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Investigators visit Rakhine attack sites

MEMBERS of the Rakhine State Investigation Commission led by its chairman Vice President U Myint Swe arrived in Sittway yesterday morning and visited police outposts that came under surprise attack on 9 October, interviewed eyewitnesses to the early-morning ambushes and questioned villagers on the allegations of rape.

Details of the interviews and inspections could not be obtained, but the commission has been charged with launching probes into the root causes of the violent attacks that occurred on 9 October and 12 and 13 November, to investigate whether security forces acted in accordance with the law and to make suggestions that would prevent such incidents from happening again, officials said.

The first stop for the Vice President and the commission was the No. 1 Border Guard Police Command Centre in Ngakhura Village in Maungtaw, which came under fire by violent attackers at about 4:30 am on 9th October. Commission members inspected the place where the violent attacks occurred, questioned the security personnel on duty at the time and asked for details on the deaths and casualties of both sides.

The commission then proceeded to the village administration office and talked with five elders, who said they witnessed the violent attacks on that day.

Separately, a team led by commission member Dr Aung Tun Thet talked with Muslim families in Ngakhura Village, where several market stalls were set on fire on 30 October.

The commission later visited Pwintphyu Chaung Village, where the majority of residents are Muslim, and spoke with residents who described in detail the firing



Vice President U Myint Swe, centre, Chairman of the Rakhine State Commission, and members of the commission interview eyewitnesses to the October attacks in Maungtaw as they visit Pyaungpyaik Village in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY



A Muslim woman from Pyaungpyaik Village replies to a team led by Dr Thet Thet Zin. PHOTO: MNA

“Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, a commission member, asked a resident whether rapes of young girls had been committed”

of light weapons, clearance operations by government troops and the outbreak of fires in the village during the attacks.

The commission proceeded to Pyaungpyaik Village, another predominantly Muslim community, where they talked with villagers about the clashes between government troops and violent attackers. Five government troops were killed in the village that day. Pyaungpyaik is where there were several outbreaks of fire, and also where there were rape accusations of young female villagers.

Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, the chairperson of the Myanmar Women Affairs Federation and a member of the commission, spoke with one female resident of

whom she asked whether rapes of young girls had been committed and whether she had witnessed any of rape.

Yesterday evening, the chairman and the commission inspected the command centre of the No. 1 Border Guard Police Force in Kyikanpyin Village, another majority-Muslim community.

The command centre was attacked on 9th October, and fires were set to a nearby village. Several weapons were also recovered in Kyikanpyin in the days and weeks after the attacks.

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International, local artists to exhibit contemporary works in Yangon on 18th and 19th December

INTERNATIONAL and local contemporary artists will exhibit their works and participate in an art workshop on 19th December at the Yangon Art Gallery.

“This is the first time in My-

anmar with participation of contemporary artists from the USA, China, Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Korea along with local artists,” said Beikthano U Tin Win, a well-

known artist in Myanmar.

The art works, including sculptures, will be on display for the public starting 18th December.

“We really want to express

our special thanks to the international painters and sculptors for their participation in this event,” said Dr Khin Shwe, Chairman of Zaykabar Company, which sponsored the event.—GNLM

Art exhibition highlights beauty of PyinOoLwin

A COLLECTIVE art exhibition is being held in Mandalay featuring the natural beauty of Mandalay's famed scenic hill town.

The Art of Highland Maymyo Group Show was opened on Sunday at Mandalay Hill Art Gallery situated at the base of the Mandalay Hill and it will be run until 14 December, displaying

over 100 works of 13 artists from PyinOoLwin (formerly known as Maymyo), covering a wide range of styles and media. Subject matter includes traditional arts and culture, still life, landscapes and lifestyle of local people.

Located some 67 kilometers east of Mandalay, PyinOoLwin is a resort town. The town is also

known as “Panmyodaw” meaning “the City of Flowers” for having different species of colourful flowers. It is the centre of the country's principal flower and vegetable production. The local growers mostly cultivate chrysanthemums, asters and gladiolas for sale across the country in every season.

PyinOoLwin is regularly included on the list of popular tourist attractions in Myanmar. The town is also well known for its colonial style houses with large compound and pine trees and unique horse carriages in town, which attract the attention of artists, tourists and photographers.—200

INTEXPO Myanmar aims to create business networks among textile companies

THE SECOND edition of the Indian Exhibition of Manmade and blended Textiles (INT-EXPO Myanmar) is set to take place next month, aiming to encourage the development of joint-ventures between Myanmar and India.

The event will be organised by the Synthetic and Rayon Textiles Export Promotion Council (SRTEPC) in association with the Embassy of India in Myanmar and with the support of the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association.

The two-day expo is scheduled to start on January 11 and will feature all types of fabrics needed for ladies dresses, shirts, suits, and different varieties of manmade and blended yarns including polyester, viscose rayon and cotton as well as home decoration textiles.

The main goal of the expo is to bring more development to the textile and garment industry through collaboration of entrepreneurs in both countries.

Myanmar, a major cotton producer, hopes to become an important garment making hub which is likely to cater to the major requirements of the European and American markets.

Myanmar imports textiles and garments mostly from China, Korea, Japan and India.—200

Crime NEWS

Fire destroys five houses in South Okkalapa Township, Ward-15



The houses destroyed by fire. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

A fire broke out in South Okkalapa Township yesterday morning and burnt down five houses.

As per sources, the fire broke out in a one-storey house in Myinthar-4 Street, Ward-15, in South Okkalapa Township, starting from jolt sticks. Property worth about K8 million were destroyed in the accident. The fire started at about 10.27 am and was brought under control at 10.50 am.

Daw Kyi Kyi Khaing, 41, owner of the house where the fire started has been charged by the South Okkalapa Myoma Police Station. A total of 56 victims from 10 households are sheltering at a religious building in the township.—Aung Thura

heroin, methamphetamine pills seized in Lashio

A combined team comprising members of the Myanmar Police Force and a local anti-drug squad discovered 952 g of heroin worth more than 18 million kyats and 37,200 methamphetamine pills worth more than 74 million kyats

in a vehicle on 10 December in Lashio.

In connection with the case, the police arrested Tin Win Aung, 25, and Ma Sai Mon, 40, who were on board a Toyota Sparex GRX.



Tin Win Aung and Ma Sai Mon are seen with seized drugs. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

Vice President, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker, assist IDPs in Muse

VICE PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint met with internally displaced persons in Muse, offering them assistance.

In addition to the vice president and the speaker, the delegation comprised Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Ye Aung and Dr Win Myat Aye and members of parliament.

At a meeting with IDPs sheltering at No. 2 Basic Education High School, Vice President U Henry Van Thio expressed his delight to fulfill the needs of the IDPs, encouraging them to have strong spirit to overcome all obstacles.

Speaker U Win Myint also clarified the purpose of the trip,

saying he would provide cash assistance collected from the wages of MPs to IDPs.

The delegation also visited St. Peter's Church, where IDPs are being sheltered, and presented aid including food and household goods.

At the meeting, Vice President U Henry Van Thio expressed his concerns for ethnic areas which have lagged behind in development, expressing his sympathy to the ethnic people.

He also said that the government is committed to ending the ethnic armed conflicts that have dragged on in the country for more than 60 years. The vice president pledged to solve the issue at the 21st Century Panglong



Vice President U Henry Van Thio and Speaker U Win Myint presents aid to IDPs in Muse. PHOTO: MNA

Conference with inclusiveness by inviting all ethnic armed groups.

Speaker U Win Myint said that the parliament has documented a proposal that has expressed concern for the ethnic people so

not to affect the sovereignty and the rule of law.

The delegation also met with family members of the deceased and injured service personnel at Aung San Thuriya Aye Cho Hall

of the Muse District Police Force.

The delegation encouraged family members and presented aid and assistance to them at the meeting.— *Myanmar News Agency*

KIA ambushes government troops

ABOUT 30 members of KIA attacked government troops conducting an area clearance operations near Nampoun Village in Mongko Township, in north-eastern Shan State yesterday.

The armed group withdrew as the government troops re-

turned fire.

The troops discovered a mine planted by the KIA members at a site where the fighting happened and deactivated it.

Government troops are carrying out area clearance operations in the area.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Investigators visit Rakhine ...

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The commission also visited the Kyikanpyin Border Guard Police Command Centre near Warpake Village and similarly spoke with residents about the attacks on the police command centre, the outbreak of fires in the village and the recovery of weapons looted during the attacks.

Five members of the border guard were killed here.

The chairman and members of the commission also questioned responsible officials at

the No. 1 Border Guard Police Command Centre in Kyikanpyin on the fighting between the violent attackers and the border guards, and the looting of arms and ammunitions that followed.

The commission will submit its suggestions by the beginning of February to the President's Office.

The commission is a separate entity from the Rakhine State Advisory Commission, which is headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Investigation Commission on Rakhine State meeting with Muslims at Pyaung Paik Village in Maungtau Township. PHOTO: MNA

IDPs return home to Mongko

INTERNALLY displaced persons who were forced to abandon their homes due to fighting between government troops and armed groups in north-eastern Shan State, returned home Saturday as the situation in Mongko

has returned to normalcy.

A total of 56 people, including 16 service personnel, eight civilians and 32 day-waged labourers, arrived back on Saturday and resumed their duties in Mongko, according to the local administra-

tor's office.

A combined team comprising of members of the Tatmadaw, Myanmar Police Force and Mongko Township authorities are carrying out systematic scrutiny of the IDPs.—*MNA*

Peace Process members reject 'terrorist' label for non-signatories of NCA

SIGNATORIES to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement said they strongly objected to any attempt to declare ethnic armed groups as terrorists, saying such acts would undermine the peace process.

"We are in opposition of declaring any leader of ethnic armed groups as terrorists because it will pose difficulties to the peace process and national reconciliation and trust-building will be undermined, said Khun Okka, Leading Patron of the Pao National Liberation Federation, at a recent meeting in Yangon.

The third coordination meeting of the Peace Process Supervisory Team (PPST) of signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and the PPWT/CT issued a press release on current political and military developments and approved a cooperation plan to achieve the committed goals.

The statement also urged that non-signatories to the NCA cooperate with the Union government for positive cooperation for peace.

The coordination meeting was held on 10 and 11 December at the Chatrium Hotel in Yangon.

During the two-day meet-



Saw Mutu Say Po, chairman of KNU, makes concluding remarks at the meeting of NCA signatories in Yangon. PHOTO BY PO HTAUNG

ing, activities of the signatories of the NCA, the implementation of the NCA and the reports of the UPJDC and the JMC were discussed.

"It will also undermine the peace process of the union government, the Tatmadaw and the Hluttaw led by the State Counsellor and it is necessary for the union government, signatories to the NCA and non-signatories to the NCA to cooperate positively," said Khun Okka.

The meeting adopted decisions to implement the provisions of the NCA by the eight

signatories, to successfully hold the national level political dialogues in accordance with the decisions of the 21st Panglong Peace Conference and participation of all ethnic armed groups in the peace process.

In conclusion, Saw Mutu Say Po, the chairman of the KNU, said that it is important to achieve the goal of peace for the country in the face of various challenges. The meeting was attended by signatories to the NCA, five leaders and three members of the PPST, and eleven members of the PPWT/CT.—*Ye Khoun Nyunt*

LOCAL Business



Fruit trading at Muse resumes on 11th December, with around 200 truck-loads of watermelon and 50 to 70 truckloads of muskmelons entering Muse. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Fruit back on sale in Muse 105th Mile trade camp

THE fruits which were transferred for trade to the China market due to the fights in Muse trade camp are being placed onto Muse trade camp starting from 11th December, according to Muse fruit depot.

Trading at Muse was suspended due to the fighting in Myanmar's north-eastern Shan State and so, the fruits were traded at China market.

