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Aid, media access to Rakhine 'soon'

ACCESS to northern Rakhine State by news media and human rights groups is expected to happen "soon", said Mr. Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary-General and chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

Mr Kofi Annan called for stability in the state to effectuate development of the region, which has been the site of several armed attacks on police outposts and alleged human rights abuses.

The allegations of abuse prompted numerous requests from around the world for access by aid groups, rights organisations and news media.

"We had the opportunity to discuss at high levels and we were told that humanitarian access will be given for aid to reach the needy," Mr Kofi Annan said.

He also discussed with high-level government personnel about access to information in northern Rakhine to be able to refute widespread rumours about rights abuses in the area, he said.

He acknowledged the role of the security forces in protecting the interests of Rakhine State and urged security services to act in full compliance with the rule of law in the state.

During the past few days, the commission led by Mr Kofi Annan visited parts of northern Rakhine state affected by recent violence as well as areas that remained peaceful, he said, stressing civilians must be protected all times and security services must comply with the rule of law.

He made the remarks at a press conference in Yangon following the commission's trip to the state on a fact-finding mission as tasked by the government.

Mr Kofi Annan completed a week-long tour of northern Rakhine State with members of an advisory commission set up by



Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan talks to reporters in his capacity as Myanmar government-appointed Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, during his press conference at a hotel in Yangon on 6 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

the Myanmar government and the Kofi Annan Foundation.

Last night, Mr. Annan said he had visited parts of Rakhine State which had been affected by the recent crackdown and stated that his committee was "deeply concerned by reports of alleged human rights abuses."

Myanmar authorities have rejected allegations of human rights abuses by residents and rights groups during a crackdown in response to coordinated attacks on three border posts along the frontier with Bangladesh which killed nine policemen.

Mr. Annan met with Presi-

“ The commission was ready to learn about the needs and anxiety of all communities and to listen to and represent the voices of all in Rakhine State: Kofi Annan

dent U Htin Kyaw on Monday and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing yesterday and touched upon the issues related to reconciliation, freedom of movement, citizenship verification, economic and social development of the state as well as preservation and promotion of the rich cultural heritage of the state that he

discussed with leaders and peoples of the two communities in Rakhine State during his trip, he said.

He was encouraged to witness the spirit of cooperation among youths in Rakhine State and said the commission was ready to learn about the needs and anxiety of all communities and to listen to and represent the voices of all in Rakhine State, he said.

For the stability and develop-

ment of Rakhine State, he stressed the need to work together with neighbouring countries and to cooperate with them in order to understand how to control trans-border migration.

Regarding the recent rally led by Malaysian Prime Minister Najib that was critical of Myanmar, U Aye Lwin, a member of the Rakhine commission, said the prime minister of an ASEAN member country should consider that such kind of activity should be carried out only through diplomacy and in a good etiquette, despite the individual's right to freedom of opinion.—GNLM



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမာန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 3rd Regular Session's 12th Meeting Held

PYITHU HLUTTAW approved that it will hear the proposal submitted at 12th meeting by U Thuang Aye, parliamentarian of Pyawbwe constituency at the Pyithu Hluttaw—calling for the Union Government to implement by laying down multi-development projects of SMEs including advanced farming and livestock breeding and giving out grants of land lease by systematically letting rural housing estates for the development of living standard of the rural populace, rural development and alleviation of poverty.

Parliamentarian U Thuang Aye submitted, "The basic needs for alleviation of poverty of rural residents and upgrading of their living standards are education, health, communication, supply of water and electricity for the rural areas, the betterment of their businesses, and earning more income.

In fulfillment of these basic needs, the respective ministries are found to have implemented based on previous structures,

hence no emergence of satisfactory outcome as hoped. Accordingly, the present proposal was submitted to help improve the living standard of the people from the state of poverty to that of progress."

Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Irrigation replied to the question of U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo of Hlaing Township constituency, "There are 40485 cooperative associations registered with the Co-operative Department in the whole country. Cooperative societies are non-governmental organizations. Economic businesses and the enterprises of the organisation are to be implemented under the decisions of the highest authoritative body. Statistics of the cooperative societies are to be examined every six months, with statistics for the whole year to be checked within 3 months after the end of the financial year. During 100-day tenure of the new regime, it was

instructed to divide the profits to its members after publicizing the detailed situations transparently."

In addition, Dr Aung Thu replied to the questions raised by U Sai Ngawn Sai Hein of Maukmai Constituency and U Khun Maung Thuang of Panglong Constituency.

The question raised by Dr Khin Soe Soe Kyi of Pyay constituency was discussed by 10 parliamentarians.

U Htun Htun of Pwintphyu constituency discussed matters concerning agricultural loans with the matter on withdrawing agricultural loans discussed by U Maung Maung of Htigyaing constituency.

Concerning the proposal, continual discussions of parliamentarians, explanation of the organizations at the Union Level and acquisition of the decision of the Hluttaw will be performed at 13th Meeting of the 3rd Regular Session, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint receives Mr Scot Marciel, Ambassador of the United States. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives US Ambassador, Adviser to NDI separately

U WIN MYINT, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, received Mr Scot Marciel, Ambassador of the United States, and Mr Edmond Effendija, Adviser to the National Democratic Institute (NDI), separately in the reception hall of Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to democratic norms, revoking,

amending and rewriting the laws which are not in conformity with the fundamental rights of the citizens, democratic reforms, internal peace and the rule of law and freedom of opinion and press.

At the meeting with the adviser to the NDI, the two sides discussed measures to be taken for further strengthening of parliamentary works.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw reforms several committees



U Naing Thiha. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Myint Htwe. PHOTO: MNA

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW approved the reformation of its several committees yesterday, including replacement of committee chairmen.

U Zone Hyan Htan, Chairman of the International Relations, Inter-parliamentary Friendship and Cooperation Committee, has been replaced with Dr Than Win of Constituency-1 of Mandalay Region.

Dr Than Win, Chairman of the Health, Sports and Cultural Committee, has been replaced by Dr Zaw Lin Htut of Constituency-9 of Mon State and Dr San Maung Maung, Constituency-1 of Bago Region has been appointed as the secretary of the committee.

Dr Khun Win Thuang of Constituency-11 of Kachin State, Chairman of the Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery Development Committee, has been replaced with U Aung Kyi Nyunt of Constituency-4 of Magway Re-

gion while Maj Win Thein, Member of the committee, has been replaced by Maj Chit Oo.

In other news from the meeting, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe replied to a question raised by MP U Min Oo, saying that the ministry has no plans to establish a station hospital in Kyattat Nyaungpin Village in Oaktwin Township, but the ministry would provide the nearest Oaktwin Township Hospital with medical equipment after inspection the situation. In response to a question raised by MP U Naing Thiha of Constituency-7 of Mon State, Dr Myint Htwe said the ministry is considering establishment of a mobile clinic system touring around villages in Kalaraok Village-tract in Ye Township. During the meeting, the parliament's bill committee submitted the second bill amending the Union Election Commission Law. — *Thura Zaw/MNA*

TNLA Attacks Government Troops With Remote-Controlled IEDs

ONE soldier was killed and several were injured when an armed group from the TNLA attacked government troops in Namsam township, northern Shan State on Tuesday morning, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

The attack took place at

about 7am 6 miles south east of Namsam when three improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were detonated by members of the TNLA by remote control, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said.

In addition to the death of one soldier, the blast also

injured multiple soldiers and one civilian with flying shrapnel. The civilian, U Aik Han of Manmai village, was taken to a hospital in Namsam and is receiving treatment. It is learnt that the government troops are clearing the area near the bridge.

— *Myanmar News Agency*

Government troops clear five explosive devices

TATMADAW troops managed to clear one locally made, remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED), four land mines and various accessories — 6 electronic detonators, an 8-inch long wire and 5 cartridges consisting of 5 dry batteries each — in an area clearance operation near the Samar feeder road

in Waimaw Township, Kachin State at about 2 pm on Monday.

Defence officials said the bombs were planted by an armed group of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Tatmataw troops will continue to conduct area clearance operations, officials said. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman received diplomats



Thura U Shwe Mann receives Netherlands Ambassador Mr Wouter Jurgens and Military Attaché Col Allard Wagemaker. PHOTO: MNA

THURA U SHWE MANN, Chairman of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw received the Netherlands Ambassador Mr Wouter Jurgens and Military Attaché Col Allard Wagemaker at 10 am yesterday at the building I-11 of the parliament in Nay Pyi Taw.

Following the meeting, he also received Mr Scot Marciel, Ambassador of the United States, and Mr Peter Lysholt Hansen, Ambassador of Denmark, separately at the same building. Also present at the calls were U Ko Ko Naing, member of the commission, and officials. — *Myanmar News Agency*

State Counsellor holds talks with Advisory Commission on Rakhine State



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with former UN Secretary-General Mr Kofi Annan, chairman of the Rakhine State Advisory Commission, in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received Mr Kofi Annan, Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and former UN Secretary General and his team at Ministry of Foreign Affairs in

Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed recent developments, long-term developments and peace and stability of Rakhine.

Mr Kofi Annan also shared information and his observations on the commission's recent visit to Rakhine State which took place

from 2nd to 4th December, 2016.

Also present at the meeting were Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee on the Implementation of Peace, Stability and Development of Rakhine State, Chairmen of respective Working Committees and responsible officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Indonesian FM arrives Nay Pyi Taw

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi hosted dinner to Indonesian Foreign Minister and party at her residence in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Mrs Retno L P Marsudi and party arrived Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They were welcomed at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Zeya and officials, Indonesian Ambassador to Myanmar and officials of the Indonesian embassy in Yangon.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets Indonesian Foreign Minister Mrs Retno L P Marsudi. PHOTO: MNA

Two men suspected in violent attacks arrested in Maungtaw

SECURITY forces detained two suspects for the armed attacks in northern Rakhine State while conducting area clearance operations near Kyarkhaungtaung Village in Maungtaw Township on Monday, according to the Information Committee of the Office of the State Counsellor's Office.

During interrogation, the security forces found photos of in-

jured and killed people and news reports from RB News stored in the mobile phones of the two suspects, Lolar Mein and Notar Shein.

Evidence was found that they were sending reports and photos. They will be charged in accordance with the law, according to the information committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*

KIA fires multiple mortar rounds at Kachin State township

MULTIPLE mortar rounds were fired at Waimaw township, Kachin State, in the morning and afternoon on Monday by an armed group from the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), according to the Office of Commander-in-Chief of Defense Service.

The shells landed in multiple locations in Waimaw but did not explode, officials said. Government troops exam-



ined the unexploded bombs, finding that they were 107 millimeter rocket mortar rounds produced by a neighboring country, said the announcement released by the office.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Welcoming ceremony for new aircraft held in Yangon

THE welcoming ceremony for the fifth aircraft (ATR 72-600 XY-AMJ) ordered by Myanmar National Airlines was held at its hangar at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

The airline has purchased new aircraft to enhance its image and competitiveness in the international market. The new

aircraft will be used in local and international flights, according to a press release of MNA.

The airlines vowed to provide better services for its passengers and has recently computerised all its systems from booking to arrival. It has also launched a website and an application.—*Kay Khine*

Myanmar violence not genocide: Kofi Annan

FORMER UN Secretary General Kofi Annan told BBC that he would not describe the violence being committed against the Muslim community in northern Rakhine as "genocide".

"I think there are tensions, there has been fighting, but I wouldn't put it the way some have done," he told the BBC after a trip to Rakhine state.

Humanitarian groups now say that 21,900 people from the Muslim community have fled to Bangladesh in less than two months.

