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Yandana Hninsi Housing complex opens

THE Yadana Hninsi Housing complex, the new government's first public housing development project in Yangon, was opened yesterday by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor.

The project, which started on 1st June, is a model project for future housing complexes in Dagon Seikkan Township, with its five 18-storey buildings.

As part of public housing development, the Yangon Region Government has adopted a five-year plan from the 2016-17 fiscal year to the 2020-2021 fiscal year to build 180,000 apartments.

Under the plan, 8,000 apartments will be constructed in two years from the 2016-2017 fiscal year to 2017-2018 fiscal year in the Yangon Region, and the apartments would be sold on an installment plan for K10 million, according to the Ministry of Construction.

To implement the project, the Ministry of Construction established the Construction and Housing Development Bank in 2014 and is planning to sell low-cost apartments worth under 10 Ks million with a 30 per cent down payment, with the remaining 70 per cent payable monthly for periods of eight, ten, twelve and 15 years.

Speaking on the occasion, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi urged the people and private businessmen to assist in implementing the public housing development projects, calling it a "public-private partnership" model.

She also requested the people to work together with the



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi views the scale model of Yadana Hninsi Housing Complex. PHOTO: MNA

government in restoring the city's former glory of "the most beautiful country in the eastern region," expressing the Union Government's commitment to upgrade Yangon, which can be accessed not only by road but also by waterway in the future.

The State Counsellor also pledged that the Union Government would assist the Yangon

Region Government in bringing glory back to the city.

As she discussed the current traffic congestion in the city, the State Counsellor said the government had a vision of the city in which people do not need to spend time on the road unnecessarily.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi planted a Maha Hlaygar tree in

the complex to mark the opening ceremony, while Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein also planted commemorative trees.

About 2,200 apartments will be sold to the public on installment system in the near future under the arrangements of the Ministry of Construction and the

Yangon Region Government.

The housing complex was formally opened by Union Minister U Win Khaing, Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Superintending Engineer of the Ministry of Construction Daw San San Aye and Managing Director of Shwe Taung Company U Aung Than. — Myanmar News Agency



Villagers carry rice bags donated by MAUK. PHOTO: MAUNG HMWE

Aid flows to villages in northern Rakhine

EMERGENCY aid from local and international organisations reached 12 villages in Maungdaw Township, northern Rakhine State, yesterday.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the organization MAUK distributed 250 rice bags to 12 villages which are experiencing food shortages following the 9 October attacks.

Officials of the ministry and responsible personnel of MAUK delivered the aid to Sapegon, Yamyat, Ngakhuya, Myothit, Ahtet

Pyupa, Pyuma Kanyintan, Kapataung, Yaymyattaung, Sabepinyin, Chanpyin, Ywenyotaung and Thayetoak villages.

The organisation MAUK also delivered 250 rice bags to Nwayontaung, Thihokyun, Aung Bala and Pyarthar and Thukha Myaing villages in northern Rakhine on Friday.

UN and international organizations also delivered humanitarian aid to 17 villages in Maungdaw District on 19 and 20 December.

The move comes as the Rakhine State Government is stepping

up efforts for sending aid to the conflict areas. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has delivered aid to villages in northern Rakhine since 7th December and the World Food Programme, the BAI, Care, UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) also began their efforts on 19th December.

After the violent attacks on border guard outposts, the WFP has been delivering aid to local residents through local staff since 4th November. — Tin Maung Lwin



St. Mary's Cathedral, at the corner of Bogyoke Aung San Road and Bo Aung Kyaw Street in Botahtaung, the largest Catholic church in Yangon, is illuminated by holiday lighting on Christmas Eve, 24th December. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Government troops clash with KIA/TNLA/MNDAA forces

COLUMNS of government troops, while conducting area clearance operations in Kutkai, Shan State (North), engaged in clashes with members of the KIA, the TNLA and the MNDAA on Friday morning.

At about 7.20 in the morning, government troops came under heavy fire from some 40 mem-

bers of the armed groups about 3,500 metres away from Panfake Village in the township and also from about two-miles away from Kongyun by approximately 50 members of the armed groups. The government troops exchanged fire with the armed groups in both clashes until they retreated to the west and the northwest. One of the

government troops was injured in the clashes.

Pursuing the armed groups, the government troops seized 185 grams of a pink-coloured stimulant powder worth K 3.5 million in a heap of dry grass at an old farmhouse about two miles away from the town. —*Myanmar News Agency*

IDPs scrutinized and admitted in Mongko

INTERNALLY displaced persons who left their homes due to fighting in Shan State (North) are being scrutinized and re-admitted into Mongko as regional stability is restored.

The IDPs, who abandoned their homes due to attacks of KIA,

the TNLA, the MNDAA, and the AA, have been returning to their homes since 9th December as government troops, police, staff of the Township Administration Department and other government agencies scrutinized them and admitted them back into the

towns. Yesterday morning, a total of 14 people, including 10 males and 4 females, were admitted into the town. Altogether 10,248 residents from 2,260 households have been admitted into the town so far, according to authorities. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Palaung residents flee amid fears of conscription, extortion by SSA (Wanhaing)

FREQUENT conscription and extortion by the SSA (Wanhaing) group forced 13 Palaung nationals, including six men and seven women to abandon their homes in Pandham and Wanmaing Vil-

lages in Monghsu Township, Shan State (South).

The families arrived at a monastery in Yephyu Village in Yakswak Township on Thursday.

Local battalion and a mobile medical team visited the Palaung IDP families and attended to their needs, providing rice, edible oil and healthcare. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Japan provides ODA loan up to JPY 31,051 million for Bago River Bridge Construction Project

MR. TATESHI HIGUCHI, Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar and H.E. U Maung Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance, signed the Exchange of Notes for ODA loan project on Friday.

The project amounts to 31,051 million Japanese Yen (approximately 264 million US dollars).

This ODA project is announced by Prime Minister Abe to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor, at the time of Summit in Vientiane, Laos, in September this year.

This project will assist in constructing a new bridge to con-

nect Yangon City side with Thilawa SEZ. This project aims to improve traffic and logistics network on both sides of the bridge, which is expected to contribute to increasing direct investments in Thilawa SEZ and the development of Myanmar economy.

The loan will be provided with an interest rate of 0.01 per cent per annum, with 40-year repayment period (including a 10-year grace period).

The Embassy of Japan believes the ODA Loan project will contribute to the social and economic development of Myanmar, thereby improving people's livelihood. —*GNLM*



Mr Tateshi Higuchi and U Maung Maung Win exchange the notes for the Bago River Bridge Construction Project. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Weapons, ammunition seized

Columns of government troops, while conducting area clearance operations in Mongko, Shan State (North) and adjacent areas yesterday, seized

a 0.22 caliber firearm and 15 rounds of ammunition that had been wrapped in a groundsheet hidden in a bush. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Five civilians injured in random KIA heavy weapon fire

ABOUT five KIA troops opened fire using heavy weapons on vehicles travelling on the Union Highway in Kutkai Township in Shan State (North) yesterday, injuring five civilians near

Monglwe Village.

Columns of government troops provided first aid to the injured and have been conducting area clearance operations in the area. —*Myanmar News Agency*



The injured civilians receive medical care at the hospital. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

U Kyaw Tin attends 2nd Mekong-Lancang Foreign Ministers' Meeting

MINISTER of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin attended the 2nd Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 23 December 2016.

The meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Prak Sokhonn, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Kingdom of Cambodia and Mr. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister, People's Republic of China. It was also attended by Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.

At the meeting, the Ministers

adopted the Joint Press Communiqué, Matrix of the follow-ups to the 45 outcome projects endorsed at the 1st MLC Leaders' Meeting held in Sanya, Peoples' Republic of China in March 2016 and the General Principles for the Establishment of the Joint Working Groups on the five MLC key priority areas, namely Connectivity, Production Capacity Cooperation, Cross-border Economic Cooperation, Water Resources, Agriculture and Poverty Reduction.

During the meeting, China officially announced the launch of Mekong-Lancang Special Fund with 300 million US Dollar capital to implement the cooperation projects to the benefit of all the people in the Mekong region. It was also decided to convene the next Foreign Ministers' Meeting in China in 2017 and the 2nd MLC Leaders' Meeting in Cambodia in

2018.

Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) is a sub-regional mechanism between China and Mekong countries namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Viet Nam and Thailand.

MLC was initially proposed during the 17th SEAN-China Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw.

Under this mechanism, China and Mekong countries have been cooperating based on three pillars namely, the Political and Security, Economic and Sustainable Development and Social, Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges.

While in Siem Reap, Minister for Foreign Affairs met with Mr. Wan Yi, Foreign Minister of the Peoples' Republic of China and discussed matters on Mekong subregional cooperation and bilateral relations. —Myanmar News Agency



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin is seen together with other foreign ministers attending the 2nd Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) Foreign Ministers' Meeting. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister for Information attends meeting for Myanmar Democracy Week Film Festival

THE SECOND coordination meeting for organising the Myanmar Democracy Week Film Festival was held at the Myanmar Radio and Television in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint urged officials of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Association and film professionals to make movies that contribute to democratic trends.

Participants at the meeting discussed production of seven full-length movies and television series, the formation of a committee for production of them, selection of directors, actors, ac-



Information minister speaking at the second co-ordination meeting. PHOTO: MNA

tresses and scripts, and formation of a committee that is responsible for stories and scripts. The

meeting ended with concluding remarks by the union minister. —Myanmar News Agency



PHOTO: AMAZONS WATCH MAGAZINE

Daw Su Su Lwin, President's wife, presented CELD's Global Inspirational Leadership Award 2016

DAW Su Su Lwin, wife of the President and Pyithu Hluttaw representative, has won the Global Inspirational Leadership Award 2016 presented by the Centre for Economic and Leadership Development (CELD) for her effort for the development of education sector and women and children, according to the Amazons Watch Magazine.

The award presentation ceremony was held at South America-Africa-Middle East-Asia Women Summit (SAMEAWS) convened on 13th December, 2016 at Shangri-La Hotel in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and Myanmar Ambassador to Kuwait HE U Aye Khaing, re-

ceived the award on behalf of Daw Su Su Lwin.

Similarly, the Amazons Watch Magazine published by CELD presented the Global Women Leaders 2016 Award of CELD for her effort for educational development in addition to a news report in its magazine which mentions her as one among the Top 100 Most Influential Women in Emerging Economies.

