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NCA parties to set up truce observation scheme in Shan State

Ye Myint

THE Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) is planning to form a state-level monitoring mechanism in Shan State following renewed clashes in the region, according to the attendees of the JMC's third meeting yesterday in Yangon.

Shan State has many armed groups, raising the high possibility of armed conflicts, said Dr Min Zaw Oo, a programme director at the Myanmar Peace Centre.

Establishing a state-level mechanism to deal with the monitoring process in Shan State will not only reduce incidences of [new] conflict but will also lower the risk of recurring conflict among ceasefire signatories, he added.

According to the programme director, the government has reached an agreement with ethnic ceasefire signatory groups to form regional monitoring committees in Taninthayi and Bago regions and Kayin, Mon and Chin states.

He told The Global New Light of Myanmar that the JMC is responsible only for the NCA signatories, not to the groups that refused to sign the agreement.

He pointed out that the Joint Monitoring Committee was



Saw Issac Po of the Karen National Union, who is also first vice-chairman of the Joint Monitoring Committee, addresses the committee.
PHOTO: YE MYINT

formed in accordance with the terms of NCA.

The JMC will have to prioritise the process of monitoring possible violations of the truce

pact among signatories only, said U Ko Ko Gyi, a member of the committee.

The committee member also said Shan State was the first

region where renewed clashes erupted after the signing of the ceasefire deal between the government and eight ethnic armed organisations.

Saw Issac Po, the first vice-chairman of the committee, said of the recent clashes in northern Shan State that tensions

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Tatmadaw aims to remove AA insurgents from Rakhine State



Gun and bullets seized from AA insurgents in Ranchaung-Ru Chaung area of Kyauktaw Township. PHOTO: MYAWADY

TATMADAW troops have clashed with the Arakan Army (AA), an ethnic insurgent group, 15 times from 28 December to 4 January in the Ranchaung-Ru Chaung area of Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State.

The fighting occurred when Tatmadaw troops cleared the area, acting on intelligence that AA insurgents were preparing to invade.

Several Tatmadaw personnel, including one commanding officer, were killed in sniper attacks, many others were injured.

The Tatmadaw captured three insurgents and seized one

weapon, 1,250 rounds of bullets, 44 mines, 10 grenades, 15 tents, 42 bags of rice, 15 containers of edible oil and a cache of medicine.

Following the Tatmadaw operation, which was carried out with assistance from local residents, AA insurgents have withdrawn from the area and have returned to civilian life in Kyawtaw, Mrauk U and Minbya townships. Tatmadaw forces suspect the insurgents are waiting to combine with allies, who are expected to travel through the forest route linking Magway to Setok-tara.

As they retreated, AA troops took five men and two women as hostages while they were working on a farm in Paletwa Township.

The AA insurgents reportedly encountered other non-state militias from a neighbouring country and demanded assistance from them.

Most AA members are thought to have been recruited by force or coercion.

The Tatmadaw has announced that it will continue to launch offensive attacks against AA forces until the area is cleared of all insurgents.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses proposal to suspend construction of high-rise buildings in Yangon

THE Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) discussed an urgent proposal today that would suspend the construction of high-rise buildings in Yangon until they meet all existing rules and regulations for construction.

The parliament put the urgent proposal on record, pledging that it would monitor the issue.

Regarding the proposal, Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint replied that the ministry is closely supervising buildings that are being built by the ministry to ensure that they follow the rules.

However, he added, the Yangon City Development Committee has set up a subcommittee of

experts to supervise the construction of buildings higher than 11 storeys.

The construction of buildings across the country should follow the existing construction rules and regulations, the deputy minister said.

Also at yesterday's Lower House session, MPs asked questions about the upgrading of a school in Pakokku Township, the drinking water supply in Bilin Township, the repaying agriculture loans in Tamu District and about permissions to use virgin and fallow lands.

MP Dr Soe Moe Aung from Bilin Constituency asked whether the Ministry of Agriculture and



Dr. Than Aung. PHOTO: MNA

Irrigation has a plan to supply drinking water from the township's Kazai Dam to the wards that face a scarcity of water every summer.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin Zaw replied that the ministry mainly supplies irrigation water to local farms. However, the deputy minister said, the ministry will cooperate with local development affairs departments to supply drinking water to the wards if the departments report on the issue to the ministry.



Dr. Daw May Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

MP U Khin Maung Shwe from Tamu Constituency asked whether the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation has any plan to settle the issue of farmers struggling to repay agriculture loans following the loss of their farmlands to floods. The MP also asked for the ministry to arrange for virgin and fallow lands to be provided to farmers who lost their farms.

Deputy Minister U Khin Zaw replied that the farmers should request their township's bank manager to delay the dead-



Dr. Soe Moe Aung. PHOTO: MNA

line for loan repayment.

During the last rainy season, floods damaged 7,318 acres of farmland in Tamu District, of which 4,353 acres have been re-covered.

At the parliament session, Minister for Health Dr Than Aung suggested that more wards be added to Yangon General Hospital, as the hospital has seen an increase in the number of patients it receives, jumping from around 25,000 in 2013 to 62,500 in 2014.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives former British PM



U Shwe Mann received Mr Tony Blair in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

THURA U Shwe Mann, the Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, received Mr Tony Blair, former British Prime Minister, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the call at the Pyithu Hluttaw building were the Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee Chairman U Hla Myint Oo, Member of Legal

Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission U Ko Ko Naing and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Courts aim to improve public trust through outreach

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo called on courts to promote public relations and to aid the development of public trust in the judiciary sector.

At the 10th work coordination meeting of judges from region and state courts in Nay Pyi Taw, the chief justice of the union stressed the importance of

the cooperation of the people in proper administration of justice.

The Supreme Court of the Union heard 1,675 criminal cases from January 1 to December 31, 2015, and has already passed judgment on 1,269 of those cases while 2,072, out of the total 3,193, civil cases that were heard in that period have been

have ruled on.

In his concluding remarks, U Tun Tun Oo called on judges across the country to strive to hear and settle cases efficiently and justly.

The meeting will end on 9 January.—*Myanmar News Agency*

NCA parties to set up truce monitoring scheme in Shan State

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are expected to decline through the agreements in the NCA, as the parties involved in the fighting seem eager to learn what is the root cause of their problems rather than blame one another.

After reaching agreements on the establishment of central and regional offices to monitor

the ceasefire on the first day of its meeting, the committee will continue the meeting for a second day in order to discuss budgetary matters, flare-ups in Shan State and measures to prevent the recurrence of conflict in the region.

The committee will also make plans to meet with international donors.

225 reported fires in Yangon Region during 2015

THE leading causes of fire outbreak in Yangon in 2015 have been determined as being general negligence and electric short circuiting. Yangon Region saw more than 225 total fires in 2015.

The Yangon Region Fire Services Department said in its statement yesterday that out of the fires that broke out in 2015, 99 were caused by electric short circuiting and 88 were due to human negligence.

Fires in 2015 caused more than K 365 million worth of damage. There were 266 recorded fires in 2014, causing

more than K 328 million worth of damage.

With more than 670 firemen and 20,000 auxiliary firemen the Yangon Region Fire Services Department is taking measures to reduce the number of fires in future. The department has installed CCTVs at eight high rise buildings in the region, keeping them under close watch around the clock in an attempt to pre-empt destructive fires.

There are 45 fire stations in 45 townships and 103 fire engines, 23 water tankers and supporting vehicles.—*Ko Moe*

Tatmadaw aims to remove Arakan Army from Rakhine State

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The AA was formed by 20 original members at the former headquarters of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in April 2009, when the KIA formed the

Federal Union Army (FUA) and sent member ethnic armed groups to conduct operations in their places of origin.

In the second week of March 2015, an AA force led by Khaing

Lin Zan left the KIA's compound in Laiza, Kachin State, for the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) camp in the border area joining Bangladesh, India and Myanmar.

On 28 March 2015, a unit of

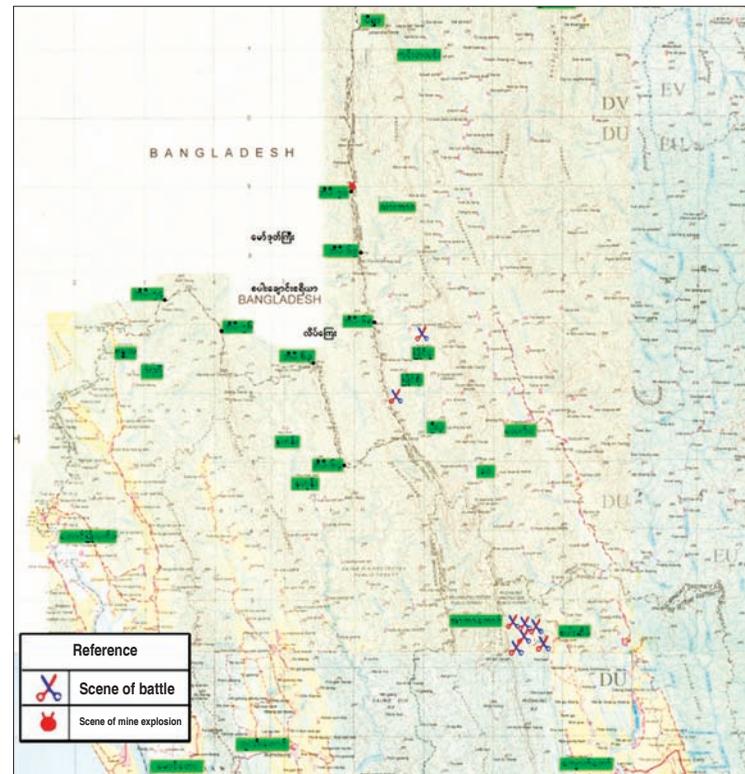
25 AA troops led by Khaing Aung Than (aka Phone Myat Khaung) entered Myanmar through Pyaingso Valley at the Myanmar-Bangladesh border. The group withdrew from the area after engaging with

the Tatmadaw.

In April 2015, further clashes erupted between the AA and the Tatmadaw when the former attempted to seize Tatmadaw-controlled territory.—*Myawady*



Amunition, medicines and rations seized from AA insurgents. PHOTO: MYAWADY



Map shows points where fighting happened between the Tatmadaw and AA insurgents and mines planted by the insurgents. PHOTO: MYAWADY

Joint Bill Committee, Finance Ministry discuss Tax of the Union bill for 2016

THE Joint bill committee of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Ministry of Finance held a meeting on the tax of the Union bill for 2016 at the parliamentary building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, Secretary of the joint bill committee of

the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw spoke on matters related to amendments, additions and removed content within the bill.

Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Union Minister for Finance U Whein Shein, and participants

discussed the bill. Also present at the meeting was the deputy speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, deputy ministers, vice chairmen and members of the joint committees of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, MPs and businessmen.—*Myanmar News Agency*

MYANMAR GAZETTE

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the appointment of Director-General U Ko Ko Tin of Human Resource & Education Planning Department under the Ministry of Education, as the Director-General of Technical Cooperation Department under the Ministry of Industry.

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as heads of service organisations shown against each from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Aung Than Oo Deputy Director-General Department of Basic Education Ministry of Education	Director-General Department of Basic Education Ministry of Education
(b) Dr Daw War War Maung Deputy Director-General Central Statistics Organisation Ministry of National Planning & Economic Development	Director-General Central Statistics Organisation Ministry of National Planning & Economic Development
(c) U Tin Maung Kyi Deputy Director-General National Archive Department Ministry of National Planning & Economic Development	Director-General National Archive Department Ministry of National Planning & Economic Development



Myanmar National Airlines' cabin crew training No. 2/2015 concluded on Wednesday at Civil Aviation Training School in Yangon. The course started on 5 November and ended on 31 December, lasting for two months. PHOTO: NYUNT LWIN (MNA)

Model year for imported cars restricted

THE Road Transport Administration Department under the Ministry of Rail Transport has issued Notification 149/2015 dated 18th December, which restricts the import of motor vehicles in regard to the year of manufacturing i.e. the model of the vehicle.