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak staged a rally on

Myanmar on Sunday in Malaysia and said genocide was taking place in Myanmar.

The army launched a crackdown in northern Rakhine in early October after co-ordinated militant attacks left nine border policemen dead.

Muslim groups have alleged serious rights abuses, including rapes, shootings and house burnings, and say they are being targeted indiscriminately.

The government of Myanmar strongly denies the allegations.

"You can feel both commu-

nities are afraid. There is fear, there is mistrust. The fear has heightened but we need to find a way of breaking that down and beginning to encourage the communities to connect," he told the BBC.

He said that observers should be "very, very careful" in using the word genocide.

Bangladesh has stepped up security on the border in response to the migrant flows, and has been criticised by Amnesty International for pushing hundreds of the local people back across the border.—*GNLM*

People stage counter protest in front of City Hall

A counter protest was staged in front of Mahabandoola Park near the City Hall in Yangon in the afternoon of 4th December to protest against the demonstrations held in front of the Myanmar Embassy organized by Malaysian political parties and religious organizations which were seen as putting pressure on the internal affairs of Myanmar with regard to the affairs in Rakhine State.

The demonstration was held on that day at about 2 pm in front of the City Hall in Yangon by over 100 Myanmar citizens and Buddhist monks. The demonstrators carried placards which showed a picture of Malaysian PM Najib Razak and which said, "protest against the Malaysian Prime Minister who is trying to put pressure on Myanmar internal matters; protest and denounce the Malaysian PM who

is instigating violence; insulting the Myanmar National flag and Myanmar leaders show clearly the true nature of terrorists." The demonstrators also shouted "Malaysian PM who is encouraging terrorism please study the true history" and "Down with those who are spreading false propaganda to the world".

One of the demonstrators Ko Myo said, "We totally cannot accept the fact that a foreign country is interfering in the internal affairs of our country and putting pressure on us. Right now they are demonstrating in front of the Myanmar Embassy in Malaysia as a means of putting pressure on us regarding affairs in Rakhine state. The Malaysian PM himself planning to lead the demonstrations himself. This is not right. We are staging counter demonstrations to protest this."

Those who participated in the demonstrations said that they had staged the counter demonstrations because the Malaysian PM has been planning to put pressure on Myanmar because the Myanmar government had conducted punitive operations against violent attackers who had launched attacks in Rakhine state. They added that they had plans to stage further counter demonstrations depending upon the developments in Malaysia.

The demonstrations have been led by national activists, the Union of Patriotic Myanmar Buddhist Monks and "Ma Ba Tha" (Association for the Protection of Race, Language and Religion), and on 3rd December afternoon, Sayadaw U Parmaukha of the Magway Monastery staged a solo demonstration against the Malaysian PM.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

Crime NEWS

Man who forced young girls into sex work sentenced to life imprisonment

A man who admitted to trafficking young girls for use as sex workers was sentenced to life imprisonment, while five others were given 12-year prison terms by the Pyay district court on Monday.

According to the investigators, two 15-year-old girls were forced to engage in prostitution in the Middle of Myanmar town Pyay. The victims testified that "we were called by two men with the promise of a well-paid job at

an eat shop in 2015. But, they sent us to a brothel and they took Ks 150,000 each from the brothel keeper. When we escaped from the brothel, our parents complained to the court of law."

After nearly a year-long trial, the judge meted out the punishment on Monday.

"The two girls did not agree to work as the commercial sex workers. The first offender named Myint Kyaing had been in

jail for ten years under the human trafficking law in 2011. And he admitted to the same case again. So, I have decided to give him life imprisonment under section 24/31 of the Anti-Trafficking Prevention Act. The other five have been given 12-year imprisonment sentences under section 24 of the Anti-Trafficking Prevention Act," said Daw Aye Thandar, the prosecutor.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Yaba pills seized in Shan State (South)



SECURITY police in Mongshu searched a car driven by Ma Nan Nun with Ma Nan Khin on board at the Nankut bridge on 5 December and seized 3,940 yaba tablets.

On the same day, members of Anti-Drug Squad Unit 25 based in Taunggyi searched a house owned by Ma Myat Myat Moe on Shwe Nay Kyar Street, Soa San Htun Ward and seized 780 yaba tablets. Police have filed charges against them under the Psychotropic Substances Law and Anti Narcotic Drug Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Awareness campaigns before death sentences, legal association says

EFFECTIVE awareness campaigns should be given priority over demanding the death sentence against those who are committing child rape cases, said Taw Win U Khin Maung Than, vice chairman of the Myanmar Independent Lawyers' Association.

There are scores of campaigns asking for the killing of child rapists. Social media such as Facebook are also full of campaigns demanding the promulgation of a new law under which capital punishment can be given to those who rape children.

But the association of law-

yers said awareness campaigns and poverty eradication should be the first steps before capital punishment.

"Those who crave for sex can commit rape cases anytime, but effective awareness campaigns are more effective.

People who are overwhelmed with the sexual desire will not be afraid to rape. Drug traffickers are a good example.

They are engaged in the drug trafficking business although they know very well that they will be given the death sentence for serious offences. What's more important is to eradicate

poverty, which is the source of all crimes.

I think poverty reduction programmes and awareness of the evil consequences of raping children should be conducted at the same time", Taw Win U Khin Maung Than said.

It is also important to ban websites that contain pornographic movies, said an internet café owner.

Only after launching the awareness programmes should deterrent punishment be meted out, said an MP from Mekhtila, Mandalay region.—*Aung Thant Khine*

Nearly 1 million yaba pills seized in Rakhine State

NINE-HUNDRED thousand yaba pills were discovered and seized by the Myanmar Navy on Monday from a boat off the coast of Myanmar near Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, according to the State Counsellor Office's Information Committee.

As the Myanmar Navy was conducting operations in Myanmar waters on Monday at about 4pm, a Navy vessel saw a boat with five men on board and several large sacks. In the process of searching the boat, 900,000 yaba tablets imprinted with two letters, WY, were found in four sacks and two tins.

In a separate incident, members of a security force searched a house owned by Annawar in



The yaba pills seized in Rakhine State. PHOTO: MNA

Shwesar Seti village in Maungtau Township and seized 1,500 yaba tablets hidden in a pile of firewood under the house, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Action taken against corrupt municipal staff

EIGHT staff members, including the Mohnyin executive officer from the Mohnyin Township development committee, have had departmental action taken against them recently by the Kachin State Government.

The action against the municipal staff occurred after local residents sent complaint letters to the Kachin State Government development affairs minister, saying that municipal servants are cheating them by asking for money for property taxes written on paper using the FriXion Clicker 05 Ball Pen, which is prohibited from use by the following clause of the relevant provision: "Do not use on legal or official documents

(or for) examinations. (When) the temperature reaches 60°C, FriXion ink will be colourless when writing. To restore colour, cool to at least- 10°C in freezer". The FriXion Clicker pen, made by Pilot, is erasable and its ink changes colour depending on the temperature.

A departmental enquiry was made by authorities as directed by state development affairs officials on 9 and 10 November.

A deputy officer's punishment was suspension of promotion for a two-year period plus a strong warning. The six clerks were demoted one step. The executive officer was given a strong warning.—*Salai Mang Ngai*

Eleven roads, eleven drains to be repaired in Kamayut

ELEVEN roads and eleven drains will be repaired in early December in Kamayut township, Yangon region. The project will spend Ks100 million from the Union Hluttaw budget, it is learnt.

"We planned to implement over 20 projects. According to the development budget law, the first priority is supplying drinking water. But Kamayut township doesn't need water. Our township needs to have the roads

and drains repaired," said, Kamayut township Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Kyaw Min.

"We will implement the project with full transparency in the use of the union budget," he added.

The development fund for the 2016-2017 financial year was handed over with a ceremony in the Kamayut township general administration office on 3 December.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

CB Bank, Samsung Myanmar launches 'CB Bank-We PLAN'



PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

CB Bank and Samsung Myanmar announced yesterday that they will be working together as long-term partners to introduce Myanmar people to the advantage of install payment called CB Bank- We PLAN.

CB Bank-We PLAN is the new service using electronic payment to serve the needs of customers for the high ticket items purchase; mobile phones, electric appliances etc. with affordable monthly payment.

There will be special offers exclusively for CB Bank Credit cardholders who buy Samsung's products at participating Samsung shops and other partici-

pating shops throughout the CB Bank- We PLAN promotion. The first offers will be available at participating Samsung shops.

CB Bank Cardholders will be able to purchase Samsung products using CB Bank- We PLAN and enjoy the 0% interest promotion starting from 1 December 2016 -30 April 2017.

.0% interest for 6 months for purchases of 200,000 to 1,200,000 MMK. For Electronic Appliances at 19 M9 Shop.

.0% interest for 6 months for purchases of 300,000 to 1,000,000 MMK for mobile phone products at Samsung Mobile Brand Shops.—*GNLM*

LOCAL Business

Over 2,200 job opportunities created from three permitted enterprises

A total of 2,217 job opportunities have been created from three enterprises permitted by the Myanmar Investment Commission.

The three enterprises receiving permits at the Myanmar Investment Commission meeting held on 1st December are in the following industries: garment manufacturing using the Cutting, Making and Packing (CMP) system; manufacturing, distribution and marketing of metal cans; and power system installation and maintenance of telecommunication equipment services.

Kingsrich (Myanmar) Fashion Limited, a wholly foreign owned enterprise, will invest in garment manufacturing in Shwe Pyi Thar

industrial zone, Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Yangon Region. Crown Beverage Cans Myanmar Limited will invest in the manufacturing, distribution and marketing of cans in Yangon industrial zone with a joint venture. Linfra Limited will put foreign investments in power system installation and maintenance of telecommunication services in Hlaingthaya Township.

The Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) reviews the investment proposals on the basis of the opinions and assessments of the region and state governments concerned to check whether the proposal meets the criteria before approval.—*Mon Mon*



An employee works on a production line at a garment factory in Hlaingthaya, Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

6 hotels linked with Jovago offer 10 to 50 per cent promotion

TO boost the number of travellers to Ngapali, six hotels linked with Jovago will offer 10 to 50 per cent promotion, it is learnt.

Jovago has linked with a total of nine hotels in Ngapali which receive a small number of travellers mostly because of costs and difficulties in transportation.

There are four well-known beaches in Myanmar: Chaungtha, Ngwe Saung, Maungmagan and Ngapali. Among them, travellers flock mostly to Chaungtha and Ngwe Saung. However, some visitors who want to enjoy the stillness of nature go to Ngapali beach, a favour-

ite of tourists. Therefore, Jovago is also offering an extra promotion to its customers, said a responsible person from Jovago.

The tourists come to relax at Ngapali beach, exploring the livelihoods of the villagers and the beautiful aquaculture. Hot air balloon rides are available only in November and March, attracting many tourists. With the burgeoning number of tourists to Myanmar, the number of visitors to Ngapali has also risen. Ngapali beach hosted about 40,000 visitors in 2015, according to the ministry of Hotels and Tourism.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Sale of fertilizer, chemical pesticides and herbicides doubled in Thabaung Township

THE sale of fertilizer, chemical pesticides and herbicides doubled in early December in Thabaung Township, Ayeyawady Region, according to the pesticide stores.

Currently, the paddy and crop fields are being faced with an infestation of pests and diseases, resulting in increasing sales of pesticides.

The farmers made advance purchases of the pesticides and fertilizer. The sales are higher when compared to the similar period in last year and also compared to last month, said U Tun Tun Lin, a fertilizer storeowner from Thabaung Township.

Shwe Nagar and Awba brands are most in demand. The farmers usually treat the land using fertilizer in December, said a farmer.

