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Ayeyarwady dolphins survey to begin on 5 Feb

Aye Min Soe

THE Myanmar wildlife conservation society will begin its annual survey of Ayeyarwady dolphins on 5th February.

The 10-day long survey will be conducted along the Ayeyarwady River between Mandalay and Bhamo, said U Kyaw Hla Thein, project manager of the dolphin conservation team of the Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar) to the Global New Light of Myanmar yesterday.

"We heard that one or two dead dolphins were found in the upper area of the river. We can confirm the number of dolphins only when we finished the survey," he said.

The survey in January last year found 58 dolphins between Mandalay and Bhamo, which is a drop from 72 in 2004.

The team has been planning to conduct the survey after spotting a rare baby dolphin in a protected area between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung in September. Dolphin conservationists are now preparing to conduct the annual survey of Ayeyarwady dolphins.

The team spotted the baby dolphin while carrying out conservation efforts in September of 2015. It was the first baby dolphin recorded in 2015.

The team also found three baby dolphins in December 2014.

The Ayeyarwady dolphin is found near sea coasts and in estuaries and rivers around South-east Asia, especially in Myanmar, Cambodia and Viet Nam.

WCS annual surveys have



PHOTO: MYANMAR WCS

Fishermen catch fish in the Ayeyarwady River with the help of a dolphin. PHOTO:MYANMARBIODIVERSITY.ORG

shown that the number of the dolphins has increased from 17 or 18 in 2005 to 24 in February last year along a 72 kilometre stretch of the Ayeyarwady River between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung.

Most of the dead dolphins were found near Bhamo and Katha and were killed by illegal fishing, according to the fisheries department.

Illegal electric-shock fishing is blamed for killing some dolphins, while some were caught in fishing nets.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has warned that Irrawaddy dolphins are at risk of extinction. In Myanmar, Ayeyarwady dolphins have been known to drive fish toward fishers using cast nets in return for some of the fishers' catch.

Now that many fishers on the Ayeyarwady river use illegal battery-shock fishing techniques, the dolphins often also fall prey to electrocution.

Illegal battery-shock fishing is the greatest challenge for conserva-

tionists and local authorities in trying to save the endangered species, according to Myanmar's fisheries department.

The Myanmar government has banned electrofishing nationwide, punishing violators with a three-year prison sentence and a K300,000 fine.

To prevent electro fishing in the river, government authorities and conservationists held a workshop in Mandalay in September last year. During the workshop, the attendees reached an agreement in principle to form a team compris-

ing representatives from the WCS, the Fisheries Department and the police force to patrol the river once every two months.

"The fishermen who use electric shock for fishing do not intend to kill dolphins. Unfortunately, the dolphins follow the fish and die when they are shocked or captured," U Kyaw Hla Thein said. "We will step up our efforts to educate them." Local fishermen also spotted an Irrawaddy dolphin in the country's Ayeyarwady delta in September.



Workers seen at a worksite in Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Foreigners allowed to purchase condominium apartment in Myanmar

YANGON — Foreigners have been allowed to purchase not over 40 per cent of condominium apartment in Myanmar in accordance with the approved Condominium Law beginning this year, official sources said yesterday.

The Condominium Law is applied to high-rise residential build-

ing having minimum six floors and it should be built on an area of 20,000 square feet or over.

The law prescribes that no more than 40 per cent of units from the condo should be sold to foreigners.

The dispute over the draft law between the two houses of the par-

liament was settled at the Union Parliament on Friday.

Under existing rules, foreign ownership of land or property is totally permitted, although foreign companies and individuals have reportedly bought land through Myanmar proxies, some parliamentarians said.

Mandalarian Artists exhibit “Mandalay Cold Season Remembrance-2” Art Fair



Painting fans are observing the paintings. PHOTO: MAUNG PYI THU

AN art exhibition titled “Mandalay Cold Season Remembrance-2”, organised by Mandalarian Artists, was opened at the Mandalay Hill Art Gallery in Aungmyethazan

Township, Mandalay Region on Friday.

The five-day event, which comprises 160 works of watercolours, oil paintings and acrylic paintings by Mandalar-

ian Artists, faculties of University of Culture (Mandalay), and teachers of Fine Art School and a new generation of youth will run between 22 and 26 January. —Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)

Union Peace Conference record to be complied

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) held a meeting at the Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday to discuss the compilation of a record of the Union Peace Conference.

Union Peacemaking Work Committee Vice Chairman U Aung Min praised the Joint Committee’s effort to keep the record of the Union Peace Con-

ference, which was successfully started on 16 January.

U Thu Wai, a representative of political parties, described the effort as an important milestone in the history of the country, calling for greater cooperation and unity in the peace process. A brief account of the Union Peace Conference is expected to come out in February and its reports in March.—Ye Khaung Nyunt



Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee meeting at Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon. PHOTO: PHO HTAUNG

Crime News

Fire destroys eleven houses in Yamethin

AN Electrical fire destroyed eleven houses in Myo Ma ward, Yamethin township, Mandalay on Thursday. According to an investigation, the fire broke out due to faulty wiring within the home of one Myo Naing Tun alias Ko Nge Lay, 43.

The fire quickly got out of control and spread to neighboring houses. It took four fire engines and a team of firemen to put out the blaze. Local police have failed charges against Myo Naing Tun.—Myanmar Police Force

Twelve men arrested for holding illegal animals

LOCAL Authorities arrested twelve men who allegedly transported 37 illegal oxen at Thabeik Kyin township, Mandalay on Wednesday. When interrogated, Zaw Win, 41, Linn Linn Aung, 18, Than Tun, 46, Khine Zaw Win, 18, San Naing Oo, 27, Waiyan Tun, 22,

Kyaw Zin, 18, Maung Soe, 26, Kyaw Thiha, 18, Myo Naing Oo, 34, Aung Myo Oo, 33 and Maung Oo, 37, failed to provide any documents proving that the ox belonged to them. Local police have filed charges against the men.—Myanmar Police Force

Two men arrested for killing elephant

POLICE have arrested two men for killing animals in the Chaungtha forest reserve, Patheingyi township, Ayeyarwaddy region on 1st January.

A combined team comprising officers and staff from the Forestry Department searched the forest reserve and found U Khin Aung

from Nga Phyu Gyi village and Maung Chauk from Min Lwin village with two motorbikes, two bags of elephant hide, 66 pieces of elephant’s trunk, 4 pieces of elephant tail as well as materials used in the killing of the elephants.

The two men are being charged by police.—The mirror

House in Magway destroyed by fire

A FIRE destroyed a house in Kanma town, Magway region on Friday. According to an investigation, the fire broke out when U Maung Maung Kyi, 49, was offering candles to his home Buddha shrine. The fire was put out by firemen with the assistance of neighbours. Local police have taken action against the man.—Kyaw Zayyar Win (Kanma)

Man killed in an accident in Mon State

A MAN was killed on the spot in a motorbike accident on Thursday on the Yangon- Mawlamyine road, Thaton township, Mon state. According to an investigation, U Kyaw Win alias Phar Tha Yaw, 47, was run over by a motorbike being driven by one Waiyan Tun, 23, with one passenger on board. The victim was changing a flat tyre when he was struck. The motorbike driver is being charged with careless driving by local police.—That Oo (Thaton)

Police private training Course 47/2015 concludes



Police Brig-Gen presenting outstanding award to a trainee. PHOTO: MPF

POLICE private training course 47/2015 came to an end on Friday at No.4 Police Training School (Taung Lay Lon).

The course completion ceremony was held in the parade ground of the training school with Police Brigadier-General

Aung Aung, The Commander of Shang State Police Force in attendance. The Police Brig-General presented outstanding merit awards.

A total of 385 recruits attended the training course.—Myanmar Police Force

Sittway soon to have new colour printing house

THE Rakhine State Acting Chief Minister U Mya Aung yesterday inspected the test run for a printing press at Sittway's subpublishing house in at the corner of Rammarwady and Takkatho roads in Magyimyaing Ward in Sittway, Rakhine State.

The managing director of the News and Periodicals Enterprise and officials briefed the acting chief minister on the completion of installation of the machinery. Opened on 26 August 2003, the subpublishing house is now having a new printing factory constructed to print coloured dailies. —Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker attends award presentation ceremony at monastic post-primary school

THE Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint yesterday attended an award presentation ceremony at a monastic post-primary school in Pyawbwe, Mandalay Region.

Before the ceremony, the speaker presented offertories to the head Sayadaw of the monastery.

In his speech, he stressed the need for the people to equip themselves with higher education to aid the successful practice of democracy. He explained the government's annual increase of funds

for educational advancement, admitting that some children only have access to basic education rather than higher education.

He praised monastic schools for fulfilling the gap and encouraged students not to feel small for receiving education there, citing monarchs and princes of olden days studying under monks.

After presenting awards to outstanding students, Speaker U Khin Aung Myint inspected the classrooms and computer labs in the monastic post-primary school. —Myanmar News Agency



Speaker U Khin Aung Myint presents prize to an outstanding student at a monastic post-primary school in Pyawbwe, Mandalay Region.

PHOTO: MNA

Agricultural technology helps alleviate farmer shortage



A farmer ploughs a farmland to grow rice at a village near Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

TECHNOLOGY and machinery will assist with increasing crop yields in the western Bago Region of Pyay, and the southern Magway Region of Aungmye, in a bid to re-

solve the problem of a shortage of farmers, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.

"We had flooding here in Aungmye twice last year. It meant

that more agricultural expenses were incurred by the farmers. The farmers here don't have much faith in the machinery they've been instructed to use [by the MoA] as

they don't have a habit of using it normally. The machinery will be tested by cultivating a 15 acre plot. It is expected that a larger area of the land will be able to be culti-

vated in the coming year due to the success of the machinery," said U Htay Maung, head of the Department of Agriculture in Aungmye township.

Experiments were systematically carried out by experts from the Pyay Laldawgyi agriculture distribution enterprise on seed production and machinery usage in cultivation. If cultivation activities are carried out in the manner which the experts demonstrated, then it could see an increase in crop yields as well as a solution to the problem with a shortage of farmers.

"As conventional methods go, if there's an area of ten acres then farmers will have the capacity to cultivate around 1.5 acres of it. We're able to produce seeds in areas of 0.20 acres and fifteen acres. As such, one doesn't need a lot of space. And, cultivating with machinery equipment will alleviate difficulties with a shortage of farmers. Furthermore, about five acres a day will be able to be covered by cultivating with machinery, also reliving the problems of having to irrigate crops. We want farmers to promote their knowledge of cultivation practices," said U Kyi Soe, a responsible official from the aforementioned distribution enterprise.

The agricultural technology has been tested on approximately 200 acres of land in Bwet Gyi of Aungmye township, as well as Zeya and Pyay regions. —Myitmakha News Agency

Myanmar, Japanese artists conducted symphonic orchestra performance in Yangon

THE Myanmar National Symphony Orchestra Concert 2016 took place at National Theater in Yangon yesterday evening.

