to stem the flow of migrants coming to Germany. Some 1.1 million people arrived last year and several thousand continue to stream in every day and there has been a backlash by right-wing groups.

Mass sexual assaults on women in Cologne at New Year by gangs of young men described by police as being of Arab or North African in appearance, have deepened worries.

The frustration in Bavaria, the main entry point for most migrants, is especially strong with Merkel's conservative allies, the Christian Social Union (CSU), repeatedly calling on her to introduce a formal cap on migrant numbers. She has resisted such a cap, arguing it would be impossible to enforce.—*Reuters*

A bus (R) with refugees from the Bavarian town of Landshut is pictured after its arrival to the Chancellery building in Berlin, Germany, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

British, EU officials see reform deal in weeks

BRUSSELS — The British foreign minister and a senior EU official involved in negotiations to help keep Britain in the European Union both said on Thursday that a deal was taking shape that could be struck within weeks.

Prime Minister David Cameron has pressed for reforms to EU rules, to be agreed by fellow national leaders at a summit in five weeks time, that would let him campaign to stay in the bloc in a referendum which could then take place as early as June.

His foreign secretary, Philip Hammond, said on a visit to Turkey that London and Brussels were closing in on a deal. Britain seeks to curb welfare payments to immigrant workers from other EU states, unimpeded by EU treaties barring discrimination against EU workers on the basis of nationality.

"We are getting closer but (we're) not there yet," he said. Negotiators were working on proposals that could be circulated to leaders before they meet in Brussels for the next European Council summit on 18-19 February.

"If it doesn't happen in February we hope it will happen in the next Council," Hammond added, referring to a summit on 17-18 March.

The British-born EU civil servant who is coordinating the work of the executive European Commission on the issue told a European Parliament committee that political will on all sides had created a "very good prospect that agreement will be reached rather soon" with the goal being a deal in mid-February.

Jonathan Faull, who leads a Task Force set up by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker to draft options, said negotiators had looked closely at how far Britain might limit EU immigrants' entitlements without clashing with their fundamental rights.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

US, Russia agree 25 January Syria talks must go forward

WASHINGTON — The United States and Russia agreed that 25 January Syria peace talks involving the government and opposition groups must go forward without preconditions, the US State Department said.

Secretary of State John Kerry, in a telephone call with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov, expressed "deep concern" over attacks on civilians in Syria, State Department spokesman John Kirby said.—*Reuters*

Govt adopts national strategy for gender equality

BELGRADE — The Serbian government Thursday adopted a new national strategy for gender equality for the period 2016-2020 and action plan for its implementation, which should help economic empowerment of women and having more women involved in Serbia's political life.

Serbia's Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality Zorana Mihajlovic said that the new strategy and action plan provided for measures to take to ensure economic empowerment of women and increase their involvement in political life. It also provides for appointing women to senior republic and local government positions, Mihajlovic said. The government will adopt the new law on gender equality soon, and after that prepare bylaws concerning women employment and combating gender-based violence, said Mihajlovic.—*Tanjug*

China supports Syrian talks to be held as scheduled

BEIJING — China yesterday called on the parties concerned to ensure the Syrian political talks go ahead on 25 January, as scheduled.

"Parties concerned should continue to support the mediation efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura, and promote positive progress of the talks," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei told a routine press briefing. China will continue to play a constructive role in facilitating the peace talks, he added. The UN envoy said on Wednesday that he and his team will continue working hard to start the intra-Syrian peace talks in Geneva on 25 January. After meeting with representatives from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, the special envoy told reporters that the officials would press for immediate action in support of the efforts in the coming few days.—*Xinhua*

Major oil pipeline hit by blast south of Libya's Ras Lanuf, NOC says

TRIPOLI — An explosion hit a major oil pipeline south of the Libyan terminal of Ras Lanuf overnight between Wednesday and Thursday, a spokesman for Libya's National Oil Corp (NOC) said.

Mohamed al-Harari said it was not clear what had caused the explosion at the pipeline, which runs from the Tibisti and Bayda fields and has been closed for more than two years.

An oil official based in eastern Libya, Mohamed al-Manfi, said the blast was a result of sabotage and said oil workers were trying to isolate the pipeline and contain the damage.

Last week, Islamic State militants attacked Ras Lanuf and the nearby terminal of Es Sider. They killed at least 18 guards and set fire to seven oil storage tanks.—*Reuters*

Key IS leader, 10 militants killed in Afghanistan

KABUL — A key Islamic State (IS) local leader along with 10 more fighters of the extremist group have been killed during drone strike in eastern Afghanistan, a local TV reported yesterday.

Citing local officials, the Tolo TV channel reported that IS leader Hafiz Saeed was killed with 10 other fighters in the air strike which was carried out in Zhwara area of the mountainous Achin District in Nangarhar Province. However, it didn't mention the exact date of the air strike. It has mentioned that Saeed had served as a commander of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) before pledging allegiance to IS last year. Officials have yet to make comment on the report. Militants loyal to IS claimed responsibility for attack on Pakistani Consulate in Nangarhar's provincial capital Jalalabad on Wednesday, which left 10 dead, including three attackers, and injured nearly a dozen others. —*Xinhua*

Opini On

Change but not frequently

Khin Maung Aye

With the founding of the Revolutionary Council in 1962 led by General Ne Win the education system was changed frequently – changes made not only to curricula and syllabi but also for pedagogy or teaching methods to be suited to the changing educational policies. General Ne Win shut down the privately owned schools, made the study of the English language apply only from Grade Vi or Fifth Standard and changed all the textbooks of universities, colleges and institutes that were written in English into Myanmar Language in order to promote the native tongue.

Again in the days of his successors, namely U Saw Maung and U t han Shwe, there were frequent changes to the education system but they didn't realise their objectives. t hough they have both exerted enough effort to improve the education system enough to be able to produce a highly qualified workforce for the nation, their efforts came to no avail not because they formulated the wrong policy but because they made the wrong decisions as to who would implement the new policies and in what manner.

t his is the reason that an over 50-year period of efforts to effectuate educational reform has not met with success. A strong case will be provided here to manifest the lack of consideration of those who implemented reform.

t he case was the prescription of 'Wuthering h eights' and 'Great Expectations' as school textbooks for Grade 11 or 10th standard students, the former as compulsory English text whereas the latter, additional. Not noticing that the level of difficulty of the texts which were written in 18th century did not match the proficiency level of the Senior Assistant Teachers (SAt s), the then minister incorporated the two English textbooks into the high school curricula, thinking that learning the difficult textbooks could improve the command of English on the part of the students.

And what is more, it should be noted that it is the type of examination questions that enhance the quality of education regardless of the level of difficulty of the textbooks. t here is a Myanmar saying, "Even the Buddha-to-be can have difficulty responding to the questions raised by a cowherd". As long as the examination questions are encouraging rote learning, the students will tend to commit into their memory whatever is taught at school parrot-fashion. t his being so, what is needed to be changed is the question type to provoke thinking, which cannot be easily responded by rote-learning and which involves unseen and unknown questions.

Last but not the least, education policy should be formulated to meet the short-term and long-term objectives of the country, to prepare the students for job opportunities and to promote the quality of the teachers and/or trainers. t he Global New Light of Myanmar would like to urge authorities and all stakeholders to formulate a farsighted and foresighted education policy which will last a long time without the need to change it frequently.

