

Two power plants
open in Ngaputaw

PAGE 9



Gyogon fishing boat
jetty inaugurated

PAGE 3

ANALYSIS

Discipline Vs
Democracy

PAGE 8

MORE MEETINGS AHEAD

Employment Contract yet to reach agreement

Thein Ko Lwin

A TRIPARTITE discussion yesterday on finalising the Employment Contract (EC) between employers and employees of various manufacturing plants ended without an agreement to set a deadline for the signing of the agreement by the remaining factories, companies and workers across the country.

The trilateral meeting included representatives from the government, employers and employees and mostly focused on the issues connected with 'probation period for workers' and 'termination of contract' regulations prescribed in the EC contract draft, according to an official from the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, who also attended the meeting.

"We could not set the deadline for the signing of the EC by all the employers and employees. However, we have built trust and understanding of the employment contract among the employers and employees," said U Myo Aung, the permanent secretary of the ministry.

The three stakeholders will meet again on 13 February, and employers and employees will discuss the contract's sticking points.

"After reaching an agreement between the two sides, they



Workers at the production line of agarment factory in the industrial zone in western part of Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

can add their agreement as an additional agreement to the EC, and [the government] will not amend the contract," the ministry official said.

More than 55 per cent of the factories and workshops nation-

wide have not yet signed the contract, said U Htin Aung, Deputy Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security.

So far, 97,696 male workers and 223,416 female workers have signed contracts with their

bosses nationwide, according to the ministry.

The ministry issued an announcement last September, urging factories, workshops and companies with a workforce comprising at least five staff

members to sign employment contracts with their workers within the first 30 days of their employment according to the Employment and Skills Development Law enacted in 2013.

See page 3 >>



Traffic is seen at Kokkine Overpass. PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG WIN

Kokkine flyover opens to traffic

KOKKINE flyover along Kabar Aye Pagoda Road was commissioned into service yesterday, ahead of schedule.

However, finishing touches will continue to be carried out on the flyover, while traffic continues alongside.

The opening of the overpass has eased traffic congestion on the road, according to a driver who used the flyover yesterday.

The opening of the flyover will provide a safer environment

to the students at the No. 1 Basic Education Primary School at Kokkine Junction, said a teacher from the school.

Meanwhile, another flyover at 8-Mile Junction is expected to open soon. The flyover has been constructed by the Capital Development Construction company since September, last year and 13.97 billion kyats was spent for the project. It is a four lane re-inforced concrete structure. Its total length is 505-m and can with-

stand 75 tons of loads.

The Region Government has planned to construct flyovers at the traffic junctions to relieve congestion and flyovers at Hledan, Bayint Naung, Shwe Gone Taing, Myay Ni Gone, Tarmwe, 8 mile junction and Kokkine were constructed during the term of current government with over 136 billion kyats.

Kokkine flyover will be officially inaugurated on Feb 10th. —SNOW

FIFA delegates assess football skills of Myanmar youths

OFFICIALS from the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) recently made assessments and an evaluation of football performance and skills of Myanmar students in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region.

With the aim of turning out bright and healthy young athletes within a decade, officials from the Myanmar FIFA Federation has conducted a three-month basic football training program in conjunction with other physical activities in schools since November last year.

Under the FIFA 11 for Health Programme, more than 5,000 students below 11 years of age from 144 government schools across the region have received basic football trainings and physical exercises from Myanmar FIFA Federation.

The FIFA officials on Tuesday visited No 1 basic education school in Meiktila Township to assess the performance of football skills of 175 students.

The programme also covers health seminars to make them aware of the danger of alcohol



Students taking part in physical activities in school. PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKTILA)

and cigarettes. "We plan to expand the programme to reach more than 10,000 students under

11 years of age across Mandalay Region next year," a sports person of Myanmar FIFA Federation.

"We also provided uniforms and sports gears to those schools."—*Chan Tha (Meiktila)*

Children from mountainous regions receive Polio vaccine

OVER 1,000 children below five years of age have been vaccinated against polio in a village in the mountainous region in Muse located northern part of Shan State.

Between 23 and 25 January, healthcare providers and members of the Rural Health Department in cooperation with Myanmar Red Cross Society carried out immunization tasks at schools, administration offices and religious buildings within every wards and villages in the project area. "We are always afraid of getting sick in both children and adults because our village is situated very far from the medical centres," said one of mothers from Nantswan Village who express her sincere thanks to healthcare providers.

Zin Mar Tun, a health assistant, said, "We provided free vaccines to all ethnic children as much as we can. Up to now, we vaccinated more than 1,000 children in the region."—*Thant Zin*

Crime News

Fire destroyed two-storey building in Thingangyun Township



Firefighters put out the fire. PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG HTWE

AN ELECTRICAL fire destroyed a 15 foot wide and 30 foot long two-storey building located in Thuwunna Ward-29 in Thingangyun Township in Yangon on Saturday early morning.

According to an investigation, the fire broke out because of an overheat light bulb which was installed at the small house for the shrine on the first floor of the main building of one Daw Maw Maw Aung on Mindin-3 Street.

The fire was controlled by the fire fighters at around 2 a.m. It took eleven fire engines to put out the blaze, which seriously damaged the building destroying the whole first floor.

Police have filed a lawsuit against the house owner.

Likewise, a fire broke out at No. 9 basic education primary school in Tamway, destroying some school furniture. Police are still investigating the case.—*Zawgyi (Pandita)*

Guns, bullets seized in Mawlamyine

LOCAL police seized guns and bullets as well as an unlicensed vehicle in Mawlamyine Township in Mon State on Friday, arresting a man.

Nearly ten weapons including pistols, M16 rifles and sniper air gun and various kinds of bullets were discovered in a house owned by a man named Min Myint Naing on Thabyay Street in Zeyamyang Ward in the

township by the police.

Acting on a tip-off, the combined team searched the house and found those weapons at underground room as well as over K1.8 million and gold jewellery in the bag in different room and an unlicensed car. Zeyathiri Township Police Force have filed charges against the suspect.—*Kyaw Than (Mawlamyine)*

Two men threatened and took motorbike in Mandalay

POLICE have arrested one of two suspected men who allegedly threatened and took motorbike between 60th and 61st road on 28 January. According to the investigation, Kyaw Zayyar Htet(a) Aung Ko Latt heading motorbike on 26th road while two men approached him. After that, two men threatened with the knife and took his motorbike away.

The police stopped Sai Thar Thar Han with the motorbike the corner of 26th and 59 streets. When interrogated, Sai Thar Thar Han admitted to taking the motorbike with Ye Win Hlaing.

The local police held the man for charges while searching for the second person who managed to escape.—*Maung Pyithu (Mandalay)*

Drunken man drowned in Taikkyi

U PHO WIN TIN's body was discovered in a pond by a co-worker on 28 January. 65 year old U Pho Win Tin was last seen on 26 January drunkenly wandering off in Thayetkon Village.

His body was sent to Thit Gyi General Hospital where no physical injuries were discovered.—*Tun Hlaing (Myaing)*

Three rob truck driver in Myingyan

THREE men attacked U Kyaw Sann Linn near mile-post 471/1 on 28 January. After stopping for a rest, he was reportedly punched by the rogues a week before the three men stole a sum of K13 lakh. After the attack the assailants fled by motorbike. Police are investigating the attack and theft.—*Lin Lat Kyae (Taungtha)*

Gyogon jetty for fishing boats inaugurated



Fishing boats are seen at the newly opened Gyogon Jetty. PHOTO: MNA

THE Gyogon Jetty was inaugurated yesterday in the presence of Union ministers U Soe Thein and U Ohn Myint. The new jetty will play a role in promoting exports of fish and prawns, according to

local entrepreneurs.

Farmed prawns will also be available at the jetty.

Shops selling ice, fishing equipment and food for fishermen have been set up at the jetty.

Union Minister U Soe Thein, who is also the chairman of the

Myanmar International Cooperation Agency, unveiled the signboard of the jetty.

The jetty was constructed under a programme of the Myanmar-International Cooperation Agency.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Labourers, employers fail to ...

>> from page 1

"It is very easy to sign the contract, but it is questionable whether the government would take action against a factory owner when he or she breaks the contract," said Ko Naw Aung, a worker who attended the meeting.

"The law guarantees punishment for those who break it. But, during the trial period, we

have had to educate them," said U Myo Aung.

On behalf of the factory bosses, a garment factory owner who also participated in the meeting yesterday expressed readiness to sign the employment contract with the workers but also demanded an end to protests at work sites.

Small and family-run businesses with a workforce of less

than 15 workers are exempted from the minimum wage but need to sign employment contracts mentioning a wage agreed between the parties.

The Employment Contract includes 23 points about job descriptions, places of employment, working hours, transportation charges, wages and benefits, among others.

The government set a national minimum wage of K3,600 for a standard eight-hour work day across all sectors and industries last year.

Myanmar scouts hold youth programme workshop

THE Myanmar Scout Federation and the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Region jointly conducted yesterday a youth programme workshop for Myanmar scouts in Lanmadaw township, Yangon Region.

Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint said that youth scouting in the country resumed in December 2012 with strength of 2,000 students from 20 basic schools.

The number has now increased to 59,000 as a result of the participation of students

from 655 basic schools and universities, with the mayor stressing that scouting in the country dates back to 1916.

The Asia-Pacific Scout Conferences approved the Myanmar Girl Guides and the Myanmar Boy Scout of their membership the ASEAN Scout Association in 2014 and 2015 respectively.

The workshop drew 50 teachers and students from basic and higher education departments and will last up to 5 February.—*Ko Lat (MNA)*

Early child care and development policies discussed in Myawady

A seminar on early childhood care and development took place in Myawady district, Kayin State, on 29 January.

U Aung Kyaw Moe, director of Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Settlement, explained the processes involved in formulating the policies and strategies on early childhood care and devel-

opment, the establishment of implementation organisations, child care services to children up to 3 years of age and education to children from 3-8 years of age. The seminar drew local departmental officials, police officers, civil society organisations and nursery schools, with organisers responding to queries raised by participants.—*Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)*

Police reform seminar focuses on conduct of police forces

A seminar on police reform took place in Mandalay from 30 to 31 January with a focus on community-based policing, crowd dispersal in protests, supervision and conduct of police forces.

The two-day seminar was conducted with the help of the British government, attracting civil and media organisations. In the past two years, the Euro-

pean Union organised similar seminars attended by police officers, civil society and media have yielded fruitful results.

Daw Khin Nilar Mya of a civil society organisation representing women recounted her experience of the previous seminars, stressing that the police were found to be acting on instructions from above.—*Aung Thant Khaing (Mandalay)*

Unseasonal rains will affect the price of salt

A spat of heavy unseasonal rain has caused flooding of salt fields in Mon State, potentially resulting in an increase in the price of the commodity, says Myanmar Salt Enterprise.

There has been a growth in the number of those farming salt in the region with an increase in the area of salt production, but heavy rainfall during the last week of December 2015 destroyed salt crops.

"This is the first month of the salt harvest season. As rainwater has flooded the salt fields, salt farmers aren't in a position whereby they can harvest a full crop anymore. The salt production

area of Mon State received three consecutive days of rain, so we can estimate that about 100,000 kyats worth of salt has been lost. The price of one viss (1.6kg) of salt could rise by as many as 20 kyats," explained head of the Mon State salt enterprise department, U Khin Soe.

The area of salt harvesting increased by as much as 700 acres in the season of 2015-16 to 2,900 acres from an area approximately 2,200 acres in size during last year's harvest.

The price of a viss of raw salt before the 2014-15 salt harvesting season fetched for just around 45-50 kyats; increasing to 70 per viss

in 2014-15, before continuing to slowly rise in value, with a current price for one viss of salt going for approximately 80 kyats.

Resident salt entrepreneurs have speculated that, the price of a viss of salt could reach a price of over 100 kyats at the end of salt harvesting season dependent upon weather conditions.

"We rely on the weather for our work. Only after people have expanded their salt fields, because of good sales of salt in the last couple years, do we have this unseasonal spat of rain which will inevitably put a dent in our profits. The price of salt will probably go up because of this unusual weather."

said U Thein Win, a Mon salt farmer.

Only come the month of December does the salt harvesting season start, whereby seawater has poured onto the salt fields and left to evaporate under the sun. The sea salt that remains behind is then raked in from the first week of January up until the month of May, at which point seasonal rains set in, calling an end to the salt harvesting season.

