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INSUFFICIENT RICE EXPORTS TO CHINA FALL SHORT OF COMMITMENTS

MYANMAR and China signed an MoU in March 2015 requiring Myanmar to officially export 100,000 tonnes of rice to China that year, but only 3,000 tonnes of rice were ultimately exported, according to Myanmar Rice Federation.

Myanmar began exporting rice to China in June 2015, but exports halted between 5 September and 15 October after Myanmar was hit by severe floods. Rice producers are directed to sell same portions of their yield for crops domestic consumption.

“We’ve only been able to export about 3,000 tonnes of rice [by the end of 2015]. We are currently planning to export an additional 5,000 tonnes,” said U Nay Lin Zin, the general secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation.

The MoU between Myanmar and China does not impose a time limit, he added.

“We’ve only been able to export about 3,000 tonnes of rice [by the end of 2015]. We are currently planning to export an additional 5,000 tonnes.”

U Nay Lin Zin
General Secretary of the Myanmar Rice Federation

Current high prices of locally grown rice have led the Ministry of Commerce, the Myanmar Rice Federation and the Myanmar Rice Mill Entrepreneurs Association to discuss the prospect

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Paddy cultivations work in a field in Bago. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

No ‘*too poh*’ for you

Carlsberg Group to discontinue phrase coined by famous composer

CARLSBERG announced yesterday it will discontinue the use of ‘*too poh*’ in the branding material for Tuborg beer in Myanmar following an announcement from a grandson of the well-known Myanmar composer Myoma Nyein that he will sue the Carlsberg Group for using the Myanmar phrase.

“We are taking immediate steps to implement the necessary modifications and will endeavour to have this completed before Thingyan. We appreciate the public’s patience while this ongoing,” said Carlsberg Group in its statement released yesterday.

The family of the late composer held a press conference in Mandalay this week to make the announcement. Myoma Nyein coined the phrase ‘*too poh*’ to represent Myanmar’s traditional Thingyan Festival. The composer’s grandson U Myo Zaw Oo said his family will settle the issue in court.

The family refused to allow the company to use the phrase ‘*too poh*’ throughout four rounds of negotiations between the two sides before the company distributed the product to the market, he added.

The Denmark-based Carlsberg Group operates in Myanmar through a joint venture with its local partner Myanmar Golden Star. It officially opened its factory in Bago last year where it brews Tuborg beer and its flagship brand Carlsberg beer.—*Kay Khaing*

STARMART nine mile Showroom International quality products are now available under one roof.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses national comprehensive development plan



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

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw put a law on record yesterday and discussed one bill and a national

development plan. The parliament put on record the issues of budget allotments from the

exclusive fund of the Union Budget Law for 2015.

The Bill Committee called

for a discussion of its findings on the Monetary Institutions Bill, which was returned by the

president with remarks.

National Planning and Economic Development Minister Dr Kan Zaw responded to queries raised by four representatives in connection with the National Comprehensive Development Plan 2010-2030, which was re-submitted to parliament by the Union government.

During the discussion, MP U Htan Lein of Mindat constituency stressed the importance of the inflow of foreign investments into small, medium and large enterprises for the generation of revenue.

In response, the Union minister spoke of the need for principles to ensure a smooth economic transformation and to overcome challenges in implementation of the national development plan.

Following the discussion, the parliament put the National Comprehensive Development Plan on record.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw Round-up

THE 13th regular session of the first Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) entered its 26th day yesterday, with a question and answer session, an approval process for two reports and the submission of one report.

Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Tint responded to a question about a government-funded highway in Kayah State posed by MP U Hnin Wai of Kayah State Constituency No. 12. The MP asked whether upgrading and maintenance works are being undertaken with the use of annual funding allocations.

The Union minister said the ministry plans to upgrade roads, build bridges, culverts and rock retaining walls and install guardrails along the Toungoo-Leiktho-Yado-Loikaw-Hopong road during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Moreover, the Hpahsaung-Maesenan-Maese-Nantmann road will be upgraded, and bridges and culverts on the road will also be built, the Un-



U Soe Tint. PHOTO: MNA

ion minister added.

The ministry and the Kayah State government have already coordinated the installation of new toll gates in the state, said the Union minister.

Deputy Minister for Education Dr Zaw Min Aung also replied to a question about the Ministry of Education's plan to reopen the Government Techni-

cal Institute (Insein), which was posed by U Nu of Yangon Region Constituency No 10.

In his reply, the deputy minister said short-term vocational training courses, including technical courses, are set to open in the main building of the institute.

The 120-year-old main building of the Insein GTI received a Blue Plaque from the Yangon Heritage Trust last December, acknowledging its status as a significant historic building.

Next, reports by the Mining, Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Committee and the Bill Committee on respective activities undertaken during the first Amyotha Hluttaw were submitted for approval.

MP U Htay Maung, a member of the Amyotha Hluttaw Education, Health and Women and Children Affairs Committee, presented the committee's report to the hluttaw.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Five missing schoolgirls returned to parents

FIVE schoolgirls aged 15 and 16 were returned to their parents on 17 January, according to police-women in Hlaingthaya Township, Yangon Region. They had previously run away from their homes leaving no explanation, fuelling speculation that they had

been abducted.

The high school students were reported to have left Hpahan, Kayah State, on 16 January and to have arrived in Yangon in the late evening, with the local police saying the girls spent the night at the house of bus conduc-

tor Myo Myint Zaw, with whom they became friends on the way.

Following a tip-off about their arrival in Hlaingthaya, local police found the five schoolgirls in the township and returned them to their respective parents.—*Police Information Centre*

Pre-paid toll card system rolled out on Lashio-Muse highway

SMALL vehicles travelling along the Mandalay-Lashio-Muse highway will be able to pay road tolls using pre-paid cards by July 2016, according to the Oriental Highway Company Ltd, which is implementing the system.

U Tin Ko Ko, the company's project manager, explained that the pre-paid card system was initially rolled out on 1 January of this year, with around 200 large vehicles currently using the system along the highway.

"We've got about 200 large vehicles currently using [the system] and have estimated that it will be made available for small vehicles by the end of July, as we've still got some preparations to take care of. [The pre-paid card system] will make it quick and easy to pay road tolls, mitigating any

additional charges that might otherwise be incurred. [Drivers] will be able to check their remaining balance as they pass through the toll gates," he said.

In order to use the pre-paid cards, one must submit an application with their vehicle's registration and the name of the primary driver. A minimum balance of K50,000 must be initially added to each new card.

The Oriental Highway Company Ltd has announced that the pre-paid cards will not be transferrable between different vehicles.

The Mandalay-Lashio-Muse highway has a total of 14 toll gates. Pre-paid cards can be topped up along the way at the toll gates at Kyauk, Kyaw (Mandalay), Kyaukme, Shaung Lan (Lashio) and 105 Mile (Muse).—*Myitmakha News Agency*

exports to China fall short of ...

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of importing Lone Hti rice from Thailand to be milled domestically before then being exported to China.

"We have to invite their import-export regulatory body, the AQSIQ, to come and inspect our rice should we desire to export it in 2016 under an MoU," said Dr Soe Htun, the chairperson of

the Myanmar Rice Federation's management committee.

Rice exports to foreign countries during the 2014-2015 fiscal year weighed a total of 1.8 million tonnes, while 1.1 million tonnes were exported between April and December in the following fiscal year, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

President discusses disaster reduction with Four Paws Int'l CEO

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein met Mr Helmut Dungler, CEO and President of Four Paws International at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Four Paws International is an Austria-based animal welfare charity foundation.

Their discussions focused on

disaster reduction, rehabilitation, establishment of sanctuaries and the protection of biodiversity and wildlife.

The president was accompanied by Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thane and U Win Tun and other officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

New Myanmar ambassador presents credentials to South Korean president

THURA U Thet Oo Maung, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Korea, presented his Credentials to Her Excellency Madame Park Geun-hye, the President of the Republic of Korea, on 15 January 2016 in Seoul.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Foreign minister meets CEO of Four Paws International



Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin meets Mr Helmut Dungler. MNA

U Wunna Maung Lwin, the Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr Helmut Dungler, CEO and President of Four Paws International at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw at 9:30am yesterday. Four Paws International is a non-profit animal welfare charity foundation based in Aus-

tria. During the meeting, the two discussed rehabilitation works in the flood-affected areas in Myanmar, the establishment of rescue units and mobile clinics for animals and the establishment of an international-grade elephant hospital, rehabilitation centre and sanctuary in Myanmar.—*MNA*

Japan funds construction of four Myanmar schools

THE Japanese government has granted US\$413,634 in cash assistance to four school construction projects in Myanmar.

Mr Tateshi Higuchi, Japan's ambassador to Myanmar, signed the four grant contracts on 18 January. Under the contracts, Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Scheme will pro-

vide funding to the construction of No. 13 Basic Education Middle School in Kalay Township; Tar Ngote Village Basic Education Primary School in Hinthada Township; Han Thar Wadi Taik Thit Monastic Post-Primary School in Thanbyuzayat Township; and Sin Inn Village Basic Education Middle School in Bilin Township.—*GNLM*



Mr Tateshi Higuchi shakes hands with an official from a project. PHOTO: SUPPLIED



President U Thein Sein welcomes Mr Helmut Dungler, CEO and President of Four Paws International. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar, ADB partner to strengthen Auditor General's Office

THE Office of the Union Auditor General has partnered with the Asian Development Bank in coordinating a workshop on regional capacity development and technical assistance (R-CDTA) titled "Enhancing Roles of Supreme Audit Institutions in Selected Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations".

The workshop began in Nay Pyi Taw on 19 January and will continue until 22 January. Officials from the Office of the Union Auditor General and various ministries

and agencies and representatives from the World Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) are attending the workshop.

The technical assistance aims to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Auditor General, bringing it into greater compliance with international standards of Supreme Audit Institutions and better-quality public finance audits, in support of its mandate under the Union Auditor General Law of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. These efforts are expected to

improve public sector accountability, transparency and good governance in relation to the use of both public and development partner funds.

The technical assistance was approved by the Asian Development Bank in December 2014 with funding from the Government of Japan's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction. The supreme audit institutions of the Philippines, Viet Nam and Lao PDR are also included in the R-CDTA programme.—*GNLM*



A workshop titled "Enhancing Roles of Supreme Audit Institutions in Selected Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations". PHOTO: MNA

Round table discussion on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction held

A ROUND table discussion on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, took place at the Parkroyal Hotel in Yangon Tuesday.

During the discussion, Brig-Gen Ko Ko Lwin of Com-

mander-in-Chief (Army) Office, Director-General U Htin Lin of International Organisation and Economic Department and officials from the United Nations addressed the meeting and held discussions with those present.

Also present at the meeting

set to last for two days were senior officials from the United Nations and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, the ministries concerned and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

World Buddhist Peace Conference aims to help make world more peaceful



Sitagu International Buddhist Academy in Sagaing. PHOTO: KHIN YADANA

THE World Buddhist Peace Conference will take place on a grand scale at Sitagu International Buddhist Academy in Sagaing Region from 22 to 24 January, focusing on making the world more peaceful, according to the academy.

Tibet Monks will bring relics of Buddha from Himalaya mountain ranges to the conference.

At the conference, partic-

ipants will discuss peace from the point of the Lord Buddha.

Around 700 religious scholars from different faiths and observers will gather at the religious conference which is scheduled to be held from 22 to 25 January, inviting 200 experts from 52 countries plus 500 local scholars.

Altogether 200 delegates from the U.S, England, Russia, Iran, other Asian Buddhist coun-

tries already arrived the host country to attend the conference.

Under the supervision of Sitagu Sayadaw, Sitagu Management Team has made necessary arrangement to accommodate the international delegates in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

The Sitagu International Buddhist Academy has been established since 1994 to provide, teach and train missionary monks.—*Khin Yadana*

Natural hot spring in Hsipaw crowded with visitors

A NATURAL hot spring situated in Kyankhin Village in Hsipaw Township in northern Shan State has received flock of visitors during these days because of cool weather in the state, locals say.