Centre for Economic and Leadership Development (CELD) is a non-profit organization, which has achieved Special Consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC). — Myanmar News Agency

Civilian injured by a landmine planted by KIA

A CIVILIAN was injured when he stepped on a landmine planted by the KIA while he was picking vegetables in a forest about 800 metres from Bawzarde, his village, in Longkin Village-tract in Hpakant on Friday.

Columns of government troops provided necessary first-aid to U Je Yawsa, and then rushed the injured man to Lingkin Hospital.

Government troops visited him and presented cash assistance. —Myanmar News Agency

Commissioning ceremony of new naval vessels for marking the 69th anniversary Myanmar Navy Day held



Commissioning ceremony of new vessels for marking the 69th anniversary Myanmar Navy Day in progress.
PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR NAVY commissioned its new vessels at the No 3 jetty in Yangon yesterday for marking the 69th anniversary Day of Myanmar Navy.

A Commissioning ceremony of new vessels for marking the 69th anniversary Day of Myanmar Navy was held at the No 3 jetty in Yangon yesterday.

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wearing Myanmar Navy Uniform as a mark of honouring Myanmar Navy Day, attended and delivered a speech at the ceremony.

Then, he cordially greeted all the retired Commanders-in-Chief (Navy) who attended the ceremony.

After Chief of Staff (Navy) Rear Admiral Moe Aung declared the new vessels as the

commissioned vessels, raising National Flag, Myanmar Navy Flag and Commissioning Flags and striking bell in line with the step-by-step commissioning process.

The Senior General and party inspected the commissioned vessels.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing took the salute by the frigates namely Kyan-Sit-Thar, Sin Phyu Shin led by Aung Zeya frigate, corvette missile carrier Bayintnaung, Fast Attack Crafts in the Single Line Formation.

At the ceremony the Senior General said that number of navy vessels was not enough in the past, and so there were weak points in defending the Myanmar coastal area. Now, as My-

anmar Navy has been upgraded, resulting in higher capacity. This being so, our territorial waters is now duly respected.

Next, the Senior General and party inspected the Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters.

In the evening, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his wife formally cut the ribbon to open the booths to mark the 69th anniversary Myanmar Navy Day.

The Myanmar Navy commissioned a personnel carrier ship, corvette missile carrier ship and six Coastal land craft utility ships at the Commissioning ceremony of new vessels for marking the 69th anniversary Myanmar Navy Day. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Repair of sixty pagodas completed in Bagan

MINOR repair of 60 pagodas in Bagan has been completed as of the third week of December, it is learnt from Archaeology, National Museum and library Department.

“Following the earthquake, we have been repairing the pagodas both minor and major, and minor repair of 60 pagodas has already been finished as of third week of December,” said U Thein Lwin, a high-ranking official from Archaeology, National Museum and Library Department.

The Archaeology, National

Museum and Library Department has been conducting emergency repair of over 80 pagodas as well.

Over 300 pagodas were damaged by an earthquake of 6.8 magnitude on 24 August, 2016. The government has been conducting the repair and renovation of the pagodas with the assistance of Thai, Japanese, Chinese and UNESCO experts.

Major repairs will be conducted with the expertise of expatriate professionals in the first week of January, 2017. —

Myitmakha News Agency

Myanmar chili growers and suppliers association to form in January

MYANMAR chili growers and suppliers association will be formed officially next month to produce high-quality chilies in Myanmar, it is learnt.

“We will apply for the license soon. We will form the association in January 2017. Our Myanmar Chili Growers and Suppliers Association will be under the Myanmar Consumers Association,” said U Than Lwin, chairman of Myanmar Chili growers and suppliers association (temporary).

“Chilis mainly need to be kept dry. The chili growers need to know about Aplatoxim B1,” he added.

The Myanmar Chili Growers and Suppliers Association has been formed with 14 members. The members were invit-

ed on 20 December from state-owned newspapers. Over 50 applications have been received from chili growers and chili powder producers from regions and states.

Chili is mainly grown in the Mandalay region and Ayeyawady region and Shan state. The Skynet agriculture channel is telecasting awareness programmes on chili drying and storage methods. They will also go on field trips to discuss the technology.

The chili growers and chili powder producers have requested the the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to support the technical assistance to be able to grow the high-quality chili in Myanmar. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

Action taken against another landlord who illegally rented house to six Chinese

LEGAL action was taken against a landlord in Mandalay on 22 December by the Immigration and National Registration Department for renting his house to six Chinese people without informing the Immigration department, it is learnt.

The landlord rented the house to six foreign Chinese, including Mr. Chen Fu Xing, for Ks0.4 million per month. The landlord is said to have been dealing with the foreigners for a year.

“The landlords and hotel owners in Mandalay will face penalties if they rent rooms or apartments to foreigners without informing to the Immigration and National Registration Department,” said an official from the immigration department on Friday.

Despite the action taken against the landlord, the six foreigners are legally working for “Run Together Advertising” and are staying in Myanmar in accordance with the Immigration

rules and regulations, it is learnt from the Immigration and National Registration Department.

Currently, the landlord from Chan Aye Tharsan township is now on trial under section 5 (1) of the Foreigners Registration Act. There have already been eight landlords and owners of two hotels who have had legal action taken against them by the Mandalay region Immigration and National Registration Department. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

POEM:

X'mas done

- * Every Christmas I recollect
To ones of long ago;
I see our mentalpiece deck
With stockings in a row.
- * Every Christmas finds me conjure
Of days that used to be
When we hid present here and there,
For all the family.
- * Every Christmas I keep in mind
The fragrance in the air,
Of roasting meat and pies
And cookies everywhere.
- * Every Christmas finds me pray
For Christmases now past
And I am back in schooldays
As far as memories last.

Yin Nwe Ko (Linn)
23-12-2016

How India lobbied Moody's for ratings upgrade, but failed

NEW DELHI — India criticised Moody's ratings methods and pushed aggressively for an upgrade, documents reviewed by Reuters show, but the US-based agency declined to budge citing concerns over the country's debt levels and fragile banks.

Winning a better credit rating on India's sovereign debt would have been a much-needed endorsement of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic stewardship, helping to attract foreign investment and accelerate growth.

Since storming to power in 2014, Modi has unveiled measures to boost investment, cool inflation and narrow the fiscal and current account deficits, but his policies have not been rewarded with a ratings upgrade from any of the "big three" global ratings agencies, who say more is needed.

Previously unpublished correspondence between India's finance ministry and Moody's shows New Delhi failed to assuage the ratings agency's concerns about the cost of its debt burden and a banking sector weighed down by \$136 billion in bad loans.

In letters and emails written in October, the finance ministry questioned Moody's methodology, saying it was not accounting for a steady decline in the India's debt burden in recent years. It said the agency ignored countries' levels of development when assessing their fiscal strength.

Rejecting those arguments, Moody's said India's debt situation was not as rosy as the government maintained and its banks were a cause for concern, the correspondence seen by Reuters showed.

Moody's and one of its lead sovereign analysts,

Marie Diron, declined to comment on the correspondence, saying ratings deliberations were confidential. India's finance ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

Arvind Mayaram, a former chief finance ministry official, called the government's approach "completely unusual".

"There was no way pressure could be put on rating agencies," Mayaram told Reuters. "It's not

done." India has been the world's fastest growing major economy over the past two years, but that rapid expansion has done little to broaden the government's revenue base. At nearly 21 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), India's revenues are lower than the 27.1 per cent median for Baa-rated countries. India is rated at Baa3 by Moody's, the agency's lowest notch for debt considered investment grade.—Reuters



Rupee notes of different denominations are seen in this picture illustration taken in Mumbai. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thousands flee coastal villages as typhoon approaches Philippines

MANILA — Philippine authorities on Saturday evacuated thousands in coastal villages in the country's central region where a category 4 typhoon is expected to make landfall later this weekend, bringing strong winds and heavy rains.

The weather bureau said typhoon Nock-ten, locally known as Nina, had earlier packed winds of 130 kmh (93 mph) but has since slowed to 15 kmh, moving west-northwest and was on target to hit Camarines Sur province in the Bicol peninsula.

"Families in Albay's coastlines have started fleeing to safer and higher grounds," Mina Marasigan, a spokeswoman for the national disaster agency, told reporters, adding coastal villagers in both Cama-

rines Sur and Camarines Norte provinces were also told to move to temporary shelters.

Albay is a province south of Camarines Sur.

Storm surges and flooding were also expected in low-lying and coastal areas and landslides were feared in mountain slopes, the disaster agency said. Marasigan said authorities have raised typhoon alert levels in nine provinces along the eastern seaboard, suspending land, sea and air travel until after Sunday to avoid accidents.

Thousands of holiday travellers were also stranded in transport terminals. Several flights have been canceled for the weekend in the central and north-eastern parts of the country.—Reuters

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Bangladesh raids militant hideout, militant commander's spouse among four surrendered

DHAKA — Four people including wife of a slain militant commander surrendered to police as Bangladesh law enforcers on Saturday morning conducted a raid on a hideout of banned Islamist outfit Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in capital Dhaka.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia told journalists that the four surrendered to the police along with a pistol and several bullets.

He said the suspected militants include Jebunna-har Shila who was earlier identified as the wife of

slain Major (retd) Jahidul Islam, militant commander of Neo-JMB (an offshoot of the banned militant outfit Jamaatul Mujahideen Bangladesh) blamed for 1 July attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka's diplomatic quarter.

Shila had earlier managed to escape another drive in Dhaka couple months earlier.

Mia said the raid is still underway as three more militants wearing suicide vests are inside the three-story building.

He said the militants have been asked to surrender but they are threatening to detonate grenades

tied to their bodies.

A team of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of Dhaka Metropolitan Police cordoned off the building near Bangladesh's premier airport in capital Dhaka Saturday suspecting presence of militants there.

Shila's husband Bangladesh Army's sacked Major Jahid was killed in a raid in Rupganj on the outskirts of Dhaka on 2 September months of after the deadly cafe attack.

Tamim Chowdhury, a Bangladeshi-Canadian and Sarwar Jahan, identified as Neo JMB chief who was

also killed during a raid on 8 October, have been blamed as the mastermind of the brutal attack on the Spanish cafe.

Chowdhury was also killed in a police raid on 27 August morning.

JMB carried out a series of bombings in 63 out of the country's 64 districts, including capital Dhaka on 17 August, 2005, leaving two people dead and 150 others injured. Hundreds of JMB leaders and activists were rounded up while six top leaders of the group, including Shaikh Abdur Rahman, were hanged in 2007.—Xinhua

6,000 people spend night at airport as heavy snow hits Hokkaido

SAPPORO — Around 6,000 people were forced to spend Friday night at New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido after about 280 flights were canceled as the northern Japanese prefecture was hit by its heaviest December snowfall in 50 years, the airport operator said on Saturday.