Write for us

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

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

The dream of the children

Network International School puts students in president's shoes

Jacob

IN less than two months, Myanmar will have a new president. The National League for Democracy, the party with the most influence in selecting the new head of state, has been tight-lipped about whom it will nominate. The silence offers citizens the opportunity to ponder what qualities and ambitions the next president should present. One Yangon school has encouraged its students to do just that, in essay form.

Network International School, a British-curriculum school in Yangon's 7-Mile neighbourhood, held an essay competition in November for primary and secondary school students. The competition asked students to answer the question 'What would you do if you were the president of Myanmar?' in 500 words or less.

The winners' answers showed that at least some members of Myanmar's youngest generation have bold ideas for change in this country and the rhetorical skill to help them execute those ideas.

Albert Teh, a year-6 Network student who was selected as a winner, wrote: "It is a time to make changes for Myanmar. As Myanmar is a developing country, we need to promote all sectors, such as education, health and the standard of living. If I am president, I will pay respect to human rights and feed people who need food, shelter and money. Moreover, I will give them proper healthcare because our country ranks among the lowest in the world for providing quality healthcare."

Indeed, the Myanmar government allotted just 3.3 per cent of its budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year to healthcare.

The secondary school winner, year-11 student May Thet Naing, elaborated on the same ideas.

"If I were president of Myanmar, I would review the current public health system and implement an efficient and effective system to provide education, prevention, care and support programmes across the country. This would include township clinics, emergency departments, outpatient [services], general and specialised hotels, home visit programmes, vaccination programmes and post-care follow up programmes," she wrote in her winning essay.

Both winners also set their sights on the education sector, which received just over 6 per cent of the national budget for this fiscal year.

"Since the standard of education is low in Myanmar, I will invite many foreign educated people to train our citizens. Furthermore, I will open many schools and learning and training centres. Education is the future!" wrote Albert.

Future-president May That Naing agrees.

"To complement poverty alleviation, our people must be educated, qualified and trained in the vocation of their choice to increase employment and productivity, as we need a working nation to compete on the world

Contestants show off their certificates. PHOTO: JACOB

stage. If I were president of Myanmar, I would assign a special team to review Myanmar's current education system, including the teaching programmes in place, curricula and methods of delivery, to ensure our programmes are relevant, practical and delivered in a timely and affordable manner," she wrote.

However, the two potential presidents also differed in their prioritisation of Myanmar's needs. May Thet Naing wrote at length about reforming the judicial system, while Albert vowed to fix traffic problems.

"I believe the eradication of poverty can be achieved by implementing a sound judicial system….For Myanmar to march forward, critical issues such as bribery and corruption must be abolished immediately to establish trust between the government and its people. To eliminate these practices, I would deploy a strong legal and governance framework, including impartial judicial officials; law and policy review, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement units; independent tribunals…to address public grievances; law enforcement units to enforce and prosecute offenders; special units to perform random inspections and prosecute violators; and public education units to ensure residents of Myanmar are familiar with their rights and responsibilities," May Thet Naing wrote, channelling Aung San Suu Kyi, whom she said she looks up to.

See page 9 >>

Myanmar to see tourism boom in 2016 with cruise ship visitors

Myanmar becomes a population destination for cruise ship visitors. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY HOTELS AND TOURISM MINISTRY.

MYANMAR to see tourism boom in 2016 with cruise ship visitors

FOREIGN cruise ships are lining up for the tourist season in Myanmar which occurs of the start of every year, said the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Under the arrangement of Destination Asia (Myanmar Limited), the cruise liner MS Seven Sea Voyage which is carrying 699 visitors and 447 crew will be arriving in Myanmar on athree-day visit from 23rdto 25thJanuary.

The cruise liners MS Rotterdam, carrying 1399 tourists and 620 crew members, World Odyssey, carrying 799 visitors and 184 crew members, MS Seabourn Sojourn, carrying 449 visitors and 330 crew members and the MV Volendam, carrying 1199 visitors and 632 crew members are also set to visit Myanmar in January and February of this year.

Asia Trails Tour Limited has also arranged for the receiving of a number globetrotters, 360 in total who will be visiting Myanmar onboard the MV Aegean Odyssey.

According to statistics, Myanmar welcomed 25 luxury cruise ships carrying 26,000 visitors in total last year and 18 luxury cruise ships carrying 18,611 tourists in 2014.This year is expected to see more cruise ships with more visitors as six ships are set to dock in Myanmar this tourist season.

Cruising along the Chindwin and Ayeyawady rivers is expected to attract more tourists in this opening season, according to Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

With more than 3 million arrivals up to August last year, Myanmar has expected around 5 million foreign visitors in this 2015-2016 fiscal year, said Daw Daw Khin Than Win of the ministry.

The number of international visitors to the country has increased from more than 1 million in 2012 to about 3.8 million in 2014.

Australian tourists cruised up the Chindwin River from 13 September to 18 Setpember last year from Kalaywa to Homealin, enjoying customs of local people and natural scenes along the river.

Besides, tourists including Americans made the cruise tours along the same route by the R V Katha Pandaw, with the arrangement of Royal Co Ltd and Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.— *GNLM*

517,000 visited Shwedagon

A TOTAL of 517,488 tourists from over 40 countries visited Shwedagon Pagoda last year, according the pagoda's board of trustees.

The board said that US$2,400 and more than K 4 billion was collected in fees from foreign visitors in 2015.

December 2015 saw a total of 63,644 tourists from 35 countries, with 15,168 from Thailand.

Shwedagon Pagoda is one of the most famous pagodas in the world and the main attraction of Yangon.— *Ko Chit*

Israeli photographer to exhibit "Writing with Light"

RENOWNED Israeli Photographer Ziv Koren will exhibit his photos under the title "Writing with Light" at the Myanmar Deitta Gallery, Yangon (No.49,3rd Floor,44th Street, BotahtaungTsp.) between January 18-30.

The exhibition is to be held by the Embassy of Israel within the framework of cultural cooperation between the State of Israel and Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The exhibition is focused on the importance of light as the main raw material in the art of photography, revealing a less familiar aspect of the creator, photographer Ziv Koren. Koren's sensitivity to the light source, and the shadows that appear before his eyes, are manifested in this collection of 47 black and white photographs, taken over the last decade in Israel and around the world. The Exhibition documents the life of different countries which is said to serve as tool enabling us to contemplate and examine human society.

Ziv Koren has been a professional photojournalist for 20 years.— *GNLM*

The dream of the children

>> from page 8

"A trusted and transparent judicial system encourages entrepreneurs and investors to establish and expand their businesses in Myanmar, creating an open market system where everyone receives an equal opportunity and no one is above the law. This in turn, creates jobs, and eliminates unnecessary hidden costs, resulting in lower costs and increased affordability for consumers," she concluded.

Albert, on the other hand, is committed to fixing a problem Yangon residents encounter and curse on a daily basis.

"Nowadays, in Myanmar, we have a poor transportation system. Most of our time is spent in traffic jams. Every day, Myanmar people encounter traffic jams, and we cannot concentrate on our work and cannot use our time preciously and properly," he wrote.

No doubt, millions of Yangon residents would be interested to see how President Albert would solve this immutable inconvenience.

Over 30 students submitted entries to the competition, and two winners were selected—one primary level student and one secondary. They were judged on their originality, style, tone, purpose and technical accuracy by the school's principal Carl Dent, school founder and director Carol Kyaing and head-of-English Jonny Tamlyn, who also organised the competition.

"With the landmark election in Myanmar, I had the perfect opportunity to engage students with a topic that would capture their imaginations and stir discussion. Overall, it was a successful competition because it engaged young people in the political process and ignited healthy debate about ways Myanmar can move forward as a society," Mr Tamlyn said in an interview with The Global New Light of Myanmar.