The agriculture department conducts an inspection tour at a time when the paddy fields are infectious with plant diseases. There are over 150,000 acres of land in Thabaung Township in which the locals mainly earn a living from agriculture. —*Myitmakha News agency*

Commuters won't suffer from freeze in SRT-1 bus line operation.

Commuters will not suffer from the halt in SRT-1 bus line running in Yangon,

according to this bus line.

It has been a year and eight months since the bus line began operation in the city and until the bus line came to a halt on 8th December after suffering losses.

"There are other bus lines running this route in Yangon and so, the commuters will not have any difficulty. However, they might be faced with uncomfortable rides," said U Myint Wai, the manager of SRT-1.

The SRT bus line was established in May, 2015, planning to run three routes. But the bus line suffered losses of about Ks700 million. Although the bus ser-

vice was halted, it still was running one route.

The SRT-1 bus line was running with over 20 buses and each bus ran a round-trip route. There were around 50 passengers on each bus.

Despite the suspension of service, the bus line is reportedly gearing up to join public bus companies in cooperation with six companies.

Those who bought prepaid cards for the SRT bus line can withdraw their money up to 31st December at No.8 compound of Bandoola Road Transport, it is learnt.—*Myitmakha News agency*

MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE EXPORT MARKETING & MILLING DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER

1. MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WILL SELL TEAK & HARDWOOD ROUND LOGS AND SAWN TIMBERS BY OPEN TENDERS IN US DOLLARS. PARTICULARS OF THE OPEN TENDER SALES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| (a) DATE & TIME | - (16-12-2016) (12:00)Noon - (19-12-2016) (13:00)Noon |
| (b) COMMODITIES & VOLUME | - TEAK LOGS ABOUT (1119) TONS - TEAK CONVERSION & IN-KANYIN CONVERSION ABOUT (400) TONS - HARD WOOD LOGS - IN-KANYIN ABOUT (2160) TONS |
| (c) PLACE | - TAW WIN HALL, GYOGONE, INSEIN TOWNSHIP, YANGON. |

2. FOR FURTHER DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE HEAD OFFICE AND ALSO VISIT MYANMA TIMBER ENTERPRISE WEB-SITE (www.myanmar-timber.com.mm).
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AGRI'16 LIVESTOCK 16
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7-9 DECEMBER 2016
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MYANMAR

အခမဲ့ ဝင်ခွင့်

မြန်မာ့အကောင်းဆုံး နိုင်ငံတကာ တိရိစ္ဆာန်ကျွန်းမားရေး၊ အစာနှင့် မွေးမြူရေးလုပ်ငန်း ထုတ်ကုန်များဆိုင်ရာ ကုန်စည်ပြပွဲကြီး ဂုဏ်ထူးဆောင်ဆု ဝိသေသ ၂၀၁၆ ခုနှစ် • တပ်မတော်ခန်းမ၊ ရန်ကင်းမြို့

- စိုက်ပျိုးရေး၊ တိရိစ္ဆာန် အစာ နှင့် မွေးမြူရေး ဆိုင်ရာ ကုန်ပစ္စည်း တင်သွင်းရောင်းချ သည့် အမျိုးအစားပေါင်း (၁၅၀) နှင့် နိုင်ငံပေါင်း (၁၆) နိုင်ငံမှ နောက်ဆုံးပေါ် နည်းပညာများ အားတွေ့မြင်နိုင်မည်။
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- စီးပွားရေးလုပ်ငန်းသစ်များ စတင်လုပ်သူများနှင့် နယ်ပယ်သီးသီးမှ နည်းပညာရှင်များ တွေ့ဆုံ နိုင်မည့် အခွင့်အရေး

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Abe's Pearl Harbour visit for remembrance, not apology: government

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's historic visit to Pearl Harbour later this month is for the purpose of remembering the victims of the Japanese attack 75 years ago, not for apologising for Japan's actions, the government's top spokesman said on Tuesday.

"This visit is an opportunity to remember those who died in war, demonstrate a resolve that the horrors of war must never be repeated, and at the same time send a message about the reconciliation between Japan and the United States," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga told a press conference.

Abe will become the first serving Japanese prime minister to visit the site of the Japanese attack on 7 December, 1941 that brought the United States into World War II.

"The prime minister said everything there is to say about his feelings on the war in his statement in

August last year to mark 70 years since the end of the war," Suga said.

Abe's visit to Hawaii on 26 and 27 December comes after Barack Obama in May became the first serving US president to visit Hiroshima, which was devastated by a US nuclear attack on Aug. 6, 1945, in the final phase of World War II.

But Suga said the Pearl Harbour visit is "not linked" to Obama's Hiroshima trip. Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Tuesday he will accompany Abe to Hawaii, where the Japanese leader will also hold his last talks with Obama, who leaves office in January.

Serving as the culmination of the two leaders' efforts to build the Japan-US alliance over the past four years, the meeting will "show the big role that the Japan-US alliance plays for peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region and the international community," Kishida said.—*Kyodo News*

Thai king appoints new members to royal council: palace



A picture of Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun is seen at the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on 6 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BANGKOK — Thailand's new king appointed three new members to his powerful royal advisory council on Tuesday and removed some former members in one of his first acts since taking the throne.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun, 64, was proclaimed king on Thursday, ushering in a new era for the 234-year-old Chakri Dynas-

ty, and reinforcing expectations of institutional stability in financial markets.

He will also be known as King Rama X. His father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, died on 13 October at the age of 88 after reigning for seven decades.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn appointed three officials to an 11-member panel, known as the Privy Council, the palace said in

a statement published on the Royal Gazette website, his first appointments to his main team of advisers.

"This is a very calculated move from King Rama X, which signals compromise while also asserting a new order under his reign," said a Bangkok-based analyst who declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter.

Criticism of the mon-

arch, the regent or the heir, known by the French term *lese majeste*, is a crime that carries a jail sentence of up to 15 years in Thailand.

Those removed from the council included the director of the Crown Property Bureau, which controls the monarchy's institutional assets, worth tens of billions of dollars, and which under the late king leased out swathes of real estate in and around Bangkok, often at below market rates.

Two former military chiefs were also removed.

The new king has already signaled continuity with the reinstatement last Friday of the president of the Privy Council, Prem Tinsulanonda, 96, a former army chief and prime minister, after he served as regent in the period between the late king's death and the new king's ascension on 1 December.

The involvement of some privy councillors in political matters became the subject of controversy in recent years, according to a semi-official biography of King Bhumibol.—*Reuters*

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Korea corporate chiefs deny seeking favours for donations

SEOUL— South Korean corporate chiefs told a parliamentary panel on Tuesday that they were not seeking favours when they made contributions to two foundations at the heart of a scandal that appears poised to bring down President Park Geun-hye.

Still, the head of the GS Group, one of the nine conglomerate bosses summoned to appear at the unprecedented televised hearing, acknowledged that it was hard to say no to the government.

"It's a South Korean reality that if there is a government request, it is difficult for companies to decline," said Huh Chang-soo, who heads the energy-to-retail GS Group and is also chairman of the Federation of Korean Industries, the main lobby group for the conglomerates known as chaebol.

The bosses of conglomerates controlling revenue equivalent to more than half the country's economy were questioned over whether they were pressured by Park or a friend and aide to give money to non-profit foundations, which backed in-

itiatives put forth by Park, in exchange for special treatment.

Park faces an impeachment vote on Friday over the scandal, although even if the vote succeeds it must be ratified by the Constitutional Court, which could take months.

Samsung Group leader Jay Y. Lee, who sat at the centre of the witness table, said Park had asked him during one-on-one meetings for support for boosting cultural and sports-related developments but did not specifically request money.

"There are often requests from various parts of society including for culture and sports. We have never contributed seeking quid pro quo. This case was the same," Lee said, adding that he was embarrassed by the situation and was appearing with a "heavy heart".

Samsung donated 20.4 billion won (\$17.46 million) to the two foundations, the most of any group, and prosecutors raided its offices last month.

Lee denied allegations from lawmakers that Samsung lobbied to get

the National Pension Service to vote in favour of a controversial 2015 merger between two Samsung Group affiliates but said the conglomerate will move to clean up its act.

"I will take all responsibility related to the current situation, legal or ethical, if there is any," said the 48-year-old Lee, the third-generation leader of the country's biggest conglomerate, who received the lion's share of the panel's often-hectoring questioning.

Lee denied knowledge of the group's contribution to the foundations at the time it was made and said he recognises the conglomerate's key future strategy office was at the centre of criticism.

"I am cautious about this since it's something that was created by the founder chairman and then the current chairman (Lee Kun-hee) but as there are negative perceptions about it, I will abolish it," he said.

The office is a key organ within the Samsung Group, responsible for major decisions such as acquisitions or entering new businesses.

The family-controlled chaebol have long dominated Asia's fourth-largest economy, working closely with the government in a system that helped the country rebuild from the ravages of the 1950-53 Korean war, but that, critics say, is due for reform, including improved corporate governance and transparency.

The corporate titans ran a gauntlet of media and protesters as they entered the National Assembly building that sits along the southern bank of the Han River.

None of the chaebol, which are among 53 corporate groups that gave money to the foundations, has been accused of any wrongdoing in the case, but a protestor outside the parliamentary building could be seen holding a sign saying: "Arrest the chaebol chiefs." Friday's impeachment vote sets the stage for Park to be the first democratically elected South Korean leader to leave office early in disgrace. Huge demonstrations have called for her to quit and her approval rating has plunged to just 4 per cent.—*Reuters*

Court upholds deportation order for Thai teenager born and raised in Japan

TOKYO — A Thai teenager born and raised in Japan lost an appeal on Tuesday against a lower court ruling that upheld his deportation order, highlighting the country's deep reluctance to accept foreigners even as its population ages and shrinks.

The Tokyo High Court ruled that Utinan Won, a 16-year-old high school student living without a visa, should leave Japan. Won's mother had already left Japan after lower court judges said her son could win residency if she returned to Thailand.

"Of course I want to stay in Japan," Won told reporters after the ruling. "I'd waited so long for this decision. I'm so sad and pained that it was made so quickly."

The High Court judges made their ruling in little more than 10 seconds, with cries of "Why?" and "Terrible" coming from a packed public gallery.

Won's case has drawn sharp focus on the plight of hundreds of children who, like him, live on "provisional release" — a status that allows those without visas to stay in Japan while banning them from working and traveling freely.

Last month, Reuters exposed the agonizing pathway to residency offered by the Japanese immigration authorities and courts to some families living on provisional release: Children can stay in Japan legally if their par-

ents return to their country of origin.

Tokyo District Court judges said in June Won could win a special residence permit if his mother — who at the time was also on provisional release — left Japan, and if he found another guardian.

Won's mother, Lonsan Phaphakdee, returned to Bangkok in September to give her son a chance to continue life in the only country he has known. Won now lives with a Japanese man who has been supporting the family.

The High Court judges said in a written ruling: "We must say that the (lower court's) decision and the deportation order are legally legitimate."

Although Won does not read or write Thai, he is able to speak the language and is young enough to adapt to life back in Thailand, the judges said.

Won's lawyer, Koichi Kodama, said the judges did not take into consideration the fact that the mother had left Japan and only re-evaluated evidence submitted to the lower court.

Wearing his school uniform and sneakers, Won remained impassive throughout the ruling, his head bowed slightly. Representatives from the government, the defendant in the case, were not present at the hearing.

His lawyer said Won had not yet decided whether to appeal against the latest ruling. —Reuters

South Korea's Park says would wait for court to uphold impeachment



South Korean President Park Geun-hye bows during an address to the nation, at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, on 29 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — South Korean President Park Geun-hye, engulfed in an influence peddling scandal, said if she was impeached she would wait for a court to uphold the decision, an official of her party said on Tuesday, signalling a political crisis could drag on for months.