Trading at Muse 105th mile trade camp was resumed on 29th November, but fruit trading was back on sale at Muse on 11th December. The Chinese merchants and buyers have been already informed about the resumption of fruit sales on the Muse market on 11th December, said the merchants from Muse.

The fruits were sold at Ks3,000-3,700 Yuan per tonnes

for various fruits whereas seedless fruits sold for 4,500-5,000 Yuan per tonne on 10th December at Wantain fruit market of China.

Currently, around 200 truckloads of watermelon and around 50 to 70 truckloads of muskmelons enter Muse and the fruit trade volume is expected to be on the rise since Chinese New Year is approaching. — *Mon Mon*

Moderate level of inflation good for economy, say economic experts

A MODERATE level of inflation is good for the economy, whereas deflation has a negative impact on the country's economy at a particular level, said U Maung Maung Win, deputy minister for Planning and Finance.

What is important is to exert efforts to effectuate the development in economy, boost the livelihood of people and scale up the individual income of the public, he added.

A high level of inflation not only affects the economy, but also adversely affects low-income people. The low-income people suffer from the high price of commodity because of the income and the expenditure mismatch. Similarly, exporters benefit from a high exchange rate whereas a high rate has a negative impact on the importers, he continued.

From his point of view, U Set Aung, vice governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar, said Myanmar's inflation level exceeded 40 per cent last year, resulting from floods and erratic weather. This year, the inflation rate has plunged down from a running inflation level to a walking inflation level of around 6 per cent.

"The Central Bank of Myanmar and the ministries concerned are needed to control the inflation rate. We have received the opinions about inflation from International Monetary Fund (IMF) and we are adopting the proper monetary policy", he added.

The Central Statistical Organization (CSO) evaluates and releases monthly and annual inflation rates. The organisation has conducted joint exercises with IMF eight times to examine the evalua-

tion of the statistics. Production plays a major role in economy to take off, said its director-general Daw Wah Wah Aung.

"We are trying to respond to monetary policy, fiscal policy, trade policy and investment policy to adapt the current economy. In addition, the government is making efforts to stabilise and improve the macro economy. Concerted efforts are also being exerted to control GDP ratio and inflation rate, with the formulation of policy under short and long term plans. Public participation is an essential part of economy, said U Maung Maung Win.

The Central Bank of Myanmar is cooperating with the ministries concerned not to have manipulation in the market, according to U Set Aung. — *Ko Min, Khin Su Su Hlaing, Aye Aye Myint*

Trade value using ITC reaches over US\$6.6 billion

THE value of trade using the Individual Trading Card (ITC) as of 25th November in this fiscal year 2016-2017 reached over US\$6.6 billion, about US\$200million higher than that of last fiscal year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

During the last fiscal year, the value of trade with ITC at the border gates was over US\$6.4billion. The value of export using ITC was over US\$600million whereas import value under ITC amounted to over US\$6,000 million, according to the statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

The trade department under the Commerce Ministry has already issued 136 cards in this fiscal year and trading with

ITC is seen in Tamu, Muse, Myawady, Tachilek, Kan Pike Tee, Kawthaung, Reed, Maw Taung and Keng Tung border trade camps. Myawady trade camp is reported to have the largest trade value of Ks2.3billion using ITC whereas trading with ITC attains Ks1.3billion at Kan Pike Tee.

Trading with ITC began in 2012 and the ITC is valid for one year.

The trade department issued nearly 300 cards in 2012-2013 fiscal year whereas there were around 150 individual trading cards last fiscal year. Over 160 export items and 240 import items are permitted to trade with the use of ITC.

— *Ko Khant*

KBZ Bank wins two bank awards from World Finance



U Nyo Myint (R), Senior Managing Director of KBZ Group of Companies accepts Best Commercial Bank in Myanmar 2016 and Best Retail Bank in Myanmar 2016 of World Finance. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

KANBAWZA Bank (KBZ) has won the titles of Best Commercial Bank in Myanmar 2016 and Best Retail Bank in Myanmar 2016, awarded by World Finance.

U Nyo Myint, Senior Managing Director of KBZ Group of Companies accepted the Best Commercial Bank in Myanmar 2016 and Best Retail Bank in Myanmar 2016 at a ceremony held at the London Stock Exchange on 5 December, 2016.

KBZ Bank was chosen as the winner of the Best Commercial Bank in Myanmar 2016 for its efforts toward the development of the economic sector of the country, including the country's small and medium enterprises with loans and banking services, for becoming a pioneer in Myanmar with modern banking services, for boosting regional cooperation in banking

sector by opening offices regionally and internationally and for becoming the country's top income taxpayer for four consecutive years, according to the statement of World Finance.

World Finance added that KBZ was also crowned with Best Retail Bank in Myanmar 2016 this year for opening more than 430 branch offices nationwide creating more than 17,000 job opportunities, for providing the country's people with digital banking services with the use of information technology and its large assistance to philanthropic works in the country.

The Kanbawza bank has won the two top titles awarded by World Finance for four consecutive years. World Finance is a banking, financial and wealth management publication headquartered in the United States. — *Thiha Tun*

China puts temporary ban on North Korean coal imports

BEIJING — China's Commerce Ministry said it will put a temporary ban on imports of North Korean coal as part of a UN Security Council resolution meant to deter Pyongyang from pursuing its nuclear weapons programme.

The 15-member Security Council late last month put new sanctions on North Korea aimed at cutting its annual export revenue by a quarter after it carried out its fifth and largest nuclear test so far in September.

"To implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2321, according to the People's Republic of China's Foreign Trade Law, imports of coal produced in North Korea temporarily will be stopped," the ministry said in a short statement on its website on Saturday.

China, believed to be the only country buying North Korean coal, would slash its imports by some \$700 million compared with 2015 sales under the new sanctions, according to diplomats.

Despite its recent anger at Pyongyang's nuclear

and missile tests, Beijing remains North Korea's most important economic and diplomatic backer and it frequently comes under suspicion for not properly enforcing sanctions.

It said the ban will be in effect until the end of the year, though coal shipped before 11 December that was yet arrive at Chinese customs would be exempt.

Over the first 10 months of this year, China imported 18.6 million tonnes of coal from North Korea, up almost 13 per cent from a year ago. Coal is one of North Korea's only sources of hard currency and its largest single export item.

North Korea has said any sanctions against its missile or nuclear programmes are a violation of its sovereignty and right to self-defence.

It is technically still at war with democratic South Korea because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and the South's main ally, the United States.—Reuters

Catholic church in Manila issues prayer against expanded death penalty



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte speaks during the change of command for the new Armed Forces chief at a military camp in Quezon city, Metro Manila, on 7 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MANILA — Roman Catholic churches in Manila on Sunday read a prayer against Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's plans to re-impose the death penalty on heinous crimes, including drug-related offences.

Last week, the justice panel in the lower house of Congress approved a legislative measure to bring back state-sanctioned executions on at least 20 crimes, including rape with murder and kidnapping-for-ransom. The

bill may be passed before Christmas.

A prayer issued by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Manila's archbishop, was read in churches across the city on Sunday and called for help to work against the death penalty.

"There is in our land a cry for vengeance and a move to fill up death rows and kill offenders but disguised as a call for justice," the prayer read. "Let true and lasting justice spring forth."

In 2006, then Pres-

ident Gloria Macapagal Arroyo abolished the death penalty for crimes involving drugs, rape and arson. Duterte and his supporters have sought to reinstate the punishment as a deterrent to rising crime and drug use.

Catholic bishops also oppose a separate plan in Congress to reduce the minimum age for criminal liability to nine from 12 currently. They fear both the reduction in the liability age and expanded use of capital punishment could escalate violence related to the current anti-drugs campaign.

The Catholic church has long opposed the death penalty in the Philippines. About 80 per cent of the country's more than 100 million inhabitants is Catholic.

Archbishop Socrates Villegas, head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, had issued a statement strongly criticising the rising death toll in the war of drugs, saying government must respect the dignity of life

and human rights.

More than 2,000 people have died in police operations against illicit drugs since 1 July when Duterte assumed the presidency. Those killed were mostly street level peddlers and users, who police said had resisted arrest.

More than 3,000 others were killed by motorcycle-riding masked men and vigilantes during the same period, but Duterte has denied the police are conducting extrajudicial killings.

Last week, senators, including the president's close allies, criticised the way Duterte has carried out his anti-narcotics campaign, saying it should be done within the limits of the law and that he must also punish erring police officers. Senators said in a report that while they had found no clear proof that the rising number of extrajudicial killings was related to state-sponsored actions, they have told Duterte to observe due process and give the accused their day in court.—Reuters

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South Korea prosecutors charge two senior ex-Park officials — media

SEOUL — South Korean prosecutors indicted a former senior presidential aide and a former vice culture minister as part of their investigation of a corruption scandal that has led to President Park Geun-hye's impeachment in parliament, media said on Sunday.

Friday's overwhelming parliamentary vote to remove Park from office puts her fate in the hands of a nine-judge Constitutional Court, which has 180 days to decide whether to uphold the motion.

Park's powers have been suspended and assumed by Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, who has ordered a high state of military alert for any attempt by rival North Korea to take advantage of the political turmoil.

South Korea's finance minister warned on Sunday that the impeachment could weigh on the economy if sentiment was undermined.

Park, whose father ruled the country for 18 years after seizing power in a military coup, has been accused of colluding with

a friend and a former aide, both of whom prosecutors indicted earlier, to pressure big businesses to donate to foundations set up to back her policy initiatives.

Park, who is serving a single five-year term ending in February 2018, has denied wrongdoing but apologised for carelessness in her ties with her friend, Choi Soon-sil. Prosecutors on Sunday again characterised Park as a co-conspirator, media reported, although

she has immunity from prosecution as long as she remains in office.

They made a similar assertion on 20 November. If the Constitutional Court affirms the parliamentary vote, Park would become the first democratically elected leader of Asia's fourth-biggest economy to be forced from office.

"Amid so much global uncertainty, this political situation is further weighing on the economy and

a downturn in sentiment could be another problem," Finance Minister Yoo Il-ho told a news conference. The two former officials whose charges were reported by media on Sunday included a former senior economic aide, Cho Won-dong, accused of colluding with the president in trying to pressure a South Korean conglomerate, CJ Group, to dismiss a group vice chairman, the Yonhap News Agency reported.—Reuters



Protesters hold candles during a rally against South Korean President Park Geun-Hye in central Seoul, South Korea, on 10 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

North Korea's Kim guides special operations drill targeting South

SEOUL — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guided a special operations drill targeting the South, the North's media reported on Sunday, as rival South Korea remained on alert for any attempt by the North to take advantage of political turmoil in the South.

The North's KCNA state news agency report did not say when North Korean forces conducted the combat exercise, nor did it mention the South Korean parliament's vote on Friday to impeach its president, Park Geun-hye.

Pictures in a Sunday report on the exercise in the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper showed what appeared to be a mockup of South Korea's presidential Blue House as a target.

Park will remain in the Blue House, though her powers have been suspended and assumed by

the South's prime minister while the Constitutional Court weighs parliament's impeachment vote.

South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn has urged a high state of military alert in case of any provocation by North Korea, including possible cyber attacks.

"We are ready to retaliate if North Korea makes any provocations and we condemn its malicious threat," a South Korean military official told Reuters.

Tension on the divided Korean peninsula has been high this year after two North Korean nuclear tests and an unprecedented flurry of ballistic missile tests.

The North's tests have brought tighter UN Security Council sanctions but no indication North Korea and its young leader Kim are willing to compromise on its nuclear and mis-



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un guides the combat drill of the service personnel of the special operation battalion of KPA Unit 525 in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) in Pyongyang on 11 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

sile programmes.

The Rodong Sinmun pictures included one of Kim observing the exercise through binoculars.