"On a more practical level, it also got students writing outside the classroom, which as an English teacher is always something to be pleased about," he added.

The competition was held alongside another one in which students were asked to write essays describing 'a special place', which encouraged students to exercise their imaginations and descriptive writing skills. Year-5 student Dora (Win Theingyi Maw) and year-8 student Addison (Khaine Zin Zin Thaw) were selected as winners in that contest.

If Myanmar's future leaders have the same commitment to progress, communication skills and empathy as the students at Network International School, we will all be in good hands.

The winners and the judges.

Iran says it has removed core from Arak reactor in key nuclear deal step

A general view of the Arak heavy-water project, 190 km (120 miles) southwest of Tehran. PHOTO: REUTERS

ANKARA — Iran has removed the sensitive core of its Arak nuclear reactor and UN inspectors will visit the site on Thursday to verify the move crucial to the implementation of Tehran's atomic agreement with major powers, state television said on Thursday.

Removal of the core from the Arak reactor will largely eliminate its ability to yield nuclear bomb-grade plutonium, and was one of the toughest issues to resolve in the long nuclear negotiations with the six powers.

"The core vessel of the Arak reactor has been removed ... and IAEA inspectors will visit the site to verify it and report it to the IAEA ... We are ready for the implementation day of the deal," spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation Behrouz Kamalvandi said.

Kamalvandi said "Implementation Day," when Iran will start to get relief from international sanctions in exchange for curtailing its nuclear programme under the July 2015 agreement, would come "very soon."

In Washington, State Department spokesman John Kirby concurred, saying "I do think we're very close" to Implementation Day.

Kirby also confirmed that concrete had been poured into the core of the reactor. Secretary of State John Kerry said on Wednesday his Iranian counterpart had told him the core had been removed and would be filled with concrete and destroyed.

Under the deal, international sanctions against Iran will be lifted once the IAEA confirms Iran has met its nuclear commitments. Iranian officials expect the IAEA report on this to be issued on Friday. The Vienna-based UN watchdog has so far declined to comment on the report.

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and the European Union's Federica Mogherini will issue a statement on Saturday or Sunday on the "Implementation Day" of the nuclear deal and the lifting of sanctions, according to Iranian officials.

The US and EU sanctions have choked off nearly 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd) of Iranian oil exports since early 2012, reducing its oil exports by 60 per cent to around 1 million barrels a day.

Tehran has drastically reduced the number of centrifuges installed at the Fordow and Natanz enrichment sites within the last few months, and shipped tonnes of low-enriched uranium materials to Russia.

"The core's holes will be filled with concrete ... The core was initially supposed to be cut into parts but we did not accept it as we want to keep it as the symbol of Iran's nuclear industry," Kamalvandi told state TV.—*Reuters*

Netanyahu says Israel and EU need to reset ties

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the European Union on Thursday of holding his country to a double standard, and reserved special criticism for Sweden, saying its call to investigate Israel was outrageous, immoral and stupid.

"There is a natural tendency in the EU establishment to single out Israel and treat it in ways that other countries are not being dealt with, and especially other democracies," he told a gathering of foreign journalists.

Netanyahu said ties needed to be "reset" — an acknowledgment that things were bad — but he did not propose steps to improve them.

Israel has been at odds with the EU over its decision to require labelling of exports from Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In November, Israel suspended contact with EU bodies involved in peace efforts with Palestinians, though Netanyahu said bilateral ties with nearly all EU countries were strong.

Relations with Sweden, however, have deteriorated since it recognised Palestinian statehood last year, and Netanyahu lambasted a call by the Swedish foreign minister to investigate whether Israeli forces were guilty of extrajudicial killings of Palestinian attackers.

"It's outrageous, it's immoral and it's stupid," Netanyahu said. "People are defending themselves against assailants wielding knives who are about to stab them to death and they shoot the people — and that's extrajudicial killings?"

Rights groups have accused Israel of using excessive force to quell a surge in attacks, which has raised fears of wider confrontation, a decade after the last Palestinian uprising subsided.

Israeli soldiers on Thursday shot dead a Palestinian who tried to stab one of them near the West Bank city of Hebron and, in a separate incident near the town of Nablus, killed a man after he slashed and wounded an army officer, the army said.

That brought the number of Palestinians killed since 1 October to at least 145. Israel says 93 of these were assailants, while most of the others died in clashes with Israeli security forces.

In the same period, Palestinian stabbings, car-rammings and gun attacks have killed 24 Israelis and a US citizen.

The wave of attacks has been partly fuelled by Palestinian frustration over the collapse of peace talks, the growth of Jewish settlements on land they seek for a future state and Islamist calls for the destruction of Israel. Also stoking the violence has been Muslim agitation at stepped-up Jewish visits to a contested Jerusalem shrine.

Earlier, Israel's Defence Minister Moshe Yaalon said pre-emptive raids and arrests had prevented the violence from escalating into an armed Palestinian revolt, and he predicted that the grassroots violence would stop.

"We are managing to foil plans by the organisations, the terrorist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad, to carry out attacks. If it were up to them, there would be suicide bombings and gun attacks here every day," Yaalon told Israel Radio.

"The fact that we are succeeding lends salience to the attempted stabbing or car-ramming attacks. We will also prevail over this phenomenon, I say, but this is a process that takes time. Statistically, we see a waning of this."—*Reuters*

More aid reaches trapped Syrians; doubts cast on peace talks

MADAYA — A second batch of aid reached a besieged Syrian town and two trapped villages on Thursday and the United Nations accused rival factions of committing war crimes by causing civilians to starve to death.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war, said aid trucks had entered the town of Madaya near the border with Lebanon, and the villages of Kefraya and al-Foua in Idlib Province in the northwest. Syrian state media said six trucks had gone into Madaya.

For months, tens of thousands have been blockaded by government troops in Madaya and surrounded by rebel forces in the two villages.

"According to the ICRC team that entered Madaya, the people were very happy, even crying when they realized that wheat flour is on the way," Dominik Stillhart, International Committee of the Red Cross director of operations, said in New York.

Aid officials hoped to bring in more supplies, with fuel deliveries set for Sunday, according to Stillhart.

"We hope ... this effort will continue," said Yacoub El Hillo, the UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in Syria, who accompanied the convoy.

A senior UN human rights official said the use of starvation as a weapon was a war crime.

"Starving civilians is a war crime under international humanitarian law and of course any such act deserves to be condemned, whether it's in Madaya or Idlib," said UN Human Rights High Commissioner Zeid bin Ra'ad.

"Should there be prosecutions? Of course. At the very least there should be accountability for these crimes."

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

"Let me be clear: the use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime," Ban told reporters.

The siege of Madaya, where people have reportedly died of starvation, has become a focal issue for Syrian opposition groups who want all such blockades lifted before they enter negotiations with the government planned for 25 January.

A Red Crescent aid convoy enters Madaya, Syria, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

A prominent member of the political opposition to President Bashar al-Assad told Reuters that date was unrealistic, reiterating opposition demands for the lifting of sieges, a ceasefire and the release of detainees before negotiations. "I personally do not think 25 January is a realistic date for when it will be possible to remove all obstacles facing the negotiations," George Sabra told Reuters.—*Reuters*

Toyota union to seek 3,000 yen or more base salary hike

Tatsuya Sasaki, head of Toyota Motor Corp's labour union, attends a press conference in Tokyo on 15 January.
PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — The labour union of Toyota Motor Corp said yesterday it plans to seek a base wage hike of 3,000 yen ($25) or more a month before the start of annual wage talks in February that are widely considered crucial for the country's economic recovery.