The concert was a joint effort between the State Orchestra of Myanmar Radio and Television under the Ministry of Information and a group of Japanese artists

led by Mr. Yunosuke Yamamoto. Myanmar and Japanese artists performed classical music, movie soundtracks, Jazz music, traditional Myanmar songs and movie songs at the concert.

After the symphonic orchestra performance, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung

Thein, foreign diplomats and the director-general of MRTV presented flower bouquets to Myanmar and Japanese artists.

Similar symphonic orchestra performance is set to be held at Myanmar International Convention Centre-2 in Nay Pyi Taw on 25 January. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar, Thailand to hold anti-human trafficking meeting in Bagan

THE Myanmar Police Force, Department of Special Investigation of Thailand and Royal Thai Police are set to hold joint coordination meetings on anti-trafficking in person in Bagan on 26-27 January.

Myanmar and Thailand signed a memorandum of understanding on cooperation in

anti-human trafficking efforts in April 2009, reaching an agreement to alternately host the meetings twice a year.

The meetings are set to discuss exchange of information and works to be done for setting up of guidelines and procedures for exchange of information. —Thant Zin Win

Chinese leader in Iran to discuss economy, regional crisis

ANKARA — Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Tehran on Friday to discuss improvement of economic and political ties after lifting of international sanctions because of Iran's disputed nuclear programme, state TV said.

Xi will meet top Iranian officials, including the country's most powerful figure, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,

and President Hassan Rouhani.

He has also visited Saudi Arabia and Egypt during his Middle East tour, which started on 19 January.

"A high-ranking political and economic delegation is accompanying the Chinese president during his one-day trip," state television quoted deputy Foreign Minister Ebrahim Rahimpour as saying. "This is the

first visit by a Chinese president in 14 years."

"Total trade between Iran and China stood around \$52 billion in 2014. But it dropped last year because of falling oil prices," Rahimpour said.

"Some 16 accords including a strategic cooperation agreement will be signed during the Chinese President's Iran visit."

The Chinese president is the

first leader to visit Iran after international sanctions were lifted on 16 January under a nuclear deal reached with six major powers including China.

Muslim Shi'ite Iran and its regional Sunni rival Saudi Arabia, Xi's first stop on his Middle Eastern tour, have been at odds since Saudi authorities executed Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr on 2 January.

The execution triggered outrage among Shi'ites across the Middle East.

Riyadh severed ties with Tehran after Iranian protesters stormed the kingdom's embassy in Tehran and its consulate in Mashhad.

China has called on both countries to exercise calm and restraint amid their on-going feud.—Reuters

Wildlife make dramatic comeback to Cambodia wetlands

PHNOM PENH — New surveys revealed a dramatic comeback for several spectacular waterbird species, otters, and other wildlife living in Prek Toal, a newly-designated Ramsar site on Cambodia's Tonle Sap Great Lake, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) said yesterday.

"Wildlife surveys have shown that species like lesser and greater adjutant storks, spot-billed pelicans, and Asian openbills have increased along with silver langur and two otter species," WCS said in a statement.

"More than 400 breeding pairs of lesser adjutant storks were

recorded, while both the spot-billed pelican and Asian openbill had record breeding years in 2014 when the surveys were made," it said.

The surveys appeared in a report titled "Wildlife Monitoring at Prek Toal Ramsar Site, Tonle Sap Great Lake 2013-2014" by Sun Visal and Simon Mahood of WCS's Cambodia Programme.

Prek Toal is considered to be the premier wetland site on Tonle Sap Great Lake, and last year was designated a Ramsar site, an international treaty on the protection of globally important wetlands. WCS said the increase in wildlife

began in the early 2000's when bird hunters were converted to nest protection rangers.

Camera trapping confirmed that both hairy-nosed and smooth-coated otter occur throughout the core area in good numbers, as a result of protection of the bird colony and dry-season streams. The greater adjutant stork population remained around 150 pairs, which although low, makes it the largest colony of this species worldwide, the statement said, adding that a range of other bird species was recorded, including the endangered masked finfoot.—Xinhua

Bounnhang Vorachith elected as Lao communist party chief

BANGKOK — Bounnhang Vorachith, vice president of Laos, has been elected as chief of the ruling communist party, replacing President Choummaly Sayasone, who had served in that post since 2006, official media reported Friday.

Lao News Agency (KPL) reported that Bounnhang was elected as general secretary of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party at the party's 10th national party congress, a five-day event that ended Friday in the capital Vientiane.

At the congress, which is

held once every five years, 685 permanent party members representing more than 268,000 party members nationwide also elected a new 69-member Central Committee.

KPL said the top five in the list of committee members are Bounnhang, National Assembly President Pany Yathortou, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thongloun Sisoulith, President of Party Central Inspection Committee Bounthong Chitmany and Deputy Prime Minister Bounpone Bouttanavong.—Kyodo News

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India, France haggle over \$9-billion warplane deal in run-up to Hollande visit

NEW DELHI — Indian and French negotiators were haggling on Friday over the price of 36 combat planes for the ageing Indian air force, officials of the two nations said, just days before President Francois Hollande visits New Delhi to cement commercial ties.

The fighter jet deal is part of a \$150-billion military modernisation drive India has launched, drawing global arms makers into one of the world's biggest markets.

Hollande and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stepped into the estimated \$9-billion deal last year, ordering government-to-government talks after commercial negotiations with the plane maker, Dassault Aviation (AVMD.PA), collapsed.

The leaders agreed to scale back the original plan for 126 Rafale planes to just 36 in flyaway condition, to meet the Indian Air Force's urgent needs, as it faces China and Pakistan.

But even the smaller deal ran into problems over the unit price of the planes and other contract terms.

France's envoy to India, Francois Richier, said the two sides were holding talks in New Delhi but he could not say for sure if they would strike a deal ahead of, or during, Hollande's



A Rafale fighter jet flies over the air base in Mont de Marsan, southwestern France, in 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

visit, which begins on Sunday.

"Discussions are taking place, can't say what will be the outcome," he told reporters. "It's not finalised yet. It's a complex negotiation. I am hopeful, but hopeful does not mean certitude."

An Indian foreign ministry spokesman said the deal for the 36 planes was in an advanced stage.

Hollande will be the guest of honour at India's Republic Day parade on 26 January, in a sign of deepening political and commercial ties. US President Barack

Obama was given that honour last year.

Modi will welcome Hollande in Chandigarh, designed in the 1950s by the French architect Le Corbusier. It is one of 100 "smart cities" Modi has designated for rapid development, in which the French will be partners.

The two sides are also discussing a plan by French nuclear company Areva (AREVA.PA) to build six reactors in western India, as part of Modi's push to ramp up nuclear capacity.

But negotiations have been stuck over the price, and French utility EDF's (EDF.PA) recent takeover of Areva's reactor business has slowed progress.

"EDF will be in the lead now, that is creating a change in the way nuclear negotiations will be conducted," Richier said.

A French diplomatic source said Rafale was far from being the main reason for Hollande's visit, but it would provide an opportunity to move the deal towards completion.—Reuters

One million Thai rubber planters await Monday's direct sale

BANGKOK — About 1 million rubber planters throughout Thailand are expected to put their produce for sale to government units on Monday, given a price of 1.25 US dollars a kilogram.

Acting Rubber Authority of Thailand governor Chao Song-arvut confirmed on Saturday the Public Warehouse Organisation, military units under command of the National Council for Peace and Order — the official name of the ruling junta chaired by Premier

Prayut Chan-o-cha, and his agency have planned to buy the 100,000-ton rubber directly from the registered planters in the southern, northern and northeastern regions of the country.

The government offered to buy the rubber for 1.25 US dollars a kilo, though the planters earlier called for 1.66 US dollars a kilo. The Thai government's latest plan to buy the rubber directly from the planters and without any dealers in between apparently followed

chronic price slumps in the domestic market which nosedived to as low as 69 US cents a kilo.

However, only a maximum of 150 kilos of rubber will be bought from each of the 1 million planters on Monday, Chao said.

Prayut has pushed for extensive uses of rubber such as in the making of tires, gloves and stadium grounds, among others, as well as the paving of road surfaces by mixing rubber with asphalt.

But only about 14,000 tons

of the total 100,000 tons will be purchased for uses by varied government units, leaving the hefty balance to warehouses under care of the government, according to the premier.

He earlier commented that the Thai rubber has oversupplied the world market and insisted that the planters turn to alternative plants in bid to reduce rubber production which has amounted up to 4 million tons, some 3 million tons of which has been bound for export, in a year.—Xinhua

Passenger plane makes emergency landing in India over bomb scare

NEW DELHI — A passenger plane from Bhubaneswar in eastern India to Mumbai yesterday morning made an emergency landing in Nagpur in central India, after reports of a bomb on the flight, said local media.

After all passengers were deplaned from the GoAir plane, nothing suspicious was found on the flight, said the reports.

India has put on terror alert ahead of the Republican Day celebrations.—Xinhua

Japanese upper house members to visit China in February

TOKYO — A cross-party group of House of Councillors members is making final arrangements to send a delegation to China in late February and resume regular parliamentary exchanges with the Chinese for the first time in four years, sources close to the group said Friday.

The delegation is also expected to meet with Zhang De-jiang, the third highest-ranking official of the Chinese Communist Party and chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, according to the sources.

The envisioned visit by the upper house members comes amid improved ties between Japan and China. An equivalent group in the House of Representatives, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner, the Komeito party, have already resumed regular contact with Chinese lawmakers last year.

The meeting with members

of the National People's Congress is envisioned in Beijing around 22 February. Possible topics on the agenda include the territorial dispute over the Japanese-controlled islands in the East China Sea called the Senkakus in Japan and Diaoyu in China.

Participants may also discuss issues related to the South China Sea and Chinese gas exploration in the East China Sea, according to the sources.

The delegation will consist of about 10 upper house members from the LDP, Komeito, the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan and the smaller opposition Japanese Communist Party.

Japanese upper house members and Chinese lawmakers had held similar meetings almost every year since March 2007, when the first such meeting was held in Tokyo. But regular contact was suspended after tensions rose between the two countries over the Senkaku Islands in September 2012.—Kyodo News

India eyes Africa's vast resources to meet rising energy demand

NEW DELHI — India has asked its oil firms to boost ties with resource-rich Africa as the south Asian nation wants to take advantage of tumbling crude prices to lock in supplies to meet future demand.

India is seen as the most important driver of energy demand growth in the world in the years to come with its oil consumption seen rising by 6 million barrels per day (bpd) to about 10 million bpd by 2040, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year extended \$10 billion in credit to African nations and pitched for a broad alliance for global reform.

"We want Indian oil companies to take advantage of the credit line extended for five years and strike deals...we should take advantage of sliding oil prices and take active role in the development of Af-

rican nations," India's oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan told the India Africa Hydrocarbons Conference, attended by ministers and officials of 22 African nations.

Oil has fallen to 12-year lows this year under pressure from a deepening supply glut and signs of economic weakness in China, the world's second biggest oil consumer.