"Watching the brave ser-

vice personnel independently and pro-actively perform their combat duty destroying specified targets of the enemy, he said with a broad smile on his face: 'Well

done, the enemy troops will have no space to hide themselves, far from taking any counteraction'," KCNA cited Kim saying. —Reuters

Japanese scientist Ohsumi receives Nobel Prize at ceremony

STOCKHOLM — Japanese scientist Yoshinori Ohsumi received the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for his study on cell recycling at a ceremony on Saturday in Stockholm.

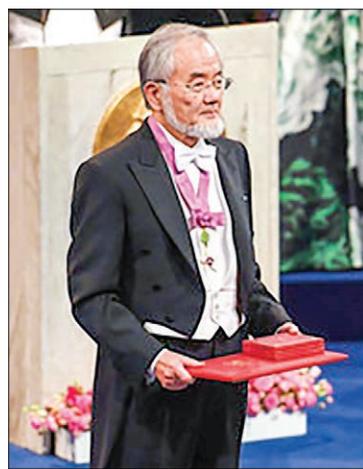
"There is no greater satisfaction as a scientist than seeing your ideas and efforts transform a field of research," the 71-year-old honorary professor of the Tokyo Institute of Technology said in a banquet speech afterward.

Ohsumi accepted the medal and diploma from Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf as he attended the Nobel Prize Award Ceremony with his wife Mariko. The researcher was the sole laureate of this year's Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine. American musician Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize in literature the same day. Singer Patti Smith sang one of his classics, "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," at the ceremony on behalf of songwriter who did not attend.

In Oslo, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in a separate ceremony. He was recognized for his efforts to bring his country's protracted civil war to an end.

Ohsumi was awarded the Nobel prize for elucidating "autophagy," an intracellular process that degrades and recycles proteins. His discoveries are believed to have opened up the possibility of new treatments for illnesses including cancer and Parkinson's disease.

Autophagy, Greek for "self-eating," has been known for over 50 years but its fundamen-



Japanese scientist Yoshinori Ohsumi receives the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for his research on cell recycling, at an award ceremony in Stockholm on 10 December, 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NES

tal importance in physiology and medicine was only recognized after Ohsumi's "paradigm-shifting" research in the 1990s, according to the Karolinska Institute, home of the Nobel Assembly.

This year's physics Nobel went to David Thouless, Duncan Haldane and Michael Kosterlitz for their discoveries related to "exotic matter" that paved the way for new generations of superconductors.

Jean-Pierre Sauvage, Fraser Stoddart and Bernard Feringa were honored in chemistry for designing molecular machines that can perform specific tasks, while Oliver Hart and Bengt Holmstrom received the economics award for their contributions to contract theory.—Kyodo News

Indian ex-airforce chief arrested in chopper deal scandal

NEW DELHI — Indian premier investigating agency Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested former air force chief S.P. Tyagi and two others in AgustaWestland helicopter deal over allegations of bribery, officials said on Saturday.

The trio was Saturday produced in a local court in New Delhi, which formally granted their custody to the investigating agency for four days.

The other two include Tyagi's cousin Sanjiv Tyagi and a Delhi-based lawyer Gautam Khaitan.

Investigators say they have enough evidence that the men had received kickbacks for the deal and extended undue favors to Anglo-Italian company AgustaWestland.

The deal is related to purchase of 12 luxury helicopters from the company in 2010 during Congress party rule.

The luxury helicopters were intended to carry Indian president, prime minister and other top leaders.

In March 2013, Indian authorities filed a criminal case against the firm and its parent company Finmeccanica.

The 71-year-old Tyagi, who retired in 2007, was called for questioning by CBI at their office along with the other two on Friday. Reports said the questioning went on for over four hours after which they were arrested.

Tyagi is the first Indian air force chief, acting or retired to be arrested in a bribery case. The

former air force chief has previously denied charges against him.

India's defence ministry cancelled the 750-million-US dollar helicopter deal in 2014 after allegations that the company has paid kickbacks to Indian officials and politicians. The ministry announced it would carry out its own investigation into the deal.

Reports said Tyagi has been accused by investigators in Italy and India of abusing his official position to push the contract in favor of Finmeccanica.

India received three of the helicopters before the deal was cancelled and delivery of the remaining nine was stopped. —Xinhua

China on higher alert as smog worsens

BEIJING — China's meteorological authority upgraded its smog alert from yellow to orange, the second most serious level, on Sunday evening, as smog worsened in many parts of the country.

Parts of Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Henan, Shanxi and Shaanxi will be covered with medium-levels of smog for 24 hours from 8 pm on Sunday, while some regions will experience heavy pollution with visibility less than 500 meters, said the National Meteorological Center (NMC).

The NMC issued a yellow

alert for smog Sunday morning, expecting a cold front to help disperse the smog Monday night.

China has a four-tier warning system for severe weather, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

When the orange alert is in force, outdoor activities in schools will be canceled and construction projects suspended.

Despite government efforts to fight pollution, frequent outbreaks of smog have become increasingly common in winter

in northern China where cold weather conditions and the burning of coal for heating combine to exacerbate the situation.

In a five-year plan on environmental improvements released on 5 December, the State Council ordered strict controls on the consumption of coal, a major source of pollution in China.

Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, the Pearl River and Yangtze River delta regions, and the 10 cities with the worst air quality must all see a reduction in coal consumption, according to the plan.—Xinhua

Republican wins US Senate runoff in Louisiana, giving party 52 seats

BATON ROUGE, La., — Republican John Neely Kennedy, a candidate for the US Senate, won a runoff election in Louisiana on Saturday against Democrat Foster Campbell in a race that gives the Republicans a 52-seat majority in the chamber.

Campbell told his supporters in the state capital of Baton Rouge that he had called Kennedy to congratulate him on his victory.

Kennedy, the state treasurer and the favourite going into the runoff, had slightly less than 61 percent of the vote with all 3,904 precincts reporting, according to the state Secretary of State's office. Turnout was relatively low.

Kennedy, who said he will not move to Washington D.C. after a campaign spent railing against "insiders," told supporters "I'd rather drink weed-killer than be anywhere else tonight," a reference to a widely reported campaign quote in which he said he "would rather drink weed-killer than support Obamacare."

Kennedy will fill the seat

held by outgoing Republican Senator David Vitter, who is retiring.

In conceding, Campbell vowed "I'll never stop fighting for working families, I'll never stop working for what's right."

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, a Democrat, congratulated Kennedy on his victory.

"I look forward to working with him to secure additional funding for flood relief, to make long term investments in our infrastructure and to bring Louisiana's federal tax dollars home to help our people," Edwards said in a statement.

With Kennedy's victory, the Republicans will have a 52-seat majority in the 100-seat US Senate. Going into the general election on 8 November, Republicans had a 54-seat majority.

Kennedy had campaigned on the popularity in his state of President-elect Donald Trump, who easily won Louisiana.

Trump flew to Baton Rouge for an election-eve rally on Ken-

neddy's behalf, and Vice President-elect Mike Pence earlier stumped for Kennedy as well.

Kennedy, 65, was a Democrat until he switched party affiliation in the conservative-leaning state in 2007.

He had consistently polled well ahead of Campbell since placing first in the state's 24-candidate free-for-all primary, which included former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke.

Celebrities including Patton Oswalt and John Leguizamo both actively supported Campbell's losing bid.

Under Louisiana law, all candidates are pitted against each other in the November general election. If no candidate claims a majority, the top two candidates move to a runoff.

Also on Saturday, Republicans Mike Johnson, a state representative, and Clay Higgins prevailed in Congressional runoffs, replacing representatives who made unsuccessful bids for the Senate seat won by Kennedy. —Reuters



Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni gestures as he talks during a joint press conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Rome, Italy on 2 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Italy president likely to ask Foreign Minister Gentiloni to try to form government

ROME — Italian President Sergio Mattarella summoned Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni to the presidential palace on Sunday, in a strong indication that the head of state has chosen him to try to form a new government.

Caretaker Prime Minister Matteo Renzi resigned last week after losing a referendum on constitutional reform on which he had staked his job, plunging Italy into a government crisis.

Gentiloni, 62, is due to meet Mattarella at 1130 GMT. If, as expected, he is formally

given the mandate, he will begin consultations with political forces to form the next government.

Gentiloni, a bespectacled former journalist, Renzi loyalist and member of Renzi's Democratic Party (PD), will then report back to Mattarella on his progress.

If Gentiloni cannot assemble political backing for a new government, Mattarella could ask someone else to try. Mattarella consulted with around 40 political parties over the past

three days before summoning Gentiloni.

The legislature is due to carry on until 2018, but early elections could be called at any time once a new electoral law is written to replace one which is widely regarded as unwieldy.

Any new government will have to act quickly to prop up a teetering banking sector, including arranging possible state intervention for the country's third-largest bank, Monte dei Paschi di Siena (BMPS.MI). —Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Blast inside Cairo's Coptic cathedral kills at least 5, injures 35

CAIRO — An explosion inside Cairo's Coptic cathedral killed at least 5 people and injured 35, Egypt's state television said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

On Friday, two roadside bombs — one in Cairo and one north of the capital — killed six policemen and wounded six others.

Egyptian security forces are fighting an Islamist insurgency led by Islamic State's branch in North Sinai, where hundreds of soldiers and police have been killed. The insurgents have also launched deadly attacks Cairo and other cities.—Reuters

Iran Air says signs deal to buy 80 Boeing passenger planes

DUBAI — Iran Air said it signed a deal on Sunday to buy 80 passenger planes from US aircraft maker Boeing, state news agency IRNA reported.

The agency quoted Farhad Parvaresh, the head of the country's flag carrier, as saying that the 10-year deal included 50 Boeing 737 aircraft and 30 777 planes.—Reuters

Qantas to fly non-stop from Australia's Perth to London

SYDNEY — Australia's national carrier Qantas Airways Ltd will launch the first regular passenger flight directly linking Australia and Europe when it begins flights from Perth to London with Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners, the airline said on Sunday.

"When Qantas created the Kangaroo Route to London in 1947, it took four days and nine stops," Qantas chief executive officer Alan Joyce told a news conference in Perth.

"Now it will take just 17 hours from Perth non-stop."

Flights on the 14,498 km (9,000 mile) route will begin in March 2018.

Federal Tourism Minister Steven Ciobo said Qantas would use Perth as a hub for passengers from eastern Australia going to Britain, and the service would boost employment and tourism.

Britain is Australia's third-largest source of international visitors with more than 660,000 people coming from there to Australia last year, and spending \$3.7 billion, Ciobo said in a statement.

The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliners used on the route will carry 236 passengers, Qantas said.—Reuters

Dozens killed in Nigerian church collapse: photojournalist

LAGOS — Dozens of people were killed by the collapse of a church in southeastern Nigeria, a photojournalist who visited the town morgue said on Sunday, a day after the incident.

"Dead bodies are stacked on top of each other because there is no space," he said. "I saw dead bodies with limbs missing."

Police said 27 had been killed and 30 injured when the church in Akwa Ibom state capital Uyo collapsed during a service on Saturday. State emergency agency NEMA said in a statement that six people had been killed and 115 injured.—Reuters

Iraqi commander wounded in mortar attack south of Mosul

TIKRIT, Iraq — An Iraqi military commander was wounded and one of his bodyguards killed when Islamic State militants fired mortar shells at his convoy south of Mosul on Sunday, officers from the local military command told Reuters.

They said a convoy carrying Lieutenant-General Jumaa Inad, head of operations in Salahuddin province, came under attack near the town of Shirqat where Iraqi forces are fighting to retake an Islamic State-held enclave.

He had wounds to his head and arm and was flown to a hospital in Erbil, they said.

The fighting around Shirqat, in Salahuddin province, is part of a wider military campaign against Islamic State in the north of the country. US-backed Iraqi force has been battling for eight weeks to crush the militants in Mosul, the largest city under Islamic State control in Iraq and Syria.