The result of wage negotiations at Toyota is often regarded as a bellwether for other firms.

The union would call for a base wage rise for the third year in a row, and is expected to finalise the demand after discussing it at a meeting through Saturday.

The carmaker agreed last year to raise base salary by 4,000 yen compared with the demand of 6,000 yen, reflecting its robust earnings as well as calls by the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for firms to spend more on wages from their record profits and help boost the country's growth.—*Kyodo News*

German economy grew at strongest rate in four years in 2015

BERLIN — The German economy grew by 1.7 per cent in 2015, the strongest rate of expansion in four years, driven by robust increases in private and public consumption, a preliminary estimate from the Federal Statistics Office showed on Thursday.

Domestic demand, fuelled by solid wage increases, low inflation and record high employment, is compensating for weaker trade, the traditional driver of Europe's largest economy.

"Germany is on a steady expansion driven by domestic demand," said Holger Schmieding of Berenberg Bank.

Officials from the Statistics Office said the full-year estimate suggested that gross domestic product (GDP) grew by about 0.25 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year, although they cautioned that this was a very rough projection as full numbers for the period are not yet available.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected slightly more modest GDP growth of 1.6 per cent for 2015, the same rate as in 2014.

Private consumption expanded by 1.9 per cent, its strongest full-year rise since 2000, contributing 1.0 percentage points to 2015 growth. Public spending, grew by 2.8 per cent, adding 0.5 points to GDP, while trade contributed 0.2 points, although imports expanded at a slightly higher rate than exports.

The GDP rise was in line with the government's forecast. For 2016, Berlin expects an expansion of 1.8 per cent. A record influx of more than a million migrants last year is pushing state spending higher as authorities spend more on housing and integration measures.

"Looking ahead, the two-speed recovery, with strong consumption and services on the one hand and sluggish industrial production and exports on the other hand, should continue in 2016," Brzeski said.

Schmieding of Berenberg said the risks to growth this year stemmed mainly from the political rather than the economic sphere, citing the risk of Britain, a major German trading partner, leaving the European Union.

"As an open economy in the middle of Europe, Germany is a major beneficiary of European integration," Schmieding said. "Any serious political development that could jeopardise European integration could weigh on business confidence and investment."—*Reuters*

Tougher rules on trading books target global banks

LONDON — Some of the world's biggest banks will have to set aside a combined $77 billion in extra capital from 2019 under new trading book rules unveiled on Thursday by global regulators hoping to prevent another financial crisis.

In the latest sign of how regulators are being more accommodative as policymakers emphasise the need to help economies grow, the Basel Committee of banking supervisors has eased its initial proposal for a hike in capital requirements.

Banks had warned that overly burdensome demands would make trading uneconomic, crimp lending and thin already stressed liquidity in markets.

Basel did not name the banks likely to be affected, but major US trading firms such as JP Morgan as well as European players such as Deutsche Bank are likely to be in the frame.

Policymakers hope that publication of the rules will give clarity on the final, post-crisis regulatory picture for banks so they can forge sustainable businesses.

While the new rules won't represent a huge overall hike in capital requirements, they could dampen ambitions to expand trading. Some lenders are already scaling back on trading activities.

Under its final, long-awaited rules on how much capital banks must hold in case stocks, bonds and other markets turn sour as they did in 2007-09, Basel has raised the trading book assets of a bank's total risk-weighted assets to around 10 per cent from 2019 from about 6 per cent.

Each percentage point difference is equivalent to less than 20 billion euros in extra capital, and an impact study by Basel study shows that for most lenders there will be little change, if any, in capital requirements.

The bulk of the 70 billion euros in extra capital requirements will fall on just a handful of big trading banks, though they are unlikely to need fresh capital as they typically hold far more than the overall minimum needed.

JPMorgan's Chief Financial Officer, Marianne Lake, told analysts on a conference call on Thursday that the final rules mark the start of a race to understand the changes and make necessary adjustments.

The rules are exceptionally complex and earlier drafts and proposals varied too much for the bank to spend a lot of time and money preparing for different outcomes, Lake said.

Under the new rules, the amount of capital needed against non-securitised assets, which make up the bulk of trading books and include shares, foreign exchange, swaps and commodities, will rise by a median of 27 per cent, Basel said.

For securitised or pooled debt, the capital increase will be a more modest 22 per cent as far heftier hikes were introduced in the immediate aftermath of the financial crisis in a quick-fix known as Basel 2.5.

The International Swaps and Derivatives Association welcomed "a more consistent and coherent market risk framework," but it is too early to comment on the overall capital impact, said Mark Gheerbrant, head of risk and capital for the group, in a statement.

"We note, however, that even the Basel Committee's own estimate of a 40 per cent average increase in total market risk capital requirements would impose a considerable burden on banks on top of the increases already introduced following the crisis, as part of Basel 2.5," he added. —*Reuters*

Hyatt says data breach started in August

CANNES — Hyatt Hotels Corp said a previously reported malware attack on its payment processing system occurred between 13 August and 8 December.

The hotel operator said on Thursday it identified unauthorised access to payment card data from cards used onsite at certain Hyatt-managed locations, primarily at its restaurants.

The company also said the "at-risk window" for a limited number of locations began on or shortly after 30 July.

Shares of Hyatt were down 3.1 per cent in afternoon trading.

Hyatt also said it has arranged a third-party identity protection and fraud detection firm to provide one year of services to affected customers at no cost.

The company did not disclose the number of cards affected.

The company disclosed in December that its payment processing system was infected with information-stealing malware but did not mention how long its network was infected. Hyatt, controlled by the billionaire Pritzker family, is the fourth major hotel operator to warn of a breach since October.

Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc disclosed attacks on payment processing systems in November.

Donald Trump's luxury hotel chain, Trump Hotel Collection, also confirmed the possibilityof a data security incident.—*Reuters*

A general view shows the Grand Hyatt Cannes Hotel Martinez and beaches in Cannes, southern France, in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Nigeria launches new investigation of 2014 kidnap of Chibok girls

ABUJA — Nigeria's president Muhammadu Buhari has ordered a new investigation into the kidnapping of 219 schoolgirls by Islamist group Boko Haram in April 2014 from the town of Chibok, the presidency said on Thursday.

A statement said a panel would be announced soon by the National Security Advisor. The decision comes after parents of the girls and the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) movement marched to the presidential villa to demand a meeting with Buhari earlier on Thursday.

"I assure you that I go to bed and wake up every day with the Chibok girls on my mind," Buhari was quoted as saying in the statement after meeting some of the marchers. "Securing the Chibok girls is my responsibility. The service chiefs and heads of our security agencies will tell you that in spite of the dire financial straits that we found the country in, I continue to do my best to support their efforts in that regard."

On 14 April, Boko Haram militants raided a school while the girls were taking exams. They loaded 270 of them onto trucks. Around 50 escaped shortly afterwards.

There was a global outcry and threats by Boko Haram to sell the girls. Former president Goodluck Jonathan was heavily criticised for his slow reaction and Jonathan's wife at first said she doubted the kidnapping had actually happened.

Oby Ezekwesili and Aisha Yesufu, leaders of the 'Bring back our girls' campaign group, discuss during their visit to the presidential villa in Abuja, Nigeria, on 14 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

After nearly a month, Jonathan set up a fact-finding committee that went to Chibok to establish whether the abduction happened and how many girls were missing. Buhari's panel will have the remit to "unravel the remote and immediate circumstances leading to the kidnap of the girls by Boko Haram terrorists as well as the other events, actions and inactions that followed the incident", Thursday's statement said.

