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JMC UNVEILS SHAN PLAN

Ceasefire monitoring committee pushes forward mechanism in Shan State

Ye Myint

THE Joint Monitoring Committee is pushing forward with their efforts by endeavouring to establish an effective state-level mechanism in Shan State today, according to the attendees of the committee's Day 2 meeting in Yangon yesterday.

Following the agreement reached at today's meeting forming a joint monitoring committee at the state level will begin tomorrow in Shan State's Kolam Township, said Dr Shwe Khar, JMC's secretary-1.

The state-level committee is set to comprise five representatives each from both the government and ethnic armed organisations and four from civil society organisations, he added.

According to the JMC's secretary-1, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, JMC's chairman, will lead the process of forming the Shan State joint monitoring committee.

The JMCs are also set to be formed at a regional level, apart from Union-level and re-



Col Wunna Aung, secretary of the Joint Monitoring Committee-Union, answers questions raised by the media after the third meeting that lasted two days at the Myanmar Peace Centre. PHOTO: YE MYINT

gion/state-level, said Col Wunna Aung, another committee's secretary.

On works to be done in improving communicative links between the two sides that have

engaged in the renewed clashes in Shan State, Dr Min Zaw Oo, a programme director at Myanmar Peace Centre, stressed the need to establish a better understanding between the commanders of

the two sides.

Prior to the demarcation process in Shan State, we are now looking to first set up the mechanism that involves monitoring, verification and conflict resolu-

tion, he added.

Shan State will become the first area to see renewed clashes after the signing of the ceasefire deal between the government and eight ethnic armed organisations following the fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Restoration Council of Shan State (RCSS), an NCA signatory.

"The incident is an accident", Col Wunna Aung commented on the case, adding that the implementation of the military code of conduct for both sides as well as guidelines will take place at various levels following the formation of the state-level committee in Shan State.

The monitoring mechanism in Shan State will become effective following the formation of the state-level committee and the setting up of a system of monitoring adherence to guidelines for the committee, said U Ko Ko Gyi, one of the JMC's members.

He called on NCA signatories to be strict in their adherence to the basic principle of resolving the conflicts through negotiation, rather than using brute.

Change in policy buffets auto market

FOLLOWING the government's announcement on new restrictions on the model/year of imported cars on 7 January, the prices of cars has decreased, according to sources.

The 18-December announcement of the Ministry of Rail Transport restricts the import of motor vehicles in regard to the year. It allows only left-hand

drive cars to be imported, too.

The policy has drawn criticism from auto businessmen and the change in policy has slowed down the market. Others have welcomed the policy.

"All are watching the situation in the auto market," a sale broker said.

The Road Transport Administration Department under the

Ministry of Rail has relaxed the restrictions concerning the year of manufacture of motor vehicles being imported.

With high demand for automobiles in the country, systematic public transportation should be given priority to meet international standards, some experts for civil affairs said.—001 (*The Mirror*)



Typical downtown traffic seen here next to Sule Pagoda, Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves third amended election laws

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the third amended Pyithu, Amyotha, region/state Hluttaw elections bills yesterday.

At the 27th day session of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in Nay PYi Taw the parliament also invited MPs to enlist their names for discussion on the letter sent by the President concerning the appointment of the Union Auditor-General.

Union Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Kan Zaw clarified a draft on short-term five-year projects from the 2016-2017 to the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.

A total of 553 MPs attended the parliamentary meeting. — Myanmar News Agency



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

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker receives delegation of Centre of Constitutional Democracy

SPEAKER of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint received Mr David C Williams, Executive Director of the Centre of Constitutional Democracy, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the meeting at a hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw were U Mya Nyein, Vice Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw and Chairman of Hluttaw Rights Committee, U Thein Win, Chairman of Public Accounts Committee of Amyotha Hluttaw, U Khet Htein Nan, Chairman of Amyotha Hluttaw Ethnic Affairs, Easing Conflicts and Peace-making Process Committee, Dr Banyan Aung Moe, Chairman of Rural Area Development and Poverty Reduction, U Khin Maung (a) U Aung Kyaw Oo, Chairman of the committee for non-governmental local and foreign organisations, U Khin Maung Htay, Member of Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting and other officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.— Myanmar News Agency



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint welcomes Mr David C Williams, Executive Director of the Centre of Constitutional Democracy, Indiana University Maurer School of Law. PHOTO: MNA

MPF advises gold shops on crime prevention

THE Myanmar Police Force gave an educative talk on criminal law in connection with gold jewelry sales at the UM-FCCI yesterday.

Police Brig-Gen Win Nang advised gold shops to install two layer glass which cannot be easily broken by thieves and most importantly to install alarms.

He also suggested thoroughly documenting transactions and sales with customers.

Finally, he advised shop

owners to hire security from private companies, install CCTV cameras, display the phone numbers of police stations in visible places and inform the police if they see a suspicious stranger.

There are 701 registered gold and jewelry shops in Yangon Region.

In one case of burglary in June of last year 150 pairs of ear rings were stolen from a shop in Pazuntaung Township.—GNLM

Magway residents demand renovation of nationalist hero statues

MAGWAY residents have demanded that the statues of revolutionary peasant Saya San and labour leader Thakhin Pho Hla Gyi at a local public park be renovated.

The "Saya San Rebellion" is a well-known anti-colonial movement in Myanmar. The two nationalist figures are remembered as heroes who led the masses against British imperialism from 1930 to 1932.

The park where the statues were erected by the government several years ago has fallen into disrepair, with locals mainly using it to store their cows, one local resident said, adding travellers also defecate in the park.

"We want the authorities to renovate the park and maintain the statues for the good of the region," the resident said.—Kyaw Swa

Affordable housing project in Haka 50 per cent complete

AS part of the plan to provide accommodation to disaster-hit residents living at temporary shelters in Haka in Chin State, 200 affordable houses have been established along Haka-Phalan Road, Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Oo said.

Under the guidelines of the President and the arrangements of the Ministry of Environmental

Conservation and Forestry, the project has been tasked with building more than 400 homes in the area, half of which are ready to be used. The development scheme is being implemented by two construction companies—Myat Noe Thu and Tin Win Tun—under the supervision of the state government.

Deputy Commissioner of Haka District U Soe Naing and

Township Administrator U Thein Zaw Oo have supervised the work, urging those companies to promote safety in the project area.

Landslides triggered by torrential monsoon rain continued to cause severe damage to Haka, the capital of Chin State in June and July last year, leaving major roads and households destroyed.—District IPRD



A minor damage to the embankment occurred in Nyaungdon on 2 January. Officials are still monitoring it and carrying out the maintenance of the embankment. Photo: District IPRD

Myanmar Energy Master Plan Unveiled

THE government has been making efforts to ensure energy sufficiency by the employment of various means, said Vice President U Nyan Tun at National Energy Management Committee meeting 1/2016 held on 8th January in Nay Pyi Taw.

He remarked that it is of utmost importance to promote the production of energy, to reduce and finally do away with losses and wastages and to reserve the environment for future generations. In this function, the government has already formulated a national energy policy to be able to supply energy in a sustainable manner. This policy is based on international expert opinion and the government has laid down a



Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses National Energy Management Committee meeting 1/2016. PHOTO: MNA

national energy supply strategy on the basis of local and international contexts.

Minister for Energy U Zeyar

Aung explained that the Myanmar Energy Master Plan drawn up by the Asia Development Bank is formulated in consider-

ation of the Myanmar economy, the form of energy use, the availability of energy resources and future requirements.

The Myanmar Energy Master Plan was read out by ADB Director Mr Chong Chi Nai.—*Myanmar News Agency*

India welcomes visitors with business visas

THE government of India has permitted Myanmar entrepreneurs to visit its country with business visas as of

December 2015.

It costs 2 US dollar for one person and we can extend the visa depending on the business

conditions of the visitor, said Dr Nanda Kumar, Indian Consul General in Mandalay at a meeting with press on Thursday.

The permission to enter India with business visa is expected to enhance economic relations between entrepreneurs of the two

countries, according to sources from businessmen in Mandalay.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House)*

Myanmar, Thailand discuss migrant labour issues

LABOUR officials from Myanmar and Thailand held talks in Yangon yesterday over issues related to Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand.

The meeting focused on 10 facts including reviewing of the MoU on labour cooperation between the two countries, re-considering the term of staying in Thailand as Thai side is

reluctant to accept staying more than 6 years in Thailand as well as issuance of the Certificate of Identity-CI for undocumented Myanmar migrant workers at one stop services in Thailand.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security estimates that over 2.5million Myanmar migrant workers are working in Thailand.

U Myo Aung, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security said that the meeting will bring benefits to solving Myanmar migrant workers issues.

The ministry has urged Myanmar migrant workers to go abroad officially.—*GNLM*

Israeli fruits to be sold at City Mart



Fruits from Israel are displayed at a stall of City Mart shop in Yangon.

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY ISRAEL EMBASSY

A SHIPMENT of fresh fruit from Israel arrived Yangon recently for the first time.

Cooperation between City Mart and the Israel export company Agrotterra brought the shipment of top quality Medjoul Dates, red grapefruit and Pomegranates from Israel this week.

The fruits will be sold in City Mart shops in Yangon.

Israel is known for its advanced agricultural methods and technology.

Cooperation between the two countries in this field is progressing. This shipment, encouraged by the Embassy of Israel in Yangon, is part of the cooperation.—*GNLM*

Illegal make-shift huts in National Races Village demolished



A man clears debris from illegal make-shift huts in National Races Village in Thaketa township, Yangon. PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)

LOCAL authorities destroyed 55 illegal make-shift huts in the National Races village in Yangon on Thursday, taking action against 6 restaurants in connection with the case.

"We destroyed the huts and shut down the restaurants which built them," said U Zaw

Moe, deputy director of Department of Rural Region Development.

The authorities reported to the Head office about the cases and will continue to take action.

There are 12 restaurants in the National Races village.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

Tourists show increasing interest in observing cultural heritage in remote areas



Antiquated sculptures are seen inside Shit-thoung Pagoda in Mrauk U. PHOTO: HTAY AUNG

Min Thit

MRAUKU of Rakhine State, the ice-capped mountains in northernmost Myanmar and islands in southern part of the country are becoming major tourist attractions according to the tourist guides.

Among those areas, Mrauk U is attracting international visitors as it offers evidence of ancient Myanmar culture associated with early Buddhism but receives few visitors compared to Bagan because of poor transportation.

It requires fundamental

infrastructure for the provision of better transportation services in order to attract more visitors, tour guide U Zaw Min Oo said.

Tourist arrivals to the country reached 4.2 millions between January and November last year, with the ministry estimating that the number will rise up to 5 millions by the end of March this year.

Deputy Culture Minister Daw Sanda Khin said that people's participation in conserving the country's cultural heritage and natural environment is crucial for sustainable tourism development.

The Ministry has reportedly increased their efforts to preserve the country's traditional sites and culture by conducting tourism management programs as the industry is reliant on natural heritage.

Laws protecting and preserving cultural heritage were enacted in 1998 and again in 2011.

With the aim of preventing environmental pollution the establishment of hotels, restaurants and industry sites is prohibited in the area of the three Pyu ancient cities which were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014.

Implementation of Tamabin electric river pumping project almost finished

NEWLY electric river pumping project named Tamabin which is being implemented in Myittha Township of Kyaukse District in Mandalay Region is 85 per cent complete, said U Maung Naing, head of Water Resources Utilization Department.

Formerly, the department supplied agricultural water across the region through diesel water pumping system, which initiated in 1996-1997 fiscal year and stopped in 2007.

Changing from diesel to electric pumping is aimed at developing the socio economic status of farmers in the region by increasing agricultural food production.

Efficient use of water in agriculture is the major needs of the farmers. To fulfil their requirements, the new project designed to provide water at affordable cost for people started in 2015-2016

with the funds of by Mandalay Region government.