"India has strategic need for energy security and this is something that Africa can use," said Ron Kapavik, vice president at IHS Energy. "India can be a natural market for African hydrocarbon resource."

India, the world's third biggest oil importer, has stepped up oil imports from Africa in 2015 and New Delhi wants to boost shipments from the region.

Indian Oil Corp, the country's largest refiner, has doubled imports from Nigeria at 60,000 barrels per day (bpd) for 2016-

17 while Hindustan Petroleum Corp has sought similar volumes from the African nation.

African nations want Indian investment to boost their oil output and develop infrastructure.

"African nations asked us to invest in developing their infrastructure, upgrading their refineries and be a partner in development of their market, mainly refined products," Pradhan said.

Equatorial Guinea has offered India equity in oil blocks, the minister said, while Algeria is keen on tie-ups with India for exploration and developing petrochemical projects. Algeria wants to boost oil supplies to India.

Sudan has offered three oil and gas blocks for exploration and development to ONGC Videsh, the overseas arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corp.—Reuters

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Indonesian National Police Chief General Badrodin Haiti (2nd L) and Spokesman of National Police Inspector General Anton Charliyan (L) show plastic bags containing guns used by militants in the 14 January attack during a press conference at the national police headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia, 22 January. PHOTO: XINHUA

China's Dalian Wanda to develop \$10 billion industrial park in India

HONG KONG — Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group said on Friday it would develop a \$10 billion industrial park in northern India, its first project in the country.

The company owned by China's richest man Wang Jianlin said it would be the lead investor in the project's initial infrastructure and also ask Chinese firms to take part.

Construction on the first phase of the 13 square km park in Haryana state is due to start this year, the company said.

"Haryana State will provide Wanda with the most preferential policies," it added in a statement.

Dalian Wanda is aggressively spending on projects and acquisitions ranging from entertainment to financial services in a bid to diversify away from its core, but slowing, domestic real estate operations.

The conglomerate which posted \$44 billion in revenue last year has said it wants more than a third of its revenue to come from abroad by 2020.—Reuters

Four died in worst Canada school shooting in decade, suspect caught



The Dene high school campus of the La Loche Community School. PHOTO: REUTERS

WINNIPEG (Manitoba) / VANCOUVER — The gunman suspected of killing four people and injuring several others in Canada's worst school violence in a decade first shot his two brothers at home before opening fire at the remote community high school, a family friend and the town's acting mayor said on Friday.

Police said a suspect was arrested after the shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan, an impoverished community about 600 km (375 miles) north of the city of Saskatoon.

The town's acting mayor, Kevin Janvier, told the Associated Press that his 23-year-old daughter Marie, a teacher, was shot to death.

He also said police told him

that the gunman first shot two of his siblings at home and then made his way to the school.

Officials have not given a motivation for the shooting or named the suspect or victims.

Mass shootings are rare in Canada, which has stricter gun laws than the United States.

In the country's worst school shooting, 14 college students were killed at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique in 1989.

A shooting in 1992 at Concordia University in Montreal killed four. A family friend said the teenaged suspect shot his two younger brothers before going to the school and shooting a teacher and an assistant.

"After he shot his two brothers, he walked back to school and he shot ... a teacher and a girl.

They're both dead. Four of them died," said Joe Lemaigre, a family friend who lives on the outskirts of La Loche.

"I know the family. Their mother worked in Fort McMurray and his grandfather went to Meadow Lake to do some shopping. That's when he shot them."

The shooting occurred in the high school and a second location, Canadian police said, adding they took the suspect into custody outside the school and seized a gun.

Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, which represents more than 70 of the province's Indian bands, said a few students were in surgery Friday evening in Saskatoon, the province's largest city.—Reuters

EU ministers to discuss extending border checks in free-travel zone

BRUSSELS — European Union ministers will discuss on Monday whether to further extend emergency border controls within the Schengen free-travel zone, which is cracking as a wave of migrants arrive from the Middle East, Africa and beyond.

More than one million people arrived in Europe last year and the numbers show little sign of falling, presenting a major challenge for EU countries that is shaking the foundations of the 28-nation bloc.

While officials in Brussels and Berlin have warned that time is running out to tackle the migration issue or risk the Schengen area falling apart, EU governments have largely failed to deliver on measures they agreed to alleviate the crisis.

Unable to stem the flows, six Schengen members, including Germany and four other EU countries, have resorted to reinstating temporary border checks in the passport-free area. They

can stay in place until May.

But with the migration crisis showing no signs of abating, EU interior ministers will debate during an informal meeting in Amsterdam on Monday what is going to happen afterwards.

Under the Schengen code temporary border checks may be extended for a total period of up to two years. For this to happen, EU leaders have to agree that "persistent serious deficiencies" in controls at Schengen's external borders put its very existence at risk.

"We have not yet launched this mechanism ... (but) this possibility exists, it is there and the Commission is prepared to use it if need be," a spokeswoman for the EU's executive said of the potential extension.

For the extension to happen, the Commission would have to recommend it and the European Council, which brings together 28 EU leaders, approve it by a qualified majority.

"We're not currently in that situation. But interior ministers will on Monday in Amsterdam have the opportunity to discuss... and it's on the agenda what steps should be taken or will need to be taken once we near the end of the maximum period in May," the spokeswoman told a regular news briefing.

The countries that now have temporary border controls in place are Germany, the top destination for refugees and migrants arriving in Europe, Sweden, Austria, France, Denmark and Norway, which is not in the EU but is in Schengen.

EU border agency Frontex said on Friday some 108,000 migrants arrived in December in Greece, the key point of entry for irregular migrants.

That compares to 150,000 arrivals in November and puts the total for Greece and Italy at 1.04 million in 2015, or five times as many as in 2014, Frontex said.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Portugal nominates ex-UN commissioner Guterres for top UN job

LISBON — The Portuguese government nominated its former prime minister and ex-UN high commissioner for refugees Antonio Guterres on Friday as a candidate for United Nations secretary-general.

Ban Ki-moon of South Korea is due to step down from the job at the end of 2016 after serving two five-year terms.

The job customarily rotates between regions, with eastern Europe next on the list, but the foreign ministry said in a statement that Guterres' political career and international experience make him an ideal candidate.

"The government considers that this candidacy is an imperative at a time when, more than at any time before, the world has to mobilise for peace and development," the statement said.—Reuters

Cabin smoke forces Delta plane into emergency landing at Narita

CHIBA — A Delta plane bound for Saipan made an emergency landing at Narita airport yesterday after detecting smoke in the cabin, airport officials said.

The Boeing 757 was en route from Narita to Saipan, the largest island of the Northern Marianas, when it was forced to return shortly after 11am with the 97 crew and passengers abroad unhurt, the officials said, adding that fire engines stood by but were not called into action.—Kyodo News

China taking 'self-isolating' steps in South China Sea: Pentagon

DAVOS — The United States is not looking for conflict with China but steps it is taking in the South China Sea are self-isolating and prompting other countries to seek help from Washington, US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter said on Friday.

"I'm not one of those people who believes conflict between the United States and China is inevitable, it's certainly not desirable, I don't think it's likely," Carter said at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

"We don't seek to ask people to take sides. We do know that people are coming to us increasingly. Why is that? It is because China is taking some steps that I fear are self-isolating, driving towards a result that none of us wants," he said, in reference to Chinese measures in the South China Sea.—Reuters

Argentina's Macri has strong support despite devaluation

BUENOS AIRES — Argentine President Mauricio Macri's popularity is at about 65 per cent two months after he narrowly won office and carried out a shock currency devaluation as part of his plan to revive Latin America's No. 3 economy, two polls showed.

Macri, a conservative, had a popularity rating of 64 per cent in one poll by the Poliarquia consultancy published on Friday and 67 per cent in the latest survey from pollster Isonomia.

His tight election victory on 22 November ended more than a decade of leftist rule and Macri has promised to overhaul interventionist policies that upset investors and the country's farmers.

His first major step after taking office on 10 December was to float Argentina's peso currency. That triggered a 28 per cent devaluation, but the polls released on Friday show Macri has won over many Argentines in his first weeks as president.—Reuters

Mexico speeding efforts to ensure 'Chapo' extradited: president

DAVOS — The Mexican government is speeding up efforts to extradite notorious drug boss Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman to the United States after his recapture earlier this month, President Enrique Pena Nieto said on Friday.

Guzman was caught in early January after six months on the run following a spectacular prison break through a tunnel in his cell floor, embarrassing Pena Nieto and his government.

"The order the Attorney General's office has is to speed up its work to ensure this highly dangerous criminal is extradited as soon as possible," Pena Nieto told the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Guzman's lawyers are working to block his extradition.

While on the run, Guzman met secretly with Hollywood A-list actor Sean Penn at a jungle hideout — a move the Mexican government says was "essential" to his capture.—Reuters

Syria opposition rules out talks before end to Russian air raids



George Sabra, a veteran Christian opposition figure and acting President of the Syrian National Coalition, attends a meeting in Istanbul on 4 July 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — The Saudi-backed Syrian opposition ruled out even indirect negotiations with Damascus before steps including a halt to Russian air strikes, contradicting US Secretary of State John Kerry's insistence that talks will begin next week.

With the five-year-old Syrian war showing no signs of ending, it looks increasingly uncertain that peace talks will begin as planned on 25 January in Geneva, partly because of a dispute over the composition of the opposition delegation.

Peace efforts face huge underlying challenges, among them disagreements over President Bashar al-Assad's future and tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Russia on Friday denied a report that President Vladimir Putin had asked Assad to step down last year.

The Syrian government has said it is ready to take part in the Geneva talks on time. The office of UN

envoy Staffan de Mistura said he was still aiming "at rolling out the talks" on 25 January, and would be "assessing progress over the weekend".

Russia said the talks could be delayed until 27 or 28 January because of the disagreement over who would represent the opposition.

George Sabra, a senior opposition official, said the obstacles to the talks were still there, reiterating demands for the lifting of blockades on populated areas and the release of detainees, measures set out in a 18 December Security Council resolution that endorsed the peace process.

"There must be a halt to the bombardment of civilians by Russian planes, and sieges of blockaded areas must be lifted," said Sabra, who was this week named as a senior member of the opposition delegation to any talks. "The form of the talks does not concern us, but the conditions must be appropriate for the nego-

tiations," he told Reuters.

Sabra's opposition council, the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), was formed in Saudi Arabia last month. It groups Assad's political and armed opponents, including rebel factions fighting Damascus in western Syria.

The west is the main theater of the war between rebels and Damascus, whose military position has been bolstered since September by Russian warplanes and Iranian ground forces.

Russian warplanes continued to bomb many parts of western and northern Syria on Friday, particularly Latakia Province, where the government is pressing an offensive against rebels, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported.

Pro-government forces captured a dam 10 km (6 miles) from the town of Salma, seized last week in one of the most significant gains since Russia intervened. "They've tightened their stranglehold on (rebel) fighters in the Latakia countryside," Observatory director Rami Abdulrahman said.