There is plenty of area to harvest salt in Mon State, but scarcity of workers, a fall in the price of salt and other difficulties such as a lack of available loans, mean that some regions aren't in a position

whereby they can exploit this natural commodity.

It is known that the main salt producing regions of Mon State are Bilin, Paung, Thanbyuzayat and Yay townships.

It is anticipated that over a quarter million tonnes of salt will be produced during the 2015-16 salt harvesting season in Mon State, with the population of the State consuming around 7,300 tonnes of the commodity, leaving plenty surplus salt to be transported to neighbouring regions of Kayin State and Tanintharyi Region, as well as the upper reaches of the country.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Support rate for PM Shinzo Abe Cabinet up 4.3 points at 53.7%

TOKYO — The support rate for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet rose 4.3 points in January from the previous month to 53.7 per cent, a Kyodo News opinion poll showed yesterday.

The disapproval rate came in at 35.3 per cent, down 2.9 percentage points from the previous poll.

In the nationwide telephone survey conducted on Saturday and Sunday, 67.3 per cent of the respondents said Akira Amari, who resigned as economy minister Thursday over a fund scandal, was right to step down from his post, while 28.5 per cent said he did not need to quit.

Although 55.5 per cent said Amari, one of the key architects of Abe's economic strategy, does not need to leave

the House of Representatives, 39.7 per cent said he should do so.

The survey covered 1,441 randomly selected households nationwide with eligible voters, with valid responses collected from 1,007 people.

Respondents were more narrowly split over whether the responsibility for having appointed Amari lies with Abe, with 46.8 per cent agreeing and 50.1 per cent disagreeing.

The poll also found 50.3 per cent were opposed to going ahead with reforms to Japan's pacifist Constitution following the upper house election scheduled this summer, while 37.5 per cent were in favour.

Abe has been pushing for changes to the national defense posture defined by Article 9, which forbids Japan from using

force to settle international disputes. Asked about a government push to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership and pass related bills before the end of the current Diet session, 69.2 per cent of respondents said lawmakers should prioritize careful deliberation of the legislation even if it spills over into the following session.

The Pacific Rim trade pact planned for signing in New Zealand on Thursday involves 12 countries including Japan.

Abe's Liberal Democratic Party was supported by 42.1 per cent, up 5.2 points from the previous month, while 9.5 per cent backed the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, down 0.2 point.

Some 33.3 per cent did not support a particular party. —Kyodo News

Indian PM stresses importance of Khadi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW DELHI — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday stressed the importance of Khadi (handspun cotton cloth) and its significance in the empowerment of the countrymen.

"Khadi has become a symbol. It has now become a center of interest of the nation's youth. Khadi has the power to provide employment to crores of people," Modi said in his this year's first radio address to the nation Mann Ki Baat. Khadi is a term used for handspun and hand-woven cloth, primarily woven from cotton and may also include silk, or wool,

which are all spun into a yarn on a spinning wheel called a charkha. It's cool in summer and warm in winter. In India, Khadi was a whole movement started by the country's pre-independence icon Mahatma Gandhi. The Khadi movement promoted an idea that Indians could be self-reliant on cotton and be free from the high priced goods and clothes which the British were selling to them during its colonial rule. Modi has also been promoting Khadi since coming to power, with one of the aims being to boost the business of the cloth makers.—Xinhua

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer -

Nakagawa Kiyoshi
gnlmdaily@gmail.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
khinmaungaye@hotmail.com

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

Chief Reporter

Ye Myint, uyemyint76@gmail.com,

Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg
jgold.news@gmail.com

Alec Wilmot
alec.wilmot.gnlm@gmail.com

Editors

Ye Htut Tin
mryehtuttin@gmail.com

Kyaw Thura, kthura.spk@gmail.com,

International news

Tun Tun Naing
tunyunaing@gmail.com

Reporters

Khaing Thanda Lwin
juniorlwin25@gmail.com

Tun Aung Kyaw
tunaungkyaw.31@gmail.com

Translators

Hay Mar Tin Win
haymarfat@gmail.com

Proof reader

Nwe Nwe Tun

Computer Team

Tun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,
Zaw Zaw Aung,

Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising
San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

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

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

Rain, snow in south China to disrupt holiday journey home



HEFEI—People walk in snow in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, on 31 January 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

BEIJING — Rain and snow will disrupt travel plans of some Chinese in southern provinces from Sunday to Tuesday as millions embark on journeys home.

The 40-day Spring Festival travel rush started a week ago. Students, migrant workers and other passengers board trains, buses and planes to head home for the Spring Festival, or the Lunar New Year, which falls on

8 February this year. Rain and snow will hit the majority of areas in Henan Province, the National Meteorological Centre (NMC) said yesterday.

In the coming three days, snow or sleet will harass passengers in parts of Henan, Hubei, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces, while rain will soak Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi and Yunnan provinces as well as

Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, according to the national observatory.

China experienced the worst cold in three decades, which ended last week, before the advent of this round of rain and snow. The NMC warned passengers about the changes in weather, and suggested they take precautionary measures. —Xinhua

Suspicious fires hit delayed liner at Mitsubishi Heavy shipyard

NAGASAKI — Police are investigating the possibility of arson aboard a cruise ship under construction at Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd.'s shipyard in the southwestern Japanese city of Nagasaki following a fire in the early hours of Sunday, the third such incident this month.

According to local police and firefighters, a worker at the Koyagi plant of the company's Nagasaki Shipyard & Machinery Works found cardboard and insulation material ablaze aboard the 124,500-ton AIDA Prima, one of two ships ordered by German cruise line AIDA Cruises.

Firefighters said workers quickly put out the fire and no injuries were reported.

Sunday's incident follows a fire in electrical wiring near a theater space on 11 January, and fire in a cabin involving a piece of cloth on 13 January.

The fires come after delivery of the ship, originally planned for March last year, has been repeatedly delayed amid design changes. The current delivery deadline is April this year.

The AIDA Cruises brand is operated by global cruise ship giant Carnival Corporation & plc. —Kyodo News

Architects call for radical rethink on rebuilding after disasters

Author: Emma Batha

LONDON — Aid agencies should stop shipping in mass-produced, pre-fabricated shelters after disasters and help people rebuild their villages with local materials like mud and bamboo, a leading Pakistani architect says.

Yasmeen Lari was inspired to rethink post-disaster construction after massive flooding in 2010 left one-fifth of Pakistan under water and affected some 20 million people.

She has since helped survivors of floods and quakes build around 45,000 low-cost homes and shelters which she says can easily be copied and have a tiny carbon footprint.

Her designs feature in an exhibition opening in London on Wednesday called “Creation from Catastrophe”, which examines how architects have re-invented communities and cities after disasters — from the Great Fire of London in 1666 to last year’s devastating earthquake in Nepal.

“A disaster zone where everything is lost offers the perfect opportunity for us to take a fresh look, from the ground up, at what architecture really is,” says Toyo Ito, one of five architects who set up “public living rooms” after Japan’s 2011 quake and tsunami.



A women’s centre designed by architect Yasmeen Lari that doubles as a flood shelter built in Kot Diji Park, Sindh Province, Pakistan. PHOTO: REUTERS

The exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) shows how architects working in disaster zones are increasingly focusing on helping people rebuild their own communities with local materials rather than imposing solutions on them.

Lari said housing provided by aid agencies after disasters was too expensive, with the result that many people were excluded.

“Whatever we do, we can never do enough because there

are so many destitute people — it is horrifying,” Lari told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview from Karachi.

“The only way we can get to them is if we find very low-cost solutions, and if we train everybody how to do things themselves.”

Her buildings are made of lime-hardened mud walls which are “as strong as anything and totally water resistant”. The roofs are made of bamboo which lasts

25 years, covered with straw matting, a layer of tarpaulin, and poz-zolana, a waterproofing material.

“You can teach this to everybody,” said Lari who has also provided shelters for people left homeless by October’s quake in northern Pakistan.

Also on show is the work of Japanese architect Shigeru Ban who has helped survivors of Nepal’s earthquake build new houses, using cardboard tubes filled with quake rubble.

In Chile, architect Alejandro Araveno, who helped redesign the coastal city of Constitución after a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2010, has pioneered a radical scheme to provide half-built houses which meet immediate needs and can be completed by the inhabitants when they can raise the money.

The prediction that disasters will increase in frequency and severity is leading architects to look at ways to “disaster-proof” communities and explore ways to work with nature rather than against it.

In Constitución, one flattened waterfront area is being replanted as a forest to act as a buffer against future floods and tsunamis.

Lari’s projects in Pakistan include two-storey community centres built on bamboo stilts which allow water to flow underneath during floods. The top floor converts into a shelter so that people don’t have to move away from their village.

In Nigeria, where flooding in 2012 uprooted over 2.1 million people, architects NLE designed a three-storey floating school in a Lagos slum which was built by local residents using off-cuts from a nearby saw-mill and locally grown bamboo. —Reuters

Cyclone passes over Australia’s northwest mining ports

PERTH — A tropical cyclone that crossed Australia’s northwest coast early yesterday was weakening, although several small inland communities were on red alert as it moved inland and the risk of heavy swells and storm surges remained.

Category 2 cyclone Stan made landfall some 120 km (75 miles) north east of the world’s largest iron ore export hub, Port Hedland, in the early hours of Sunday morning, the Australian Bureau of Meteorology said. Fears that the slow-moving cyclone would in-

tensify to a Category 3, or severe cyclone, didn’t eventuate.

The cyclone was heading inland in a south easterly direction and communities in its path were placed on red alert, the highest warning, and advised to take shelter in the strongest, safest part of a building.

“There is the potential for destructive winds with gusts to 130 km/h near the centre of the cyclone for the next couple of hours,” the weather bureau said in a warning on its website. Heavy rainfall,

flood warnings, rough seas and higher than usual tides were forecast as the cyclone moves inland and gradually weakens.

The Pilbara ports of Dampier and Port Hedland, through which gas from the north-west shelf and almost half of the world’s seaborne iron ore is shipped, were closed by authorities on Friday.

Cyclone Stan is the first of the season which usually runs from 1 November to 30 April, with up to 11 storms, according to forecasters. —Reuters

Mahinda Rajapaksa’s son arrested by financial crimes police

COLOMBO — A son of former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa was arrested on Saturday under the country’s money laundering act and remanded in custody until 11 February, the police said.

Several members of the Rakapaksa family are facing police investigations for alleged financial crimes. They include Rajapaksa, who was president for a decade until 2015, his brothers Basil and Gotabaya, his wife Shiranthi and eldest son Namal.

Rakapaksa’s second son, Yoshitha, a 27-year-old naval officer, was arrested with four others, including Rakapaksa’s spokesman and a brother of Ports and Shipping Minister Arjuna Ranatunga.

A local court ordered those detained to stay in custody until 11 February, police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said.

President Maithripala Sirisena is under pressure to act on allegations of corruption against Rajapaksa and those who served his administration, especially from civil society organisations which backed Sirisena against Rajapaksa in last year’s election.

Rajapaksa is still popular among many ethnic majority

Sinhala Buddhists who credit him with ending a 26-year-war against Tamil Tiger rebels in 2009.

Yoshitha, who was Sri Lanka’s national rugby team captain when his father was the president, was arrested after more than six hours of questioning by police, two officials told Reuters.

Rajapaksa, who went to the local court to hear the order against his son, angrily condemned the police’s use of the money laundering act to arrest his son.

“Today they (the government) have used that act which we brought to deal with terrorists to put the son of the person who eradicated terrorism behind bars,” Rajapaksa told reporters.

“We have trust in the judiciary system and expect the justice will prevail. All these (actions) are to take revenge of me,” Rajapaksa, now an opposition legislator, is being investigated for misappropriation of money in a state-run television channel during the 2015 presidential polls.

Many Rajapaksa sympathisers believe these allegations were brought to tarnish his name and influence voters against him. —Reuters

US urged Japan to consult with China prior to Senkakus purchase

WASHINGTON — The United States urged Japan to consult with China prior to Tokyo’s 2012 purchase of the disputed Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea from a private owner, a declassified e-mail forwarded to then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton showed Saturday. In the e-mail dated 3 September, 2012, about a week before Japan’s purchase of the Senkakus claimed by China and Taiwan, then US Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell said he had urged Japan’s then Vice Foreign Minister Kenichiro Sasae and the Japanese government to “consult and advise Beijing on their plans.”