The union government in a cabinet meeting held yesterday

decided to relax the ministry's restrictions concerning the year of manufacture of motor vehicles being imported.

The earliest allowed year of manufacture is 2006 and restrictions vary depending upon type.

Restrictions will be relaxed for fire engines and ambulances imported to be donated to the state.—*Myanmar News Agency*

South Korea seeks US strategic weapons after North's nuclear test

SEOUL — South Korea is in talks with the United States to deploy US strategic assets on the Korean peninsula, a South Korean military official said yesterday, a day after North Korea said it successfully tested a hydrogen nuclear device.

The United States and weapons experts voiced doubts the device was as advanced as North Korea claimed, but calls mounted for more sanctions against the isolated state for its rogue nuclear programme.

The underground explosion angered China, which was not given prior notice although it is North Korea's main ally, pointing to a strain in ties between the neighbours. The test also alarmed Japan and the White House said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe agreed with US President Barack Obama in a telephone call that a firm global response was needed.

Obama also spoke to Presi-

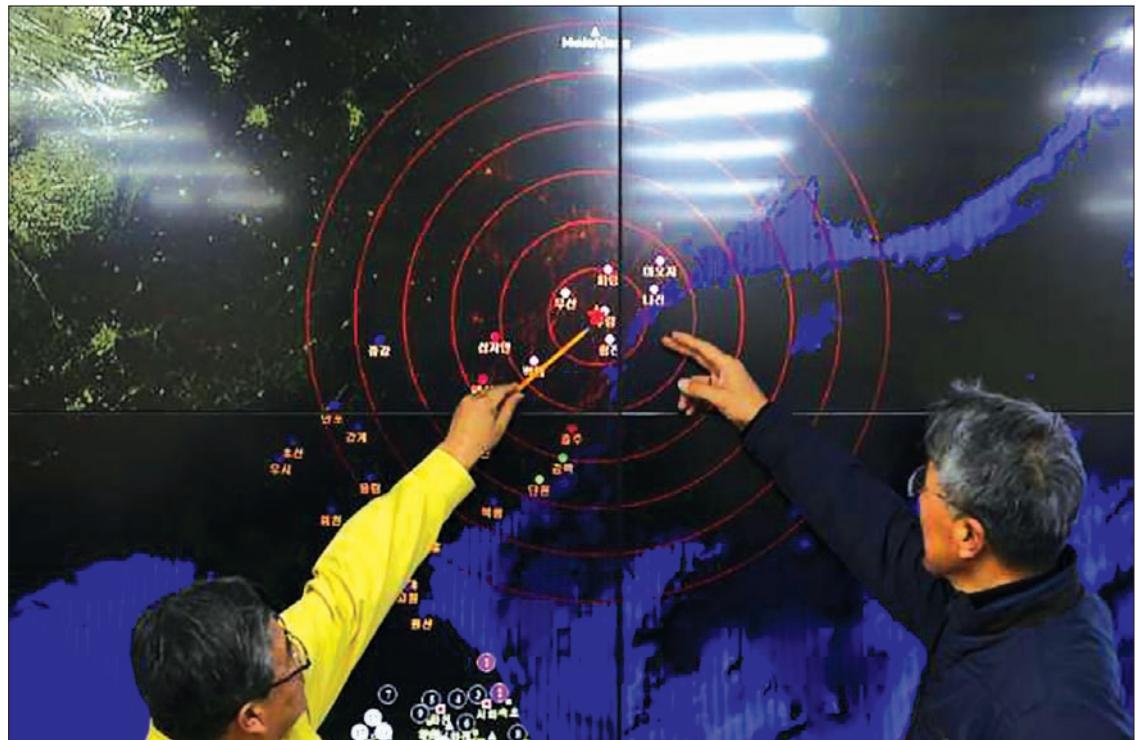
dent Park Geun-hye of South Korea to discuss options.

A South Korean military official told Reuters the two countries had discussed the deployment of US strategic assets on the divided Korean peninsula, but declined to give further details. After North Korea last tested a nuclear device, in 2013, Washington sent a pair of nuclear-capable B-2 stealth bombers on a sortie over South Korea in a show of force.

At the time, North Korea responded by threatening a nuclear strike on the United States.

South Korea, technically in a state of war against the North, said it was not considering a nuclear deterrent of its own, despite calls from ruling party leaders. The United States is highly unlikely to restore the tactical nuclear missiles it removed from South Korea in 1991, experts said.

The United States is also limit-



Ko Yun-hwa (L), Administrator of Korea Meteorological Administration, points at where seismic waves observed in South Korea came from, during a media briefing at Korea Meteorological Administration in Seoul, South Korea, on 6 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed in its military response for fear of provoking an unpredictable regime in Pyongyang, said Anthony Cordesman, a defence policy expert at the Washington-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies think tank.

"Any escalation in this region, any over-reaction can easily lead to not only a conflict between South and North Korea, but drag China and the United States and Japan into a confrontation," as well,

Cordesman said.

Hours after the latest nuclear test on Wednesday, the UN Security Council said it would work immediately on significant new measures against North Korea. Diplomats said that could mean an expansion of sanctions against Pyongyang, although major powers might balk at an all-out economic offensive.

In the United States, Republican presidential candidates

seized on the test to accuse Obama of running a "feckless" foreign policy that enabled North Korea to bolster its nuclear arms capabilities.

US congressional sources said Republican leaders of the US House of Representatives were considering a vote as soon as next week to impose stiffer punishment on foreign companies doing business with Pyongyang.—Reuters

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Executive Officer -

Nakagawa Kiyoshi
gnlmdaily@gmail.com

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye
khinmaungaye@hotmail.com

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

Chief Reporter

Ye Myint, uyemyint76@gmail.com,

Consultant Editors

Jacob Goldberg

jgold.news@gmail.com

Alec Wilmot

alec.wilmot.gnlm@gmail.com

Editors

Ye Htut Tin

mryehtuttin@gmail.com

Kyaw Thura, kthura.spk@gmail.com,

Myint Win Thein

journalist.sss@gmail.com

International news

Tun Tun Naing

tunyaing@gmail.com

Reporters

Khaing Thanda Lwin

juniorlwin25@gmail.com

Tun Aung Kyaw

tunaungkyaw.31@gmail.com

Translators

Ma Than Htay,

Hay Mar Tin Win

haymarfat@gmail.com

Proof reader

Nwe Nwe Tun

Computer Team

Tun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung,

Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,

Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation & Advertising

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532

Ads and subscription enquiries:

adv.gnlm@gmail.com

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China again lands planes on disputed island in South China Sea

BEIJING — China on Wednesday landed two test flights on an island it has built in the South China Sea, four days after it angered Viet Nam with a landing on the same runway in the disputed territory, the Xinhua state news agency said.

The two flights are likely to spark further condemnation from Viet Nam, which launched a formal diplomatic protest over the weekend, and the Philippines, which said it was planning to do the same.

Both countries have

claims to the area that overlap with that of China, which claims almost the whole of the South China Sea.

Xinhua said the two planes landed on an artificial island in the Spratly Islands on Wednesday morning.

"The successful test flights proved that the airport has the capacity to ensure the safe operation of large civilian aircraft," Xinhua said, adding that the airport would facilitate the transport of supplies, personnel and medical aid.

Xinhua did not give any

more detail about what type of aircraft had landed.

The runway at the Fiery Cross Reef is 3,000 metres (10,000 feet) long and is one of three China has been building for more than a year by dredging sand up onto reefs and atolls in the Spratly archipelago.

On Saturday, China landed a civilian plane on the same runway in the Spratlys in its first test, which was also the first time it had used a runway in the area.

The United States has criticised China's construction of the islands and worries that it plans to use them for military purposes, even though China says it has no hostile intent.

The United States said after the first landing it was concerned that the flight had exacerbated tension.

The runways would be long enough to handle long-range bombers and transport aircraft as well as China's best jet fighters, giving it a presence deep in the maritime heart of Southeast Asia that it has lacked until now.

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



A civilian aircraft lands at the airfield on Yongshu Jiao in the Nansha Islands, on 6 January. PHOTO: XINHUA

Cambodian leader reverses decision on single citizenship

PHNOM PENH — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen yesterday reversed his earlier decision on single citizenship for political party leaders, saying they could continue to hold multiple nationalities.

Speaking at a commemorative ceremony, Hun Sen said that after serious discussions among leaders of the ruling Cambodian People's Party, a decision had been reached that leaders of all political parties are entitled to retain two or more citizenships.

"All political parties' (leaders), whether with one or 10 citizenships, please come and do politics altogether," said the premier.

Hun Sen said the reversal is meant to provide more overseas Cambodians with more opportunities to participate in political elections in Cambodia.

Hun Sen last month said the CPP would initiate a legal requirement for single citizenship for leaders of all political parties.—Kyodo News

Govt accepts Congress demands on GST bill



A view of the Indian parliament building is reflected on a car in New Delhi. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW DELHI — The government said yesterday it agreed to accept demands set by the Congress party to back a landmark tax reform, raising hopes a political standoff that blocked the measure throughout last year might be resolved.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Venkaiah Naidu also said the government was willing to bring forward the next parliament session to pass the proposed goods and services tax bill (GST) if Congress supports the measure.

The proposed tax, India's

biggest revenue shake-up since independence in 1947, would seek to replace a slew of federal and state levies, transforming the nation of 1.2 billion people into a customs union.

Naidu met Congress leader Sonia Gandhi yesterday to convey the government's decision. Gandhi, however, didn't assure him of her party's support.

"Sonia said they (Congress) will discuss among themselves and take a final decision," Naidu said.

The Congress press team

was not immediately available for comment.

The Congress party, the original author of the tax reform, has opposed what it calls the "flawed" version now before parliament, where it has been able to block a key constitutional enabling amendment in the upper house.

It wants the government to cap the GST rate at less than 20 per cent, scrap a proposed state levy and create an independent mechanism to resolve disputes on revenue sharing between states.—*Reuters*

NZ to host TPP signing ceremony on 4 February

SYDNEY — New Zealand will host the signing ceremony for the Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade pact on 4 February, the *New Zealand Herald* reported yesterday, citing a Chilean government official.

A New Zealand government spokesman said the countries involved are still in discussion and that a date has not been decided.

The TPP trade deal was finalised in October, with Japan, the United States and 10 other nations reaching a broad agree-

ment after five years of intense negotiations. The text of the landmark trade deal was released in November. The signing will finalize that.

At the TPP leadership summit held in Manila in November, New Zealand Prime Minister John Key proposed that the signing ceremony be held in his country. The agreement will enter into force when at least six countries accounting for 85 percent of the combined GDP of the 12 signatories ratify the treaty.—*Kyodo News*

Japan finds no radiation from North Korea nuke test in airborne samples

TOKYO — Japan's nuclear regulator said yesterday that it has found no radioactive materials from North Korea's nuclear test in airborne samples collected by Air Self-Defence Force jets.

Citing a report by the Japan Chemical Analysis Centre, the Nuclear Regulation Authority said no iodine or cesium were detected in the dust samples collected Wednesday afternoon at altitudes of 3 to 10 kilometres over Japan.