The number of people stranded overnight at the airport's passenger terminal building was the most since its opening in 1992, the operator Hokkaido Airport Terminal Co. said.

With the airport only having 4,000 blankets, the authorities had to bor-

row some from nearby Self-Defence Force bases, it added.

Suspension of some flight services on Saturday continued to cause congestion at the airport, which serves the prefectural capital Sapporo.

"I want to go home today, somehow. I am just praying that I won't receive an email from the airline company notifying me of cancellation of the flights," said Yu Iwabuchi, a 20-year-old vocational school student who was hoping to travel to her home in Nagano Prefecture. Hokkaido Railway Co., meanwhile, said they

have stopped the operation of more than 330 trains, including all morning services to and from Sappo-

ro Station, on Saturday as the task of clearing snow took longer than predicted.—Kyodo News



Passengers remain stranded at New Chitose Airport in Hokkaido on 24 December 2016, having spent the night at the airport after heavy snowfall cancelled hundreds of flights. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

South Korean president's friend at heart of scandal summoned for questioning

SEOUL — A South Korean special prosecutor probing a corruption scandal engulfing impeached President Park Geun-hye summoned a friend of hers at the centre of the crisis for questioning on Saturday on charges including bribery and embezzlement, an official said.

The questioning of Choi Soon-sil, whom Park has described as a life-long friend, came ahead of a ninth straight weekend rally in central Seoul demanding the immediate ouster of Park.

Choi and other former presidential aides were charged in November with abuse of power and fraud, but Park has immunity from prosecution as long as she is in office even though her powers are suspended.

"The charges in the indictment are but a very small part of the 14 points under investigation by the special prosecutor," said Lee Kyu-chul, a spokesman for the team of investigators probing the scandal.

Choi will be questioned on charges of bribery and transferring embezzled assets abroad, Lee told a briefing.

Choi, wearing a grey prison uniform and a surgical mask, was taken to the special prosecutor's office from detention, pushed by a throng of correctional officers through a media scrum.

She did not answer journalists' questions about the charges.

The special prosecutor has



Choi Soon-sil, the jailed confidante of disgraced South Korean President Park Geun-hye, centre, arrives for questioning into her suspected role in political scandal at the office of the independent counsel in Seoul, South Korea, on 24 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

up to 100 days to investigate allegations that Park colluded with Choi and her aides to pressure big conglomerates to contribute 77 billion won (\$64 million) to foundations set up to back her policy initiatives.

Park has denied wrongdoing but apologised for carelessness in her ties with Choi.

The friendship dates back to

the 1970s when Park served as acting first lady after her mother was killed by an assassin's bullet intended for her father, then-president Park Chung-hee.

Five years later, in 1979, Park's father was murdered by his disgruntled spy chief.

Park's impeachment is being reviewed by the Constitutional Court which has up to 180

days from the day of the 9 December impeachment to decide whether to uphold it or reinstate Park. Another large crowd is expected in central Seoul later in the day calling on Park to step down. A group of 1,000 young people are scheduled to dress up as Santa Claus and march to the presidential Blue House to deliver handcuffs.—Reuters

EU to help improve nutrition, food security in Laos

VIENTIANE — The European Union (EU) has made available 22.6 million euros and called for project proposals to improve nutrition and food security in Laos.

The move aims to help Laos accomplish its National Nutrition Strategy 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020, which will help to improve food and nutrition security among rural households and create sustainable agricultural wealth at the village and household levels, the state-run Vientiane Times reported on Friday.

Food and nutrition security is about ensuring that everybody is able to access sufficient, affordable and diversified nutritious food.

In Laos, access to sufficient and affordable food remains a challenge in itself. Beyond this crucial question, ensuring that food, once obtained, is being utilized and provides adequate nutrition is another key challenge, according to the EU.

Nutrition is interlinked with agriculture, food security, social protection, health, education, water and sanitation. The devastating consequences of "hidden hunger" in Laos and the urgent need to scale up interventions to tackle this challenge are undeniable.—Xinhua

Talks on Indonesia-Japan medium-speed railway project intensified

JAKARTA — Talks between Indonesia and Japan regarding a medium-speed railway project between Indonesia's two largest business hubs have been intensified and may become one of the main topics to be discussed during a visit by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Jakarta next month.

The project will be a part of efforts to revitalize the existing 725-kilometre railway between Jakarta and Surabaya, after Japan lost out to China in September last year in bidding to construct a high-speed railway between Indonesia's capital and the West Java provincial capital Bandung.

The railway will be devel-

oped into a medium-speed one with a capacity of 160 kilometres per hour and an end-to-end duration of five hours, down from the current nine hours, with fares of between 500,000 rupiah (\$37) and 600,000 rupiah.

Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs Luhut Pandjaitan told reporters Friday that the Ministry of Transportation and the Technology Assessment and Application Agency, or BPPT, had completed an early survey on the project and decided to use an electric system.

The Indonesian government, in its proposal to Japan submitted during Pandjaitan's visit to Tokyo this week, also picked a pub-

lic-private partnership to finance the project.

The option was taken because the project "will be costly" and according to the country's law, railways belong to the state, the close aide of President Joko Widodo said.

Pandjaitan said that, based on Japan's calculations, the project will cost 102 trillion rupiah, while Jakarta calculated that it may cost less than 80 trillion rupiah.

"We try to combine (the financing from the government and private sector) so the project will not put a heavy burden on our state budget," Pandjaitan said.

"Apparently, the Japanese

side has also agreed with us, so we hope that it (negotiations) will be finalized (soon)," he added.

A feasibility study on the railway project will be carried out by BPPT, state-owned railway company PT Kereta Api Indonesia and representatives from Japan.

"The feasibility study, which will be jointly financed by Indonesia and Japan, may be completed by the end of next year, so hopefully the project will start soon after that," Pandjaitan's deputy Arif Havas Oegroseno told a small group of journalists.

Further details on the project are expected to be discussed during a visit by Japanese Minister

of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Keiichi Ishii to Jakarta on Wednesday and Thursday to prepare for Abe's visit.

The railway network will be integrated with some dry ports, where goods arriving from Jakarta's Tanjung Priok Port will be cleared by customs and quarantined before being transported onward.

Tanjung Priok Port, as well as a new port that will be developed by Indonesia and Japan in Patimban on the northern coast of West Java Province, is expected to be a hub for loading and unloading goods from ships to be sent to dry ports by train.—Kyodo News

China uncovers 500,000 food safety violations in nine months

SHANGHAI — China, rocked in recent years by a series of food safety scandals, uncovered as many as half a million illegal food safety violations in the first three quarters of the year, an official said.

Chinese officials have unearthed a series of recent food

health scandals, including rice contaminated with heavy metals, the use of recycled "gutter oil" in restaurants as well as the sale of baby formula containing lethal amounts of the industrial chemical melamine in 2008.

Bi Jingquan, the head of the China Food and Drug Administra-

tion, told the Standing Committee of National People's Congress on Friday that while significant progress had been made in the food sector, "deep-seated" problems remained.

According to a transcript of Bi's report published on the official website of the National Peo-

ple's Congress (www.npc.gov.cn), Chinese food safety departments conducted more than 15 million individual inspections in the first three quarters of the year and found more than 500,000 incidents of illegal behavior, he said.

Among the offences were false advertising, the use of coun-

terfeit products and ingredients and the sale of contaminated food products, Bi said. One case in the northeastern province of Jilin involved the use of industrial gelatine in food, while several cases in southwestern Guizhou Province involved the use of counterfeit and low-quality salt.—Reuters

Trump's nuclear remarks test bid to improve Russia ties

WEST PALM BEACH, (Fla.)/ MOSCOW — US President-elect Donald Trump upped the stakes on Friday in a back-and-forth exchange with President Vladimir Putin over nuclear weapons that tested the Republican's promises to improve relations with Russia.

Offering a glimpse of how he might conduct diplomacy after taking office on 20 January, Trump reportedly welcomed a nuclear arms race with Russia and China and boasted that the United States would win it.

MSNBC host Mika Brzezinski said Trump told her in an off-air phone call: "Let it be an arms race. We will outmatch them at every pass and outlast them all." The television station did not play his comments on air. It was the second brusque comment about atomic weapons in two days from the New York businessman that alarmed nuclear non-proliferation experts worried about fueling global tension.

The broadsides from Trump's resort in Florida appeared to be aimed mostly at Putin even though the two men have vowed to patch up relations between their countries once the Republican enters the White House.



US President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a USA Thank You Tour event in Orlando, Florida, US, on 16 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Trump tweeted unexpectedly on Thursday that, "The United States must greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes," but gave no further details.

That comment appeared to be a response to Putin who said earlier on Thursday that Russia needed to "strengthen the mili-

tary potential of strategic nuclear forces."

Russia and the United States are at odds over Syria's civil war and Ukraine but Cold War-style nuclear tensions have greatly eased in recent years. Moscow and Washington signed the New START nuclear treaty in 2010 which reduced strategic weapons and delivery systems.—*Reuters*

Russia's Putin discusses killing of ambassador with Erdogan

MOSCOW — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan gave an update on the investigation into the killing of the Russian ambassador in Ankara in a phone conversation

with President Vladimir Putin on Friday which also covered the Syrian crisis, the Kremlin said.

The envoy, Andrei Karlov, was shot dead on Monday by an

assassin who shouted "Allahu Akbar" and "Don't forget Aleppo". He was buried with military honours in Moscow on Thursday.

"The President of Turkey informed Vladimir Putin about how the investigation of the murder of the Russian ambassador to Turkey was going," the Kremlin said in a statement.

"The close cooperation between Russian and Turkish law enforcement and special services was noted," it said.

On the Syrian crisis, the two men expressed satisfaction with the end of the operation in Aleppo.

"This has meant that favourable conditions have been created to start the peace process, assuming there will be a cessation of hostilities across the whole territory of Syria and a transition to a political settlement," it said.

Russian news agencies reported earlier on Friday that one Russian military police battalion, fully staffed with contract service members, had been deployed from the Hmeimim air base in Syria to Aleppo.

The battalion will help local officials with law enforcement, the defense ministry was quoted as saying by RIA news agency.—*Reuters*



Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) and his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan arrive for a news conference following their meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, on 10 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kerry, after UN vote, calls for Israel, Palestinians to advance two-state solution

WASHINGTON — US Secretary of State John Kerry called on Israel and the Palestinians to advance prospects for a two-state solution after the United States abstained in a UN Security Council vote on Friday condemning Israeli settlements.