Later in the day they recaptured another five villages, all in hills overlooking insurgent positions, he said, describing it as a "strategic advance" towards the Turkish border.

Air strikes also hit areas in the east near where government forces have been fighting against Islamic State, which controls most of the province.

Raids believed to be either Russian or Syrian killed 30 civilians near Deir al-Zor city, the Observatory said.—Reuters

US 'hopes' Saudi Arabia may reopen Tehran embassy

DAVOS, (Switzerland) —

The United States hopes that Saudi Arabia may restore diplomatic ties with Iran, a senior State Department official said by phone on Friday ahead of Secretary of State John Kerry's Saturday visit to Riyadh.

Tensions between bitter regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran escalated this month after Riyadh's execution of a Shi'ite Muslim cleric triggered an attack by Iranian protesters on its Tehran embassy, leading the kingdom to cut

diplomatic ties.

However, the US official said Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's statement of regret this week over the embassy storming, which Riyadh accused Tehran of tacitly encouraging, was "significant". Iran denies the allegation.

"Hopefully, maybe that will open up the possibility that the situation will resolve and that the Saudis will find their way forward in reopening their embassy in Tehran," he said.

The official added the United States had no plans to engage on the issue of facilitating a Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, and that Washington — which has no diplomatic ties with Tehran — was not well placed to do so. He added that Kerry had emphasised to the Iranian and Saudi foreign ministers the importance of reconciliation and that Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who visited Riyadh this week, also discussed this with Saudi authorities.—Reuters



An Iranian protester holds up a street sign with the name of Shi'ite cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr during a demonstration against the execution of Nimr in Saudi Arabia, outside the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tehran on 3 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tunisia declares nationwide curfew after violent job protests

TUNIS — Tunisia declared a nationwide curfew on Friday after four days of protests and rioting over jobs and economic conditions, the worst unrest since an uprising five years ago that toppled autocrat Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

There were further demonstrations on Friday in several regions, including Kasserine and Sidi Bouzid. In Tunis, demon-

strators blocked a major thoroughfare and burned tyres in the street. At least 19 people were arrested in the capital in connection with the unrest, a security official said.

Tunisia has been held up as a model for democratic progress since the 2011 revolution that toppled Ben Ali. But there has been rising discontent over a lack of jobs and high liv-

ing costs, especially in the country's interior. There is also concern over attacks by Islamist militants, including an assault on a beach resort in June that killed 39.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that due to the risk to public and private property from the protests it was imposing a curfew from 8pm to 5am with immediate effect.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (538N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAENAM 1 VOY NO (538N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD
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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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MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.1.2016 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.

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LINES

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OPINION

Do what is right rather than act on instructions

Kyaw Thura

ALL eyes are on the start of the next parliament with new representatives, mostly from the National League for Democracy, which won 80% of the parliamentary seats in the general elections last November. It is absolutely imperative that NLD's members, the overwhelming majority in parliament, should not spread themselves too thin in their efforts to reform the government. It is impossible to expect different results without taking different ap-

proaches.

Being elected to parliament is a real thrill for first-time politicians simply because their new posts come with new responsibilities associated with new challenges and anxieties. Understandably, they will find it quite difficult to adjust themselves to the new role.

Constitutionally speaking, the people are the real owner of power and accordingly send their representatives to parliament and ask them to help realise their dreams of enjoying higher living standards, better education, better healthcare and safer environments. Turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to the silent majority will prove fatal to national development on all fronts.

Parliamentarians are responsible for fulfilling the needs of the people and the country as a whole. In doing so, they are required to do what is right rather than act on instructions from above. A glance is enough to reveal how the yes-men culture

has delayed the further development of the country in the past six decades.

Making mistakes is natural. What is unnatural is repeating the same mistake more than twice. In addition, failure is unavoidable in pursuit of success. It should, however, be noted that we do not need to find new ways to fail so as to succeed. We have had enough old ways! All we need is to learn from the wrongs of our own and others.

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.

Will the Deals Agreed at COP21 Really Work?

Khin Maung Myint

THE much awaited Climate Change Conference (COP21) had concluded. Will the outcome of the deliberations there, meet the expectations of the environmentalists and the eco-conscious people around the world? That remains to be seen only after at least five years, as the deals signed on 11th December 2015, the last day of the conference, would come into force, only in 2020.

I'm not being pessimistic, but I wonder if we have that much time to wait, given the situations we are facing today. Personally, I'm of the opinion that we are out of time and cannot afford to wait that long. Although we may be compelled to wait because it was supposed to be the consensus of the conference, definitely the climate will not wait. It would continue to deteriorate as it had been doing all along. The effects of the climate change is getting worse year after year without any relent or sign of improving. So, just imagine what could happen in the five years before the deals come into force. As I'm just a layman, I cannot understand why a wait of five years is necessary, when the issue is a very pressing one and the consequences of which could be worse than any war we had ever endured.

According to the media reports, I noticed that the most significant agreements reached are as follows:---

1. To stop carbon emission altogether;
2. To limit the temperature rise at below 2°C and eventually bring it down to 1.5°C;
3. To cut down on the use

of fossilized fuels and eventually end the fossil fuel age;

4. To grant US\$ 100 billion a year, starting from the year 2020, to the developing countries to fight the climate change;
5. To review the progress every five years.

From the look of it, the goals set are very ambitious, or, rather too ambitious. However, I wonder if they are binding enough, as some leaders, who participated are claiming. Some observers are saying that they are not binding enough, to which I agree, as they failed to introduce the sanctioning, as a tool to bring the countries that do not abide by the decisions of the conference, in line. What use will those agreements and decisions be, if there is no provision to enforce them. There are other agreements, but the above mentioned are the most important for us, so I would like to make a quick run-through analysis.

The first goal is stopping the carbon emission altogether. As far as I understand, their objective is to strike a balance between the **carbon sources** and the **carbon sinks**, to create a **carbon-free** environment. The **carbon source** is the emitter of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and the **carbon sink** absorbs the CO₂ gases and retains them for a long period. **Carbon sinks** are created, primarily by growing more trees, as trees sequester the CO₂ gases and reduce its presence in the atmosphere.

Will it be possible without a really binding force, which most experts believed the present deals lacked, to achieve that goal? Without a sanctioning power vested to some concerned organizations, how would they be able to make a country that does not abide by the rules, to listen. I'm

certain that some countries will not abide accordingly, judging from the fact that the Copenhagen Conference held in 2009 failed, as some countries are reluctant to sign it, because they didn't agree to accept the emission targets. As it lacked a strong binding, it wouldn't be easy to impose the emission targets this time around, too. Unless all the nations of the world act as one and strive towards a common goal of eradicating the carbon, it is bound to fail.

As for the limiting of the temperature rise, some experts are of the opinion that the present rise is above 2°C already, a fact, which the participants of the COP21 seemed to ignore. According to the news about the agreement reached, I am of the opinion that they seem to be taking for granted that the temperature rise haven't exceeded the 2°C ceiling, judging from the wordings used in their agreements. Their target to bring it down to 1.5°C is quite laudable, however, the dateline set to accomplish that goal is very unrealistic. It was set at 2100.

Should I say that is surprising or absurd or ridiculous, given the fact that the temperature rise and the climate change is the most pressing issue that cannot afford to wait that long. I believe no one could really know precisely what would become, even in the five years' wait before the deals come into force, let alone in another eighty five years, that is in 2100. I presume that the deals are in favour of the large emitters of CO₂, by allowing them to continue emitting CO₂ with only slight reductions that wouldn't affect their industries and their economies.

It would also be difficult to do away with the fossilized fuel use altogether, so if a drastic reduction could be achieved, it would benefit the humanity very

much. To discourage the use of such fuels, their productions must be restricted. Limited supplies would raise their prices to great extents that could make the industrialists turn to renewable energies.

I applaud the idea of granting funds to developing nations to fight the climate change, because it agrees with what I had suggested in one of my previous articles. However, strict controls should be in place to protect against misappropriations. Regular inspections should be carried out by un-corrupt officials so that the funds are used effectively. Today it is an undeniable fact that some international officials, who had to oversee the projects around the world, are misappropriating the funds by using high-end model motor vehicles and staying in lavish five star hotels or residences while on assignments.

The provision to review the progress every five years is a very good idea, only if they are carried out without any bias or prejudice. Apart from this view I have no other comments or remarks to make, concerning this agreement.

I would like to quote some observers' opinions and outlooks on the agreements or the deals reached at the COP21. The first one I would like to quote is that of Nick Dearden, the director of the campaign group **Global Justice Now**. He said "It's courageous that the deal on the table is being spun as a success when it undermines the rights of the world's most vulnerable communities and has almost nothing binding to ensure a safe and liable climate for future generations". Another person I would like to quote is Nick Mabey, chief executive of climate diplomacy organization **E3G**. He said the agreement was an ambitious one that would require seri-

ous political commitment to deliver.

Some observers say that the attempt to impose emission targets on countries was the main reason why the Copenhagen talks in 2009 failed. At that time, nations including China, India and South Africa were unwilling to sign up to a condition that they feel could hamper economic growth and development.

There was also an assessment that was published during the two week talks that suggested, the emission reduction targets submitted by the countries as required by the latest agreements would only limit the global temperature rise by 2.7°C.

The agreements also aimed to put an end to the fossil fuel age, which I think is too ambitious and not realistic at all.

In conclusion, I would like to say that nothing significant would be achieved by the agreements reached at the Paris Climate Change Conference. My view is based on the fact that the agreements are not binding enough and also taking into consideration, the above remarks and assessments by experts, that it would only limit the temperature rise by 2.7°C. It is way off the target they had aimed, which was below 2° and to bring it down to 1.5°C by the year 2100. In my opinion the conference made many concessions to please every nation attending the conference to get their consensus and get the deal endorsed unanimously. I am not alone who thought so. There were some critics who said, many changes to the draft deals were made to break the impasse during the deliberations to get the consensus. Well, we'll have to wait and see how many nations would comply by the agreements as to the letter.

Budget constraints stall archaeological dig

BUDGET limitations will put a halt to excavation activities at the site of the ancient city of Thuwunnabumi in Bilin and Kyaikto townships in Mon State by February, according to the Mon State government.

A total budget of K1.1 billion—union government budget of K800,000 and K300,000 from various donors, was allocated use starting from November 2015. However, digging at the site will come to a definite stop next month says Dr. Min Nway Soe, a minister of Mon State.

“We’re nearly out of this year’s budget for excavation activities. We have budget limitations. So we’re going to stop digging with this year’s budget. But excavation will continue again at the end of the year, so that it will be financed by the coming fiscal budget,” he said.

A group of Myanmar archaeological experts were called to carry out excavations with the fiscal budget of 2015 – 2016 at a total of 7 sites around

the vicinity of Winka village in Bilin township, including a mound of earth located in Malawt Kyaung village of Kyaik Hto township which was widely believed to be the site of a religious building.