The hot spring is in Kyankhin Village that is 5 minutes far from Mandalay-Lashio Pyidaungsu Road. Organiser normally stores the hot water from the spring to 30 foot long, 15 foot wide and 4

foot deep concrete tank. And then People who want to take a hot spring bath can swim in two concrete tanks within the area. Hot spring bathing assists them with cardiovascular disease and nervous system imbalances.

An average of 200 people visit the Kyankhin hot spring each day. Organisers collect K200 per visitor to raise funds for preservation of the natural hot spring.—*Sai*



Natural hot spring in Hsipaw. Photo: Sai

Crime News

Narcotics & chemicals used in refining opium seized

A local anti-drug squad in Loilem seized 150 litres of Hydrochloric acid, 1,400 litres of Sulfuric acid, 3600 kilos of white solid materials, 500 kilos of charcoal powder and two mobile phones in a car heading from Taunggyi on Sunday. Charges have been filed against Aung Myint Win, the driver of the car, Aung Toe Win, his passenger.

Similarly, member of the police searched a tyre shop owned by Ye Myint Aung at Lamadaw and found 2,207 pills of yabbas, 0.24210 kilos of marijuana and three mobile phones. The investigations have led to searching Ye Myint Aung house at Hlaing Thayar and found another 700 pills of yabba and



Aung Myint Win and Aung Toe Win. PHOTO: MPF

3.46196 kilos of marijuana.

Likewise, local police has seized 258 pills of stimulants and 0.12 kilos of raw opium, a mobile phone and K 3.41 mil-

lions from a motorbike driven by Kya Kay at Kengtung-Taunggyi road. The police have taken action against them under the anti-Narcotic law.—*MPF*

One man seriously injured by gun shot at Myawaddy

ONE man was seriously injured by a gun shot at ward 4, Bayintnaung - Nawaday road in Myawaddy on 19 January.

According to the investigation, a Probox car approached to a Caldina car driven by Ko Oo (a) Win Naing Oo with his wife and daughter on board and a man seated in the Probox shot Ko Oo and drove away.

Ko Oo was seriously injured while his wife got minor injuries. The police are still investigating the case.—*(District IPRD)*



Car accident kills three theatrical artistes, injures 17 others

A six-wheel vehicle with over 40 people on board turned over when the driver lost control on the Pale -Gangaw road on Tuesday. The accident killed three people and injured 17 others.

The driver while trying to avoid falling into a ravine crashed into the tree. If the car plunges down, there would be a lot of casualties. We are very lucky, said a member of theatrical troupe.

Theatrical associations from Monywa and Pale also

helped us. We are moving some injured people to Mandalay as they are seriously injured, said U Nan Htay Aung, Secretary of Sagang Region Theatrical Artists Association.

Two out of injured 17 have to undergo operation at Monywa general hospital, while the rest 15 people are being given medical treatment at Mandalay general hospital. Those who died on the spot are: Ju Ju, U Lu Bo and U Shwe.—*Aung Thant Naing*

Kitchen fire kills two, damages three cars

A kitchen fire killed two people and damaged three cars in ward -1, Kyee Khar town, Chin State on 19 January when the fire started to break out from the kitchen while people inside the house were all sleeping. The fire quickly got out of control and

spread the house. The fire killed U Lang Pong and his son, U Taung Swan Khine. The fire also destroyed a PRADO and two trailer vehicles. The fire was put out by the firemen with the assistance of neighbors.—*(District IPRD)*

Police found gold from stone bags in Bhamaw

POLICE seized ownerless 50 stone bags containing gold near Shwe Mhaw Police station, Sone Taw Village, Bhamaw township on 15 January.

Acting on a tip-off, police discovered ownerless stone

bags including the gold, digging tools and implements, and five motorbikes. The police brought them all to the Bamaw police station. The police are still investigating the case.—*U Ye (Ka Thar)*

US expects China to play 'special role' in punishing North Korea

SEOUL — US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken yesterday called for China to play “a special role” in strengthening sanctions against North Korea to punish it for its latest nuclear test in violation of UN Security Council resolutions.

“We believe China has a special role given the special relationship it has with North Korea,” Blinken told reporters after meetings with South Korea’s foreign and defence ministers, as well as senior officials.

“China shares our commitment and our conviction that North Korea must denuclearise,” he said, adding that China has “more leverage and more influence” over North Korea than any other country in the world.

Blinken, who arrived in Seoul on Tuesday, is due in Beijing later Wednesday for a series of talks on slapping tougher punitive measures on North Korea over its fourth nuclear test on 6 January, which drew a storm of condemnation from the international community.

Vice Foreign Minister Lim Sung Nam, who also held talks with Blinken, told reporters that



US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken (L) meets with South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se in Seoul on 20 January.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

they agreed on the need to step up diplomatic efforts to adopt a “strong and comprehensive resolution at the United Nations.”

“We reconfirmed our joint goal that North Korea should be made to pay a corresponding price for its misdeed,” Lim said,

standing alongside with Blinken.

The senior State Department official is visiting South Korea and China as part of a four-nation swing through Asia that has already taken him to Japan and Myanmar. —*Kyodo News*

New Zealand to fly two flags in run-up to referendum

WELLINGTON — Visitors to New Zealand over the next two months will be forgiven for not recognising the national flag as the country flies two flags over official buildings and other sites.

The government announced yesterday that the proposed alternative to the official flag will fly over 250 sites — including the iconic Auckland Harbour Bridge — alongside the current flag until the end of a referendum to choose the preferred flag in March.

The alternative flag, featuring a white stylized silver fern and the Southern Cross star formation against a blue and black background, was selected from five possible alternatives in a referendum in November last year.

“Having the two flags flying side by side around New Zealand will help people compare the designs before making a decision in the final flag referendum, which runs from 3 March to 24 March,” Deputy Prime Minister Bill English said in a statement. However, campaigners for retaining the current flag accused the government and Prime Minister John Key, who early on expressed a preference for a change to a flag featuring a silver fern, of promot-

ing the alternative.

“They have no statutory right to do it — this is just a blatant attempt by the Prime Minister to put his fern flag on the same level as our national flag,” leader of the opposition New Zealand First party Winston Peters said in a statement.

“To fly the referendum flag winner beside the New Zealand flag is an exercise in deception and suggesting that it has the same status. Legally it has none,” said Peters.

“What a ludicrous situation it will be having two flags flying.”

In the March poll, the alternative design will go head to head with the current flag, which features the British Union Jack in the top left corner. The winner will become or remain the official New Zealand flag.

The process has been marred by controversy and rancor among the political parties since it was initiated by Key after last year’s general election. Critics of the present flag, including Key, say it is too similar to the Australian flag and that it is a hangover from the country’s colonial past.—*Xinhua*

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India start-ups at risk as investors close taps, Modi fund falls short

MUMBAI — After pumping billions of dollars into Indian Internet start-ups in the last 24 months, global investors are cutting that flood back to a trickle as dreams of huge online sales are clouded by soaring valuations and still-distant profits.

Even as Prime Minister Narendra Modi lines up a four-year, \$1.5 billion government fund to help startups create jobs, entrepreneurs fear that may prove a drop in the ocean. Venture capitalists have already tightened purse strings as ripples from China’s economic slowdown lap around the world.

According to a new report by CB Insights and KPMG, venture capital investments in India’s start-ups nearly halved to \$1.5 billion in fourth-quarter 2015 from July-September. Faltering start-ups could mean India missing out on huge potential: Bank of America Merrill Lynch has forecast Indian e-commerce will surge to \$220 billion by 2025 from about \$11 billion last year.

“While the first phase of funding was about investing in big markets...now investors want to look at how entrepreneurs manage their business and compete while investing,” said Niren Shah, India head of Norwest Venture Partners, said.

Modi’s plan for newly launched companies includes tax breaks on their first three

years of profits, as well as their investors. But most of India’s tech startups make losses, not profits. They follow a discount-driven business model aimed at generating revenue from customers that buy and sell goods and services, touting growth in ‘gross merchandise value’ on their platforms as a metric to attract funding.

Two of the country’s best known e-commerce retailers — Flipkart and Snapdeal — have attracted big-name backers like Accel Partners, Singapore state

investor Temasek Holdings and Japan’s SoftBank Group Corp, enthused by growth potential in a country where only 252 million of a population of 1.3 billion people have Internet access.

Yet the pair have notched up huge losses as they compete for increasing sales through deep discounts, according to banking and industry sources. Flipkart and Snapdeal did not immediately respond to Reuters’ emails seeking comment.

“In the last few years, people were looking at gross mer-

chandise value (when considering investment),” said Radhika Aggarwal, co-founder and chief business officer of online marketplace Shopclues.com. “I think that changed very quickly in the second half of last year.”

Shopclues.com raised funds last week from investors including Singapore sovereign wealth fund GIC and Tiger Global that valued the firm at more than \$1.1 billion — helped by detailing plans to hit profitability by the first half of next year, Aggarwal said.—*Reuters*



Employees of Shopclues.com, an online marketplace, work inside their office in Gurgaon, on the outskirts of New Delhi, India, on 19 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Militants kill at least 19 as they storm Pakistan university

CHARSADDA (Pakistan) — Armed militants stormed a university in volatile northwestern Pakistan yesterday, killing at least 19 people and wounding dozens a little more than a year after the massacre of 134 students at a school in the area, officials said.

A senior Pakistani Taliban commander claimed responsibility for the assault in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province but an official spokesman later denied involvement, calling the attack “un-Islamic”.

The violence nevertheless shows that militants retain the ability to launch attacks, despite a country-wide anti-terrorism crackdown and a military campaign against their strongholds along the lawless border with Afghanistan.

A security official said the death toll could rise to as high as 40 at Bacha Khan University in the city of Charsadda. The army said it had concluded operations to clear the campus six hours after the attack began and that four gunmen were dead.

A spokesman for rescue workers, Bilal Ahmad Faizi, said 19 bodies had been recovered including students, guards, policemen and at least one teacher, named by media as chemistry professor Syed Hamid Husain.

Many of the dead were apparently shot in the head execu-



Soldiers hold their caps as a helicopter flies past during an operation, after a militant attack at Bacha Khan University in Charsadda, Pakistan, on 20 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

tion-style, TV footage showed.

The militants, using the cover of thick, wintry fog, scaled the walls of the university yesterday morning before entering buildings and opening fire on students and teachers in classrooms and hostels, police said.

Students told media they saw several young men wielding AK-47 guns storming the university housing where many students were sleeping.

“They came from behind and there was a big commotion,” an unnamed male student told a news channel from a hospital bed in Charsadda’s District Hospital. “We were told by teachers to leave immediately. Some people hid in bathrooms.”

The gunmen attacked as the university prepared to host a poetry recital yesterday afternoon to commemorate the death anniversary of Khan Abdul Ghaffar

Khan, a popular ethnic Pashtun independence activist after whom the university is named.

Vice Chancellor Fazal Rahim told reporters that the university teaches over 3,000 students and was hosting an additional 600 visitors for the poetry recital.

Umar Mansoor, a senior Pakistani Taliban commander involved in the December 2014 attack on the army school in Pe-

shawar, claimed responsibility for the Charsadda assault and said it involved four of his men.

He told Reuters by telephone the university was targeted because it was a government institution that supported the army.

However, later in the day, official Taliban spokesman Muhammad Khorasani issued a written statement disassociating the militants from attack, calling it un-Islamic.

“Youth who are studying in non-military institutions, we consider them as builders of the future nation and we consider their safety and protection our duty,” the statement said.

The reason for the conflicting claims was not immediately clear. While the Taliban leadership is fractured, Mansoor is believed to remain loyal to central leader Mullah Fazlullah.

The Pakistani Taliban are fighting to topple the government and install a strict interpretation of Islamic law. They are loosely allied with the Afghan Taliban who ruled most of Afghanistan until they were toppled by a US-backed military action in 2001.

By afternoon on Wednesday, the military said all four gunmen had been killed.