Kerry said in a statement that the United States did not agree with every aspect of the resolution. But he said the UN measure "rightly condemns violence and incitement and settlement activity and calls on both sides to take constructive steps to reverse current trends and advance the prospects for a two state solution."—*Reuters*

Vucic: Serbia committed to good-neighbourly ties with Croatia

BELGRADE — Serbian PM Aleksandar Vucic met in Belgrade on Friday with Milorad Pupovac, president of Croatia's Serb National Council, reiterating Serbia's commitment to good-neighbourly relations with Croatia.

Vucic and Pupovac, who is also an MP in the Croatian parliament, discussed the position of ethnic Serbs in Croatia and possibilities for Serbian government assistance to institutions of the Serb community there. They discussed ways in which the Serbian government can help to solve the difficulties facing Serbs in Croatia and improve their position, the government said in a statement.

The Serbian government will help the institutions of the Serb community in the strengthening of their programming capacities, in particular in education and culture, the statement said. They also discussed the state of the relations between Serbia and Croatia.—*Tanjug*

Fresh Saudi-led airstrike kills seven children in Yemen

SANAA — At least seven children and two women were killed when a Saudi-led airstrike hit their home in Yemen's southwestern province of Ibb overnight, rescuers and residents said on Saturday early morning.

The airstrike took place around midnight, killing an entire family and destroying their home. Rescuers and residents said that it took them about one hour to pull out the bodies. Dozens of adjacent houses were also damaged.

Separately, the Saudi-led coalition launched seven air strikes overnight on the provinces of Saada, Hodaydah and Taiz, targeting Houthi fighters, according to residents and local officials. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

On 23 November, a Saudi-led coalition airstrike killed twelve Yemeni civilians and wounded six others when they were traveling in a pickup car toward a local public market in Hayran in the north-western province of Hajja. Saudi Arabia has been leading a mostly Arab military coalition to intervene in the Yemeni conflict since March 2015 via an air campaign.—*Xinhua*

Turkey-backed rebels kill 68 IS fighters near Syria's al-Bab

ISTANBUL — Turkey-backed rebels killed 68 Islamic State militants in clashes in northern Syria overnight, Turkish state media reported the military as saying on Saturday, as intense fighting around the town of al-Bab continued.

Syrian rebels supported by Turkish troops have been laying siege to the Islamic State-held town for weeks, as part of the "Euphrates Shield" operation launched by Turkey nearly four months ago to sweep the Sunni hardliners and Kurdish fighters from its Syrian border.

Fighting around al-Bab has escalated this week with Turkish soldiers and 138 jihadists killed in clashes on Wednesday in the deadliest day since the start of Turkey's Syrian incursion.—*Reuters*

29 wounded in Mexican fireworks-market blast released from hospital

MEXICO CITY — Some 29 people wounded in Tuesday's explosion at a central Mexican fireworks market have been released from the hospital, authorities said on Friday.

Another 24 victims remain hospitalized at 13 different hospitals in and around Tultepec, the town in the State of Mexico where the San Pablito market is located.

Around 3 pm (2100 GMT) on Tuesday, a series of explosions — six major blasts possibly from stored gunpowder kegs, and hundreds of smaller rockets and firecrackers going off in all directions — destroyed the market at the height of the annual shopping season.—*Xinhua*

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.

It is incumbent upon us to safeguard our independence

Editorial from the
Mirror Daily
(Kyemon) Dated
23rd December
2016

EACH and every one of the Peoples in the world loves their country, and accordingly they want to serve their country and people, more or less. In order to accomplish that spirit, their country needs to be an independent and autonomous nation.

In case a country being under the reign of another, every countryman is willing and ready to sacrifice their life fighting for independence. It is not an easy job for a country to regain its independence and sovereignty. It will take time and require sacrifices to do so. Contrariwise, we will be well convinced that Myanmar easily lost her Independence and sovereignty to other's rule in 1885.

Retrospecting the events in some one hundred years ago, we can make a general conclusion that deterioration of integrity in the country and lack of technology, techniques, tactics and modern weapons advanced enough to keep pace with other nations were attributed to the loss of our valued independence and sovereignty.

During 11 dynasties of Konbaung Era in Myanmar, the country became a colonial nation in 3 phases. Skilled manipulation of power and management of administrative machinery led colonialists to becoming one-century-long-ruling governor over Myanmar. This was not caused by lack of patriotism and nationalism. As long as a country

does not attain its autonomy, it will be difficult to promote the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in us.

Colonization of a country can be made in a short period of time, as the prolonged rule of the colonized nation by exercising divide-and-rule tactic can disintegrate unity among people.

Impact of evil legacy left after a century long reign by use of divide-and-rule method is hundred times worse than armed control, and it caused the country to suffer for many years. In other words, a psychological defeat is more dreadful than a military defeat so much that the country finds it difficult to recover to a normal state.

It took nearly 70 years for Myanmar to gain its independence, yet it must be said to have been suffering from woes left by colonial rule. After gaining independence, the colonial rule left us legacy of practicing systematic approach to everything, and concurrently, we have evil legacy of problems which are still difficult to be solved.

As addressed by Bogyoke Aung San, a country that gains independence must have freedom, equality, development and unity & consolidation, which are worthy of the Independence.

Specifically, we should keep in our mind that it will be like a state losing independence though living in an independent nation, unless we have unity.

Sexual offences In Myanmar, Singapore and India

U Mya Thein. B. A., B.L.

(Continued from 24-12-2016)

(a) sexually penetrates the vagina or anus of a woman (B) with a part of A's body (other than A's penis) or anything else; or

(b) penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of a woman (B) with his penis, with or without B's consent where B is to A's knowledge A's grand-daughter, daughter, sister, half-sister, mother or grandmother (whether such relationship is or is not traced through lawful wedlock), shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) Any woman of or above the age of 16 years who, with consent, permits her grandfather, father, brother, half-brother, son or grandson (whether such relationship is or is not traced through lawful wedlock) to penetrate her in the manner described in subsection (1)(a) or (b), knowing him to be her grandfather, father, brother, half-brother, son or grandson, as the case may be, shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) Subject to subsection (4), a man who is guilty of an offence under subsection (1) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 5 years.

(4) If a man commits an offence under subsection (1) against a woman under 14 years of age, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 14 years.

(5) A woman who is guilty of an offence under subsection (2) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 5 years.

Sexual penetration of a corpse

Section 377. (1) Any man

who penetrates, with his penis, the vagina, anus or mouth, as the case may be, of a human corpse, shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) A man who is guilty of an offence under subsection (1) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 5 years, or with fine, or with both.

(3) Any person (A) who causes any man (B) to penetrate with B's penis, the vagina, anus or mouth, as the case may be, of a human corpse, shall be guilty of an offence if B did not consent to the penetration.

(4) A person who is guilty of an offence under subsection (3) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 20 years, and shall also be liable to fine or to caning.

According to Indian Penal Code

Section 375. A man is said to commit "Rape", if he -

(a) penetrate his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

(b) inserts, to any extent, any object or a part of the body, not being the penis, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

(c) manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or

(d) applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person, under the circumstances falling under any of the following seven descriptions:-

First.- Against her will.

Secondly.- Without her consent.

Thirdly.- With her consent, when her consent being obtained by putting her or any other person in whom she is interested, in fear of death or of hurt.

Fourthly.- With her consent, when a man knows that he is not her husband and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married.

Fifthly.- With her consent when, at the time of giving such consent, by reason of unsoundness of mind or intoxication or the administration by him personally or through another of any stupefying or unwholesome substance, she is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she gives consent.

Sixthly.- With or without her consent, when she is under eighteen years of age.

Seventhly.- When she is unable to communicate consent.

Explanation 1.- For the purpose of this section, "vagina" shall also include labia Majora.

Explanation 2.- Consent means an unequivocal voluntary agreement when the woman by words, gestures or any form of verbal or non-verbal communication, communicates willingness to participate in the specific sexual act:

Provided that a woman who does not physically resist to the act of penetration shall not by reason only of that fact, be regarded as consenting to the sexual activity.

Exception 1.- A medical procedure or intervention shall not constitute rape.

Exception 2.- Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.

Section 376. (1) Whoever, except in the cases provided for in sub-section (2) commits rape, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

(2) Whoever,-

(a) being a police officer, commits rape-

(i) within the limits of the police station to which such officer is appointed; or

(ii) in the permission of any station house; or

(iii) on a woman in such police officer's custody or in the custody of a police officer subordinate to such police officer; or

(b) being a public servant, commits rape on a woman in such public servant's custody or in the custody of a public servant subordinate to such public servant; or

(c) being a member of the arm forces deployed in the area by the Central or a State Government commits rape in such area; or

(d) being on the management or on the staff of a jail, remand home or other place of custody established by or under any law for the time being in force or of a women's or children's institution, commits rape on any inmate of such jail, remand home, place or institution; or

(e) being on the management or on the staff of a hospital, commits rape on a woman in that hospital; or

(f) being the relative, guardian or teacher of, or a person in a position of trust or authority towards the woman, commits rape on such woman; or

(g) commits rape during communal or sectarian violence; or

(h) commits rape on a woman knowing her to be pregnant; or

(i) commits rape on a woman when she is under sixteen years of age; or

(j) commits rape, on a woman incapable of giving consent; or

(k) being in a position of control or dominance over a woman, commits rape on such woman; or

(l) commits rape on a woman suffering from mental or physical disability; or

(m) while committing rape causes grievous bodily harm or maims or disfigures or endangers the life of a woman; or

(n) commits rape repeatedly on the same woman, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not less than ten years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanation.- For the purposes of this sub-section,-

(a) "armed forces" means the naval, military and air force and includes any member of the Armed Forces constituted under any law for the time being in force, including the paramilitary forces and any auxiliary forces that are under the control of the Central Government or the State Government;

To be continued

Amazon starts flexing muscle in new space: air cargo

ALLENTOWN, (Pa.) — A cargo plane emblazoned with “Prime Air” descended from an empty sky at Lehigh Valley International Airport on Tuesday, ninety minutes from the bustle of New York City, loaded with crates of goods during the peak holiday shopping season.

It’s one of 40 jets leased by Amazon.com Inc for a new cargo service to meet delivery demand from the retail giant’s customers. Exclusive payload data reviewed by Reuters and interviews with airport officials around the country show that Prime Air planes are flying nearly full, but with lightweight loads, taking away valued business from FedEx Corp and United Parcel Service Inc.