Campbell said he had requested Japan’s prior consultation with

China when he met with Sasae on 7 August, 2012, in Tokyo. At that time, the Japanese government “has just concluded a round of deliberations and apparently their PRC (People’s Republic of China) counterparts were irate,” according to the e-mail. “Sasae however believes that China actually understands the necessity of these actions and will accept them. (I’m not so sure),” Campbell said in the message sent to senior State Department officials. The Japanese government purchased three of the five main Senkaku islands from a private landowner on 11 September, 2012, to bring them under its control. The action enraged China and sparked a wave of anti-Japanese protests in the country.

The e-mail titled “Sasae call” was written shortly after Sasae conveyed to Washington by phone Tokyo’s intention to put the Senkakus under state control. It was declassified Friday by the State Department in connection with Clinton’s use of a private e-mail server for her work as secretary of state, which has been highlighted in her current presidential campaign.

In the message, Campbell also said although the Japanese government and the private owner have agreed on a purchase price, then Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara, who had been raising funds at the metropolitan government to buy the uninhabited islands, was “unlikely to consent” to the central government’s action. —Kyodo News

Germany's Merkel says refugees must return home once war is over

NEUBRANDENBURG — German Chancellor Angela Merkel tried on Saturday to placate the increasingly vocal critics of her open-door policy for refugees by insisting that most refugees from Syria and Iraq would go home once the conflicts there had ended.

Despite appearing increasingly isolated, Merkel has resisted pressure from some conservatives to cap the influx of refugees, or to close Germany's borders.

Support for her conservative bloc has slipped as concerns mount about how Germany will integrate the 1.1 million migrants who arrived last year, while crime and security are also in the spotlight after a wave of assaults on

women in Cologne at New Year by men of north African and Arab appearance.

The influx has played into the hands of the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD), whose support is now in the double digits, and whose leader was quoted on Saturday saying that migrants entering illegally should, if necessary, be shot.

Merkel said it was important to stress that most refugees had only been allowed to stay for a limited period.

"We need ... to say to people that this is a temporary residential status and we expect that, once there is peace in Syria again, once IS has been defeated in Iraq, that you go back to your home country

with the knowledge that you have gained," she told a regional meeting of her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Merkel said 70 per cent of the refugees who fled to Germany from former Yugoslavia in the 1990s had returned.

Horst Seehofer, leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU), the CDU's Bavarian sister party, has threatened to take the government to court if the flow of asylum seekers is not cut.

Merkel urged other European countries to offer more help "because the numbers need to be reduced even further and must not start to rise again, especially in spring".—Reuters

Masked mob threatening migrants go on the rampage in Stockholm



Counter-demonstrators gather to show their disapproval of a movement calling itself "The People's Demonstration", which held a meeting and demonstration at Norrmalmstorg square in Stockholm, Sweden on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

STOCKHOLM — A gang of masked, black-clad men rampaged through the streets of Stockholm on Friday night after handing out leaflets threatening to attack migrant street youths, "to make a statement", with police saying on Saturday two arrests had been made.

The incident highlights the growing tensions over immigration in Sweden, a country of 10 million which received 163,000 asylum seekers last year, and comes days after a 22-year old female worker was stabbed to death in a centre for unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors in south-western Sweden.

The police said in statement one man had been arrested for punching a plain clothes officer in the face and another for carrying a brass knuckleduster, but the extent of any assaults against immigrants was not clear. Swedish dai-

lies said that according to witnesses a number of people had been attacked by the men who were thought to belong to "firms" of hooligans associated with local soccer teams.

The leaflets handed out on Friday, which were confirmed by police as being the same as were posted on Swedish social media, said, "When Swedish streets are no longer safe for ordinary Swedes it is our DUTY to fix the problem ... Today, therefore, 200 Swedish men gathered to make a statement against the North African 'street children' who are ranging around the capital's central station.

"The police have amply shown that it lacks the means to rein them in and we now see no alternative than for us to mete out the punishment they deserve."

A poll last week showed support for Sweden's ruling cen-

tre-left Social Democrats hit its lowest level in nearly 50 years, mainly because of a sense the government has been overwhelmed by the influx of asylum seekers. In a move to boost confidence, the Swedish government said this week the country was likely to deport between 60,000 and 80,000 of last year's asylum seekers. However, that number is similar in percentage terms to rejections of asylum applications in previous years when the numbers were much smaller.

More than 35,000 unaccompanied minors sought asylum in Sweden last year, roughly half of them registered as 16 or 17 years old. More than 23,000 unaccompanied minors were from Afghanistan. This week, the country's national police chief asked the government for more money and more officers in the wake of the migrant crisis.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Serbian PM signs proposal to relieve defence minister of his duties

BELGRADE — Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic has signed a proposal to relieve Defence Minister Bratislav Gasic of his post and sent it to the parliament for discussion, Tanjug learnt at the prime minister's office.

As Belgrade media reported, this is expected to be one of the topics during the extraordinary session set to begin on Monday. PM Vucic said on Friday he would relieve Gasic of his duties by the end of this month, as he had promised to do, and that a new minister would take office after 15 days. The prime minister underscored that Gasic would not resign, but that he would send a proposal for his dismissal to Serbia's lawmakers to debate on it. Gasic stirred a storm of criticism after an insulting comment he made to a female reporter.—Tanjug

British broadcaster Terry Wogan dies of cancer — BBC

LONDON — British television and radio personality Terry Wogan died of cancer aged 77 yesterday, his family said.

Irish-born Wogan, one of the BBC's most recognisable faces and voices, was granted a British knighthood in 2005.

"Sir Terry Wogan died today after a short but brave battle with cancer. He passed away surrounded by his family," a statement on behalf of his family said. Wogan began his broadcasting career with Irish state broadcaster RTE before joining the BBC in 1966. He went on to become a national institution as a disc jockey, chat show host and presenter, known for his gently mocking wit and Irish brogue. He hosted the BBC's coverage of the Eurovision Song Contest from 1980 to 2008.—Reuters

Iraq needs \$1.56bn in 2016 for humanitarian response to Islamic State

BAGHDAD — Iraq needs \$1.56 billion this year to finance its response to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war against Islamic State, which has displaced more than 3.3 million people since 2014, according to a government report released yesterday.

Baghdad, strapped for cash amid a plunge in oil prices, will manage to fund less than 43 per cent of those needs from its budget, the report said. "The international community is necessary for bridging the deficit or financing gap," it added.—Reuters

Almost 40 dead after migrant boat sinks off Turkey

ANKARA — Almost 40 people drowned and 75 were rescued after a boat carrying migrants to Greece sank off Turkey's western coast on Saturday, according to local officials and the Turkish Dogan news agency.

More than one million refugees and migrants arrived in the European Union last year and some 3,600 died or went missing, forcing the EU to mull suspending its Schengen open-borders area for up to two years. The Turkish coast guard was continuing search and rescue efforts where the 17-metre boat carrying at least 120 people sank off the coast of Ayvacik, a town across from the Greek island of Lesbos, the Dogan news agency reported.

"I am afraid the numbers will rise as divers continue the search," Mehmet Unal Sahin, the mayor of Ayvacik, told the CNNTurk news channel by phone. "Local people woke up to the sound of screaming migrants and we have been carrying out rescue work since dawn. We have an 80-kilometre-long coast just across from Lesbos, which is very hard to keep under control." At least five of those who died were children, Dogan reported, while rescued migrants were hospitalised with hypothermia symptoms. It said the migrants were of Syrian, Afghan and Myanmar origin.—Reuters

Fidel Castro meets Uruguayan ex-president on regional affairs

HAVANA — Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro has met with Uruguayan former President Jose Mujica in Havana to discuss regional issues, local media reported Saturday.

During his meeting with Castro, Mujica expressed his concerns over the spreading Zika virus, according to a report on the Cubadebate website. Mujica has been on the Caribbean island since the start of the week to attend a literary award ceremony and the International Conference "For everyone and for the good of everyone."

On Thursday, Mujica met with Cuban President Raul Castro and they discussed international and regional issues, according to Cuban television channels.—Xinhua

Stage is set for Syria peace talks as opposition arrives in Geneva

GENEVA/AMMAN — A delegation from Syria's main opposition group arrived in Geneva on Saturday to join UN-mediated peace talks, demanding President Bashar al-Assad's government be made to comply with a UN resolution on humanitarian aid and human rights.

"We are keen to make this negotiation a success," opposition spokesman Salim al-Muslat told reporters as the delegation arrived from Riyadh, ending weeks of uncertainty about whether they would come and the talks would happen.

The 17-strong team from the Saudi-backed Higher Negotiation Committee (HNC), including political and militant opponents of Assad in the country's 5-year-old civil war, is expected to have a first meeting with the UN mediator Staffan de Mistura on Sunday, setting up the first peace talks in two years.

Muslat said the HNC insisted on implementation of a UN resolution demanding all sides allow aid access, release detainees, end sieges and stop targeting civilian areas.

That was not a precondition for talks, he said, but it was the duty of the Security Council members who agreed the resolution last month, including Syria's chief



UN envoy Staffan de Mistura shakes hands with Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al Jaafari (L) during the Syria peace talks in Geneva, Switzerland, on 29 Jan, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ally Russia, which is supporting Assad's forces with a bombing campaign.

Russian air strikes on Syria have killed nearly 1,400 civilians since Moscow started its aerial campaign nearly four months ago, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group, said on Saturday.

"We are going to Geneva to put to the test the seriousness of the international community in its promises to the Syrian people and to also test the seriousness of the regime in implementing its humanitarian obligations," HNC

spokesman Riyadh Naasan Agha said.

"We want to show the world our seriousness in moving towards negotiations to find a political solution," he told Reuters.

Opposition coordinator Riad Hijab, who was not among the first HNC group to arrive, said in a statement posted online that there would have to be humanitarian improvements to justify the delegation's continued presence in Geneva.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said the talks must ensure human rights are upheld as

participants work towards a political transition in Syria.

"Humanitarian law must be respected and the objective of a political transition actively pursued to enable the talks to succeed," Fabius said in a statement sent to Reuters.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov was quoted by Russian Interfax news agency as saying that Moscow welcomed the decision by Syrian opposition coordinator, Riad Hijab, to take part in talks in Geneva.

The United Nations earlier said the aim would be six months of talks, first seeking a ceasefire, later working toward a political settlement to a war that has killed more than 250,000 people, driven more than 10 million from their homes and drawn in global powers.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier told the German newspaper *Welt am Sonntag*: "Only at the negotiating table will it become clear if both sides are prepared to make painful compromises so that the killing stops and Syrians have a chance of a better future in their own country."

The HNC's demands include allowing aid convoys into rebel-held besieged areas where tens of thousands are living in dire

conditions.

The medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Saturday that 16 people had starved to death in the government-besieged town of Madaya since aid convoys arrived this month and accused the authorities of blocking medical shipments.

"It is totally unacceptable that people continue to die from starvation, and that critical medical cases remain in the town when they should have been evacuated weeks ago," said Brice de le Vingne, MSF's director of operations in a statement.

Agha said the opposition delegation, including HNC head Hijab and chief negotiator Asaad al-Zoubi, would not call for a complete cessation of hostilities but would demand an end to "the indiscriminate shelling of markets, hospitals and schools by the regime and its Russian backers".

Russia and Syria deny targeting civilians, saying they take great care to avoid bombing residential areas. Separately, the heavy Russian bombing campaign continued unabated in northern Syria on Saturday with the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights saying the areas hit included rebel-held villages and towns in the Aleppo countryside near the border with Turkey.—Reuters

Some African states oppose AU peace force for Burundi — Gambian president

ADDIS ABABA — Some African states oppose sending peacekeepers to Burundi without its consent after it said that would be seen as an invasion, Gambia's president said on Saturday at the start of an African Union summit.

Rifts in Africa about whether to deploy the 5,000-strong force will worry Western powers and others, who fear Burundi will slide into ethnic conflict if there is no intervention. The African Union's peace and security council announced the plan for the force in December, but Burundi swiftly rejected it.

The AU charter allows a force to be sent against the will of a host country if there is a risk of serious violence, such as genocide. But some African leaders may be concerned about setting a precedent that could be turned on them, experts say.