“The operation is over and the university has been cleared,” Pakistan army spokesman General Asim Bajwa said.—Reuters

Nepal constitution talks fail to end protests

KATHMANDU — Talks between the Nepali government and minority groups to resolve a dispute over a new constitution have fallen apart, opposition leaders said on Tuesday, dashing hopes that protests that have led to crippling fuel shortages will end soon.

More than 50 people have been killed since August in anti-government protests in the Tarai region, a narrow strip of

plains that runs along Nepal’s southern border with India. A resulting slowdown in cross-border truck traffic has plunged the landlocked nation into a fuel crisis that has hampered aid to survivors of last year’s deadly earthquakes and spawned a lucrative black market.

The ethnic Madhesi groups who live in the Tarai say Nepal’s new constitution, its first since the nation abolished its centu-

ries-old monarchy, alienates their members, granting them low representation in parliament and government bodies.

After talks fell apart on Monday night, dozens of Madhesi activists burned tyres on the road in the southern business town of Birgunj, police said, in continuing protest against the charter’s carving the lowland region into federal states dominated by mountain communities.

Nepal blames India, its largest trading partner, for siding with the protesters near its border and invoking an unofficial blockade on trucks crossing from India into Nepal, a charge that India has repeatedly denied. In the eastern border town of Kakarvitta, a long row of motorcycles and scooters stood in the middle of a bridge marking the border with India, as their owners poured smuggled fuel into their tanks.

“It’s been good business,” said a woman named Devi, who came from the Indian border town of Raniganj to sell petrol to Nepalese in plastic tubs and bottles. The United Madhesi Front, which wants state boundaries to be redrawn to give their communities more power, said talks with government negotiators that started two weeks ago had become “meaningless”.

Defence Minister Bhim Rawal said the boundary issue would be settled by a political committee in three months, but Madhesi party leaders were not convinced.

“We can’t trust the government,” Laxman Lal Karna, another Madhesi leader, told Reuters. “We have been betrayed in the past on similar assurances.”—Reuters

27 male Bangladeshi nationals arrested in Singapore for terror links

SINGAPORE — Singapore’s Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) yesterday said the Internal Security Department has arrested 27 male Bangladeshi nationals who were planning to take part in extremist activities in other countries, including their homeland.

The authority said the 27 male Bangladeshis, all working in the construction industry in Singapore, were arrested under the Internal Security Act (ISA) between 16 November and 1 December last year.

MHA stated that the Work Passes of the Bangladeshi nationals have been cancelled and 26 of them have been repatriated to Bangladesh. The remaining Bangladeshi is currently serving a jail sentence for attempting to leave Singapore illegally after learning about the arrests of his fellow group members. He will be repatriated to Bangladesh upon completion of his sentence.—Xinhua



Protesters stand near burning tyres as they gather to block the highway connecting Nepal and India, during a general strike called by Madhesi protesters demonstrating against the new constitution in Birgunj, Nepal in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Balance of Asia-Pacific military power shifting against US

WASHINGTON — The balance of military power in the Asia-Pacific is shifting against the United States, as China and North Korea challenge the credibility of US security commitments and the Pentagon faces spending limits, according to a study released on Tuesday.

Researchers at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, which conducted the study for the US Department of Defence, were left “concerned” that President Barack Obama’s “rebalance” of US interests toward Asia might not be sufficient to secure US interests in the region.

Congress required the Department of Defence to commission the report under the 2015 National Defence Authorisation Act.

“Chinese and North Korean actions are routinely challenging the credibility of US security

commitments, and at the current rate of US capability development, the balance of military power in the region is shifting against the United States,” the study said.

Pentagon leaders, and supporters in Congress, say efforts to keep pace with China’s growing military might and other international security threats have been hampered by mandatory “sequestration” budget cuts imposed across the government in 2011 in an effort to address the massive US deficit.

Congress passed a spending bill at the end of 2016 that addressed some of those concerns, but has not come up with a long-term solution.

The report makes four recommendations.

The first is that the White House should develop a single rebalance strategy, after finding confusion throughout the gov-

ernment. Among other things, the report said the administration should increase its outreach to Congress and coordinate better with allies.

The second recommendation is that Washington should accelerate efforts to strengthen its allies and partners, including in the area of maritime security. “Many states are struggling to mitigate regional security risks that range from major humanitarian crises to maritime disputes to missile threats,” the study said.

The third recommendation is that the United States should sustain and expand its military presence in the Asia-Pacific, and the fourth was that the United States should accelerate development of new capabilities for US forces, such as the ability to resist the growing ballistic missile threat to US ships and forward bases.—*Reuters*

European border checks would cost German trade billions



German police conduct a control at the German-Belgian border in Aachen, Germany, to check vehicles and verify the identity of travellers in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — Reinstating border controls within Europe’s passport-free Schengen zone because of the migrant crisis would significantly increase costs for Germany’s foreign trade, national trade organisations told German media yesterday. “About 70 per cent of German foreign trade takes place within Europe, particularly with countries of the euro zone,” Anton Boerner, head of the BGA trade federation, told newspaper *Tagespiegel*.

“The cost for international road transport alone would increase by about three billion euros

(\$3.27 billion).”

Stefan Genth, head of the HDE retail group, said checks would severely impact the transport of goods throughout Europe due to delays at the borders. European Union member states are bitterly divided over the handling of an influx of migrants and refugees fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and North Africa. Germany took in 1.1 million last year.

The failure to agree on joint measures to handle the crisis has put the Schengen zone, with its 26 European members, on the verge

of collapse. German Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt on Monday urged Chancellor Angela Merkel to prepare to close the country’s borders to stem the influx, arguing Berlin must act alone if it cannot reach a Europe-wide deal on refugees. Merkel has resisted calls to shut the borders and tried to convince other European countries to take in quotas of refugees, pushed for reception centres to be built on Europe’s external borders and led an EU campaign to convince Turkey to keep refugees from entering the bloc.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

ISIS media outlet confirms death of ‘Jihadi John’

DUBAI — A media outlet associated with Islamic State on Tuesday released a eulogy for “Jihadi John”, a member of the militant group who gained notoriety for his filmed execution of hostages, the monitoring organisation SITE reported.

The militant was identified as Mohammed Emwazi, a British citizen of Arab origin. The US military said in November it was “reasonably certain” it had killed him in a drone strike.—*Reuters*

Dacic: We will not allow for return of migrants

BELGRADE — Serbia’s Foreign Minister Ivica Dacic said on Tuesday that Serbia would not allow for a return of migrants to its territory and would take necessary measures if some neighbouring countries resorted to unilateral moves.

After a meeting with Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic and Slovenian Foreign Minister Karl Erjavec, Dacic said that if Croatia, Slovenia and Austria decided to make some unilateral moves in the context of the migrant crisis, Serbia would respond accordingly.

He explained that the Slovenian foreign minister had come to Serbia to inform the Serbian PM about Slovenian PM Miro Cerar’s initiative, addressed to President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and the prime ministers of the states along the migrant route through the Balkans, about the need for a joint response to an expected surge in the number of migrants. — *Tanjug*

Three died, 53 injured in East China fireworks plant blast

NANCHANG — Three people were confirmed dead and another one remains missing after blasts swept a fireworks plant in east China’s Jiangxi Province early yesterday, according to local authorities.

Fifty-three injured people are being treated in hospital.

The first blast ripped through a workshop of Hongsheng fireworks factory in Kunshan village, Guangfeng district, Shangrao city at around 0:30am yesterday, said the city’s emergency management office. Several blasts followed.

Rescuers have managed to pull out 21 people who were trapped in the dormitory area of the plant and sent them to hospital. More than 1,000 people nearby were evacuated to safe areas after the blasts.—*Xinhua*

IS releases 270 out of 400 kidnapped in Syria’s Deir al-Zour

DAMASCUS — The Islamic State (IS) group released 270 out of 400 people it had kidnapped, when its militants stormed a town in the countryside of Syria’s eastern province of Deir al-Zour earlier this week, a monitor group reported yesterday. The 270 released people were kids under 14, and men over 55 years old, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

It added that 130 men between the age 15 and 55 are still held by the IS militants, who will interrogate them on charges of cooperation with the Syrian government in the town of Bughailiyeh. Aside from the originally captured 400 men, the UK-based watchdog group, which relies on a network of activists on ground, said the IS group captured another 50 people over the past 24 hours during raids in Bughailiyeh in the countryside of Deir al-Zour.—*Xinhua*

Denmark, Greenland sign agreement on uranium

COPENHAGEN — Denmark and Greenland have reached an agreement on the rules for future commercial exports of uranium from the island, local media reported Tuesday.

Denmark’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has signed an agreement with the self-governed Greenland after prolonged discussion, Foreign Minister Kristian Jensen was cited by Danish news agency Ritzau as saying.

“We have had to agree on how we deal with the fact that Greenland has the right to extract uranium, while Denmark is responsible for what happens when it is extracted and to be exported,” Jensen said when briefing the Foreign Policy Committee on Tuesday.—*Xinhua*

OPINION

Roll up your sleeves

Kyaw Thura

OUR country has gone through the devastation of ethnic rivalries for over six decades, leaving successive generations suffering from the curse of armed conflict. Despite the ongoing peace conference, sporadic armed conflicts still break out occasionally and hamper efforts to restore lasting peace.

We cannot afford to allow current disputes to escalate into a further threat to the peace process and democratic reform. It seems that all the parties engaged in the peace talks are

found lacking proper motivation for trying to reach an agreement by peaceful means. After all, they are left with no choice but to leave their disagreements behind and start looking for common ground on the restoration and maintenance of peace. They have brought limited commitment and enthusiasm to the negotiating table and have acted with some sympathy for innocent victims.

In the event of any outbreak of armed conflict, both sides would assert their right to protect themselves and shift the blame to the other party, thereby widening the gap that undermines peacemaking. It would benefit warring groups to remember that casualties do not incur on a particular side. In other words, neither soldiers nor enemies are killed in war. Simply put, they all are human beings who are killed on flimsy pretexts.

All things considered, there is a pressing

need for informal avenues to conflict resolution alongside the formal peace processes. It is therefore necessary to push all the parties concerned to roll up their sleeves in the search for an early resolution to their disputes and the full restoration of peace.

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.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.

Nationalization: A Grave Blunder

Khin Maung Myint

THE 1963 Nationalization move was a real blunder. I should know it, as I had been actively involved in that process. That year the leaders of the, then, Socialist Government, decided to nationalize the businesses. Their concept was: Capitalism and Socialism could never coexist. At first, it was the large industries, businesses and companies that were nationalized, irrespective of their owners' nationality. Later, for reasons I couldn't know, small businesses, including even retail shops belonging to FRC (Foreign Registration Certificate) holders were also nationalized.

During the first phase, on 1 June 1963, the major industries: including the export and import trades, rice, banking, mining, textiles and rubber, which were labeled as the capitalist tools were nationalized. According to some records, a total of around 15,000 private enterprises were nationalized. I wasn't involved in that process, but it was the second phase that I came to be part of that scheme.

Early one night in August of that year, the staffs of our establishment were gathered in an assembly hall for briefing. We were waiting anxiously for our superior's arrival. When he arrived he explained at length, the necessity to nationalize the businesses as we were on the path to establishing a Socialist State. No Socialist State could thrive while the businesses were in the hands of the Capitalists, that was what we were told. After his speech, we were convinced we were going on a mission for the good of the country and the people. Everyone was upbeat and raring to

leave for our assigned destinations. I had to take charge of a team of twelve, who would act as in-charges of the shops we were to nationalize.

Our team's destination was the Twante township. We left at mid-night from the Thanhlyin side with a double decker ship and arrived Twante at a few minutes before 3a.m. We were met at the jetty by the Chairman of the Township Security and Administrative Committee and party. From the jetty we were taken to a State High School, where we were briefed by the Chairman. According to the list prepared by the township authorities, there were ten shops in Twante and one in Kyaikhtaw, a few miles by river, to the west. I assigned my men, one each, as in-charge of the ten teams, that would take over the shops in the Twante proper. The township authorities attached one volunteer firefighter to each team. By then, the time was 4a.m, still two hours to the appointed hour, so I gave detailed instructions to my men as to how to go about their job in taking over the shops.