Expanding into transportation, from trucks to planes, is one of Amazon’s most important endeavors as it strives to lure new customers with fast shipping while keeping costs under control. The world’s largest online retailer is sending more packages, more often, and later in the day to serve its estimated 35 million to more than 50 million US members of Amazon Prime, a service that promises two-day shipping for \$99 per year.

Bulky boxes with goods once purchased in stores, like toilet paper, are a revenue driver at UPS



A wide body aircraft emblazoned with Amazon’s Prime logo is unloaded at Lehigh Valley International Airport in Allentown, Pennsylvania, US, on 20 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

and FedEx. That’s in part because they now are charging customers increasingly by boxes’ volume rather than weight. Shipping its own big, light packages is helping Amazon dodge those rising fees.

To date, Amazon has only said it leased the planes to speed

up shipping and to backstop cargo partners during the holiday season. FedEx and UPS have delivered items late for Christmas in recent years.

“Our own delivery efforts are needed to supplement that capacity rather than replace it,” Amazon

spokeswoman Kelly Cheeseman told Reuters. She declined to comment on eluding cargo airline fees.

Amazon’s planes fly to at least 10 airports across the United States, supplying its warehouses nearby. Officials at four airports said Amazon’s flights are operat-

ing near capacity but landing with lower-than-average weight — meaning it is placing low-density shipments inside the jets.

Amazon aircraft on a monthly basis handled only between 37 per cent and 52 per cent of their maximum loads by weight, according to an analysis of cargo, capacity and landing data from the four airports, with supplementary information from tracking website FlightAware.com. By contrast, FedEx and UPS were at 53 per cent and 56 per cent capacity, respectively, according to US Transportation Department data for the year ended September 2016, excluding weight carried for free.

“You’re dealing with cargo that’s big in dimensions, but in pure weight it’s light,” said an airport ramp manager in California.

Airports in Tampa and Charlotte reported similar payload data for the carriers contracted by Amazon, but they did not specify whether the flights were full by volume or whether they were operated on Amazon’s behalf. A seventh airport outside Chicago said the planes were not full, though daily flights only started in October 2016, and Amazon likely is learning the market, transport experts said.—Reuters

Denso, NEC to tie up in developing self-driving technology

NAGOYA — Major Japanese auto parts maker Denso Corp. will team up with NEC Corp. in developing self-driving automobile technology that makes use of artificial intelligence, sources at the two companies said on Saturday.

With NEC boasting expertise in developing artificial intelligence and software, Denso intends to accept assistance from the infor-

mation technology company to accelerate research into automotive parts for next-generation vehicles.

Specifically, Denso hopes to marry its camera and sensor technology with NEC’s “deep-learning” artificial intelligence technology to develop systems to allow cars to be able to sense dangers and avoid people and obstacles in their way, according to the source.

The relationship will also work towards enhancing automotive cybersecurity due to the heightened risk of data leaks as more cars become connected to the Internet.

With alliances between the automotive and IT industries gaining importance in developing next-generation vehicles, Denso

has already moved to tie up with Toshiba Corp. and Sony Corp. in a bid to compete with its overseas rivals.

Earlier this week, Honda Motor Co. said it is entering into formal discussions with Waymo, the autonomous driving unit of Google Inc.’s parent company, to integrate its self-driving technology with Honda cars.—Kyodo News

Stocks could suffer as Trump trade policy takes shape

NEW YORK — The year-end stocks rally on the heels of the election of Donald Trump as US president was built on expectations of reduced regulations, big tax cuts and a large fiscal stimulus.

Now signs are emerging from the Trump camp that harsher trade policies that could jeopardize the honeymoon are likely in the offing, and investors would be well advised to give those prospects more weight when gauging how much further an already pricey market has to run.

By naming China hawk Peter Navarro as head of a newly formed White House National Trade Council, the incoming administration is signaling Trump’s campaign promises to revisit trade deals and even impose a tax on all

imports are very much alive.

Among the policies favored by Navarro and Trump’s pick for commerce secretary, Wilbur Ross, who has the president-elect’s ear on a range of economic issues, is a so-called border adjustment tax that is also included in House Speaker Paul Ryan’s “Better Way” tax-reform blueprint.

If implemented, economists at Deutsche Bank estimate the tax could send inflation far above the Federal Reserve’s 2 per cent target and drive a 15 per cent surge in the dollar.

Analysts calculate that, all else being equal, a 5 per cent increase in the dollar translates into about a 3 per cent negative earnings revision for the S&P 500 .SPX and a half-point drag on



Traders work on the floor at the opening of the day’s trading at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in Manhattan, New York City, US, on 22 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

gross domestic product growth. The dollar index .DXY has already gained more than 5 per cent since the US election.

Harsher trade policies may not cause a full economic slowdown, “but I’d expect a localized recession in manufacturing and smaller gains in factory employment as well,” said Brian Jacobsen, chief portfolio strategist at

Wells Fargo Funds Management in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.

He said the border tax could trigger retaliation, pouring uncertainty into the market.

“Even if the drafters of the legislation have pure intentions, other countries could use this as a pretext for propping up or subsidizing their own favourite industries.”—Reuters

Ericsson, Cisco to target corporate, public sector clients in 2017

STOCKHOLM — Global telecoms equipment gear maker Ericsson (ERICB.ST) plans to expand its partnership with Cisco Systems Inc (CSCO.O) by serving new corporate clients and the public sector in 2017, its North American chief told Reuters in an interview.

Rima Qureshi says Ericsson and Cisco remain on track to achieve an extra \$1 billion each in revenues by 2018 through a partnership which was announced late in 2015. Qureshi says Ericsson’s Cisco partnership, which generated over 60 deals in the first year, has been mainly focused on telecom operators. Next year, the firms plan to target enterprises and public sector as well.

“The two of us together definitely are looking much closer into how we can work on the enterprise (segment),” said Qureshi.

“We are investigating what we can do together within Industry & Society, IoT (Internet of Things), smart cities and we’re going to target specific public sector segments, specifically for example transportation, utilities ... And then of course we’re looking at other segments such as security,” she added. Qureshi says Ericsson’s forecast to generate up to 25 per cent of revenue from business outside of telecom operators by 2020.—Reuters

Aleppo sees shelling, air strikes again as Assad urges peace talks

BEIRUT — Syrian rebels shelled Aleppo and air strikes resumed around the city on Friday as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his allies said the insurgents' withdrawal from the city could pave the way toward a political solution for the country.

A day after the last rebels left their remaining pocket of territory in the city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights — a war monitor based in Britain — said about 10 shells fell in its southwestern al-Hamdaniya district.

The Observatory said six people, including two children, were killed. State television said at least three people died.

Insurgents seeking to oust Assad have shelled government controlled areas of Aleppo throughout the conflict, which began in 2011. The destruction in those parts of the city has been far less than in eastern districts rebels held until this month.

Air strikes resumed in rebel-held areas of the countryside near Aleppo on Friday for the first time since the end of the evacuation operation.

Strikes hit to the west, southwest and south of the city, areas which had not been hit for at least a week. The Britain-based Obser-

vatory had no information on casualties yet.

After months of bombardment and a final few weeks of intense air strikes and Syrian army advances on the besieged, rebel-held part of Aleppo, a local ceasefire was reached on 15 December which allowed thousand of civilians and then fighters to leave.

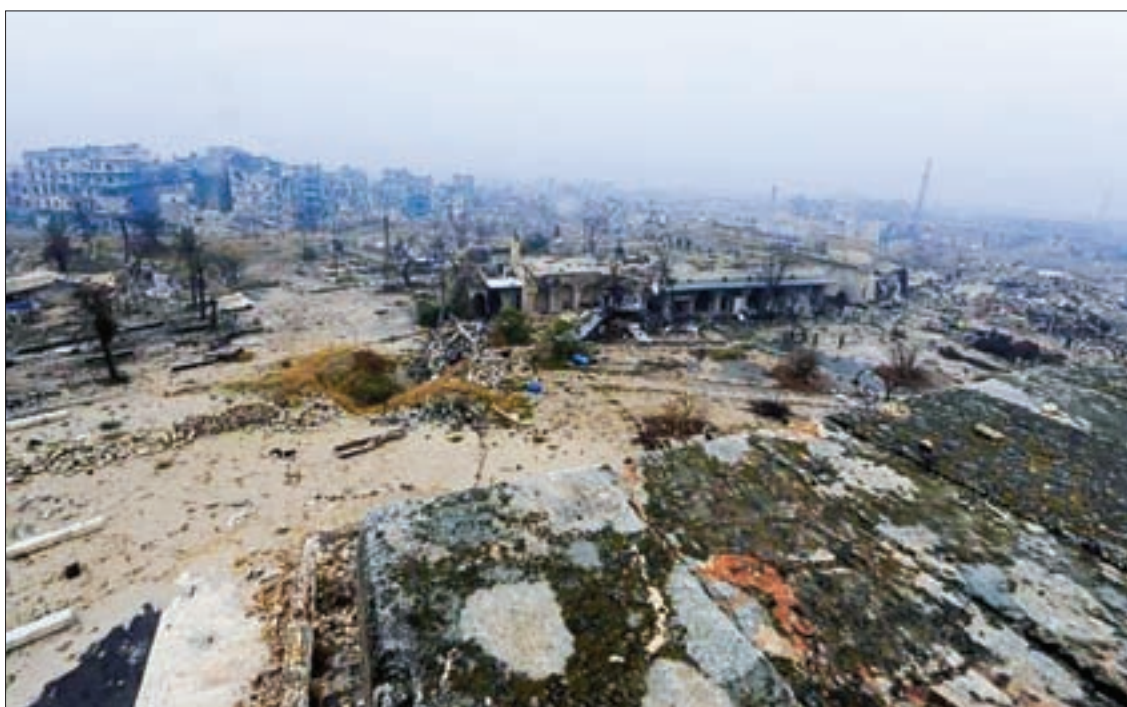
The last left the city late on Thursday for countryside immediately to the west. The International Committee of the Red Cross said about 35,000 people, mostly civilians, had departed.

Many of those who left are living as refugees in the areas to the west and south of Aleppo, including in Idlib province where bulldozers were used to clear heavy snowfall on Friday morning, the opposition Orient television showed.

On Friday, the army and its allies, including Lebanese group Hezbollah, searched districts abandoned by the rebels, to clear them of mines and other dangers, the Observatory reported.

State television showed empty streets lined with apartment blocks smashed by air strikes in the al-Ansari district.

In the capital Damascus, the water authority has been forced to



A general view shows damage in the Old City of Aleppo, Syria, on 13 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

cut supplies coming into the Syrian capital for a few days and use reserves instead after rebels polluted the water with diesel, it said on Friday.