Inad was visiting troops in the village of Ganous, on the eastern bank of the Tigris river about 90 km (60 miles) south of Mosul.—Reuters

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

The way forward for cooperatives in implementation of SDGs

Tun Tin Tun

PEOPLE, Planet, Peace, Partnership and Prosperity are important for all of us. (The Sustainable Development Goals are a UN initiative. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), officially known as Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a set of seventeen aspirational "Global Goals" with 169 targets between them.) The International Year of Co-operatives has provided a powerful focal point for the sector. It has heightened its sense of shared purpose, illustrated the range of activities and celebrations of the International Year, by the number of international conferences and summits held around the world with agreed outcome declarations, as well as the wide-spread take-up of the 2012 International Year logo by co-operatives around the world. It has raised the profile of co-operatives beyond the limits of the sector itself, in civil society and amongst governmental and inter-governmental bodies. These are significant achievements, but they need to be seen in the context of the dominant emerging trends that are likely to shape our politics, societies and economies for the foreseeable future. Some of the most crucial Global Trends are: environmental degradation and resource depletion; an unstable financial sector; increasing inequality; a growing global governance gap; a seemingly disenfranchised younger generation; and a loss of trust in political and economic organizations.

Efficient and effective implementation of business activities of cooperatives need to be expanded to meet the needs and wants of consumers. Co-operatives already make a significant contribution towards alleviating these pressing global problems. But, with appropriate support and greater understanding and recognition, they could contribute much more. We therefore believe that the major priorities are to make far more people aware of the co-operative form of enterprise, to provide people with the tools and back-up to establish, fund and develop sustainable co-operatives, and to remove barriers that get in their way. The challenge now is for the International Cooperative Alliance-ICA, national bodies, sector groups, co-operative societies and individual members to take the Blueprint for a Cooperative Decade forward, from the drawing board to the implementation stage.

Realizing this, it is necessary to give more choices to the people and members of cooperatives to expand their activities to better serve the grassroots communities. The way forward for cooperatives is to engage more fully on sustainable development. The 2013 ILO/ICA Joint Survey respondents observed that the cooperative movement was doing better on acting local than on translating their thinking to the global level. They pointed out two critical elements in order to secure more active engagement by the cooperative movement on sustainable development: the Government on provision of a supportive policy and legal framework; and cooperatives and their organizations in promoting the cooperative model as outlined in the provisions of the ILO Recommendation 193 concerning the Promotion of Cooperatives.

Naga people to celebrate traditional New Year Festival in Lahe

TRADITIONAL New Year Festival of the Naga people is planned to be held in Lahe, a town in Naga Hills of Sagaing Region, next year on a grand scale.

The annual Naga New Year Festival, one of the most interesting festivals in Myanmar, takes place every January in the remote mountainous area that is home to the Naga ethnic tribe to pray for a good New Year and a bountiful harvest.

Some local and international visitors come to the remote area self-administered by the Naga people to enjoy the daily life culture of residents, discover the traditional Naga ceremonial pole, stay in a traditional tent and try local foods and rice wines.

The festival is also popular with photographers, who take pictures of the hill tribe people,

enjoy the scenery of the upper parts of the Chindwin river, meet more minorities of Naga tribes and trek through Naga land.

Located in Hkamti District in Sagaing Region in northwestern Myanmar, the Naga self-administered zone consists of three townships—Leishi, Lahe and Nanyun. The festival is held alternately in those towns to host all the Naga sub tribes.

"After a meeting among heads of tribes, we decided to celebrate this year's festival in Lahe, hoping to see a wide range of traditional dances and songs. In only Lahe Township, there are around 35 tribes," said U Kal, a representative of Lahe constituency.

The New Year Festival was held in Nanyun in 2014, Leishi in 2015 and Lahe in 2016.—*Min Wai (Monywa)*



Naga people dancing at the traditional New Year festival held last year in Lahe. PHOTO: MIN WAI (MONYWA)

Myanmar TV stars to produce traveling programs in China

MYANMAR TV stars team comprising local famous singers, models and actors will travel to China to make two travel programs, Let's go to China and Travelling in China, from Dec.15 to 27, said U Wai Min Maung, chairman of Myanmar Media 7, production company, Saturday.

The travel programs will be made by touring four cities in China, namely Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou and Yangzhou.

The famous rappers Hlwan Paing, Kyaw Htut Swe and Bobby Soxer will join the program as well as Pop singer, Bunny Phyo.

The popular actors Min Thway and A Lin Yaung, actress Khin Lay New, Miss Supranational Myanmar 2013 and actress, Khin Wint Wah, model, singer and Miss World Myanmar 2014, Wine Lay and singer and model, Nan Thuzar, will also cast

in two programs. Let's go program which is popular among local youths has been broadcast for four years and filmed in a lot of Asian and Western countries while Travelling in China is a newly designed program.

Yang Shouzheng, Counselor of Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, said that the embassy helped the team in visa cases and travel planning as China and Myanmar have deep friendship and the embassy wants to show Myanmar people about the political, economic and social situations of China through the program.

Hlwan Paing, a famous rapper, said that he is very excited to travel to China and expressed his thanks to the Chinese Embassy.

Both programs will be broadcast on local MNTV and Channel 9 in February next year.—*Xinhua*

"Geography and National Development"

Prof. Maung Maung Aye (Geography)

IN commemoration of the 96th Anniversary of the University of Yangon, the International Conference of University and National Development was held on December 2, 2016 (Friday) from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. at the Conference Room, Arts Building, University of Yangon. The international conference was jointly organized by the Center of Excellence on Urban and Regional Development (University of Yangon) and the University of Yangon in collaboration with the Institute of Geography, University of Cologne, Germany.

On the next day, 3rd December, 2016, as an active member of the Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM) this author had an opportunity to attend the First Geographical Research Conference held in Arts Hall, University of Yangon. Actually, this research conference was held in conjunction with the International Conference of University and National Development, and jointly organized by the University of Yangon, Asia Research Centre and Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM). Deputy Director-General (DHE), Ministry of Education, President (GAM), Prof. Frauke Kraas (University of Cologne, Germany) made their keynote speeches respectively at this auspicious event. Twelve research papers on various aspects were submitted to the First Geo-

graphical Research Conference.

The University of Yangon was established in 1920 and is the oldest university of Myanmar. On the occasion of its 96th Anniversary in 2016, it is the aim of the international conference to contribute to the important role of universities to national development. Multidisciplinary topics, approaches and perspectives were applied in order to support a vivid exchange beyond disciplinary borders and to enhance scientific networks.

The major aims of the international conference were

- 1) to create a platform of academic discussion for Myanmar scholars on the role of universities to the development of the country,
- 2) to open the discussions within the University of Yangon to connected institutions and to the wider public, and
- 3) to enhance the relationship between the University of Yangon and international universities.

Main topics of panel sessions were found to be -

1. Challenges for the development of Myanmar
2. Improving university research in Myanmar
3. Future of cities, towns, and rural communities in Myanmar

With regard to the First Geographical Research Conference, the author would like to briefly highlight some salient points on Geography Science and National Development in general and

the Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM) in particular .

Introducing Geography

Geography is initially defined as the systematic study for the understanding of the Planet-Earth or the Global Village inhabited by man. Today, the geographic discipline encompasses a much deeper and wider scope. Geography is the science that examines and explains spatial variations, differences, similarities, disparities, and all the patterns and processes of development. Geography provides a scientific interpretation on all phenomena that occur on the surface of the earth.

Early Background

Geography has an early history, dating back to about 2500 years ago. The first university (of the western style) was established at Bologna in Italy. In 1870, Geography was a subject taught at German-speaking universities in Europe, and departments of Geography were also set up.

In Myanmar, Yangon University (then Rangoon University) was established in 1920. The Department of Geography was set up in 1924, and it is the oldest departments in the University of Yangon. Although it was planned at the very beginning, teaching of geography in the University of Yangon started in 1924 with Professor Dr. L.D. Stamp.

In June 1951, Dr. Daw Thin Kyi became professor and head of the Department of Geography. The number of teaching staff gradually increased. Plans for centennial celebrations of both University of Yangon and teaching of geography

in the University of Yangon are already being drawn up.

World Geographical Societies

World Geographical Societies appeared since the early part of the nineteenth century.

Among these are shown below.

▣ Royal Geographical Society (RGS), 1830

▣ International Geographical Union (IGU), 1922

▣ Association of American Geographers (AAG), 1930

▣ Institute of British Geographers (IBG), 1933

Formation of the Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM)

Concerted efforts for the formation of the Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM) had been taken since the last forty years ago (1973, 1980, 1992, and 2004).

In line with the guide lines for the legal formation of associations, the application for the Association was again submitted to the departments concerned in March, 2012. Permission to form the Geographical Association of Myanmar (Registration No. 2139) was obtained on September 4, 2013.

The first Annual General Meeting of GAM was held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall of the University of Yangon on December 27, 2015. Since its inauguration, the total number of GAM members has been gradually increasing, and now it has reached more than 900 members so far.

Aims of the GAM

The Five Major Aims of the GAM are -

development of Geographic Discipline

(a) to hold forums, research towards the national development of Myanmar through Geographic Science

(b) to support and contribute towards the national development of Myanmar through Geographic Science

(c) to promote awareness of Geographic Concepts among the public in Myanmar

(d) to promote closer relationship and cooperation among the members of GAM

(e) to get closer contact and collaboration with other Societies of Geography far and near across the globe (IGU inclusive)

Activities of the GAM

Future activities of the GAM are primarily -

(a) to hold forums, research conferences, talks, workshops and training programmes

(b) to print and publish all aspects related to the AIMS of GAM through a journal (annual/biannual) [GAM has already published two volumes of the journal entitled-

The Environmental World -Vol.(1), No.1 and Vol.(2), No. 1] (c) to prepare, print and publish geographic knowledge through newsletters, books, maps, and teaching aids for the public and students

(d) to establish a systematic and modern library of Geography (e-library inclusive)

(e) to accomplish other activities that meet the AIMS of GAM

Location of GAM

The tentative address of GAM is No. 7-A, Tawwin Street, 9th mile, Mayangon Township, Yangon City. Yangon Office Phone is 09 420 184379 whereas Mandalay

Office Phone No. is either 09 256 000800 or 09 796 922203. E-mail: myanmargeography@gmail.com and Website: www.geography-myanmar.org. In the near future, the GAM is moving to its new address in Dagon Myothit (North) Township.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Geographic Discipline In Myanmar, there was a time when Arts subjects, including Geography, were taught

at Basic Education High Schools. However, it is no longer the case at most of the High Schools. As such, it is anticipated that Myanmar will soon face the danger of Geographic Ignorance and Geographic Illiteracy. In order to produce good citizens in Myanmar, this author is quite confident to say that it is necessary and essential to teach Geography as a "core subject" at High Schools like it was before AD 2000.

Geography focuses on "location or place" while History gives its focus on "time".

Both Geography and History are very important foundation subjects for Myanmar. Each and every item of news includes place and time. So does every happening or event that takes place or location. Geography and History should not be ignored. Smart geographers and historians are able to make good assessment, evaluation and analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in most situations. Myanmar will always need their assistance.

Why study Geography?

There has never been a better

or more important time to study Geography. With growing interest in issues such as climate change, migration, environmental degradation and social cohesion, Geography is one of the most relevant courses you could choose to study.

Geographers are also highly employable in many countries. Whatever your passion for the world - fascination with landscapes or concerns about inequality - Geography will provide you with knowledge and transferable skills that will reward you personally and advance you professionally.