Half an hour before the appointed time, which was 6a.m, the ten teams set out, guided by the volunteer firefighters attached to them, to their assigned shops. After an hour, the Chairman and I, along with some township officials, made a inspection round to check the shops taken over.

At the first shop, I was dismayed by what I saw. It was a shanty building, which served as a home and a small grocery store incorporated in it. The commodities stocked there were nothing, compared to an average grocery store at a market in Yangon. The owner was a foreign national and the wife was a Bamar citizen with four kids.

The next shop was no better and some shops were even worse, except for one shop, which was a retail and wholesale grocery, that catered the requirements of the whole township. There were two shops, which sell odds and ends, called the Kyulaya shops in the old days.

After inspecting the shops in Twante, I left with the two remaining members of my team to Kyaikhtaw sub-township. We traveled on a police motor launch accompanied by a team of police escorts, as those areas were frequented by the insurgents. The Assistant Township Officer of the General Administrative Department, stationed there, met us and took us to the only grocery shop that was to be taken over. The shop belonged to an old foreign national whose wife was a Bamar citizen. It was also a shop-house like those in Twante.

That evening I was back in Twante. After dinner, I met with my men and checked the cash ledgers to find out the incomes for the day. Apart from the wholesale shop, the incomes from the other shops were almost negligible, for the owners to be categorized as capitalists. That fact was confirmed the next day, when I went on an inspection round. At the first shop, where the owner was a foreigner in his forties, with a Bamar wife and four kids. I was surprised to see him shouldering two buckets filled with water and selling them in his neighbourhood. I learned, on enquiring him, that he had never done that before. However, as he had six mouths to feed and had no more income, he had to earn money in whatever way he could. He also said that he wouldn't be able to afford to send his children to school anymore. First, I thought he was

exaggerating, but later I realized he was telling the truth. There were many like him, but I will skip the details.

The worst was at Kyaikhtaw. Whenever I went there to check my men, I met with unpleasantness. The old lady of the shop always cried until she fainted. My men had to revive her, as her husband was too old to take care of her. When she regained consciousness, she gave me a tongue lashing. At one time she said we were worse than the dacoits, because the latter would leave them something if they hugged their legs and pleaded. However, she said, we left them nothing. I sympathized with her but I was in no position to do anything, although by then, I wasn't convinced we were doing the right thing. So, I just ignored her harsh words and tried to calm her down by saying soothing words.

The worst was still to come. It was more touching and I was ashamed of myself. It happened on my third trip to Kyaikhtaw. That time, I noticed a young girl about sixteen at that house, whom I had never seen on the previous trips. This time the old lady didn't cry but she confronted me as soon as I arrived and accused me as being no better than the Chettias, the South Indian loan sharks of the past. She said, she knew we would eventually confiscate their house and added that nothing would matter to her anymore when that should happen. She pointed to the young girl and told me, she was her only daughter who had to leave school in Yangon, where she was studying in the Matric class, as they couldn't afford her expenses anymore. She told me to take her daughter away too, like the Chettias did.

Though her words were insulting, I wasn't angry with her.

Instead I told her, we did not have any instruction to confiscate the house. I assured her that it would never happen, just to appease her, though I didn't know for sure what would come next.

Due to nationalizing, all the industries, the export and import businesses ceased. Even the small retailers and all essential household commodities disappeared from the markets. Everything from food stuffs: such as rice, cooking oil, chillies, sugar, milk tins to clothing materials, umbrellas, even matches and candles became very scarce and were rationed or had to draw ballots if there were not enough to go around. The fuels for the vehicles and for cooking were also rationed and were never enough. Thus hoardings and smugglings of essential commodities and black marketing emerged and became the livelihoods for many, until recently.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the nationalization was a grave blunder, carried out hastily without properly analyzing the situations and considering the consequences. Our country, once considered to be among the prosperous nations in the region, plummeted to the status of the Least Developed Country (LDC) in the world. I am not dwelling in the past by writing thus. However, my intention is to let the new generations and most of my generation who might not have any idea what really took place during the nationalization schemes that totally collapsed our economy. What I had mentioned here was just the tip of an iceberg; the adverse effects were far more profound and widespread. We had learned a bitter lesson, which we should never forget.

World endangered Dugongs spotted off Rakhine coast

DUGONGS, medium-sized aquatic mammals which are included on a list of the world endangered animals, have been spotted along a stretch of Rakhine coastline between Laung Kyo and Kan Tharyar beach in Gwa township, as well as around the Sunpan Kyaung beach of Mann Aung Island, according to the Kyauk Phyu district Department of Fisheries.

“Studies have shown that the dugong species has become an endangered species not just in Asia but in the whole world. There are only two areas along the Rakhine coastline where they still remain. A dugong died in December of last year after it got entangled in a fishing net off the coast of Mann Aung Island. Fishing vessels which encounter dugongs becoming caught in their nets are prohibited from killing them for food and have been instructed to release them back into the ocean. Unfortunately, few follow these regulations,” said U Htun Tin, head of the Kyauk Phyu township Department of Fisheries.

The Kyauk Phyu township Department of Fisheries started carrying out of a series of aware-



ness campaigns during December, 2015 explaining how fishing was not allowed in known grazing areas of dugongs and that fisherman must immediately release a dugong should it become trapped in

one of their fishing nets.

“It’s difficult to carry out research on the numbers of grazing Dugongs. There still aren’t any efforts being made to conserve sea-grass in the regions which

the Dugong habitually settle in for grazing and reproduction.” continued U Htun Tin. As such, there is a need for areas rich in the volume of sea-grass to be designated ‘no fishing’ zones in a bid

to prevent the extinction of this endangered species. The Kyauk Phyu township Department of Fisheries has made it known that they will carry out activities to ensure offshore fishing vessels and trawlers avoid such regions so that sea-grass can thrive without being destroyed.

But not all Dugong die as a result of being accidentally entangled in the nets of fishing vessels. “The Dugong have a habit of getting caught up in fishing nets during the start and end of the rainy season. Last June, a Dugong pup was caught in our nets but we released it straight away as it still showed signs of life,” explained U Kyaw Thar, a local fishermen from Mann Aung township.

There are over ten species of animals included on the world endangered species list including the dugong, the manatee and seven species of turtles, while five of those species of turtles come to Thamein Hla Island in Ayeyawady Region to have their young on the beach before returning back into the ocean, according to the Kyauk Phyu district Department of Fisheries.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Over half a million acres of forest to be protected in Rakhine State

THE Ministry of Forestry is planning to turn 550,000 acres of wild and uncultivable land located in Min Pya township, Rakhine State, into protected forest this year.

The land is located between the village tracts of Htein Pin and Min Kuu Lan, with plans to demarcate the area as protected forest in order to conserve the environment and protect life.

“A submission will be made to the State government this month for the cordoning off 450,000 to the 550,000 acres. It is has become quite evident how de-

forestation, from a surge in illegal logging activities, is destroying the natural environment. Our aim to is to be able to replant trees in these forests. We are also intent on making it so that those, whether an individual or group, will get permission to plant new trees in parts of forest. Whatever happens, we expect to reduce the extent of deforestation.” explained U Tin Soe, an official from the Forestry Department of Min Pya.

The department of Min Pya has planted 5,700 acres of teak trees, 2,350 acres of ironwood trees and 795 acres of standard

timber for village use within the township. Local villagers habitually slash and burn areas of wild forest to prepare the land for cultivation but this often results in forest fires.

U Ba Sein, the administrator of Hayzawgyi village, located within Min Kuu village tract, expressed his mixed feelings about the replanting initiative of the Forestry Department. “I’m glad trees will be replanted in areas that used to be forest. But, it’s made me even more concerned that the trees will fall into the hands for those who carry out

logging activities without replanting. It also brings worry that we will encounter difficulties with our livelihoods as we depend upon the forest to provide for us,” he said.

Areas of land within Min Pya township earmarked for protection are dense forest abundant with wildlife and extremely inaccessible. The majority of local residents are farmers who mainly practice shifting cultivation activities and cattle breeding, but also have a habit of seasonally carrying out logging and bamboo cutting, as well as hunting wild

animals.

The Forestry Department of Min Pya township made a submission to the Rakhine State government on 31 December 2015 for an area of 283.98 square miles in the area of Than Kyaung and 293.75 square miles in the area of Ko Lone Taung from within Htein Pin village tract, as well as 50.31 square miles from within the area of Ta Yweh and 141.41 square miles in the area of Kar Ma from within the village tract of Min Kuu Lan, to be demarcated as protected forest.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Free Medical Services for Eye Patients in Thandwe, Rakhine State

AN eye specialist team led by Professor Kan Nyunt and Professor Ko Ko Tin provided free Eye Care Services to patients with Eye diseases at Sitagu Eye Hospital, Thandwe from 14th to 17th January.

The medical team comprises (11) eye surgeons and (6) nurses. They treat 1265 out patients and operate on 198 patients with cataract. The patients are from Thandwe, Kyaindali, Gua and Taungup Township. The team work is supported by U Tin Lay, President and members of Sitagu Eye Hospital Administration Association.

Overall expenditure for the team is donated by the well wishers U Chit Khine, Daw Khin Soe Wai (Edin Group),



Eye specialist team gives treatment to patients. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

U Kyi Lin, Daw San San Win (Silver Beach Hotel), U Mg Mg @ U Kyin Hwet, U Soe Min, Daw Nu Nu Latt, U Mg Mg,

Daw Si Si Htay, U Kyaw Kyaw Moe, Dr Kyaw Kay Khine and Daw Cho Cho Win (KTK Co., Ltd.).—GNLM

Creating Youth Employment

POEM:

There is a need, more employment to create for youth who are not in school for some reason before they seek other countries to illegally migrate for earning their livelihood in a job or occupation commonly known as 3D - Difficult, Dirty, Dangerous jobs for which ‘general labour’ are much in demand and which do not require any skills expeditious, except good health and a willing pair of hands.

Policies could be formulated by the Bodies concerned based on the Employment and Skills Development Law for ‘Employers’ both public and private to provide training on-the-job while working, to such youth who are willing, under a Learnership/Apprenticeship Contract to serve for a fixed period as learners and apprentices, paid during their term of Contract an agreed percentage of wages of skilled workers of the Occupation which would enable them to earn as they learn.

And following the terms of Learnership/Apprenticeship period be assessed and certified against the relevant Occupational Standard and either be employed by the establishment concerned or be free to seek skilled employment locally or overseas.

Lokethar

Obama, Erdogan speak by phone, vow cooperation against terrorism

ANKARA — US President Barack Obama and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan on Tuesday pledged continued cooperation in the fight against militants, including Islamic State and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants, the White House and Turkish presidential sources said.

During his phone call to Erdogan, Obama offered his condolences for last week's bombing in Istanbul, when 10 German tourists were killed in a suicide attack blamed on Islamic State, the White House and Turkish presidential sources said.

Obama also condemned a recent string of attacks by the PKK against Turkish security forces, and he stressed the need for de-escalation, the White House said in a statement.

The two leaders said the fight against terrorism would be among a number of topics on the agenda when US Vice President Joe Biden visits Turkey on Saturday.

NATO member Turkey, a member of the US-led coalition battling Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, has increasingly become a target for the Sunni Muslim mil-

itants. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu blamed Islamic State for the bombing on 12 January in Istanbul's historic heart. The suicide bomber is thought to have crossed recently from Syria.

Islamic State is also believed to be behind other attacks last year in Turkey, including one in the capital Ankara in which more than 100 people were killed.

Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast is currently engulfed in the worst violence since the 1990s after the collapse last July of a two-year-long ceasefire with PKK militants.—Reuters

Children on Syrian refugee route could freeze to death: UN



A migrant carries a child as they walk through a frozen field after crossing the border from Macedonia, near the village of Miratovac, Serbia, on 18 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

GENEVA — Thousands of refugee children travelling along the migration route through Turkey and southeastern Europe are at risk from a sustained spell of freezing weather in the next two weeks, the United Nations and aid agencies said on Tuesday.