"Currently, we obtain water using diesel engine from Samone River to grow onion and chilli. The total expenses for diesel pumping including fees for rental engine normally cost between K200,000 (US\$154) and K300,000 (\$232)," said farmer U Hla Aung.

"The former system creates some troubles to take water from the river to cultivation areas. Some plantations which are far from the river mainly rely on rainfall." "We are planning to distribute agricultural water to 100 acres of farmlands in coming summer with the use of the new pumping system," said U Maung Naing.

"The project will benefit 450 acres of farmlands across the region after it finished."— *Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)*



Villagers gather at Tamabin River Pumping Project to fetch water. PHOTO: MIN Htet AUNG

Crime News

Stimulants and Raw opium haul lead to arrests

LOCAL authorities seized stimulants, accessories of gun and raw opium in Pinlaung- Hmawbe road on 6 January.

When the police stopped the motorbike, Maung Koe, the passenger shot the police and drove away. When he was arrested, police found one AK47rifle and one M20 pistol, 5 bullet bags, 78 rounds of bullets, 1.1 kilo of raw opium and 104 pills of stimulant.

Similarly, the police squad in

Kyaukme discovered 1160 pills of stimulant on a motorbike driven by Aik Kyaw on 5 January.

Local anti-drug squad sized 590 pills stimulant in a motorbike heading from Hsipaw to Kyaukme. Charges have been filed against Aung Myint, the driver of the motorbike, Kyaw Win, his passenger. The men are being charged under the Anti-Narcotic law.— *Myanmar Police Force*



Maung Koe and San Aung. PHOTO: POLICE FORCE

Fire destroys two-storey house in Haka

A FIRE destroyed a medium two-storey house in Haka, Chin State on Tuesday. No deaths or injuries result from the blaze.

The incident occurred around 4.30 p.m at the house

owned by absentee landlord U Khwa Kee Yan. The fire reportedly first broke out in the kitchen of the house as a tenant forgot to switch off an electric cooker before he left the home.

It took 3 fire engines and the assistance of neighbours to put out the blaze. The Haka Myoma Police Station has taken action against Than Aung, the tenant.— *Police IPRD*

Illegal timbers seized in Sagaing

PADAUK timbers weighing 2.59 tons were seized by local police in Kani Township, Sagaing Region on Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off a combined team comprising police

and staff from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry searched a vehicle being driven by one Naing Tun, 28, near the western part of Myaung-gone Village. They discovered a

cache of timber worth K647,500 (US\$497.75) in the car.

The suspect has been charged under Section 6(1) of the Public Property Protection Act.— *Police IPRD*

Child killed in accident

A 7-year-old child was killed on the spot in a vehicle accident in Thasi, Mandalay Region on Tuesday.

The 24-year-old driver U Myo Aung lost control of his truck and crashed into a house situated on the left hand side of the Meiktila-Taunggyi Road near Yaypaungsonne Village, Thasi, Mandalay.

The collision killed a child named Nay Win Aung who was situated in the kitchen.

The driver has been charged with careless driving by local police.— *Police IPRD*

Cowshed, house destroyed in blaze

A COWSHED and home were destroyed by fire on Tuesday in Pale Township, Sagaing Region.

A man named Myint Kyine, 35, of Khawtheini Village allegedly built a fire under the cowshed to warm himself.

The fire was brought under control at 5 am that day by members of regional police forces and neighbours.

The man has been charged by local police.— *Police IPRD*

Malaysia PM Najib will table amendments to budget soon



Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak. PHOTO: REUTERS

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak will table amendments to the 2016 budget “soon” that will take into account the challenges expected in the new year, state news agency Bernama quoted him as saying on yesterday.

Najib did not specify when

the meeting would be tabled.

Amendments to the budget will have additional measures to optimise spending and the role of government linked firms, he said, speaking at a meeting with the Ministry of Finance staff.

Najib said inflation this year is expected to stay in the

range of two to three percent.

He added that the government projects GDP growth to remain stable at 4 to 5 per cent.

The Prime Minister delivered a popular budget in October that gave cash to low income families and taxed the rich.

But revenues from oil and gas have continued to slump for Southeast Asia's second largest oil producer amid a drop in global fuel prices.

The 2016 budget assumed oil prices to be \$48 per barrel. Brent Crude was trading at around \$33 per barrel on yesterday.

Najib said 2016 will be a challenging year but that the government is committed to upholding the people's welfare and ensuring strong economic growth.

The ringgit, slumped more than 18 per cent against the US dollar in 2015.

Political uncertainty from a scandal over millions of dollars deposited in Najib's personal account has also weighed on the currency and the economy.

The Prime Minister has denied any wrongdoing.—Reuters

Co-financing plans with AIIB underway — ADB president

MANILA — Asian Development Bank President Takehiko Nakao said yesterday that officials of the Manila-based bank are exploring with their counterparts from the newly established, China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank possible projects that the two institutions can co-finance, dismissing fears that the creation of the latter would erode the ADB's role in the region.

In a forum with the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines at the ADB headquarters here, Nakao said discussions between the ADB and AIIB have begun for possible co-financing on projects related to transportation, such as roads, renewable energy, urban development, and water.

“AIIB is planning to start operations by the middle of this year and will announce the first batch of its projects, including their own and including co-financing with us and several other international financial institutions,” Nakao said.

He voiced hope that co-financing will be part of the first batch of the AIIB's approved projects, adding that the ADB has 50 years of experience, especially in policy-based financing with emphasis on social and environmental impact. The AIIB, which has an authorized capital stock of \$100 billion, was formally established

last month with 57 founding members. Of the 57, China is the largest shareholder with a stake of about 30 per cent. Beijing will host its first meeting on 16 January.

Prior to the formal launching of the AIIB, Nakao met twice with the latter's appointed head, Jin Liqun, a former Chinese deputy finance minister, to discuss ways for the two institutions to cooperate amid what the ADB says is an \$8 trillion requirement for infrastructure investment in the region from 2010 to 2020.

“There is no choice over not cooperating. We should cooperate because there is a huge need for financing in Asia, and we have certain expertise and experiences. I already made a commitment to that by discussing very frankly and friendly with Mr. Jin,” Nakao said. The ADB's operations in 2015 reached an all-time high of \$27.15 billion, comprising loans, grants, technical assistance, and co-financing. It is around 19 per cent higher than the \$22.89 billion in 2014, the bank said. “As we approach our 50th anniversary this year, we are committed to scaling up our operations and achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development in the region,” Nakao said in a separate statement. The ADB is owned by 67 members, of which 48 are from Asia.—Kyodo News

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MPs, health officials spar over tobacco pack warnings

NEW DELHI — A parliamentary panel in India reviewing whether to put larger health warnings on cigarette packets has asked the health ministry for evidence to show that such a move would cut tobacco consumption, according to documents reviewed by Reuters.

The panel, which has been criticised before by tobacco control activists for apparent conflict of interest as one of its members owns a tobacco business, sent a list of 32 questions to the health ministry in October.

It asked the ministry to explain which ingredients in tobacco cause cancer and whether previous government surveys showed that graphic warnings led to a drop in tobacco usage, which is linked to as many as 900,000 deaths a year in India, the world's second-largest tobacco producer.

Some questions cited concerns that larger warnings can hurt tobacco farmers and boost illicit trade. That surprised officials as they appeared to toe the industry line rather than focus on public health, ministry sources said.

One health official said they thought the questions were “almost identical to objections raised by the industry.”

“The panel is playing into the tobacco industry's ploy,” said Shailesh Vaite, a member of the Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control, a group of

more than 350 global organisations.

Panel chairman Dilip Gandhi denied the panel had been influenced by the tobacco industry, and said it expects to have a report on its findings within 45 days. He declined to comment on the list of questions sent to the health ministry.

Shyama Charan Gupta, a panel member who runs a company that makes traditional hand-rolled “beedi” cigarettes, said he has recused himself from the issue of tobacco warnings. He remains on the panel, which scrutinises several other regulations.

“The panel is playing into the tobacco industry's ploy.”

Shailesh Vaite

Member of the Framework Convention Alliance for Tobacco Control

The Tobacco Institute of India (TII) — which represents hundreds of local manufacturers in India's \$6 billion cigarette market as well as bigger firms such as ITC Ltd, part-owned by British American Tobacco Plc — said it held talks with the parliamentary panel in July.

“Regulatory impositions adversely impact the livelihood of farmers, the legal cigarette business,” said Syed Mahmood Ah-

mad, director of the TII.

The group did not comment on the panel's questions to the ministry, but has previously said bigger packaging warnings are “unreasonable” and “impractical”. ITC declined to comment.

The health ministry first proposed in October 2014 that 85 per cent of a cigarette packet's surface area should carry health warnings, up from 20 per cent. That was opposed by the tobacco industry and put on hold after the parliamentary panel said it needed to analyse the impact on the industry. The move has also been challenged in courts.

ple, showed that smoking dropped by up to a fifth after the adoption of graphic warning labels.

Such communication between the parliamentary panel and the health ministry, which has not previously been reported, risks further delaying the measures, activists and health ministry officials said. The ministry has defended its proposal, and told the panel that extensive research proves “conclusively” that tobacco causes cancer, a review of the ministry's responses shows.

In one question, the panel said the proposed increase in the size of the packaging warnings was “skewed”, and it questioned how it would cut tobacco use, especially among young people. It asked if there was any research planned for “evolving” a less harmful tobacco crop.

The ministry said it believes all forms of tobacco are harmful and addictive, and there is no safe level of tobacco, according to the documents. It cited several studies in its defence.

The panel also asked whether the ministry had data to show how many cancer cases were directly linked to tobacco, and which were the main harmful ingredients in it. In reply, the ministry said cigarettes contain more than 7,000 chemicals, including nicotine, tar and radioactive components.—Reuters

South Korea resumes anti-North Korea loudspeaker propaganda

SEOUL — South Korea yesterday resumed loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korea propaganda across the inter-Korean border in retaliation against the North's latest nuclear test, the Defence Ministry said.

The noontime resumption of what North Korea has previously denounced as "smear broadcasting" and "psychological warfare" is certain to draw a fierce backlash from Pyongyang, which has in the past threatened to fire artillery at the speakers.

Cho Tae Yong, deputy head of the National Security Office, said South Korea is maintaining its highest level of readiness and is ready to respond resolutely if North Korea makes any provocation.

Local media reported that frontline troops near sites where

11 banks of loudspeakers are located have been placed on highest alert.

"If North Korea attacks the loudspeakers, we will immediately retaliate," an unidentified Defence Ministry official was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency, adding that K-9 self-propelled artillery and short-range missiles have been deployed near the loudspeakers.

The resumption of the high-decibel broadcasts across the 4-kilometre-wide Demilitarised Zone comes on the purported birthday of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who is known to be in his early 30s.

For decades, the two Koreas have bombarded each other's soldiers at the DMZ and people in nearby villages with propaganda, but the broadcasts were halted in



South Korean loudspeakers used for anti-North Korea propaganda broadcasts, near the Demilitarised Zone between the two Koreas in June 2004. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

2004 amid easing tensions.

They resumed again for a short time last August after a landmine explosion injured two South Korean soldiers in

the DMZ, resulting in tensions that raised fears of a military confrontation between the two Koreas.

That was averted by mara-

thon talks held later that month at the truce village of Panmunjeom, which produced an agreement under which Pyongyang voiced regret over the landmine blasts and Seoul agreed to stop its "Voice of Freedom" broadcasts, which typically include criticism of the North Korean regime, messages from defectors, information about life in South Korea and even K-pop music.

North Korea's latest nuclear test on Wednesday, its fourth, has drawn criticism from around the region and across the globe.