Geographic Information can be defined as information about objects or phenomena that are associated with a location relative to the surface of the earth, and GIS is a technology used to collect, manage, analyze and report geographically referenced information in the form of maps or other output. GIS is rapidly becoming a generic skill and a requirement for many jobs. It is integral to problem-solving activities. It is encouraging, in these days of abundant distractions and ever-increasing demands upon our time, that a Geographical Society can not only flourish but grow. The author hopes it says that we care very much

about our world. Geography may not be the sexiest word in the Myanmar language, but when you think of what Geography can help you understand, the list is almost endless. For example,

- From volcanoes & earthquakes to surfing & white-water rafting.

- From water wars to where you get the best cocktails,
- From world music to choosing where to ski.
- From commodity trading to conflict resolution,
- From migration to music,
- From the melting of glaciers to the food on your plate,
- From why Kenyans win marathons so often to why people face death to cross borders.

Geographers may not have all the answers, but in all these areas they can give you the information that matters.

Pledge of the GAM

The Geographical Association of Myanmar (GAM) will strive its utmost for the realization of its aims. Together with other civil societal organizations, it will participate actively for the development of a peaceful, modern and developed federal democratic country.

In conclusion, the author would like to express his heartfelt gratitude to the Convening Committee or Organizing Committee of the Conference as well as individuals and institutions to whom sincere thanks are due.

The author would like to wish all of GAM patrons and members the best of health, prosperity, success, peacefulness and happiness. The author is looking forward to meeting all of GAM members again at the Second Geographical Research Conference which is expected to be held in any one of other major cities in Myanmar (may be Mandalay, Taunggyi, Patheingyi, etc.). The author firmly believe in his own longlasting motto such as "No Geography, No Development". Therefore, to sum up, the author's final remark is "Geography is indispensable to understanding and developing the present and future world"

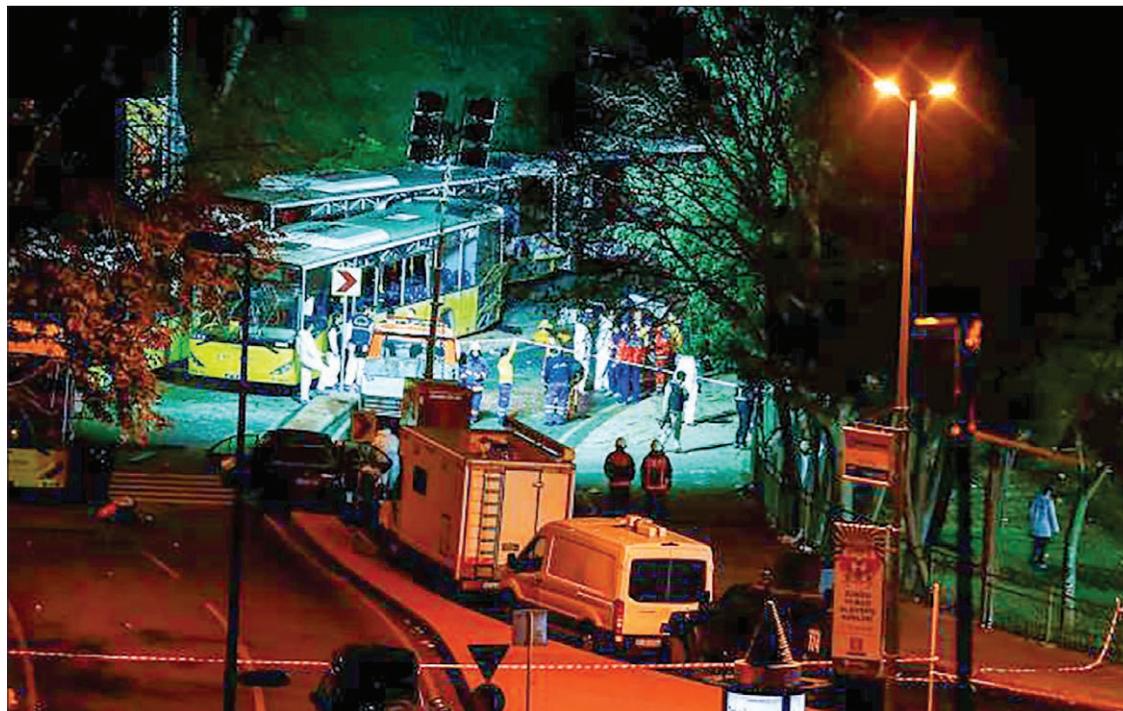
Turkey says Kurdish militants may be behind deadly soccer bombing

ISTANBUL — Turkey said on Sunday that Kurdish militants may be responsible for the two bombs that killed 29 people and wounded 166 in an apparent coordinated attack on police outside a soccer stadium in Istanbul after a match between two top teams.

The blasts on Saturday night — a car bomb outside the Vodafone Arena home to Istanbul's Besiktas soccer team followed by a suicide bomb attack in an adjacent park less than a minute later — shook a soccer-mad nation still trying to recover from a series of deadly bombings this year in cities including Istanbul and the capital Ankara.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus said that early indications pointed to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has carried out a three-decade armed insurgency, mainly in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast. Ten people have been detained so far, he said.

"The arrows point at the PKK," Kurtulmus told broadcaster CNN Turk in an interview. "There will be an announcement once the investigations are over. We cannot



Police forensic experts examine the scene after a blast in Istanbul, Turkey, on 11 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

say anything definite for now."

He said Turkey's allies should show solidarity with it in the fight against terrorism, a reference to the long-standing disagreement with fellow NATO member Washington over Syria policy. The United

States backs the Syrian Kurdish YPG in the fight against Islamic State. Turkey says that the militia is an extension of the PKK and a terrorist group.

Flags were to be flown at half mast and Sunday was declared

a day of national mourning, the prime minister's office said in a statement.

President Tayyip Erdogan cancelled a planned trip to Kazakhstan, his office said. Erdogan described the blasts as a terrorist

attack on police and civilians. He said the aim of the bombings, two hours after the end of a match attended by thousands of people, had been to cause the maximum number of casualties.

"Nobody should doubt that with God's will, we as a country and a nation will overcome terror, terrorist organisations ...and the forces behind them," he said in a statement.

"It was like hell. The flames went all the way up to the sky. I was drinking tea at the cafe next to the mosque," said Omer Yilmaz, who works as a cleaner at the nearby Dolmabahce mosque, directly across the road from the stadium.

"People ducked under the tables, women began crying. Football fans drinking tea at the cafe sought shelter, it was horrible," he told Reuters.

Turkey faces multiple security threats. In addition to the Kurdish insurgency, it is also battling Islamic State as a member of the US-led coalition against the Sunni hardline group. Less than a week ago, Islamic State urged its supporters to target Turkey's "security, military, economic and media establishment".—Reuters



FILE PHOTO Syrian army soldiers drive past the Arch of Triumph in the historic city of Palmyra, in Homs Governorate, Syria in this 1 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian airstrikes force Islamic State retreat in Syria's Palmyra—monitor

AMMAN — Russian airstrikes forced Islamic State fighters to retreat to the outskirts of Palmyra on Sunday, a day after they had stormed the ancient city in eastern Syria, a war monitor said.

The militants were now fighting in orchards on the fringe of Palmyra, the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its jets had launched 64 strikes and killed more than 300 militants during the operation, backing up the Syrian army.

Islamic State fighters had gained control of some oil and

gas fields around the city during their advance which started on Thursday, the monitor said. They had also been pushing towards the nearby T4 air base — used by Russian forces supporting the Syrian army.

It was not immediately clear who now controlled the fields, including al Mahr and Jazal.

The city had been recaptured from the militants last March, in what was hailed as a major victory for the government and the biggest reversal for Islamic State in Syria since Russia's intervention, which turned the tide of the conflict in Assad's favour.—Reuters

Oil truck fireball kills at least 42 in central Kenya — aid worker

NAIVASHA (Kenya) — A fireball from an oil lorry engulfed vehicles on one of Kenya's main highways, killing at least 42 people late on Saturday, a rescue worker at the scene said.

The tanker lorry rammed into vehicles north of the central town of Naivasha then exploded, an official with the National Disaster Management Author-

ity said. "More bodies are still trapped inside the burned vehicles," Red Cross volunteer Moha Maris told Reuters.

The government gave a lower death toll. "The information that we have is that 13 vehicles were involved and so far we have retrieved 33 bodies," Irungu Nyakera, Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Transport and

Infrastructure, told a news conference.

An official in Naivasha said 50 people were being treated in several hospitals for burns, eight of them in a serious condition.

In 2009, more than 100 people burned to death near the central town of Molo after a lorry carrying petrol caught fire.—Reuters

US Defence Secretary Carter in Iraq for talks on Mosul

BAGHDAD — US Defence Secretary Ash Carter arrived in Baghdad on Sunday for talks with Iraqi leaders on the US-backed military campaign against Islamic State militants in Mosul, the Pentagon said.

Iraqi forces, backed by a US-led coalition, have been battling Islamic State in Mosul for eight weeks. The army has recaptured about a quarter of the city, but has faced major counter attacks by the retreating jihadists.

Carter said last week the battle for Mosul, while hard, could be complete before President-elect Donald Trump takes office next month. That, however would require a significant acceleration in the Iraqi army's progress.

The Pentagon said Carter would meet Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi, the president of the Kurdish region Massoud Barzani and the commander of the US-led coalition supporting



Members of the Iraqi Army fire towards Islamic State militant positions at the south of Mosul, Iraq on 10 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Iraqi forces, US Lieutenant-General Steve Townsend.

He will "thank US, coalition, and Iraqi troops engaged in the counter-ISIL campaign, survey

key locations directly supporting the battle for Mosul, and discuss the next steps in the fight" against Islamic State, it said in a statement.—Reuters

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily	
TG-2302	15:00	16:55	1,5,6,7	
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily	
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily	
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily	
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily	
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily	
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily	
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily	
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily	
UB-017	15:45	19:15	2,4,6,7	
UB-017	17:45	19:15	1,3,5	
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7	
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6	

BANGKOK TO YANGON				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily	
TG-2351	10:10	11:00	1,5,6,7	
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily	
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily	
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily	
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily	
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily	
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily	
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily	
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily	
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5	
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily	
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6,7	

YGN TO ICN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily	

ICN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily	

YGN TO DMK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-252	8:30	10:15	Daily	
FD-256	12:55	14:20	Daily	
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily	
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily	
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily	
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily	
DD-4239	21:00	22:45	Daily	
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily	
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily	

DMK TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily	
FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily	
FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily	
FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily	
DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily	
DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily	
DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily	
SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily	
SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily	

YGN TO KUL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily	
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily	
8M-501	16:00	20:15	2	
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1	
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily	
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7	

KUL TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily	
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily	
8M-502	16:45	17:45	1	
8M-502	21:10	22:10	2	
MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7	
MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily	

YGN TO CAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-012	07:00	11:30	7	
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6	
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5	

CAN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-012	12:30	15:45	7	
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6	
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5	

YGN TO TPE				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily	

TPE TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily	

YGN TO SIN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily	
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily	
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5	
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily	
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6	
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2	
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily	
3K-582	11:35	16:05	1,3,4,5,6,7	
TR-2823	9:45	2:15	1,2,4,5,6,7	
UB-001	7:30	11:45	Daily	

SIN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-232	13:40	15:15	Daily	
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily	
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6	
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily	
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5	
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2	
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily	
3k-581	09:10	10:40	1,3,4,5,6,7	
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,6,7	
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily	

YGN TO HAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-956	19:10	21:35	Daily	

HAN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily	

YGN TO NRT				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily	

NRT TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily	

YGN TO SGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7	

SGN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7	

YGN TO HKG				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily	
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7	

HKG TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7	
KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6	
UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7	

YGN TO DOH				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,4,6	

DOH TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-918	20:10	5:20	3,5,6	

YGN TO CNX				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily	

CNX TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily	

YGN TO DAC				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6	

DAC TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6	

MDL TO DMK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily	

DMK TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily	

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

MDL TO SIN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2	
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6	

SIN TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6	
MI-533	11:30	14:50	2	

MDL TO BKK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily	

BKK TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily	

MDL TO KMG				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily	

KMG TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
MU-2029	13:20	13:15	Daily	

NYT TO BKK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7	

BKK TO NYT				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7	

AIRLINE CODES

- 8M = Myanmar Airways International
- BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines
- MH = Malaysia Airlines
- MU = China Eastern Airlines
- NH = All Nippon Airways
- SQ = Singapore Airways
- PG = Bangkok Airways
- UB = Myanmar National Airlines
- VN = Vietnam Airline
- 3K = Jet Star
- AI = Air India
- CI = China Airlines
- DD = Nok Airline
- KA = Dragonair
- MI = Silk Air
- TG = Thai Airways
- AK = Air Asia
- CA = Air China
- CZ = China Southern
- FD = Air Asia
- KE = Korea Airlines
- QR = Qatar Airways
- TR = Tiger Airline

DAY	
4	= Thursday
1	= Monday
2	= Tuesday
3	= Wednesday
5	= Friday
6	= Saturday
7	= Sunday

WHO urges Trump to expand Obamacare, ensure healthcare for all

GENEVA — The World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday urged US President-elect Donald Trump to expand Obamacare and ensure all Americans have access to healthcare.