Excavations began during the fiscal year of 2014 – 2015 with a union budget of K200,000 on mounds of earth which were believed to contain buildings, elephant statues and inscription laid brick work of pagodas from ancient times.

In terms of finds from digs during the follow fiscal year of 2015 – 2016, buildings believed to be to dwellings and monasteries, as well as traditional pottery were discovered, while current excavation activities are being carried out on the mound of earth in Malawt Kyaung village which is believed to contain remnants of a religious building.

It is also known that uncovered ancient town walls and religious buildings could be those of the ancient Thuwunnabumi city. As such, efforts will be



A stalled archaeological dig in Mon State. PHOTO: YARMANYA PAGE

made to preserve the site from damage of the elements by building a cover to shelter the site. Excavations of the ancient town wall were first carried out

in six sites located in Winka village of Bilin township back in 1975. However, wind and rain damage resulted in the deterioration of the sites and now

only two remain. The year 2014 was the first time excavation activities had been re-carried out on the sites in 38 years.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Bitter sweet success of Ywangan coffee beans

NEIGHBOURING China, who annually purchases around 240 tonnes of Ywangan coffee beans, will this year halt its mass purchasing due to a rise in the price of the bean, local coffee producers predict.

The coffee beans from Ywangan township, located in the Danu self-administrated zone of Shan State, entered the world market this year with technical assistance from USAID, but it has resulted in a bitter after taste, causing the price of the commodity to increase.

Local coffee producers believe that the Chinese, who have been purchasing the beans annually at a cheaper rate, will be put off from paying the higher price.

“In years past, China used to buy up as much of the coffee as it could. Households used to sell the beans along with other products. The coffee was sold for a fair price. As China didn’t fuss over the quality they bought it all. This year however saw a USAID initiative to increase the quality of the beans, resulting in the coffee being able to be sold at a higher price. It’s entered the world market,” said U Win

Aung Kyaw, chairperson of the Ywangan Coffee Association.

The Chinese started buying Ywangan coffee beans back in 2012, and during 2015 they had purchased a total of 240 tonnes of the commodity. But, entry into the world market in 2016 at a level of 85 marks, with a support of American coffee experts, has put the beans from the Shan State into competition with beans from other countries.

“The Chinese don’t need such great quality coffee beans. In the manner of regional tradition, coffee growers don’t have machinery. They buy the quality beans which have been spilt by hand and dried under the sun. The Chinese aren’t going to buy the coffee any more this year. The price of Ywangan coffee is now up to that of prices on the world coffee market, so the Chinese can’t afford to purchase it anymore. They don’t want to pay the price which the Japanese are after. The Japanese will buy coffee if it’s good [quality].” said the general secretary of the Mandalay Coffee Association, U Min Hlaing.

A Costa-Rica coffee

crop was introduced into the village of Ywangan back in 1985 as a substitute crop to the poppy which was grown to produce opium. Some forty years later in November 2015 and the Ywangan coffee is a world wide name where 1 viss (1.6kg) of the beans goes for a price of 5,000 kyats.

“The Chinese have some plan to buy the coffee. But we’re not certain yet as to exactly what extent. In previous years, they used to buy coffee beans that were hand shelled here in the village.

But this year we’ve got Korea and Thailand paying a good price for the coffee as the quality has improved. The Chinese built a factory last year in the village of Inn Kone on the southern side of Kyaukse town in which the shells of the coffee beans are split.” said a coffee plot owner from Ywangan.

During 2015, a total of 240 tonnes of Ywangan coffee beans were exported to China, 30 tonnes domestically to the Pyin Oo Lwin Coffee Association, 30 tones to Thailand and a further 50 tonnes around Myanmar, while 18 tonnes were exported to Japan.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

South and SE Asia represents a biogeographically contiguous region rich in numerous species of flora and fauna and several unique fragile ecosystems. The rich biodiversity of the region is reflected by the fact that four megabiodiverse countries of the world are located here including India, China, Malaysia and Indonesia. The other nations in the region with considerable biodiversity are Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. However, poor wildlife management and severe anthropogenic pressure in the region have been seriously impacting the spectacular regional biodiversity. Several species found in this region are not found anywhere else in the world and many of the species here are seriously endangered and threatened with extinction. The factors promoting loss of biodiversity in the region irrespective of the nation include: uncontrolled forest fires, poaching, wildlife trafficking and trade, dependence on forest resources for sustainability of the poor indigenous communities living around adjacent forest belts, unrestricted grazing in forest areas, related anthropogenic pressures like illegal encroachments into forests, poor surveillance and management, lack of awareness and poor funding available for conservation.

For effective management of the regional biodiversity: China, SAARC and ASEAN members need to come together on a common platform in 2016 for preventing poaching, illegal wildlife trade and trafficking and controlling challenges of insurgency, another potent factor impacting rapid loss of regional wildlife. All these nations have common borders that are used by traffickers and insurgent groups for illegal movements. The region having dense forests and difficult terrain, makes surveillance challenging. If all the nations in the region come together to develop some joint mechanism for managing their borders; then poaching and trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products could be efficiently controlled. This could not be achieved overnight. However, I humbly beg all the concerned nations to work on this and develop some comprehensive regional plan and policy to protect the wildlife from 2016. This joint management of forest resources could make a huge difference to conservation efforts in the region and help conserving local wildlife and forests; and prevent depletion of precious biodiversity and other natural resources.

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

Apple's Zadesky, head of electric car project, to leave company: WSJ

NEW YORK — Apple Inc.'s (AAPL.O) Steve Zadesky, who has been overseeing the company's electric car project for the last two years, has said he is leaving the company, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

Zadesky, who previously worked with the iPod and iPhone teams, is leaving for personal reasons not related to his performance, the WSJ said.

It was not clear when the 16-year veteran would leave Apple, the Journal said. As of Friday afternoon his profile on LinkedIn still listed him as working at Apple.

Apple declined to comment.

Apple has never acknowledged it is looking into building an electric car, but the company has recruited dozens of auto experts, many from car makers like Ford or Mercedes-Benz.

Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook went to BMW's (BMWG.DE) headquarters in 2014, and senior Apple executives toured the carmaker's Leipzig factory to learn how it manufactures the i3 electric car, sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The dialogue ended without conclusion because Apple, the world's largest maker of electronic gadgets, appears to want to explore developing a passenger car on its own, one of the sources said.

Also, BMW, the world's biggest seller of premium cars, is being cautious about sharing its manufacturing know-how because it wants to avoid becoming a mere supplier to a software or Internet giant.

But one of the sources said the exploratory talks between senior managers might be revived.—Reuters

Nearly 300,000 recreational drone owners in US database



A DJI Phantom 3 Professional drone with 4K video flies in a drone cage during the 2016 CES trade show in Las Vegas, Nevada on 8 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Nearly 300,000 recreational drone owners have registered their unmanned aircraft in a new federal database intended to help address a surge of rogue drone flights near airports and public venues, US regulators said on Friday.

The Federal Aviation Administration said 295,306 owners registered in the 30-day period after the registry was launched on 21 December and obtained an FAA identification number that must be displayed on their aircraft.

It was not clear how many drones had been registered. The registration applies to drones that weigh between 0.55 pound (250 grams) and 55 pounds (25 kgs).

Experts have said 700,000 to 1 million unmanned aircraft were expected to be given as gifts in the United States last Christmas alone. People who operated their small unmanned aircraft before 21 December must register by 19 February.

Owners who registered dur-

ing the first month had the \$5 fee reimbursed.

"The registration numbers we're seeing so far are very encouraging," FAA Administrator Michael Huerta said in a statement.

Federal officials see online registration as a way to address the safety concerns that have arisen as a result of unauthorised drone flights near airports and crowded public venues across the country.

The current system is available only to owners who intend to use drones exclusively for recreational or hobby purposes. The FAA is also working to make the system available for non-model aircraft users including commercial operators by 21 March.

Officials say the agency is also working with the private sector to streamline registration including through the use of new smart phone apps that could allow a manufacturer or retailer to register a drone automatically by scanning an identification code on the aircraft.—Reuters

Google to pay £130 million UK back taxes, critics want more

LONDON — Google said on Friday it agreed to pay the UK tax authority 130 million pounds in back taxes, prompting criticism from campaigners and academics who said the UK tax authority had agreed a "sweetheart deal".

Google, now part of Alphabet Inc, has been under pressure in recent years over its practice of channelling most profits from European clients through Ireland to Bermuda where it pays no tax on them.

In 2013, the company faced a UK parliamentary inquiry after a Reuters investigation showed the company employed hundreds of sales people in Britain despite saying it did not conduct sales in the country, a key plank in its tax arrangements.

Google said the UK tax authority had challenged the company's low tax returns for the years since 2005 and had now agreed to settle the probe in return for a payment of 130 million pounds.

It said it had also agreed a basis on which tax in the future would be calculated.

"The way multinational companies are taxed has been debated for many years and the international tax system is changing as a result. This settlement reflects that shift," a Google spokesman said in a statement.

A finance ministry spokeswoman welcomed the deal saying, "This is the first important

victory in the campaign the Government has led to ensure companies pay their fair share of tax on profits made in the UK and is a success for our new tax laws".

However, Preme Sikka, Professor of Accounting at Essex University said the settlement looked like a "sweetheart deal."

He said that for a company that enjoyed UK turnover of around 24 billion pounds over the period and margins of 30 per cent, the settlement represented an effective tax rate in the low single digits for Google.

"This is a lousy number and we need to know more," he said. Richard Murphy, a tax expert who has advised the opposition Labour

leader, Jeremy Corbyn, on economic policy, said the deal was "a disaster" and that, based on the turnover and margins Google enjoyed, "They should have been paying 200 million pounds a year."

Between 2005 and 2013, Google had UK turnover of 17 billion pounds and its main UK unit reported a tax charge of 52 million pounds, filings showed. In 2014, it had UK revenues of around 4 billion pounds, according to its annual report, but has not yet published its UK tax charge. Labour's finance spokesman John McDonnell said the government should publish more information about the Google deal.—Reuters



The neon Google sign in the foyer of Google's new Canadian engineering headquarters in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fewer orders at Apple suppliers could signal first iPhone sales decline

TAIPEI — Some of Apple Inc's main Asian suppliers expect revenues and orders to drop this quarter, indicating iPhone sales are almost certain to post their first annual decline since the flagship product was launched almost a decade ago.

The forecasts of lackluster sales by companies including Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC), the world's biggest contract chipmaker, and smartphone camera lens producer Largan Precision Co Ltd add to concerns about Apple's outlook amid slowing global demand for smartphones.

Industry executives say the latest iPhone did not have enough new features from the previous model to tempt users, raising fears that Apple's innovative streak — and the profits it has generated — may be running its course.

Apple, which reports December-quarter results on Tuesday, declined to comment on its sales outlook. "Visibility is only a month at a time and demand is quite weak," Largan Precision Chief Executive Adam Lin told an earnings briefing, referring to his company's overall business.