Pyongyang said Wednesday that it successfully conduct-

ed its first hydrogen bomb test that morning, drawing a barrage of international criticism and skepticism.

The Japanese regulator also said it has detected no irregularities in radiation levels from Wednesday afternoon through Thursday morning at the roughly 300 monitoring posts across the country. The T-4 trainer aircraft from the Misawa Air Base in Aomori Prefecture, the Hyakuri Air Base in Ibaraki Prefecture and the Tsuiki Air Base in Fukuoka Prefecture took the samples.—*Kyodo News*

158 safe after ferry capsizes in East Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR — All 158 passengers were safe after a ferry capsized in Malaysia's Sabah State on North Borneo, authorities said Wednesday.

The ferry carrying 158 passengers left Tawi-tawi of southern Philippines for Sem-

porna area in Malaysia, but collided with a barge before arriving onshore, according to the local fire and rescue department. All on board were reportedly rescued and four were sent to hospital for treatment.—*Xinhua*

Australian authorities battle two natural disasters

SYDNEY — Australian authorities yesterday are battling two separate and devastating natural disasters on opposite sides of the country, both of which are threatening lives and property.

An out of control wildfire, or bushfire as it's known in Australia is currently burning 100 kilometres south of Perth in Western Australia state that is threatening lives and homes.

Australian authorities have told local media the fire started by a lightning strike on Tuesday morning, which after being fanned by strong winds up to 60 kilometres per hour, has so far burnt through 11,000 hectares.

Weather conditions for the area are expected to be hot and humid with temperatures reaching upwards of 39 degrees Celsius, hampering the efforts of fire-fighters.

Melissa Young from the small town of Waroona that has been under threat from the fire told Australia's national broadcaster yesterday she did not hesitate to evacuate when told to, however other residents have stayed.

"They were just out on their balconies watching the flames and watching it go past and hoping its not going to take their house," Young told the ABC.

"The ash is coming into the backyards and into the fences and the smoke's getting really thick so it was just time to get out, it's not worth it, it's not worth your life."

Meanwhile on the opposite side of Australia the New South Wales state is suffering from wild winds, heavy rains and major flooding that has trapped 20 campers following a large low pressure weather system that has smashed records.

Emergency services have been forced to suspend rescue efforts on Wednesday after the Wollombi Brook and Hunter rivers swelled, forcing evacuations

at nearby Raymond Terrace, approximately 160 kilometres north of Sydney.

It is believed authorities will try to drop food and supplies to those trapped, including five children, in a remote section of a national park using boats, however rescue efforts will have to wait.

"We're not trying to get them out; there's no way we want to transport people across a flooded river," NSW State Emergency Services incident controller Ashley Sullivan said.

The region recorded its wettest January day on Wednesday since records began from a

201mm downpour.

The low pressure system is also hampering marine rescue efforts for a 60-year-old man who was swept off his yacht while returning from an offshore race after a wave struck the vessel in wild seas off the coast of Port Stephens, 200 kilometres north of Sydney.

The missing man's crew had searched for their crewman however sailed to the nearest port on the advice of rescuers, local media reported. Australia's maritime authorities so far are fielded 10 calls for assistance from the storm.—*Xinhua*

Merkel wants to stem refugee flow but keep EU borders open

WILDBAD KREUTH — Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday she wanted to stem the flow of refugees into the European Union while at the same time keeping open borders within the bloc, days after Denmark imposed passport checks on people entering from Germany.

Merkel, who last November marked a decade in office, starts 2016 facing renewed pressure from her own conservatives to reduce the influx of asylum seekers arriving in Germany, after a record inflow of over 1 million last year sapped their support.

"It is very important to me that we achieve both a noticeable reduction in the flow of refugees ... and at the same time preserve the free movement of people within the European Union," she told reporters at a conference of her Bavarian allies, the CSU.

This free movement, which has resulted in 26 European countries abolishing internal border controls within their 'Schengen zone', was "a motor for economic development and prosperity", she said.

Germany's northern neighbour Denmark imposed temporary border checks on Monday, fearing that it would become the final destination for many refugees after Sweden put in place controls to stop them moving further north.

Merkel was named Person of the Year by both *Time* magazine and the *Financial Times* after opening Germany's borders to refugees in August, but



German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Bavarian state premier and leader of the Christian Social Union (CSU) Horst Seehofer (R) arrive to give a statement during the annual CSU Epiphany meeting in the southern Bavarian resort of Wildbad Kreuth near Munich, Germany on 6 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

the resulting wave of migrants has stretched its resources and unnerved many citizens.

The Interior Ministry said on Wednesday that a record 476,000 migrants applied for asylum last year, with the applications of another 600,000 registered migrants yet to be collected.

Despite vowing last month to reduce the numbers, Merkel is under pressure from the Christian Social Union (CSU), Bavarian sister party of her Christian Democrats (CDU), to do more. CSU leader Horst Seehofer has demanded a cap of 200,000 migrants a year. The conservatives have been alarmed by a drop in their support from around 43 per cent in mid-August to a three-year low of 36 per cent in October and November. Support has begun picking up as Merkel has sought to stem the inflow.

Last October, she offered to help Turkey's bid to join the European Union in return for cooperation in stemming the flow of migrants and taking back those rejected by Europe.

However, Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere said on Wednesday that a drop in arrivals in December was due to rough seas, not efforts by Turkey to prevent departures.

Merkel has resisted calls from some conservatives to close Germany's borders or cap the number of arrivals, many of whom are fleeing war in the Middle East or Afghanistan.

She argues the influx must be tackled outside Germany, through negotiations to resolve the war in Syria, by encouraging Turkey to improve conditions for refugees there, and by convincing European partners to accept quotas of asylum seekers.—*Reuters*

Rouhani shows determination to end embassy attacks in Iran

DUBAI — President Hassan Rouhani asked Iran's judiciary on Wednesday to urgently prosecute the people who attacked the Saudi Embassy in Tehran in protest at the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shi'ite cleric.

Rouhani's comments appear to show his determination to reduce tension with Iran's Sunni Gulf neighbours and continue his attempts to normalise ties with world powers by speaking out on a practice that has become a challenge for the Islamic Republic's foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Sudan and Djibouti broke all ties with Iran this week, the United Arab Emirates downgraded its relations and Kuwait recalled its ambassador after the embassy was stormed. Jordan summoned Iran's ambassador. After reaching a landmark nuclear deal with world powers in July, Rouhani is seeking to end Iran's long isolation with the West. However, the

repercussions of the attack could jeopardize that, posing the biggest diplomatic crisis of his government. Members of the UN Security Council released a statement on Monday condemning the attack, and another on a consulate in the city of Mashhad, "in the strongest terms".

"By punishing the attackers and those who orchestrated this obvious offense, we should put an end once and forever to such damage and insults to Iran's dignity and national security," Rouhani was quoted as saying in a letter published on the state news agency IRNA.

While embassies are often a focus of protests worldwide, Iran still celebrates the anniversary of the 1979 takeover of the US Embassy in Tehran every year and refers to it as the Second Revolution. Since then, Iranians have attacked several embassies in Tehran, including those of Kuwait in 1987, Saudi Arabia in

1988, Denmark in 2006 and Britain in 2011, most of which have led to a breach in diplomatic relations. Some of those attacking the Saudi embassy and starting fires took selfies and published them on social media, a clear sign that they thought they were enjoying immunity from jurisdiction in a country that has parallel centers of power.

In the letter to the head of judiciary, Rouhani asked Sadeq Larijani, to bring those behind the attacks to justice.

"This has been always a paradox in the Islamic Republic," said Hossein Rassam, a former political adviser at the British embassy in Tehran.

"While the revolutionary state condones or supports such attacks to capitalise on their revolutionary momentum, the administration dismisses them as it should deal with their diplomatic consequences," he added.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

H-bomb test 'grave violation' of North Korea's obligations if true, EU says

BRUSSELS — North Korea's reported test of a hydrogen bomb would be a "grave violation" of the country's international obligation not to produce a nuclear weapon, the EU's foreign policy chief said on Wednesday.

"If confirmed, this action would represent a grave violation of (North Korea's) international obligations not to produce or test nuclear weapons, as determined by several United Nations Security Council Resolutions," Federica Mogherini said in a statement. She said it would also be "a threat to the peace and security of the entire Northeast Asia region."—*Reuters*

Obama, Abadi discuss concern over Saudi Arabia execution in call

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi on Wednesday discussed their "mutual concern" over Saudi Arabia's execution of Shi'ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr and attacks on Saudi Arabia's Embassy in Iran, the White House said.

"They agreed on the need for all regional parties to demonstrate restraint, avoid provocative rhetoric or behaviour, and avoid a worsening of sectarian tensions," the White House said in a statement. "They agreed on the importance that all parties maintain diplomatic engagement and dialogue."—*Reuters*

South Korea to restrict entry into joint factory park with DPRK

SEOUL — South Korea's unification ministry plans to restrict the entry of workers into the Kaesong industrial complex, an inter-Korean factory park in the namesake city of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), local media reported yesterday.

An unidentified unification ministry official told reporters that workers, allowed to enter the Kaesong complex, will be limited to those who have a direct relevance to production activities.

Such action came a day after the DPRK announced its first successful test of a "hydrogen bomb," the fourth in total.

About 1,200 South Koreans yesterday stayed at the Kaesong industrial complex, where some 120 South Korean companies are employing tens of thousands of DPRK workers to operate factories.

The official was quoted as saying that the number of South Koreans who will be allowed to stay there could slide by as much as 100, calling the limited entry as necessary steps to protect people's safety after the DPRK's nuclear test.—*Xinhua*

China to help develop Pakistan hydropower project

YICHANG — China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC), the state-owned hydropower developer, has won the right to develop a hydropower project in Pakistan, CTGC announced yesterday.

The Kohala Hydropower Project, the firm's biggest investment in the Pakistani hydropower market, is expected to have an installed capacity of 1.1 million kilowatts.

The project is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a 3,000-km network of roads, railways and energy infrastructure to assist development in Pakistan and boost growth for the Chinese border economy.

In September, CTGC registered a subsidiary for the project in Pakistan. A Pakistani government supporting letter for the project was issued last week, CTGC said.

Established in 1993, CTGC is "a clean energy group focusing on large-scale hydropower development and operation." It manages the development and operation of the Three Gorges Project, the world's largest hydropower project in terms of installed capacity, according to its official website.—*Xinhua*

Fire occurs at nuclear plant in central Japan, no radiation leaked

SHIZUOKA — A small fire occurred at Chubu Electric Power Co.'s Hamaoka nuclear plant in Shizuoka Prefecture yesterday, the company said, adding there was no radiation leakage.

No one was injured in the fire that broke out around 11am in part of the turbine building for the No 2 reactor, which has been under decommission, the utility said. The fire has already died out.—*Kyodo News*

Two Guantanamo detainees sent to Ghana: Pentagon

WASHINGTON/ACCRA — Two Yemeni detainees held for more than a decade at the US military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba were transferred to Ghana, the US Defence Department said on Wednesday, years after both men were recommended for release.

Dozens of countries have received former Guantanamo Bay detainees but the transfers were the first to Ghana, which sought on Wednesday to allay possible public concern that they could pose a security threat.

The detainees were identified by the Pentagon as Mahmud Umar Muhammad Bin Atef and Khalid Muhammad Salih al-Dhuby.

Government documents posted online by the *New York Times* identified al-Dhuby as a Yemeni citizen born in Saudi Arabia in 1981 who travelled to Afghanistan to fight, and was assessed to be “a probable member” of al Qaeda. He surrendered to Afghan forces, was turned over to the United States, and was sent to Guantanamo Bay in May 2002.