BBOG has kept the memory of the incident alive with frequent marches and Nigerian newspapers keep daily track of the number of days they have been missing.

Buhari won last year's election on a promise to quash the militant group as Jonathan was seemingly unable to do.

Buhari said at the end of December that he was open to negotiating with Boko Haram for the return of the girls if credible representatives of the group could be identified.

Boko Haram has been waging a six-year insurgency to establish an Islamist state in the northeast of Africa's biggest economy and pledged allegiance to Islamic State last year.

In the second half of 2014, it took over vast swathes of territory, mainly in Borno state where Chibok is located. Nigerian troops recaptured most of it with the help of forces from Chad, Niger and Cameroon, who themselves were increasingly being targeted by the Islamists.

Boko Haram has since reverted to raiding villages for provisions or hitting soft targets like places of worship and markets and are mainly around Lake Chad, the Sambisa forest reserve and the mountainous region bordering Cameroon.—*Reuters*

90% of scandal-hit Yokohama condo residents want all buildings rebuilt

YOKOHAMA — Nearly 90 per cent of residents at four scandal-hit Yokohama condominium buildings said in a survey that they want all the buildings, including a tilting one for which defective piling has been found, to be rebuilt, the survey showed yesterday.

The residents represented 628 condo units, or 89.1 per cent of the total 705 units in the condominium complex in Yokohama, southwest of Tokyo, at the heart of a data falsification scandal. The scandal, which came to light last year, has stoked public concerns over the safety of buildings in general.

The latest figure has surpassed the consent by more than four-fifths required for all buildings to be rebuilt, as stipulated in a law.

The survey, in which respondents identified themselves, was conducted from 25 December by an association of the condominium complex residents. The poll was the second of its kind.

Mitsui Fudosan Residential Co., which sold the buildings completed in 2007, has already unveiled its plan to rebuild the entire complex, not just the tilting one.

Based on the outcome of the surveys, the association will come up by the end of February with its own policy on how to deal with the scandal. In the first survey, which was anonymous and conducted in November last year, 67.5 per cent said they wanted the entire complex rebuilt.

In the latest poll, residents from 32 units, or 4.5 per cent, said they want the buildings partially rebuilt, while those representing 21 units, or 3 per cent, have yet to make up their minds. Regarding future decisions, residents in 60 units, or 8.5 per cent, said they are thinking of selling their units or moving out, while those in 483 units, or 68.5 per cent, are considering moving back once the condominiums are rebuilt.

After piling data fabrication for a building at the complex was found in October, Ashi Kasei Construction Materials Corp, which was responsible for the piling work, admitted to data fabrication in its past projects. —*Kyodo News*

thE REPUBLiC OF thE UNiON OF MYANMAR
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(iNVitAtiON FOR OPEN tENDER)
(1 / 2016)

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

Sr.No	tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-062(15-16)	Data Processing Center and Data Acquisition Sercel (5) Items	US$
(2)	IFB-063(15-16)	Data Processing Software & Hardware Accessories (1) Lot	US$
(3)	IFB-064(15-16)	2900 Series Well Head Equipment & Accessories (3) Sets	US$
(4)	IFB-065(15-16)	Explosimeter (2) Nos	US$
(5)	IFB-066(15-16)	Telecommunication Equipments (2) Items	US$
(6)	IFB-067(15-16)	Portable Welding Machine with Complete Accessories (2) Sets	US$
(7)	IFB-068(15-16)	High Pressure Pump with Complete Accessories (2) Sets	US$
(8)	IFB-069(15-16)	Pipe Line Pigs (2) Items	US$
(9)	IFB-070(15-16)	Drill Track Guidance Tool (1) Set	US$
(10)	IFB-071(15-16)	4" ERW Steel Line Pipe, API 5L Grade A (10,000)Meter	US$
(11)	IFB-072(15-16)	NDT Services for 20" Domestic Gas Pipe Lines (1) Lot	US$
(12)	IFB-073(15-16)	Steel Ball Valves (2) Items	US$
(13)	DMP/L-012(15-16)	Landing Leg (Landing Gear) for CNG Tube Trailer (10) Sets	KS

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

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 13th January, 2016 at the Finance Department , Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

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

US sailors made 'navigational error' into Iranian waters

MIAMI — The 10 US sailors briefly held by Iran before being released on Wednesday made a navigational mistake that led them into Iranian waters but did not communicate that to Navy commanders before being intercepted, the US military said on Thursday.

US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said the information came from debriefings of the sailors, who were flown on Wednesday to a US military facility in Qatar after Iran released them along with their two riverine boats.

"The information that they have given us, and through their commanders, is that they did stray accidentally into Iranian waters due to a navigation error," Carter said in an interview with FUSION television's Jorge Ramos, which will also air on Spanish-language Univision.

Carter's comments were the most detailed so far from American officials on the incident, which rattled nerves just before the expected implementation of a landmark nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Diplomats in Washington and Tehran, through a series of anxious phone calls, sought to resolve the incident quickly, ensuring it did not torpedo the nuclear accord. In the end, Iran released the US sailors — nine men and one woman — on Wednesday, a day after they were detained.

The speedy resolution of the incident contrasted with previous cases in which British servicemen were held considerably longer, in one case nearly two weeks.

Carter said the sailors apparently did not radio in to tell their commanders they were off-course before encountering the Iranians.

"They did not report this navigational error at the time. It may be that they were trying to sort it out at the time they encountered the Iranian boats and discovered they were inside of the territorial waters of Iran," Carter said in the interview that took place in Miami. He denied the sailors were on a covert mission, saying that "they were simply transiting from one place to another."

Still, many questions about the incident remained unanswered, including what precisely led the sailors off-course and how they did not realise they were in danger before being detained by Iran.

One US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said it was clear the boats did not run out of fuel.—*Reuters*

UN sees progress in Qatar's migrant labour reforms

DOHA — Qatar has made progress in its efforts to improve the lives of migrant labourers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Thursday, departing from previous UN criticism of the wealthy nation's treatment of workers.

Rights groups accuse Qatar of abusive labour laws and of forcing some workers to live in squalor and work under poor safety conditions.

Unions and labour protests are banned and authorities penalise dissent with jail terms or immediate deportation.

"From what we have seen there is progress. We are convinced there is genuine will to tackle rights violations," Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein told reporters in Doha after a two-day visit to the tiny state, which draws its vast wealth mainly from LNG exports.

Qatar hosts 1.6 million foreign workers from countries such as India, Nepal and Bangladesh. They outnumber the local workforce by nearly 20 to one.

In 2014 the UN called on Qatar to abolish its "kafala" or sponsorship system, which forces foreign workers to seek their employer's consent to change jobs or leave the country.

The system is used in various forms across the Gulf Arab region, and rights groups say it contributes to widespread labour abuse. Qatar has not yet abolished the law, but Hussein said efforts were underway.

"Through the development of legislation... Qatar is working to replace kafala," he said, adding that Qatar needed to give a timeframe for implementation of further reforms.

Qatar says it has made progress: A wage protection system requiring companies to pay salaried workers by electronic bank transfer came into force in November.

During his visit, the UN envoy spoke with construction workers while on a tour of a new worker accommodation camp built on the outskirts of Doha by the government to host 100,000 foreign workers.