Other suppliers said Apple now only gave them orders one month in advance, instead of the usual three months.

"We have to be very flexible in terms of capacity," said an executive at one of those firms, declining to identify their company or be named due to a confidentiality agreement that prevents Apple suppliers from discussing its order book.

Apple has previously said that individual data from its supply chain was not an accurate reflection of its outlook.

But TSMC, which makes some of the chips that go into iPhones, forecast this month that first-quarter revenues would likely fall by up to 11 per cent year-on-year, adding that demand for high-end smartphones would also be weak.

An 11 per cent quarterly decline would be the steepest revenue drop for TSMC in almost 7 years, Thomson Reuters data shows.

Earlier this month, people familiar with the matter told Reuters that Taiwan-based Foxconn, which assembles most iPhones, had taken a rare decision to cut

working hours over a major holiday during which workers usually rack up overtime.

Foxconn, the trade name for Hon Hai Precision Industry Co Ltd, saw its December revenues slump by a fifth and 2015 sales miss expectations.

A more detailed picture about Apple's outlook could emerge next week if key suppliers including LG Display Co Ltd, SK Hynix Inc and Samsung Electronics Co provide first-quarter forecasts when they report December-quarter earnings.

First-quarter revenues at both LG Display and Hynix are expected to fall around 10 per cent, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S data. Analysts say iPhone sales could pick up during the second half of the year, when the company usually launches new products, but with competitors such as Samsung Electronics and Huawei Technologies Co Ltd sharpening their edge, some suppliers are not so sure.

"The pace of innovation has slowed. Apple is going toward the same direction as other brand names," said another Taiwanese Apple supplier.—Reuters

Jeff Bezos' space company successfully re-flies, lands rocket

CAPE CANAVERAL — Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' space transportation company, Blue Origin, successfully launched and landed a suborbital rocket for a second time, a key step in its quest to develop reusable boosters, the company said on Friday.

The New Shepard rocket and capsule, which is designed to carry six passengers, blasted off from a launch site in West Texas at 11:22am CST (1722 GMT) and landed itself minutes later back on the launch pad, the company said in a statement.

The rocket that flew on Friday was the same vehicle that made a successful test launch

and landing two months ago, demonstrating reuse, Bezos said in a statement posted on Blue Origin's website 10 hours after the flight.

"I'm a huge fan of rocket-powered vertical landing," Bezos wrote. "To achieve our vision of millions of people living and working in space, we will need to build very large rocket boosters. And the vertical landing (system) scales extraordinarily well."

Fellow tech titan Elon Musk's SpaceX in December successfully returned a rocket to a landing pad in Florida after it blasted off on a satellite-delivery mission.

Blue Origin and SpaceX are

among a handful of companies working to develop rockets that can fly themselves back to Earth so they can be refurbished and flown again, potentially slashing launch costs.

SpaceX on Sunday attempted to land a rocket on a platform floating in the Pacific Ocean, but one of the booster's four landing legs gave way and the rocket keeled over and exploded.

For now, Blue Origin is flying suborbital rockets, which do not have the speed to put spacecraft into orbit around Earth.

The company is working on a more powerful rocket engine, with testing slated to begin this year, Bezos said.—Reuters



Amazon founder and Blue Origin founder Jeff Bezos (L) announces plans to build a rocket manufacturing plant and launch site at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

More evidence HIV/AIDS fight requires multiple approaches

LONDON — A currently available pill could significantly curb new HIV infections among gay and bisexual men in the UK, if prevention and treatment programmes are also expanded, researchers say.

Wider use of the once-a-day pill, along with HIV blood tests and treatment among very sexually active men who have sex with men, could potentially reduce new cases by about 44 per cent by 2020, researchers say.

The new research shows that "combination approaches, even if implemented among only a targeted or limited population, can have a larger impact than single

interventions alone," said Dr Jason Kessler, an HIV researcher who was not involved with the new study.

Of the more than 100,000 UK residents with HIV infections in 2014, about 43 per cent were gay or bisexual men, the authors of the study write in The Lancet HIV.

In this population, attempts to reduce transmission of the AIDS-causing virus by focusing on condom use and frequent blood tests have been ineffective, the authors say.

A new Gilead drug marketed as Truvada (containing tenofovir disoproxil and emtricitabine) has

emerged as another prevention strategy.

Rather than waiting to catch the virus, people take Truvada before they get infected. Truvada is thought to cut the risk of sexually-transmitted HIV by 90 per cent.

This practice of treating people with medicine to prevent them from catching a communicable disease is known as PrEP, which stands for "pre-exposure prophylaxis."

For the new study, Narat Punyacharoensin of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and colleagues used computers to estimate the number of new HIV cases among gay and

bisexual men in the UK by 2020 and then to predict how different prevention methods might change the number of infections.

They estimated that nearly 17,000 gay and bisexual men ages 15 to 64 would become newly infected with HIV between 2014 and 2020.

By itself, expanding PrEP to all gay and bisexual men in the UK would prevent about 59 per cent of infections, the computer model estimates. Even just targeting those at highest risk of HIV infection with PrEP would still reduce infections by more than half.

A large percentage of HIV

infections could also be prevented if the only thing gay and bisexual men did was to reduce the number of repeat sexual partners or decreased unprotected sex with repeat sexual partners, the researchers say.

But even if PrEP — combined with yearly HIV testing and a test-and-treat programme — were used only by the men in the top 25 per cent for sexual activity, more than 7,000 new cases could be prevented by 2020, they estimate. Compared to treating every gay and bisexual man in the UK, targeting the most sexually active people is feasible, according to the researchers.—Reuters

Japanese researchers create human ear cartilage from iPS cells

TOKYO — The University of Tokyo and Kyoto University said Friday they have succeeded in creating human ear cartilage from iPS cells.

The University of Tokyo released photos of a rat with cartilage in the shape of a human ear implanted on its back. The researchers hope they can use the new technology in treating patients born without ears or with small ears, with a clinical study involving humans expected to start in five years.

The researchers at the two state-run universities cultured human induced pluripotent stem cells into cartilage cells, which were then made into numerous tiny balls.

They filled a plastic tube with the diameter of about 3 millimetres with the balls. Using three such tubes, the researchers shaped a human ear and implanted it onto the back of a rat.

In about two months, the tubes dissolved, leaving behind on the animal's back what looks like a 5-centimetre human ear.

Induced pluripotent stem cells could grow into various human tissues and they are considered promising in the field of regenerative medicine.—Kyodo News



A rat with cartilage in the shape of a human ear implanted on its back. The University of Tokyo and Kyoto University said on 22 January 2016, they have succeeded in creating human ear cartilage from iPS cells. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Save the Children faces funding gap for Ethiopian drought crisis

NAIROBI — Save the Children charity said on Friday it had raised less than a third of what it needed for its campaign to help Ethiopia cope with drought which has left 10.2 million people critically short of food.

Experts say the drought is worse than the one in 1984, when years of conflict followed by the failure of rains led to a famine that killed up to a million people.

This time, Ethiopia is better positioned to respond after rapid economic growth, but still risks being overwhelmed as it digs into strategic food reserves.

"The scale of the need is really huge and has outstripped the Ethiopian government's ability to do this on their own," Save the Children President Carolyn Miles told Reuters from the United States after a visit to Ethiopia.

The drought has mainly been blamed on El Niño, a weather pattern causing rainfall to decline in some areas of the world and floods elsewhere.

Save the Children has been

seeking \$100 million for the next 12 to 18 months, but so far has only \$30 million. "One of the hardest things right now is getting the awareness up," Miles said.

The UN World Food Programme is also facing a funding shortfall. It needs \$480 million to help meet the needs of about 7.6 million of 10.2 million at risk in coming months, but has raised just under \$60 million, a WFP official said.

Save the Children has ranked Ethiopia a Category 1 emergency, like the Syrian crisis.

Miles said the Syrian conflict, rumbling on for five years, had "really stretched the humanitarian system", making it harder to find international support for Ethiopia.

Ethiopia was showing more openness than in the past in publicising the crisis, which could help.

"But because there is so much stress and strain on the humanitarian system, I am not sure how much of a difference that will make," she said.

Ethiopia was using its food

reserves cautiously to make them last, Miles said. Some families received rations for not all of their members, while handouts were often made only every other month.

More international aid would make the government "more comfortable using (the) reserves," she said.

Almost 5.8 million of those facing critical food shortages are children, with 400,000 severely malnourished or close to it, making them highly susceptible to pneumonia or malaria, Miles said.

"We really want people to act now when we can actually save those children's lives," she said.—Reuters

"One of the hardest things right now is getting the awareness up."

Carolyn Miles
President of Save the Children



AEGIS Brokerslink Myanmar Representative Office Grand Opening Ceremony

January 23rd, 2016 - AEGIS Brokerslink AG a global broking company, specialising in delivering world class insurance and reinsurance business in particular our strength in sectors such as: aviation, engineering, employee benefits, officially held the grand opening ceremony of our representative office in Yangon, Myanmar with the support of Dr. Maung Maung Thein - Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Aye Min Thein, Managing Director of Myanma Insurance and Commercial Councillor Vietnamese Embassy and attended by many distinguished Guests.

As Myanmar continue to open up to the world and undergoing tremendous growth, AEGIS Brokerslink is proud to be associated with the vast economic development and bright future of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

With Myanmar's proud history, friendly people and a young population, rich resources, we are sure of the country's sustained progress thus creating a milestone opportunity for the development and growth of the nascent home insurance industry.

With the support and guidance of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration and Myanmar Insurance, we are strategically committed to the country's insurance sector and thereby indirectly facilitating support for all economic sectors through effective risk and insurance management as the country forge ahead.

Our Myanmar representative office's key role will be to perform market research, support and liaison activities on behalf of our Group and our Global Partners around the world, we will engage with potential local partners and carefully review opportunities for a future insurance broking operation in the country. With this unique "on the ground" presence we will actively interact, build strong relationships with Myanma Insurance, the local insurance industry through training, technical collaborations, as well as providing a gateway to the experience, and know-how of regional and global insurance and reinsurance markets.

Haiti postpones Sunday's presidential election as violence erupts

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Haiti called off its presidential election on Friday, two days before it was due, over concerns of escalating violence sparked by the opposition candidate's refusal to take part in a process he said was riddled with fraud.

Pierre Louis Opont, president of Haiti's electoral council, said the run-off vote was being pushed back for security reasons. But he did not say when the election, already postponed twice before, would be rescheduled.

The announcement led to jubilation from demonstrators marching to oppose the election. They danced on the streets of the capital Port-au-Prince, but the mood quickly darkened. Gunshots were fired as protesters clashed with police.

The postponement is nevertheless expected to ease unrest after days of protests in the deeply impoverished country of about 10 million people, at pains to rebuild from a devastating earthquake six years ago and to emerge from decades of political dysfunction.

Several western nations, fearing a new era of instability in the Caribbean nation, have been assisting Haiti in its election preparations. The US govern-

ment alone has chipped in \$30 million.