The UN weather agency said it forecast below-normal temperatures and heavy snowfall in the next two weeks in the eastern Balkan peninsula, Turkey, the eastern Mediterranean and Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.

"Many children on the move do not have adequate clothing or access to the right nutrition," said Christophe Boulierac, spokesman for the UN children's agency UNICEF. Asked if children could

freeze to death, he told a news briefing: "The risk is clearly very, very high."

Children were coming ashore on the Greek island of Lesbos wearing only T-shirts and soaking wet after travelling on unseaworthy rubber dinghies, the charity Save the Children said in a statement.

"Aid workers at the border reception centre in Presevo say there is six inches of snow on the ground and children are arriving with blue lips, distressed and shaking from the cold," it said.

It said temperatures were forecast to drop to -20 degrees Celsius (-4°F) in Presevo in Serbia and -13 degrees (9°F) on the Greek border with Macedonia.—Reuters

Military chiefs gather in Paris to bolster Islamic State fight

PARIS — Defence chiefs from the United States, France, Britain and four other nations meet in Paris Wednesday to examine ways to accelerate gains against Islamic State, including by potentially ramping up the number of police and army trainers.

US Defence Secretary Ash Carter described the gathering as a chance for face-to-face talks among the core contributors in the US-led coalition, which also includes Germany, Italy, Australia and the Netherlands.

"I'll be soliciting their

views and describing to them my thoughts about how we can accelerate the campaign, including the variety of capabilities, military capabilities, that will be required," Carter said, predicting increases in the numbers of trainers in the months ahead, including of police who can help hold territory seized from Islamic State.

France was the first country to join US-led air strikes in Iraq. Since the Paris attacks by Islamic State militants in November, President Francois Hollande has

stepped up French aerial operations against Islamic State, including in Syria, contributing about 20 per cent of coalition strikes. A French defence ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the coalition would discuss ways to broadly intensify the effort.

"It's not just about adding more planes, but also trainers to accelerate the speed with which local forces can retake territory against Daesh," the official said, using a colloquial term to describe Islamic State.—Reuters

Three attackers from Burkina al Qaeda assault still at large

PARIS — Three suspected al Qaeda attackers involved in an assault on a hotel and cafe in Burkina Faso's capital that killed 30 people at the weekend were still being sought on Tuesday, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said.

Three gunmen were killed in a French and US-assisted operation by Burkina security forces to retake the Splendid Hotel and surrounding buildings following the Friday night attack, which targeted an area popular with foreigners.

Eight Burkinabes, six Canadians, three Ukrainians and three French citizens were among the dead. Other bodies are still in the process of being identified.

"Of the six assailants, three were killed and three others are still being sought," Valls said in remarks before the French parliament, adding that the attack on Ouagadougou was a reminder of a similar attack in Paris in November.

"This attack was claimed by AQIM. This is further proof that this group is dangerous."

Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) on Monday identified three fighters it says were responsible for the attacks, giving their names as al-Battar al-Ansari, Abu Muhammad al-Buqali al-Ansari and Ahmed al-Fulani al-Ansari.

The French troops involved in the operation against the attackers were part of a 200-strong force stationed in the country as part of a regional anti-militant operation.

AQIM claimed a similar attack on

the Radisson Blu hotel in Mali's capital Bamako that killed 20 people in November.

Some witnesses however reported seeing more attackers. Security forces responding at the scene of events initially believed

they were facing a team of 12 gunmen. Gendarmes at the time said they believed at least two assailants were women.

"The investigation is moving forward. Eleven French police and gendarmes are assisting Burkinabe experts with the identification of bodies. There are also five American FBI agents," Burkina Security Minister Simon Compaore

said.

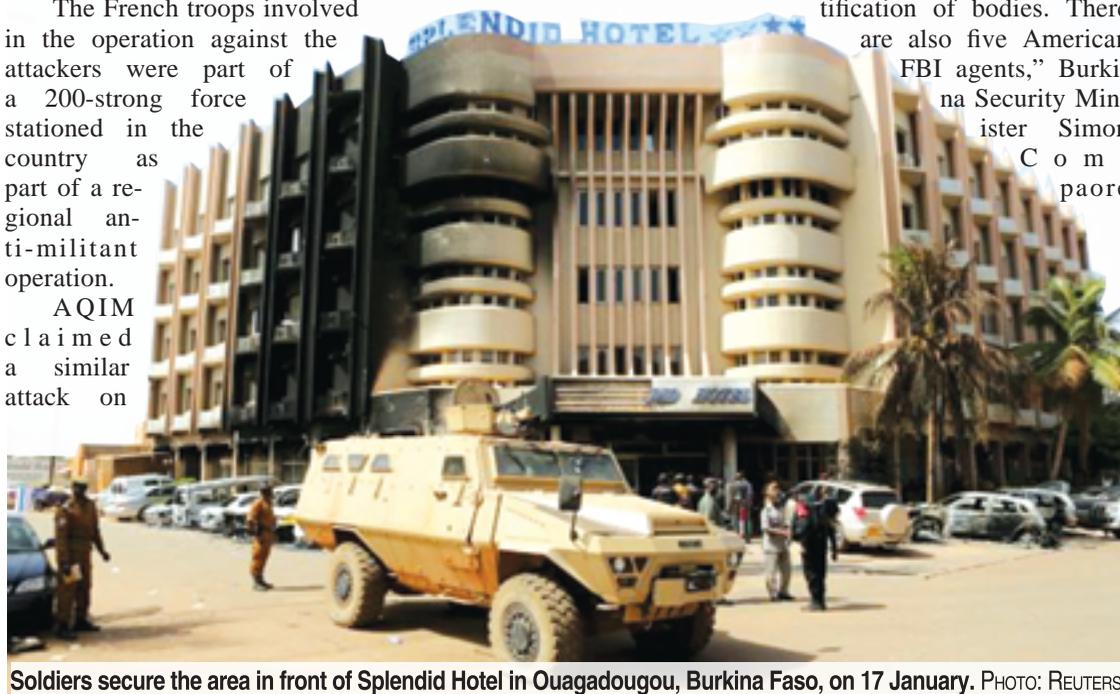
Authorities in Ouagadougou have already made a number of arrests though some had since been released, said Foreign Minister Alpha Barry.

"In this kind of situation we pick up everyone who could resemble the suspects and then, bit by bit, we verify," he said.

Leaders from Burkina and Mali have agreed to work more closely to fight jihadists by sharing intelligence and conducting joint security patrols.

Heavily armed security agents on Saturday raided the Ouagadougou home of Mossa Ag Attaher, spokesman for the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) -- a Malian Tuareg rebel group. He was questioned but later released.

"What kept coming up was 'Do you have information on imminent threats to Burkina? Does the MNLA have links with those threatening Burkina?'" Ag Attaher told French radio RFI, adding that he had denied any connection to the attack.—Reuters



Soldiers secure the area in front of Splendid Hotel in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 17 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

Transgenic mosquito ready to join Brazil's war on Zika virus



A Brazilian soldier searches for signs of mosquito larvae in a pool in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 18 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

BRASILIA — A genetically modified mosquito has helped reduce the proliferation of mosquitoes spreading Zika and other dangerous viruses in Brazil, its developers said on Tuesday.

The self-limiting strain of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito was developed by Oxitec, the UK-sub subsidiary of US synthetic biology company Intrexon. The male mosquitoes are modified so their offspring will die before reaching adulthood and being able to reproduce.

Oxitec, which produces the mosquitoes in Campinas, announced it will build a second facility in nearby Piracicaba, Sao Paulo state, following strong results there in controlling the population of the *Aedes* vector that also carries the dengue virus.

Zika virus, first detected in Africa in the 1940's, was unknown in the Americas until last year when it appeared in northeastern Brazil. The virus has quickly spread through Latin America.

Brazilian health authorities

have linked the Zika outbreak to a surge in the number of babies born with unusually small heads, a damaging neurological condition called microcephaly.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention issued a travel advisory last week warning pregnant women to avoid 14 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Latin America affected by the virus.

With Brazil's rainy season underway, authorities are scrambling to fight the seasonal surge in mosquito populations.

Two weeks ahead of Carnival celebrations, a highlight of Brazil's tourism calendar, officials want to stem international concern about the virus. They also want to reassure travellers who plan to attend the opening ceremonies of the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika, which causes mild fever and rash.

Oxitec said its proprietary OX513A mosquito succeeded in reducing wild larvae of the *Aedes*

mosquito by 82 per cent in a neighborhood of Piracicaba, where 25 million of the transgenic insects were released between April and November. Authorities reported a big drop in dengue cases in the area.

"This is a powerful and versatile tool that can dramatically reduce the levels of infestation, which is the core of Brazil's prevention strategy right now," said Oxitec business development director in Brazil, Glen Slade.

The transgenic mosquito known as OX513A was approved by Brazil's National Technical Commission for Biosafety (CTN-Bio), but needs authorisation from health surveillance regulator Anvisa to move to commercial production.

Oxitec began as a spin-off from Oxford University and was acquired in September by Intrexon, which has provided resources to invest in an expansion to fight the mosquito causing Brazil's public health emergency, Slade said. — Reuters

CDC issues guidelines for pregnant women during Zika outbreak

CHICAGO — The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday issued guidelines for doctors caring for pregnant women who might have been exposed to Zika virus, a mosquito-borne infection that can cause brain damage in a developing fetus.

The new guidelines, first reported by Reuters, lay out recommendations for doctors whose pregnant patients have traveled to areas with Zika virus transmission.

They follow a travel advisory issued by the CDC on Friday warning pregnant women to avoid travel to 14 countries and territories in the Caribbean and Latin America affected by the virus.

In Brazil, Zika has been linked to a rising number of cases of microcephaly, a condition associated with small head size and brain damage. Tourism officials in that country have tried to play down the risks as the country gears up for Carnival and the 2016 Olympics, the first in South America.

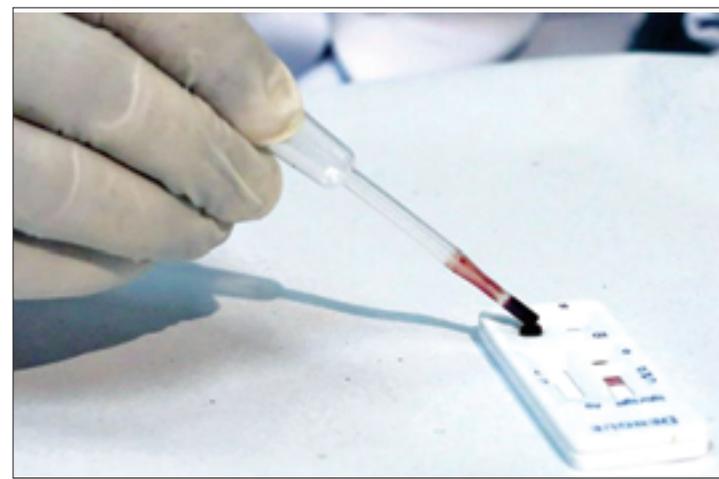
On Saturday, health officials confirmed the birth of the first baby born with micro-

cephaly in the United States attributed to the virus. The child was born in Hawaii to a mother who had become ill with Zika virus while living in Brazil last May.

There is no vaccine or treatment for Zika, which causes mild fever and rash. An estimated 80 percent of people infected with the virus have no symptoms at all, making it difficult for pregnant women to know whether they have been infected.

In its latest to doctors, the CDC urges providers to ask pregnant women about their travel history. Women who have traveled to regions in which Zika is active and who report symptoms during or within two weeks of travel should be offered a test for Zika virus infection.

Those who test positive should be offered an ultrasound to check the fetus's head size or check for calcium deposits in the brain, two indicators of microcephaly. These women should also be offered a test of their amniotic fluid called amniocentesis to confirm the presence of Zika virus. — Reuters



A health agent uses a new test kit that rapidly diagnoses three different mosquito-borne viruses in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on 18 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Slow heart rate not linked to increased risk of heart disease

WASHINGTON — A slower than normal heartbeat, known as bradycardia, does not increase the risk of developing heart disease, a US study said Tuesday.