Protests or strikes by workers are extremely rare but in November police were called to break up a work stoppage after several hundred men working at a major building site in downtown Doha went on strike complaining of unpaid wages.—*Reuters*

EU Parliament delays vote on new car pollution limits

BRUSSELS — The European Parliament on Thursday postponed a vote on new car pollution limits that could have killed a compromise agreed by EU members, as politicians argue over whether to seek tougher limits despite the delays that would entail.

With strong political momentum for stricter emission limits after the Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE) scandal, the assembly had been due to vote next week on a parliamentary proposal to reject a compromise agreed by representatives of the 28 European Union nations in October.

The vote pits lawmakers, who side with automakers pushing for the compromise proposal to be adopted now, against environmentalists seeking tougher rules.

The diluted deal would allow cars to carry on emitting more than twice official limits on nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions, blamed for premature death and respiratory diseases.

A car drives near the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, in 2014.
PHOTO: REUTERS

It was overwhelmingly rejected by the assembly's environment committee last month, but members of the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) and of the Socialists and Democrats on Thursday supported pushing back a plenary vote until next month.

The EPP, the biggest political group, argued that rejecting the draft law would delay changes to old limits while a new proposal is thrashed out and the automotive industry would lack certainty to make business adjustments and invest in cleaner technology.

Politicians said they want the time to come up with an alternative proposal for future legislation on emissions.

"We are negotiating informally with the Commission and we want something substantial in our hands at the end of the day if we vote against the objection," said German Socialist Matthias Groote.—*Reuters*

CLAiMS DAY NOtiCE

MV KOtA REStU VOY NO (RSU-497)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RESTU VOY NO (RSU-497) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

ShiPPiNG AGENCY DEPARtMENt
MYANMA PORt AUthORitY
AGENt FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONtAiNER LiNES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAiMS DAY NOtiCE

MV iNNWA StAR VOY NO (001W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INNWA STAR VOY NO (001W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16.1.2016 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 CONtiNENtAL ShiPPiNG LiNE PtE LtD

Phone No: 2301185

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

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

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

DAWEI SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND MYANDAWEI INDUSTRIAL ESTATE CO., LTD.

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

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

CLAiMS DAY NOtiCE

MV PERLA VOY NO (004W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PERLA VOY NO (004W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16.1.2016 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 ORiENt OVERSEA CONtAiNER Li NES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAiMS DAY NOtiCE

MV ANAN BhUM VOY NO (152N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY NO (152N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 16.1.2016 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.

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‘The Revenant’ becomes Oscar front-runner; actors of colour ignored

LOS ANGELES — Grueling revenge movie “The Revenant” emerged as the Oscar front-runner on Thursday in nominations that pit big-budget movies against small personal dramas and once again shut actors of colour out of the industry’s biggest honours.

The hashtag #OscarsSoWhite was quickly revived on Twitter. It had emerged last year, when only white actors received nods.

Will Smith, who stars in football injury drama “Concussion,” and Idris Elba from “Beasts of No Nation” were among the black actors who were not nominated this year. The black cast and director of hip hop biopic “Straight Outta Compton” were also left out of the race.

“In a year with an extraordinary number of great performances by black actors that were embraced by audiences and embraced by critics, for them all to get ignored is tragic,” said Reginald Hudlin, who will produce the 28 February awards ceremony hosted by comedian Chris Rock.

“The Revenant,” an ambitious pioneer-era saga, led with 12 nominations, including best picture, best actor for Leonardo DiCaprio and best director for Mexico’s Alejandro Inarritu, who won the top Oscar last year for the dark showbiz comedy “Birdman.”

“The Revenant” will compete with gritty action adventure “Mad Max: Fury Road” and space film “The Martian.” All three boast budgets above $100 million.

Oscar nominees for Best Actor are shown in this combination of file photos (L to R) Bryan Cranston, Matt Damon, Michael Fassbender, Eddie Redmayne, and Leonardo DiCaprio. PHOTO: REUTERS

Oscar nominees for Best Actress are shown in this combination of file photos (L-R) Brie Larson, Saoirse Ronan, Charlotte Rampling, Jennifer Lawrence, Cate Blanchett. PHOTO: REUTERS

The best picture nominees also include independent films “Room,” “Spotlight” and “Brooklyn” as well as studio productions “The Big Short” and “Bridge of Spies,” which had budgets in the $20 million to $40 million range.

Amid the excitement from nominees, others in Hollywood were nursing their wounds. “Straight Outta Compton” and “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” were left out of the best picture race, while Ridley Scott, director of best picture nominee “The Martian,” did not make the grade in the director category.

20th Century Fox (FOXA.O) led the studios with a total of 30 nominations, including for “The Revenant,” “The Martian” and “Joy,” as well as its Fox Searchlight independent film arm’s “Brooklyn” and “Youth.” The tally also includes six nods for “Bridge of Spies,” which it shared with Walt Disney Co (DIS.N).

“The Revenant,” about a fur trapper mauled by a bear and left for dead by his companions, brought nominations for DiCaprio, who has never won an Oscar, and supporting actor for Tom Hardy.

“We gave it our all on this film, and this appreciation from the Academy means a lot to me and my colleagues who made it possible,” Inarritu said in a statement. “Champagne and Mezcal will run tonight!”

The Oscars, chosen by the 6,000 members of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, can have up to 10 best picture nominees, but voters selected just eight.

While diversity was lacking in the acting race, the films nominated reflect a variety of genres.

“Look at the range of movies we’re discussing,” film critic Leonard Maltin said. “A lesbian love story, a brutal story of survival and everything in between.”

Previous Oscar winners Cate Blanchett and Jennifer Lawrence returned to the best actress race, which has no obvious front-runners. At 25, Lawrence, is the youngest four-time acting nominee.

This year, she was recognised for playing the Miracle Mop inventor in “Joy.” Blanchett was nominated for lesbian romance “Carol”, although the movie was overlooked for best picture.

The best actress field also includes rising star Brie Larson for “Room”; veteran Charlotte Rampling, who is hoping British drama “45 Years” will bring her first Oscar; and Saoirse Ronan for Irish immigrant tale “Brooklyn.”

Sylvester Stallone, enjoying a new wave of popularity, scored a supporting actor nod for reprising his career-defining role as boxer Rocky Balboa in “Creed.”

“I was not expecting it ... especially at this time in my life,” the 69-year-old actor said in a statement.

Director Inarritu will face off with George Miller for “Mad Max”; Adam McKay for “The Big Short,” about the 2007 US financial collapse; Lenny Abrahamson for “Room”; and Tom McCarthy for “Spotlight,” about the Boston Globe’s probe into child abuse by Catholic priests.-—*Reuters*

British actor Alan Rickman, star of ‘Harry Potter’ films, dies at 69

LONDON — British actor Alan Rickman, whose roles ranged from Hollywood villains to Professor Snape in the Harry Potter films, has died after a battle with cancer aged 69.

With his aquiline features and cultured — if often menacing — English accent, he became one of Britain’s best-known actors of stage and screen over the last 30 years with a career stretching from the Royal Shakespeare Company to sci-fi spoof “Galaxy Quest”.

His family said he had died surrounded by family and friends.

“Alan was my friend and so this is hard to write because I have just kissed him goodbye,” said British actress Emma Thompson who appeared with Rickman in a number of films including “Love Actually.”

“He was the finest of actors and directors. I couldn’t wait to see what he was going to do with his face next,” she said in a statement. “He was above all things a rare and unique human being and we shall not see his like again.”

A graduate of London’s Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, Rickman got his big break

Alan Rickman. PHOTO: REUTERS

appearing the Broadway version of “Les Liaisons Dangereuses” in the mid-1980s before making his first major film appearance as Hans Gruber in “Die Hard” soon afterwards.