Parliament is expected to hold a vote on her on Friday, but even if the opposition wins the two-thirds majority needed for

impeachment, the vote must be upheld by the Constitutional Court, a process that could take months.

Park met leaders of her Saenuri party and top official Chung Jin-suk later said the president was willing to accept her party's proposal for her to step down in April, but gave no indication that was willing to resign immediately.

"She will fight really hard to overturn at the

Constitutional Court," said Rhee Jong-hoon, a political commentator at iGM Consulting.

"And if the motion is overturned? She will remain in office until her term is finished. Nothing matters after the Constitutional Court rules against the impeachment bill."

Park, whose term officially ends in February 2018, could become South Korea's first democratically

elected leader to leave office early in disgrace.

Her comments indicated she had not changed her mind in the face of intense pressure for her to resign immediately.

"If the impeachment proceedings take place, and the motion is approved, I will observe the process taken by the Constitutional Court and calmly go along with what's right for the country and the people," Chung quoted Park as saying.

The three opposition parties need at least 28 members from Park's Saenuri Party for the impeachment bill to pass with a two-thirds majority. At least 29 of them are believed to be planning to vote for the bill, members of a breakaway faction said.

Park is accused of colluding with a friend and a former aide to pressure big business owners into paying into two foundations set up to back her policy initiatives. Park has denied wrongdoing but has apologised for carelessness in her ties with the friend, Choi Soon-sil.—Reuters

South Australian grain farmers prepare for biggest yields in 50 years

CANBERRA — South Australian grain farmers are getting ready for what could be their biggest harvest "in 50 years", with the "enormous" yield expected to help the state's bottom line by about 2.3 billion US dollars.

Following crippling bushfires which ravaged South Australia's grain regions last year, farmers now expect a big harvest of wheat, lentil and other crops, which will also

boost their spirits.

Wheat grower John Lush said he was expecting to harvest enough wheat for around 20 million loaves of bread, the biggest harvest he has witnessed in his 49 years on the farm.

"If we could (custom order a growing season), this is (exactly what we'd have ordered): yields were way above average, rainfall was above average, didn't have any hot weather when we didn't need it so most

farmers are happy, which is very unusual," Lush told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Monday.

"Lentil crops have been almost double their average yield; wheat crops are 50 per cent up above normal averages so we're looking at some really outstanding yields."

Lentil farmer Richard Konzag told the ABC the bumper season was good not only for farmers'

pockets but also their mental health as well. Suicide is still one of the leading causes of death among Australian farmers.

"This good season's going to do a lot of good for the community here particularly after what we experienced 12 months ago with the Pinery fire," Konzag said. It is tremendous not only for people's bank accounts but also for their mental well-being too.—Xinhua

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV HARMONY SW VOY. NO (4) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Opinion

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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.

Time to change! So much the worse for you if you cling to bad habits!

Khin Maung Oo

AS per nature, human beings love freedom, justice and peace. But latent greed changes their nature, pushing them to become a villain into our societies. Craving can be controlled by wisdom, consciousness and our beings' collective attempt to control with positive minds. We can name the first two kinds self-criticism and the last one criticism. Ignorance—lack of wisdom and consciousness—begets lack of reasonable judgment of right or wrong, which drives them to total destruction. Similarly, for our collective attempt to control with positive minds, we need courage. As long as a man is not free from fear, we cannot criticize others. Here we need to distinguish criticism from accusation & hu-

miliation.

At the very first, a person may have entered into an institution or organization with a noble intention. Anyone may be adulterated ruined by uncontrollable latent lust. Thus, bribery and corruption emerge nearly everywhere. There are no countries totally void of these malpractices in this planet. With the changing world, our country experienced many changes, a lot of problems and hardships. The worst is moral bankruptcy which is a ubiquity of the country. To put it simply, many of the people were dragged in these malpractices, some of their own will and some against their wishes. Whatever it is, their minds can be said to have been colored. Here I need to say a little. I

wrote the word "many". There were some people with no hints of corrupted characters in our society. They disliked these but kept their mouths closed for many reasons. Some wanted to live in peace. Some were afraid of being regarded to be opposed ones. In other words, they lived on 3 Nots—"မလုပ်၊ မရှင်၊ မပြော".

During the period of five decades, our country saw many changes including epoch-making victories. The recently held election's landslide victory depicts that nearly the whole populace want changes, that is, peace, freedom and justice. They voted in favor of their favorite party by claiming "time to change". They used to say that they have expressed their desire with their

inked pinkies. Quite right in saying so! Our responsibility is not yet finished. We have yet to do many things. If we want changes, we ourselves change our mindsets and bad habits. The government and every individual are responsible to change our society so that we can have a pleasant place to live in. In our environment full of corruption and practices, are we—ourselves, our friends, our parents and relatives—free from these malpractices? Our leaders gave us time to change our habits. When you point one finger, there will be three fingers pointing back to you. Criticism and self-criticism will bring us a better world. Now is the time to change. It will be so much the worse for us if we cling to bad habits!

Poisonous news and the Western Gate

Thapyay

WHEN I became aware of the power of the international media, which can be labeled as script-writers behind the theatre of the world full of conflicts and make paths wherever they go like elephants, I cannot help thinking about their positive potentials to make the world a peaceful and prosperous place, if they could apply their constructive potentials.

While reviewing the causes of various conflicts, I came to think about the violent attacks on a border guard police command centre and two other police outposts in Maungtaw District, Rakhine State on 9th October.

An ugly day

At dawn on that day, terrorists launched coordinated surprise-attacks on border police outposts with violent attackers outnumbering the security forces, killing 9 members of security forces and looting many arms and ammunitions.

It can be seen that the terrorists had coordinated for the attacks for a long time and they were openly challenging the sovereignty of the State.

Furthermore, security forces conducting area clearance opera-

tions along routes of their withdrawal were also ambushed by terrorists who assumed themselves as local residents and they suffered losses of lives, arms and ammunitions.

Stability

The union government is making concerted efforts to restore stability and the rule of law and to implement regional development tasks in Maungtaw.

With the understanding that stability of the area cannot be restored as long as the looted weapons remain in the hands of the terrorists, area clearance operations have been conducted and at the same time, measures are properly taken to take action against perpetrators according to their involvements in the attacks in accordance with the law based on information elicited from interrogations and other sources. Records were also kept throughout the process.

Releasing correct news

The union government has been releasing news about regional security and stability and efforts for regional development transparently as they happen. As correct news is released to the state-owned media as well as the private local media, the international media are reporting correct news from the trusted sources.

On 2nd and 3rd November,



Security forces are partolling along the Nef River between Myanmar and Bangladesh.

officials of the Union Government, the Rakhine State Government and the UNDP, together with ambassadors to Myanmar visited Maungtaw and Buthidaung in Rakhine State and witnessed the act of terrorists, efforts for regional security, stability and development. The UNDP coordinator and the ambassadors held a press conference at the Kandaygyi Palace Hotel in Yangon on 4th November.

Rippling effects of the conflicts

With a blind eye to the 9/10

attacks and the depth of the breaches of law the terrorists committed in carrying out raids on the border guard police posts, some Muslim terrorist organizations built a social network in the name to the invented ethnicity and make terrorists heroes on the websites of their network. At the same time, they systematically propagated fabricated stories on the network by accusing as if the security forces on area clearance duty were committing arsons, human rights abuses, rapes, the use

of force and genocide.

The fabricated news stories, which were completely contrary to the truth, were intentionally shared by religious communities to international media in a well-prepared manner. As the international media also echoed the fabricated and biased news stories repeatedly sent to them, violent terrorist attacks that occurred in Maungtaw were obscured and their fabricated news spread to the world.

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Senior General receives Kofi Annan, chairman of Rakhine advisory commission

SENIOR GENERAL Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received the delegation led by Mr Kofi Annan, chairman of the advisory commission on Rakhine State, in the Call Room of the Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

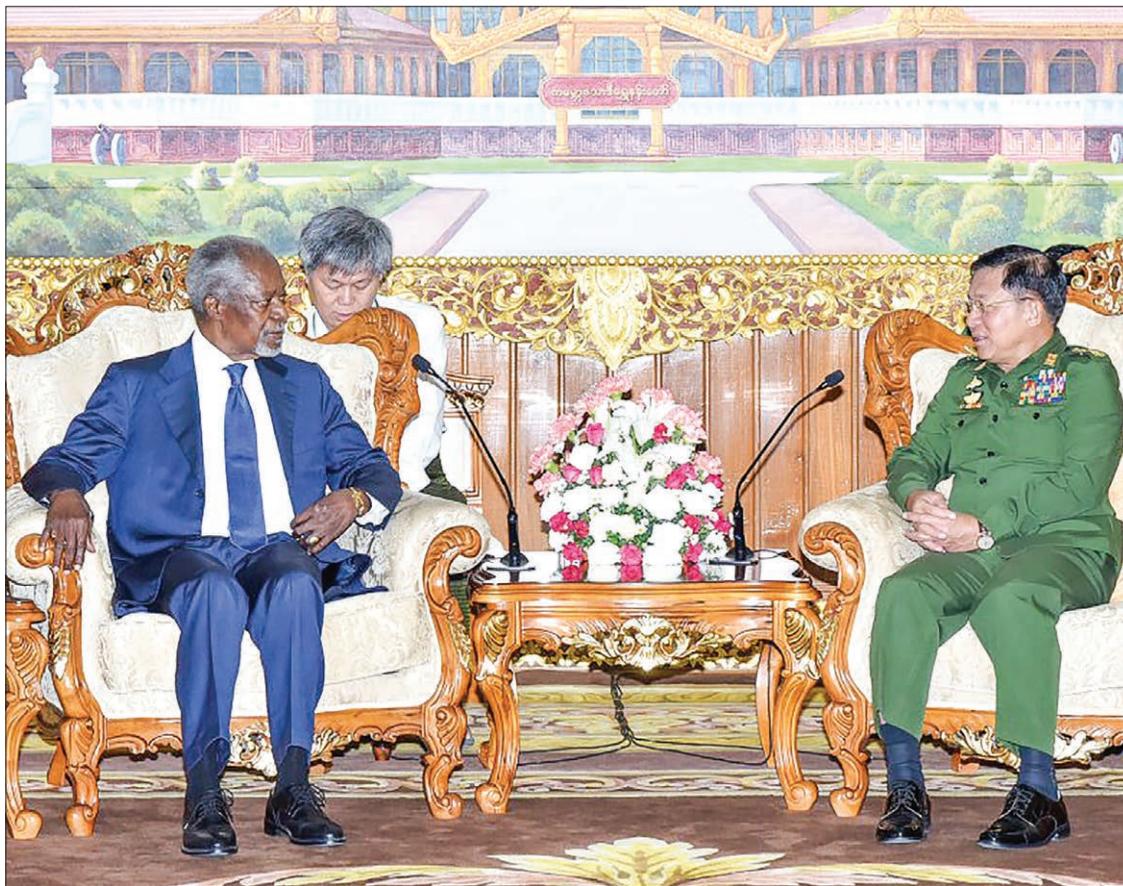
In the meeting, Mr Kofi Annan said he would request the Tatmataw's help with humanitarian efforts.

"The commission will report on situation of the trip to Rakhine State during the present second visit to Myanmar, situation on discussions with the leaders of the State, proposals on social affairs, economic development, national reconciliation, creation of opportunities for discussions among organisations and matters on human rights, with a view to achieving the betterment of long-term situation. For this, we want the Tatmataw to help take part in giving humanitarian support."