The real estate magnate takes office next month after promising to repeal outgoing President Barack Obama's signature healthcare policy which helped millions more Americans get medical insurance but has been a target of Republican attacks.

Agnes Soucat, the WHO's director of health system governance and financing, said there were various ways of providing health cover to more people, and it amounted to "political choices." "We as the WHO really encourage the new administration to make sure that the social contract is expanded and that all US citizens have access to health care," Soucat told a news briefing in Geneva.

The United States is the only country among the 35 member states of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development



Cathey Park of Cambridge, Massachusetts wears a cast for her broken wrist with "I Love Obamacare" written upon it prior to US President Barack Obama's arrival to speak about health insurance at Faneuil Hall in Boston on 30 October, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

(OECD) not to provide universal health care, a key UN Sustainable Development Goal for 2030, she said.

The Affordable Care Act, known commonly as Obamacare, has provided some 25 million previously uninsured Americans with health cover. Republicans say it has created unwarranted government intervention in personal healthcare and private industry.

Trump in late November picked Republican US Representative Tom Price, an orthopedic surgeon from Georgia and Obamacare critic, to be his health secretary. Price has long championed a plan of tax credits, expanded health savings accounts, and lawsuit reforms to replace Obamacare.

Republicans are divided over how quickly an Obamacare repeal should go

into effect, with some saying a delay would give them time to work on a replacement, instead of throwing millions of Americans out of their health insurance with no substitute. "There are different strategies to make universal health care particularly pro-poor," Soucat said. "So what we are saying is, yes, this would be a setback if people would lose coverage." —Reuters

FDA warns four companies for labeling flavoured cigarettes as cigars

The US Food and Drug Administration said on Friday it had issued warning letters to four tobacco manufacturers for selling flavoured cigarettes labeled as cigars.

The privately owned companies — Swisher International Inc, Cheyenne International LLC, Prime Time International Co and Southern Cross Tobacco Co Inc — are selling the products under brands such as "Swisher Sweets", "Cheyenne", "Prime Time" and "Criss-Cross" in youth-appealing flavours such as grape, wild cherry and strawberry, the FDA said.

About 90 per cent of adult daily smokers smoked their first cigarette by the age of 18, the agency said.

"Flavoured cigarettes appeal to kids and disguise the bad taste of tobacco, but they are just as addictive as regular tobacco products and have the same harmful health

effects," Mitch Zeller, director of the FDA's Center for Tobacco Products, said in a statement.

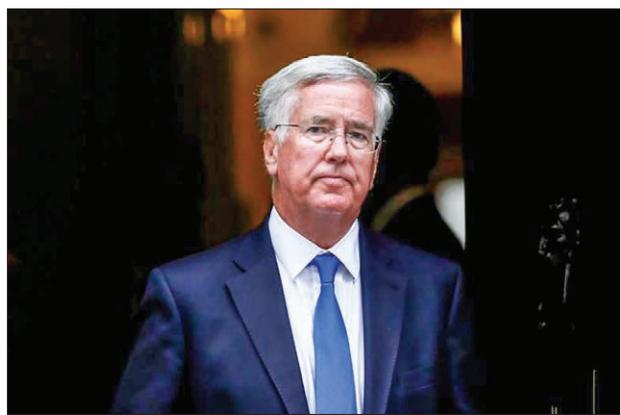
The Tobacco Control Act, which was signed into law in 2009, banned cigarettes containing candy or fruit flavors, to reduce the likelihood of smoking and addiction to tobacco among youth.

The FDA said that while the products in question were labeled as cigars, they met the definition of cigarettes in the Act because they were likely to be offered to or bought as cigarettes based on their appearance, packaging and labeling.

The agency has asked the manufacturers to respond within 15 working days of receiving the letter.

Failure to obey federal tobacco law may result in civil money penalties, criminal prosecution, seizure, and/or injunctions.—Reuters

Britain says West cannot treat Russia as an equal partner



Britain's Secretary of State for Defence Michael Fallon leaves after attending a cabinet meeting at Number 10 Downing Street in London, Britain on 8 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Britain's defence minister said on Sunday he was ready to work with his new US counterpart but that Western nations could not treat Russia as an equal partner as Moscow was a strategic competitor.

Several appointments by US President-elect Donald Trump have suggested his administration could forge warmer relations with Russia's Vladimir Putin, worrying several European allies, especially in eastern Europe.

"I'm ready to work with the new Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis... to be strong against Russian aggression towards NATO, to de-escalate tensions with Moscow and as I said to continue to work with Russia on how we get towards a settlement in Syria," Michael Fallon told the BBC.

"That can't be treating Russia as an equal. Russia is a strategic competitor to us in the West and we have to understand that," he said.

Trump is expected to name the chief executive of Exxon Mobil Corp as secretary of state, a source told Reuters on Saturday, an appointment that would put in place an official with close ties to the Russian government. Fallon also emphasised Britain's support for Saudi Arabia after foreign minister Boris Johnson told an audience that the Saudis, Iran and others were "puppeteering and playing proxy wars."

A spokeswoman for Prime Minister Theresa May said earlier in the week that Johnson's views did not reflect the government's position on Saudi Arabia and its role in the region.—Reuters

Veteran leader Gruevski seeks comeback in Macedonian poll

SKOPJE— Macedonia's veteran nationalist leader Nikola Gruevski sought re-election as prime minister on Sunday, in a vote called almost a year after his government stepped down amid protests over alleged corruption.

Most recent opinion polls have shown a lead for his centre-right VMRO-DPMNE — the party that has led governing coalitions in the former Yugoslav republic for the best part of a decade.

His main challenger is the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM) whose leader, Zoran Zaev, accused the government last year of wiretapping tens of thousands of citizens and released recordings appearing to implicate the government in corruption. Gruevski denied any wrongdoing.

"I am hoping that this madness will stop after the election. I hope a better party will win, the one that promises more jobs and a better economy," said unemployed 52-year-old Orde Serafimovski.

A caretaker government is currently in place, under the terms of an EU-brokered deal to end the political crisis in the landlocked nation of 2.1

million people.

The European Union had long criticised Gruevski's record on democracy and the rule of law, but also needs Macedonia's cooperation to help contain its migration crisis. The country sits on a major migration route into the bloc.

Macedonia is a candidate to join the European Union but has never begun accession talks, partly because of criticism of its reform record and because of an entrenched row with

neighbouring EU member Greece over the name Macedonia, which also belongs to a northern Greek province.

"I am hoping that VMRO will win," said Toni Mihajlovski, a 52-year-old worker at a grocery store in Skopje.

He said he was concerned that if the SDSM won, Albanians would be given more autonomy and the government would make concessions over the name issue to get the EU membership talks started.

"I am afraid if the other party wins there would be no Macedonia."

Eleven parties and coalitions are running, including four representing the ethnic Albanian community, which accounts for around a third of the population. Traditionally, an Albanian party joins a coalition government as junior partner.

The polls close at 1800 GMT. Preliminary results are expected after 2000 GMT, and a final result on Tuesday.—Reuters



Leader of Macedonian ruling party VMRO-DPMNE and former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and his wife Borkica greet supporters during an election campaign rally in Ohrid, Macedonia, on 21 November, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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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.

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Trump likely to name Exxon CEO secretary of state

BALTIMORE — US President-elect Donald Trump is expected to name the chief executive of Exxon Mobil Corp as the country's top diplomat, a source familiar with the situation said on Saturday, an appointment that would put in place an official with close ties to the Russian government.

News of Tillerson's possible appointment comes as US intelligence analysts have concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help Trump win the White House.

The choice of Tillerson further stocks Trump's Cabinet and inner circle with people who favor a soft line toward Moscow.

Tillerson, 64, has driven Exxon's expansion in Russia for decades and opposed US sanctions im-

posed on Russia for its seizure of Crimea. Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded Tillerson Russia's Order of Friendship, one of the country's highest civilian honours. Exxon's Tillerson emerged on Friday as Trump's leading candidate over 2012 Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney and three other people.

Tillerson met with Trump for more than two hours at Trump Tower on Saturday morning. It was their second meeting about the position this week.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Tillerson was the expected pick but cautioned no formal offer had yet been made.

A senior official on the Trump transition team said

the president-elect was close to picking Tillerson.

Trump spokesman Jason Miller said no announcement on the high-profile job was forthcoming in the immediate future.

"Transition Update: No announcements on Secretary of State until next week at the earliest. #MakeAmericaGreatAgain," he tweeted.

Trump on Saturday attended the Army-Navy football game in Baltimore, where he was joined by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who withdrew from consideration as secretary of state on Friday.

NBC News, which first reported the development, said Trump would also name John Bolton, a former US ambassador to the United Nations, as deputy secretary of state. As Exxon's

CEO, Tillerson oversees operations in more than 50 countries, including Russia.

In 2011, Exxon signed a deal with Rosneft, Russia's largest state-owned oil company, for joint oil exploration and production. Since then, the companies have formed 10 joint ventures for projects in Russia.

Tillerson and Rosneft chief Igor Sechin announced plans to begin drilling in the Russian Arctic for oil as part of their joint venture, in spite of US sanctions.

In July, Tillerson was one of the highest-profile US representatives at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, one of Putin's main investment forums, even as Washington had been taking a harder line than Europe on maintaining sanctions.—Reuters

UK government facing new Brexit court case

LONDON — Opponents to Britain leaving the European Union will launch a fresh legal action this week, which could further hamper Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit plans, The Sunday Times reported.

The newspaper said campaigners will write to the UK government on Monday saying they are taking it to the High Court in an effort to keep Britain in the single market.

It said the claimants will seek a judicial review in an attempt to give lawmakers a new power of veto over the terms on which Britain leaves the EU.

They argue the government "has no mandate" to withdraw from the single market because it was not on the referendum ballot paper on 23 June and was not part of the ruling Conservative Party's manifesto for the 2015 general election.

May has said she wants to invoke Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty by the end of March, kicking off up to two years of exit negotiations.

However the High Court ruled last month that Article 50 cannot be triggered without parliament's



Dusk falls over Parliament Square outside the Supreme Court after the third day of the challenge against a court ruling that Theresa May's government requires parliamentary approval to start the process of leaving the European Union, in central London, Britain, on 7 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

assent. That ruling is being challenged by the government in Britain's Supreme Court.

The Sunday Times said the new court case hinges on whether the government would also have to trigger another legal measure — Article 127 of the European Economic

Area agreement — in order to quit the single market.