That was to be the first of many performances as a villain, including “Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street” and as the Sheriff of Nottingham in “Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves”, for which he won a Bafta, the British equivalent of an Oscar.

He also won a Golden Globe and an Emmy during his career and despite his reputation for playing the “baddie”, he was also acclaimed for more sensitive roles in films such as “Truly Madly Deeply”, and Love, Actually.

Tributes poured in from fellow actors.

“Another dear friend gone ... Yippe Kaye aye dear chap. We will always have Nakatomi,” Bruce Willis said on Twitter, referring to the Die Hard movie.

Daniel Radcliffe, who starred alongside Rickman as Harry Potter, said he was “undoubtedly one of the greatest actors I will ever work with”.

“Film sets and theater stages are all far poorer for the loss of this great actor and man,” he said.

Harry Potter author JK Rowling tweeted: “There are no words to express how shocked and devastated I am to hear of Alan Rickman’s death. He was a magnificent actor and a wonderful man,”

The Guardian newspaper said Rickman was always politically active with the left-wing Labour Party and his wife, Rima Horton, his partner of more than 50 years whom he married in secret last year, had been a Labour councillor in London.

“Brilliant actor, deeply principled man. My heart goes out to Rima and his family,” Ed Miliband, Labour’s former leader said on Twitter.—*Reuters*

Adele, James Bay, Years and Years lead BRIT nominations

LONDON — British singers Adele and James Bay, together with pop-electronica trio Years and Years, led the running for this year’s BRITs on Thursday, earning four nominations each at Britain’s top music awards.

Adele who has stormed charts worldwide with her album “25”, received nods for British female solo artist and MasterCard British album of the year.

In the British female solo artist category, she faces Jess Glynne, Laura Marling, Florence Welch of Florence and the Machine as well as late singer Amy Winehouse.

Adele’s hit single “Hello” will also compete for British single and British artist video of the year.

British breakthrough act competitors Years and Years and singer-songwriter Bay are also in the running for British single with “King” and “Hold Back the River” respectively.

Bay also faces Adele in the album category for “Chaos and the Calm” alongside Coldplay’s “A Head Full of Dreams”, Florence and the Machine’s “How Big, How Blue, How Beautiful” and producer Jamie xx’s “In Colour”.

He is also up for British Male Solo Artist, a group also including Jamie xx, DJ Calvin Harris and producer Mark Ronson.

Years and Years won a nomination for British group alongside Coldplay, Blur, indie rockers Foals and boyband One Direction.

“King” is up for British artist video of the year, a lineup also including Sam Smith’s No.1 James Bond theme “Writing’s On The Wall”, Ed Sheeran’s “Photograph”, One Direction’s “Drag Me Down” and Ellie Goulding’s “Love Me Like You Do”.

That song, which featured on the “Fifty Shades of Grey” soundtrack, is also in the running for British single.

Pop star Justin Bieber, hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar and rapper The Weeknd are among those nominated for international male solo artist while American pop singers Ariana Grande and Meghan Trainor and Australian Courtney Barnett are included in the running for the female version of the award.—*Reuters*

Despite traumas of war, Syrian children in Turkey dream of home

YAYLADAGI — When nine-year old Ilaf Hassun drew a picture of her home she scrawled a simple house, trees and clouds with smiling faces. Then in thick red pen, she added the figure of a woman clutching her dead child walking towards a cemetery.

Syria's conflict has left hundreds of thousands dead, pushed millions more into exile, and had a profound effect on children who lost their homes or became caught up in the bloodletting.

Hassun and her family are living with nearly 3,000 other people — 1,000 of them under 12 years old — in Yayladagi Refugee Camp, a former tobacco factory converted by the government just across the border from Syria in eastern Turkey. Her father works illegally in Turkey and rarely visits.

She plays with the other children, but her artwork points to the mental scars borne by her and many of the 2.3 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey, more than half of them children. Providing mental security as well as physical shelter is one of the challenges facing Turkish authorities. A Reuters photo story from various camps in the region shows the children at play and displaying their drawings. It all appears very normal - a girl skips rope, another poses in front of her tent, others weave, teenage boys play football.

"We have to find a way to let these children forget the war and what they experienced," Ahmet Lutfi Akar, president of the Turkish Red Crescent, told Reuters.

"These (children) grow up in camps. We have to teach this generation that problems can be solved without fighting, and we have to erase the scars of war." The Turkish government, aided by the United Nations and non-governmental organisations, has set up 27 "Kid-Friendly Fields" across the country, used by an estimated 100,000 children between the ages of four to 18 who receive support and education, and a chance to be children.

A combination picture shows Syrian refugee Ele Cundi, 5, who poses as she sits with her friends in a kindergarten at Midyat refugee camp in Mardin province, Turkey, on 14 December 2015 (top) and her drawing (bottom) on 12 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

The centres are the latest effort by authorities to ramp up their humanitarian response and provide long-term care for refugee communities unlikely to be able to return for years. From the age of 9, the Arabic-speaking children are taught Turkish to help them integrate.

"When they arrive in a different country they have difficulties living in a different culture, in a world speaking a different language," said Meryem Dolgun, a youth worker. "They have self-confidence problems, fear. Some think they are worthless."

The most severely traumatized are sent to specialist hospitals, but the rest are given support within the camps.

"They draw tanks, war planes, dead people, wounded children, crying mothers. Drawings are the evidence of their trauma, the reflection of their inner worlds," Dolgun said. The need to provide schooling and a future for Syrian children in Turkey — and prevent what Dolgun called a "lost generation" — has become a high priority.—*Reuters*

Winners of $1.6bn US Powerball jackpot still officially unknown

LOS ANGELES — Three ticket holders with a claim on a record $1.6 billion Powerball jackpot were laying low on Thursday, their identities officially still a mystery even as lottery officials revealed the retailers in California, Florida and Tennessee that sold them the lucky tickets.

Each of the winning tickets is worth $528.8 million to the holders, lottery officials said in California, one of 44 states plus Washington, DC, and two US territories that sold millions of Powerball tickets.

The winning numbers of 08 27 34 04 19 and Powerball 10, picked in a drawing on Wednesday night, appeared on tickets sold in three stores: a 7-Eleven convenience store in Chino Hills, California, a Publix supermarket in Melbourne Beach, Florida and Naifeh's Food Mart in Munford, Tennessee. The jackpot winners overcame odds of 1 in 292 million. "The Chino Hills winner has not come forward yet," California Lottery said on its Twitter feed.

Los Angeles TV station KABC backed away from a story it reported that a registered nurse in Pomona, California, was one of the jackpot winners after the woman's daughter said her mother was not the winner. At a media conference in front of the California 7-Eleven, lottery officials presented a symbolic check for $1 million to the owner of the franchise, Balbir Atwal, for selling a jackpot winning ticket. He said he would give some of the bonus money to charity and share some of it with his friends and family.

With each state setting its own lottery rules, the Tennessee retailer, located in a Memphis suburb, received $25,000 and the Florida retailer, located in a tiny coastal town, will get $100,000 at an undetermined date, lottery officials said.

The announcement of the winners came after the previous 19 drawings produced no jackpot winners. With the grand prize rolling over each time, the bounty soared to a record $1.586 billion, fueled by what had become a national preoccupation with Powerball and the prospect of taking home untold riches. In towns and cities across the country, millions of would-be billionaires, many of them who had never before played a lottery, stood in long lines to buy tickets.