In 2006, the Pentagon’s Joint Task Force at Guantanamo Bay recommended he be transferred out of its custody.

Bin Atef was identified by the documents as a Yemeni citi-



A US Marine guard tower overlooks the Northeast gate leading into Cuba territory at Guantanamo Bay US Naval Base in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

zen born in 1979 in Saudi Arabia. He was handed over to the United States after his capture by Northern Alliance Forces in Afghanistan in November 2001.

The Pentagon described Bin Atef in 2007 as “an admitted member of the Taliban.” But his US lawyer, George Clark, said he was cleared for release in 2009.

“He’s a smart, bright young man and I’m sure he’ll be suc-

cessful,” said Clarke. He added that Bin Atef’s priorities upon release would likely be getting married and starting a family, learning the local language, and finding employment.

Ghana has granted permission for the two men to remain in the country two years subject to security clearances, said Foreign Minister Hanna Tetteh, adding that their activities would be

monitored.

The West African nation is a stable democracy that prides itself on upholding humanitarian values and contributing to UN peacekeeping missions. Its population is largely Christian, but Islam is strong, particularly in the north of the country.

Several other African countries have received Guantanamo detainees, including Uganda and

Cape Verde.

“Many countries have already taken people in such situations so it’s not out of the ordinary,” Ghana’s Communications Minister Edward Boamah told Reuters.

The United States requested the transfers a year ago and Ghana sent its US ambassador to Guantanamo Bay to interview the detainees and assess any risk, Boamah said.

Clarke voiced frustration over the years-long delay in Bin Atef’s release from Guantanamo, after he was first cleared for transfer.

“Nobody understands that,” he said. “That’s been one of the perpetual frustrations of representing people down there.”

President Barack Obama, who campaigned on a pledge to close the prison, views it as a damaging symbol of detainee abuse and detention without charge that he inherited from Republican President George W. Bush.

A Reuters report last month found that Pentagon officials have been throwing up bureaucratic obstacles to thwart the president’s plan to close Guantanamo. The men’s release means 105 detainees now remain at Guantanamo Bay, the Pentagon said.—Reuters

Indonesia offers to mediate spat between Saudi Arabia, Iran

JAKARTA — Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno L.P. Marsudi said yesterday that Indonesia has offered to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia in a bid to defuse tensions between the two Middle East powers.

“We already asked both countries to mediate. We are still

trying to find what Indonesia can do,” she said.

Voicing concern that the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran will impact countries in the region, she said Indonesia, the world’s largest Muslim-populated country, is trying to find a form of meeting or discussion that will

contribute to solving the problem in a peaceful manner. Tensions flared in the Middle East after Saudi Arabia said Saturday that it had executed 47 people, including a prominent Shiite cleric, for their alleged involvement in terrorism in opposition to the kingdom’s ruling family.—*Kyodo News*

Hamas sets conditions to join new Palestine unity gov’t, says to mull on opening of key crossing

GAZA — Islamic Hamas movement said on Wednesday that it is ready to join a newly formed Palestinian unity government if it ends security cooperation with Israel.

Sami Abu Zuhri, Hamas spokesman in Gaza, said in an emailed press statement that the conditions for his movement to be a part of the unity government are related to ending the Palestinian National Authorities (PNA)’ policy of discrimination against Gazans, issuing proper political decisions that fit with their “sacrifices,” as well as terminating security cooperation with Israel.

In 2007, Hamas violently seized control of the Gaza Strip

following weeks of internal fighting with Abbas Fatah Party. Efforts to end this internal division between them had so far failed to achieve full reconciliation between them. The two rivals, Hamas and Abbas Fatah Party, have been arguing on the issue of ruling the Gaza Strip, since the two sides agreed on forming a consensus government in June 2014, mainly on security issues.

President Abbas said recently that he insists on ending the internal division and called on Hamas movement to join the new national unity government. The endless feud between Hamas and the Fatah Party has maintained the key crossing point of Rafah between

Gaza and Egypt closed, a senior leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) said. Rafah crossing is the only exit for the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip to the outside world.

Two weeks ago, several Palestinian factions, mainly Palestinian left-wing parties, offered an initiative to the two rivals on the crossing, which remained closed for several years.

Egypt has opened the crossing partially for just a number of times on humanitarian grounds for pilgrims, patients and students. In 2015, the crossing has been opened for only 19 days, according to Palestinian official statistics.—*Xinhua*

Yemeni government forces retake port from Houthi rebels

ADEN — Yemeni government forces have recaptured a Red Sea port town in the northwestern province of Hajjah after fierce fighting with Houthi rebels, a military official told Xinhua yesterday.

Warplanes of a Saudi-led coalition participated in the operation in the port of Midi late Wednesday, the official said on condition of anonymity.

The Shiite Houthi group and their allies have used the Midi port for smuggling weapons into their main bastions in the country’s north, the official said.

However, sources close to the pro-Houthi forces denied the reports, saying that their fighters are still in full control over Midi.

According to local residents, the Saudi-led Arab coalition launched intensified airstrikes Wednesday on Houthi-controlled positions across Sanaa, causing a series of intensive explosions that rocked nearby houses.

Loyalists of the Shiite

Houthi group and former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh said they will organise rallies on Friday to condemn the “usage of cluster bombs in capital Sanaa,” following reports by pro-Houthi media outlets that US-made BLU-63 cluster bombs were used on several occasions during Wednesday’s bombings.

The impoverished Arab country was plunged into violence in September 2014 when the Shiite Houthi group invaded the country’s capital Sanaa, driving President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi into exile.

The conflict soon turned into an all-out civil war between pro-government forces and Houthi rebels backed by troops loyal to former President Saleh, followed by the intervention of a Saudi-led Arab coalition vowing to restore the legitimate government of Hadi.

The almost daily air raids by the Saudi-led alliance and fighting on the ground have killed thousands of Yemeni civilians and forced many others to flee their homes.—*Xinhua*

OPINION

The socio-economic promise of the NCA

Khin Maung Aye

THE nation-wide ceasefire agreement (NCA) has been signed, bringing the country one step closer to ending its internal wars. Arrangements are being made to convene the Union Peace Conference in order to bring peace, prosperity and stability to all of Myanmar's national races.

The signing of the NCA on 15 October 2015 was followed by a coordination meeting to execute the agreement. The meeting, known as the Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting (JICM), was attended by President U Thein

Sein, who formed the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) with representatives from the government, parliament, the Tatmadaw, political parties and the eight signatories to NCA. The UPDJC drafted the framework for political dialogue.

The framework draft for political dialogue must be successfully finalised within 60 days of the signing of the NCA, as prescribed by the agreement, at a ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw on December 15, where it was presented to President U Thein Sein. Based on this framework, political talks are set to begin within 90 days of the signing the NCA. President U Thein Sein has announced that the Union Peace Conference will be convened on 12 January 2016. The conference will be held for five full days until 16 January.

Arrangements are now underway to accommodate the more than 1,000 people who will attend the conference on behalf of the aforementioned stakeholders. The people living in areas

inhabited by the signatories to NCA are to be guaranteed the fruits of genuine peace, which will facilitate regional development and gradually improve the socio-economic lives of local people.

This being so, The Global New Light of Myanmar would like to earnestly urge the ethnic armed organisations that have not yet signed the NCA to consider signing it in an effort to end the socio-economic woes of their compatriots.

Write for us

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

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

Looking forward to a peaceful, bountiful, happy and vibrant 2016

Myo Myint

AS human beings what keep us going is the hope that tomorrow will be a better day, and however impossible they may be, that somehow, our wishes will be fulfilled. So, with high hopes that our lives will be improved, our problems will be solved, and we will have less stress and strain, we welcome the new year. As a sixty plus person, I am old enough to know that in this global age, it is not enough for all the wishes of a single person to be fulfilled, as no person is an island and not only are the lives of all citizens of a country intertwined but also the events occurring in one country, especially those in neighbouring countries impact on another, as the refugee crisis in Europe clearly shows, and we need to wish well not only the citizens of one's country but also all global citizens.

At the beginning of the new year, the thing that most people in Myanmar yearn for is probably everlasting peace. They are deeply saddened by the fact that despite efforts to bring peace to the whole country, there are as yet regions in our country that are facing conflicts with innocent displaced persons including young children suffering most the consequences of strife. Moreover, the increasing use of violence and weapons in quarrels regarding matters of little consequence shows the growing need to create peace not only in regions, but also in the minds and hearts of people beginning from a very young age, by parents,

schools, religious organizations and the community. Moreover, the rise in crimes such as murders, including killings of law enforcement personnel, robberies, thefts, pick pocketing, rapes, drug trafficking and human trafficking, some of them probably due to the increase in migrants to cities and towns from rural areas in search of work, are causing much distress and alarm in people, especially those in large cities who have to work till late at night. Hence, in the new year, people hope that ways and means will be found to reduce crimes drastically and make our society a secure place so that, it will be safe for everyone, men, women, and children in both urban as well as rural areas, to venture out at all hours of the day.

It is unavoidable for people to deal with civil servants at one time or another, and they very much hope that in the new year, these government employees, including the judiciary will be free of corruption, nepotism and arrogance, and will treat members of the public with due regard as taxpayers and citizens, and render the services for which they have already received a salary from the government, without expecting more from the public. People also hope that senior administrators of the government and private organizations will uphold transparency and good governance and provide proper supervision to their staff, and ensure that they carry out their duties to the best of their ability, observe the set rules and regulations and that they know that they are held accountable for their to the public

whom they serve. People also hope that the representatives they have elected to parliament will serve as their voice and that they will ensure that justice, equality and fairness prevail for their electorates and all citizens and not work for personal gain, fame and power.

Another hope for the new year is that the economy of the country will improve with more investments from abroad and more expertise and hard work within the country, that the monopolization and manipulation of businesses and industries by a handful of people will cease, and that more job opportunities with fair salaries will be created for young people so that they will not have to go abroad and become victims of human trafficking and exploitation. Those living in rural areas also hope that the practice of land grabbing will be ended, that effective poverty alleviation programmes and support systems will be introduced, and that the country will be free of natural disasters in the new year so that their livelihoods will not be affected and they will not run up huge debts. In addition, people, especially those with low income will be very happy, if in the new year, transportation can be improved in order that they will not have to spend so much time and money on it, that the cost of living can be brought down, and kept under control, and that action will be taken against unscrupulous persons who try to raise prices of basic commodities, without any sound reasons, especially when there is a salary increase for workers,

which deprives them of enjoyment of any benefits derived from the increase in salary.

People also wish that the quality of education will be raised so that what their children learn will enable them to have the knowledge, life, social and thinking skills and technology relevant to the world of work and enable them to get a decent job. They also hope that the government will provide more money for education in order that more qualified teachers can be appointed and better facilities provided. They also hope that teachers will think twice before exploiting their students to earn extra money by forcing them to attend their tuitions. Furthermore, they hope that doctors and nurses, both at government hospitals and private clinics will not treat their patients like mannequins, have more patience with them, give them more time to discuss their health problems, educate them on healthy living and provide them with the cheapest and most effective treatments. So also they hope that private hospitals and clinics will not overcharge.

They also hope that people will be less self centred, be more disciplined and also think about the convenience of others as they go about their daily businesses, such as, by keeping their surroundings clean, not opening stalls on pavements and roads, parking their vehicles only in designated areas, and taking care not to disturb the neighbourhood with deafening noise.

Just as in previous years, so also in the new year, we cannot expect the government to solve

all our problems and fulfill our wishes. Every one of us must appreciate that our collective as well as individual actions influence the development of our country. We must also be aware that discord creates strife, misunderstanding, intolerance and suspicion which in turn create backwardness and poverty. If we wish to walk on the path to development, peace and tranquility, we need to foster unity, self-sacrifice and industry. We need to be self-reliant and not to wait for handouts from richer nations, as they may not be able to do so for a long period, and work hard like nations that have freed themselves from the yoke of ignorance, poverty and backwardness, with adults working not only for themselves but also for younger generations, and younger generations working not only for themselves, but for older generations and generations to follow. All the citizens of Myanmar must remember throughout the year that at this important juncture what is important for the nation is neither one's glorious past, nor the bitter experiences but what we can do and need to do for future generations. We have a common future and a common responsibility to build better relationship and create a peaceful, bountiful, happy and vibrant nation for ourselves as well as future generations. Each of us is also responsible to fulfill not only our aspirations but also the common people's hope that 2016 will serve as a turning point for transforming Myanmar into leading Southeast Asian nation.

Flood risk management scheme implemented in Hpakant



Arrows direct the site where an embankment would be constructed to prevent flood. PHOTO: SOE NAING OO

FLOOD prevention measures have been carried out by the development committee of Hpakant Township, Kachin State, in cooperation with private companies, since 6 January, a committee spokesperson said.

A road is being built

by the companies to facilitate the transportation of dump soil in the area.

A local investigation team recently visited Mamone Village in Seikmu Village-tract and subsequently suggested that township officials carry out disaster prevention activi-

ties immediately.

The committee plans to build several embankments in the village as soon as possible. Local residents are concerned about flooding because a 60-foot deep valley containing a monastery is situated in the village.—*Soe Naing Oo*

Lahu community celebrates New Year

THE Lahu community, an ethnic minority group in Myanmar, celebrated its traditional New Year festival in Tarlay, eastern Shan State, on 5 January.

Residents of villages in the surrounding hills gathered at the festival held at the compound of U Wa Shin, leader of the Kyarkuni People's Military, and U Kya Law, leader of Meikoelarhu People's Military.

The history of Lahu people and their culture were celebrated through various activities during the festival. Several Lahu dance troupes entertained audiences with folk music and

dance performances at the event.

Like they do on other holidays, the Lahu community made donations of crops and food to poor community members.

The Lahu community in Shan State is divided into 20 sub-groups, most of which live in Meisei and Kyaikdon.

Lahu dances include the playing of the buu flute, which is considered a symbol of Lahu people. One of their most important traditional dances is the karkhaepwe, in which dancers play music as they dance around a fir tree.—*Myint Mo*



Lahu ethnic men play traditional music while dancing at their new year festival. PHOTO: MYINT MO (TACHILEK)

Crime News

Woman charged under new Monogamy Law

A WOMAN in Mandalay faces charges under the new Monogamy Law—one of four “protection of race and religion laws” passed last year, police reported yesterday.

The 37-year-old Daw Yin Htay was charged under Section 13 of the Monogamy

Law after being discovered living with a man named U Myo Lin Tun while still married to U Kyaw Hsan Win, 35.

Daw Yin Htay and U Kyaw Hsan Win signed a marriage bond in 2003. They have two children. In November

2015, Daw Yin Htay held a wedding ceremony with U Myo Lin Tun to fulfil the wishes of her mother, Daw Than Shin.

Three people involved in the case are being sued by Daw Yin Htay's first husband.—*Maung Pyithu*

More than 10,000 yabba pills seized last week

THREE people have been arrested by police in a recent drug trafficking investigation conducted in Hsenwi, Shan State, and in Yangon.

Acting on a tip-off, local police searched a house owned by Loutwu in Nanton Village,

Hsenwi Township, on 2 January, and discovered 7,765 yabba pills. Loutwu was placed under arrest.

Police also seized two other alleged drug dealers—Kyaw Min Htike in Thantaung Township and Khaing Thazin Win in Manyangone

Township in Yangon—who were found in possession of a cache of yabba tablets last week.

The suspected drug dealers were charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law at Thuwunna Police Station.—*Myanmar Police Force*

Man stabbed to death in Mandalay

A MAN was killed by the brother of his employee on 3 January in Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay Region, police reported yesterday.

U Nan Maung Htwe, 22, who owned a sewing business, was stabbed to death by Myint Ko Ko (aka Watkyi), the elder

brother of employee Moe Htet Aung, in front of the latter's house.

U Nan Maung Htwe sustained serious injury to his left breast and died en route to Mandalay General Hospital.

Before the murder, a quar-

rel occurred between the employer and employee in which the employer punched his worker.

Police seized a 9-inch knife as evidence and filed a suit against the two brothers under Section 302 of the Penal Code.—*Maung Pyithu*

Police arrest suspects in stolen motorbike case

TWO men who are believed to have stolen a motorbike were arrested by police in Maha Aungmye Township, Mandalay Region, on 3 January.

Local police seized Thein Zaw Khaing, 22, and Ye Khant Aung, 22, of Madaya Township in possession of the stolen motorbike between 64th Street

and 65th Street near Theikpan Street in Maha Aungmye Township after the two were unable to procure documents proving their ownership of the motorbike.

The suspects have been charged under the law by police at the Maha Aungmye Myoma Police Station.—*Maung Pyithu*

7,765 yabba pills seized in Hsenwi

LOCAL police discovered and confiscated 7,765 yabba pills (a synthetic-amphetamine based narcotic) from a house owned by one Lauk Wu in Nantsalap Village, Hsenwi Township, on 2 January, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

Local police also seized 1,979 yabba pills from a Mark-II car being driven by Kyaw Min Hteik on Leiktho-Loikaw Road in Thandaung township the next day.

Local police in Mayangon township discovered 472 yabba pills on Ma Khaing Thazin Win alias Thazin on 2 January.

Action is being taken against

the three suspects who will be charged under the Anti-Narcotic Act.—*Myanmar Police Force*



Lauk Wu.

Flight to safety sends gold to 9-week high as stocks slump

SINGAPORE — Gold climbed above \$1,100 an ounce for the first time in nine weeks yesterday as investors channelled money into the safe-haven metal amid a global stock market rout, worries over the Chinese economy and heightened geopolitical tensions.

China stocks fell 7 per cent yesterday after less than half an hour of trading, triggering a circuit breaker that will keep Shanghai and Shenzhen markets closed for the rest of the day.

China also guided the yuan sharply lower, deepening concerns about the economy and sending Asian shares to a three-month low.

Spot gold rose to a nine-week high of \$1,102.80 an ounce, before paring some gains to trade up 0.4 per cent at \$1,098.20 by 0258 GMT. US gold futures also jumped for a fourth straight session to a nine-week high of \$1,102.50.

“Gold continued to climb with rising safe-haven demand amid the rebound in market volatility. Rising equities losses and surprising devaluation of the

yuan are painting a positive picture for gold,” ANZ said.

Gold, often seen as an alternative investment during times of geopolitical and financial uncertainty, benefited from the risk-averse sentiment in the market along with other haven assets such as the Japanese yen and US Treasuries.

“Gold is clearly re-establishing its role as a safe-haven. For as

long as global stock markets — in particular China’s — appear wobbly, gold is likely to attract a good bid,” HSBC analyst James Steel said.

A raft of data releases from China in coming weeks is likely to show activity continuing to slow, adding to global concerns about the country’s economic outlook for 2016.

The World Bank on Wednes-

day cut its global economic growth forecast for 2016, citing the weak performance of major emerging market economies.

Adding to market fears was North Korea’s announcement it had successfully tested a powerful nuclear bomb on Wednesday, a move that escalated tensions in the Korean peninsula.

The news came just days after tensions flared in the Middle East between Saudi Arabia and Iran after Riyadh executed a Shi’ite cleric critical of Saudi policy.

Bullion was also supported by a softer dollar and the release of the minutes of the Federal Reserve’s last policy meet. The minutes assured markets that the Fed would hike rates gradually this year.

Among other precious metals, silver and platinum rose about 0.6 per cent each.

Palladium, which as an auto-catalyst metal is more exposed to economic weakness, slid to a 5-year low of \$501 an ounce before paring the losses to trade flat.—Reuters



Gold bars are displayed at a gold jewellery shop in Chandigarh.

PHOTO: REUTERS

LG Electronics aims to triple OLED TV sales this year

SEOUL — South Korea’s LG Electronics Inc aims to at least triple sales of its next-generation organic light-emitting diode (OLED) televisions this year, a senior company executive said.

An LG spokeswoman confirmed remarks made by LG TV chief Kwon Bong-suk on the sidelines of the CES trade show in Las Vegas. The executive said LG could at least triple sales of OLED sets based on fourth-quarter numbers but did not offer specifics including how many OLED TVs the firm sold this year. LG, the world’s No 2 TV maker behind domestic rival Samsung Electronics Co Ltd, is betting heavily on OLED, hoping that the new technology will help it get ahead of rivals.

The firm cut prices of some OLED TV models by as much as 45 per cent late last year in the United States.—Reuters

UK new car registrations hit all-time high in 2015

LONDON — British new car registrations hit an all-time high last year, two sources told Reuters citing preliminary industry data, helped by rising consumer confidence, the strength of the pound and cheap car loans.

“The headline number will be around 2.63 million,” one of the sources close to the data said, adding that some of the sales figures for the last trading day of December had yet to be seen.

The previous record for registrations in Britain was set in 2003 when 2.58 million new cars were

sold. A second source familiar with the data also said the total figure would be around 2.63 million.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, an industry body, is due to publish the data on Thursday. It declined to comment when contacted by Reuters.

Car sales in Britain, Europe’s second-biggest auto market after Germany, fell sharply after the 2007-8 financial crisis but have gradually recovered, returning in 2014 to pre-crisis levels at 2.48 million.

British consumers have benefited from low interest rates and the strengthening of sterling against the euro which has made it cheaper to import cars from car-producing nations in Europe such as Germany and France.

Around 75 per cent of new car purchases are now made on credit in Britain with many customers effectively renting a new car — typically for three years — before trading it in for a new model using a scheme known as a personal contract plan (PCP).

The expected new record high for registrations comes despite declines in sales for Volkswagen (VOWG_p.DE), which accounts for around 20 per cent of British car sales.

Sales of some of its brands fell sharply in October and November following the diesel emissions scandal.

Low inflation, rising wages for many households and falling unemployment have helped to bolster consumer confidence in Britain, boosting car sales.—Reuters



Volkswagen cars are parked outside a VW dealership in London, Britain in 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Mitsubishi Motors to close US plant after giving up buyer search

TOKYO — Mitsubishi Motors Corp has decided to close a plant in Illinois after giving up on finding a buyer for it, company sources said yesterday.

The Japanese automaker plans to end parts production at the US plant in May and dismiss around 250 workers there, the sources said. When vehicle production was halted there in November, it cut around 1,000 jobs.

Mitsubishi Motors is expected to book a special loss due to severance pay and other costs, although details have yet to be disclosed. In July, Mitsubishi Motors

decided to end vehicle production in the United States due to sluggish sales in North America. The Illinois plant was producing sport utility vehicles.

Production is being consolidated at the company’s plant in Okazaki, Aichi Prefecture, in central Japan, and vehicles will be exported to the United States from Japan.

Mitsubishi Motors began production of its vehicles in the United States in 1988 through a joint venture with Chrysler Corp. and later acquired a full stake in the joint venture.—Kyodo News

China to see a market-based yuan currency mechanism in 2016

BEIJING — China will continue to proceed with reforms to bring about a market-based yuan currency mechanism this year, the China Foreign Exchange Trade System (CFETS) said yesterday.

The yuan was stable against a basket of other currencies in 2015,

CFETS said in a statement published on its website. It added that China has ample foreign exchange reserves while there is no basis for the yuan’s continuous depreciation. Economic fundamentals will support the yuan in the long term.—Reuters

Japan’s farm, fishery product exports hit record high in 2015

TOKYO — The value of Japan’s exports of agricultural, forestry and fishery products reached 669 billion yen (\$5.67 billion) between January and November last year, shattering the record full-year high of 611.7 billion yen logged in 2014 thanks to a global Japanese cuisine boom, the farm ministry said yesterday.

The government’s aim to expand such exports to 700 billion yen by 2016 appears likely to have been achieved in 2015,

according to the sum for the eleven-month period which grew 22.0 per cent from a year earlier.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries assumes that the increase reflects a rising worldwide demand for Japanese cuisine, an official said.

Exports to Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and the United States were notably high, the preliminary data showed.

Export values of agricultural products grew 24.3 per cent to

395.6 billion yen and those of fishery products grew 18.3 per cent to 249.5 billion yen, while the figure for forestry products climbed 25.3 per cent to 23.8 billion yen.

Of the agricultural products, processed foods and beverages took up over half of the total with a value of 198.8 billion yen, followed by 42.3 billion yen for livestock products and 28.8 billion yen for vegetables and fruits.—Kyodo News



A clerk counts Chinese 100 yuan banknotes at a branch of a foreign bank in Beijing on 4 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Blood plasma from Ebola survivors fails to prevent deaths in field study

BOSTON — Treating Ebola victims with blood plasma donated by Ebola survivors failed to significantly increase the odds of recovering from the deadly virus, according to a field test of the experimental treatment.

The conclusion is based on the cases of 84 people treated with plasma in Conakry, Guinea, in the hope that the antibodies in the fluid would help patients fight off the virus the way they did in the surviving donors.

The death rate was 31 per cent with the plasma, compared to 38 per cent in a control group of 418 sufferers treated at the same medical centre who did not receive survivor plasma, according to the results in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

When the researchers adjusted for other factors that can affect survival, such as the age of the victims, the effect of plasma therapy was even less impressive.

“Of course you would like to dream and see a very strong reduction in mortality, but we didn’t see this,” chief author Dr Johan van Griensven of the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium, told Reuters Health.

A key limitation of that study is that it’s not known how many virus-fighting antibodies were in the plasma of the donors. Because Ebola virus disease, or EVD, is so dangerous, that analysis needs to be done in laboratories with special safety equipment, which are not available in affected countries, the researchers write.

“We might have anticipated there would be an effect” with plasma from survivors, said Dr William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist at Vanderbilt University Medical Centre in Nashville, who was not connected with the research.

The fact that no benefit was



Health workers wearing protective clothing prepare to carry an abandoned dead body presenting with Ebola symptoms at Duwala market in Monrovia. PHOTO: REUTERS

seen “does not mean antibodies to Ebola are not going to be a good treatment,” he cautioned. The plasma donors might not have been fully recovered, he noted, so the fluid might not have been rich in antibodies.

There were hints that some groups did benefit, though.

Children younger than five years old, known to have a poor prognosis, had the highest risk of death in the control group, but four of the five patients in this age group treated with convalescent plasma survived, van Griensven and his colleagues write. Although pregnant women with EVD also have a poor prognosis, six of the eight pregnant women treated with convalescent plasma survived, they add.

In another Ebola study, published as a letter to the *Journal*,

researchers with the World Health Organisation report that men treated in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone had a lower survival rate than women.

The disease killed 67.1 per cent of the infected men versus 63 per cent of the women.

The difference persisted even after adjusting for age, symptoms, and the amount of time it took for the person to seek medical help after falling ill, said coauthor Dr Christl Donnelly of Imperial College London.

“People hadn’t found that before. But because we had such a large epidemic we can see it consistently,” she told Reuters Health.

Men were no more likely to become infected with EVD than women. But they did, typically, wait 12 hours longer to seek help than women. That’s 12 additional

hours they were capable of spreading the virus to others, the researchers note.

Yet, Donnelly said, that 12-hour delay didn’t seem responsible for the higher death rate among males. Schaffner is not so sure. “Twelve hours is 12 hours. Maybe that’s not so trivial. ... This can, at certain stages, be a rapidly moving infection. This is intriguing, interesting and worth another look.”

As of 27 December, according to the WHO, 28,637 people have been infected with Ebola in the recent outbreak; 11,315 of those died. The most recent epidemic began two years ago in Guinea. On 29 December, WHO declared the country to be free of the disease. If no new cases emerge by 14 January, the epidemic will be considered over.—Reuters

Teeth whitening can cause permanent damage

VANCOUVER — People hoping for a whiter, brighter smile should be careful while using teeth whitening and bleaching products as they can cause permanent dental damage, a Canadian expert said Wednesday.

Bleaching products can have multiple side effects such as damaging the dental enamel, causing irritation to the gums, tooth sensitivity and more, Adriana Manso, a clinical assistant professor in the Faculty of Dentistry at the University of British Columbia in Canada’s western city of Vancouver, said in a statement.

She said some of these effects are lasting and the damage to the dental enamel is permanent and irreversible, adding that there is also an obvious risk of overuse or abuse when applying over-the-counter bleaching products such as strips, paint-ons or trays.

“It is important to remember that dental bleaching is not recommended for everyone. I would always advise discussing bleaching with your dentist first.

“There are different reasons why a person’s teeth are discoloured or darker so the treatment options and results would also differ.”

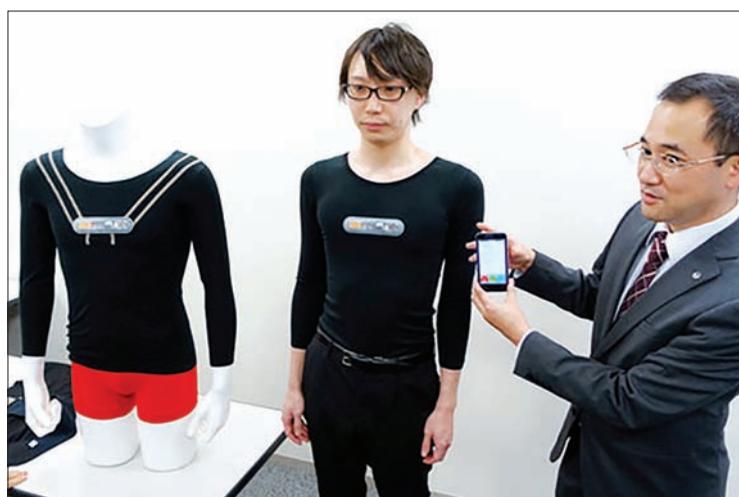
Assistant professor Adriana Manso
University of British Columbia

Underwear that can measure, send health data developed

TOKYO — An upcoming trade fair in Tokyo will showcase wearable devices including an underwear garment that can measure its wearer’s heart rate and the number of calories they consume, as well as the straightness of their back.

The machine-washable garment, knitted with conductive metallic textiles, was developed by major underwear maker Gunze Ltd in collaboration with NEC Corp., one of Japan’s biggest electronics firms.

According to the two firms, the metallic textiles serve as sensors for the health data, with the degree of stoop being quantified. The data will be automatically sent to a smartphone via wireless communication. Via the smartphone, the data can be accumulated in



A man (C) models a new type of underwear knitted from metallic textiles that can transmit health data to smartphones via wireless communication, while a member of the garment’s development team explains the technology in the western Japan city of Osaka on 6 January. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

NEC’s cloud, enabling its use by businesses, including a service in which a gym instructor offers advice to customers based on their postures and other health information. The two firms are currently developing an app for users of the underwear to browse the data on a smartphone so that the prospective service for gym users can be launched by the end of March 2017. The garment can be washed as the device for data sending is detachable.

The underwear will be on display at the Wearable Expo, to be held 13 to 15 January at Tokyo Big Sight. Gunze aims to post 2.5 billion yen (approximately \$21 million) in sales from its wearable devices in fiscal 2020 through March 2021.—Kyodo News

There are different reasons why a person’s teeth are discoloured or darker so the treatment options and results would also differ,” Manso said.

According to Manso’s research, bleaching products contain hydrogen peroxide that diffuses through the enamel. It breaks down the compounds that are causing the discolouration, and the teeth become lighter. Bleaching products used by the dentist for in-office therapies can have higher peroxide concentrations of up to 40 per cent. The bleaching mechanism is similar but these therapies need to be well supervised and should only be used in the dentist’s office. Alternatively, dentists can prescribe supervised at-home bleaching therapies.—Xinhua

Maduro names young hardliner to run Venezuela's ailing economy

CARACAS — President Nicolas Maduro named a hardline sociologist on Wednesday to steer Venezuela's economy during an acute recession that is battering the OPEC nation and has cost the ruling Socialists' control of congress.

In a major cabinet reshuffle, the president appointed Luis Salas, 39, a professor at the Bolivarian University of Venezuela created by late leader Hugo Chavez, to the top economic position of vice president for the economy.

Salas, who has repeatedly espoused Maduro's view of an "economic war" waged by right-wing foes and wealthy businessmen against the government, was also named head of a new Ministry for Productive Economy.

The appointment will confound critics who say Venezuela desperately needs a loosening of state controls to revive production in a nation plagued by shortages and the world's highest inflation rate.

In his writings, Salas has argued in favour of

price controls, says inflation is used as a "political tool" to pressure governments, and blames fascism for what he calls economic sabotage.

"We are facing a new economic emergency, and in coming days I will present a rescue plan," Maduro, 53, a former bus driver and foreign minister, added in a more than two-hour speech on state television announcing the cabinet change first promised a month ago.

Splitting the former Economy, Finance and Bank Ministry into two, the president also named another university academic, Rodolfo Medina, as the finance and banks minister. Medina currently heads an office that draws up the state budget.

Members of the opposition, who in December won a legislative election thanks to Venezuelans' anger at the economic malaise, scoffed at the appointments as entrenching failed policies.

"Maduro's new cabinet reminds me of the tragic orchestra's final goodbye

on the Titanic," tweeted opposition lawmaker Americo De Grazia.

Neither of the two academics named to the senior economic positions have prior ministerial experience.

Maduro also ratified Eulogio Del Pino as head of state oil company PDVSA and as oil minister, Delcy Rodriguez as foreign minister and Vladimir Padrino as defence minister.

Amid a flurry of other changes and the creation of a handful of new ministries, the president replaced Jorge Arreaza, son-in-law of Chavez, as executive vice president with state governor and Socialist Party stalwart Aristobulo Istariz.

Arreaza was made minister for universities, science and technology, plus a vice president for social matters.

Earlier in the day, deepening a national political showdown, the opposition defied a Supreme Court ruling and swore into the new congress three lawmakers barred from

taking their seats.

The opposition won a two-thirds' super-majority in legislative elections in December, but the court granted injunctions against the three, all from the jungle state of Amazonas, after allegations of irregularities.

"It was a violation of our human rights," one of the three, Romel Guzama, said after being sworn in.

The government said the National Assembly had breached the constitution. "Those people are not legislators ... a conflict of powers is coming," said former assembly President Diosdado Cabello, who is the ruling Socialist Party's No 2, adding that funding to the assembly could be cut off as a consequence.

The case of the three is crucial because they tip the opposition over the two-thirds line in the assembly of 167 members. That majority gives the opposition expanded powers, including the capacity to fire Maduro's cabinet ministers.

While the opposition



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro receives a welcome with military honours upon his arrival at Miraflores Palace in Caracas, in this handout picture provided by Miraflores Palace on 6 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

is pushing for a recall referendum to oust Maduro this year — as allowed halfway through his term under the constitution if nearly 4 million voters request it — the government is also playing hard ball.

Before the new National Assembly convened, the government eliminated its control over the central

bank. Also, 13 new Supreme Court justices were sworn in by the outgoing assembly in December, which critics slammed as a last-minute court-packing scheme by the Socialist Party.

The opposition has vowed to undo the Supreme Court appointments. —Reuters

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09-73083053, 09-43055309, 01-200975, k@kshproducts.com

Invitation for Bids for Myanmar National Portal

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), as the implementation agency for the Telecommunications Sector Reform Project now invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders for Design, Development, Configuration, Hardware Supply and Installation for the Myanmar National Portal. All interested entities are request to submit their bids at the following address by 14:00 hours Myanmar Time on February 26, 2016.

Attn:

Than Htun Aung (Mr.) Project Director,
Telecom Sector Reform Project Building No. 2,
Ministry of Communications and Information
Technology, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.
Tel: +95 67 407435 Fax: +95 67 407539
Email: thanhtunaung_ptd@outlook.com,
tsrproject2014@gmail.com,
nwenisoeyin@e-mcit.gov.mm,
nwenisoeyin@gmail.com

A complete set of bidding documents in English may be downloaded from Ministry Website at www.mcit.gov.mm.

Central African Republic candidates now mostly support vote count: UN

BANGUI — Almost all of the 30 candidates running for president of Central African Republic now support the election despite calls this week by 20 of them for the vote count to be stopped, the UN peacekeeping mission said on Wednesday.

About 77 per cent of votes have been counted in the 30 December election that is hoped will mark the end of three years of conflict in which thousands have died.

Two former prime ministers are in the lead, according to election authorities, and will likely contest a run-

off election on 31 January.

Anicet Georges Dologuele had 259,211 votes, while Faustin Archange Touadera had won 222,391 votes. No other candidate had more than 135,000 votes. The UN said its statement followed a meeting on Tuesday between the candidates and senior officials including Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the UN Secretary General's special representative and Balla Keita, head of the peacekeeping mission.

Twenty-eight candidates have indicated they want "to make sure that the election process carries on"

and would use only legal means to express any complaints, it said in a statement.

Twenty candidates had previously urged authorities to stop the vote count because of what they said were irregularities in the ballot.

Since Tuesday, at least five of those have publicly reversed their position.

The United Nations is a significant player in Central African Republic where Muslim rebels and Christian militias have often targeted civilians. About one fifth of the impoverished country's 5 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

The country's troubles intensified in early 2013 when mainly Muslim rebels from an alliance called the Seleka seized power in the mostly Christian nation, provoking reprisals from Christian "anti-balaka" militias.

Catherine Samba-Panza became transitional president in May 2014 with a mandate to guide the country to the election, a transition supported by the United Nations. Since then, inter-communal and inter-religious violence has flared sporadically despite the presence of peacekeepers and French forces. —Reuters

First Cuban migrant flight to leave Costa Rica next week



A Cuban migrant rests outside her tent at a temporary shelter in the border, between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, in Penas Blancas, Costa Rica, in December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

SAN JOSE — The first flight for Cuban migrants stranded in Costa Rica will leave on Tuesday, the Central American country's foreign minister said on Wednesday.

A group of around 180 people will be able to leave on a flight to El Salvador on Tuesday evening, they will then have ground transportation to the Guatemala-Mexico border, Manuel Gonzalez, Costa Rica's foreign minister said.

Subsequent flights from Costa Rica will depend on the success of this one.

The flow of migrants

from Cuba has surged as the process of a detente between Washington and Havana stirs fears that preferential US asylum rights for Cubans may soon end. Costa Rica's government stopped issuing transit visas to Cubans in December as Nicaragua, which is a close ally of Cuba, shut its borders to them in November.

Since then, the number of Cuban migrants stuck in limbo inside Costa Rica's northern border with Nicaragua has grown steadily. An estimated 8,000 Cubans are now stuck there. —Reuters

California governor declares LA-area gas leak an emergency

LOS ANGELES — Governor Jerry Brown on Wednesday declared a Los Angeles-area natural gas leak that has been sickening nearby residents for more than two months an emergency, calling for alternatives to stop the underground leak if existing efforts fail.

Southern California Gas Co, which operates the well that is the site of the underground methane leak, is trying to stop it by drilling a relief well to reach a damaged pipeline, then injecting fluids and heavy mud into it.

The governor's office said in a statement the utility will need to identify how it will stop the leak if a relief well fails to seal it — or if the existing leak worsens.

The leak was discovered on 23 October at a well used for natural gas storage in Aliso Canyon just outside Los Angeles' Porter Ranch neighbourhood, which is home to



Porter Ranch residents Danielle Michaels (L) and Michelle Theriault (R) hold signs outside Los Angeles City Hall during a demonstration ahead of the testimony before the Los Angeles City Council on the ongoing natural gas leak in the Porter Ranch area of Los Angeles, California in December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

more than 30,000 people. Thousands of residents were forced to move over the holidays, with the company underwriting their temporary housing.

Officials from Southern California Gas, a di-

vision of Sempra Energy, say they expect to stop the leak in late February to late March. The leak, which state officials have said accounted at its peak for a fourth of California's 20 million metric tons a year

in greenhouse gas emissions from methane, is believed to have been caused by a broken injection-well pipe several hundred feet beneath the surface of the 3,600-acre (1,457-hectare) field.—Reuters

World Bank cuts 2016 global growth forecast to 2.9%

WASHINGTON — The World Bank on Wednesday cut global growth forecast for 2016 down to 2.9 per cent, saying that weak growth among major emerging markets will weigh on global growth in 2016. In its Global Economic Prospects Report, the Washington-based institution expected the world economy to grow 2.9 per cent in 2016, 0.4 percentage points lower than the bank's forecast in June 2015, but higher than the estimated 2.4 per cent growth in 2015.

Developing economies are forecast to expand by 4.8 per cent in 2016, less than expected earlier but up from a post-crisis low of 4.3 per cent in the year just ended; advanced economies are expected to grow 2.1 per cent this year, also lower than its June forecast but up from the estimated 1.6 per cent increase in 2015.

“The January Global

Economic Prospects tells us that if 2015 was a disappointing year for the world economy, 2016 is the risky year,” said Kaushik Basu, World Bank Group Vice President and Chief Economist, at a media briefing. “The global economy, in particular the emerging economies could hit a road bump.” Downside risks, including slower growth, financial stress around the US Federal Reserve tightening cycle, weak commodities prices, and heightened geopolitical tensions, have become increasingly centred on emerging and developing countries, said the report. The emerging economies seem to be coming apart, with Brazil and Russia expected to remain in recession in 2016, while China and India forecasted to grow around 7 per cent. China is forecasted to grow 6.7 per cent in 2016 and 6.5 per cent in 2017, lower than the estimated 6.9 per cent growth in 2015.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (TPN-679)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (TPN-679) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (090W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (090W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S HANJIN SHIPPING LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KULNATEE VOY NO (09/15)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KULNATEE VOY NO (09/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-3 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S KULNATEE CO LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DECENT VOY NO (1514)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DECENT VOY NO (1514) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S G-LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KULTHARA VOY NO (11/15)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KULTHARA VOY NO (11/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-6 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S KULNATEE CO LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

People's Choice disruption laughed off as DeGeneres and Depp win big



LOS ANGELES — Ellen DeGeneres, Johnny Depp and hit film “Furious 7” were among the top winners at Wednesday’s People’s Choice awards, which featured an on-stage incident that recalled Kanye

West’s Video Music Awards antics seven years ago.

As the team from “The Talk” accepted the favourite daytime TV hosting team award, a young man in a red biker jacket strode onto the stage and seemed to give his name and plug a project as Sheryl Underwood waved him off, intoning “uh uh.”

“The Talk” co-host Sharon Osborne kicked the interloper’s backside as he was pushed away and held up her middle finger, while Underwood called “security, security!”. The women then laughed off the encounter. The disruption recalled West’s 2009 stunt at the VMAs, where he pulled a microphone from Taylor Swift to complain that Beyonce should have won.

The rest of the live ceremony, which kicks off Hollywood’s annual awards season culminating with the 28 February Oscars, went off without incident.

Talk show host Ellen DeGeneres received a humanitarian award for her work for causes including children in need, the environment, animal rights and health issues.

Joking that she started out hoping “to make people laugh, and to get very, very rich,” DeGeneres then struck a humble note. “Would I call myself the Dali Lama of daytime? No. But I’m

sure someone out there has,” she said.

An emotional Vin Diesel accepted the favourite film prize for “Furious 7,” noting how hard it was to resume filming after the death of co-star Paul Walker in a car wreck.

Johnny Depp, named favourite male dramatic actor, called his storied career “a bizarre road for an actor.” Depp, who has had several box office failures since starring in the hit “Pirates of the Caribbean” film series, told fans “I’m very appreciative that you’ve stuck with me,” sounding a familiar note among winners who singled out fans for thanks.

The People’s Choice Awards are chosen by fans voting online in categories spanning film, television and music. More than 200 million votes were cast, said host Jane Lynch, the star of “Glee”.

Dakota Johnson, star of the explicit “50 Shades of Grey,” suffered an apparent problem with her gown while she accepted her favourite dramatic movie actress award but laughed it off as nothing people hadn’t seen before. Other winners at the Los Angeles ceremony included Sandra Bullock as favourite movie actress, “The Big Bang Theory” as favourite network TV comedy and “Grey’s Anatomy,” which was named favourite network TV drama.—Reuters

Streaming music in US up 93% in 2015; Adele tops album sales

LOS ANGELES — US music consumers almost doubled their use of streaming services in 2015, with Apple Inc’s new Apple music platform helping boost volume a record 93 per cent, Nielsen Music said on Wednesday.

Music consumers used on-demand streaming platforms to listen to 317 billion songs, exceeding projections. Physical album sales declined again, with British singer Adele’s “25” providing a bright spot in an otherwise dreary market.

“The amount of exposure Apple gave to streaming can’t be understated,” said David Bakula, senior vice president of industry insights at Nielsen Entertainment.

About 241 million albums were purchased last year, a 6 per cent drop from 2014; 103 million albums were bought in digital

formats and nearly 12 per cent of all albums were bought on vinyl.

Rock music accounted for a third of the albums sold over 2015, while pop music dominated singles.

But while streaming dominated the music industry with large-scale platforms including Google Play, Amazon Prime Music and Spotify, two of the year’s biggest-selling albums, Adele’s “25” and Taylor Swift’s “1989,” were strategically kept off streaming services.

Adele’s “25” smashed opening week sales records in November and has clocked a total of 7.4 million albums sold by year end. Taylor Swift had the second biggest-selling album of the year with her “1989” record selling just under 2 million copies.

“What works for Adele and Taylor Swift doesn’t necessarily

work for everyone else,” Bakula said, suggesting the two were exceptions to the rule and that most artists still turned to streaming for a part of their sales.

The third biggest-selling album of the year, Justin Bieber’s “Purpose,” smashed streaming records in November, with 205 million global streams in its debut week. Bakula added there was “no question” that streaming had helped curb the online piracy of music that severely hurt the industry in the early 2000s with platforms such as Napster.

R&B and hip hop music accounted for 21 per cent of the 317 billion streams consumed on on-demand platforms, and artists such as Drake, Future, The Weeknd and Kendrick Lamar delivered some of the year’s top-selling and best-received records.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Thailand expects record tourist arrivals in 2016



Tourists walk at the ruins of the ancient capital of Ayudhdhaya, Thailand. PHOTO: REUTERS

BANGKOK — International tourist arrivals in Thailand are expected to reach a record high in 2016, the tourism minister said on Wednesday, after nearly 30 million foreigners came to its temples, beaches and bars in 2015.

Tourism boomed even after the deadliest attack on Thai soil in peacetime at a shrine in central Bangkok shook the country and

as a high profile trial for the murder of two British backpackers sullied the industry's reputation.

Tourism accounts for about 10 per cent of Thailand's GDP and is one of the few bright spots for an economy that underperformed peers in Southeast Asia. Visitors to Thailand should rise to 32 million in 2016, said Tourism Minister Kobkarn Wat-

tanavrangkul, emphasizing that it was not a target but an estimate. That would be more than 7 per cent higher than the 29.88 million that visited in 2015. The government is targeting revenue from tourism of 2.3 trillion baht (41.64 billion pound) in 2016, up from 2.21 trillion baht in 2015, she said.

Around 60 to 70 per cent of travellers are repeat

visitors, she said.

The country providing the most tourists to Thailand was China, with around 8 million in 2015. Malaysia came in a distant second with more than 3 million, and Japan, third with 1.4 million. Thailand's central bank predicts the economy will grow 3.5 per cent this year, due to government stimulus measures and tourism. —Reuters

Swimming in Siberia – taking the plunge when the air is minus 30C

KRASNOYARSK — A winter swimming club in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk gathers young and old from all walks of life. They share a love of bracing, cold water. Siberian cold.

“The moment of immersion is a sensation of delight. Afterwards there's a rush of energy and my entire body feels relaxed,” said Mikhail Sashko, 68, chairman of the club. “My wife says I am crazy.”

With a small wooden clubhouse on the banks of the Yenisei River, the Cryophile winter swimming club — named after organisms that thrive in extremely cold temperatures — has about 300 members.

These swimmers say they, themselves, flourish in air temperatures that often reach 30 degrees Celsius below zero (minus 22 Fahrenheit) or lower in the long months of a Siberian winter. One picture in a Reuters photo story shows Mikhail Shakov, 23, a demobilized Russian soldier, swimming towards an ice-floe but sporting a traditional ushanka, or ear-hat. In another, photo Nikolai Bocharov, 77, rubs a snow on his body as he sits on a snowdrift after bathing.

Aged from under one year old to 79, the members include school pupils, engineers and retired construction or water utility workers. The club's spirit of fun includes pouring buckets of water on each other when celebrating Polar Bear Day at a zoo in a suburb of Krasnoyarsk, one of Siberia's largest cities. Like children anywhere, young club members have snowball fights — but in this case wearing just their swimming costumes.

Some members of

the club say regular bathing in cold water has had a positive impact on their health. Yulia Klimenkova, 16, whose whole family are also members, says the cold water boosts her immunity and recently helped her get over a respiratory virus. Vladimir Khokhlov, 71, a former builder and now a pensioner, dates his passion for swimming in all weathers to a September day in 1990, the year the Cryophile club was founded. While on a fishing trip on the banks of the Yenisei, he got up one morning and felt inspired to jump in the river. He hasn't stopped since.

“I can't live without bathing daily in cold water, it's like a drug,” says Khokhlov, who also works as a caretaker, maintaining ice levels on an outdoor hockey rink. “If there's no river nearby I have to find another way to pour cold water over myself from head to foot.”

Once in the clubhouse — where access is based on a rota because of the building's small size — club members relax in the sauna, chat over a hot drink or play the piano.

It's not for everyone. Klimenkova, who has been swimming with the club since she was four, says her friends praise her bravery but balk at taking the plunge themselves.

“Many of my friends and their parents say it's impossible to bathe in the winter in the Yenisei River,” says 9-year-old Nastya Usachyova. “They don't approve.”

For others, taking a dip no matter what the temperature is a way of disconnecting from daily life and setting their troubles to one side. —Reuters



Mikhail Sashko, chairman and one of the founders of the Cryophile winter swimmers club, bathes in cold water during a flash mob, part of a celebration of Polar Bear Day at the Royev Ruchey Zoo in a suburb of the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, on 29 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International

(8-1-2016 07:00 am~ 9-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	The Beauty In The North Of Myanmar
07:43	Am	Writer
07:50	Am	Wet Markets in Yangon: Shwe Pa Dauk Fish Market
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	SHWE SETTAW (Minbu)
08:44	Am	Myanma Agarwood
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Tigers, Lions and The Guardians
09:36	Am	Jeyyanandi (A Day in the Life of a Nun)
09:53	Am	The Pride of Myanmar “Traditional Handicraft”
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Gold: King Of All Metals
10:57	Am	Kid's Home

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Thursday 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	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture “The Golden Land”
07:45	Pm	YUFL
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Architect: U Thaw
08:51	Pm	Chaug Tha Souvenir Business

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

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

MRTV News Channel

(8-1-2016, Friday)

6:00 am

- Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

8:35 am

- Current Affairs

9:35 am

- Weekly Entertainment

10:35 am

- MRTV's Youth Program

11:35 am

- Science and Technology Programme

12:50 pm

- Talk on Old Film (Part-4)

1:30 pm

- TV Drama Series

2:25 pm

- TV Drama Series

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Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Messi double as Barca beat nine-man Espanyol in Cup

BARCELONA — Lionel Messi struck a spectacular free kick, scored another goal and set up two more in a 4-1 victory for Barcelona over nine-man city rivals Espanyol in the first leg of their King's Cup last-16 clash on Wednesday.

A second-string Atletico Madrid side secured a 1-1 draw at neighbours Rayo Vallecano, striker Saul Niguez equalising in the second half for the La Liga leaders.

Argentine Messi slotted home after 13 minutes for Barca following Felipe Caicedo's opener for Espanyol and he struck a 30-yard free kick before halftime that went in off the underside of the crossbar.

Espanyol held Barca to a 0-0 draw at home last Saturday in La Liga but the Cup holders were much more threatening this time.

Messi provided assists for Gerard Pique and Neymar in the second half while in a feisty game there were also red cards for Espanyol's Hernan Perez and Papakouli Diop.

"In derbies there is always a high tempo and they have a style of play that is always on the limit," Pique told reporters.

"The other day the referee allowed it but this time he didn't and it was easier for us to play our football."

Nacho put Rayo ahead

with a low drive after 34 minutes against an Atletico side showing a number of changes and it was only after the break that the league leaders offered any real threat.

Augusto Fernandez and Claudio Kranevitter made their debuts and found it difficult to impose themselves on the game and Atletico lacked their usual solidity. They equalised through a 15-yard

strike from Saul who was set up by Luciano Vietto after 67 minutes and there were chances for both sides in the closing stages.

Arda Turan made a comfortable debut for Barca after finally being allowed to play following the end of the FIFA transfer ban but Espanyol scored first.

Marco Asensio intercepted a Dani Alves pass to set up Caicedo who beat keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen from the centre of the area.

Messi finished clinically from an Andres Iniesta through ball and the Argentine forward cracked home a free kick which swerved

in the air past Lopez before crossing for Pique to score from close range.

Espanyol lost their composure after Perez and Diop were dismissed and Neymar volleyed home from another Messi pass to complete the rout.

Striker Alvaro Negredo scored a hat-trick, including two second-half penalties, as Valencia thrashed Granada 4-0 to lift the club who have yet to pick up a La Liga victory under new manager Gary Neville.

Second-half goals from Inaki Williams, Aritz Aduriz and Aymeric Laporte helped Athletic Bilbao come from behind to beat in-form Villarreal 3-2.—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Bilic says West Ham unlikely to sign players in January

LONDON — West Ham United manager Slaven Bilic has said he is 99 per cent sure his high-flying Premier League club will not sign any players in the January transfer window.

The Hammers are sixth in the table and four points outside the top four, but Bilic said on Wednesday he would only add to his squad in "exceptional" circumstances.

"We have a good squad, a big squad, and 99 per cent (certain) we will leave it like this and make our signings in the summer," the Croatian told Talksport radio.—Reuters

Ferrer wild card a boost for Auckland fans

WELLINGTON — While local tennis fans bemoaned the early exits of the top two women's seeds from the Auckland Classic, organisers of next week's ATP Auckland Open delivered some good news yesterday after world number seven David Ferrer accepted a wild card.

Ferrer was upset by Ukraine's Illya Marchenko in the first round in Doha this week, paving the way for him to accept the wild card at Auckland, a tournament he has won four times.

"It's huge for this tournament to have David Ferrer back for another year," tournament director Karl Budge said. "He has been so loyal to us and is a huge crowd favourite."

"We are pleased to welcome him back to have another

crack at the title."

Ferrer's inclusion in the draw, now as the top seed, means four of the top-12 players in men's tennis will be at the tournament.

France's Jo Wilfried Tsonga (10), who had been under an injury cloud and a doubt before he arrived in Auckland on Tuesday, twice champion John Isner (11) and South Africa's Kevin Anderson (12) make it the strongest field assembled in New Zealand's largest city, Budge added.

"To have our top four seeds all inside the world's top 12 is incredible for an ATP 250 event," Budge said.

"We are in for a treat this year."

The depth of the men's draw should make up for some

of the disappointment directed at the women's tournament this week. Local media reported fans were angry that the Auckland Classic had been shorn of its top drawcards with defending champion Venus Williams and 2014 winner Ana Ivanovic both bundled out in the first round.

Budge said that was the nature of sport, particularly at the top level.

"That's the beauty of sport, it's unpredictable," Budge said. "That's the quality of this tournament, anyone of those girls coming through can win."

Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki is the last of the three big drawcards remaining and will play her quarter-final against Romania's Alexandra Dulgheru later on Thursday.—Reuters

Injuries mar Everton's win over City

LONDON — Everton's 2-1 victory over Manchester City in the first leg of their Capital One Cup (League Cup) semi-final came at a cost with the trio of Romelu Lukaku, Tom Cleverley and Seamus Coleman sustaining injuries during the contest on Wednesday.

Striker Lukaku, the joint top-scorer in the Premier League on 15 goals, headed home the winner for the Toffees before hurting himself, and manager Roberto Martinez is hoping the in-form Belgian will be back in action soon.

"Romelu took a knock to his ankle and he will need assessing. I don't know if he will be available at the weekend but I don't expect anything too serious," the Spaniard told the club website (www.evertonfc.com).

Everton finished the game with 10 men after Coleman tweaked his calf muscle late in the game, with the manager having used up his substitutions.

"Seamus is probably the most serious of the three. He has pulled his calf and that type of injury usually takes three or four weeks to fully recover," Martinez said.

Cleverley suffered a recurrence of the calf injury he picked up against Tottenham Hotspur at the weekend. The midfielder had to sit out for more than two months due to a ligament damage before returning to action in November and has only 11 league appearances so far this season.

"Tom picked up a knock to his calf against Spurs and it flared up at half-time," Martinez said.

The manager is also not setting too much store by Wednesday's win, as a 1-0 victory by City (after extra time) in the return leg will be enough to send Manuel Pellegrini's men through.

"It (the first-leg win) means nothing. We had to win our first leg and we'll now have to prepare for a very interesting second leg," said Martinez whose team are currently 11th in the Premier League.

Everton face Dagenham & Redbridge F.C in the third round of the FA Cup on Saturday and return to Premier League action against third-placed Manchester City on Wednesday.—Reuters