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said government troops will help the local residents, all of whom should abide by the law.

"The Tatmataw will fulfil the needs of the local residents, understanding that it is necessary to implement the tasks of socio-economic development of the local populace. Yet, as for the local populace, they need to live in accord with laws and rules prescribed by the State. However, if they live on their own stance, not abiding by the law, to set up their own socio-economic development and to violate the rules and laws, it is unacceptable. As for us, we will cooperate for the emergence of just and fair settlement."

The senior general also received Dr. Nikolay Listopadov, ambassador of the Russian Federation to Myanmar, yesterday afternoon to discuss the history of the long-lasting friendship between Myanmar and Russia, Russia's assistance in reforming Myanmar in 1989, the strengthened relation and cooperation between the two countries' armies, situation to improve in all sectors, including sending an increased number of scholars and cooperation in military techniques. —*Myanma News Agency*



Senior General receives Kofi Annan, chairman of Rakhine advisory commission.

PHOTO: MNA

Poisonous news and the Western Gate

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With the fabricated and exaggerated news of religious and racial discrimination, genocide and ethnic cleansing, instigation of players behind the scene further instigate protests against Myanmar and threats to Myanmar working in some countries.

In the similar fashion, the United Nations, international organizations, civil society organizations and officials from some countries reverberated the fabricated news in order to win favour, to intervene and pressure Myanmar and make the matter go from bad to worse.

Refute with the truth

It is the only way to refute the fabricated stories with the truth and to reveal the truth to the international media which turned a blind eye to the real situation. An emergency news team visited Maungtau and has released information on ground since 1 November.

"We have about 230 households in our village. We left our village in fear because we did not understand the real situation. Now, we have come back to our village. Neither border guards nor government troops raped anyone. No one was forced to work as porters for military operations. We haven't heard of such things. We want to live peacefully," U Nu Hussein told the news team on 6th November.

Concerning the accusations, Village Administrator of Ngasarkyu Village said that



The border guard police is on duty at the western border with Bangladesh.

some villagers tried to run away as they had misunderstanding on the area clearance operations searching for terrorists involved in the violent attacks. Security forces did not rape anyone during the clearance operations. No one was forced to work as porter for the operations. There was no arson and no raid."

"Security forces did not attack any civilians but those who were involved in the attacks left their villages. Some villagers left their villages because of misunderstandings," he added.

"At the night of attacks, shops were set on fire and security forces and local people had to extinguish the fires. No security force raped anyone, killed anyone or forced anyone to work as porters. People of different religions have been liv-

ing in Ngakhuya Village for a long time. There has not been any incident of violence," Village Administrator U Gawgy Aung of Ngakhuya Village told the news team on 6th November.

News has been released that there were some buildings damaged by fire in Warpeik, Kyetyoepyin and Darsargyi Village in northern Maungtau and arsonists got away, but there was a mismatch between the number of burnt buildings in the areas reported by the HRW and the number of damaged buildings seen on field trips. The Information Committee held a press conference on the accusations on 26 November.

U Hla Maung Thein of Ngakhuya Village said that some

people had already moved goods from the shops before they set fire to them and no house was set on fire there.

Following the 9/10 attacks and subsequent attacks in Maungtau district, a total of 528 suspects were detained and among them, 48 were sentenced, 9 were acquitted and one was released on bail but four died, according to the press release on 1 December.

One of the suspects called Mammud Karsi even admitted having planted an improvised landmine with four others at the entrance to Maungnama (South) Village on 11th November and blew up the landmine while three trucks of border guards passed through the road, according to the press release of the Information Committee on 22 November.

The news team also visited the sites where the border guard police command centre in Ngakhuya Village, Ngakhuya Police outpost and Kotankauk Police Station came under surprised attacks and the findings and as well as others obtained while visiting border guard post along the Naf River and the border fence could be useful for the Rakhine State Advisory Commission and the National Level Investigation Commission.

I hope that local and international media will be allowed to cover news in the area to some extent and it was also learnt that authorities are mak-

ing security arrangements for the international media based on the security conditions faced by the emergency news team.

Eliminate suspicions

It is surprising that internal media is reporting their news stories based on fabricated, false and incorrect news stories on the social network. The consequences of their reports can really damage their images.

The international media should exert efforts to verify their reports in accordance with the media ethics so that their reporters are not influenced by outsiders and their reports are objective. Meanwhile, the international media should be careful of the abuse of their influence.

International media that uphold the public interests should be basically honest and correct, exact and sound news should be published in accordance with the media ethics so that they do not exaggerate a situation and work in the interest of the public.

Although visibility is low when snow, like suspicions, falls but when the Sun, like the truth, emerges, all the mist has to disappear and the truth is revealed. Similarly, it is hoped that the situation in Maungtau, which was misunderstood due to fabricated news will be revealed by correct news reported by the international media in accordance with the media ethics.

Merkel's conservatives meet to prepare for 'toughest' election



German Chancellor and leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union party CDU Angela Merkel (C) poses with CDU leaders ahead a CDU party convention in Essen, Germany, on 5 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ESSEN, (Germany) — Chancellor Angela Merkel will rally her conservatives at a party conference on Tuesday to gird for a German election next year that she expects to be “tough like no other”.

Seeking a fourth term in office, Merkel must unite her Christian Democrats (CDU) and try to recapture some of her personal popularity, undermined by the crises that have rocked Europe.

Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum defeat on Sunday and the impending departure of French President Francois Hollande underline Merkel's status as Europe's most experienced leader, but she needs to win back disgruntled voters at home.

The CDU has seen its support eroded by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has profited from popular

concern about the influx into Germany last year of around a million migrants, many fleeing war in the Middle East.

“We know our world is changing. It always has been. Anyone who promises to be able to stop that isn't being honest,” said CDU Secretary General Peter Tauber. “What we are promising is to turn this change in a good direction for our country.”

With Britain poised to leave the EU, Russia testing the NATO alliance and southern Europe's economies struggling, the CDU will debate a main resolution entitled: “Orientation in difficult times — for a successful Germany and Europe”.

The conference is in Essen, a former industrial hub where unemployment is at 11.6 per cent, twice the national average. It is where Merkel was first elected CDU party chairwoman in 2000.

Returning to Essen, Merkel, aged 62 and chancellor for 11 years, must rally her party to fight off the social media-savvy AfD while also appealing to the centre ground.

Since declaring last month she would seek a fourth term, her conservatives have gained support. A survey by pollster Emnid published on Sunday showed support for the conservative bloc — Merkel's CDU and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union — rising by 2 points to 37 per cent, the highest level since January. With her current Social Democrat coalition partners trailing 15 points at 22 per cent as her nearest rivals, Merkel is likely to win the election next September.

But coalition building could then prove difficult, with the AfD likely to enter the national parliament for the first time.—Reuters

Europe suffers Italian blow but bigger tests loom

BERLIN — The resounding “no” from Italian voters to Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's referendum on constitutional reform was not a rejection of the European Union and its single currency, as jubilant populists from across the bloc claimed on Monday.

But the vote, which pushes Renzi out of office, does represent a significant setback for Europe at a time when its leaders are scrambling to mount a credible response to Brexit, the election of Donald Trump in the United States and their stubborn economic woes at home.

In one fell swoop, it adds another country to the list of EU members that are likely to be pre-occupied by domestic politics in 2017, a year in which the Dutch,

French, Germans, and possibly the British, will go to the polls.

And it sends a warning to other European reformers like Francois Fillon, the conservative front-runner for the French presidency, who has promised no less than five referendums to push through his domestic agenda if he is elected next spring.

More immediately, despite the relatively calm reaction of financial markets on Monday, the vote will deepen concerns about Italy's under-funded banking sector and the economic prospects of the euro zone's third biggest member state.

That, in turn, could complicate the calculus for the European Central Bank, which meets on Thursday to decide on the future

of its controversial bond purchase programme.

“This won't push Italy back into crisis for now,” said Marcel Fratzscher, head of the DIW economic institute in Berlin and a former top official at the European Central Bank.

“But it means lost time for a country that faces huge problems with its banks, its enormous public debt levels and high unemployment. There is a significant danger that the reform course will now slow.” Renzi, seen by his European partners as an anchor of stability in a country where political upheaval has been the norm for decades, won just over 40 per cent of the vote in the referendum, a far worse result than polls had predicted.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Security raised at L.A. rail line after threat warning from foreign country

LOS ANGELES — Federal and Los Angeles officials said on Monday they had been alerted by authorities in another country to a “specific” threat against the city's Red Line commuter rail system, prompting them to beef up security and alert the public.

“This threat is imminent, ... it is very specific,” Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck told an evening news conference. “But the credibility still needs to be vetted.”

Law enforcement officials at the news conference said the threat had been relayed to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by a law enforcement agency in another country, where the threat had originated. Officials did not identify the country.

The male caller, speaking in English, had warned authorities in that country of an attack against a Red Line station across the street from the Universal Studios theme park on Tuesday, Beck said.—Reuters

France raises risk level on bird flu to 'high'

PARIS — France raised to “high” the risk level across the country after the detection of several cases of the highly pathogenic H5N8 avian flu strain in Southwestern France farms and in wild ducks in Northern France, the farm ministry said on Tuesday.

The decision was also motivated by the “rapid change in the... situation in France and in several European countries,” the statement said.

France, which has the largest poultry flock in the EU, is still recovering from a severe bird flu epidemic in southwestern France earlier this year which led to a total halting of duck and geese output in the region and import restrictions from trading partners.—Reuters

Kerry says Iran nuclear deal has made world safer, rejecting Trump criticism

WASHINGTON — US Secretary of State John Kerry said on Monday Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers last year had made the world safer, rejecting US President-elect Donald Trump references to the pact as a “disaster” and “the worst deal ever negotiated”. “The region is safer, Germany and the United States are safer, Europe is safer, Israel is safer and the world is safer... It depends on all of us to keep this alive,” Kerry said at an event at which he was awarded the German Order of Merit.

He added that President Barack Obama had already approached Trump about the matter.—Reuters

Kremlin upbraids West for 'modest' response to Syria hospital strike

MOSCOW — The Kremlin regrets that the United States and other countries have reacted in a low key way to the shelling of a Russian military field hospital in Aleppo, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

“We regret that the world community, including our partners in the United States, are reacting very modestly to the tragedy that unfolded with the attack on the field hospital,” Peskov told a conference call with reporters.—Reuters

Vujovic: Investment activity to grow 5.7 per cent

BELGRADE — The reforms and projects underway have led to a 5.7 per cent growth of investment activity, which will be one of the main generators of economic growth in 2017, Serbian Finance Minister Dusan Vujovic said Monday.

“Everybody is acknowledging now that the real growth rate for next year is 3 per cent, which is 0.8 per cent higher than the initial 2.2 per cent projection,” Vujovic said in the Serbian parliament.

Investments will account for 1.2 per cent of the total, net export growth for 0.6 per cent and increased spending for 1.2 per cent, he said. The gradual emergence of spending as an element of higher economic growth is very significant, he said.

Earlier on, everyone expected a 2.8 per cent deficit in 2017, while now the general government deficit is down to 1.7 per cent, including the planned salary increases and the increase of investment activity and capital expenditure, he said.—Tanjug

South Korea expands poultry cull to fight bird flu

SEOUL — South Korea plans to cull more chickens and ducks as it tries to contain an outbreak of bird flu, with a total of around 8 per cent of the nation's poultry population expected to be slaughtered.

The government said on Tuesday that 28 cases of the H5N6 strain of bird flu had been confirmed since mid-November, with another 10 possible cases being investigated.

It added that if the virus continued to spread, the government could issue a so-called 'standstill order' to prevent workers from the poultry industry moving around the country. That would follow similar temporary restrictions that were introduced over a weekend in late November.

The agriculture ministry said in a statement that 4.4 million farm birds had been slaughtered as of Tuesday, with another 2.6 million expected to be culled. That would be over



South Korean health officials disinfect a vehicle to prevent spread of bird flu in Pocheon, South Korea, on 23 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

8 per cent of the country's poultry population of nearly 85 million.

Supplies of chicken, eggs and duck meat have not tightened as of yet, an agriculture ministry official said, but chicken prices are expected to fall as consumer worries grow.

Producer prices for

chickens stood at 1,690 won (\$1.44) per kilogram as of Tuesday, down 4.5 per cent from the November average of 1,770 won/kg, according to data from the Korea Broiler Council.

Cases of human infections from the H5N6 virus have previously been reported elsewhere, with

the virus killing at least 10 people in China since April 2014. No cases of human infections have been reported in South Korea.

Japan has been culling poultry due to the discovery of a different form of bird flu there, while a series of cases have also been found in Europe.—Reuters

Asia-Pacific loses steam in efforts to end hunger

HONG KONG — Even as malnutrition killed millions of children worldwide last year — with many deaths in Asia-Pacific, the region's progress towards defeating hunger has slowed down, a new study has found.

The study, published on Tuesday by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, said although Asia-Pacific halved the number of hungry mouths from 1990 to 2015, in many countries, progress has faltered in the last five years. "The results show that the rate of progress could easily lapse to low levels or could even become negative, resulting in erosion of gains made in the good years," the report said.

For instance, conflict-torn Afghanistan cut hunger rates by 8.7 per cent from 2003 to 2008 but reversed the trend from 2010 to 2015, with an increase of 1.6 per cent. And in Bangladesh, the rate of reduction was less than 1 per cent from

2010 to 2015, compared to 10.9 per cent between 1997 and 2002.

While soaring rice prices and poorer growth in agricultural productivity have played a role, slowing economic growth is the main driving force behind slower reductions in hunger, said David Dawe, FAO senior economist and one of the study's authors.

Economic growth for Asia was 5.9 per cent last year, down from 6.3 per cent in 2014 and an average of nearly 8 per cent over the previous decade. With less money in their pockets, poor families buy less food.

As a result, 12 per cent of the region's population — or some 490 million people — remain undernourished, with most of them in Southern Asia. Region-wide, nearly one out of three children suffers from stunting, which carries severe, irreversible consequences for both physical health and cognitive function.—Reuters

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THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY
NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT**

Invitation for Bids

Date: 5th December, 2016

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

IDA Credit No. : 5727-MM

Contract Title: Concrete Poles for National Electrification Project

Reference No. : C1-G2

1. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards payments under the contract for Concrete Poles for National Electrification Project.

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for supply of spun concrete pole 10 meter and 12 meter, for the total quantities of 94,786 poles to be delivered in calendar year 2017 to multiple destinations in all Regions and States of Myanmar. Domestic preference with the margin of 15% will apply. The goods will be grouped into 10 lots and bidders may submit bid for any one or more lots.

3. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers [edition of January 2011 revised in July 2014] ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to the paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting for the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Manager, Office No.(27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, nep.pmomoep@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents during office hours 10:00 to 16:00 hours at the address given below.

5. A complete set of bidding documents in CD with English language may be purchased by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of Myanmar Kyats 100,000. The method of payment will be transferred to the following account:

Electricity Supply Enterprise, account no. SEE 10316 at Myanma Economic Bank in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The transferred slip shall be submitted with the above application. Once the application and the transferred slip received, the bidding documents will be provided in the CD.

In case of any difficulty in purchasing the bidding documents, interested parties may contact in writing:

1. Director General

Department of Electric Power Planning

Ministry of Electricity and Energy

City: Nay Pyi Taw

Country: The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Email: dep.pssp.info@gmail.com

2. Ms. Xiaoping Wang, Task Team Leader

The World Bank

Address: 30th Floor, Siam Tower.

989 Rama I Road, Pathumwan Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Email: xwang3@worldbank.org

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 10:00 am, 19th January, 2017. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives at the address below at 10:00 am, 19th January, 2017.

Director General Office, Department of Electric Power Planning

Office No (27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Nay Pyi Taw

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

7. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security as described in the bidding document.

8. The address referred to above para 4 and 5 are :

Attention : Director General Office, Department of Electric Power Planning

Office No(27), Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Nay Pyi Taw

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Telephone : +95 67 410203

Facsimile : +95 67 410077

E-mail : nep.pmomoep@gmail.com

Web site : <http://www.moep.gov.mm>

Judge declares mistrial in ex-South Carolina policeman's murder trial

CHARLESTON, (South Carolina) — A South Carolina judge declared a mistrial on Monday after jurors weighing a murder charge against a white former South Carolina police officer who shot and killed a black motorist said they were deadlocked.

A bystander's cell phone recorded North Charleston patrolman Michael Slager, 35, firing eight times at 50-year-old Walter Scott's back as he fled an April 2015 traffic stop.

The video helped to make Slager a national symbol for a wave of police killings of black men in cities including New York, Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri. The hung jury was likely to fuel fresh debate about racial bias in law enforcement and the US justice system.

"Despite our best efforts, we have been unable to come to a unanimous verdict," jurors said in a note on Monday, their fourth day of deliberations after four weeks of testimony in a Charleston courtroom.

Prosecutor Scarlett Wilson, who left the courtroom with tears in her eyes, later said in a statement her office would retry Slager.

"Justice will be had," Scott family lawyer Justin Bamberg told reporters. "I don't think there's a soul in the world who thinks that what Michael Slager did is



Surrounded by family and family attorneys, Anthony Scott speaks at a press conference after a hung jury was announced in the trial of former North Charleston police officer Michael Slager outside the Charleston County Courthouse in Charleston, South Carolina on 5 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

okay." Slager and his lawyers left the courthouse without commenting.

Only about one-third of at least 78 police officers across the United States charged with murder or manslaughter from an on-duty shooting since 2005 have been convicted, according to data collected by Philip Stinson, an associate professor of criminal justice at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. About half of those convicted pleaded guilty.

Slager, who testified during his state trial, told the jury of 11 white people and one black man how he felt "total fear" before shooting Scott, hitting him

with five bullets.

Slager had pulled Scott over for a broken brake light. He said the motorist ran and refused orders to stop, then grabbed the patrolman's stun gun during a scuffle.

Prosecutors said Scott, who was unarmed, fled because he was behind on child support payments and feared arrest. They accused Slager of altering the crime scene by moving the Taser closer to the handcuffed body so he could claim Scott had taken it.

Jurors first indicated they were deadlocked on Friday. At the time, they said one member was holding out against a conviction,

though they did not indicate whether the rest of the panel was settled on finding Slager guilty of murder or a lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter.

After resuming deliberations on Monday, they sent another note that said the majority of jurors were undecided and then requested explanation of legal terms critical to the case, such as malice and self-defence. Judge Clifton Newman provided further guidance, but it did not result in the panel reaching a consensus. All 12 jurors would have to come to a unanimous decision on a charge for the jury to deliver a verdict.—Reuters

Peru's ex-leader Fujimori leaves prison for brain scan

LIMA — Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori said on Monday he has been moved from his prison cell to a health clinic in Lima to undergo testing for a brain condition and to treat problems moving his right shoulder.

Fujimori, 78, has been serving a 25-year sentence since 2009 for graft and human rights abuses during his 1990-2000 authoritarian rule.

Fujimori said on Twitter that he had been admitted to a clinic in Lima to be scanned for risk of brain ischemia, a lack of blood flow to the brain that can lead to strokes, and due to "persistent limitations moving my right shoulder."

Fujimori was treated for two brain ischemias, or restrictions in blood supply to tissues, about a year ago,



Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori leaves the clinic where he was transferred from his prison cell to undergo neurological tests after feeling dizzy and briefly losing the strength in his legs, his doctor said, in Lima, on 31 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

his doctor Alejandro Aguinaga said.

Late on Sunday Fujimori experienced dizziness and found a very large bruise on his right shoulder that extends to his elbow, Aguinaga told

reporters. "He's lucid, calm, waiting for the result of the scan."

Fujimori has undergone medical treatment outside prison several times in recent years for problems ranging from

high blood pressure and depression to a growth on his tongue.

Fujimori's eldest daughter, Keiko Fujimori, narrowly lost her second presidential bid this year, dashing his supporters' hopes that he might be freed from prison with a presidential pardon.

President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, who took office in July, has said he would not pardon Fujimori but would be willing to sign legislation that allows aging prisoners like him serve their sentences under house arrest.

Keiko Fujimori's right-wing party holds a majority of seats in Peru's single-chamber Congress but has not proposed any legislation that would result in Fujimori leaving prison.—Reuters

Japan's greenhouse gas emissions fall for 2nd straight year

TOKYO — Japan's greenhouse gas emissions fell 3.0 per cent in fiscal 2015 from a year earlier, declining for the second straight year, the Environment Ministry said in a preliminary report released on Tuesday.

The fall was partly thanks to further reduction in power consumption at houses, offices and commercial facilities, it said.

Japan's greenhouse gas emissions in fiscal 2015 were 5.2 per cent below fiscal 2005 levels, meaning the country has already met its goal of a 3.8 per cent cut by fiscal 2020.

An environment ministry official said achieving an emissions cut target of 26 per cent in fiscal 2030 from 2013 levels set under the Paris Agreement "will come into sight" if the pace of reduction can

be maintained.

Japan ratified the Paris Agreement on fighting global warming last month.

The gas emissions totaled the equivalent of 1,321 million tons of carbon dioxide in the fiscal year ended last March.

After the idling of most of its nuclear power plants following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, Japan's emissions were on the increase amid a rise in the use of thermal power, but the upward trend reversed in fiscal 2014.

Experts nevertheless called for continued efforts to reduce gas emissions as the figures also reflected temporary factors including declining demand for air conditioning and heating due to the effects of cooler summers and warmer winters.—*Kyodo News*

Four injured as taxi hits pedestrians on sidewalk in central Tokyo

TOKYO — Four people were injured when struck by a taxi that, after being rear-ended, hit a motorbike and a minicar, then jumped the curb and struck pedestrians on a sidewalk in central Tokyo on Tuesday morning, police said.

A woman who was riding a bicycle is in critical condition with a head injury, while the taxi driver in his 60s temporarily lost consciousness, according to the fire department.

The taxi was rear-ended while trying to change

lanes before hitting the motorbike and minivehicle, which were waiting for a traffic light at an intersection in Tokyo's Minamiaoyama district, the police said. The taxi then ran onto a sidewalk, hitting the woman and a male pedestrian in his 50s.

The accident happened when after dropping off a passenger on the left side of a three-lane road, the taxi tried to move to the right-hand lane to make a right turn at the intersection.—*Kyodo News*



A worker checks a valve of an oil pipe at the Lukoil company owned Imilorskoye oil field outside the West Siberian city of Kogalym, Russia, on 25 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

EU nations near compromise on how to counter Russian gas supply risks

BRUSSELS — EU nations are edging toward a compromise on a proposal to guard against gas supply disruptions, agreeing to share details on contracts and cooperate across borders, the Slovak presidency said on Monday.

Cuts in gas supplies from Russia in 2006 and 2009 exposed the bloc's vulnerability — particularly in eastern Europe — in relying on Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom for around one third of its needs.

But the European Commission's bid for greater oversight and to mandate more regional cooperation has raised the hackles of big EU states, wary of it overreaching.

"We were clear today that such a situation (dis-

rupted gas supplies) should not be repeated again," Slovak Economy Minister Peter Ziga, whose country is hosting the EU presidency, told journalists after the meeting of representatives from member states on energy issues.

Despite objections from France and Germany about opening up commercially sensitive information, Monday's political accord paves the way for talks with the European Parliament early next year — the final step in the EU's lengthy lawmaking.

Ministers agreed to the EU executive's proposal for access to details — except on pricing — on long-term gas contracts that account for at least 40 per cent of annual gas consumption or are "key

to security of supply" in member states.

Side stepping objections by many member states to the EU executive's plan to oblige regional cooperation to safeguard security of supply, member states agree to cooperate instead based on risk assessments.

"It's not exactly what we proposed ... but I'm pretty happy with it," Climate and Energy Commissioner Miguel Arias Canete said, referring to the draft law which had sliced the bloc into nine separate regions to pool resources.

The assessment to be carried out by the gas transport operators' lobby ENTSO-G would set the basis for cross-border measures, including emergency supply corridors

along the lines of existing infrastructure.

As a last resort, member states also agreed in principle to reroute gas supplies to neighbouring states in case of cuts once rules are worked out to compensate private suppliers.

European Union sources said member states were also nearing an accord, potentially this week, with parliament over Brussels' request to vet bilateral energy deals between EU nations and countries such as Russia.

The EU executive wants to avoid a repeat of the legal headaches it faced when it ruled that Gazprom's planned South Stream pipeline under the Black Sea ran counter to EU competition law.—*Reuters*

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Anime 'your name.' ranks as 2nd-highest grossing Japanese film

TOKYO — Japanese animation film "your name." has topped the 20 billion yen (\$176 million) mark in domestic box office receipts, becoming the second-highest grossing Japanese film released in the country.

Released on 26 August, director Makoto Shinkai's time-traveling body-swapping fantasy has raked in 20.006 billion yen as of Monday, movie studio Toho Co. said on Tuesday.

The last time the 20 billion yen threshold was crossed was 15 years ago, by "Spirited Away," a Hayao Miyazaki anime released in 2001 and the top grossing film ever in Japan, which collected 30.8 billion yen in domestic ticket sales.

"your name." now ranks as the fifth most successful among films released in Japan including foreign titles, after "Spirited Away," "Titanic," "Frozen" and "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," according to Kyogo Tsushinsha, a company monitoring the film industry.

The blockbuster success of "your name." came as a surprise for distributor Toho, which had predicted around 1.5 billion yen

in such revenues from the movie, whose director was relatively obscure before its release.

Despite the lack of widespread advertising, the film gained popularity through word of mouth on social media, glowing reviews in the mass media and prizes overseas.

"I want to thank all the people who watched this film. It taught me that a movie can at times have the power to connect with society," Shinkai said in a statement.

The love story depicts body-swapping between a high school girl who lives in the countryside and yearns for a life outside and a high school boy in Tokyo through their dreams, as their fates become intertwined by the once-in-a-thousand-year fall of a comet. The film has drawn over 15.3 million viewers in Japan in the three months and 11 days since its release, and is set to hit the screens in 92 countries and territories.

The film has already been released in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand, topping their box office lists in its opening week.—*Kyodo News*

US comedian Jimmy Kimmel to host 2017 Oscars: Academy

LOS ANGELES — US comedian and talk show host Jimmy Kimmel will host the 2017 Oscars ceremony in February, organisers said on Monday, taking on one of the trickiest jobs in show business.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences confirmed that Kimmel had been chosen after it was first reported by Hollywood trade publication Variety.

Kimmel, 49, who hosts ABC television's "Late Night with Jimmy Kimmel," will be a first-time host of the Oscars, the most prestigious night in the movie industry. He previously hosted the 2016 Emmy Awards for television and is a past host of the American Music Awards show. The 2017 Oscars ceremony will take place in Los Angeles on 26 February, and will be broadcast domestically on ABC.

"Yes, I am hosting the Oscars. This is not a prank. And if it is, my revenge on @TheAcademy will be terrible & sweet," Kimmel tweeted on Monday.

The Academy was unusually late in announcing who will host the 2017 ceremony, a deal which is normally sewn up by November.

The job is a difficult balanc-



PHOTO: REUTERS

ing act with competing goals of entertaining hundreds of A-list stars at the venue, as well as a worldwide TV audience, and moving along presentations for some 20 awards.

Kimmel follows Chris Rock, a black comedian who hosted the 2016 Oscars amid a controversy over the all-white acting nominee lineup and the wider lack of diversity in the industry. The show drew the lowest US television audience in eight years with just 34 million viewers.

Previous recent hosts have included TV star Neil Patrick Harris, comedian Ellen DeGeneres and "Family Guy" creator Seth MacFarlane.—*Reuters*



Sasha Lane (L) poses with director Andrea Arnold as she arrives for the gala screening of the film "American Honey", during the 60th British Film Institute (BFI) London Film Festival at Leicester Square in London, Britain, on 7 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

'American Honey' and 'I, Daniel Blake' triumph in UK film awards

LONDON — "American Honey", "Under the Shadow" and "I, Daniel Blake" were among the winners at the British Independent Film Awards in London on Sunday, scooping some of the top prizes at the ceremony.

"American Honey", about a runaway teenage girl traveling across the American Midwest, was named Best British Independent Film and Andrea Arnold won the best director prize. Newcomer Sasha Lane won in

the best actress category and the movie also picked up the award for Outstanding Achievement in Craft.

"Under the Shadow", set in post-revolution Iran in the 1980s, took the best screenplay award, the Douglas Hickox Award (Debut Director) for Babak Anvari and best supporting actress for Avin Manshadi.

Veteran director Ken Loach's drama "I, Daniel Blake" saw Dave Johns pick up

the "best actor" award while actress Hayley Squires won "most promising newcomer".

"Moonlight", a story about a young black man growing up in a rough Miami neighbourhood, was named Best International Independent Film.

The event, which drew the likes of "Spectre" actress Naomi Harris and Oscar nominee Michael Fassbender, was hosted by British comedian Jennifer Saunders.—*Reuters*

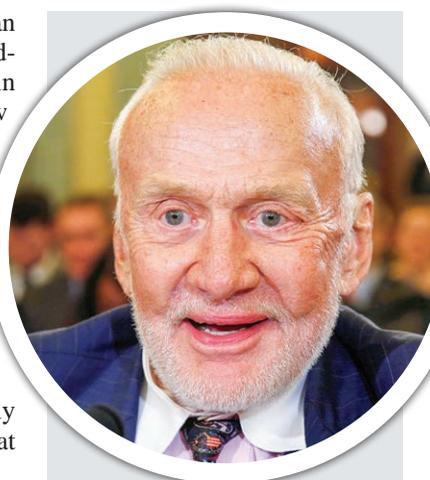
Space oddity as Dr David Bowie treats 'starman' Buzz Aldrin in NZ hospital

WELLINGTON — In what can only be described as a space oddity, former astronaut Buzz Aldrin is being cared for in a New Zealand hospital by Dr David Bowie after being evacuated from the South Pole.

In a truly remarkable coincidence, Aldrin's doctor shares the name of the late British singer whose greatest hits included songs such as "Starman" and others about space travel that could easily have been penned for the great American astronaut.

The coincidence certainly tickled Aldrin's manager, Christina Korp, who posted a photo on Twitter of Aldrin and Dr Bowie together in a Christchurch hospital.

"Thank heaven @TheReal-Buzz's doctor is David Bowie," Korp said on Twitter. "You can't make this stuff up."



Former astronaut Buzz Aldrin. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bowie, the singer and actor, released his smash hit "Space Oddity" about a fictional astronaut who loses communication with ground control in 1969, just

days before Neil Armstrong and Aldrin became the first humans to set foot on the moon.

Their moonwalk, part of the Apollo 11 lunar landing, was watched by a then-record television audience of 600 million people worldwide.

Bowie, who also adopted the alter ego of Ziggy Stardust, followed the success of "Space Oddity" with the release of "Starman" in 1972.

Aldrin, 86, was evacuated from the South Pole at the weekend after falling ill and was flown to Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island, where he remains in quarantine. He has been advised by doctors to remain until fluid in his lungs clears.

Bowie, the singer and actor who won the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006, died earlier this year.—*Reuters*

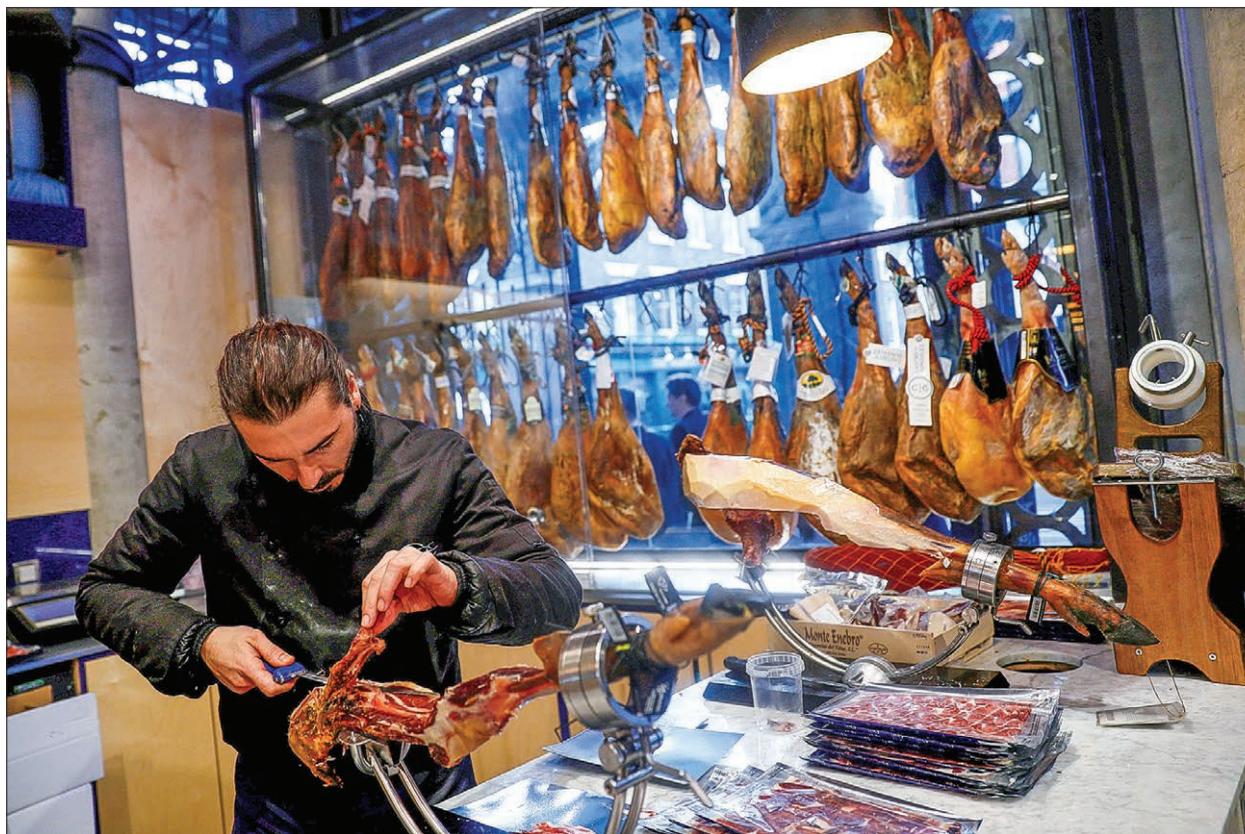
For London's food and wine businesses, Brexit has a bitter taste

LONDON — Importing fine foods from Spain has been a good trade for London firm Brindisa, but like many food and wine businesses that rely on the free movement of goods and workers within the European Union, it has been badly hit by Britain's vote to leave. Launched on a shoestring by entrepreneur Monika Linton 28 years ago, Brindisa now employs 300 people in five London restaurants, two shops and a warehouse.

It is part of a sector that encompasses more than 27,500 businesses in London, generating an annual turnover above 14 billion pounds (17 billion). Food and wine is one of the city's most vibrant service industries but also one of the most exposed to the process of leaving the EU, known as Brexit.

"In terms of Brexit we're probably almost the government's least favourite company because we ship everything in and we employ a lot of non-British people," Linton told Reuters at her shop in Borough Market, a foodie's paradise south of the Thames.

The plunge in the value of the pound against the euro following the vote yanked up the cost of the artisan cheeses, fine hams and



A member of staff prepares cured meat in a Brindisa shop, a Spanish fine food business, at Borough Market in London, Britain, on 22 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

other products Brindisa gets from all over Spain.

"We've had to increase prices," said Linton. "The valuation has tumbled so far that we couldn't sustain our margin."

The import and distribution arm of Brindisa buys 11 million euros a year to purchase goods in Spain, so the pound's post-referendum plunge could cost the

business about 2 million pounds compared with the exchange rate this time last year.

For small firms, which dominate the food and drinks sector, weathering a currency shock can be all-consuming, because they do not have enough staff to divert to contingency planning. "It takes all our attention," said Giles Budibent,

co-owner with his brother of wine importer and distributor Barton Brownsdon & Sadler (BBS). "We only have so much. We can't be running around looking for new business."

The firm imports from EU members France, Italy and Spain, as well as from Chile, South Africa and Australia. It developed a more sophisticated ap-

proach to currency hedging after the 2008 global financial crisis, softening the initial Brexit blow, but in October it too had to raise prices. It would be a major challenge for BBS and Brindisa if the deal Britain eventually negotiates with the 27 remaining EU members involves a return of trade barriers.

"We're exceedingly

worried about that. It's just so easy at the moment. You want to import something from Europe, you just go on and do it," said Budibent.

Brindisa imports a lot of short-life products such as young farmhouse cheeses and fresh meat. "We might end up where we were before, where you've got masses of paperwork but you've also got the risk of things getting held up on the border," said Linton.

She was also worried about what would happen to rules about labelling, food traceability, product safety and authenticity.

"If Britain is going to have to set up its own rules, all the suppliers are going to have to have labels for Britain instead of labels for Europe, which is a really expensive and slow process," she said. But the number one concern for Linton and the rest of the industry is that Brexit will bring restrictions on immigration, shrinking the pool of cheap foreign labour on which it relies.

"The restaurant trade is an immigrants' trade," said Peter Harden, co-founder of Harden's London Restaurants, a respected annual guide now in its 26th year, during an interview in the elegant dining room of Michelin-starred restaurant Chez Bruce.—Reuters

Turkish hotels cut staff, shut for winter with occupancy lowest in Europe

ISTANBUL — Turkish hotels have cut staff by 40 per cent, some have shuttered for the winter and others are struggling to pay back loans after a trying year when occupancy rates fell to the lowest in Europe, a report said on Monday.

The tourist industry, which adds about \$30 billion to gross domestic product in a usual year, has been dealt a body blow by a spate of bombings this year, includ-

ing an attack on Istanbul's main airport, and a failed coup in July.

Long one of the world's most visited countries popular with Arabs, Russians and Europeans, Turkey has seen average hotel occupancy rates fall to 50.4 per cent in the first ten months of 2016, according to the Hotel Association of Turkey (TUROB). Room revenues dropped by 42 per cent over the same period, also the steepest decline

in Europe, while some properties saw occupancy rates of just 30 per cent, meaning they were operating at a loss, TUROB chairman Timur Bayindir said in a statement.

"Some hotel owners have sold their apartments to make the ends meet, and the sector had to let 40 per cent of their personnel go," he said. The number of foreign visitors to Turkey fell by a quarter in October, official data showed last week. That

was the smallest contraction in seven months, as arrivals from Russia showed a recovery after Ankara restored ties with Moscow.

The drop-off in Russian tourists, who traditionally flock to Turkey's Mediterranean beaches, had been particularly painful. Relations soured after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane over Syria last year, but ties were formally restored in August.—Reuters

Gourmet institute selects coriander cuisine as dish of year

TOKYO — A private gourmet institute said it has selected food featuring coriander, an herb known around the world for its rich aroma, as the dish of the year for 2016, citing its growing popularity in Japanese food culture.

Coriander, previously regarded in Japan only as an ethnic condiment and seasoning, has come to play a leading role in various dishes including salads, hotpot meals, cocktails and desserts at many restaurants and at home, the Tokyo-based Guruna-

vi Research Institute said. "Against the backdrop of a heightening healthy trend, vegetables that had not played a central role in meals have come under the spotlight," it said. The herb is widely used in a variety of cuisines including Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, Portuguese, Mexican and Indian, according to the institute. Japanese wine was runner-up for dish of the year and churrasco, a Brazilian dish, was named as winner of the "national bond award."—Kyodo News



Various dishes featuring coriander are introduced at a Tokyo hotel on 5 December 2016, as a private gourmet institute selected food featuring the versatile herb as the dish of the year, citing its growing popularity in Japanese food culture. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(7-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 8-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

| | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Chanmyay Yeiktha Meditation Centre-Hmawbi |
| 07:39 | Am | Chinlone and the dreams of the player |
| 07:53 | Am | Black Gold (P - I) |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | A Real Dream of Accidental Gift |
| 08:52 | Am | Delicacies From Magwe |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:26 | Am | Director: Maung Myo Min (Yin Twin Byit) |
| 09:36 | Am | All About Orchids |
| 09:50 | Am | Tigers, Lions and The Guardians |

| | | |
|-------|----|----------------------|
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | Rakhine Tourist Area |

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

Prime Time

| | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 07:03 | Pm | News |
| 07:26 | Pm | Wonderful Indonesia (Electronic Media Trip) |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | Myanmar Delicate Artistic Handy Creations-The Making Procedure of Goldsmith |
| 08:42 | Pm | A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-1) |
| 08:53 | Pm | Distinguished Myanmar Lady "Kyin Po" |

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(For Detailed Schedule - www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

CONMEBOL awards Copa Sudamericana to Chapecoense team

ASUNCION (Paraguay) — South American soccer's governing body CONMEBOL awarded the 2016 Copa Sudamericana championship to Brazil's Chapecoense club on Monday after most of the team died in a plane crash in Colombia last week.

Only six people survived the crash en route to the final, which killed 71 passengers and crew, shocked football fans worldwide, and plunged Brazil into mourning.

Colombia's Club Atletico Nacional, which would have played Chapecoense in the biggest game in the club's history, asked for the trophy to be awarded to the Brazilian team to honour the victims, CONMEBOL said in a statement.

CONMEBOL's council decided to honour that request with all of the "sport and economic prerogatives that entails," the statement said. Club Atletico was also given a one-time Fair Play award.

As Sudamericana champions, Chapecoense will automatically play Libertadores champions Atletico Nacional for the Recopa Sudamericana next year.

They will also get a guaranteed spot in next year's Copa Libertadores, South America's equivalent of the Champions League.

Family and friends donning the team's green and white colors grieved over 50 caskets flown to Chapeco for an open-air wake in the team's stadium on Saturday. Chapecoense had ascended in a storybook tale from the minor leagues to reach the final of a major South American tournament.—Reuters



General view as a minute's silence is observed as respect for the victims of the Colombia plane crash containing the Chapecoense players and staff during Premier League at Etihad Stadium, on 3 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brazil invite Colombia to play in Chapecoense charity match

SAO PAULO — Brazil have invited Colombia to play a friendly match next month with proceeds from the game going to families of the Chapecoense players and staff killed in the Medellin air crash, a Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) spokesman told Reuters on Monday.

Last week's disaster, which killed 71 passengers and crew, shocked soccer fans the world over and plunged Brazil into mourning.

The small side from south-

ern Brazil were heading to Colombia to play local team Atletico Nacional in the final of the Copa Sudamericana. Only six people survived the crash.

"The idea is that the game will be against Colombia, for all that represents," the spokesman said, "but we don't know if they will be able to come because of the dates."

"But a friendly will take place, against someone else if not Colombia, probably on either 22 or 25 January.

"The proceeds from the

match will be sent to the families of the players, the staff and those involved with Chapecoense who died in the crash."

The CBF also said it would donate 5 million reais (\$1.46 million) to Chapecoense to help the club get back on its feet. The team lost almost all of their players and will need to invest to build a squad for next season.

They were given an extra incentive on Monday when South American football's governing body named them Copa Sudamericana champions.

The decision gives Chapecoense an automatic place in next year's Copa Libertadores, the South American equivalent of Europe's Champions League. Nacional had asked for their stricken rivals to be given the title and it means the two sides will meet next year for the Recopa Sudamericana, a two-legged play off between the Sudamericana winners and the Copa Libertadores champions.

Atletico Nacional won the 2016 Libertadores in July.—Reuters

Man City, Chelsea charged with failing to control players



Manchester City's Sergio Agueiro is shown a red card by referee Anthony Taylor during Premier League at Etihad Stadium, on 3 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Manchester City and Chelsea have been charged with failing to control their players during Saturday's Premier League match, the FA said on Monday.

City striker Sergio Agueiro's reckless tackle on Chelsea defender David Luiz in stoppage time sparked a melee at the Etihad Stadium, with players and coaching staff from both teams involved in ugly scenes. City's Agueiro and Fernando were sent off and will serve four and three-game bans respectively.

"Both Manchester City and Chelsea have been charged for failing to ensure their players conducted themselves in an orderly fashion

and/or refrained from provocative behaviour," the FA said in a statement.

Leaders Chelsea won the match 3-1 to move four points clear of fourth-placed City.

Later on Monday, West Bromwich Albion and Watford were also charged for failing to control their players in Saturday's league game at the Hawthorns, which the hosts won 3-1.

In the 84th minute, Watford's Roberto Pereyra was sent off after reacting angrily to James McClean's challenge, resulting in a touchline clash involving both sets of players. All the clubs charged by the FA have until 1800 GMT on 8 December to respond.—Reuters

Holdings United host Reading, City visit West Ham in FA Cup

LONDON — Manchester United will begin their FA Cup defence at home to a Reading side managed by their former defender Jaap Stam, while their local rivals Manchester City visit West Ham United in the third round after the draw was made on Monday.

Premier League leaders Chelsea will host Notts County or Peterborough, English champions Leicester City will visit fellow top-flight side Everton, while Liverpool welcome Newport County or Plymouth Argyle in ties to be played between 6-9 January.

Arsenal, who like Manchester United have won the famous old trophy a record 12 times, travel to Preston North End, while north London rivals and eight-times winners Tottenham Hotspur entertain Aston Villa,

who won the FA Cup on seven occasions.

Seventh-tier Stourbridge United, the lowest ranked team left in the competition, face a rearranged second-round tie at home to Northampton Town on 13 December before they can contemplate a visit to league Two (fourth-tier) Wycombe Wanderers.

There are four all-Premier League ties, including Hull City at home to Swansea City and Burnley away to Sunderland.

Second-tier Reading's boss Stam was a favourite during three years at United, where the Netherlands international was part of the famous 1998-99 treble-winning side under Alex Ferguson. He also won league titles either side of that historic season.—Reuters