The country's claim that the test represented its first successful detonation of a hydrogen bomb has, however, been disputed, with analysts stating the explosion's yield fell far short of one that an H-bomb would produce.—Kyodo News

Bushfire destroys nearly 100 homes in Western Australia, missing people found



Smoke clouds from a large bush fire are seen behind a police road block at the turn off onto the South Western Highway near Pinjarra, Western Australia, on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

SYDNEY — A bushfire destroyed nearly 100 homes in western Australia as it swept through countryside south of Perth, but there were no casualties reported after emergency officials and local media said yesterday that three missing people had been found safe.

Fanned by blustery, hot winds, the bushfire, which razed 58,000 hectares (143,321 acres) of land this week, ripped through the small rural town of Yarloop on Thursday night.

Around 95 homes were destroyed the town of 545 people, along with its post office, fire station and shops, media reports said.

"I believe we've had what I would suggest are catastrophic losses within Yarloop," said Wayne Gregson, Western Aus-

tralian Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner.

Three people, who were registered as missing, were found safe, while most of people who stayed to defend their properties were being evacuated by air or road, *The Australian* newspaper reported.

"It just got out of control... after that it just ripped through, it was quite scary," volunteer firefighter Jesse Puccio told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. "It's like when you see in the war when the napalm bombers go through."

The bushfire continues to threaten other beef and dairy producing towns in the state, emergency workers said.

Alcoa Inc said two of its buildings have been destroyed but its Western Australia alumina re-

fining operations were unaffected by the fire.

Australia has suffered a series of fires due to a long hot, dry spell. Four people were killed in a series of bushfires sparked by lightning in Western Australia in November, two people were killed in fires in South Australia in November, and more than 100 homes were destroyed in fires on Christmas Day in Victoria state.

Wildfires are an annual summer event in Australia, but rising temperatures have prompted some scientists to warn that climate change could increase the length and intensity of the summer fire season.

Australia experienced its fifth hottest year on record in 2015, according to the Bureau of Meteorology, which has been keeping statistics since 1910.—Reuters

Talks uncertain as India says Pakistan must first hunt militants

NEW DELHI — India called on Pakistan on Thursday to take "prompt and decisive" action against militants it blames for an attack on an air base, days before fraught peace talks between the nuclear-armed neighbours are scheduled to resume.

A meeting between the foreign secretaries of both nations had been tentatively scheduled for 15 January, but it is unclear if it will still happen after the weekend attack on the Indian Air Force base near the Pakistan border. India's foreign ministry said Islamabad has been given actionable intelligence that those who planned the assault came from Pakistan.

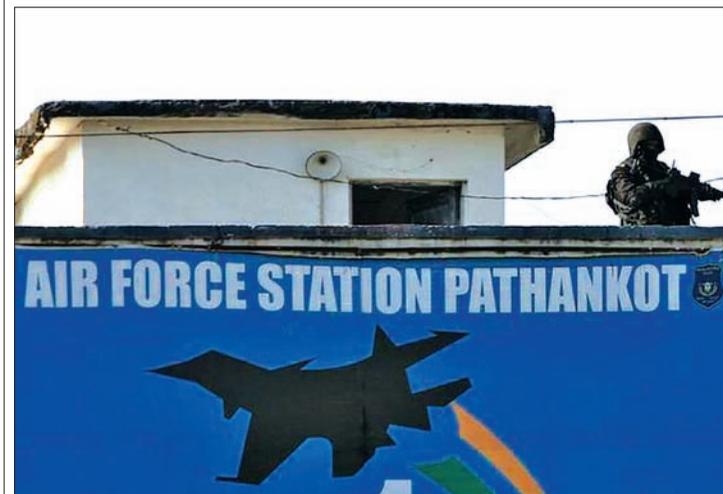
"As far as we are concerned the ball is now in Pakistan's court," spokesman Vikas Swarup told reporters when asked if the talks were on. "The

immediate issue in front of us is Pakistan's response to the terrorist attack."

A senior Pakistani official said India provided intelligence that included telephone numbers, call intercepts, and locations where they believe the attackers or their handlers were.

Pakistan is following up the leads, the official said, and hopes that the talks would not be cancelled while it explores them.

Prime ministers Narendra Modi of India and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan are struggling to keep their renewed dialogue on track after the militant attack killed seven Indian military personnel and wounded 22. Modi made a surprise stopover in Pakistan last month, the first time an Indian premier has visited in over a decade.—Reuters



An Indian security personnel stands guard on a building at the Indian Air Force (IAF) base at Pathankot in Punjab, India, on 5 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Paris police kill man armed with meat cleaver on Charlie Hebdo anniversary

PARIS — French police shot dead a man wielding a meat cleaver after he tried to enter a police station on Thursday, the anniversary of militant attacks in Paris, shouting “Allahu akbar” (God is Greatest) and wearing what turned out to be a fake suicide belt.

The Paris prosecutor said the man was also carrying a mobile phone and a sheet of paper bearing the Islamic State flag and a claim of responsibility by the militant group written in Arabic.

According to a judicial source, Ali Sallah, was a Moroccan born in 1995 in Casablanca. He was homeless and known to police for theft in 2012 in the Var region of southern France.

French Justice Minister Christiane Taubira told French television i-Tele that from what was known so far, the man had no known links to violent Islamist radicalism.

She suggested he might have been mentally unstable.

Thursday is the first anniversary of deadly Islamist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in the French capital and Sallah’s attack came just minutes after President Francois Hollande had given a commemoration speech elsewhere in Paris.

Security concerns intensified further in France in November when 130 people were killed in shootings and suicide bombings targeting a Paris music hall, bars, restaurants and a stadium.

Those attacks were claimed by Islamic State, the militant



French police check a pedestrian as they secure the area after a man was shot dead at a police station in the 18th district in Paris, France on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

group that controls swathes of Iraq and Syria. Several of the militants involved were, like the Hebdo killers, French-born.

In his statement, Paris Prosecutor Francois Molins said a terrorism inquiry had been opened into Thursday’s attack.

“(The man) shouted ‘Allahu akbar’ and had wires protruding from his clothes. That’s why the police officer opened fire,” a police official said.

French Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet later said the suicide belt the man was wearing was fake.

Journalist Anna Polonyi, who could see the outside of the police station from the window of her flat, posted photos on social media that showed what appeared to be a bomb-disposal robot beside the body of the

man, who was wearing jeans and a gray coat.

Polonyi told Reuters that her sister, in the flat with her, had seen the incident. She said the police shouted at the man and that they shot him as he was running towards them.

In his commemoration speech, Hollande promised to equip police better to prevent further militant attacks. He also defended draconian security measures implemented since November that his Socialist government had once shunned.

Last year’s attacks have boosted the popularity of the far-right, anti-immigrant National Front party ahead of a presidential election due in 2017.

“Terrorism has not stopped posing a threat to our country,” Hollande said.—Reuters

Germany promises migrant crime crackdown after Cologne assaults

BERLIN — Germany’s ruling parties promised yesterday to crack down aggressively on migrants who commit crimes, after assaults on women in Cologne on New Year’s Eve stoked debate about Chancellor Angela Merkel’s welcoming policy towards refugees.

Some 121 women are reported to have been robbed, threatened or sexually molested there by gangs of mostly drunk men between 18 and 35 years old while out celebrating.

Cologne’s police chief has said the perpetrators appeared to be of “Arab or North African” origin and the head of the police union in the region was quoted by German daily *Die Welt* as saying there were “definitely” refugees among them.

In response to the assaults, Merkel’s Christian Democrats (CDU) have called for tougher penalties against offending asylum seekers, according to a draft paper seen by Reuters ahead of a meeting of the party leadership in

Mainz. The paper says refugees and asylum seekers who have been sentenced to prison or probation should be barred from eligibility for asylum.

This sentiment was echoed by Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, who is also leader of the Social Democrats (SPD), coalition partners to Merkel’s conservatives.

“Why should German taxpayers pay to imprison foreign criminals,” Gabriel said. “The threat of having to spend time behind bars in their home country is far more of a deterrent than a prison sentence in Germany.”

Cologne police have not confirmed that refugees were among the attackers on New Year’s Eve, but Arnold Plickert, chief of the police union in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia said there was no doubt in his mind.

“The suggestion that nothing points to refugees as being among the attackers is wrong in my view,” Plickert told *Die*

Welt. “There were definitely refugees among the perpetrators.”

The CDU paper calls for lower barriers to deport criminal asylum seekers, increased video surveillance and the creation of a new criminal offence for physical assault. The assaults have raised doubts over whether Germany, which took in 1.1 million refugees last year, can succeed in integrating the latest wave and prompted renewed calls for limits on the number of new arrivals.

“If a direct link is shown between the assaults and the arrival of Middle Eastern migrants, the CDU could lose ground in state elections in March, and Merkel will come under greater pressure to introduce an upper limit on the number of migrants entering Germany,” said Eurasia analyst Mujtaba Rahman.

A new poll for public broadcaster ARD showed Merkel’s popularity rising 4 points to 58 per cent and support for her conservative bloc up to 39 per cent.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Repair work completed on China’s gas pipeline destroyed by landslide

BEIJING — Repair work has been completed on a section of China’s West-East natural gas pipeline which was destroyed by a landslide in late December in the southern city of Shenzhen, the official Xinhua news agency said yesterday.

Oil and gas giant PetroChina resumed natural gas supply to Hong Kong on Friday morning via a temporary pipeline, Xinhua said.—Reuters

Inert US Hellfire missile wrongly shipped to Cuba in 2014

WASHINGTON — An inert US Hellfire missile sent to Europe for a training exercise ended up by mistake in Cuba in 2014, in a serious loss of military technology, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Thursday, citing people familiar with the matter.

US investigators are trying to find out what went wrong and authorities have been trying to get the Cuban government to return the air-to-ground missile, which is often fired from helicopters and used as an anti-tank weapon, those familiar with the matter said, according to the *Journal*.—Reuters

Truck-train collision kills 3 in central Thailand

BANGKOK — At least three people were killed and over 30 others injured when a cattle-carrying truck crashed into a running train in central Thailand’s Phetchaburi Province yesterday morning, local media reported.

At least five carriages of the No.255 passenger train on Thon Buri-Lang Suan route derailed after the collision happened at a rail crossing around 10:30am local time.

Those confirmed dead include the truck driver and a monk, and the injured have been hospitalised.

The collision, the cause of which has yet to be determined, also damaged 200-metre concrete sleeper.

The incident forced railway officials to stop two south-bound trains from Bangkok at Cha-am railway station and transfer all passengers by buses to Phetchaburi to continue their journey to Lang Suan in southern Chumphon Province.—Xinhua

India, France start joint military exercise

NEW DELHI — India and France yesterday began a joint military exercise in the western state of Rajasthan.

The eight-day counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency exercise includes a French contingent comprising 56 personnel of the 35th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Armoured Brigade, sources said.

The French contingent, which had served in Afghanistan, is led by Major Thibaut De Lacoste Lareymondie, they said.

On the Indian side, troops from the 2nd battalion of the Garhwal Rifles are participating in the exercise code-named Shakti-2016, the sources said.

“The exercise is an important step for the armies to train together and gain from each other’s rich operational experience,” the Indian Army has said in a statement.

“Both countries have troops deployed in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations and therefore sharing each other’s military experiences will pay meaningful dividends.”—Xinhua

Oil tanker crashes into minibus, killing 5 in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH — Five Cambodian Muslims were killed outright and nine others injured in a collision between an oil tanker and a minibus yesterday morning in western Cambodia’s Pursat Province, a local police chief said.

The fatal crash took place at 6:00am local time on national road No 5 in Krokor district when the two vehicles were driving in an opposite direction and hit head-on, said Em Run, police chief of Krokor District.