"It is not only Burundi that is resisting that idea," Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh told reporters at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa when asked if there was opposition to the plan for peacekeepers. He did not name any nations.

Asked if Gambia was among them, he said: "Without the consent of Burundi, yes."

Burundi, facing its worst crisis since an ethnically charged civil war ended in 2005, is high on the agenda for the two-day summit as

violence that has killed hundreds of people rattles a region where memories of Rwanda's 1994 genocide are still raw. Officials have said African leaders would try to persuade President Pierre Nkurunziza — who triggered the crisis by standing for a disputed third term in July elections — to accept such a force. They also said they were unlikely to succeed.

"When it comes to troops, our position has not changed. It is a no-go area under any conditions," Burundi's Foreign Minister Alain Nyamitwe told reporters in Addis Ababa. Leaders from the 15 members of the council met on Friday in a bid to resolve differences but failed to reach a decision, said Smail Chergui, the AU's peace and security commissioner.

An African diplomat said South Africa and Tanzania, two main brokers of the peace deal that brought Nkurunziza to power in 2005, were among those opposed to sending an unwanted force.

Ivan Simonovic, UN assistant secretary-general for human rights, said a failure to deploy troops would be a concern, but the AU should at least send more African human rights observers or send police.

"At the moment, it is important to increase international presence in one or the other form," he told Reuters.—Reuters

Turkey says Russian jet violated its airspace again, warns of consequences

ANKARA — Turkey warned of consequences on Saturday after saying a Russian SU-34 jet had violated its airspace despite warnings, once more stoking tensions between two countries involved in Syria's war, but Russia denied that there had been any incursion.

In a similar incident in November, Turkey shot down a Russian warplane flying a sortie over Syria that it said had violated its airspace, triggering a diplomatic rupture in which Russia imposed economic sanctions.

Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Major-General Igor Konashenkov denied that any Russian plane had entered Turkish airspace, and called the Turkish allegation "pure propaganda".

He said Turkish radar installations were not capable of identifying a particular aircraft or its type or nationality, and that no verbal warning had been issued in either English or Russian.

Turkey's Foreign Ministry said in its statement that the Russian ambassador had been summoned late on Friday, and that the violation was a clear sign that Russia wanted issues between the two countries to escalate.



A Sukhoi Su-24 fighter jet lands at the Hmeymim air base near Latakia, Syria, in this handout photograph released by Russia's Defence Ministry on 7 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We are making a clear call to the Russian Federation not to violate Turkish airspace, which is also NATO airspace," the statement said.

"We are emphasising once again that the unwanted consequences of such irresponsible behaviour will belong fully to the Russian Federation."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the violation had taken place, and urged Russia to "take all necessary measures" to ensure NATO airspace was not violated again. "Previous incidents have shown how dangerous such behaviour is," his statement said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said he wanted to meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin after the incident.

"I told our Foreign Ministry to convey my desire to meet Mr Putin personally. There has been no answer on this yet," Erdogan told reporters at the airport before departing for a visit to Latin America. The downing of the Russian warplane in November left relations between the two countries in tatters. Russia responded with economic sanctions that have hit Turkish exports and tourism revenues.—Reuters

OPINION

A shoulder to cry on

Kyaw Thura

WITH lower house of second parliament scheduled to convene on 1st February and the upper, 2nd February our country has reached a crucial juncture. Myanmar has an urgent need for more coordinated political action and accountability.

No matter whoever is elected president,

one thing we know for sure is that the new cabinet faces an enormous task—getting the country back on track after decades of a standstill.

It will not be fair to leave that obligation on their shoulders alone. In fact, we should all offer our active support and practical assistance in remedying the country's management glitches.

It is typical of us, as ordinary people, to entertain some fear of the powers that be. It is not uncommon for some officials to misuse power for their own ends. Over the years, corruption and bribery have become a natural habit in our society.

For the general public, each elected representative is a shoulder to cry on. The people of Myanmar will expect the decision makers in the

executive, legislative and judicial branches to formulate policies that will dry their tears and improve the country's image in the international community.

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.

Discipline Vs Democracy

TOMMY PAUK

Discipline and Democracy are interdependent. Unless people are well-disciplined, a country cannot build a democratic state. Democracy cannot flourish without prevalence of law and order as well as discipline. Democracy is based on the capability of public and leadership. Discipline leads people and elected-government to reach the goal of genuine democracy. People and elected-government have to work together in unison for social and economic development democratically. If we embrace democracy, we must discipline ourselves as a first drive. We need to strictly abide by the democratic norms and obey the disciplines of our society. To democratize the administrative machinery and organization, not only the democrats but also the people concerned must participate in the reform tasks. The knowledge about democratization must be shared among the people. The educators must teach democracy as a compulsory subject to students of all levels so that they can acquire knowledge of democratization. Otherwise, the would-be educated persons or graduates from universities do not know how to exercise democratic norms and standards properly. Theoretical knowledge and practical experience are just like an engine driver and a locomotive to reach the desired destination. As we all know, the term (Greek term: demokratia, from demos + kratia -cracy) Democracy and its derivations are already embedded in the minds of global people nowadays. Actually, it is neither a twenty-first century ideology nor a brand new ideology. It has origin in Greece many years ago, but it is still fresh and contributory to political-ideology for all communities and nations in building up socio-economic development in an effective and efficient manner.

Everyone would like to see the fruitful results of the democ-

racy. If people want their country to be ruled by democracy, they have to adhere to the norms and standards of democracy which emphasizes discipline. The government and the entire people are obliged to obey the discipline. In other words, everyone must learn to be well-disciplined in order to become good citizens and to promote good image of their nation in the world. In fact the discipline is a yardstick to assess the people's value. Regarding discipline, there is a motto; 'Discipline is taught as the fundamental - human- decency from school classrooms' in our society. Basically, schools cultivate the citizens to become disciplined persons. The Buddhist Monastic education also teaches the students how to do and behave in a disciplined manner. It is undeniable that parents, teachers and Buddhist monks are those who administer the discipline in Myanmar society. In addition, there are many proverbs and sayings pertaining to the values of discipline for man. In fact these Myanmar proverbs and sayings are guidelines for the people to succeed in life-struggle properly.

The acts of disobeying the rules, regulations and discipline cause hindrances to the democratization process. Discipline makes a person valuable in his or her society enabling him to become a decent person. If a society lacks discipline, mayhem occurs in it consequently. Strict discipline must be imposed on all the citizens in a country so that it can prevent the out break of chaos. As for an example, Singapore has strict discipline on littering — the litter louts or litter bugs are heavily fined. This being so, Singapore has a good reputation for its strict disciplines on civic duty and littering. Since Singapore is a cosmopolitan city, citizens as well as foreigners are obliged to obey the prescribed regulations. In fact, each and every nation should be like Singapore. Such good behaviour should be imitated by all socie-

ties in the world.

The rights and responsibilities should go together in a democratic society. The disciplined-flourishing democracy can be realized only by the disciplined citizens. Now, Myanmar is implementing the democratization process. So people are needed to co-operate with the government to achieve success in this reform process by adhering to discipline. All citizens must participate in moving forward Myanmar to reach a democratic state. In this function, we are being with to challenges to build a democratic state. Unless discipline is not abided by the people and government, it will be very hard to reach the goal of democracy. We can see that the citizens in the most developed countries strictly adhere to discipline. They obviously show their disciplined manner in dealing with people. Naturally, we, humans honour and respect well-disciplined persons whereas we tend to condemn those who are uncivilized, impolite and rude in manner and behavior.

It seems not very difficult to follow the discipline if the people can appreciate the value of discipline, knowing that disciplined people can promote their country's image among world's nations. If a country stands firmly as a democratic state and its people are well-disciplined, this country will surely develop and prosper. We can say that discipline is vitally important to enable the democratic practices to flourish.

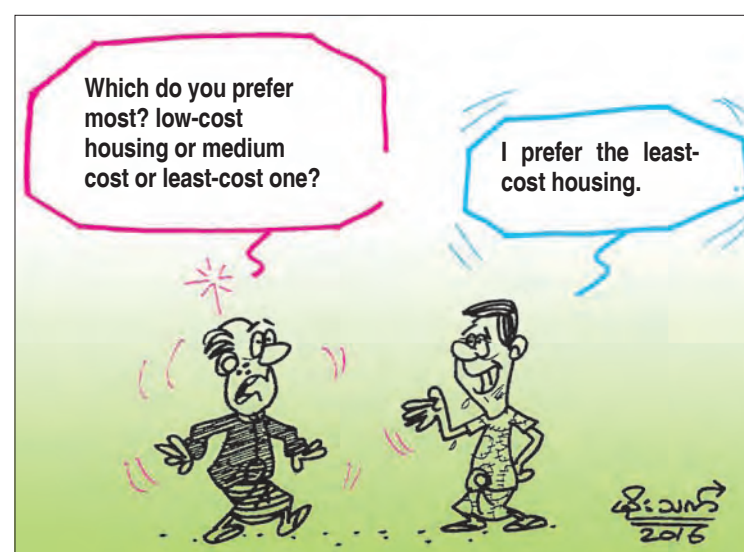
Tommy Pauk is the pseudonym of U Thein Swe, who is B.A (English) and (Registered Law) R.L.I. degrees holder. He has English Teaching experience at Yangon University English Department and Workers' college in Yangon, and now is working as freelance writer and English Teacher cum Translator/Interpreter for foreign firms.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

The populist culture believing in aliens coming to earth from the outer space and the existence of several other extra-terrestrial beings are an overwhelmingly science fiction proposition rather than true science. No scientific research journals or science magazines have ever acknowledged or accepted or published that aliens ever existed or the concept is acceptable to modern science. These are only hoaxes and speculations in popular television series, magazines and tabloids for decades in western nations with no substantial scientific proofs and are mostly based on fictitious circumstantial evidences that have questionable credibility. The popular stories of UFO sightings, aliens visiting earth, even outrageous claim of alien abductions and molestations are available in western popular culture with special emphasis on US being popular and acceptable to a big section of the general public. They have no scientific credibility other than illustrating the fact that what the local population of some specific regions are easily obsessed and intrigued with. We often see what we ought to believe and what the society, culture, media and other factors have influenced us to believe for centuries. This possibly explains the highest number of UFO sightings reported from the US. Do aliens have a special liking for the Americans or do they have a contract signed with the US Government to show up in American air space always compared to any other nation? The concept of aliens is very popular from childhood to adulthood of an individual born and raised in the US popularized through comic books of kids to popular magazines for adults as this alien concept sells very well in North American markets. Hence it is not appreciable to promote such western pseudoscience as these are also based on false human perception, beliefs and fictitious records that have no connection to reality or modern science. Promoting concepts of aliens, UFOs and extra-terrestrial beings visiting earth should be completely banned in newspapers and standard magazines across the globe as they put a credibility to such false science topics that has not yet been convincingly proved.

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu



Two power plants open in Ngapudaw

TWO new power plants were opened yesterday in Ngapudaw Township, Ayeyawady Region, with Electric Power Deputy Minister U Aung Than Oo unveiling the archways to mark the official opening of the two plants.

The Ngayokkaung Taung and Ngapyema 66/33/11KV 10MVA power plants both held test runs for the distribution of electricity to nearby villages in the township on 12 October last year.

Over 20 miles of cables are being installed in Haigyikyun Township to bring electric power to the households by February.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Officials visit a newly opened power plant in Ngapudaw. PHOTO: MNA

As Kyauk Phyu SEZ gets underway hotels owners ask, 'Where is everybody?'

ANTICIPATION of the commencing of the Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone in Rakhine State was that it would bring increased tourism to the area, for which hotel expansion was prepared accordingly. However, the number of foreigners visiting the region is yet to live up to expectation, say hotel owners.

"We've had hardly any foreign or national guests. Once the Oil and Shwe Gas Project was confirmed some foreigners came to the town, but they've rented out their own property," said U Tin Aung Soe, owner of the May Pone Moe Hotel.

There are seven hotels in the town of Kyauk Phyu, which

boast a combined total number of 160 rooms, although hotel owners were only able to fill approximately 15% of these rooms with guests during this month of January.

It is known that some of the foreigners and nationals who have set up base in Kyauk Phyu because of their companies involvement with the Chinese Shwe Gas Project, are living in rented housing within the town of Kyauk Phyu, rather than staying at the one of the town's hotels.