It said ministers argue Britain automatically exits the single market when it quits the EU.

But, it said if the claimants win the new case, the government would have to gain the ap-

proval of lawmakers.

The Department for Exiting the European Union could not be immediately reached for comment.

A group of British and Irish lawyers are also seeking to challenge Britain's decision to leave the EU in the Irish High Court to try

to establish if Brexit can be reversed once divorce talks have been triggered.

Pro-Brexit critics have cast the legal battles as an attempt by a pro-EU establishment to thwart the result of the referendum, when Britons voted by 52-48 percent to leave the EU.—Reuters

Five Colombian soldiers rescued after helicopter goes down at sea

BOGOTA — Five Colombian soldiers have been rescued after their helicopter crashed on Friday between the Caribbean islands of Providencia and San Andres, the Colombian navy said on Saturday.

In the helicopter were travelling police officer, Andrew Lopez, helicopter technician, Farid Mendez, coastguard officer, David Naranjo, the co-pilot, Julio Cortes and the pilot Jose Arevalo.

However, the helicopter was also transporting presumed drug trafficker, Rafael Tobias, who is missing. Tobias was recently captured and charged for trafficking and was being transported from Providencia to San Andres to face trial.

"We are intensifying the search for the missing person reinforced by a navy ship," said Admiral Andres Vasquez in a statement, after stating the rescue of the five soldiers happened successfully on Friday night.

According to Vasquez, the helicopter went down around 14 nautical miles from San Andres but the cause of the crash had not been established.—Xinhua

US researchers develop device to harvest energy from human motion

LOS ANGELES — The movement of finger swipes may soon be able to charge our cellphones.

Researchers at Michigan State University has created a new way to harvest energy from human motion, using a flexible, thin and non-toxic device that actually can be folded to create more power.

The research, funded by the National Science Foundation, suggests "we're on the path toward wearable devices powered by human motion," said Nelson Sepulveda, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering and lead investigator of the project.

The completed device is called a biocompatible ferroelectret nanogenerator, or FENG, in the journal Nano Energy.

Demonstration videos show that with the low-cost device, the scientists successfully operated an LCD touch screen, a bank of 20 LED lights and a flexible keyboard, all with a simple touching or pressing motion and without the aid of a battery.

The device can be adapted to many applications and sizes. The nanogenerator used to power the LED lights was palm-sized, while the device used to power the touch screen was as small as a finger.

According to the study, the film-like substrate consists of a silicone wafer, which is fabricated with several layers, or thin sheets, of environmentally friendly substances including silver, polyimide and polypropylene ferroelec-

ret. The layers are infused with ions.

When the device is compressed by human motion, or mechanical energy, electrical energy is created. Impressively, the device also becomes more powerful when folded.

"What I foresee, relatively soon, is the capability of not having to charge your cell phone for an entire week, for example, because that energy will be produced by your movement," said Sepulveda in a statement.

Researchers believe FENG is "a promising and alternative method in the field of mechanical-energy harvesting," which is aided by its advantages, such as light weight, flexible, biocompatible, scalable, low-cost and robust.—Xinhua

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Front View: 7'2" width, 7'2" depth.

Plan View: 21'6" width, 7'2" depth.

Front View: 21'6" width, 14'4" height, 7'2" depth.

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'Star Wars' enters 'grittier' new chapter with 'Rogue One' premiere

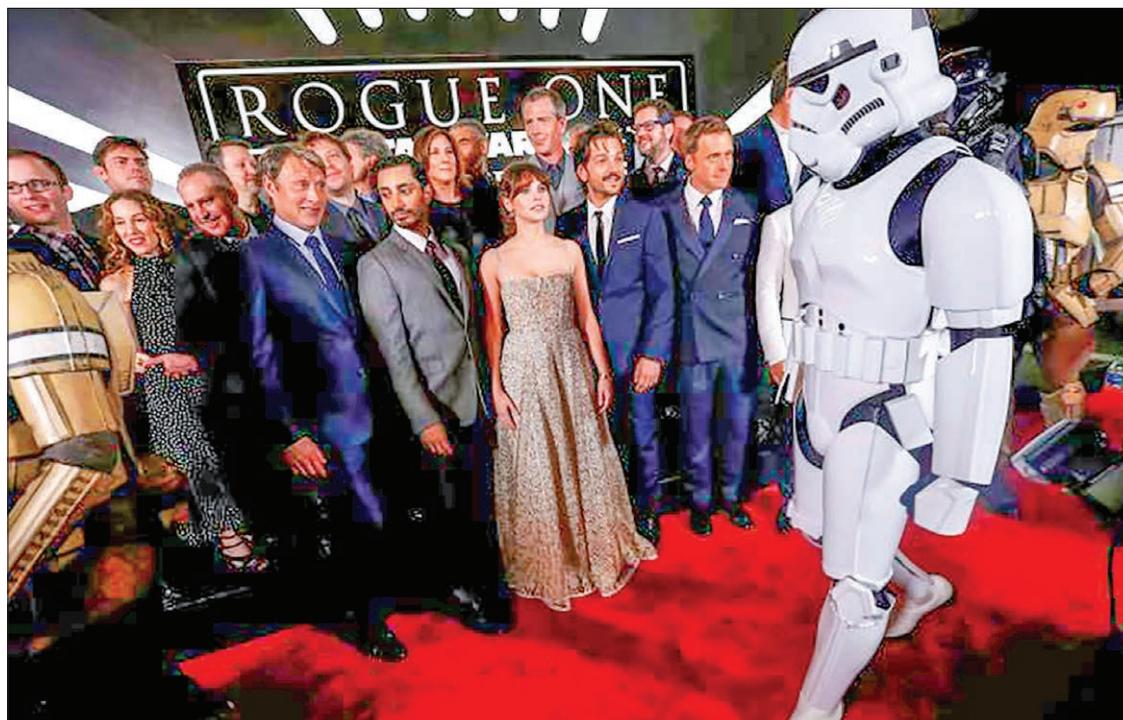
LOS ANGELES — With a new band of rebels and a high-stakes journey, "Star Wars" ushered in a new chapter on Saturday by bringing a galaxy far, far away to the heart of Hollywood for the "Rogue One" premiere.

Directed by Gareth Edwards, "Rogue One" is the first standalone film in Disney's "Star Wars" reboot. It stars a brand new cast in a storyline that does not follow the third trilogy that started with last year's hit, "The Force Awakens".

Ben Mendelsohn, who plays Imperial Commander Orson Krennic, described "Rogue One" as "the really tough cousin" to previous "Star Wars" films.

"People are going to understand exactly where it lives in the 'Star Wars' world and timeline, and I feel like this is a much grittier, harder-edged film and it really packs a hell of a wallop," Mendelsohn told Reuters on the red carpet, which featured a life-size Rebel Alliance X-Wing jet.

"Rogue One", in theaters on 16 December, follows Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones), the daughter of a weapons specialist who



The cast and crew pose on the red carpet while a 'Storm Trooper' walks by as they arrive at the world premiere of the film 'Rogue One: A Star Wars Story' in Hollywood, California, US, on 10 December, 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

has been in hiding under another name for years. Her fate is quickly tied in with Rebel Alliance pilot Cassian Andor, played by Diego Luna, and Im-

perial pilot Bodhi Rook, played by Riz Ahmed, who defects from the dark side.

The trio band together with more rebels to fight the evil

Darth Vader's plans for intergalactic domination.

Jones described Erso as "a bit of a tomboy", saying she had prepare intensely for the role's

physical demands.

"I had to be in the gym for far too long, which I have to say is not enjoyable. But for the sake of 'Star Wars', I was prepared to do it," she said.

The movie explores the journey preceding the events that launched George Lucas' intergalactic saga with 1977's "Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope". The audience at Hollywood's Pantages Theater were among the first to see the full movie, and cheered as homages and references were made to the previous films.

The diverse cast boasts Mexican actor Luna, British-Pakistani actor Ahmed, Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen and Chinese actors Donnie Yen and Wen Jiang.

"All my friends ... said 'We're so excited for you. You're the first Chinese actor that's going to be in the 'Star Wars' universe,' and everything just dawned on me," Yen said.

"This is history making here, so I'm so glad that I'm standing here in front of the camera." —Reuters

From afar, Dylan muses on honour and surprise of Nobel prize



Singer Bob Dylan performs during a segment honoring Director Martin Scorsese, recipient of the Music+ Film Award, at the 17th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards in Los Angeles on 12 January, 2012.

PHOTO: REUTERS

STOCKHOLM — Nobel laureate Bob Dylan sent a message on Saturday thanking the Swedish academy for awarding him the Nobel prize for literature, an honor the American singer and songwriter believed was about as likely as "standing on the moon."

"I'm sorry I can't be with you in person, but please know that I am most definitely with you in spirit and honoured to be receiving such a prestigious prize," Dylan said in a speech read by Azita Raji, the US ambassador to Sweden, at the Nobel banquet.

He also expressed his huge surprise at receiving the award.

"If someone had ever told me that I had the slightest chance

of winning the Nobel Prize, I would have to think that I'd have about the same odds as standing on the moon," he said.

The media-shy Dylan finally accepted the 8 million Swedish crown (\$870,000) prize for literature, after frustrating the award-giving academy with weeks of silence following the announcement of the award on 13 October. But he chose not to attend the festivities.

His absence has been widely debated in Sweden in recent weeks, where the Nobel prize is a huge source of pride. One member of the academy accused Dylan of being "arrogant" and "rude" as the singer remained

silent after the award was announced.

In his place singer Patti Smith performed Dylan's "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" at the award ceremony earlier in the day. A nervous Smith forgot the lyrics and had to start over but still received emphatic applause at the end.

While Dylan was absent, all other laureates, which include Japan's Yoshinori Ohsumi for medicine and Britain's Duncan Haldane for physics, accepted a medal and a diploma from the hand of the Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf before attending the banquet at Stockholm's City Hall for about 1,300 people.

In a Nordic country priding itself on its modernity, the Nobel banquet is vestige of old-world luxury that every year brings together royalty and the powerful in politics and business with some of the world's top scientific minds. The dress code is white tie and tails for men and gowns for women.

The prize was introduced in 1901 according to the will of Alfred Nobel, a Swedish inventor and industrialist, five years after his death in 1896.

The prizes in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, literature and economic science are awarded in Stockholm, Sweden, while the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded in Oslo, Norway. —Reuters

China-Cambodia Film Tour kicks off in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH — A 25-day China-Cambodia Film Tour kicked off here on Sunday, aiming at enhancing cultural ties and promoting people-to-people relations between the two countries, officials said.

Four famous Chinese films — The Piano In A Factory, Wolf Totem, Go Away Mr. Tumor, and The Smile of Angkor — along with three Cambodian movies had been selected for screening at the film tour, which started from Phnom Penh capital to seven provinces around the kingdom's Tonle Sap Lake.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony at the iconic Chak Tomuk Theater in Phnom Penh, Cambodian Culture and Fine Arts Secretary of State Khim Sarith said the ticket-free event would enable Cambodian people to better understand about the cultural values of the two countries.

"For decades, Chinese movies have been very popular among Cambodian audience," he told the ceremony with about 500 spectators. "A large number of Chinese films have been screened at cinemas and television channels across Cambodia." —Xinhua



Thanda Hlaing, one of Myanmar famous models and public figures, introduces Europe's No. 1 home appliances of Beko and Ariston at the sale promotion at the Ocean Centre (Shwegondine) on 11 December. PHOTO: YE HTUT TIN

France's Hollande opens replica of Lascaux prehistoric art caves

PARIS — French President Francois Hollande on Saturday opened a new replica of the famous Lascaux caves where prehistoric hunters painted hundreds of images of animals like aurochs, horses and deer on the cave walls.