“Two men, two boys and one girl were killed on the spot and nine others were badly injured in the crash,” he told Xinhua via telephone, adding that all the victims were on board of the minibus.

The oil tanker was blamed for the accident, as its driver escaped the scene soon after the tragic crash, the official added.

Road accidents are a leading cause of death in the Southeast Asian country, killing an average of six people per day. According to a government report, road crashes killed 2,265 people last year, up 5 per cent year-on-year.—Xinhua

OPINION

New Development Concept includes Spiritual and Mental Well-being

Khin Maung Aye

WITH the advent of the 21st century, the developing and the underdeveloped countries of the world have come to focus on freeing themselves from the vicious circle of poverty whereas the developed are exerting effort to sustain the development they have already achieved. In this function, the United Nations Organisation, on its part, has set the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are to be implemented between 2000 and 2015. Now with the lapse of this 15-year period, the United Nations has set the new goals called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Not all nations have not fully achieved the MDGs. This being so, they have to continue to implement the MDGs to the full extent while making efforts to implement the SDGs for the next 15 years. With the changing of the concept of development, the United Nations has come to think of spiritual and mental well-being in addition to material well-being, no more looking at things only from the economic aspect.

Such being the case, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are found to include spiritual and mental well-being, taking into account the quality as-

pect. In fact, the concept of development has come to mean promotion of the quality of life of the people.

The SDGs for 2016 to 2030 are as follows:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of

terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

It is found that the SDGs are very ambitious, calling for broader activities in order that equal development can be ascertained. There are 17 goals, 169 targets and more than 250 indices to measure the development. These goals are to be incorporated into national development plans – short term and long term. It is incumbent upon all citizens as well as all stakeholders to participate in implementation of these 17 goals. The Global New Light of Myanmar, therefore, would like to urge all citizens and stakeholders to direct their effort towards the achievement of these goals.

Write for us

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

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

Hello, I'm still alive! Part I

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

RELATIVES, class mates, colleagues, students, and friends at home and abroad, I'm still alive!

News of the hospitalization of Dr Khin Maung Nyunt, retired Professor of Statistics Department and retired Rector of the Institute of Economics, Yangon in the Facebook and a few weeks later the sad news of his death on Friday morning 11-12-2015 and news of his funeral service and burial followed by condolences by his students on following two days Saturday and Sunday 12-13 December 2015 had caused many confusions and untimely condolences offered to my wife and family by phone, Facebook and e-mail.

Even on 15-12-2015 at the early hour, one of my old lady students who is also my wife's class mate at St. John's Convent, Mable Maw rang up my wife. As my wife had just gone out, I received the phone call:

"Hail, Sayagi you're still alive. I thought it could be you Dr Khin Maung Nyunt who passed away a couple days ago."

"Mable, you are not the only one who made this mistaken

identity. My wife and family members are kept busy with such kind of phone calls."

The worst and funniest was that some history major I.R major and Archaeology major students began collecting money for yellow robes for monks and wreaths to lay at my burial. Then they suddenly found out that I was still alive giving lectures at Ph.D pre-lim classes. So they purchased a nice silk longyi and a fine fancy foreign shirt with the collected money and paid me respects. They cheerfully and happily explained their mistaken identity.

The funniest case was a recent graduate of Ph.D Archaeology named Dr Khaing Mon Kyaw. As she returned from National Museum at Nay Pyi Taw she heard the news of the death of Dr Khin Maung Nyunt that day. She wept on the way home and she phoned my driver to know the date and time of my funeral service and burial. The driver had to convince her that it was not me but the other Dr Khin Maung Nyunt who passed away. That evening she came to my house. Half weeping and half laughing she retold her mistaken identity.

With a silk longyi and many dry food-staff she paid me respect. She left immediately to tell her parents and friends that it was not me who passed away but the other Dr Khin Maung Nyunt, the retired Rector of the Institute of Economics.

Dear readers, assuming that it would be very amusing and entertaining for you to hear the long story of mistaken identity between the two Khin Maung Nyunts – the late and the still alive by tracing the history starting in late 1956 to 11-12-2015. The editors of the highly esteemed Daily *The Global New Light of Myanmar* would be kind enough to serialize my articles on this subject for the entertainment of its readers.

It was in the year 1955 that the two Khin Maung Nyunts won Myanmar Government state scholarship for post-graduate degrees abroad. I had already got an M.A degree in modern history and Political Science from Yangon University. The other Khin Maung Nyunt also got his M.A statistics, Department of Economics. Now began the first cause of mistaken identity between the two Khin Maung Nyunts. He and me both got admission to the London School of Economics and Political Science

[L.S.E] London University for our post-graduate studies leading to Ph.D – he in Economic Statistics and me for International Relations [I.R.] in the Faculty of Social Science. He flew to London and arrived there two months ahead of me.

Inspired by reading Kin Wun Mingyi's London Diary, Oxford University Diary by I.C.S U Sein Tin [Theikpan Maung Wa] and Bo Ba Ko's and Dr Htin Aung's writings on their sea voyage I chose to go to UK by boat. It was a cargo boat S.S Salween of Henderson Line. There were altogether 12 Myanmar students, among them were Daw Sein Sein [Anthropology] and Daw Khin Ma Lay [Betty, Geography]. They were my contemporaries. There was one my senior U Win Maung [Ngwe Tayi Magaznie] who shared cabin with me. The rest were from Army, Navy and Air Force and medical researchers. SS Salween departed late October 1955. Due to the short notice given me for departure, I had no time to make warm clothings or western dress. I was at that time warden of Sagains Hostel and Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Modern History and Political Science. Professor Ba Nyunt was pleased to see me in full Myanmar dress – black

over jacket and blue Bangkok longyi when I went to pay farewell respect to him. I was taken by my hostel students in buses to Lewis Street Jetty from where we went to SS Salween anchored in the deep sea.

The sea voyage took nearly a month passing through stormy Bay of Bengal, the Red Sea, Suez Canal, the Mediterranean Sea, the Strait of Gibraltar and very sickly rough waters of English channel till we reached the harbour of Liverpool. We had both good time and uneasy moments of sea sickness. I jolted down in my diary every event and experience on board and wrote on article about them and sent it to Yangon University Magazine of that year.

One striking experience was a chemistry major student who shared dinner table with me. He had trouble in using English words Yes and No because he was poor in English. I had to help him often at dinner. The funniest experience with him was at the customs of Liverpool harbour. I advised him to write down all we brought with us and submit them at the green line. While I was enquiring about the train to London, he was involved in heated argument with the customs officer.

See page 9>>

Mandalay sees increased number of tourists over 2015

INTERNATIONAL tourist arrivals to Mandalay last year exceed the estimates made by the Mandalay Region Hotel and Tourism Development Department, its spokesperson said.

In 2015 alone a total of 306,432 foreign tourists visited Mandalay, an increase of 26% over 2014. The majority of travellers come from China, Thailand, France, Germany and the U.S.

Mandalay is the second-largest city and the last royal capital of Myanmar. It is located 716 km north of Yangon on the east bank of the Ayeyawady River. According to the latest census,

the city has a population of just over 1.2 million.

The city hosted 242,566 globetrotters in 2014.

The outlook for the tourism sector in 2016 depends on the progress of tourism based investment in Myanmar as well as the global and ASEAN economy, the spokesperson said.

He added that plans are underway to expand international flights and airline access to Mandalay.

Currently, eight domestic airlines and five international airlines are operating services there.—*Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)*



Tourists visit a Pagoda in Mandalay. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG

Hello, I'm still alive! Part I

>>from page 8

He did write down everything he brought from his hometown – rice, cooking oil, salted fish, pea nuts, dried prawn, etc. He also brought Myanmar herbal medicines which his mother gave – such as for digesting, for muscle pain, cough, etc. Instead of writing them down under one general heading, Myanmar herbal medicines, he literally translated them one by one. So he translated licking salt avrsdK;&Spfq,fvsufqm; into English “80 kinds of wind!” Customs officer thought it was powdered drug and he would not let him go. When I arrived on the scene, the two were almost yelling at each other. When I found out the cause of their heated debate I could help laughing.

“Customs Officer Sir, this is not powdered drug, it’s Myanmar herbal medicine, please let him go with his medicine.”

Luckily there was another customs officer nearby who overheard our commotion. He came to our rescue. He was an English man who had lived in Yangon for some years. He explained about 80 kinds of wind licking salt to his colleague. So the matter ended peacefully.

The story of mistaken identity between the two Khin Maung Nyunts began when, one day the manager of the Westminster Bank, Horbon branch, close to the L.S.E building, rung me up to remind me that I had only 5 pounds left in my credit, as I had purchased a new suit and some warm clothings. I was shocked. I told him that I had recently put into my credit my scholarship allowance and I had

not bought anything. I had bought western dress and warm clothing at Aden Freeport when the ship stopped there for a day for loading and unloading. When I went to see the manager I found his mistaken identity of the two Khin Maung Nyunts. What other Khin Maung Nyunt spent were paid out from my credit and what money I put in went into his credit. When I explained that there were two Khin Maung Nyunts at the L.S.E, he refused to believe me. So I looked for the other Khin Maung Nyunt and brought him before him. The other Khin Maung Nyunt told the manager that he bought a suit and some warm clothings. He quoted his bank account No. The manager turned red, so ashamed of his serious error. When I checked my credit account, the money the other Khin Maung Nyunt spent went of my account.

“Mr Manager, you are working in bank, you should check our bank account Nos. even though we two have identical names, I shall report this matter to your boss.”

The manager apologized many times for his mistake. When the other Khin Maung Nyunt left the scene, the manager looked at me and said either sincerely or by way of flatter to atone for his mistake.

“Mr Nyunt, you look younger and more handsome than the other Khin Maung Nyunt!”

The rule of British Education Higher Department was that no one could register for Ph.D. Regardless of what degree you already had, you have to register for M.A first. Then the Board of Professors would decide if you

are qualified to proceed to Ph.D. or not after they have assessed your term papers or presentations at international seminars. So we two Khin Maung Nyunts were busy with our requirements. On one occasion, my presentation and presentation of other Khin Maung Nyunt were sent to my supervisor Mr Tunstall. It was the mistaken identity of the dispatch department. My supervisor phoned me to see him first in the morning. When I turned up at his office,

“I notice now you are very clever and brilliant student doing Ph.D. in two different subjects. But you should have learnt the rules and regulations of the L.S.E before you joined it. We allow only one Ph.D in one specialization. I warn you to be a law abiding student at L.S.E.” He gave me the two presentations of the two Khin Maung Nyunts.

I explained that there were two Khin Maung Nyunts at the L.S.E and gave him telephone no. of Myanmar Embassy, 19 A Charles Street for the confirmation of what I said. He phoned and got the answer. Then he phoned the Dispatch Dept which said it by mistake sent both presentations to Mr Tunsall. When he asked me why Myanmar names are identical I explained Myanmar naming system according to the days, date and time of birth. He seemed quite pleased.

At that time in London there were three Kyaw Myints. But they belonged to different universities and resided at different boroughs. We nicknamed them to avoid mistaken identity. The

Kyaw Myint who was studying Nuclear Physics at Imperial College was nicknamed Anumu Kyaw Myint. The Kyaw Myint who was studying Chartered Accountancy was called C.A Kyaw Myint and the Kyaw Myint who used to gamble at the greyhound race was called Khwepwe Kyaw Myint. Later it was shortened to Khwe Kyaw Myint. He was studying mathematics. C.A Kyaw Myint settled in Australia. Anumu Kyaw Myint became Rector of Mandalay University and Director-General of Higher Education. He passed away 2 years after his retirement. Khwe Kyaw Myint became Deputy Minister in the Department of Economic Planning and he expired after retirement.