"This kind of living arrangement [of foreigners living in rented housing] is not in line with article 32(a) of the Hotel and Tourism Law. The relevant bodies need to make sure to regulate this matter," continued U Tin Aung Soe.

Hotel owners will continue their expansion of hotels in Kyauk Phyu with the expectation

of the arrival of foreign guests with the onset of foreign investment projects in the region.

"Construction for a twenty room hotel is still under way. We're expanding our operations specifically because of the SEZ project," said U Tin Aung Soe.

It is also known from hotel owners that preparations are also being made for construction of hotels close to the Min Pyin beach where the Kyauk Phyu SEZ is to be built.

The building of the Kyauk Phyu SEZ was approved in union parliament on 29 December, 2015 with 424 votes in favour of the project against just 23 votes who opposed, while the first actual phases of construction of the zone will commence at the end of this year, according to the Kyauk Phyu SEZ administration committee.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



A scale model of Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone. PHOTO: SEZ

SCG holds \$305 million in Myanmar assets

SIAM CEMENT (SCG) announces its operating results for 2015, showing a 35 per cent growth in earnings year on year. The company reported sales of K14.839 trillion (US\$12.835 billion), marking a 10 per cent decrease year on year as a result of lower oil prices. However, profits for the period reached K1.532 trillion (\$1.325 billion), representing an increase of 35 per cent year on year, which has been attributed to healthy earnings in the chemicals business, despite a lower performance in the cement and building materials businesses. The company's export revenues accounted for 29 per cent of SCG's total revenue from sales—an 11 per cent decreased year on year to

K4.287 trillion (\$3.708 billion).

On a quarterly basis, SCG's Q4/2015 revenue from sales decreased 10 per cent year on year and a five per cent quarter on quarter to K3.799 trillion (\$2.947 billion) as a result of lower chemical prices, which are linked to oil prices. However, profits for the period registered an increase of 29 per cent year on year at K412 billion (\$319 million) thanks to higher chemicals earnings, while also showing a growth of 27 per cent quarter on quarter, since the previous quarter (Q3/15) was held back by a total of K131 billion (\$101 million) in non-recurring items ranging from inventory adjustments and FX loss.—*Kyaw The-ein (MNA)*

Fish Farming : Driving Rural Development and Incomes

MYANMAR'S fish farming industry is in rapid growth, despite perceptions that it's been sluggish, and has the potential to drive rural development and incomes, according to a recent report launched this week. The research discussed the fish farming industry's role in creating job opportunities, supporting improved nutrition, health and well-being, as well as examined the inhibitors to maximize the industry's growth. The Centre for Economic and Social Development, Michigan State University and the International Food Policy Research Institute led the research.

It is estimated that the output of fish farms in the Delta, which accounts for 90% of the country's

fish farms, has grown 250% over the last ten years. The land area of fish farms in this region is also believed to have doubled.

Fish plays a significant role in food and nutrition security in Myanmar. It is a major source of micronutrients, particularly important for child development. Household budgets in Myanmar allot 14% of food expenditure on fish, a close rate to the food expenditure on rice (19%).

Fish farming, compared to rice farming, also provides rural employment, requiring more manpower in the harvest and transport of fish to markets. The study also suggests it is potentially more profitable than other alternative forms of agriculture.

Over 100 Myanmar workers laid off in Chiang Rai without pay

APPROXIMATELY 120 Myanmar migrant workers have been made redundant from a construction company in the northern Thai town of Chiang Rai after they protested to the workers and social security department about not receiving their salaries.

The workers staged the protest on January 27 as the aforementioned construction company owed roughly 3.4 million Thai Baht in salaries.

"The company gave us the sack. They didn't pay us our salaries. We are protesting in order to get the money that we are owed," said Myanmar migrant worker Ko Htun Htun.

The company cut off the water and electricity supply to the accommodation of the workers after they protested, and so they are currently searching for new employment and a place to live.

"[We're protesting about] the salary owed to us for December 16, 2015 to January 15, 2016. We requested our Migrant Workers Federation to provide assistance in the manner of the law," commented a Myanmar migrant worker involved in the protests.

The Myanmar migrant workers in question were working on the three project construction sites of the aforementioned company, while workers are demanding 15 days salary, on top of a week's advance salary and compensation after being fired.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Commercial fish farm nurseries are able to generate an estimated 5-10 times more income than mango or rice paddy farming.

In order to maximize its potential, however, researchers emphasize the need to ease restrictions on land use for fish farming. It says rules of agricultural land to enable small landholders to fish farm legally must be developed. It also urged for the creation of policies that can promote a level playing field for small and medium enterprises.

The study was conducted at seven townships, which accounts for 75% of fish farm land areas in Myanmar, and San Pya market, Yangon's largest wholesale fish market.—*MiTV*

US economy hits soft patch in fourth quarter as inventories, trade weigh

WASHINGTON — US economic growth braked sharply in the fourth quarter as businesses stepped up efforts to reduce an inventory glut and a strong dollar and tepid global demand weighed on exports.

Gross domestic product increased at a 0.7 per cent annual rate, the Commerce Department said on Friday in a report that showed a further cutback in investment by energy firms grappling with lower oil prices. Growth in consumer spending also slowed as unseasonably mild weather cut into spending on utilities.

But with the labour market strengthening and some of the impediments to growth largely temporary, economists expect output to pick up in the first quarter of 2016. First-quarter growth estimates are for now mostly above a 2 per cent rate.

“The economy took its lumps late last year. It’s not going to be smooth sailing in 2016, but we don’t see the ship sinking either, and the rising concern about a recession later on this year triggered by China, those fears need a reality check,” said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG Union Bank in New York.

The Federal Reserve on Wednesday acknowledged that growth “slowed late last year,” but also noted that “labour market conditions improved further.” The US central bank raised interest rates in December for the first time since June 2006.

Though the Fed has not ruled out another hike in March, weaker growth and financial markets volatility could see that delayed until June. Excluding inventories and



The Lower Manhattan skyline, One World Trade Centre and Manhattan Bridge are seen in the background as a ferry with a US flag cruises in New York in September 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

trade, the economy grew at a 1.6 per cent pace in the fourth quarter. The fourth-quarter growth pace was in line with economists’ expectations and followed a 2 per cent rate in the third quarter. The economy grew 2.4 per cent in 2015 after a similar expansion in 2014.

The GDP data, together with a surprise decision by the Bank of Japan to cut a benchmark interest rate below zero in a bold move to stimulate the Japanese economy, buoyed the dollar against a basket of currencies. Prices for US Treasuries rose and US stocks were trading higher.

In the fourth quarter, businesses accumulated \$68.6 billion worth of inventory. While that was down from \$85.5 billion in

the third quarter, it was a bit more than economists had expected, suggesting inventories could remain a drag on growth in the first quarter. The small inventory build subtracted 0.45 percentage point from the first estimate of fourth-quarter GDP growth.

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two thirds of US economic activity, increased at a 2.2 per cent rate. Though that was a step-down from the 3.0 per cent pace notched in the third quarter, the gain was above economists’ expectations.

Unusually mild weather hurt sales of winter apparel in December and undermined demand for heating through the quarter.

With gasoline prices around \$2 per gallon, a tightening labour

market gradually lifting wages and house prices boosting household wealth, economists believe the slowdown in consumer spending will be short-lived.

“The consumer will continue to power ahead, as spillovers from the weak mining and manufacturing sector to services industries remain limited,” said Harm Bandholz, chief US economist at Uni-Credit Research in New York.

Income at the disposal of households after accounting for taxes and inflation increased 3.2 per cent in the fourth quarter after rising 3.8 per cent in the prior period. Savings rose to a lofty \$739.3 billion from \$700.6 billion in the third quarter.

While a separate report from the University of Michigan

showed a dip in its consumer sentiment index in January because of the recent stock market sell-off, consumer optimism remained at levels consistent with steady economic growth. The dollar, which has gained 11 per cent against the currencies of the United States’ trading partners since last January, remained a drag on exports, leading to a trade deficit that subtracted 0.47 percentage point from GDP growth in the fourth quarter.

The downturn in energy sector investment put more pressure on business spending on nonresidential structures. Spending on mining exploration, wells and shafts dropped at a 38.7 per cent rate after plunging at a 47.0 per cent pace in the third quarter.

Investment in mining exploration, wells and shafts fell 35 per cent in 2015, the largest drop since 1986.

As oil prices appear to level off, the energy sector drag on the economy is expected to ease in the coming quarters. Oil prices have plummeted more than 60 per cent since mid-2014, forcing oil field companies such as Schlumberger (SLB.N) and Halliburton (HAL.N) to slash their capital spending budgets.

Business spending on equipment contracted at a 2.5 per cent rate last quarter after rising at a 9.9 per cent pace in the third quarter. Investment in residential construction remained a bright spot, rising at a 8.1 per cent rate. With consumer spending softening, inflation retreated in the fourth quarter. A price index in the GDP report that strips out food and energy costs increased at a 1.2 per cent rate, slowing from a 1.4 per cent pace in the third quarter.—Reuters

Three scientists on shortlist to appear on new Scottish banknote

LONDON — Royal Bank of Scotland has named three Scottish scientists — two men and one woman — on the shortlist of candidates to appear on its first plastic 10 pound (\$14) note.

The three are physicist James Clerk Maxwell, Mary Somerville, the first female member of the

Royal Astronomical Society, and civil engineer Thomas Telford, known as the “Colossus of Roads”.

More than 400 people took part in the selection of the 128 nominees, who had to be Scottish historical figures or people who had made a major contribution to

Scotland in science and innovation.

Maxwell (1831-1879), a hero of Albert Einstein, discovered the unified theory of electricity and magnetism.

Somerville (1780-1872) was a pioneer as a female scientist when women’s participation was discouraged. Her writings ultimately led to the discovery of the planet Neptune.

Telford (1757-1843) built more than 1,000 miles of roads in his lifetime and in Scotland designed harbours, tunnels and the Caledonian Canal.

People can vote for one of the three to appear on the note, which will be issued in 2017.

The decision on who to put on new banknotes can be controversial. The Bank of England was criticised in 2013 for the removal of the only female figure on its notes, social reformer Elizabeth Fry. Novelist Jane Austen was subsequently chosen to appear on new 10 pound notes.—Reuters

World’s only racing car designed for public roads prepares to wow China

LONDON — The world’s only single-seat racing car built to run on public roads is preparing to make its debut in Chinese mainland.

Britons Neill and Ian Briggs plan to launch the 274 kilometres an hour BAC Mono, described as the ultimate road beast, in either Beijing or Shanghai in the coming months. The two brothers are convinced the car will become the ultimate ‘big boy’ accessory among young cosmopolitan executives in China’s big cities.

But they also hope their entry into China will attract something that has so far eluded the BAC-Mono: the first female buyer, willing to splash out at least 235,000 US dollars (plus delivery and taxes). The price can be double if buyers opt for the full range of customisation.

A few months ago the car, capable of reaching a speed of 0 to 96.5 km/h in 2.8 seconds,

made its debut in Hong Kong, with the allocation of cars available all snapped up with days.

With a waiting list currently standing at 14 months, the hand-built sports racers come off a production line in Liverpool at the rate of just one a week.

Co-founder and product development director Neill Briggs, in an exclusive interview with Xinhua, described the plans of the company as it neared its launch in Chinese mainland.

“We will wait until the Spring Festival is over so we are looking at the end of March, but certainly in the coming months. At the moment we are looking at Beijing and Shanghai. Details of locations are currently being finalised. “This is a hand-crafted car and we believe brand Britain makes it even more attractive. The main challenge we have in China is to get road-legal status”.—Xinhua



A scaffolder carries a plank past a sign for RBS on a building undergoing renovation in London in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

More than 2,100 pregnant Colombian women infected with Zika virus

BOGOTA — More than 2,100 pregnant Colombian women are infected with the mosquito-borne Zika virus, the country's national health institute said on Saturday, as the disease continues its spread across the Americas.

The virus has been linked to the devastating birth defect microcephaly, which prevents fetus' brains from developing properly. There is no vaccine or treatment.

There are 20,297 confirmed cases of the disease in Colombia, the national health institute said in a epidemiology bulletin, among them 2,116 pregnant women.

There are so far no reported cases of microcephaly or deaths from the virus in Colombia.