"For a large majority of people with a heart rate in the 40s or 50s who have no symptoms, the prognosis is very good," lead author Ajay Dharod, instructor in internal medicine at the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, said in a statement.

"Our results should be reas-

suring for those diagnosed with asymptomatic bradycardia," Dharod said.

The heart usually beats between 60 and 100 times a minute in an adult at rest. But with bradycardia, the heart beats fewer than 50 times a minute. The condition can cause light-headedness, shortness of breath, fainting or chest pain due to the heart not pumping enough oxygen-rich blood through the body.

However, until now, there had not been any research to de-

termine if a slow heart rate contributed to the development of cardiovascular disease.

In the new study, researchers looked at 6,733 participants aged 45 to 84 who did not have cardiovascular disease when first recruited into this study, but who may have been on heart rate-modifying medications frequently used to treat hypertension.

Study participants were followed for more than 10 years to monitor cardiovascular events and mortality. — Xinhua

East China Province reports 1st H7N9 case this winter

XIAMEN — East China's Fujian Province on Tuesday confirmed its first human infection of H7N9 bird flu virus this winter.

The patient from Zhangpu County was confirmed to have the virus on Saturday. The patient is being treated and is in stable condition, the local publicity department said.

The county authorities

have ordered to halt livestock sales in three townships in a bid to reduce the risk of infection.

On Tuesday, health authorities in Shanghai said that one of the city's two confirmed H7N9 patients has basically recovered and another is no longer critical.

The two are a 59-year-old man and a 58-year-old woman. — Xinhua

Venezuela Congress plans to investigate PDVSA, China loans

CARACAS — Venezuela's new opposition-led Congress plans to investigate state-run oil company PDVSA's [PDVSA.UL] financial health and hefty Chinese loans, a lawmaker said on Tuesday.

The OPEC member country depends on oil for nearly all of its export revenue. With the political opposition in control of the National Assembly since this month, rivals of leftist President Nicolas Maduro want to use their new perch to push for greater transparency and accountability at PDVSA.

"We want to know the real state of PDVSA's books," Elias Matta, an opposition lawmaker and vice

president of the energy and oil commission, told Reuters on the sidelines of the National Assembly.

"The country wants to know how the money from the Chinese funds were spent. We also want to investigate what the real cost of production is. And why haven't they done the output increases they talked about so much? We're going to have a lot of work in this commission," he added with a smile. Venezuela has received some \$50 billion in financing from China through an arrangement under which it repays loans in shipments of crude and fuel.

The financing, whose fine print is not disclosed, has been a crucial boost to

the South American country, especially as the price of its heavy-oil crude slumps, aggravating a cash crunch and potentially grazing a break-even point in production.

That comes on top of what the US Energy Information Administration figures show is falling or stagnating output in Venezuela, which has the world's largest oil reserves, for around a decade.

Disputing these figures, Venezuela says it is shoring up production thanks to the heavy-crude-rich Orinoco region, countering natural declines in its mature fields.

Since September 2014, PDVSA has been led by Eulogio del Pino, a Stanford-educated engineer per-



A worker of the Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA holds a flag with the company logo, during a meeting with Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro outside Miraflores Palace in Caracas on 12 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ceived to be trying to reform the Caracas-based company critics say has become bloated. "I think at some point the president of PDVSA will have to come to the Assembly and the commission so we can resolve some important issues," added Matta,

who hails from the traditional oil-producing state of Zulia, on the border with Colombia.

Congress may also seek to call in Rafael Ramirez, who presided over PDVSA for a decade and is now Venezuela's envoy to the United

Nations in New York, according to Matta.

"We want a healthy oil industry, an oil industry that can generate the income we so badly need right now," he added before slipping into the legislative session.—Reuters

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The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Date 21 January 2016 imm@kcyangon.com

Argentine court triggers search for Franco-era victims in Spain

GUADALAJARA (Spain) — Spanish campaigners dug up a mass grave on Tuesday in a search for victims of the country's civil war and the fascist dictatorship it put in place, as an Argentine court puts pressure on Spain to confront its troubled past.

The exhumation, expected to last several days, is the first agreed to by a Spanish court at the behest of the Argentine investigators.

Hundreds of Spaniards turned to the Argentine court two years ago for help in uncovering crimes committed during the 1936-1939 civil war and the subsequent 36-year dictatorship of General Francisco Franco, by using an international human rights law.

On the edge of a cemetery in Guadalajara, some 50 km from Madrid, vol-

unteers dug open a grave believed to hold 22 or 23 bodies after a campaign by 90-year-old Ascension Mendieta, who is seeking her father's remains.

"I'm overwhelmed by all this, but I know we're going to get there and get what we wanted," she told Reuters TV. "After this I can die in peace."

Her father Timoteo, who fought against Franco's forces, is believed to have been shot amid reprisals after the war ended.

Hundreds of thousands of people died during the conflict, with atrocities committed on both sides. The victors under Franco went on to execute thousands of people after the war, according to British historian Paul Preston's book "The Spanish Holocaust".

Forty years after Fran-

co's death, the Argentine-led investigation into possible crimes against humanity during his rule could revive a movement to confront Spain's past, which gained prominence after the Socialists came to power in 2004.

A historical memory association, which helped with the dig in Guadalajara, has carried out several exhumations in recent years at the request of families. But building legal cases in Spain has been impossible. The country passed an amnesty law in 1977 which pardoned the crimes of the Franco government.

Campaigners hope the latest exhumation could open the door to more under the court's investigation, said Ana Messuti, a lawyer working with the relatives of Spanish victims in the Argentine case.

So far, the investigation has met with mixed success, after a Spanish court last year rejected an Argentine judge's request to arrest and extradite 20 former Spanish officials.

For Spaniards born since the country's return to democracy after Franco's death, the civil war divisions and stories still resonate, even as many turn to new political alternatives that represent a break with transition-era forces. Elena Garcia, Mendieta's 21-year-old grand-daughter, called on authorities to do more to locate and deal with mass graves, arguing such efforts were long overdue.

Many say they simply want to give their relatives proper burials, even decades later. For others, the push for exhumations is an unwelcome way of reviving old wounds.—Reuters

Argentina, citing emergency, authorises force against drug flights

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina decreed measures on Tuesday designed to help fight drug trafficking, vowing to crack down on smugglers using the country as a transshipment point for Bolivian and Peruvian cocaine destined for the lucrative markets of Europe.

Declaring a nationwide public security emergency, the country's new president said the army would be allowed to "identify, warn, intimidate and use force" against drug flights.

"The resolution in-

cludes strong control of air space," said a statement from Mauricio Macri, who won the presidency in November promising to straighten out Argentina's troubled economy and step up anti-narcotics efforts after what he called years of inaction by his predecessor, Cristina Fernandez.

The measure overhauls Argentina's border security network, promising efficient coordination of customs and law enforcement.

It came days after the end of a two-week manhunt for three criminals convict-



Argentina's President Mauricio Macri. PHOTO: REUTERS

ed of drug-related killings, whose escape from prison gripped the country and pointed to corruption in the security forces. Argentina is a major soy, wheat and corn exporter. International

drug enforcement officials have called the country's main grains port city, Rosario, the "Tijuana of Argentina," comparing it to the Mexican border city used to move cocaine into the United States.

Experts say drugs enter Argentina from Andean cocaine-producing countries to the north. Smuggling routes narrow the closer the shipments get to Rosario, increasing violence among gangs that want to control the final steps toward the shipping lanes of the South Atlantic.—Reuters

Congo cobalt mined by children may be in your mobile phone

KINSHASA — Cobalt used in batteries for phones, laptops and electric vehicles could come from mines in Democratic Republic of Congo that use child labour, an Amnesty International report said on Tuesday.

Working with campaign group African Resources Watch (Afriwatch), Amnesty accused technology giants including Apple, Samsung SDI and Sony of lax oversight of the supply of cobalt from mines in Congo to smelters and on to battery-makers.

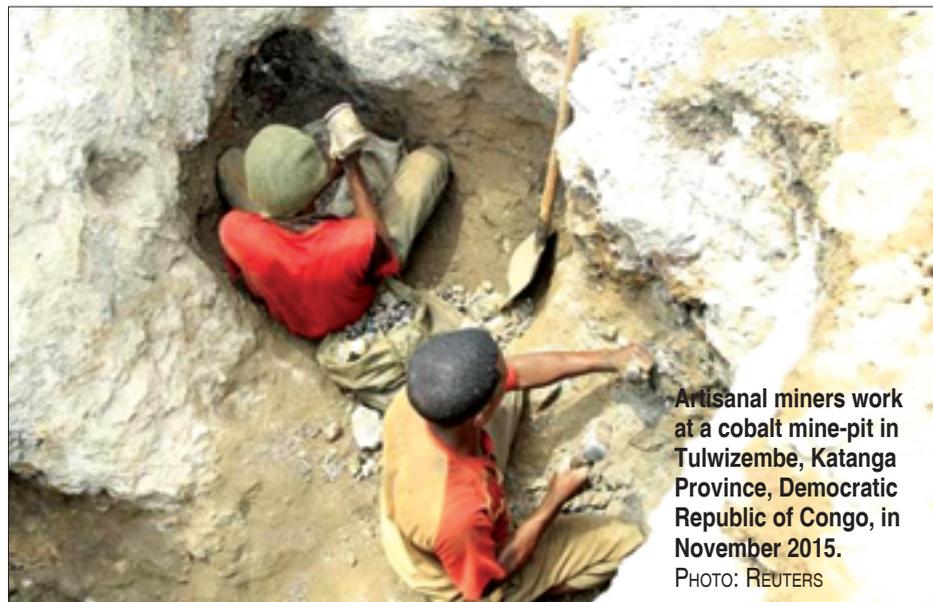
As a result, consumer products sold across the globe could contain traces of the metal produced each year by informal Congolese mines without companies knowing, the report said.

“It is a major paradox of the digital era that some of the world’s richest, most innovative companies are able to market incredibly sophisticated devices without being required to show where they source raw materials for their components,” Afriwatch executive director Emmanuel Umpula said.

In a statement issued in response to Amnesty’s research, Apple said it had a zero tolerance policy towards child labour and was evaluating ways to improve its identification of labour and environmental risks.

Samsung SDI said it conducted written evaluations and on-site inspections of all suppliers to certify compliance with human rights, labour, ethics, environment and health standards.

Sony did not respond to emailed requests for comment. Millions of Congolese work in informal mining,



Artisanal miners work at a cobalt mine-pit in Tulwizembe, Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of Congo, in November 2015.
PHOTO: REUTERS

with rudimentary tools and usually without legal authorisation. They often scavenge in the waste heaps of larger mines.

The report, based on research in Congo’s mining heartland, singled out a smelter in southern Congo owned by Congo Dongfang Mining International (CDM), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Chinese mineral giant Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Ltd.

The report alleged that CDM did not check the source of the cobalt it purchased from local buying houses, leading to a “high risk” that it came from mines where children and other workers were exposed to hazardous conditions.

The researchers interviewed 17 children at five mines where they said children as young as seven scavenged for rocks containing cobalt. The researchers said they saw workers from the mines queuing to sell cobalt to buying houses that claimed to sell to CDM.

Huayou Cobalt is the

largest cobalt chemicals producer in China and sold almost \$235 million of the metal in 2013, according to the report.

Once smelted, the cobalt is exported to China before being sold to battery manufacturers who claim to supply top-end electronics companies including Apple, Samsung, Sony and 13 others, the report said.

In a written response quoted in the report, Huayou Cobalt said it had “reasonably presumed that the behaviours of suppliers comply with relevant regulations of the DRC and taken the corresponding social responsibilities”.

A woman who answered the phone at Huayou Cobalt this week and identified herself as Ms. Yang told Reuters the information in the report was not true as far as she knew but added that she was not very familiar with CDM’s operations.

The report also said none of the 16 companies linked to the CDM smelter provided enough detail to re-

searchers to independently verify the origins of the cobalt used in their products. Only one acknowledged the link with the smelter plant.

Reuters could not independently verify any link between the companies and the smelter plant.

Samsung told Amnesty it was very hard to trace the source of the cobalt due to non-disclosure by suppliers and the complexity of supply chains. It denied to Reuters that CDM or Huayou Cobalt were in its supply chain.

Congo’s supply of the metals such as tantalum, tin, tungsten and gold has been under scrutiny since 2010, when laws in the United States required US-listed companies to ensure their supply chain was free from these so-called “conflict minerals”.

But cobalt has received scant regulatory attention, although strife-torn Congo is the source of more than half of global supply. Amnesty and Afriwatch said they hoped the research will trigger action.—Reuters

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES— FIRMS SELECTION)

Country : MYANMAR

Project : Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management (airbm) Project

Credit No.: IDA 55590

Project ID: P146482

Assignment Title: Preparation of Detailed Designs and Construction Supervision of PMU building at DWIR Compound

Reference No. C1.4.21

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, National Water Resources Committee (NWRC) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Ayeyarwady Integrated River Management (AIRBM) Project Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems (DWIR), MOT is the implementing agency of the AIRBM through the Project Management Unit (PMU) established under the supervision of the secretary of NWRC and DG of DWIR, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services.

The consulting services (“the Services”) include:

- 1) Preparation of detailed engineering designs required for construction of the new building of approximately 1200 m² located at DWIR Compound, Yangon. Terms of Reference (TOR) and the Preliminary designs are available in the PMU Office at the address given below for review of the interested consultants.
- 2) Preparation of associated technical specifications and BOQs
- 3) Assistance in preparation of bidding documents.
- 4) Supervision of the construction activities during the construction period.

Designs are expected to be completed approximately within 2 months and, following the tender of the construction works, construction of the building is expected to be completed within 6 months.

The PMU now invites eligible consulting firms (“Consultants”) to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The short listing criteria are:

- Reputable Architect / Architectural firms with combined experience in preparation of Engineering designs and providing construction supervision services with at least 10 years of experience with a demonstrable track record of rendering architectural concept / design services / construction supervision services;
- Architectural and Engineering Design Consultancy firms shall have a Team Leader/Civil Engineer a Graduate in Civil Engineering with at least 5 years of Experience in Detailed Engineering Design; and
- The Consultancy firm should have completed and worked for at least 3 projects in the last 5 years at the same level.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank’s *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants [under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants]* by World Bank Borrowers dated July 2014 (“Consultant Guidelines”), setting forth the World Bank’s policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Selection Based on the Consultants’ Qualifications (CQS) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours 09:30 to 16:00 hours.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail, or by e-mail) by **12 February 2016**.

Ayeyarwady Integrated River Basin Management (AIRBM) Project, C/O DWIR, Ministry of Transport

Attn: U Win Hlaing, Project Director

AIRBM Mailing Address: Room (7) Building (1), MICT Park, Hlaing Campus, Yangon, Myanmar

E-mail: dwir.airbm@gmail.com, component1hic@gmail.com, component3director@gmail.com.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (049 7JR)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (049 7JR) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CMA CGM**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (125N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (125N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.1.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 03 VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 03 VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.1.2016 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
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Phone No: 2301186

'X-Files' reunites Mulder and Scully in search for a truth closer to home

LOS ANGELES — For nine years on Fox's hit sci-fi show "The X-Files," FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully searched for an alien truth that was seemingly hidden in the skies. But as they return to screens this week, the truth might be much closer to home.

Starting Sunday, six new episodes will reunite Mulder, played by David Duchovny, and Scully, portrayed by Gillian Anderson. The pair spent nine seasons investigating cases involving government cover-ups, unidentified flying objects and "monsters" stemming from folklore.

From 1993 to 2002 the series followed Mulder, a dogged believer in extraterrestrial existence and unexplained phenomena, and Scully (Gillian Anderson), a skeptic with a medical degree, who tried to debunk her partner's theories.

The series ended with the two on the run as an alien invasion threatened human existence.

As the pair reunite, the years have taken a toll. Scully is a surgeon, while a depressed Mulder has isolated himself from the world. They are not in a relationship, and neither is in the FBI any more.

The world, meanwhile, has only served up more unexplained phenomena, said series creator Chris Carter.

"Conspiracy has gone mainstream," Carter told Reuters.



Cast members Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny pose at a premiere for "The X-Files" at California Science Centre in Los Angeles, California on 12 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We've got a government who admits to spying on us, so we are in a brave new world of sorts."

In the new series, an Internet-based conspiracy theorist piques Mulder and Scully's interest with a young woman who says she has been abducted numerous times. The culprits might not be little green aliens, but rather, a human conspiracy.

"It actually tests Scully's faith in science being able to explain everything as it always has," Carter said. "It lights a fire under Mulder. I think that it not only reignites the series, but the quest of the two characters."

Carter said "The X-Files" could continue as a limited series, pending ratings and Duchovny

and Anderson's respective schedules as both have had success post "X-Files."

The "X-Files" finale in 2002 coincided with a shift in people's perceptions of the US government in a post-9/11 world, Carter said.

"The idea that the government was conspiring against us was contradictory to what people wanted to believe, which is that the government could protect us," Carter said.

But in 2016, conspiracy theories still run rife on the Internet and UFOs still perplex people.

"I believe that we are all interested in the supernatural, whether it be faith, or science," Carter said.—Reuters

Grammys to air live on West Coast for first time

LOS ANGELES — For the first time ever, this year's Grammy Awards will be aired live in the Pacific and Mountain time zones.

Stations that choose to participate in the live broadcast will air the 58th annual award show from 5-8:30pm PST and 6-9:30pm MST. Last year's Grammys received 24.8 million viewers, reported Billboard.

"We've discussed this with CBS for years, but a variety of factors came together this year, and we collectively agreed that we had the perfect opportunity to try a new model and see how viewers respond," said the Re-

cording Academy and GRAMMY Foundation president Neil Portnow.

"I'm very pleased to share that, for the first time, west coast TV viewers will be able to watch the GRAMMY Awards live."

The CBS awards show will join the Oscars, the Emmys and the Golden Globes in being broadcast live coast-to-coast.

LL Cool J hosts the upcoming Grammy Awards at the Staples Centre in Los Angeles on 15 February, now airing live across the country via participating CBS affiliates and owned stations at 8pm EST.—PTI

Lady Gaga to perform tribute to David Bowie at Grammys?

NEW YORK — Pop star Lady Gaga will reportedly perform a tribute to legendary musician David Bowie, who died last week after battling cancer, at the upcoming 2016 Grammy Awards.

Organisers are planning a tribute to Bowie at the upcoming ceremony and are considering Gaga to be part of it, reported the *New York Post*.

"Lady Gaga is quietly mourning David Bowie and will pay tribute to him at the Grammy Awards," sources said.

Another source close to the 29-year-old songstress added, "There's been discussions about a Bowie tribute, but nothing is confirmed yet."

Since she began working in the music industry years ago, Gaga has made no secret of her love and admiration for Bowie.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS



Amitabh Bachchan's 'TE3N' to release on 20 May

MUMBAI — Megastar Amitabh Bachchan's next, "TE3N", which has been produced by Sujoy Ghosh, is set to hit theatres on 20 May this year.

The film, helmed by Ribhu Dasgupta, also stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the lead role.

"#TE3NtheFILM... Releasing 20 May, 2016... 2 months non-stop shoot and out to the audience... SUPER!" Bachchan tweeted.

Actress Vidya Balan will be seen in a special appearance as a cop in the movie, which will mark the reunion of the "Dirty Picture" star with Sujoy and Nawazuddin with whom she last worked in the 2012 thriller "Kahaani". Vidya and Bachchan, earlier worked in the 2009 drama "Paa", where she played mother to the latter, then 67 years, suffering from Progeria.

Just like "Kahaani", "TE3N" has also been shot in the Kolkata. Dasgupta has previously directed the 2014 TV drama mini-series "Yudh" which starred Big B.—PTI

'Sherlock' season four won't arrive until 2017

LOS ANGELES — PBS president Paula Kerger has revealed Benedict Cumberbatch-starrer "Sherlock" season four will arrive next year.

"We do have the next 'Sherlock' announced, that is coming up about a year from now," Kerger said.

It was previously announced that the three-episode season 4 would begin production in April.

Addressing the long gap between each season, Kerger said, "As you know, Benedict has got-

ten to be somewhat popular since we began our work with him and he very much wants to continue with 'Sherlock'. As you know, they are produced almost like films, and we're hoping the next one will be about a year from now." "Sherlock" recently returned with a special titled "Sherlock: The Abominable Bride" that is set in a Victorian period.

The holiday special was also released in more than 500 theatres in the US and UK on 5 and 6 January.—PTI

I'd like to kiss Adele: Rick Ross

LOS ANGELES — Hip-hop superstar Rick Ross admits he is in love with Adele's new album 25 and he'd like to kiss her.

"I love Adele. When I see her, I may kiss Adele."

"She speaks for so many people. When I hear her voice, I stop and make that face and say, 'What is this man?' I just gaze off into the sky for a second and think creatively," he said.

And Ross, 39, is keen to hit

the studio with the "Hello" singer, adding, "I've got a beat ready for her if I ever run across her."

Adele recently proved her love of hip-hop after joining British comedian and TV host James Corden for a 'carpool karaoke' sketch on his US talk show, during which she rapped along to Nicki Minaj's verse on Kanye West's 2010 hit "Monster", which also featured Ross and Jay Z.—PTI

Snow disrupts traffic in central Japan



A woman walks her bicycle on a snow-filled road near Nagoya Castle in central Japan on 20 January. Heavy snow and stormy winds were expected to continue on the day in wide areas of the country, mainly along the Sea of Japan coast. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

NAGOYA — Heavy snow hit wide areas of the Japanese archipelago yesterday, with traffic disrupted in the Tokai region of central Japan which is usually unaccustomed to snowfall.

The cities of Nagoya and Gifu saw up to 9 centimetres of snow. Bullet train services on the Tokaido Shinkansen Line were delayed by up to about 70 minutes, inconveniencing around 110,000 people, according to Central Japan Railway Co.

At Chubu airport in Aichi Prefecture, two international flights bound for Seoul and China's Tianjin and six domestic flights to such destinations as Sapporo and Kyushu were canceled, the airport operator said.

JR Nagoya Station was crowded with passengers affected by the traffic disruption due to the snow.

In the city of Nakasugawa in Gifu Prefecture, two people in a light truck sustained minor injuries when they collided with an oncoming snowplow, police said.—Kyodo News

Bollywood A listers' off-beat on screen pairing in 2016

MUMBAI — The year 2016 will see Bollywood top stars, from the three Khans — Shah Rukh, Aamir and Salman to Hrithik Roshan and Ajay Devgn, pair opposite relatively younger and fresh faces on screen.

Shah Rukh, who in the past has given a dream start to the career of actresses like Anushka Sharma and Deepika Padukone, will be seen opposite three newcomers in his upcoming two films "Fan" and "Raees".

Popular face of Pakistani entertainment industry, Mahira Khan will be making her Bollywood debut opposite the 50-year-old actor in "Raees".

While in Maneesh Sharma's "Fan", Shah Rukh will share screen space with debutantes Waluscha De Sousa and Shriya Pilgaonkar, daughter of Marathi actor Sachin.

Aamir will be seen opposite popular TV actress Sakshi Tanwar in his sports-drama "Dangal".

Sakshi, best-known for playing the role of Parvati in the hit TV show, "Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii", is playing the "Dhoom 3" actor's wife in the film.

Salman, too, will be seen for the first time opposite actress Anushka Sharma in Yash Raj Film's "Sultan".

Anushka previously worked with Shah Rukh and Aamir in "Jab Tak Hai Jaan" and "PK" respectively.

Superstar Akshay Kumar, who has earlier enjoyed successful on-screen pairing with Sonakshi Sinha, Katrina Kaif and Priyanka Chopra, will be seen with actress Nimrat Kaur in "Airlift".

The film marks Nimrat's second full-fledged role after her breakthrough movie "The Lunchbox".