Discovered by four teenagers in 1940, the rock displays in southwestern France are some of the richest collection of paintings from the Paleolithic era, and one of the most impor-

tant archeological finds of the 20th century. The caves were closed to the public in 1963 in order to preserve the paintings. There have been several earlier replicas built, but smaller and with less detail. The new replica, which cost 66 million euros (\$70 million), is housed in a new building at the foot of the hill in the Dordogne region where the original paintings are. Authorities expect some 400,000 visitors per year. —Reuters



General view of Lascaux 4, a new complete replica of the original prehistoric painted caves, in Lascaux, France, December 10, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Artist works to preserve Christian heritage in Hamas-run Gaza

GAZA — Only about 1,200 Christians remain in Gaza — only a tiny fraction of the population in a territory run by Hamas Islamists — but artist Naser Jeldha is doing what he can to preserve its Christian heritage through art.

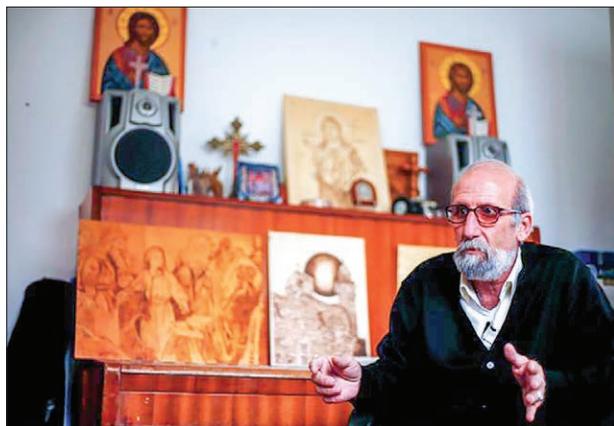
In his studio in the heart of old Gaza, not far from a 5th century Orthodox church, Jeldha spends his days carving religious figurines, chiselling low-relief carvings of Biblical scenes and painting portraits of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and the saints.

"My message is about my religion," said the grey-bearded 57-year-old, a member of the Greek Orthodox community.

"I want to make it visual, I want to make people see it, not only to be kept as texts in church."

As he works, steel-rimmed spectacles perched on his nose, Jeldha listens to Byzantine prayer music that echoes softly around the studio, creating an atmosphere from another era.

The walls are covered in his pictures, with more



Christian artist and sculptor Naser Jeldha gestures during an interview with Reuters in his studio in Gaza City December 4, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

laid out on the arms of chairs and sofas, and others propped on a 150-year-old Russian piano in the corner. As well as painting and sculpture, Jeldha plays the accordion, piano and guitar.

In the run up to Christmas - celebrated on Jan. 7 in the Orthodox church - Jeldha is busy making pieces as gifts for friends and relatives. While he has been an artist for 35 years, he does not display his works or offer them for sale. Instead, he presents them as gifts at weddings or events on the Christian calendar. He does,

however, have plans for a public showing soon.

In the next two weeks, he is also hoping he will be one of about 800 Christians granted a permit by Israel to leave Gaza and travel to Bethlehem, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, to attend prayer services in Jesus's birthplace.

"We have applied for permits and if we get them I intend to travel with my family," said Jeldha, who is determined to remain in Gaza despite the departure of many Christians over the last decade in the face of ris-

ing economic hardship.

While Gaza's Christians generally enjoy good relations with their Muslim neighbours, there have been isolated attacks by hardline Salafist groups on Christian tombs and symbols.

Hamas, the Islamist movement that has ruled Gaza since 2006, is keen to ensure the Christian community feels safe and protected. Its leaders occasionally visit the heads of the three Gaza churches to build stronger relations. Jeldha acknowledged that the economy was suffering, with the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt, a move to pressure Hamas, limiting trade, driving up costs and causing despair.

Despite that, Jeldha, whose white front door is adorned with a small cross painted in blue, said he would never leave. "I have lived in this neighbourhood for 54 years. I have brotherly and wonderful relations with Muslims," said the father of four. "Gaza is beautiful and I will not leave it...I do not feel I am a stranger here." —Reuters

China's famous Buddhist mountain to launch "smart" tourism programme

TAIYUAN — Mount Wutai, one of China's four sacred Buddhist mountains, has signed an agreement with Shanxi Cable and Broadcasting Information Network to launch a smart tourism service around Mount Wutai, the management committee of the scenic area said on Sunday.

With a planned investment of 4.5 million yuan (650,000 US dollars), the programme named "smart Mount Wutai" will offer free wi-fi service, a network system providing services, including an intelligent voice guide, ticket

booking, as well as hotel and restaurant information to tourists.

As part of the province's plan to build smart tourism, the programme will provide more convenience to Mount Wutai tourists.

Added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2009, Mount Wutai is home to about 50 Buddhist temples built between the 1st century and early 20th century.

The site is in Wutai County, Xinzhou City in Shanxi Province, 230 km from the provincial capital, Taiyuan. —Xinhua

SantaCon coming to town

LOS ANGELES — From Boston to Austin and Chicago to Los Angeles, revelers across the United States will be donning red and white suits this weekend to mark the worldwide SantaCon holiday pub crawl.

The annual, often inebriated gatherings of people dressed as Santa Claus as they go barhopping will be held in 380 cities in the United States and 51 countries, according to SantaCon.info.

The website, which bills itself as the established authority on the event, lists details of festivities around the globe, discounts on Santa Claus costumes and advice on how to avoid ticket scams for the events which are mostly free.

But while the faux Santas are counting on a fun-filled day and evening, some bar owners and local officials are bracing for the worst after previous events ended with complaints of drunken and disorderly behavior, public urination and arrests.

Norman Siegel, the New York lawyer who represents SantaCon, acknowledged that in the past the festival in the city had been marred by drunken incidents but this year organizers are aiming for no, or very few arrests or summons. "We have established a cooperative, working relationship with the New York Police Department, which is very positive," he said in an interview. —Xinhua

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(12-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 13-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Tapestry-A Unique Combination Of Painting and Craftsmanship
07:47	Am	Five Hair Relic Enshrined Pagodas
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Hive Hunter
08:47	Am	Talking Shwe Thway (Children Journal)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab
09:41	Am	Myanmar Weaving
09:52	Am	Famous pagodas of Sagaing
10:03	Am	News

10:26	Am	Visiting A Serene Village In The Northwest Of Myanmar
10:41	Am	A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas
10:53	Am	Yoghurt Vendor

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-5)(Part-1)
07:46	Pm	A Way of Life: Aikido
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture "A stir about of Rainbows"
08:52	Pm	Philatelic Pleasure

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

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

Arsenal go top, Vardy hat-trick lights up Leicester

LONDON— Arsenal shoved Chelsea off the top of the table but Leicester City's Jamie Vardy, with a dazzling hat-trick, was the man of the moment on Saturday as the struggling Premier League champions blew aside Manchester City 4-2. With Chelsea chasing a ninth win in a row when they host West Bromwich Albion on Sunday, when third-placed Liverpool also host West Ham United, Arsenal seized their chance to take the overall lead by beating Stoke City 3-1 at the Emirates. The London rivals are now tied on 34 points, and have the same goal difference of 21, but Arsenal edged ahead with 36 goals scored to Chelsea's 32.

Vardy, hero of last season's fairytale title triumph, finally ended his 16-match goalscoring drought for the club with a brace in the first 20 minutes at a rainswept King Power Stadium.

The Foxes, making a non-sense of their miserable recent form, raced into a three-goal lead against Pep Guardiola's expensively assembled side and England striker Vardy completed his first Premier League triple in the 78th from the tightest of angles.

"It was the true Leicester today, maybe because we have played so badly in our last few matches, but today we were so strong," happy manager Claudio Ranieri told the BBC.

"I am very pleased for Jamie. When he finished I said 'Oh, wel-



Arsenal's Granit Xhaka in action with Stoke City's Mame Biram Diouf during the match of the Premier League between Arsenal v Stoke City at the Emirates Stadium on 10 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

come back'." Manchester City stayed fourth on 30 points and risk being overtaken by Tottenham Hotspur, who take on Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday, while Leicester moved up to 14th on 16 points. On a bumper day for goals, the Premier League saw six

home sides score three or more times on a single day for the first time since May 1993. The goals kept coming at Arsenal, where a rash challenge by Granit Xhaka on Joe Allen gave Charlie Adam the chance to put Stoke ahead from the spot, on the Scot's 31st birthday,

and he despatched it without fuss.

Goals either side of halftime by Theo Walcott and Mesut Ozil, who netted with a rare header, put Arsenal back in front against a side that had never taken a point off them at the Emirates.

Walcott stabbed in Hector

Bellerin's low cross for the equaliser three minutes before the break and Ozil's looping header made it 2-1 five minutes after the interval.

Substitute Alex Iwobi then ran through to give Arsenal the two-goal victory they needed to top the table.—Reuters

Guardiola facing searching questions as City slump

LONDON — Pep Guardiola was hailed as the best thing to happen to English football when he swanned into Manchester City at the start of this season and immediately swept all before him with 10 cultured victories in a row.

Yet if that all seemed too good to be true, City fans now know it really was. In the subsequent 15 matches in all competitions, Guardiola's team have won just four

times. One of those was a stellar night against Barcelona but they have too often flattered to deceive.

If that was all worrying enough, Saturday's 4-2 defeat at Leicester City was positively alarming, a shambolic performance with a striking absence of the pass-and-move crispness of the best Guardiola teams and showcasing real defensive deficiencies.

It left City fourth in the table,

four points behind leaders Arsenal, but they could be seven points off the pace should Chelsea beat West Bromwich Albion on Sunday.

It is far from a calamity for City but as Guardiola tried to explain away the defeat afterwards, there were hints that, after his triumphs in Spain and Germany, he is finding the manic puzzles of the Premier League rather harder to solve.

"I have tried to control games so we concede few goals in my career as a coach, and here I cannot do that, and I have to analyse why," he told reporters afterwards, promising to work overtime to put things right.

He has always said he would not dilute the way he goes about playing in the Premier League but asked if he would compromise on his philosophy, he said: "I have to improve to solve that, yeah, that's true." There was also an intriguing exchange in light of City's fragility about his approach to on-field duels. "I'm not a coach for the tackles, so I don't train the tackles," he said.—Reuters



Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola looks dejected Action during the match between Leicester City and Manchester City at the King Power Stadium on 10 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ramos stages another late show to snatch dramatic win for Real

BARCELONA — Real Madrid captain Sergio Ramos again came to his side's rescue as they snatched a dramatic 3-2 victory over Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday to keep Zinedine Zidane's side six points clear at the top of La Liga and set a club record 35 games unbeaten.

Ramos, the scorer of Real's 90th-minute equaliser last week against Barcelona, headed in Toni Kroos' corner in the 93rd minute to complete a stunning turnaround after former Real forward Joselu threatened to unravel the unbeaten run.

Joselu struck twice in the space of two minutes to cancel out Alvaro Morata's stunning second-half strike in the 63rd minute and gave Deportivo a shock 2-1 lead in the 65th by knocking in a low cross from Florin Andone.

Real youngster Mariano Diaz scored his first league goal to level in the 88th and preserve

the unbeaten run but yet again Ramos had the final say.

"When you fight until the end things go your way. They penalised our errors but in the end when you work hard you get results," said Ramos.

"I'm happy that I keep scoring goals and above all we keep completing our objectives."

Zidane, who rested several players, including Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema, was also without Gareth Bale, who has an ankle injury — only the second time since the Welshman joined that Real have been without any of their famous BBC strike force of Bale, Benzema and Ronaldo for a league game.

The win keeps them top of La Liga on 37 points, six clear of nearest challengers Barcelona, who won 3-0 at Osasuna thanks to two second-half strikes from talisman Lionel Messi and an opener from Luis Suarez.—Reuters