There was another Khin Maung Nyunt with whom I had a very amusing and romantic mistaken identity. He was a young navy officer under training at a naval base somewhere in Scotland. He was a smart, tall and handsome young man, who could sing pop songs of Tommy Steel and Elvis Presley, and could dance western dances. No wonder he had many English girlfriends. One summer he made a date with one of his English girlfriends for summer vacations in London but for his address in London he told her to phone Myanmar Embassy in London. She arrived in London two days ahead, the Embassy gave my address 34 (B) Earl’s Court Square and phone. She came straight to my house. The Landlady Mrs Coleman received Pamela which was her name. Young, pretty and guitar shaped body, speaking Queen’s English

though she was hailed from a village in the neighbourhood of London. Mrs Coleman made her wait in the reception hall. When I came home, Mrs Coleman knocked my door and came in:

“Mr Nyunt, how naughty you are! I thought you’re simple quiet young scholarly student. You never told me you’ve got a pretty English girlfriend. There in the reception she is waiting for you.”

She pulled my hand and led me to her.

“Oh! No. Are you Mr Khin Maung Nyunt?”

“Yes, I am. Do I know you?”

No. But I have dating with naval officer Mr Khin Maung Nyunt in London. Myanmar Embassy gave me this address.”

“Oh now I see. I’m another Khin Maung Nyunt, a scholar at the L.S.E. But I’ve seen naval officer Khin Maung Nyunt at Myanmar Embassy reception. But he did not stay in London. He was at his training quarters.”

“Yes. This summer we two made dating in London. I arrived here 2 days ahead. I got his address from Myanmar Embassy. I’ve never been in London before. So don’t know what to do before he comes.”

“Mr Nyunt, be a good boy to keep company with her. Take her around in downtown London till her boyfriend arrives. Would you do that my dear?” says Mrs Coleman to me.

Mrs Coleman appeal, the girl’s beauty and charm and my boyish romance combined to make me utter a positive answer “Yes O.K.”

(To be continued)

Israeli soldiers shoot dead four Palestinian attackers in West Bank



Israeli policemen stand next to the scene of a Palestinian stabbing attack close to the West Bank Jewish settlement of Migdal Oz on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

JERUSALEM — Israeli security forces on Thursday shot dead four Palestinians who launched two separate stabbing attacks in the occupied West Bank, the military said, as a surge in street violence entered its fourth month.

The first attack occurred at Gush Etzion Junction, the scene of many similar recent incidents. Three Palestinians attacked a group of soldiers with knives, the army said in a statement, and the “forces thwarted (the) attack and shot (the) assailants”.

Shortly after, at an Israeli

checkpoint near the city of Hebron, a Palestinian tried to stab a soldier and was shot and killed, the army said.

No soldiers were injured in either incident.

Stabbings, car-rammings and shootings by Palestinians have killed 21 Israelis and a US citizen since the start of October.

Israeli forces or armed civilians have killed at least 137 Palestinians in the same period, 87 of whom authorities described as assailants. Most of the others have been killed in clashes with secu-

rity forces. Commentators say the surge in attacks has been fuelled by the collapse of US-sponsored peace talks in 2014, the growth of Jewish settlements on land Palestinians want for a future state and Islamist calls for the destruction of Israel.

Also stoking the violence has been Muslim opposition to increased Israeli access to Jerusalem’s al Aqsa mosque complex, which is the third holiest site in Islam and is also revered in Judaism as the location of two biblical temples.—Reuters

In besieged Syrian town, peace talks seen as pointless

BEIRUT — Warnings of widespread starvation are growing as pro-government forces besiege an opposition-held town in Syria and winter bites, darkening the already bleak outlook for peace talks the United Nations hopes to convene this month.

The blockade of Madaya, near the border with Lebanon, has become a focal issue for Syrian opposition leaders who told a UN envoy this week they will not take part in talks with the government until it and other sieges are lifted.

The United Nations says it has received credible reports of people dying from starvation in the town. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the war, puts the toll at 10, while opposition activists say it is in the dozens.

Reuters could not independently confirm the reports.

“We were living on tree leaves, on plants, but now we are struggling in a snow storm and there are no more plants or leaves,” said Majed Ali, 28, an opposition activist who spoke to Reuters by phone from Madaya.

“I was 114 kilos before the siege. Now I am 80.”

The United Nations said the Syrian government on Thursday approved access and it was preparing an aid delivery “in the coming days”, along with a delivery to two villages in north-west Syria besieged by rebels.

Residents in Madaya, where the United Nations says some 40,000 people are at risk, meanwhile make do with water flavoured, where available, with spices, lemon, salt and vinegar, said Abu Hassan Mousa, the head of an opposition council in Madaya.

Where rice or powdered milk are available, the prices can reach some \$300 a kilo, residents said.

With half a metre of snow-fall this week, furniture, doors and wooden fixtures and fittings are being burnt to heat homes, said Ali, the opposition activist.

“Negotiations have no meaning all the time we are besieged, all the time we are hoping for a cup of milk for a child. What are we going to negotiate over? Our dead?” he said.

Blockades have been a common feature of the nearly five-year-old war that has killed an estimated 250,000 people. Government forces have besieged rebel-held areas near Damascus for several years and more recently rebel groups have blockaded loyalist areas including the two villages in Idlib Province.

The blockade of Madaya began six months ago when the Syrian army and its Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, started a campaign to reestablish President Bashar al-Assad’s control over areas along the Syrian-Lebanese border.—Reuters

Iran stops doing business with Saudi Arabia as Nimr execution rankles

DUBAI — Relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia deteriorated even further on Thursday as Tehran severed all commercial ties with Riyadh and accused Saudi jets of attacking its embassy in Yemen’s capital.

A row has been raging for days between Shi’ite Muslim power Iran and the conservative Sunni kingdom since Saudi Arabia executed cleric Nimr al-Nimr, an opponent of the ruling dynasty who demanded greater rights for the Shi’ite minority.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Sudan, Djibouti and Somalia have all broken off diplomatic ties with Iran this week, the United Arab Emirates downgraded its relations and Kuwait, Qatar and Comoros recalled their envoys after the Saudi embassy in Tehran was stormed by protesters following the execution of Nimr and 46 other men.

In a cabinet meeting chaired by Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani on Thursday, Tehran banned

all imports from Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia had announced on Monday that Riyadh was halting trade links and air traffic with the Islamic Republic.

Iran also said on Thursday that Saudi warplanes had attacked its embassy in Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, an accusation that Riyadh said it would investigate.

“Saudi Arabia is responsible for the damage to the embassy building and the injury to some of its staff,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari was quoted as saying by the state news agency, IRNA.

Residents and witnesses in Sanaa said there was no damage to the embassy building in Hadda district.

They said an air strike had hit a public square about 700 metres (yards) away from the embassy and that some stones and shrapnel had landed in the embassy’s yard.

Iran will deliver its official report on the attack to the United

Nations on Thursday, Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian was quoted by ISNA news agency as saying.

A coalition led by Saudi Arabia has been fighting the Shi’ite, Iran-allied Houthi movement in Yemen since March 2015.

Saudi coalition spokesman Brigadier General Ahmed Asseri said their jets carried out heavy strikes in Sanaa on Wednesday night, targetting missile launchers used by the Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia.

He said the coalition would investigate Iran’s accusation and that the Houthis have been using civilian facilities including abandoned embassies.

While Riyadh sees regional rival Iran as using the Houthis as a proxy to expand its influence, the Houthis deny this and say they are fighting a revolution against a corrupt government and Gulf Arab powers beholden to the West.

The deputy head of Iran’s



An Iranian riot police stands guard as protesters hold street signs with the name of Shi’ite cleric Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr during a demonstration against the execution of Nimr in Saudi Arabia, outside the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tehran on 3 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

powerful Revolutionary Guards told Saudi Arabia on Thursday it would “collapse” in coming years if it kept pursuing what he called its sectarian policies in the region.

“The policies of the Saudi regime will have a domino effect and they will be buried under the avalanche they have created,” Brigadier General Hossein Salami, was quoted as saying by the Fars news agency on the sidelines of a ceremony held in Tehran to

commemorate Nimr.

Salami compared Saudi policies with those of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi president overthrown by US forces in 2003.

“The path the Saudi regime is taking is like the one Saddam took in the 1980s and 90s. He started a war with Iran, executed prominent clerics and top officials, suppressed dissidents and ended up having that miserable fate.”—Reuters

Injuries soar after Michigan stops requiring motorcycle helmets

NEW YORK — In the three years after Michigan repealed a mandatory motorcycle helmet law, deaths and head injuries among bikers rose sharply, according to a recent study.

Deaths at the scene of the crash more than quadrupled, while deaths in the hospital tripled for motorcyclists. Head injuries have increased overall, and more of them are severe, the researchers report in the *American Journal of Surgery*.

Senior author Dr Carlos Rodriguez decided to do the study after noticing an abrupt change in the trauma unit at Spectrum Health Hospital in Grand Rapids, where he works. The first week after the law was repealed in April 2012, he told Reuters Health, “I just could not help but notice the number of patients that had been in motorcycle crashes with no helmet on,



Helmets rest on the seat of a Bousouzoku style motorbike.

PHOTO: REUTERS

which was enormously different in number and volume than we had experienced the weekend before.”

The study team looked at records for patients admitted to Spectrum Health Hospital and at state

transportation department records of fatalities at crash scenes for the seven-month motorcycle season (April to November) in 2011, before the law was repealed, and for the same period in 2012, 2013 and

2014. Among the accident victims brought to the hospital, the proportion of riders who had not been wearing a helmet rose four-fold, from 7 per cent to 28 per cent, the researchers found.

About 10 per cent of non-helmeted riders brought to the hospital died there, compared to 3 per cent of those who had been wearing helmets.

Among riders who died at the crash scene, the proportion not wearing helmets rose from 14 per cent before the law was repealed to 68 per cent afterward.

“These are the kinds of things that we wanted to look at to hopefully make legislators see that this was a mistake,” Rodriguez said in an email.

Riders without helmets also drank more alcohol after the law was repealed, based on blood tests at hospital admission. The severity

of injuries increased for non-helmeted riders, as well as the number of life-threatening head injuries.

Non-helmeted patients tended to stay longer in the Intensive Care Unit and to need machine assistance with breathing.

Overall, hospital costs averaged \$27,760 for non-helmeted riders versus \$20,970 for patients who had been wearing helmets.

In the US, 19 states and the District of Columbia require all motorcyclists to wear a helmet, while 28 states require only some to wear them and three states have no helmet laws at all.

Since the repeal of Michigan’s 35-year-old helmet law, riders can go without a helmet if they are over 21, have had their license for at least two years and purchase at least \$20,000 in additional medical insurance coverage, the researchers note.—Reuters

Human imprint has thrust Earth into new geological epoch

OSLO — The indelible imprint left by human beings on Earth has become so clear that it justifies naming a new geological epoch after mankind, experts said on Thursday.

The dawn of the “Anthropocene” would signal the end of the Holocene epoch, considered to have begun 11,700 years ago at the end of the Ice Age. The new term, suggested in 2000, is based on the Greek word “anthropos”, meaning “man”.

“Human activity is leaving a

pervasive and persistent signature on Earth,” said a report in the journal *Science* by an international team led by Colin Waters of the British Geological Survey.

“We are becoming a geological agent in ourselves,” Waters told Reuters.

The start date could be around the mid-20th century, the authors wrote.

They said the atomic age, starting with a bomb test in New Mexico in the United States on 16 July, 1945, and the post-war leap

in mining, industry, farming and use of manmade materials such as concrete or plastics all left geological traces.

Concrete, invented by the Romans, was now so ubiquitous that it would amount to one kg (2.2 lbs) for every square metre (11 sq feet) of the planet’s surface if spread out evenly, they said.

Any formal recommendation to adopt the Anthropocene as a new geological epoch would require years of extra research, partly to pin down a start

date, Waters said.

Some experts reckon the Anthropocene began with Europe’s Industrial Revolution in the 18th century. Others would give it a more widespread origin, dating it from the spread of agriculture several thousand years ago.

“Any definition will inform the stories that we tell about human development,” said Professor Simon Lewis of University College London, who was not involved in the study. He favors 1610 as a start date, marking the

spread of colonialism, disease and trade to the Americas from Europe.

Erle Ellis of the University of Maryland, a co-author of the study released on Thursday, said pinning down the Anthropocene would transform understanding of humanity’s role on the planet.

He said it was a “challenge no smaller than a second Copernican revolution”. In the 16th century, Nicolaus Copernicus helped show the Earth rotates around the sun.—Reuters

New US diet rules would take 20% bite out of American sugar use

NEW YORK — If the US government has its way, Americans would cut their consumption of sugar and corn syrup by more than 2 million tonnes a year, the latest blow for a sweetener industry facing an onslaught of criticism over negative health effects.

The US government on Thursday issued new dietary guidelines that suggested for the first time that consumers limit their consumption of added sweeteners at a specific level, less than 10 per cent of a recommended daily intake of about 2,000 calories. Currently the average American consumes about 270 calories a day in the form of sweeteners, equal to about 13 per cent, the guidelines said.

With one teaspoon of sugar equal to approximately 15 calories, a reduction equivalent to more than 60 calories worth of added sugars — over 20 per cent fewer than the average American consumes today — would amount to some 2.2 million tonnes of primarily sugar and high-fructose corn syrup.

That figure may be conservative. The USDA estimates total national sweetener demand by food and beverage manufacturers at around 19 million

tonnes. On that basis, a reduction of a roughly 20-per cent drop in sugar calories consumed could amount to 3.7 million tonnes — small relative to worldwide use of over 186 million tonnes, but still more than enough to meet the entire needs of Egypt.

To be sure, many people including health advocates point out that few Americans are expected to follow the new guidelines.

But even the suggestion of such a significant decline is bad news for an industry engulfed in a “war on sugar” as health advocates blame sweeteners for a national obesity crisis.

And a deeper decline in demand from the one of the world’s top five users could weigh on global sugar prices that have fallen by half in five years.

That would be a major blow not just for soda companies and candy makers, but for sugar and corn companies like privately held ASR Group — the maker of Domino Sugar — Archer Daniels Midland Co (ADM.N) and Cargill Inc [CARG.UL] battling in an already competitive sweetener market.

Americans have been buy-

ing markedly less sugar amid the rising health worries.

While total demand for sweeteners is rising, per capita consumption is on the decline.

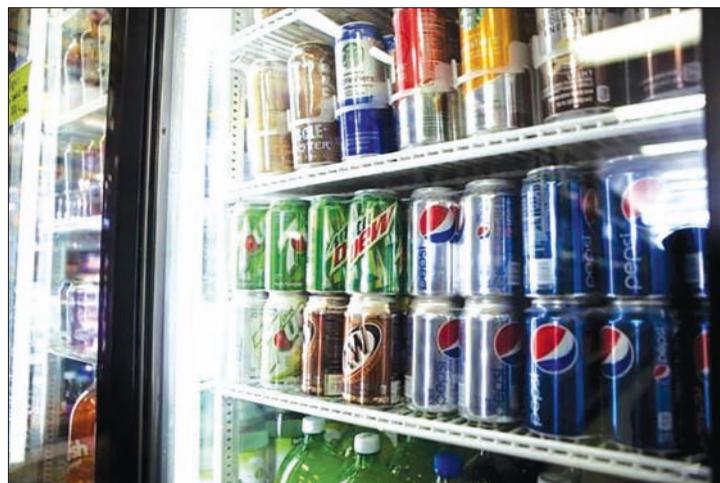
The Sugar Association, which represents sugar companies including ASR and Louis Dreyfus Commodities’ [AKIRAU.UL] Imperial Sugar Co, criticised the guidelines, saying they were based on “weak science.” A spokesman for the Corn Refiners Association said the group intended to review the document with scientific authorities.

Cargill “continues to regu-

larly work with many of its food customers to develop ways to reduce the amount of added sugars in food and beverages,” a company spokesperson said. Cargill and others have moved into no- and low-calorie sweetener alternatives like stevia.

The American Beverage Association said reducing beverage calories is a “common goal,” noting its members have been cutting product sizes.

Even so, the move is expected to lay groundwork for the US government’s initiative to add more information on sugars on food labels.—Reuters



Cans of soda are displayed in a case at Kwik Stops Liquor in San Diego, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

Kaketsuken’s operations suspended over irregular blood products

TOKYO — Blood products and vaccine manufacturer Kaketsuken yesterday was ordered by the state to suspend business for 110 days, the longest penalty ever handed down under Japan’s pharmaceutical law, as the company was found to have been adding unauthorised ingredients to its products and falsifying records.

While Kaketsuken, formally known as the Chemo-Sero-Therapeutic Research Institute, will be forced to halt business from 18 January to 6 May, the health ministry has decided that in order to avoid impacts on patients it will exclude from the order some blood products and vaccines that do not have substitutes.

In December, a third party investigation panel released a report concluding the Kumamoto-based institute began straying from authorised processes for producing its blood products from 1974, or possibly earlier, and started using additives that prevents blood from clotting.—Kyodo News

Venezuela government steps up fight with opposition-led congress

CARACAS — Venezuela's government upped the ante against the new opposition-led Congress on Thursday with a protest against the removal of images of venerated late socialist leader Hugo Chavez and a legal appeal against the swearing-in of three legislators.

Irked by this week's unceremonious removal of the giant Chavez photos from Congress, his successor President Nicolas Maduro had them displayed in a Caracas plaza under military guard and officials vowed to plaster the country with more.

"I've given the order that in the coming hours all the streets of Caracas, all the poles, all the fences, have the image of our liberator Simon Bolivar and the image of our Father Chavez," said Socialist Party heavyweight Jorge Rodriguez, with hundreds of government supporters at a Caracas square.



Supporters of Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro hold up photographs of Venezuela's late President Hugo Chavez as they gather outside Supreme Court building in Caracas on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

The furore symbolizes the ballooning confrontation between Venezuela's opposition, in control of the National Assembly for the first time in nearly 17 years, and Maduro's government. Officials were infuri-

ated by a video of Henry Ramos, the rambunctious new 72-year-old president of the Assembly, telling workers earlier this week to rid the building of Chavez imagery, and adding: "This isn't a cemetery."

Maduro has called for nationwide protests. "He doesn't respect the noble sentiment of millions of Venezuelans, the noble memory of a man who died," Maduro said on Wednesday.—Reuters

EU to ease restrictions on food imports from Fukushima

TOKYO — The European Union will start easing restrictions Saturday on Japanese food imports imposed after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster, including on vegetables and beef produced in the prefecture, according to the Japanese agriculture ministry.

Tsuyoshi Takagi, Cabinet minister for rebuilding areas devastated by the March 2011 quake and tsunami, on Friday welcomed the bloc's decision. At present, all food items from Fukushima except alcoholic beverages need to be shipped with radiation inspection certificates.

The requirement will be removed for vegetables, fruits excluding persimmons, livestock products, tea and soba noodles, as the radiation levels of these items never exceeded permissible levels in 2013 and 2014, according to the farm ministry.

Other food items from the prefecture such as rice, mushrooms, soybeans and

some fishery products — excluding scallops, seaweed and live fish — will remain subject to the requirement.

Allowable limits are set at 100 becquerels per kilogramme for vegetables and fruit, at 50 Bq/kg for milk beverages and infant food, and at 10 Bq/kg for drinking water, in accordance to Japanese standards.

The EU move follows the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries' announcement in November that the bloc would ease the restrictions after gaining approval from the European Commission.

The decision also comes as the European Union and Japan are in the midst of negotiations for a free trade agreement. In the talks, Tokyo is seeking the elimination of duties on Japanese vehicles, while Brussels is looking to expand exports through the reduction of tariffs on pork, cheese, wine and other agricultural products.—Kyodo News

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PACAO VOY NO (001N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACAO VOY NO (001N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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MV MERCY WISDOM VOY NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERCY WISDOM VOY NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Gun owners grill Obama at town hall, NRA sits it out

FAIRFAX — President Barack Obama fielded tough questions from gun owners at a televised town hall on Thursday, defending his move to tighten gun rules as he sought to elevate the issue of gun control before the November 2016 election to replace him.

A series of mass shootings has punctuated Obama's time in office, and after he failed to convince Congress to toughen up gun laws, the president said he wanted to have a national debate about guns in his final year in office.

Obama, who said he had never owned a gun, has blamed Congress for being beholden to the National Rifle Association, a powerful lobby group that fights any action that might infringe on Americans' constitutional right to bear arms.

Guns are a potent issue in US politics. The NRA is feared and respected in Washington for its ability to mobilize gun owners. Congress has not approved major gun-control legislation since the 1990s.

The NRA sat out the town hall, aired live on CNN from a university just miles (km) from the group's Virginia headquar-



US President Barack Obama participates in a live town hall event on reducing gun violence hosted by CNN's Anderson Cooper (R) at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia on January. PHOTO: REUTERS

ters, calling it a "public relations spectacle."

But several gun owners peppered Obama with arguments against his gun rule proposals.

Taya Kyle, widow of US Navy SEAL Chris Kyle who was killed at a gun range and portrayed in the film "American Sniper," said laws would not stop people with criminal intent.

"The problem is that they want to murder," Kyle said. Kimberly Corban, a survivor of a sexual assault who said she carried a gun

to protect herself and her two young children, told Obama that she felt his changes infringed on her rights.

"I have been unspeakably victimized once already, and I refuse to let that happen again to myself or my kids," Corban said.

Obama told Corban his proposals would not make it harder for law-abiding people like her to buy a gun, but could stop some criminals. "You certainly would like to make it a little harder for that assailant

to have also had a gun," he said.

Obama announced his latest strategy earlier this week to try to boost background checks for gun buyers, wiping away tears as he remembered the 20 children and six adults gunned down at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012.

"It continues to haunt me, it was one of the worst days of my presidency," Obama said on CNN.—Reuters

EU should erect new Greek frontier to stop migrants: Hungarian PM says

BUDAPEST — The European Union should establish a new frontier on the northern border of Greece, because an agreement with Turkey will not be enough to stop hundreds of thousands of migrants from coming to Europe, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said yesterday.

Orban has gained support in Hungary with his tough stance on migration. His government has put up fences on the country's southern border to keep out migrants and asylum seekers fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and Asia.

The barriers initially drew criticism from his European Union partners, but several countries, such as Slovenia and Austria, have since raised barriers of their own. Others have imposed checks within the EU's border-free Schengen



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban addresses news conference with British Prime Minister David Cameron (not pictured) in Budapest, Hungary on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

zone to cope with the flow.

Orban said Germany, which welcomed a million migrants last year, has recently shifted towards "common sense" to slow arrivals. But Orban said nothing short of stopping more people entering would resolve the issue.

"I think the next line of defence that we need to build up lies on the northern border of Greece," Orban told public radio in an interview.

He said Bulgaria, one of Greece's northern neighbors, should be adopted into the EU's border-free

Schengen zone, while Macedonia should be given financial support and other assistance so it could beef up its defences.

"I do not think that the deal with Turkey will be sufficient in itself," Orban said. Hungary erected fences on its southern borders to halt the flow of migrants.

In October, the EU offered Turkey a possible 3 billion euros (\$3.26 billion) in aid, the prospect of easier travel visas and renewed talks on Turkey's joining the bloc, in return for its help stemming the flow of migrants to Europe.