It was the largest lottery prize ever offered in North America, and no other lottery in the world had ever featured a jackpot of that size that could be won on a single ticket.

The winners in Florida and Tennessee have not come forward, lottery officials in those states said.

Under the rules, a winner has up to a year to do so. All three states with winners have laws requiring their names to be released publicly, according to the Powerball website.—*Reuters*

A crowd gathers in front of the 7-Eleven store where a winning Powerball ticket was sold, in Chino Hills, California on 13 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International

(16-1-2016 07:00 am~ 17-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon-The Historic Bells
07:39	Am	Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre- Hmawbi
07:51	Am	Cultural Show: Theatrical Make Up
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	A May Yay Yin Nat Festival (Ep- I)
08:42	Am	We'll Leave After 12 Passengers Are On Board ……..
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Today Myanmar & ICT "Today's Youth and ICT"
09:40	Am	International Dances in Myanmar
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Discovering Tribes: Pre Kayaw- Their Life and Customs (Part- I)
10:52	Am	Kayah

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

Prime time

07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax
07:43	Pm	Dengue Fever
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: The Modernization Of Myan mar Customs
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Pro lific Writer of Poems & Prose - Min Thu Wun (Ep-2) Student Life & Early Literary Career
08:54	Pm	Now in Yangon

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

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

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(16-1-2016, Saturday)

6:00 pm
- Classical Songs

6:15 pm
- Real Story Real Move

6:40 pm
- Musical Programme

6:50 pm
- Myanmar Series

7:05 pm
- Cassette Drama

9:55 pm
- Musical Programme

10:15 pm
- Myanmar Video

Midnight
- Close Down

From 16.1.2016 (Saturday) 06:00 Pm
To 17.1.2016 (Sunday) 06:00 Pm
this schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

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Saturday, 16 January, 2016

Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia serves to Simona Halep of Romania during their womens' singles semi final at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney, on 15 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Halep downed by Kuznetsova after solid Sydney semi workout

SYDNEY — World number two Simona Halep gave her injured left leg a good workout but bowed out of the Sydney International in the semi-finals after a hard-fought 7-6(5), 4-6, 6-3 loss to Svetlana Kuznetsova on Friday.

Kuznetsova will play Costa Rican qualifier Monica Puig for the title later on Friday as organisers of the Australian Open warm-up look to catch up after Thursday's violent storm severely disrupted the event.

Halep, who on Friday was drawn to play a qualifier in the season's opening grand slam, came into the tournament with fitness concerns after pulling out of last week's Brisbane International due to a long-term Achilles injury.

The Romanian's match against former French and US Open champion Kuznetsova was a thorough test of her fitness before she decamps to Melbourne Park and she played a full part in a tight, two hour 45-minute contest.

The match started on Thursday evening but Halep was unable to convert her 5-4 overnight lead into a 1-0 advantage when it resumed in largely dry but blustery conditions on Friday.

Kuznetsova won the opening set on a tiebreak but Halep broke the 30-year-old's first service game in the second and evened up the contest after 51 minutes when the Russian netted a return.

The deciding set was again a tight affair studded with quality rallies which Kuznetsova won only after she had saved two break points while serving for the match.

Puig continued her fairytale run at Olympic Park when she converted a 4-0, 15-0 overnight lead to win the first set 6-0 and Swiss Belinda Bencic decided she could no longer continue.

"I retired today because I was throwing up all morning and feeling sick," Bencic, the 12th seed at the Australian Open, said in a message to organisers.

"In respect of Monica, I wanted to go to court to at least try."—*Reuters*

Djokovic to battle rising South Korean first up

MELBOURNE — Top seed and defending champion Novak Djokovic's road to a sixth Australian Open title starts with a first-round match against South Korean young gun Chung Hyeon, while women's champion Serena Williams faces feisty Italian Camila Giorgi.

A rising star of Asian tennis, 19-year-old Chung was voted the ATP's most improved player last season after his ranking soared into the top 60 from 173 at the end of 2014. "That's not going to be an easy match," American super-coach Paul Annacone told reporters at Melbourne Park during the draw ceremony on Friday.

"Novak's going to be tested right from the start."

The iron-willed Serb otherwise enjoys a kind run in the draw's top quarter, with a potential last eight match-up against seventh seed Kei Nishikori his first against a top-10 player.

Second seed Andy Murray, runner-up to Djokovic last year, will play another emerging talent in 18-year-old Belgian Alexander Zverev as the Briton bids for a first trophy in Melbourne after four trips to the final.

Third seed Roger Federer faces 117th-ranked Georgian Nikoloz Basilashvili in the first round while compatriot Stan Wawrinka, the 2014 champion and fourth seed, plays Russian veteran Dmitry Tursunov, now ranked 265 in the world. Fifth seed Rafa Nadal, the 2009 winner, has an all-Spanish encounter in the first round against Fernando Verdasco before a possible quarter-final against Wawrinka.

In the women's draw, defending champion Williams has hardly swung a racket in anger since the US Open but will need to be on her game against hard-hitting Giorgi, who at world number 35, is the highest-ranked unseeded player.—*Reuters*

Atletico, Valencia through to Spanish Cup quarters

MADRID — Antoine Griezmann scored twice off the bench as Atletico Madrid sealed a place in the King's Cup quarter-finals with a 3-0 win at home to Rayo Vallecano on Thursday while Valencia also advanced with victory by the same scoreline at Granada.

Atletico and Valencia join holders and record winners Barcelona, Athletic Bilbao, Sevilla, Celta Vigo, Las Palmas and second-division Mirandes, the only non-La Liga side left in the competition, in Friday's draw for the last eight.

Rayo held their more illustrious city neighbours to a 1-1 draw in last week's last 16, first leg at their Vallecas stadium and were sniffing a possible upset ahead of the return across town at Atletico's Calderon arena.

Angel Correa's powerful strike from the edge of the penalty area, which flew in off the underside of the crossbar, put the 2013 winners ahead five minutes before halftime.

Griezmann hooked in a second for the home side in the 80th minute and the in-form France forward made it 3-0 in added time with a breakaway goal for a 4-1 aggregate victory.

Rayo, who are second from bottom in La Liga at the halfway stage, barely troubled Miguel Angel Moya in the Atletico goal and must now turn their attention to avoiding relegation.

Valencia coach Gary Neville rested several regulars for the visit to Granada after a thumping 4-0 victory in the first leg at the Mestalla.

Granada, also struggling in La Liga, had the better of the early exchanges and Ruben Rochina's first-time shot came back off the inside of a post in the 21st minute.

However, midfielder Wilfried Zahibo made the most of an error by goalkeeper Ivan Kelava and headed in at a corner in the 42nd minute to snuff out any hopes of an unlikely Granada comeback.

Atletico Madrid's Diego Godin and Stefan Savic in action with Rayo Vallecano's Joaquin Jose Marin "Quini" and Jose Ignacio Martinez "Nacho" during Spain King's Cup at Vicente Calderon stadium, Madrid, Spain on 14 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Paco Alcacer sped clear to score in the 63rd minute moments after coming on to replace Alvaro Negredo and Pablo Piatti completed the scoring and a 7-0 aggregate success with a penalty six minutes from time.

"Granada were excellent in the opening minutes," Neville, who took over from the sacked Nuno Espirito Santo last month, told a news conference.

"But as the game went on I think we were the better team," added the former Manchester United and England defender.

The quarter-finals will be played over two legs later this month, with the semi-finals at the start of February and the final on 21 May.—*Reuters*

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Advertisement & Circulation — (+95) (01) 8604532

"Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629."