But opposition candidate Jude Celestin said last week he would not take part in the election, alleging a first round vote in October was rigged to favor the ruling party candidate.

"The fact that the electoral council was forced to give up the electoral farce is a victory for the Haitian people," said Jean-Charles Moise, another opposition candidate who said fraud led to his first-round defeat.

Hamstrung with weak institutions, Haiti has struggled to build a stable democracy since the overthrow of the 1957-1986 dictatorship of the Duvalier family and ensuing military coups and election fraud.

The government held an unscheduled cabinet meeting to plan measures to "guarantee public order and the security of lives and property," the prime minister's office said in statement without giving details.

In a statement explaining the postponement, the election commission reported that seven election offices and an official's home had been torched and several other offices were attacked, including by armed men.—Reuters

Michigan suspends workers, restores Flint mayoral powers in water crisis

FLINT, (Mich)/WASHINGTON — Michigan Governor Rick Snyder on Friday suspended two state workers in connection with water testing failures in the Flint contamination crisis and the state restored some powers to Mayor Karen Weaver.

Snyder, who NBC news reported has hired a crisis PR firm, suspended two Michigan Department of Environmental Quality workers in an increasing national furor over elevated lead readings in tap water and the blood of some children.

Snyder apologised this week to Flint residents for the state's failures. Reports have pointed to errors at the city, state and federal level, but the bulk of the blame has been put on the DEQ, a state agency whose director re-

signed at the end of last year over Flint's water issues.

"Some DEQ actions lacked common sense and that resulted in this terrible tragedy in Flint," Snyder said in a statement.

Shortly before Snyder's announcement, the Michigan Treasurer said Mayor Weaver who was elected in November to lead the city that is in receivership, can now hire and fire the city administrator and department heads. Weaver met on Tuesday with President Barack Obama over the water contamination crisis gripping her city. A state-appointed board on Friday unanimously recommended that some powers be returned to the Flint mayor as the financially strapped city transitions to local control from the state

control that once included an emergency manager.

Flint's lead contamination problem came after a 2014 switch in water supplies to save money. "I recognise, and we recognize, that we have a lot of work we have to do, I believe this is a step forward and I appreciate it," Weaver told the board via a conference call.

The suspensions came one day after the US Environmental Protection Agency said a top regional official would resign because of the crisis. A succession of Flint emergency managers appointed by Snyder to try to solve the city's fiscal woes have come under criticism. Their cost-cutting measures exposed Flint to a local water supply that was more corrosive than the previous

water supply and caused more lead to leach from aging water pipes.

Snyder, who has rejected calls to resign, blamed the water crisis on bureaucracy, citing a cultural problem with civil servants more focused on technicalities than common sense.

"You have a handful of ... 'experts' that were career civil service people that made terrible decisions... and we have to live with the consequences with that. They work for me so I accept that responsibility and we're going to fix this problem," he told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" programme on Friday.

Residents complained about the water within weeks of the change in supplies, but officials did not take action until October 2015 after tests



Michigan National Guard members help to distribute water to a line of residents in their cars in Flint, Michigan on 21 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

showed some tap water and children with elevated levels of lead, a neurotoxin that causes brain damage and other health issues.

The ordeal has raised questions about the effect of inequality. Flint, a poorer, majority African-American

city of 100,000 is about an hour north of Detroit.

Asked if the public health crisis was a case of so-called environmental racism, Snyder said "absolutely not," adding that officials have distributed bottled water and filters.—Reuters

Auto Telephone numbers of Yangon South Dagon Exchange Area will be changed

To provide better quality and upgraded services for its auto telephone numbers, Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications will substitute IP System NGN (Next Generation Network) with MSAN (Multi Service Access Node) of South Dagon KY Exchange. Hence, the numbers which start with (595xxx) of South Dagon Exchange will be replaced with the numbers which start with (234-8xxx) of Ahlone ZXSS10SS1B (SoftSwitch) Exchange on 19th February, 2016. Those new numbers will have both voice call and ADSL internet access. Current ADSL users do not need to register again. New ADSL users will need to register to Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications for internet access.

Static IP of South Dagon KY Exchange Area will be changed into Static IP Range (172.x.x.x) Network. For further information and preparation for changes, Current ADSL Static IP users are requested to contact telephone numbers (01-650870 and 01-662707) of ADSL office at the Information Technology Department of Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications

Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications

Auto Telephone numbers of Yangon Htauk Kyant Exchange Area will be changed

To provide better quality and upgraded services for its auto telephone numbers, Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications will substitute IP System NGN (Next Generation Network) with MSAN (Multi Service Access Node) of Htauk Kyant KY Exchange. Hence, the numbers which start with (600xxxx) of Htauk Kyant KY Exchange in Yangon will be replaced with the numbers which start with (943-7xxx) of Mayangone Soft-X3000 (SoftSwitch) Exchange on 12th February, 2016. Those new numbers will have both voice call and ADSL internet access. Current ADSL users do not need to register again. New ADSL users will need to register to Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications for internet access.

Static IP of Htauk Kyant KY Exchange in Yangon will be changed into Static IP Range (172.x.x.x) Network. For further information and preparation for changes, Current ADSL Static IP users are requested to contact telephone numbers (01-650870 and 01-662707) of ADSL office at the Information Technology Department of Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications.

Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications

Oscars' Film Academy pledges to diversify membership by 2020

LOS ANGELES — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, organiser of the Oscar awards, pledged on Friday to double its membership of women and minorities by 2020 through an ambitious affirmative action plan that includes stripping some older members of voting privileges.

The announcement came amid a backlash over the absence of actors or filmmakers of colour in this year's Oscars nominations, prompting actor Will Smith, director Spike Lee and a handful of others to say they plan to shun the Oscars ceremony on 28 February.

The membership rule changes, among the most sweeping in the academy's 88-year-old history, were unanimously adopted by the organisation's Board of Governors on Thursday night, the group said in a statement. But the reforms will not affect voting for this year's Academy Awards.

A lack of diversity within the academy, whose ranks consist mostly of older, white men, has long been cited as a barrier to

racial inclusion in Hollywood's highest honours.

But many critics point to the scarcity of opportunities for minorities and women on either side of the camera in a film industry that largely relegates them to marginal or stereotyped roles.

Academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs, who became the first African-American to assume the organisation's top post in the

summer of 2013, hailed Friday's move as demonstrating the academy is ready "to lead and not wait for the industry to catch up."

But Ava DuVernay, who became the first black filmmaker to earn a Golden Globe bid for her for Oscar-nominated civil rights drama "Selma" last year, said the academy's action was a long time in coming and taken only under duress.—Reuters



An Oscar statuette. PHOTO: REUTERS

Jessica Alba's fitness mantra

LOS ANGELES — Actress Jessica Alba says the only reason she works out is to stay mentally fit.

The 34-year-old "Sin City" star said she has never been obsessed with fitness and does not mind having cheat days, reported ET online.

"I'm healthy, but I don't go to

extremes. I exercise for my mental health, but can mow through a box of cookies with the best of them," Alba said. Not only herself, but for the actress health of her kids is also important.

"My kids are my top priority. Their health and well-being come first," the mother to 7-year-old Honor and 4-year-old Haven said.

Apart from leading a healthy lifestyle, Alba has also taught her daughters the importance of being eco-friendly.

"I try to teach my girls by doing. We fill water bottles instead of buying new ones, recycle and talk about what products are safe and unsafe for them and the earth."—PTI

DiCaprio donates USD 15 Million to conservation projects



Cast member Leonardo DiCaprio poses during a photo call for the movie "The Revenant" in Rome, Italy on 16 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio has donated USD 15 million from his foundation in an effort to fast-track ways to preserve the planet.

The 41-year-old actor made the announcement at the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award Ceremony in Davos, Switzerland, reported US magazine.

"The Revenant" actor was honoured for his work in tackling the ongoing climate crisis.

"Generosity is the key to our future. With that, I am pleased to announce today over USD 15 million in new commitments from LDF to fast-track cutting-edge sustainability and conservation projects around the world," DiCaprio said. A portion from the funds will go toward protecting the last remaining rain forests, including the Amazon in Ecuador, where the palm oil industry is threatening the vast span of land.—PTI

Bennet sisters don swords in 'Pride and Prejudice and Zombies'

LOS ANGELES — Jane Austen's classic tale "Pride and Prejudice" gets a somewhat different makeover for cinema screens this winter with heroine Elizabeth Bennet armed with a sword and fighting zombies.

"Downton Abbey" and "Cinderella" actress Lily James plays the much-loved character in "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies", where a new enemy adds to the story of love amid the social classes in 19th century England.

"Well, I think it's like Shakespeare, you do it a million different ways and it still stands because it's such a timeless classic and beautiful piece of writing," James said at the film's premiere in Los Angeles on Thursday night.

"I think it's the same with this. I think actually it survives being butchered, it survives the zombies and the story and the love story all stay true and potent."

Charles Dance portrays Mr Bennet in the movie with actresses Bella Heathcote, Suki Waterhouse, Ellie Bamber and Millie Brady playing Elizabeth's sisters.

"The Bennet sisters were like Spice Girls with swords. We were so kick ass," James said. "The women pull the shots in this movie."

It's all about girl power and it was really fun."

The film is based on the book of the same name published in 2009.

"Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" is set for release from February.—Reuters

Beyonce to release new album after Super Bowl performance?

LOS ANGELES — R&B queen Beyonce Knowles will reportedly drop her new sixth album out of the blue after her performance with Coldplay at the Super Bowl halftime show on 7 February.

34-year-old Beyonce's album has been ready since late 2015 but she delays it to avoid competition with Adele's comeback LP "25", reported Aceshowbiz.

"She held off on a release as a code of honour to Adele, so their records didn't clash," said an insider.

"Beyonce doesn't have the

pressure of releasing an album and is doing bits here and there because she and her team know it is Adele's time to shine. The last few months have been all about her comeback," the insider continued.

While Beyonce has not said anything about working on a new album, a bunch of Twitter and Instagram posts show that she's up to something big. Recently, she was reported filming a new music video in New Orleans.

Her last album, "Beyonce", was released in December 2013 without prior notice.—PTI



Lily James poses at the premiere of "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" in Los Angeles, California on 21 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Algiers' tumbledown Casbah stirs loyalty among residents

ALGIERS — With almost each step you take in the narrow, winding alleys of the tumbledown Casbah in Algiers, a resident approaches to remind you of the past glories of this UNESCO World heritage site.

Historic monuments include the 1,000-year-old Sidi Ramdane mosque and former fortress, and the Princess Khedaoudj al Amia Palace, now converted into a national museum of art and traditions.

Houses are passed down along generations, but decay and damage from an earthquake in 2003 are causing some to consider a move to modern apartments, with financial backing from the government. Others refuse to leave the tight-knit community and neighbourhood they have called home for decades.

"I was born here and will die here too," said Fatouma, 89, a mother of nine daughters and four sons.