The al-Fija spring which supplies Damascus with water is in the rebel-held Wadi Barada valley northwest of the capital in a mountainous area near the Lebanese

border. The government controls much of the surrounding territory and on Friday carried out aerial attacks and shelled the rebel-held area, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

A military news outlet run by Hezbollah said the rebels in the valley had refused to leave the area and the Syrian Arab Army began

an offensive against them on Friday morning.

Through a series of so-called settlement agreements and army offensives, the Syrian government, backed by Russian air power and Iran-backed militias, has been steadily suppressing armed opposition around the capital. —Reuters

FBI warns of possible Islamic State-inspired attacks in US

WASHINGTON — US federal authorities cautioned local law enforcement on Friday to be aware that supporters of Islamic State have been calling for their sympathizers to attack holiday gatherings in the United States, including churches, a law enforcement official said.

The warning, issued in a bulletin to local law enforcement, said there were no known specific, credible threats.

The notice from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Homeland Security was issued out of an abundance of caution after a publicly available list of US churches was

published on pro-Islamic State websites.

"The FBI is aware of the recent link published online that urges attacks against US churches. As with similar threats, the FBI is tracking this matter while we investigate its credibility," the FBI said in a statement.

Islamic State sympathizers "continue aspirational calls for attacks on holiday gatherings, including targeting churches," CNN quoted the bulletin as saying. The notice describes different signs of suspicious activity for which police should be alert, it said. —Reuters



A member of the New York Police Department's Counterterrorism Bureau patrols the Union Square Holiday market following the Berlin Christmas market attacks in Manhattan, New York City, US, on 20 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Malta hijack ends peacefully as Gaddafi loyalists surrender

VALLETTA — Hijackers armed with what were probably replica weapons forced an airliner to land in Malta on Friday before freeing all their hostages unharmed and surrendering, having declared loyalty to Libya's late leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Television pictures showed two men being led from the aircraft in handcuffs. The prime minister of the tiny Mediterranean island, Joseph Muscat, tweeted: "Hijackers surrendered, searched and taken in custody".

The Airbus A320 had been on an internal flight in Libya on Friday morning when it was diverted to Malta, 500 km (300 miles) north of the Libyan coast, after a man told the crew he had a hand grenade.

Muscat said the grenade and two pistols the hijackers were also carrying appeared to be replicas, according to an initial forensic examination.

A Libyan television channel reported it had spoken by phone with a hijacker who described himself as head of a pro-Gaddafi party. Gaddafi was killed in an uprising in 2011, and Libya has been racked by factional violence since.

With troops positioned a few hundred meters (yards) away, buses were driven onto the tarmac at Malta International Airport to carry away 109 passengers, as well as some of the crew. Television footage showed no signs of strug-



Two hijackers of a Libyan Afriqiyah Airways Airbus A320 surrender to Maltese military on the runway at Malta Airport, on 23 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

gle or alarm. After the passengers had left the plane, a man briefly appeared at the top of the steps with a plain green flag resembling that of Gaddafi's now-defunct state.

Libya's Channel TV station said one hijacker, who gave his name as Moussa Shaha, had said by phone he was the head of Al-Fateh Al-Jadid, or The New Al-Fateh. Al-Fateh is the name that Gaddafi gave to September, the month he staged a coup in 1969, and the word came to signify his coming to power.

In a tweet, the TV station later quoted the hijacker as saying: "We took this measure to declare and

promote our new party."

Lawmaker Hadi al-Saghir told Reuters that Abdusalem Mrabit, a fellow member of Libya's House of Representatives on the plane, had told him the two hijackers were in their mid-20s and were from the Tebu ethnic group in southern Libya.

After the standoff ended peacefully, Muscat told a news conference there had been talks between Maltese authorities and the Libyan hijackers.

The men had asked for two Maltese negotiators to board the aircraft, but this was rejected. —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 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	

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	

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	

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

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	

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	

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	

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	

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

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

YGN TO KMG				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily	
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily	
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3	

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

YGN TO PEK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	3,7	

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

YGN TO SGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-942	12:10	14:55	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	

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

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

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

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

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

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	

KMG TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily	
MU-2031	14:00	14:30	Daily	
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3	

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

PEK TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-905	19:30	22:50	3,5	

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

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

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	

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

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

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

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

Corruption probe clouds survival of Brazil's transition leader



FILE PHOTO: Brazil's interim President Michel Temer (C) attends a meeting with Brazil's Senate President Renan Calheiros (centre, R) and Planning Minister Romero Juca (centre, L) in Brasilia, Brazil, on 23 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BRASILIA — Corruption allegations implicating Brazilian President Michel Temer and his party are casting doubt on his ability to remain in office and causing the first cracks in his coalition amid growing calls for early elections.

Allegations that Temer and members of his inner circle solicited illegal funds for his 2014 vice presidential campaign threaten to undermine a solid majority in Congress that put him in office by impeaching leftist Dilma Rousseff in August.

Losing that majority would dismantle the two goals Temer set himself as caretaker president through 2018: to restore fiscal discipline and revive Brazil's flailing economy.

Key allies are still with Temer, for now.

But there are signs some are ready to break ranks, and others are divid-

ed over getting burned by association with his deeply unpopular government.

Senator Ronaldo Caiado, whose Democrats Party is one of the strongest backers of Temer's austerity measures before Congress, said this week the president lacked enough support in the country for the measures and should consider stepping down to allow elections next year.

In the centrist PSDB party, which fully backs Temer's fiscal reform programme as it eyes its own presidential bid in 2018, party leader Aécio Neves reconfirmed his support for Temer this week, as long as he sticks to the austerity agenda.

Temer is trying to strengthen his base by offering the PSDB, Brazil's third-largest party, a fourth Cabinet post, the ministry in charge of relations with Congress.—Reuters

UN General Assembly backs resolution on nuke abolition talks

NEW YORK — The UN General Assembly on Friday adopted for the first time a resolution calling for the start of negotiations to outlaw nuclear weapons, marking a major step toward landmark talks on disarmament.

The resolution calls for talks to be held twice next year — the first round from 27 to 31 March and the second from 15 June through 7 July in New York — to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

Because the meetings will be held at UN headquarters there were financial implications that had to be approved before it could finally be adopted in a plenary session.

One hundred and thirteen countries backed it, and 35 — including the United States, Britain,

France, Russia and Japan —voted against it. Thirteen, including China, abstained.

"Negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban treaty is the first step in finishing the major piece of unfinished business within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which requires nuclear-armed states to disarm," Matthew Bolton, associate chair of Pace University, said in an e-mail exchange with Kyodo News.

"The passage of this resolution sends a clear message that the vast majority of the world sees nuclear weapons as illegitimate and inhumane weapons. The successful negotiation of a treaty would represent the most significant shift in nuclear politics since the end of the Cold War and represents a

much-needed victory for multilateral diplomacy."

The decision to endorse the resolution at the General Assembly follows the 27 October resolution that was adopted by a UN committee charged with overseeing disarmament issues.

The motion was initially put forward after a UN working group on nuclear disarmament in August adopted a report recommending to the General Assembly that negotiations begin in 2017 to make nuclear weapons illegal.

Austria introduced the draft along with Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa as the first stage in the process at the committee level. Once endorsed there, the final step is the adoption by the General Assembly.—Kyodo News

Activity logs of Japanese peacekeepers in South Sudan discarded

TOKYO — Daily activity logs compiled by Japanese troops deployed to South Sudan as UN peacekeepers have been discarded, Defence Ministry officials said Saturday, likely making it hard to examine some of their activities, including those around the time of a large-scale clash in the fledgling nation in July.

The logs, compiled by members of the Ground Self-Defence Force in South Sudan, were discarded entirely, including in digital form, because they "ended their useful purpose," an official of the ministry's Joint Staff said, adding that infor-

mation in the logs has been relayed to superiors.

The news comes amid concerns that the security situation in the African country has so deteriorated that it is no longer meeting the conditions set by the Japanese government for participation in a UN peacekeeping mission.

Internal ministry rules stipulate that records related to UN peacekeeping operations must be stored for three years, but those which "arise on an unscheduled basis and end their purposes within a short period time" can be discarded, a senior ministry official said.

The official of the Joint Staff said information in the discarded daily activity logs has been reflected in documents compiled for newly arriving troops to some extent.

Japan began sending members of the Self-Defence Forces to South Sudan in November 2011. The GSDF civil engineering corps has been deployed in the capital Juba since January 2012. Today its 11th batch is in the country with an additional task of protecting peacekeepers and UN staff even if they themselves are not directly targeted.—Kyodo News

Evacuation advisory for area hit by massive fire lifted after 2 days

NIIGATA, (Japan) — A municipal government lifted Saturday afternoon an evacuation advisory for residents in the areas hit by a massive fire that broke out Thursday morning, destroying some 150 buildings and injuring 11 people in a city on the Sea of Japan coast.

Ahead of the lifting of the advisory, the municipal government of Itoigawa, Niigata Prefecture, allowed residents of most of the affected areas back in to check on their homes and buildings. But the government kept the areas near the origin of the blaze — a ramen noo-

dle restaurant — as no-entry zone. The fire which broke out at 10:30 am Thursday forced hundreds of residents to evacuate their homes and prompted the dispatch of the Self-Defence Forces. It was not totally extinguished until Friday afternoon, about 30 hours after it started.

The Itoigawa city government had advised 744 people from 363 households to evacuate, and more than 30 were still taking shelter at two locations as of Saturday morning.

The fire burnt 40,000 square meters, according to the municipal government.

Police and firefighters have finished investigating the area around the noodle restaurant, they said.

The police believe the fire started at the ramen restaurant as its owner said he went outside after turning on a stove burner.

The Niigata prefectural government has sent a team of seven officials to support the city government in reconstructing the damaged areas. Those officials will assess the city government's needs before the prefectural government sends a full-fledged support team, it said.—Kyodo News

Invitation for 4th Annual General Meeting and Gathering Dinner

You are cordially invited to attend 4th Annual General Meeting and Gathering Dinner of Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation as a member of agencies. The meeting's program will be held as mentioned below;

Date : 8-1-2017 (Sunday)

Time : Meeting Time (10:00am) to (12:00pm) and
Dinner Time (06:00pm) to (09:00pm)

Place : Western Park Restaurant 7th Floor, Polo Club (Asia) Residence
Corner of East Horse Race Course Road & Laydaunkan Road
(Near Sky Star Hotel), Tamwe Township.