The institute said 37.2 per cent of pregnant women with Zika live in Norte de Santander Province, along the eastern border with Venezuela.

Earlier figures from the health ministry showed 560 pregnant women had the disease, out of more than 13,500 infections.

Zika cases have been confirmed in 23 countries and territories in the Americas and scientists are racing to develop a

vaccine for the virus.

Nearly half of Colombia's Zika cases have been reported in the country's Caribbean region, the bulletin said. More than 60 per cent of those infected are women.

The health ministry has said Zika infection falls within the health requirements women must meet to get abortions in the country, which restricts the procedure unless patients are victims of rape, have significant medical problems or the fetus is fatally deformed.

Many women, especially those living far from large cities, struggle to find abortion providers even when they meet the legal requirements and illegal abortions are widespread.

The government has urged women to delay pregnancy for six to eight months to avoid potential infection. Officials expect up to 700,000 cases.

Brazil is the country hit hardest by the disease. It has reported around 3,700 cases of microcephaly strongly suspected to be related to Zika.

The World Health Organisation has said as many as 4 million people in the Americas may become infected.—Reuters

Japan releases global forest map to help reduce global warming

TOKYO — Japanese space agency on Thursday released a global forest map free of charge by using its radar Earth observation satellite, which may help prevent global warming through understanding of forest distribution.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) "developed a whole-globe forest map of 25-metre resolution, 'Global Forest/Non-forest map,' using the DAICHI-2 (ALOS-2) launched on 24 May, 2014, and released it from today free of charge," said JAXA in a release on Thursday.

In recent years, deforestation has been expanding in tropical and sub-tropical areas and is widely deemed as one of the causes of global warming. Therefore, many governments in the world place priority on understanding forest areas and maintaining them as important measures against global warming for political decisions.

"The L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar-2 (PALSAR-2) aboard the DAICHI-2 (Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2) with its high sensitivity and resolution

uses a radio wave of long wave length (about 24 cm) that is suitable for observing the existence of forests (natural forests) and the current status of forest use," said JAXA.

"It can also perform observations regardless of weather conditions or time (day or night) hence it is especially advantageous to measure forests in tropical areas which are covered by clouds almost all around the year," said the Japanese space agency.

JAXA plans to provide the "Global Forest/Non-forest map" by the DAICHI-2 once a year to contribute to measures against global warming through the understanding of forest distribution.

"With this data, we can grasp the reduction and increase of forests in each area in the world based on spatial and temporal changes," said the space agency.

"Therefore, it is expected to be useful for government organisations around the world for their forest maintenance plans such as which area should be prioritized for monitoring and maintenance," it said.—Xinhua

Did Brazil, global health agencies fumble Zika response?



Sueli Maria (obscured) holds her seven-day-old daughter Milena, who has microcephaly, at a hospital in Recife, Brazil, on 28 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

RIO DE JANEIRO — Last January, long lines formed outside health clinics in Recife, a city in Brazil's northeast hit hard in recent years by outbreaks of dengue, a painful tropical disease.

Doctors were on guard because federal health officials and the World Health Organisation (WHO) had warned 2015 would be a bad year for dengue and possibly another viral disease, chikungunya, both spread by the same type of mosquito.

But the symptoms of the hundreds of people seeking treatment did not fit dengue. Instead of high fevers and intense muscular aches that dengue is known to cause, patients were running only slight temperatures and complaining of joint pain. Many had rashes sooner than with dengue and chikungunya. "We knew this was something else," says Carlos Brito, a doctor from Recife who told state and federal health authorities in January-February last year that they were wrong to classify all the cases as dengue. "But the authorities were slow to believe," he said.

Kleber Luz, a physician in Natal, a city 300 km up the Atlantic coast, says he gave similar feedback but got the same response. The two — who were part of a group of doctors discussing the odd symptoms in text messages — grew frustrated with the authorities' narrow focus. They asked the federal health ministry to broaden

its search beyond viruses known in the area.

It took until early May for the health ministry to recognise that the Zika virus had arrived in Brazil and to alert the WHO's regional arm, the Washington-based Pan American Health Organisation. And it wasn't until November that a Rio de Janeiro laboratory made a link between the virus and microcephaly, which can lead to abnormally small brains in developing babies.

The WHO has been lambasted in the past couple of years by scientists, aid organisations, and public health experts for the slow way in which it initially reacted to the Ebola epidemic as it spread across West Africa in 2014. And so far, the hesitant response to the Zika outbreak, which has created the worst global health scare since Ebola, says much about the difficulties that the WHO and other health authorities face in combating unexpected public health threats.

On 1 December, the WHO cited the lab evidence linking Zika to microcephaly in an advisory to its member countries. It will consider on Monday whether to declare an international emergency.

The WHO said in Geneva on Thursday that Zika in the last few months has spread "explosively" to more than 20 other countries in the Americas and could infect as

many as 4 million people.

Whether the health authorities in Brazil and the leadership at the WHO have taken too long to get to this point is a subject of debate within the international health community.

The Brazilian government says its response when it was first alerted by the doctors about the unusual symptoms they were seeing was driven by the evidence.

"It was too early," said Claudio Maierovitch, director of the health ministry's Department of Communicable Disease Surveillance. "There are so many other viral possibilities and Zika had never been seen in this hemisphere."

And he said that when Zika was identified, the authorities' response was based on knowledge of the disease. Previous outbreaks of Zika, a virus first identified in 1947 in Uganda, had occurred in small and scattered rural populations in Africa and Southeast Asia and the symptoms were relatively benign.

"We based our response on the scientific knowledge available, that Zika caused a mild illness without major complications," said Maierovitch. "But as soon as we saw that there was an association with microcephaly, we reacted in record time."

Critics say that the WHO has been slow to act after the link between Zika and microcephaly was made, and should have declared an emergency as soon as that was determined. "My chief criticism is of WHO in Geneva. After being widely condemned for acting late on Ebola, it is now sitting back with Zika," said Lawrence O. Gostin, a professor of public health law at Georgetown University, who has worked with the WHO and written extensively about pandemics and policy. WHO officials say the agency's response to Zika is driven by science, and they point out that much remains unclear, including the precise nature of any link between Zika and microcephaly.

"In any unfolding crisis you're dealing with a lot of uncertainty," Bruce Aylward, the WHO's assistant director-general, told reporters on Thursday.—Reuters

Cancers cause 2.8m deaths in China in 2015

BEIJING — Cancers may have caused some 2.8 million deaths in China in 2015, which means more than 7,500 people die of cancer every day, according to a study by Chinese scholars.

"With increasing incidence and mortality, cancer is the leading cause in China and is a major public health problem," said the study published by the US medical journal "CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians."

It also estimated that nearly 4.3 million were diagnosed in

2015, with 12,000 new cases daily.

The figures marked a sharp rise in new diagnoses. Figures released in 2013 estimated that there were 3.12 million new diagnoses and over two million deaths in 2012. The figures in the study are not actual numbers, but are estimates based on data trends from 72 local, population-based cancer registries between 2009 and 2011, which is now available through the NCCRC and represents 6.5 per cent of the total population.

It said lung, stomach, esopha-

geal, liver and colorectal cancers were the most common ones in men, accounting for about two-thirds of all cases. Breast, lung, stomach, colorectal and esophageal cancers were the most commonly seen cancers among women, it added. Chen Wanqing, leading author of the study and director of the NCCRC told China National Radio that though air pollution is an important cause of lung cancer deaths, their accurate correlation must be decided by 10 to 20 years of data analysis.—Xinhua

Israel would consider invitation to peace talks with Palestinians-spokesman

JERUSALEM — Israel would consider a French invitation to peace talks with the Palestinians, but believes France has made a mistake by saying it will recognise a Palestinian state if the talks fail, an Israeli government official said on Saturday.

"If and when we get an invitation to a conference, we will examine it and respond to it," the official, who declined to be named, said in a statement.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told foreign diplomats on Friday that if the conference he proposes hit a wall, "well ... in this case, we need to face our responsibilities by recognising the Palestinian state".

The Israeli official dismissed the idea, saying: "Why would

the Palestinians budge on even a comma in a conference if they already know that, without making progress, they will get what they want?"

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, speaking to African leaders at a summit in Ethiopia, urged them to back France's conference plan.

But two Israeli cabinet ministers, both allies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said Israel should boycott such a meeting.

"Unequivocally, Israel will not attend a conference under threat," Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz told Channel 2 television, echoing a comment by Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz to Channel 1.



A Palestinian protester uses a sling to hurl stones towards Israeli troops during clashes, near Israel's Ofer Prison near the West Bank city of Ramallah on 29 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

US-led efforts to broker a "two-state solution" collapsed in 2014, and there has been no serious attempt to revive them.

Fabius has previously called for an international support group comprising Arab states, the European Union and UN Security Council members to put pressure on the two sides to compromise. But Netanyahu has called France's initiatives "counterproductive".

A US official responded cautiously to Fabius's statement.

"The US position on this issue has been clear. We continue

to believe that the preferred path to resolve this conflict is for the parties to reach an agreement on final status issues directly," the official said.

Despite anger in the US administration over Israeli settlement building, there is little prospect of President Barack Obama supporting any initiative that could upset the US Jewish lobby 10 months before an election.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has called Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements in occupied land "provocative" and said that it raises questions about

its commitment to a two-state solution.

Palestine has non-member observer status at the United Nations and its flag flies with those of member states at UN headquarters in New York. Sweden became the first member of the European Union to recognise a Palestinian state in 2014, and several other states have followed.

Palestinians seek a state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, parts of which have been occupied by Israel since 1967.—Reuters

FBI negotiates with defiant Oregon refuge holdouts

BURNS — The FBI negotiated with four armed occupants at a remote federal wildlife refuge in Oregon on Saturday while the holdouts in a video posted online expressed their mistrust of the government and reluctance to leave.

One of the four protesters remaining at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge said in a darkly lit video posted on Friday that he wanted to be assured he would not be arrested if he left. Others with him expressed similar sentiments.

Tensions in the standoff remained high four days after Robert "LaVoy" Finicum, 54, a spokesman for the group that seized buildings at the refuge on 2 January, was killed by police during the arrests of occupation leader Ammon Bundy and several other protesters as they travelled on a highway.

Supporters staged a rally in the nearby ranching community of Burns on Saturday night. About 30 pick-up trucks and other vehicles honked horns and waved flags — US, Confederate and Gadsden — as they drove. Passing the courthouse, protesters yelled "murderer" and "FBI go home."

B.J. Soper, a founding member of the Pacific Patriots Network, said: "It came from the locals, who asked up to help out and organize this driving rally and show support for the community."

But Mayor Craig LaFollette said the protesters were mostly out-



B.J. Soper speaks during the "Stand Your Ground" rally opposed to the shooting death of Robert "LaVoy" Finicum organized by the Pacific Patriots Network in Burns, Oregon on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

siders who had disrupted the community, adding: "We don't want them here."

Soper countered that rally footage showed "about 70 per cent of the vehicles were actually locals."

The FBI said Finicum reached for a gun during the confrontation, which was recorded on grainy video. His family disputes that.

In taking over the refuge, protesters criticised federal control of vast tracts of land in a flare-up of the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion, a decades-old conflict over federal control of millions of acres in the West. "Negotiations are ongoing," FBI spokeswoman Beth Anne Steele said, declining to give de-

tails on the talks or comment on the video. Bundy has issued messages through his attorney urging those remaining at the refuge to stand down and saying they would continue to fight through the courts.

But the holdouts in the video, streamed live on YouTube, said they did not want to leave the site, 30 miles (48 km) from Burns in the state's rural southeast, and expressed mistrust of the US government. "I don't believe that they have any authority over me because they're illegal and I can't bow down to that," said one.

Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward earlier this week said the protesters went too far in their armed occupation.—Reuters

US warship sails near island claimed by China in South China Sea

WASHINGTON/SHANGHAI — A US Navy destroyer sailed within 12 nautical miles of an island claimed by China and two other states in the South China Sea on Saturday to counter efforts to limit freedom of navigation, the Pentagon said, prompting an angry reaction from Beijing.

China claims most of the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of world trade is shipped every year. Viet Nam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said no ships from China's military were in the vicinity of the guided-missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur when it passed near Triton Island in the Paracel Islands.

The US Navy conducted a similar exercise in October in which the guided-missile destroyer Lassen sailed close to one of China's man-made islands, also drawing a rebuke from Beijing.