"They want to rehouse us, but I am not leaving the place where I grew up."

Concrete breezeblocks are used to repair Moorish as well as more modern buildings, while functional iron doors have replaced intricate old wooden ones.

Many houses have collapsed, the debris cleared by local authorities to make way for playgrounds.

The Casbah's fading grandeur can be explained by the high cost of upkeep, which few residents can afford. In this neighbourhood of about 70,000, people earn a living working in office jobs, as health workers, domestic staff, taxi drivers, security guards and street vendors. Artisans still based in the Casbah include those making brassware and jewelry, woodworkers and traditional dressmakers.

In the 1990s, during a civil war in which an estimated 200,000 people died,

the Algiers Casbah was a stronghold of Islamist militants. Policemen, journalists and citizens were killed inside its maze-like alleys. Doors and windows were shuttered.

The 1966 Gillo Pontecorvo movie "The Battle of Algiers" shows how the neighborhood was also central in Algeria's struggle for independence from France in the 1950s, serving as a hide-out for separatists.

In the modern-day Casbah, the background sounds are pop music, birdsong or the Islamic call to prayer, rather than gunfire or explosions.

The authorities are trying to deal with the decay of what many see as a jewel in the national crown. Rehousing has been part of this effort so far, but has not been popular with residents.

If the heirs to a Casbah property agree to give it to the state, they can each be rehoused in apartments per-



A woman helps her daughter as she plays on a slide in the old city of Algiers Al Casbah, Algeria December 3, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

manently. If not, families are rehoused temporarily and return once renovation work is complete.

"I don't want to leave the Casbah and live in an area that's different to where I grew up," says Re-

douane, 26. "If I am forced to I will move but I am sure will visit the Casbah very often."

As for Fatouma, she says any government financial help will not sway her from wanting to stay in

her house, with its views of shipping in the Mediterranean in the background.

"They can re-house my children and their respective families, but not me," she says. "I want to die in the Casbah." —Reuters

Mizkan to try to make Brazilian hand-roll sushi popular in Japan

NAGOYA — Vinegar maker Mizkan Holdings Co said Friday it will try to make the Brazilian version of hand-roll sushi popular in Japan as it aims to spur vinegar consumption in the year of the Rio

de Janeiro Olympics.

The company based in Handa, Aichi Prefecture, in central Japan, has come up with various recipes for "temaki," a Japanese and Brazilian fusion cuisine, for use by restau-

rants in Japan.

The ingredients to be mixed with cooked vinegared rice and wrapped in seaweed include salmon, cream cheese, shrimp, vegetables and fried chicken. Balsamic vine-

gar is also used for some recipes.

According to Mizkan, temaki is a popular fast food in Brazil, where around 600 restaurants offering it, known as temakeria, are in business. Some temaki uses fruits such as mangoes, and it is eaten with a spicy sauce. Temakeria is also opening in big cities in Europe and the United States.

Mizkan will provide its temaki recipes to restaurants in Japan and ask them to adopt temaki as new menu items. "We hope temaki will become an everyday item in Japan as well," a company official said.—Kyodo News



Various "temaki," or the Brazilian version of hand-roll sushi, cooked with recipes created by vinegar maker Mizkan Holdings Co. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Heavy snow, cold temperatures expected in Japan on weekend

TOKYO — The Japan Meteorological Agency warned Friday of heavy snow and cold temperatures this weekend mainly in western Japan as a cold air mass flows into the Japanese archipelago from Saturday to Monday.

The agency also warned of road and rail disruptions, and damage to crops as snow is forecast even for the plains.

The cold air mass is the strongest this winter, enhancing the winter air pressure system across the archipelago.

Stormy weather is predicted mainly on Sunday in the Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu regions, the agency said.

Snow is expected to begin falling in the Kanto area, including Tokyo, from late Saturday afternoon, with about 1 centimetre of snow expected in metropolitan Tokyo by 6 pm Saturday.

Temperatures are expected to fall below zero on Sunday and Monday in Osaka, Hiroshima, Takamatsu, Kochi and Fukuoka.—Kyodo News

mitv Myanmar International

(24-1-2016 07:00 am ~ 25-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Back To A Paradise (Ep-1)
07:56	Am	Scented Buddha Images
08:03	Am	News
08:20	Am	The World Peace Buddhist Conference

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Saturday Repeat (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)
(03:00 Pm ~ 04:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 08:00 Am)

04:03	Pm	News
04:26	Pm	Myanmar Prehistory
04:50	Pm	Culture Show: Theatrical Art
05:03	Pm	News
05:26	Pm	A Day Tour On A Cart (Bagan Trip)

05:38	Pm	ABU Radio Song Festival
05:50	Pm	A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-2)
06:00	Pm	The World Peace Buddhist Conference Closing Ceremony

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	To My Dream City (Part- 2)
07:45	Pm	Now in Yangon
07:50	Pm	Today Myanmar
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	An Aficionado Of Alluring Antiques

(09:00 Pm ~ 10:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (05:00 Pm ~ 06:00 Pm)

10:03	Pm	News
10:27	Pm	The Most Prominent Resort And Residence -Ngapali
10:51	Pm	Lines & Wash Painting

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)
(03:00 Am ~ 06:00 Am) - Today Repeat (03:00 Pm ~ 06:00 Pm)
(06:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (10:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)

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

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(24-1-2016, Sunday)

6:00 pm

- Musical Programme

8:15 pm

- Fashion Music

8:35 pm

- Sing & Enjoy

9:05 pm

- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

9:40 pm

- Myanmar MovieMovie

Midnight

- Close Down

From 24.1.2016 (Sunday) 06:00 Pm
To 25.1.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Rainy Manchester ideal for Messi, jokes Aguero



Crystal Palace's Yohan Cabaye in action with Manchester City's Sergio Aguero during Barclays Premier League at Etihad Stadium on 16 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — It rains hard and often and is a far cry from the beaches of Barcelona, yet Argentina striker Sergio Aguero believes world player of the year Lionel Messi would find Manchester to his liking.

Manchester City striker Aguero said he had extolled the virtues of England's north-west city to his compatriot and Barcelona forward who is the most valuable player in the game.

Messi, 28, has expressed no desire to leave Barca, where he is contracted to until 2019, but Abu-Dhabi owned Manchester City, backed by the billions of Sheikh Mansour, are one of the few clubs who could afford to buy him.

"He already knows there's no beach!," Aguero, who has scored 120 goals in 185 appearances during his four-and-a-half years at the Etihad, told Sky Sports.

"We play every three days so we just eat, rest between games — so the weather is not really that important."

"So I told him that Manchester is ideal as a city because you stay at home all day, you play every three days, we can eat, we can meet up, drink Mate (a traditional Argentinian drink) and play football together."

Real Madrid would also have the resources to sign Messi but Barca would never sell a player of his stature to their arch-rivals.

According to the latest valuations released by Football-Observatory.com, Messi's transfer value is put at 251 million euros (\$271 million), nearly 100 million euros more than the next on their list, Brazil striker Neymar.

Earlier this month Messi won the FIFA Ballon d'Or (world player of year) award for a fifth time.—Reuters

Sick but slick Wawrinka through to fourth round

MELBOURNE — Stan Wawrinka let his tennis do the talking as he brushed off the after-effects of a cold to breeze into the fourth round of the Australian Open with a 6-2, 6-3, 7-6(3) victory over Lukas Rosol on Saturday.

A croaky voice and blood-shot eyes told the tale of the illness that has laid low the fourth seed this week but the 18 aces and 45 winners he conjured up on court suggested his game was largely unaffected.

"I just had a cold a little bit, but nothing serious, nothing big," the 2014 Melbourne Park champion said.

"As long as I'm feeling good on the court, that's the most important thing. The rest, if I don't have a voice, if I feel a little bit sick, it doesn't matter."

Wawrinka had spent just over 3 1/2 hours on court in his first two matches at Melbourne Park, but needed 115 minutes to dispatch his fellow 30-year-old.

The French Open champion defused the tall Czech's serve and broke it four times over the first two sets before clinching the third on a tie-breaker.

"I'm happy the way I'm playing so far," said the Swiss.

"Today I think the beginning I start really well, not only the serve, but returning almost every shot, making him play a lot, being aggressive, taking

the ball early.

"Happy with the match in general. Three sets, it's a good win again."

Renowned for his fearsome backhand, Wawrinka said a big improvement in his forehand had contributed considerably to his recent success.

"For sure it's been a key for those big matches that I won," he said.

"In the past I was struggling in the important points, important moment with my forehand. Now I don't anymore. Now I trust my forehand, that's for sure."

The victory was the 2014 Australian Open champion's 400th on the ATP Tour and came a day after fellow Swiss Roger Federer recorded his 300th win at grand slams and Maria Sharapova her 600th WTA Tour-level win.

The French Open champion expects a tougher test in the fourth round when he meets Canada's 13th-seed Milos Raonic, a 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 winner over Serbia's Victor Troicki on Saturday.

"I think it depends a lot on my game, of what I'm going to do, of where I'm going to be on the court, the way I'm going to serve," he said.

"In general, I always find some solution to break his serve, even if it is really tough. We'll see. Hopefully I can be ready and be strong enough to take that one."—Reuters

'Aussie' Konta wins over Melbourne Park crowds

MELBOURNE — Johanna Konta spurned the country of her birth to play tennis for Britain but the Sydney-born 24-year-old has enjoyed huge support from the Melbourne Park crowds during her run to the Australian Open fourth round. After upsetting Venus Williams in her opening round match, Konta said she had no intentions of switching allegiance back to Australia but there was no cold shoulder from the crowd at Hisense Arena on Saturday.

Konta demolished 66th-ranked Czech Denisa Allertova 6-2, 6-2, making her the first British woman to reach the last 16 in Australia since Jo Durie in 1987.

"I have been amazed with how much support I've gotten, but I don't know if that's a British contingent here or if that's from my Australian roots," Konta told reporters. "I'm just very grateful for all the people that do come out. Whether they are supporting me or the player I'm playing against, it's always good to have a lot of people around. It brings good energy." The loss of locally born athletes to other nations, particularly those who end up representing arch-rival Britain, is difficult for sports-obsessed Australia to swallow.



Britain's Johanna Konta. PHOTO: REUTERS

Konta has been compared by local media to Laura Robson, who was born in Melbourne but ended up winning a mixed doubles silver medal for Team GB at the London Games.

Australia, however, has also embraced foreign-born tennis players, with Muscovite Daria Gavrilova switching nationality from Russia only weeks ago — just in time to help her adopted nation win the Hopman Cup and also make a run to the fourth

round at Melbourne Park.

Other players with more tenuous links have been 'adopted', including Belgian four-times grand slam champion Kim Clijsters, who was affectionately known as 'Aussie Kim' due to her relationship with local champion Lleyton Hewitt.

Former French Open champion Ana Ivanovic was also embraced as 'Aussie Ana' after she became involved with top local golfer Adam Scott.—Reuters