"It is nice that (Turkey) has promised that there would be a line of defence there, but we need to build one of our own from our own resources on the northern border of Greece and stop, not slow down, but stop migration," Orban said.—Reuters

Djuric: International community sees its interest in ZSO

ZVECAN — The international community backed Belgrade's plan for the Community of Serb Municipalities (ZSO) as it recognised its interest in that proposal, Director of the Office for Kosovo-Metohija Marko Djuric said.

In an interview to the Zvecan-based broadcaster Most, he described the fact that the international community had accepted and supported the plan for the Community as "our diplomatic success".

He said that the policy of the Serbian government was based on building greater stability, mutual understanding and normalising relations. Serbia has managed to garner support for the Community and to show to the most influential people in the world that the Community is not directed against anyone, its sole goal being to help Serbs survive in Kosovo, Djuric said.—Tanjung

Brazil dam burst tailings spill below early estimates



An aerial view of the mouth of Rio Doce (Doce River), which was flooded with mud after a dam owned by Vale SA and BHP Billiton Ltd burst, at an area where the river joins the sea on the coast of Espirito Santo in Regencia Village, Brazil, in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

MELBOURNE — Much less sludge was spilled than first estimated from a dam burst at a Brazilian iron ore mine last November which killed 17 people, co-owner BHP Billiton (BHP.AX) (BLT.L) said yesterday.

Satellite assessments showed about 32 million cubic metres of sludge was released into the Rio Doce river, BHP said, citing information from mine operator Samarco, its joint venture with Brazil's Vale (VALE5.SA).

"The amount of tailings released is therefore significantly less than some initial estimates which were in excess of 50 mil-

lion cubic metres," BHP said. The early estimates suggested the mine tailings could have filled more than 20,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The dam burst left hundreds homeless in Brazil's worst environmental disaster for which the government is seeking 20 billion reais (\$5 billion) in damages and seeking to hold BHP and Vale responsible for any amount that Samarco cannot pay.

The latest Samarco report showed about 85 per cent of the sludge stayed within 85 km (53 miles) of the burst dam, while the recovery effort has found fish

alive in the Rio Doce in a 670 km (416 mile) stretch of the river out to where it flows into the Atlantic Ocean.

"They were able to detect fish living in areas affected by the turbidity plume as well as in unaffected tributaries of the Rio Doce," BHP said.

Companies in charge of water supply have also been able to treat water from the river up to drinking standards and for use in industry and on farms, while Samarco and other companies are working to limit harm from sediment in the river at hydroelectric plants.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV THAI BINH 039 VOY NO (05)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH 039 VOY NO (05) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-1 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (TGN-623)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (TGN-623) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.2016 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 BC SANFRANCISCO VOY NO (022W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BC SANFRANCISCO VOY NO (022W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Golden Globes race wide open, host Ricky Gervais prepares barbs



Director of the movie Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu (L) poses with cast members Tom Hardy (C) and Leonardo DiCaprio at the premiere of "The Revenant" in Hollywood, California on 16 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — With free-flowing champagne and blistering jokes that have yet to be told but have already been apologised for, Sunday's Golden Globes promise a rowdy night featuring Hollywood's top names and a wide-open awards race to keep viewers in suspense.

The Globes, chosen by Hollywood Foreign Press Association voters, often offer a prescient preview of the more prestigious Academy Awards.

Britain's acerbic Ricky Gervais will take over hosting duties from comedy duo Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. He has already tweeted a cheeky apology for those who will be offended by his jokes.

With films such as "Spotlight," "The Revenant," "The Big

Short" and "Carol" vying for Golden Globe wins, the Oscars field may start to shape up.

"This year's Globes are a free-for-all," said Tom O'Neil, founder of awards tracker GoldDerby.com. "The Golden Globes is an Oscars audition."

The nominees cover a varied field of genres and topics. "Spotlight," about The Boston Globe's probe into sex abuse by Catholic priests, is the likely frontrunner for best drama while Wall Street misdeeds movie "The Big Short" could win best comedy, O'Neil said. Globes voters are not members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences who determine the Oscars. But the Globes has honored many films and actors who have gone on to

win Oscars. Oscar nominations will be announced on 14 January. This year, pundits favour Leonardo DiCaprio in the best actor race for his role as a fur-trapper bent on revenge in Alejandro Inarritu's Pioneer-era drama "The Revenant." DiCaprio is up on Sunday against Eddie Redmayne ("The Danish Girl"), Will Smith ("Concussion"), Michael Fassbender ("Steve Jobs") and Bryan Cranston ("Trumbo").

"Carol" star Cate Blanchett will contend against co-star Rooney Mara for best drama actress, as well as Saoirse Ronan ("Brooklyn"), Brie Larson ("Room"), and Alicia Vikander ("The Danish Girl"). Gervais will host the dinner ceremony for a fourth time. In the past, he has skewered everyone from Charlie Sheen and Robert Downey Jr. to Kim Kardashian. Potential targets on Sunday include movie star Mel Gibson, a scheduled award presenter, and the sex scandal surrounding comedian Bill Cosby.

"Because I can see the future, I'd like to apologise now for the things I said at next week's Golden Globes," Gervais tweeted last week, adding: "I was drunk."

Golden Globes are also awarded to TV shows and actors, with contenders including "Game of Thrones," "Veep," "Transparent," and "Empire."—Reuters

Angelina Jolie's kids to join her in 'Kung Fu Panda 3'



PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Actress Angelina Jolie has asked her kids Pax, Zahara, Shiloh, and Knox to join her on-screen as members of the ancient Chinese cartoon clan in "Kung Fu Panda 3".

The 40-year-old Oscar-winning actress, who will reprise her role as the Tigress, will have her children lending their voices to some of the other pandas featured in the film, reported E! online.

"They have some lines in

the film," Jolie's representative said.

Though this will be the first big screen performance for Knox, 7, with his mom, the rest of the kids have worked on the set with Jolie and dad Brad Pitt.

Pax and Zahara as well as Vivienne made cameos in the Disney "Maleficent".

Shiloh, 9, and Maddox both worked on their father's "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button" and "World War Z".—PTI

'One Day at a Time' actor Pat Harrington Jr. dies after Alzheimer's struggle

LOS ANGELES — Pat Harrington Jr., the veteran comic actor who won an Emmy Award for playing nosy but endearing apartment building super Dwayne Schneider in the long-running TV situation comedy "One Day at a Time," died at the age of 86, his daughter said on Thursday.

Tresa Harrington said in a statement on her Facebook page that Harrington died on Wednesday evening. She did not give a cause of death but had written in early December that he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease and was in declining health after a fall and a brain hemorrhage.

"My heart is broken to pieces and I will cry and cry until I just won't," Tresa Harrington wrote.

The actor's longtime manager, Phil Brock, described Harrington as "a gracious human being who will always be remembered for his portrayals of the human condition."

"Pat had the ability to bring laughter and kindness to any role. The twinkle in his Irish eyes let you know that you were in on the joke," Brock said in a statement.

In 1975, Harrington was cast as the faux suave Schneider in the CBS situation comedy that followed the lives of newly divorced



(L-R) Actors Richard Masur, Bonnie Franklin, Pat Harrington Jr., Valerie Bertinelli and Mackenzie Phillips accept an award for the show One Day at a Time during the 10th Anniversary TV Land Awards in New York in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

mother Ann Romano, played by perky Bonnie Franklin, and her teenage daughters, portrayed by Valerie Bertinelli and Mackenzie Phillips. The series ran for nine years until 1984, the year Harrington won an Emmy — the top US TV honor — for best supporting actor. He also won a Golden Globe Award for best supporting actor in 1981.

"He turned out to be the comic strength of the show," famed TV producer Norman Lear, who

developed "One Day at a Time," told the Archive of American Television.

The New York-born son of a vaudevillian, Harrington got his first break in show business in the 1950s when comedian Jonathan Winters discovered him performing a goofy comic character named Guido Panzini for some friends. Harrington brought the character to popular TV shows hosted by Steve Allen and Jack Paar.—Reuters

HBO near to close deal for 'Game of Thrones' seasons 7, 8

LOS ANGELES — Premium cable and satellite television network HBO is in final talks to sign the deal for another two-season renewal of their popular fantasy drama "Game of Thrones".

HBO programming president Michael Lombardo made the revelations to a set of reporters during Television Critics Association's winter press tour, said The Hollywood Reporter.

The renewal would be for

seasons seven and eight.

It will be the second time that the fantasy drama, based on the books by George RR Martin, has scored the dual order.

In 2014, the network renewed the Emmy-winning drama for seasons five and six.

The news came after HBO announced an 24 April premiere date for sixth season of the series.

A formal announcement is expected to come soon.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

West London theatre raises the curtain on the Hermit Kingdom



Visitors walk past a maze which had been set up in Trafalgar Square to promote London's West End shopping and entertainment district in 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — The Finborough Theatre, a tiny off-West End stage tucked away above a pub, has built its reputation on innovative new writing and on occasions has a knack for seizing highly topical issues for its plays.

Still, even the award-winning theatre could not have planned to open In-Sook Chappell's "P'yongyang" on the day its subject — isolated and idiosyncratic North Korea — would grab global headlines by announcing its first hydrogen bomb test.

Chappell, born in South Korea and brought up in Britain, doesn't directly touch on North

Korea's nuclear tests. But she takes us behind its regimented displays of military might into the suffering of citizens who have lived through decades of international sanctions, isolation and malnutrition.

She was inspired to write the play after visiting the eerie Demilitarised Zone between North and South Korea and hearing accounts from North Korean refugees of the starvation and brutal treatment they had endured.

Founded in 1980, the Finborough Theatre in West London has nurtured talents including actress Rachel Weisz and Laura Wade, who

shot to fame as the writer of *Posh*, which shone a spotlight on Prime Minister David Cameron's decadent, privileged student past.

To try to make her difficult subject accessible to a Western audience, Chappell said she decided to root it in "a very simple love story" between a hero and heroine wrenched apart by the North Korean regime.

The Finborough Theatre typically rejects scripts based on conventional love stories as too hackneyed, but it made an exception for a play that uses a romance as a way into a deeper political drama.

"I want people to be entertained. I want people to hear stories they have not been told before. I want them to be moved, but I guess I want them to question how this is allowed to continue," Chappell said.

It's a question behind the latest headlines as the world wonders whether the huge explosive Pyongyang fired off really was an H-bomb — the United States government and several experts doubt that — and why it chose to hold an atomic test now.—Reuters

A room without a view: second life for Swiss army bunkers

AIROLO — For upwards of almost \$200 a night, guests at a Swiss hotel might expect to catch a glimpse of the towering Alps or overlook one of the country's famous lakes.

But visitors to Hotel La Claustra get a room without a view.

The 17-room hotel is buried in the Gotthard mountain range and, with cavernous walls and minimalist interior, offers the chance to spend a few nights in an ex-army bunker.

As images taken for a Reuters photo story show, there is a bleak brick entrance, decorated only with a Swiss flag. Inside, a restaurant, windowless rooms and lounge are all hacked from the bare, surrounding rock.

La Claustra is part of a wider trend in Switzerland for recycling the plentiful decommissioned bunkers for other uses.

From data centres to museums, from mushroom farms to cheese factories, businesses have been refashioning the former strongholds.

"Along with our processors, our key selling points are the Swiss brand and the physical safety of this bunker," said Frank Harzheim, managing director at Delta-

lis data centre, located in a bunker which once housed up to 1,500 soldiers.

During World War II, Switzerland had a network of around 8,000 bunkers and military shelters. Faced with high maintenance costs and a cooling threat of invasion, the Swiss army since the 1990s has handed a property unit the task of trimming that number down.

The vast majority have now been bought, sealed off, or set aside for historical preservation and are dotted around Switzerland, often still disguised as barns, houses and medieval castles.

The defensive tendencies that spawned Switzerland's bunker building are legendary.

According to one possibly apocryphal story repeated with pride for more than a century, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II on a visit in 1912 was said to have asked a Swiss infantryman what 100,000 Swiss soldiers would do if 200,000 German invaders stormed over the border.

"Each would have to shoot twice, your majesty," came the supposed reply.

Museums like Sasso San Gottardo, built in a former fortress, look to tell the story of Swiss efforts to stave off invasion in the 20th century. After Germa-

ny invaded France in 1940, Switzerland was surrounded by Axis powers and recognised that it would be out-gunned in any assault.

To hold off an invasion, Switzerland sought to make itself prohibitively difficult to conquer. Under the plan dubbed the National Redoubt, much of the country's manpower and firepower would retreat to the mountains if a foreign aggressor attacked.

Through its chain of fortresses and bunkers, Switzerland would keep control of the mountains along with key transit routes.

"This was a pragmatic solution but also a very problematic one," said Rudolf Jaun, a former Swiss history professor at Zurich University. "The Redoubt strategy was what we call in German a Notloesung (emergency solution)."

During the Cold War, concerns turned to nuclear attack. The Swiss ramped up military spending and many homes were required to be equipped with bomb shelters.

As with the bunkers, the Swiss have found new uses for these bomb shelters too — nowadays many are simply used to store family knick-knacks and wine collections.—Reuters



(9-1-2016 07:00 am~ 10-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon—The Sacred Hair Relics Hailing Pogodas
07:53	Am	Creations of a Designer
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Clay Toy Pots Festival
08:43	Am	Gardener: Rose Plantation
08:50	Am	Kyaikhteyoe: Bamboo Guns
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Today Myanmar & ICT "Education & ICT"
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Discovering Tribes "MUUN" (Episode - II)
10:50	Am	Amazing "Sayargyi Nyein Chan Aung"

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	Yathe Taung Township In A Nut-Shell
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar: Automobile- New Tech Challenges
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	"Myanmar Music Icon" Ko Nay Win, Creator of Myanmar Own Tune Songs (Episode-1)
08:55	Pm	Now in Yangon

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

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

Owner of world's largest blue sapphire ponders its fate

COLOMBO — The owner of the world's largest blue sapphire, which he says is worth more than \$100 million, said on Thursday he is deciding whether to auction the Sri Lankan gem or display it as an international attraction.

The polished oval sapphire is as large as a person's palm and weighs 1404.49 carats (281 grams), according to a local industry body that certified it, the Gemmological Institute of Colombo.

"I would love to keep it and have it exhibited and share it with the public," said the owner, who requested anonymity for security reasons, "but I have to balance it out with my security concerns."

"My estimate (of its value) is about \$100 million," he told Reuters during an interview in Sri Lanka, but declined to say

exactly how much the stone cost when he bought it in September.

In 2014, a 392.5 carat Sri Lankan sapphire known as the "Blue Belle of Asia" sold for 16.96 million Swiss francs (\$16.94 million) at a Swiss auction.

The National Gem and Jewelry Authority of Sri Lanka confirmed the stone was the world's largest blue sapphire. It was mined in Sri Lanka's central district of Ratnapura and is classified as a natural corundum un-heated blue star sapphire.

Local legend says Sri Lanka's world-famous blue sapphires were formed by the tears of Adam after God expelled him from paradise.

The three largest blue sapphires have all been found Sri Lanka. The stone that was previously the largest star blue sapphire weighs 1,395 carats, the



The owner of the world's largest blue sapphire holds it for photographs during an interview with Reuters in Colombo on 6 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

National Gem and Jewelry Authority said.

Britain's Princess Diana wore an engagement ring made from a blue oval sapphire from Sri Lanka encircled with diamonds, while Prince William's bride Kate Middleton wore a similar sapphire and diamond cluster, also using a

Sri Lankan stone.

Sri Lanka exported \$381.2 million worth of gems and jewellery in 2014, government figures show. It is famous for precious stones, especially sapphires, which come in shades of blue, pink, yellow, violet, white, green and orange.—Reuters

Sunderland's Allardyce keen to hold on to striker Defoe

LONDON — Sunderland striker Jermain Defoe will not be sold during the January transfer window unless the club receive an exceptional offer, manager Sam Allardyce has said, while announcing his intention to keep deploying the 33-year-old as a lone striker.

Allardyce appeared unconvinced by Defoe when he took over from Dick Advocaat in October, saying the striker needed to improve his all-round contribution to the team, but seems to have been won over by a series of encouraging displays.

"We haven't had any bids for Jermain and I suppose if there had been a bid for him, I would have turned it down," Allardyce told reporters at his pre-match news conference ahead of Saturday's FA Cup third round tie against Arsenal.

"Unless it had been that big a bid that the owner told me we couldn't afford to turn it down. Every club has that

scenario but we haven't had a bid for Jermain and we don't want to sell him."

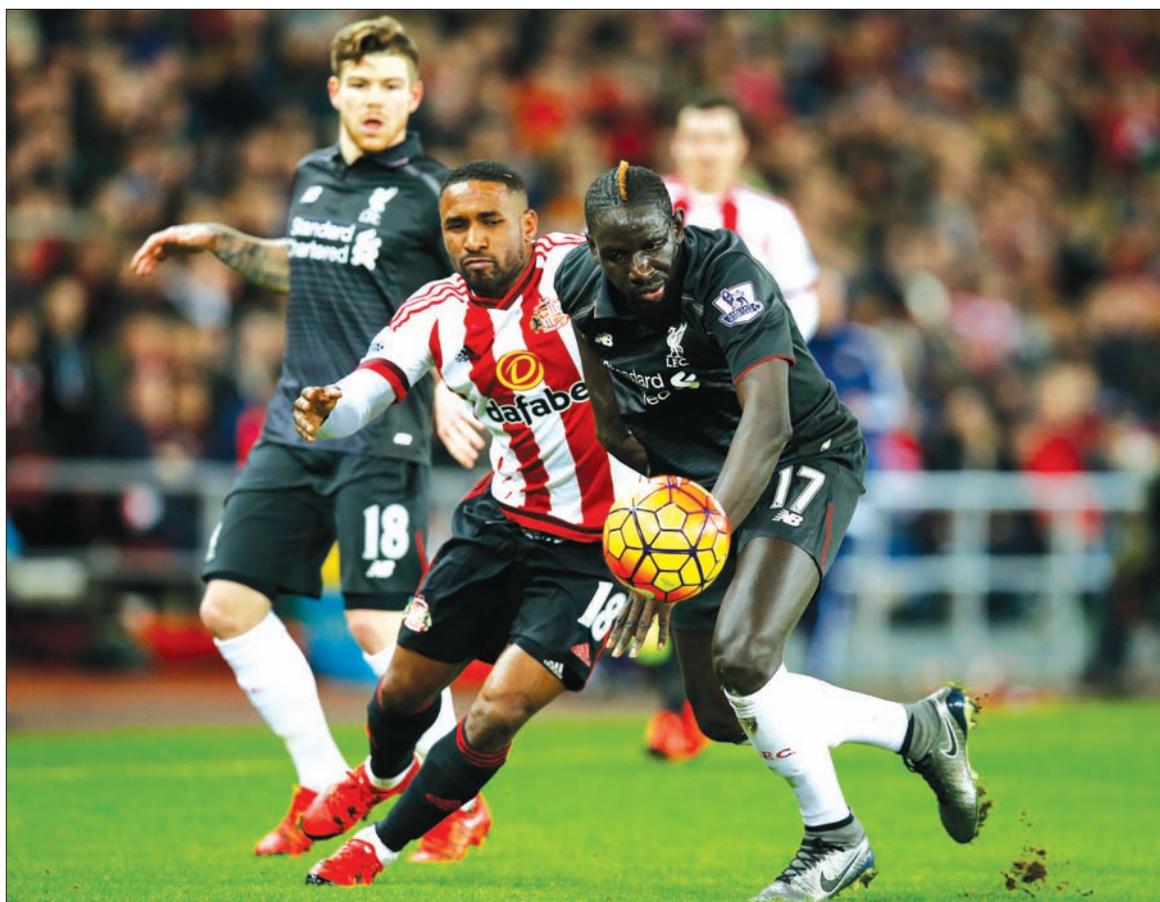
Defoe has found the back of the net nine times this season in all competitions for Sunderland, and grabbed a brace against Aston Villa on Saturday to hand his relegation-threatened side a much needed three points.

The Black Cats are 19th in the table on 15 points from 20 games.

Speaking on Thursday, Allardyce said Defoe's performance had convinced him the forward could lead the line for Sunderland on his own.

"There's always been a belief that maybe he can't play up front on his own but he's played on his own a couple of times for me now and I'm more than willing to continue down that line," Allardyce said.

"If he can continue being as good, and as clinical as he was last weekend, then long may it last." —Reuters



Liverpool's Mamadou Sakho in action with Sunderland's Jermain Defoe during Barclays Premier League at Stadium of Light on 30 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Mixed martial arts championship to come to Yangon in March

Ko Moe

KACHIN Fighter Aung La N Seng will take part in the ONE: Union of Warriors Championship which will be held on 18 March at the Thuwunna Indoor Stadium in Yangon.

Organised by the Singapore-based One Championship and AGD Bank, it will be the second time a Mixed Martial Arts championship has been held in Myanmar. The first-ever event was held last year in Yangon.

ONE Championship is the largest of its kind in Asia.

"I am very excited to compete in our homeland for the first

time," said Aung La N Seng who is currently in preparation training.

Aung La N Seng was born in Myitkyina of Kachin State. He is famous among mixed martial arts fighters. He has been dubbed as the "Myanmar boa constrictor" or the "Burmese Python" for his apparent dexterity and muscular firmness. He learned Jujitsu among other techniques in the US before entering the MMA in 2005. "Aung La N Saing's opponent will soon be announced," said CEO of One Championship Mr Victor Cui.

Other international and local fighters will also take part in the competition.



Fighter Aung La N Seng and other fighters pose for the Mixed Martial Arts championship. PHOTO: KO MOE

Gabon's Aubameyang wins African Footballer of the Year

ABUJA — Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang was named African Footballer of the Year on Thursday, narrowly edging out Yaya Toure at the Confederation of African Football award ceremony.

The prolific Borussia Dortmund forward, who received 143 votes to four-time winner Toure's 136, is the first player from the central African country to win the award.

His accolade comes despite a year without trophy success. He was captain of the Gabon team eliminated in the first round of the African Nations Cup finals in Equatorial Guinea at the start of 2015 and his club finished seventh in the Bundesliga last season.

But he did score 29 Bundesliga goals in 2015, including 18 this season plus a further seven in the Europa League. He is the first Bundesliga-based player to win the annual award first introduced in 1970.

"His potency in front of goal has seen him become one of the most recognisable strikers in Europe this season," said his citation.

"I thank the people of Gabon, this award is for them. I want to thank my team mates in the national team and also



Gabon's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang receives the Confederation of African Football (CAF) award for African Footballer of the Year from FIFA acting president Issa Hayatou in Abuja, Nigeria on 7 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

at Dortmund. It is their work that helps me to score goals. For the parents of the youth of Africa, please give your kids a chance to realise their dreams," Aubameyang said in his acceptance speech.

The 26-year-old is the second player born in Europe to win the award after Frederic Kanoute, the Parisian-born Mali international.

Aubameyang's father was captain of Gabon and played professionally in France. His mother is Spanish, he was born in France but raised in Italy.

The African Footballer of the Year is decided by a vote of coaches or technical directors of all Africa's national teams.

Toure had won the award for an unprecedented four years in succession from 2011-2015 and was the favourite for a fifth after captaining Ivory Coast to the African Nations Cup title.

Ghana international Dede Ayew, who left Olympique Marseille in France for Swansea City in mid-year, was third with 112 votes. His father Abedi Pele won the award three times from 1991 to 1993.—Reuters