Executive Committee

Japanese woman missing in France, man being sought in connection

PARIS — A 21-year-old Japanese university student is missing in France, with local police trying to ascertain the whereabouts of another foreign student in connection with her disappearance, local authorities and media said Friday.

Narumi Kurosaki, a Tokyo-born student at the University of Tsukuba in Japan's Ibaraki Prefecture, began attending the University of Franche-Comte in Besancon in eastern France in September to study language, according to the authorities and other sources.

Kurosaki disappeared around 4 December and could not be reached on her cell phone thereafter, they said. Her credit card has also been suspended. On the night of 4 December, just before her disappearance, she had a meal with acquaintances at a local diner, including the man the police are now trying to locate.—*Kyodo News*

Mongolia's nomad herders facing winter disaster as temperatures plunge

ULAANBAATAR — Mongolia's traditional nomads are facing a natural disaster known as "dzud", where frigid temperatures and heavy snow cause widespread livestock deaths, threatening herders' livelihoods.

Mongolians are already struggling with an economic crisis which has seen the currency, the tugrik, depreciate rapidly, making household goods more expensive.

Weather forecasts for next week are predicting temperatures as low as between minus 40 and minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 40-58 degrees Fahrenheit) in northern and eastern Mongolia.

Government officials have yet to declare a "dzud", but the current climate is ideal for the natural disaster, said Lamjav Oyunjargal, the director for forecasting at the Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment.

"Officially, conditions are very difficult in Mongolia. Mostly we talk about livestock because it's the main income of herder



People load coal into a car in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia as the wave of extreme cold hits the country December 22, 2016. Picture taken on 22 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

people in Mongolia, but it's also dangerous for humans," Oyunjargal said.

Dulaamsuren, who works at the National Emergency Management Agency in Bulgan province in remote northern Mongolia, said more than 3,000 local herders did not have enough supplies to last through the winter.

"We have enough hay until February or March, but we really should stock

up more," he said, adding that the region was now under 40 centimetres (11 inches) of snow, four times the usual level.

The dzud of 2009-2010, one of the most severe in history, saw a total of 9.7 million livestock deaths.

As many as 1.1 million head of livestock died last winter.

Winter began early when Mongolia was hit

by a "cold surge" in November, plummeting temperatures to around minus 47 degrees Celsius (minus 52.6 degrees Fahrenheit), she said.

By 11 December, about 70 per cent of the country was under snow.

"Already affected areas will get even more snow and colder temperatures," Oyunjargal said, adding the east and north of the country, an area the size of

Egypt, were most vulnerable.

Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world, and the extreme cold and snow storms of a "dzud" are a major issue for herders travelling between far-flung towns.

Amid the worst economic conditions since the global economic crisis, the capital Ulaanbaatar is working with international organisations to get assistance to herders.

The government has stockpiled hay and fodder for distribution, but resources are stretched thin as it negotiates with the International Monetary Fund to refinance debt.

Dzuds have become more frequent as a result of climate change, environmental groups have said, putting Ulaanbaatar under increasing strain in recent years. The mass migration of out-of-work herders into the Mongolian capital over the last decade has seen the rapid expansion of "ger districts", makeshift neighbourhoods named after Mongolia's traditional yurt dwellings.—*Reuters*

EU to exempt foreign flights from emissions scheme

BRUSSELS/LONDON — The European Union is set to extend the exclusion of foreign airlines from its emissions trading system to give a United Nations-brokered global deal time to come into effect, two EU sources said.

The move would be welcomed by the airline industry which wants a single, global emissions trading system (ETS) for aviation as opposed to a patchwork of national and regional schemes.

The European Union had ordered foreign carriers to buy credits under its ETS in 2012 but backtracked when countries said it violated their sovereignty and China threatened to cancel plane orders to Airbus Group SE.

It granted airlines operating flights into and out of the EU an exemption until 2016 to give the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) time to craft a global system.

The United Nations body clinched a deal in October, raising hopes that the EU executive would

prolong the extension beyond the end of this year when it automatically expires unless the law is changed.

"Expectation is it will be extended," one of the sources said.

The proposal by the EU executive, the European Commission, will be adopted at the end of January, two sources said.

Another EU source said the proposal was very sensible and would create predictability for operators.

The ICAO deal will be voluntary from 2021 to 2026 and mandatory from 2027 for states with larger aviation industries, prompting criticism from the European Parliament who had called for something more ambitious.

The exemption for foreign carriers could be extended until it is clear the ICAO system is working, one of the sources said.

Another said extending it to 2020-2021 would be a "good start".—*Reuters*

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANDAMAN STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MATHU BHUM VOY. NO (1029W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MATHU BHUM VOY. NO (1029W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MOL (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV WEST SCENT VOY. NO (135N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV WEST SCENT VOY. NO (135N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185



Matthew McConaughey. PHOTO: PTI

Matthew McConaughey faked Australian accent for women

LONDON — Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey faked an Australian accent for almost a year to impress women. The 47-year-old star lived in New South Wales for a year when he was 19 years old, and says that upon his return to the US, he spent some time pretending he had picked up the distinct Australian accent while he was there, reported *Femalefirst*. “The ladies kinda were (into it), which is why I was doing it. And also

I was playing a trick,” McConaughey said.

“There’s a lot of my fraternity brothers out there now going, ‘you did fake that for a year.’ Yeah, I did.”

Meanwhile, Matthew McConaughey is in negotiations to star in *White Boy Rick*. The film will follow the true story of Detroit teenager Richard Wershe Jr, who became an informant for local and federal authorities when

he was just 14 years old, eventually becoming a drug kingpin in the city in the 1980s, reported *Deadline*.

If things workout McConaughey would play Wershe’s blue-collar father, who watches his teenage son receive a life sentence for his place in the drug trade.

Yann Demange is set to direct the film, with Logan and Nolan Miller penning the script.—PTI

SMAP opts for signature variety show for final appearance, shuns NHK

TOKYO — SMAP has turned down a request from NHK to appear on the public broadcaster’s famous year-ending music programme as they opt for their signature variety show aired by a commercial broadcaster for their final appearance before breakup, their agent said Friday. SMAP, one of Japan’s most popular and longest-lived pop groups, has decided to make the final episode to be broadcast 26 December of “SMAP X SMAP,” a show featuring SMAP singing, cooking and doing a comedy skit, their final appearance as the group.

In a letter addressed to the producers of NHK’s annual music extravaganza, “Kohaku Utagassen,”

released the same day by talent agency Johnny & Associates Inc., the members expressed thanks for the request and said “each of us thought hard about how our last stage should be” before their 31 December breakup.

“We came to the conclusion we would like to make ‘SMAP X SMAP’ our last stage because we have worked with its staff for the past 20 years and all five of us have appeared on it regularly,” said the letter dated 19 December. However, the “last stage” is likely to be a taped one, as show business sources said the members will not appear live on the final episode of the variety show. The names of SMAP and its five members — Masahiro

Nakai, Takuya Kimura, Goro Inagaki, Tsuyoshi Kusanagi and Shingo Katori — were written at the end of the letter. NHK’s public relations department commented that although NHK was disappointed by the decision, the broadcaster is grateful for SMAP having appeared on “Kohaku” 23 times in the past and added excitement to the show. SMAP X SMAP, which started in April 1996 and has been broadcast every Monday night by Fuji Television Network, has remained popular, often referred to as “Suma Suma.” American singer-songwriter Lady Gaga and Australian model Miranda Kerr were among the guests who appeared on the show earlier this year.—*Kyodo News*



Michael Fassbender says he has been working continuously since past five years and now plans to take a break from films. PHOTO: PTI

Actress Carrie Fisher suffers medical emergency on London-to-L.A. flight

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood actress and writer Carrie Fisher, best known for her role as Princess Leia in the “Star Wars” movies, suffered a cardiac episode on Friday during a flight from London to Los Angeles, where she was rushed to a hospital after landing.

Fisher, 60, was described by her younger brother, Todd Fisher, as being in critical condition, and

he said she remained under medical treatment in the intensive care unit (ICU) of a Los Angeles hospital several hours after becoming ill.

“It’s not fair to say ‘stable.’ I am not saying she is fine, or not fine,” he told Reuters by telephone in response to reports about her condition. “She is in the ICU.”

He said he was driving and en route to pick up their mother, the

veteran entertainer Debbie Reynolds. Todd Fisher offered no details about his sister’s condition or the circumstances of how she was stricken. He said the information had come from his sister’s assistant.

The Los Angeles Times cited one unnamed source as saying the actress had been “in a lot of distress on the flight,” which landed at Los Angeles International Airport shortly after noon (2000 GMT).

According to the celebrity news website TMZ.com, Fisher suffered a “massive heart attack” 15 minutes before landing, and an emergency medical technician who was aboard was ushered to the first-class cabin to provide aid.

The city Fire Department confirmed that its emergency personnel met an arriving flight at the airport to treat a patient in “cardiac arrest,” but declined to identify the individual, citing medical confidentiality laws.

Two passengers who said they were aboard the flight and sitting near Fisher posted messages on Twitter reporting that she had fallen ill.—*Reuters*

Carrie Fisher poses for cameras as she arrives at the European Premiere of *Star Wars, The Force Awakens* in Leicester Square, London, on 16 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Michael Fassbender planning to take acting break

LONDON — Michael Fassbender says he has been working continuously since past five years and now plans to take a break from films. The 39-year-old actor has been “pretty full on” this year, having starred in the upcoming ‘Assassin’s Creed’ movie, as well as reprising his role as David in ‘Alien: Covenant’ — the sequel to 2012’s ‘Prometheus’ which will be released in May next year, reported *Female First*.

“It’s been pretty full on. I had a ferocious appetite and energy for it, and I went at it like a maniac. But I’m going to take some downtime now. The last five years, I was verging on being a workaholic. I’ve just been going from film to film,” Fassbender said. While the actor is planning on returning to the spotlight in the future, he also would not rule out quitting his job all together.

When asked if he would ever stop acting, Fassbender

said, “I’m not ruling it out. I’m not saying it’s going to happen, but a part of me thinks you have a time as an actor when you’re at your best. There’s a journey to it, and then it’s downhill.”

Michael Fassbender also says he had a word with the makers of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* and could have part of the film. Fassbender said he met with director JJ Abrams for a part in last year’s record-breaking sequel, reported *Digital Spy*. “We talked about a role. We had a conversation,” the 39-year-old actor said.

“I’m pretty sure I was busy doing something else in the summer he was kickstarting that,” he added. Fassbender did not specify which role he had been in talks to play, but there are speculations that he was considered for First Order heavies Kylo Ren or General Hux — played in the movie by Adam Driver and Domhnall Gleeson respectively.—PTI

Century-old warehouse becomes must-see for vintage car enthusiasts

KOBE — A nearly century-old red brick warehouse in the major western Japanese city of Osaka has turned into a mecca for enthusiasts of vintage and classic cars in Japan, enabling visitors to get up close to pieces of motoring history.

Glion Museum on the port of Osaka displays more than 100 heritage vehicles ranging from the Rolls-Royce Phantom II, the British carmaker's 40/50 horsepower model released in 1929, to late 20th century supercars, all iconic in their own way.

The museum, which is designed to make visitors feel as if they are strolling through the back streets of London or New York, was opened by Glion, a retailer of imported cars in nearby Kobe, in June 2015.

It occupies some 10,000 square meters, and includes a steakhouse and cafe.

Examples from approximately 100 years of motoring history, from the early 1900s



Photo taken on 29 November 2016, shows a Toyota 2000GT sports car displayed at Glion Museum, a century-old warehouse-turned museum for vintage cars, in Osaka. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

when gasoline-powered vehicles became prevalent to the present age, are exhibited in four sections laid out in chronological order. Technical information and data is available alongside the cars, with videos of the vehicles on the road in which their distinctive engine notes can be heard accompanying the museum pieces.

Separating the Glion Museum from similar dis-

plays is the fact that all cars are roadworthy, and for sale.

"Classic cars are considered expensive but there are some priced at just 2 million yen," Jun Uehara, 36, event director at the museum, said. Every Saturday and Sunday, 200 to 300 people visit the museum, Uehara said, adding about 150 vintage cars have been sold since its opening.

"We want lots of people

to get a feel for automobile history here and become interested in it," he said.

The museum is "worth visiting as there are many cars I longed for when I was young as well as older cars I don't know," said Shinya Sagisaka, a 56-year-old, who came with his wife from Izumisano in Osaka. "It takes me back to my childhood."

The Rolls-Royce Phantom II was produced between 1929 and 1935 and the example on display in Osaka is one of the rarest.

Cars on display also include the Ford Model T, the world's first mass-produced car released in 1908, and many iconic Japanese cars such as the sleek Toyota 2000GT and groundbreaking Nissan Skyline GT-R.

Toyota Motor Corp. manufactured only 336 units of the 2000GT sports car between 1967 and 1970 and it has become one of the world's most highly sought-after vintage cars. —Kyodo News



Bassam Ghraoui, chairman and CEO of Ghraoui Chocolate speaks during an interview with Reuters in Budapest, Hungary, on 22 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Leaving war-torn Syria, luxury chocolatier finds new home in Hungary

BUDAPEST — Bassam Ghraoui's Syrian confecti- onary became synony- mous with the finest gour- met chocolates anywhere before war decimated his business, and he is start- ing anew in Hungary with a factory to be launched next year.

"It is a project which will put Hungary on the map of higher-than-aver- age EU exporters of choc- olate," Ghraoui, 62, told Reuters in his downtown Budapest office with pan- oramic views of the orna- te houses of parliament.

Ghraoui, scion of one of the oldest Damascus merchant families with business dating back to 1805, says he always had a "soft spot" for the Central European nation where he has been doing some non- sweets business since the early 1990s.

About three years ago, after Syria's civil war erupted, he acquired Hungarian citizenship and bought a house in Buda- pest, moving with his fam- ily there in August 2015.

"Yes, I am Hungarian and, give me time, I will speak Hungarian," he said.

Asked about Hunga- ry's 2015 decision to build a border fence to keep out migrants — including Syr- ians — flocking to Europe to escape war and poverty, Ghraoui said politics "is not my domain."

"For me, I am very well treated, and I am not a refugee — I am a citizen."

Ghraoui's confec- ti- onary gained global re- nown; it won the "Prix Spécial d'Honneur" at the Salon du Chocolat trade fair in Paris in 2005. But Syria's war slashed production at his factory in a Damascus suburb to less than 0.5 per cent of its peacetime level.

His new chocolate factory taking shape in the town of Hatvan, about 60 km (40 miles) east of Budapest, will become operational towards the end of 2017, giving jobs to 540 people and pro- ducing about 7,500 tonnes of chocolate per year. —Reuters



Automobiles drive on a solar panel road during its inauguration in Tourouvre-au-Perche Village, north France, on 22 December, 2016. France installed the world's first solar road in Normandy in north France, which aims to provide power to the local streetlights and encourage renewable energy use needed to combat climate change. PHOTO: XINHUA

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(25-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 26-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Yangon Markets: Nyaung Pin Lay Market
07:32	Am	We'll Leave After 12 Passengers Are on Board
07:47	Am	ABU Radio Song Festival
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The World's Largest Book
08:51	Am	Creative Collage Artist Zaw Yan Naing
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Discovering Tribes: Tai Khun (or) Gon: their life and customs
09:48	Am	Talking Shwe Thway (Children Journal)
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	The Korean Treasure, Kimchi, Black Garlic & Apple Wine

10:45	Am	A Precious Gift from Waste
10:54	Am	Moe La Win's Piano Melody 3 (Jingle-Bell Rock by Joe Beal & Jim Boothes)
10:57	Am	Gardener: Rose Plantation

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

Prime Time		
07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	The Most Prominent Resort And Residence - Ngapali
07:49	Pm	Today Myanmar
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Creator of Imagination
08:52	Pm	Cultural Show: Theatrical Make Up

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

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

MRTV (25-12-2016, Sunday)

6:00 am	• Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	4:35 pm	• Mono Classical Songs
7:35 am	• Business News	5:15 pm	• Gitadagale Phwintbaohn
8:35 am	• Beautiful ASEAN	6:35 pm	• News Year Ender 2016 (Part-4)
8:50 am	• Documentary	7:15 pm	• TV Drama Series
9:35 am	• People's Talk	8:00 pm	• News/International News/ Weather Report
10:35 am	• Women in Myanmar Society	8:35 pm	• Life Struggles
11:35 am	• Thai PRD (Queen Sirikit Museum of Textile)	9:00 pm	• News/ Weather Report
12:35 pm	• Super Book		• Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Cmpetitions
1:20 pm	• Myanmar Movie		
3:45 pm	• This Weeks Special Interest		

Note/Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

Donnarumma save wins Super Cup for Milan

DOHA — AC Milan lifted the Italian Super Cup after 17-year-old goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma's save from Paulo Dybala secured a 4-3 penalty shootout win over Juventus on Friday.

Giorgio Chiellini put Juve ahead and Giacomo Bonaventura equalised, both in the first half, as a free-flowing match finished 1-1 after extra-time. Gianluca Lapadula's first penalty for Milan was saved by Gianluigi Buffon.

Mario Mandzukic then fired a Juve effort against the crossbar before Donnarumma produced a superb one-handed save to stop their fifth

"I cannot describe what I'm feeling and I don't even know

what was going

ly saves from Stefano Sturaro and Mandzukic before Chiellini turned the ball in from a corner in the 18th minute.

Milan, who beat Juve 1-0 in their last Serie A meeting and are fifth in Serie A, levelled when Bonaventura scored with a glancing header from Spaniard Suso's cross seven minutes before halftime.

Donnarumma made another outstanding save in the second half to turn Sami Khedira's long-range effort over the bar.

Opposite number Buffon, 21 years his senior, was not to be outdone, brilliantly turning Carlos Bacca's header on to the woodwork.

"We lost on penalties but we just needed to be more lucid to win the match in extra-time,"

first half but then we dropped off too much." —Reuters



AC Milan's goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma kicks the ball during Italian Super Cup Final, in Doha, Qatar on 23 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

said

Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"We did everything we could to avoid going to penalties. We played very well for the

Federer expects injury layoff to prolong playing career

MUMBAI — Roger Federer believes his six-month absence due to a knee injury could help prolong his playing career, with the 17-times grand slam winner saying he has enjoyed the break.

The 35-year-old Swiss had surgery on his left knee in February and, after missing the French Open with a back injury, announced in July that he needed extensive rehabilitation and would be sidelined for the rest of the season.

Federer returns to action at the Hopman Cup, starting on 1 January, which he will play in for the first time since he teamed up with his now wife Mirka in 2002. He will partner compatriot Belinda Bencic, 19, at the international team tournament in Perth.

Federer said it was a tough call to take a six-month break and he looked at the bigger picture before deciding.

"I do believe that it could be very beneficial for the future of my tennis career," he told reporters on a conference call. —Reuters

Pochettino not worried by Kane drought ahead of Saints trip

LONDON — Tottenham Hotspur striker Harry Kane has been backed to rediscover his scoring touch by manager Mauricio Pochettino ahead of Wednesday's Premier League visit to Southampton.

Kane, the league's top scorer last season with 25 goals, has seven for fifth-placed Spurs in the current top-flight campaign and has not scored in his last three appearances.

"I am not worried about him," Pochettino told a news conference on Friday. "For me he is one of the best strikers in the world, for different reasons maybe he didn't score in the last few games, but I have no doubt that it is only a few games."

"He is a fantastic player and a top scorer. I have no doubt he will start to score as soon as possible."

Going by Kane's record

from last season, Pochettino is justified in not hitting the panic button just yet.

The 23-year-old got nine league goals up to Christmas last year before adding 16 to win the golden boot award ahead of Leicester City's Jamie Vardy and Manchester City's Sergio Aguero.

Tottenham trail leaders Chelsea by 10 points ahead of the trip to seventh-placed Southampton, but Pochettino is confident his team can close the gap in the second half of the season.

"I think it is realistic because there are a lot of games to play," the Argentine said. "So I think we can achieve that and we can fight for the title at the end of the season." —Reuters

American Keys to miss Australian Open after wrist surgery

CARY (North Carolina) — World number eight Madison Keys will miss next month's Australian Open after undergoing wrist surgery, the American said on Friday.

Keys, 21, who made the round of 16 at all four grand slam tournaments last year, had the procedure in early November and would not be ready for the season-opening grand slam that begins at Melbourne Park on 16 January.

"Three days after the year-end WTA Championships

issues and went very well ... I don't want to rush back and need to take my time to be fully ready to perform my best on the court."

Keys, who plays right-handed, also revealed she was being coached again by former world number one Lindsay Davenport, having worked with Thomas Hogstedt for the last year.

"I am very excited

about working with Lindsay again," Keys added. "She's helped me reach great results in the past and we make an excellent team!" —Reuters



USA's Madison Keys. PHOTO: REUTERS