"This operation challenged attempts by the three claimants — China, Taiwan and Viet Nam

— to restrict navigation rights and freedoms," Davis said, reflecting the US position that the crucial sea lane should be treated as international waters.

Davis said the latest operation sought to challenge policies that require prior permission or notification of transit within territorial seas. He said the United States took no position on competing sovereignty claims to naturally formed land features in the South China Sea.

"No claimants were notified prior to the transit, which is consistent with our normal process and international law," Davis said.

China condemned the US action as provocative.

"The American warship has violated relevant Chinese laws by entering Chinese territorial waters without prior permission, and the Chinese side has taken relevant measures including monitoring and admonishments," China's foreign ministry said.

China's defence ministry calling the American action "intentionally provocative and 'irresponsible and extremely dangerous'".—Reuters

America's angry voters divvied up by Trump and Sanders

IOWA CITY, (Iowa)/NEW YORK — The 2016 election is shaping up to be the year of angry voters, the disgruntled Americans shaking up the establishment by fueling the presidential campaigns of two very different candidates — billionaire businessman Donald Trump and self-declared socialist Bernie Sanders.

Some 73 per cent of voters likely to head to the polls in November's election say they think the United States is on the wrong track, and these disaffected people make up a majority of the support bases for both Republican candidate Trump and Democratic hopeful Sanders — 87 per cent and 54 per cent, respectively, according to a Reuters/Ipsos poll.

Both candidates were seen as long shots against brand name rivals like Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton a few months ago, but have seen their popularity surge as the election race starts in earnest with the Iowa caucuses on 1 February. They are likely to do well in Iowa, but even if they lose, the fervor they've whipped up has upended the race and maybe even American politics.

So who are the angry Americans? They deviate from the popu-

lation in key ways: they are whiter, poorer and less educated. They are less likely to support a candidate who has been involved in politics. And regardless of party, they have deep distrust for Clinton after her more than two decades in the public eye. Where the camps differ is in identifying the root of America's ills, with supporters of Sanders pointing to income inequality and health care as the top problems, and those backing Trump putting the blame on immigrants and foreign terrorists, according to the poll. Pundits have been quick to define the economy as the source of the voter anger feeding the Trump and Sanders campaigns. In a post-recession world, the middle class still struggles with stagnant wages and a weak job market. But a close look at the polls, and interviews with prospective voters, show concerns go well beyond economic indicators.

Here in Iowa, the December jobs report issued Tuesday found just 3.4 per cent unemployment — far below the national average and still on the decline. "Now Hiring" signs are ubiquitous across the state. Asked to select the top issue for the next president in the first 100 days of the new administration, 24

per cent of voters nationwide who said the country was on the wrong track picked immigration — making it the most popular choice by that group.

Only 10 per cent of those who think the nation is on the right track selected immigration, making it the fifth most popular choice for that group, according to the poll.

"Wrong track" voters were also more likely to say terrorism and the economy were concerns.

Trump has built his campaign on an immigration platform that includes building a wall and deporting millions of undocumented immigrants. And his insistence that he could negotiate better trade deals provides a strong appeal to those concerned about disappearing jobs in a global economy.

On Tuesday night in Iowa City, Trump's rally drew both supporters and opponents. Eight times the event was interrupted by protesters, who were forced out of the packed gymnasium and heckled by the raucous crowd. Jim Schmidt, 48, of Johnson County, Iowa, was among the angry. His 11-year-old son wore a button proclaiming "Bomb the shit out of ISIS. The child watched as protesters were ejected from the event, cheering



US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waits to speak at a campaign town hall in Davenport, Iowa on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

and waving his hand in support.

"I'm angry but I love it and enjoy it," Schmidt said afterward. He's backing Trump for his business experience and ability to bring about change.

Where Trump's angry voters have been on display at rallies, the intensity around Sanders has manifested itself online — dominating message boards and comment sections. A liberal radio host in Oregon, Carl Wolfson, announced last month he was ending his show in part because of the vitriol coming from Sanders supporters. His Facebook post on the topic was then inundated with angry responses.

Sanders is resonating among angry voters by focusing on income inequality, and promising to deliver universal health care and free college education. Meghan Metier, 22, of Iowa City said the Affordable Care Act — President Barack Obama's signature healthcare reform — has allowed some of her friends to access Medicaid. But to keep it, she added, they have to be certain their income doesn't exceed the poverty level, so they stay barely employed. For her the system is broken and Sanders is the only candidate who appears ready to fix it. "He's a more reliable progressive," she said, comparing him to Clinton.—Reuters

French protesters call for end to state of emergency

PARIS — Several thousand people marched in French cities on Saturday to protest against a state of emergency introduced after November's attacks in Paris and a proposed nationality-stripping law that led France's justice minister to quit this week.

President Francois Hollande's Socialist government adopted state of emergency legislation following the 13 November. Islamist militant

attacks that left 130 people dead, and it plans to extend the measures for a further three months after they expire next month.

Opponents say the increased police powers and restrictions on public gatherings damage democracy and are ineffective in tackling terrorist threats. The debate has become intense as the government has pursued plans to deprive convicted terrorists of French national-

ity. Paris attracted the biggest march as 5,500 protesters, according to a police estimate, went from the traditional rallying point of Republic square through central Paris before dispersing near the Louvre museum.

The organisers said 20,000 joined the Paris protest. Smaller marches took place in other French cities like Toulouse and Marseille as part of protests

planned in 70 towns.

"I think it's more than dangerous, the extension of the state of emergency," Alexandra Scappaticci, one of the protesters in Paris, told Reuters.

"It has already been used during the COP 21 (climate talks) to lock down demonstrators who had nothing to do with terrorism, so I think that if it is extended, I don't know what more they could use it

for, but in any case, it will not prevent terrorism."

The Socialist government has the backing of most French people for the emergency measures and the wider use of nationality-stripping, opinion polls show. But it has angered some left-wing political allies, and Justice Minister Christiane Taubira, who had deep reservations about the reforms, resigned this week.—Reuters

One dead in shooting outside Denver motorcycle expo; event cancelled



Police officers stand watch outside the Rocky Mountain Regional Trauma Center after a shooting at a motorcycle show at the National Western Complex in Denver, Colorado on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

DENVER — A battle involving gunfire and knives erupted at a Denver motorcycle exposition on Saturday afternoon, leaving at least one person dead and sending seven people to the hospital, authorities said. There were no immediate arrests in the mayhem, which took place at the Colorado Motorcycle Expo at the National Western Complex, Denver Police Chief Robert White said at a news conference. The event was cancelled for Sunday. Police were talking to several witnesses and a "person of interest" about the incident, in which four people were shot, one stabbed and three injured in other ways, possibly in a fist fight.

Three people were in critical condition at area hospitals, while the others had less serious injuries.

White said there was more

than one shooter but could not say could why the fight started.

"Whether it was motorcycle gang-related, whether it was motorcycle club-related, that is still to be determined," White said. "This is very early on in the investigation." The incident recalled a shootout last May outside a restaurant in Waco, Texas. Nine bikers were killed, 18 injured, and scores were arrested in that incident.

A witness who requested anonymity out of fear of retaliation told the *Denver Post* newspaper that the fight was started by rival biker gangs. The gun fight occurred during the first day of the annual Colorado Motorcycle Expo, described on its Facebook page as the largest indoor motorcycle swap meet in the country, drawing thousands.—Reuters

Composer Morricone glad he re-considered Tarantino's film offer

ROME — Ennio Morricone, who wrote some of cinema's best-known sound tracks, said on Saturday he was glad he agreed to Quentin Tarantino's plea to do the score for the hit film "The Hateful Eight" after first turning him down.

Morricone changed his mind only after a visit by the American director to the composer's home in Rome. Morricone won a Golden Globe for the film and has been nominated for an Oscar.

"I worry a lot when I am asked to write a score for a film," a frail Morricone, 87, said on Saturday as he was given the Golden Globe statuette which he could not travel to Hollywood to get earlier this month.

"When Tarantino called me about a score for the film at first I said 'no' and changed my mind when he came to my house," Morricone said of the Western, which

is set in the period after the American Civil War.

"But I told him I wanted a total break with the style of Western films I wrote 50 years. I was worried even after I finished because I didn't know if he would like it because it is more like a symphony in four movements," an emotional Morricone said, his voice cracking at times.

"I think Tarantino liked it and that people liked it too."

Morricone, who has been nominated for an Oscar six times and was given an honorary Academy Award in 2007, composed scores for Sergio Leone's Spaghetti Westerns such as "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly," as well as films such as Roland Joffe's "The Mission," and Giuseppe Tornatore's "Cinema Paradiso".

He was handed the statuette at the Rome flagship store of Italian luxury brand Bulgari, which



Italian composer Ennio Morricone. PHOTO: REUTERS

announced it was sponsoring a film on Morricone's life and work to be directed by Tornatore.

Morricone wrote the scores for most of Tornatore's films, most notably "Cinema Paradiso" which won the Oscar for best foreign film in 1988.

Tornatore, 59, who attended Saturday's ceremony, said his tribute to Morricone, called "The Glance of Music", will profile the composer's classical education, his fonts of inspiration, and his relationships with directors.—Reuters

Zayn Malik's 'Pillowtalk' hits no 1 in 60 countries

LONDON — Former One Direction star Zayn Malik's debut solo single "Pillowtalk" has reached number one on iTunes in 60 countries.

The 23-year-old singer released the song on Friday and within minutes it was trending worldwide on Twitter before shooting to the top of the charts around the globe, reported Femalefirst.

He tweeted: "Crazy love today. This is crazy ... I can't believe it. Blown away... Love you all (sic)."

The steamy video for the single features Malik and his girlfriend Gigi Hadid.—PTI

'Spotlight,' actors of colour win big at SAG awards amid diversity furor

LOS ANGELES — "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to diverse TV," Idris Elba joked on stage after winning twice at Saturday's Screen Actors Guild Awards, where actors of colour claimed a slew of wins amid a furor in Hollywood over the lack of on-screen diversity.

Leonardo DiCaprio, Brie Larson and the cast of "Spotlight" — all white actors — won the top three film awards of the night, but the rest mainly honoured diverse cast and roles. That is in stark contrast to the Oscars, where no actors of colour are nominated this year for the industry's highest honours.

"Spotlight," about the Boston Globe's probe of child abuse in the Catholic Church, beat out hip-hop biopic "Straight Outta Compton" for best film ensemble. The movie starred Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo and Rachel McAdams.

"This is not only for survivors of this horrific situation, this is really for the disenfranchised," Keaton said. "This is for the Flint, Michigans in the world, for the powerless."

DiCaprio was named best actor for playing a fur-trapper in pioneer-era retribution drama "The Revenant."

"We all stand on shoulders of giants, so thank all those actors from past who have inspired me and all the actors in this room," DiCaprio said.

Larson, who played a woman held hostage with a young son in "Room," was named best actress, while Sweden's Alicia Vikander won best supporting actress for playing the wife of transgender artist Lili Elbe in "The Danish Girl."

"Spotlight," DiCaprio, Larson and Vikander are all nominated for Oscars, and with their Saturday wins, are cemented as front-runners in their respective categories.



Actor Leonardo DiCaprio & actress Brie Larson pose their awards for Outstanding Performance. PHOTO: REUTERS

Elba, a black British actor, won two SAG awards: best supporting actor for playing a mercenary commander in Netflix's West African war drama "Beasts of No Nation," and best actor in a limited series for BBC's crime drama "Luther."

"We made a film about real people and real lives, and to be awarded for that is very special," Elba said of his "Beasts" win.

In the television categories, which featured far more diverse actors and roles, Netflix's women's prison show "Orange Is the New Black," won the best comedy series ensemble award for the second consecutive year.

"Look at this stage," cast member Laura Prepon said while accepting the award. "This is what



The cast of "Spotlight" (from left:) Billy Crudup, Brian d'Arcy James, Mark Ruffalo, Rachael McAdams, John Slattery, Michael Keaton and Liev Schreiber, hold their awards for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture as they pose backstage at the 22nd Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California on 30 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

we talk about when we talk about diversity. Different race, colour, creed, sexual orientation."