In filmmaker

Ashutosh Gowariker's next "Mohenjo-Daro", Hrithik will share screen space with former beauty pageant contestant Pooja Hegde, who makes her Bollywood debut with the period drama.

This will be the second time the "Bang Bang!" star will be paired with a new face after his own debut "Kaho Na... Pyar Hai!" which also marked the Bollywood in-nings of actress Ameesha Patel.

Grand-niece of legendary actor Dilip Kumar and Saira Banu, Sayesha Saigal, will be paired opposite Ajay in his much-ambitious Diwali-release "Shivaay".

Another Khan to be seen with a new female face will be actor Irrfan Khan. The "Talvar" actor

will be playing husband to Iranian-French actress Golshifteh Farahani in Anup Singh's "The song of Scorpions"—PTI

Takiguchi, Motoya share Akutagawa award, Aoyama wins Naoki Prize

TOKYO — Novelists Yusho Takiguchi and Yukiko Motoya have jointly won the prestigious Akutagawa Prize for emerging authors, while Bumpei Aoyama has won the Naoki Prize for popular fiction, the selection committee said Tuesday.

Takiguchi, a 33-year-old native of Tokyo, won the 154th prize for his work "Shindeinai Mono" (Those Who Are Not Dead), about a dead man's large group of relatives remembering him at his wake.

Motoya, a 36-year-old playwright and theater pro-

ducer hailing from central Japan's Ishikawa Prefecture, won with "Iruai Konin Tan" (Tales of Marriage to a Different Sort). The humorous work describes a married couple whose faces come to resemble each other.

Motoya had been nominated for the prize three times in the past.

Aoyama — a 67-year-old native of Yokohama near Tokyo, who began writing historical fiction in his 60s — was awarded the Naoki Prize for his work "Tsuma o Metoreba" (Taking a Wife), a collec-

tion of stories depicting a cross-section of Japanese society in the Edo period.

The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Tokyo in late February, with each carrying 1 million yen (\$8,500) in prize money.

The Akutagawa Prize was founded in 1935 in memory of renowned Japanese novelist Ryunosuke Akutagawa, while the Naoki award, also created in 1935, is named after popular writer Sanjugo Naoki.

Nominations for both prizes are received twice yearly.—Kyodo News



Novelists Yukiko Motoya (C) and Yusho Takiguchi (R), winners of the Akutagawa Prize for up-and-coming authors, and Bumpei Aoyama, winner of the Naoki Prize for popular fiction, hold up their award-winning works while posing for a photo at a hotel in Tokyo on 19 January 2016. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in Tokyo in late February. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

mitv Myanmar International

(21-1-2016 07:00 am ~ 22-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Unique Pattern Of Myanmar... A Trend Of ChinTraditional Dress
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Exquisite Myanmar Silk
08:45	Am	Famous Pagodas of Sagaing
08:53	Am	Young Artist: Maw Thu Da Nu
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	The Art of Making Glaze Ware
09:44	AmChanges
10:03	Am	News
10:27	Am	Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Ep-4)
10:39	Am	On the River

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Travel To The Southern Part of Shan State (Kalaw)
07:44	Pm	Myanmar Betels
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Win Pe
08:39	Pm	Sticky Shan Snack
08:45	Pm	Chef Life "Thit Htoo"

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

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

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(21-1-2016, Thursday)

6:00 pm	8:00 pm
• The Mirror Images of The Musical Oldies	• TV Drama Series
6:15 pm	8:50 pm
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	• Musical Programme
6:30 pm	9:05 pm
• Fashion Show	• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
6:45 pm	9:25 pm
• Nay Ma Win Ah Hla Myar	• Documentary
7:10 pm	9:50 pm
• TV Drama Series	• ASEAN Cultural Fair-2014
	10:10 pm
	• Myanmar Video

From 21.1.2016 (Thursday) 06:00 Pm
To 22.1.2016 (Friday) 06:00 Pm

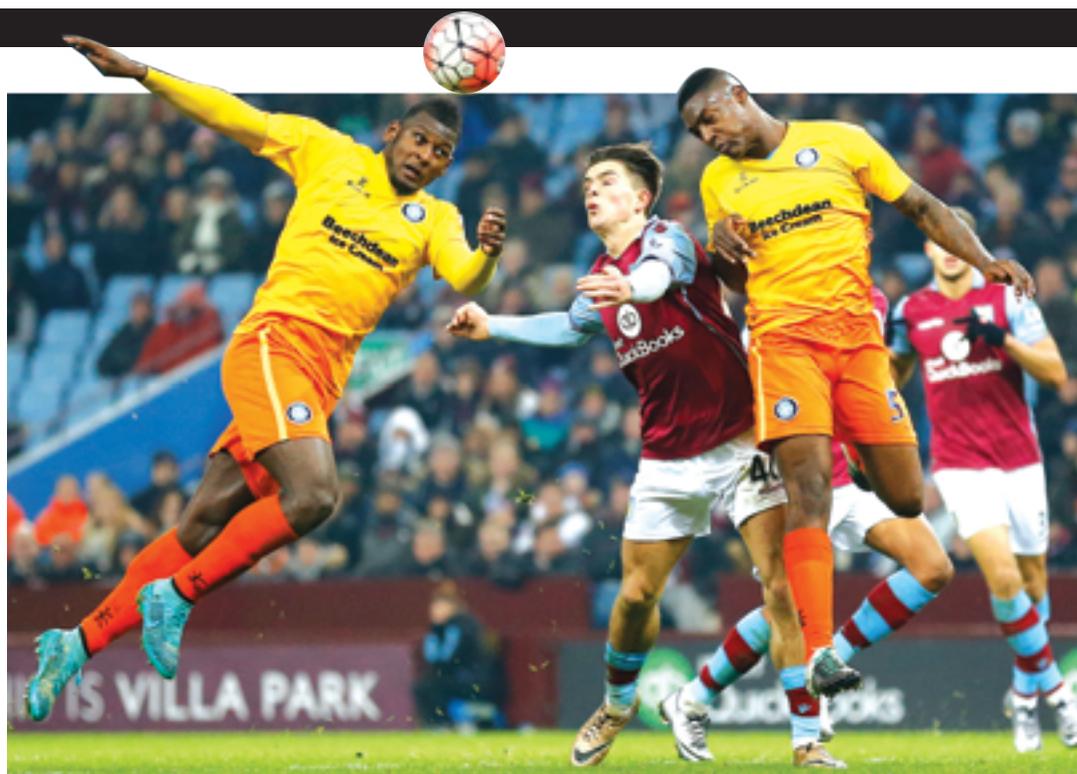
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

Villa put league troubles aside to advance in FA Cup

LONDON — Aston Villa forgot their Premier League woes and moved into the fourth round of the FA Cup with an unconvincing 2-0 win over fourth tier Wycombe Wanderers in their third round replay at Villa Park on Tuesday.

A 75th minute header from Ciaran Clark and a last minute strike from Idrissa Gueye settled the tie as Villa, beaten finalists last season but currently bottom of the Premier League, won for only the fourth time this season to set up a home meeting with Manchester City. West Bromwich Albion, the only other Premier League team in action, were also made to battle for victory over lower league opposition, seeing off Championship (second tier) strugglers Bristol City 1-0 at Ashton Gate.

The home side, who sacked manager Steve Cotterill last week,



Aston Villa's Jack Grealish in action with Wycombe Wanderers' Anthony Stewart and Aaron Pierre during FA Cup Third Round Replay at Villa Park on 19 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

kept the Baggies out until the 52nd minute when Venezuela international Salomon Rondon, West Brom's record 12.0 million pounds (\$17.00 million) signing, trapped the ball on his chest before sweeping it home. West Brom will face third tier Peterborough United at home in the next round. Like Villa, debt-ridden Bolton Wanderers are another

club whose glory days seem long gone but they also enjoyed a much-needed win.

Four-times FA Cup winners Bolton, struggling at the bottom of the Championship and facing a fight for survival with debts of 172.9 million pounds, won their replay against minor league Eastleigh 3-2 at the Macron Stadium. Eastleigh, who play in the

fifth tier National League, gave Bolton an early scare when they took the lead after 11 minutes through fullback Joe Partington. Bolton, who face a winding-up order from the tax authorities at the High Court next month, came back by scoring twice in four minutes through Gary Madine and Dean Moxey just before half-time. —Reuters

Myanmar chess players booked for HD Bank Cup

SELECTED chess players from Myanmar are set to take part in the 6th HD Bank Cup International Open Chess Tournament 2016 in Viet Nam, according to the Myanmar Chess Federation on Tuesday. Win Zaw Tun and Nay Oo Kyaw Tun, who are International Masters, and Khin Ko and Sithu will be competing in the tournament, said the MCF.

"We hope for good results in the tournament as our players are well experienced and they have enough time to prepare," U Myo Zaw Min of the MCF said. According to the MCF, Win Zaw Tun beat international grandmasters and stood first in the Myanmar International Open Chess Tournament 2015. Likewise, other Myanmar chess players did well in the tournament Myanmar hosted. Chess players from ASEAN countries are also set to compete in the tournament set for eight days from 7 to 14 March in Ho Chi Minh City of Viet Nam. —Ko Moe

Serena slams Hsieh to march into third round

MELBOURNE — Defending champion Serena Williams ramped up her bid for a 22nd grand slam title with a dominant 6-1, 6-2 win over unseeded Taiwanese Hsieh Su-wei to charge into the Australian Open third round yesterday.

The top seed had to survive a tough opening match against Italian Camila Giorgi but destroyed the 90th-ranked Hsieh in exactly one hour in glorious sunshine at Rod Laver Arena.

Hsieh, a two-time grand slam doubles champion, prised three break points but the American saved them all and closed out the match with her seventh ace.

"I think I was really focussed and that first round really helped me because I was really just fighting," world number one Williams told reporters after setting up a third-round clash against 18-year-old Russian Daria Kasatkina.

"I really gave a big effort there. Today again, I just wanted to stay focussed for the whole time.

"I don't think I made that many errors today. Something I was hopefully trying to get back into. And

I moved much better today, so slowly but surely, feeling a little bit better."

Williams pulled out of the lead-up Hopman Cup midway through her first match with knee trouble but looked untroubled as she burned around the court to fire 26 winners past the Taiwanese. She was particularly pleased with her scramble for a winner around the net, which she thought was the first of her career, but poured cold water on the idea of pulling off a between-the-legs trick shot in subsequent matches. —Reuters



Serena Williams. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sharapova armed and dangerous at Melbourne Park



Russia's Maria Sharapova. PHOTO: REUTERS

MELBOURNE — Maria Sharapova declared herself free from the worry of a forearm injury after charging into the Australian Open third round yesterday.

The fifth seeded Russian had to pull out of the leadup Brisbane International with a sore left forearm but was in full flight in a 6-2, 6-1 rout of unseeded Belarusian Aliaksandra Sasnovich, the early match at the Rod Laver Arena.

"Yeah, I feel pretty good. I felt I was more confident with my left hand today," Sharapova, runner-up last year to Serena Williams, told reporters.

"That's always something that — especially when it's like in the hand-wrist area — it's in the back of your mind even though you're feeling it.

"I felt really good and confident today about it."

Long a baseline blaster rather than an all-court player with a delicate touch, the five-times grand slam champion had enough comfort against Sasnovich to launch a few dropshots from the baseline, with mixed results.

Sharapova said she had been working on mixing up her game, which some pundits have seen as too one-dimensional to beat top seed Williams, who has long dominated the Russian.

"When I'm aggressive and I have depth on my shots, it's just good to have that variety to bring (players) in, to move forward myself," said Sharapova, who next faces American Lauren Davis.

"I mean, I had a couple of good (drop-shots), I had a couple of really crappy ones. I'd say it was pretty mediocre today.

"It's actually something that I had to add, because I was getting really frustrated losing to my hitting partner all the time.

"He just stood so far back behind the baseline, I was like, just can't handle him beating me so often.

"I have to just change things around. That's kind of when I started getting into that a little bit." "He was a little surprised (laughter). But it started working, so that was good." —Reuters