"Orange" star Uzo Aduba won best comedy series actress for playing kooky inmate Crazy Eyes, Queen Latifah won best actress in a TV miniseries for playing blues singer Bessie Smith in HBO's "Bessie," and Viola Davis won best drama actress for ABC's "How to Get Away with Murder." All three actresses are black.

Jeffrey Tambor won best comedy series actor for playing Maura Pfefferman, an aging wealthy transgender woman in Amazon's "Transparent."

"I'd like to dedicate this award to the non-Maura Pfeffermans who don't have a lot of cash for their operations, for their med-



(L-R) Phyllis Logan, Raquel Cassidy, Lesley Nicol, Sophie McShera and Joanne Froggatt of "Downton Abbey" hold their awards for Outstanding Performance. PHOTO: REUTERS

icine, for their freedom," Tambor said.

Kevin Spacey was named best drama actor for political

thriller "House of Cards," and British period drama "Downton Abbey" was named best drama ensemble.—Reuters

Bowie's will directs his ashes to Bali, splits \$100 million estate

NEW YORK — David Bowie, the British rock star who died at the age of 69 from cancer earlier this month, directed in his will that his ashes be scattered in Bali, an island that fascinated him, according to a newspaper report.

Bowie's estimated \$100 million estate will go to his wife, children, a nanny and a personal assistant, in accordance with his 20-page will, filed on Friday in Surrogate's Court in Manhattan, the *New York Times* said.

His penthouse apartment in the trendy Manhattan neighbourhood of Soho, where fans left a wall of flowers upon hearing news of his death on 10 January, was left to his widow, model Iman Abdulmajid Jones, the newspaper said. He also left her about half of the remaining estate.

His children, adult son Duncan and teenage daughter Alexandra, will get about 25 per cent each and Alexandra was also left Bowie's mountain retreat in Ulster County, New York.

A nanny who cared for Duncan, Marion Skene, will receive \$1 million, the report added.

Bowie left his own long-time personal assistant, Corinne Schwab, or Coco, \$2 million and stock in a company called Opos-



Flowers are pictured outside the apartment house where David Bowie was living in 1976-78 in Berlin's Schoenberg district, Germany, on 15 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

sum Inc. It was not immediately clear what business Opossum is involved in. The will, which was prepared in 2004, was filed under Bowie's birth name, David Robert Jones, which was never legally changed by the singer who created

the pop persona "Ziggy Stardust" in the early 1970s.

The document directed that Bowie be cremated, preferably in Bali "in accordance with the Buddhist rituals," the newspaper said. He further stated that regardless of

where the cremation took place, his ashes should be scattered in Bali.

Bowie was cremated in New Jersey on 12 January.

Bowie's publicist Steve Martin declined to comment on Saturday.—*Reuters*

'Travel University' encourages young Japanese to take wing, see world

TOKYO — Tabippo Inc., a travel-related event planning company set up by a group of young travel enthusiasts, attracts over 3,000 people annually to their "Tabi Daigaku" workshops where participants get travel advice on everything from how to prepare for a round-the-world trip, taking better photos and improving their language skills.

The Tokyo-based company's 27-year-old president, Naoya Shimizu, made a three-month trip around the globe during his senior year in university and had a wonderful experience. "As a result, I want to encourage young people of my generation to travel abroad more and go see different things," he said.

Upon returning to Japan, Shimizu and a few friends he made during the trip got together to launch Tabippo as an unincorporated association. Later, he launched the company under the same name in April 2014.

"Tabi Daigaku," which translates as Travel University, hosts about 80 to 90 events in Tokyo, Kyoto, Okinawa and other places in Japan each year. Participants can, for example, learn English or other foreign languages needed for travelling, or obtain advice on travel preparations or job hunting after their return from those who have completed the round-the-globe adventures.

Fees vary depending on the workshop, but usually average

around 1,500 yen (\$13) for students and 2,500 yen for those who are already working.

The majority of participants are between 18 years old and their early 30s, with about 30 per cent being university students and the rest working adults, Tabippo officials said.

Participants have given positive feedback, saying the events were easy to join and that they were able to find travel buddies.

In summer, Tabippo organises "World Journey Festa — Tabi-Matsuri," a travel-themed outdoor festival with music and talk shows that draws about 5,000 visitors.

Tabippo is now considering events in partnership with educa-

tional institutions from elementary schools through to universities, as well as programmes to support returnees with job searches after their journeys.

In February, a series of seminars mainly for students and other events is scheduled to be held in Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka as "Tabippo 2016."

The company also sells travel goods, including easy-to-use notebooks in which to keep a record of the journey, as a way of promoting the joys of travel through objects used in daily life.

"Travelling enriches our lives," Shimizu said. "I want to spread the culture of travelling and turn more people into globe-trotters."—*Kyodo News*

Top chefs showcase best of East, West in Vancouver

VANCOUVER — Some top chefs from Canada, China and France joined forces here Friday evening at a popular restaurant to showcase the best of East and West as part of the city's 8th annual Chinese Restaurant Awards. Since 2008, the awards have been a highlight of Vancouver's unique and exciting Chinese culinary scene.

The awards nowadays serve as a restaurant and dining guide for food lovers by recognising the top restaurants in the city in categories such as best Chinese dish, social media award and diner's choice award.

Craig Stowe, Chinese Restaurant Awards president, told Xinhua that the Chinese Restaurant Awards are a celebration of the unique culinary achievement in Vancouver. "We have over 350 restaurants that specialise in Chinese cuisine, so northern Chinese, southern Chinese, dim sum, noodle houses, fine dining. It's quite amazing," he said, adding that Vancouver is one of the top places outside China to enjoy Chinese dishes. On Friday, organisers invited three top chefs from the Shangri-La hotel chain in Vancouver and Paris, as well as one of Vancouver's top pastry chefs for a multi-course dinner.

The theme was "East Meets West," with the chefs taking turns presenting their top dishes inspired by both Western and Chinese ingredients, techniques and traditions. The event organiser said Vancouver has been going through a culinary transformation, with Chinese restaurants becoming an important part of the food scene. Stowe said the food scene here has started to reflect the changing population and tastes. "In Vancouver, what's happened is half the population is Asian and a big portion of that is Chinese," he said, adding that the city had a wave of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong in the seventies, and a second wave from the Chinese mainland later.—*Xinhua*

mitv Myanmar International

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

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Innovative Handiworks Based On The Art Of Line Drawing
07:44	Am	Kyauk Gu Umin Cave Gu Pha Ya
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Discovering Tribes "Lisu: Their Life and Customs" (Part- II)
08:48	Am	Gold from Garbage
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA DRUM)

09:51	Am	Kayah Style
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Myanmar HR Conference (2015) (Part- I)
10:41	Am	A Worth Studying Site For Ancient Myanmar Heritages

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -2)
07:47	Pm	Mobile House
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Lashio Noodle)
08:45	Pm	Now in Yangon
08:49	Pm	Kyaikhteeyoe: My Father The Porter

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

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

Shanghai to stage Shakespeare film exhibition

SHANGHAI — Shanghai will stage an exhibition of films adapted from the works of William Shakespeare in June to mark the 400th anniversary of the British playwright's death.

The organising committee of the Shanghai International Festival said yesterday they would co-

host the event with the British Film Institute during the Shanghai International Festival.

Ian McKellern, who starred a number of Shakespeare dramas and who is best known in China for his portrayal of Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*, will attend the event, the committee said.—*Xinhua*

Suarez winner helps Barca sink nine-man Atletico

BARCELONA — Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez scored the goals as Barcelona came from behind to beat nine-man Atletico Madrid 2-1 at the Nou Camp on Saturday in a top-of-the-table clash that sent them three points clear in La Liga. Atletico went ahead in the 10th minute through Koke but Messi equalised for Barca following a fine team move on the half hour.

Suarez struck his 31st goal in as many games after 38 min-

utes and a wild challenge from Filipe Luis on Messi earned the Atlet-

ico defender a red card before half-time. Diego Godin was also sent off after receiving a second yellow card for a mis-

timed tackle on Suarez midway through the second half.

"We knew it would be

a difficult game and we are happy with three points against a direct opponent," keeper Claudio Bravo told reporters.

"There is still a long way to go in the championship. We are going well at the moment in all

Messi for the equaliser.

Atletico were sloppy defensively as Suarez latched onto a simple ball over the top by Alves and beat Oblak too easily from a tight angle.

The visitors' chance of a comeback were hit by a knee high studs up challenge by Filipe Luis on Messi that saw him dismissed.

the tournaments and it is good to get a win even though we were not at our best."

Barcelona moved on to 51 points, three ahead of Atletico, and have a game in hand.

Atletico coach Diego Simeone opted to play five in midfield with Antoine Griezmann the lone striker.

It meant they were able to outnumber Barcelona in the middle of the pitch early on and they threatened immediately with Bravo stretching to block a Saul Niguez strike.

Koke was then given space to stroke the ball home in the centre of the area from a Saul cross.

Gradually Barca began to impose themselves, with Suarez having a shot blocked by keeper Jan Oblak after a good passing move and they again probed the defence before Jordi Alba picked out

Still Atletico pushed forward after the break and Griezmann was unlucky with a shot that came back off Bravo, who knew little about it, before heads began to drop after Godin's dismissal.

A second half Bruno Soriano penalty gave Villarreal a 1-0 victory over Granada that put them level on 44 points with third-placed Real Madrid, who face Espanyol on Sunday.

Jean-Sylvain Babin pulled back Roberto Soldado in the area and Soriano sent keeper Andres Fernandez the wrong way with his spot kick after 54 minutes.

Elsewhere, an Inaki Williams header gave Athletic Bilbao a 1-0 victory at Getafe, Xabi Prieto and Inigo Martinez were on target for Real Sociedad in a 2-1 win over Real Betis, and Eibar fell 2-1 at home to Malaga.—Reuters

Djokovic masters Murray for sixth Australian title

MELBOURNE — Novak Djokovic crushed Andy Murray 6-1, 7-5, 7-6(3) on Sunday to match Roy Emerson's record of six Australian Open titles and leave the Briton heartbroken again at Melbourne Park.

The defending champion was at his ruthless best under the lights at Rod Laver Arena, mauling Murray in the baseline duels and closing out the match in two hours and 53 minutes.

Murray succumbed to his fifth loss in five Australian Open finals, and fourth against the Serbian world number one, who claimed his 11th grand slam title to draw level with the totals of Australian Rod Laver and Swede Bjorn Borg.

Having fended off Murray in a marathon second set, Djokovic again had to put down some stiff Murray resistance in the third as the Scot refused to go quietly.

But having been dragged into a tiebreak, Djokovic sealed the title on his third match point with a clinical ace down the T.

For a man who has owned the year's first grand slam for five of the past six years and won his first in 2008, Djokovic's celebrations were subdued and he gave Murray a consoling pat on the chest as they shook hands.

After walking around the court and pumping his fist at clutches of thrilled Serbian fans, Djokovic ripped off his shirt and flung it to a young woman who jumped up and down in delight.

"Andy, you are a great champion, a great person and a great friend and I'm sure you are going to have more opportunities to fight for this trophy," Djokovic said at the trophy presentation.

"It's a great privilege to match the record of one of the greatest players to play the game," he added, referring to Laver who was watching on.

Murray, whose wife Kim is heavily pregnant at home in Britain and was rocked by a medical emergency involving his father-in-law at the tournament, was magnanimous in defeat.

"I feel like I've been here before," Murray said jokingly as he took the microphone.

"I'd like to congratulate Novak. Six Australian Opens is an incredible feat. And what he has done in the last year has been incredible consistency."

Djokovic started brilliantly in his semi-final win over Roger Federer and launched the same attack on Murray, breaking the Scot twice to roar into a 5-0 lead and winning 22 of the opening 29 points.

Sealing the set with an unreturnable serve, the Serb prised another four break-points in the third game of the second set but Murray dug in to hold with an ace.

Murray began to make inroads in some brutal baseline rallies and the players traded service breaks before Murray seemed set to move 6-5 ahead when he went 40-0 ahead on serve.

Djokovic struck back from nowhere though and whipped a passing shot beyond Murray to

raise a break-point after a punishing 36-stroke rally.

Murray clubbed a backhand well past the baseline to concede serve but still had chances when the Serb lost his



Serbia's Novak Djokovic kisses the men's singles trophy after winning his final match against Britain's Andy Murray at the Australian Open tennis tournament at Melbourne Park, Australia, on 31 January 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS