

■ NATIONAL

Vice President attends prayer for Christmas in Pyinmana

► PAGE 3



■ NATIONAL

Rakhine State Government aid reaches 12 villages in Maungdaw Tsp

► PAGE 2



■ LOCAL BUSINESS

Lacquerware market in Bagan cool despite high season

► PAGE 4

Vol. III, No. 254, 12th Waning of Nadaw 1378 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 26 December 2016

President attends Christmas party

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw and his wife Daw Su Su Lwin attended a Christmas lunch and prayer held at the house of the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker yesterday morning.

The president and his wife were greeted by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mann Win Khaing Than and his wife Nant Kyin Kyi, who said prayers for the President and wife.

The Speaker and his wife also greeted and said prayers for other guests, including Vice President U Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay, Vice President U Henry Van Thio and wife Dr Shwe Hlwum, Chairman of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myo Nyunt, Vice Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U T Khun Myat and his wife, Vice Speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and his wife, Union Ministers and Deputy Ministers and wives.

Later, the President and his wife enjoyed Christmas lunch with the guests and said prayers before posing for documentary photos. — Myanmar News Agency



President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin are welcomed by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mann Win Khaing Than and family. PHOTO: MNA

MoHS to improve coverage of HIV prevention services across Myanmar

HIV prevention activities have been carried out across the country by the Ministry of Health and Sports, which plans to improve coverage of its services across Myanmar next year, the ministry's spokesperson said.

The ministry is now implementing the HIV prevention plans at over 30 200-bed hospitals in states and regions plus five 100-bed hospitals in the areas with the highest rate of HIV infections, including Kawthaung, Tachilek, Namtham and border towns.

The ministry's township-based HIV control programmes have reached the target population in over 300 townships this year. According to the ministry's figures, an estimated 10,000 people become infected with the human immunodeficiency virus each year in Myanmar. There are almost 200,000 people living with HIV in the country, 23 per cent of whom are intravenous drug users and 7 per cent of whom have engaged in same-sex relations.

The serious virus mostly

found in young people is partly due to poor health education. The majority of transmissions occurred among commercial sex workers, intravenous drug users and same-sex partners. To control the disease, anti-retroviral drugs have been distributed by the ministry in partnership with non-governmental organizations. To raise HIV awareness among the public, the ministry and its partner organisations continue the educative programmes through various campaigns.—200

KIA/TNLA attack govt troops

GOVERNMENT troops came under attack by about 60 members of the KIA and the TNLA joint forces while conducting area clearance operations in Muse Township at about 4:30 pm on Friday.

As government troops repelled the attack, the armed groups retreated to the southeast at 6 pm in the evening.

About four hours later, approximately 10 members of the KIA attacked a tollgate near the Oriental Hotel in Kutkai. Security forces responsible for the road returned fire and the armed group withdrew to the west.

Government troops were also attacked by the armed groups about 7,000 metres to the west of Mongpaw Village yesterday morning until the government troops returned fire, prompting the armed groups to withdraw to the west at about 7:15 am.

During the clashes, some of the security forces were injured, officials said. Several rounds of ammunition, a backpack and a guerrilla uniform were seized by the security forces.

Government troops are conducting clearance operations in the areas.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar MOBILE MONEY anywhere anytime anyone

First Myanmar Phone Money

Withdrawal Shopping

Deposit Pay Salary

Transfer Top up from mobile

Safe Simple Swift

Be Proud using mobile money service on MPT, MECTel Sim Cards

- ◆ Want to Top up other phones?
- ◆ Want to shop at Gamone Pwint?
- ◆ Want to transfer money?
- ◆ Want to pay salary to your employees?
- ◆ Want to transfer withdrawal anytime?

Office: No. 111, Lashan Street, Yangon, Myanmar. Phone: 09-11001120
Call Center: 1212 (Hot Line) 1616, 1619



Immanuel Baptist Church is illuminated on Christmas Day in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

Mongko Catholic Church repaired

A CHURCH in Mongko, which was damaged by the armed groups in the fighting from 20 November to 4th December, have been repaired and handed

over to the responsible personnel of the church on 24th December.

The repair was carried out by the Garrison Engineer-

959 of the Tatmataw.

U Daung Khaung, Daw Ah Lon and U Khaw Hsaung of the church accepted the building. — Myanmar News Agency



Secular authorities and spiritual authorities of the church posing for a group photo. PHOTO: MNA

Alley trash removal project to continue in Mingala Taungnyunt and Ahlon township

YANGON City Development Committee will continue to remove rubbish from alleys behind buildings in Mingala Taungnyunt and Ahlon townships after finishing similar projects in six downtown townships.

The YCDC's Pollution Control and Cleansing Department initiated the project starting in mid-August in Pazundaung, Kyaukdtada, Botahtaung, Pabedan, Latha and Lanmadaw townships. During the project,

the committee also removed the squatters in downtown alleys.

The project successfully completed on 9 December in the target areas with the department planning to continue the waste collection works in Mingala Taungnyunt and Ahlon located near downtown.

The sanitation work is planned to begin in Ahlon township on 26 December and in Mingala Taungnyunt township in the first week of January. The

committee is currently carrying out educational programmes to raise public awareness about the YCDC's rules and regulations regarding undisciplined acts of throwing trash into alleys, which blocks the gutter and causes dirty water to flow into ground floors and into the environment.

The commercial city of Yangon produces about 1,700 tonnes of garbage each day, most of which are kitchen waste. —200

Rakhine State Government aid reaches 12 villages in Maungtaw Township

AID from the Rakhine State Government reached 12 villages in Maungtaw Township, northern Rakhine State, on Saturday.

More than 250 rice bags supplied by the Rakhine State Government were delivered to 12 villages by officials of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the organisation MAUK Serving Humanity.

Disitribution of the rice was

as follows: 79 bags went to Sa-baegon Village; 16 bags to Yamyat Village; 26 bags to Nangkhuaya Village; six bags to Ahtet Pyuma Village; 11 bags to Auk Pyuma Village; 34 bags to Myoma Kanyintan Village; seven bags to Sabei Pinyin Village; 26 bags to Chanpyin Village; 20 bags to Ywenyitaung Village and six bags to Thayatoak Village.

—Myanmar News Agency



Donation of rice by Mauk being handed over. PHOTO: MNA

Crime NEWS

Yaba pills, opium powder, ice seized in Laukkai

A MAN on Saturday was arrested by members of Tatmataw (Myanmar Armed Forces) in Laukkai, a township in northern Shan State. Over Ks30 million worth of narcotics and psychotropic substances were confiscated from him.

After a tip-off, the house of U Lee Louk Shan was raided by a military column at about 10:30 pm on Saturday to search for illegal drugs. Authorities found the suspect in the possession of

a cache of 5,137 yaba pills, pure amphetamine commonly known as ICE weighing one kilogram and nearly 95 grams of opium powder.

The suspect and confiscated substances will be handed over to the local drug squad in Laukkai Township.

The suspect will face legal charges under the existing Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —Myanmar New Agency

Raw opium seized in Mongsat

AN ANTI-DRUG squad in Mongsat discovered 1.7 kilos of raw opium hidden in a house in Mongkoke, Mongsat Township, on Saturday, according to the police source.

The team, acting on a tip,

searched the house owned by Li Jay in Htoodaw Village, Lwehsaung village-tract.

Action is being taken against Li Jay, 44, under the Anti-narcotics Act. —GNLM



Li Jay is seen together with drug seized from his home. PHOTO: POLICE

Vice President attends prayer for Christmas in Pyinmana

Vice President U Henry Van Thio attended the Christmas prayer service of the Chin Baptist Christian Church in Pyinmana yesterday afternoon.

At the ceremony, the chairman of the ceremony read scripture from the Old Testament while venerable bishops praised the omnipotence of God followed by prayers and blessings.

Afterwards, the chairman and the secretary of the church

presented gifts to the congregation, which greeted one another.

After the hymn session, Dr Anna Shwe Hlwun preached to the congregation.

Later, the Vice President enjoyed a Christmas dinner hosted by the church. Also present were Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Naing Thet Lwin and Deputy Minister of the President's Office U Min Thu. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Vice president U Henry Van Thio attends the Christmas prayer service at the Chin Baptist Christian Church in Pyinmana. PHOTO: MNA

Authorities has plan to finalise upgrading of Thabyaygon market in March, 2017

THE upgrading of Thabyaygon market, which serves many of the capital's civil servants, is planned to be finalised in March next year, according to the administration office for the market under the Nay Pyi Taw Development Affairs Committee.

The development project aims to protect the market, which is located in basin areas, from possible weather effects during the rainy season. Water inundation usually occurs during the rainy season, which is disrupting the

sellers and buyers in the market.

Art Wave, a Chinese company, has pledged to construct roofs on the new market for the purpose of promoting China-Myanmar friendship. The new project will include around 480 shops.

The tender-winning Tet Lan Construction company will undertake building of the floor of the building, including preparing the ground of the market, the committee's spokesperson said.

Construction work began on 15 December.—200

Landmines, ammunition seized

WHILE conducting area clearance operations in surroundings of Mongko in Shan State (North), columns of government troops found landmines, two cartridges of M-22, 131 rounds of bullets, an artillery shell, three KIA caps and three MNDAA uniform suits about 1,500 metres northwest of Phaungsai Village yesterday

afternoon.

Meanwhile, government troops conducting area clearance operation discovered ten improvised landmines in a dried stream near Nangton Village yesterday morning. Government troops are conducting area clearance operations near the areas. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Land mines and ammunition seized in Mongko. PHOTO: MNA

Thandwe District Association (Yangon) holds annual gathering



Rakhine communities participate in their gathering at U Ottama Park in Yangon. PHOTO: YE HTUT

THANDWE District Association (Yangon) held its annual gathering yesterday at the U Ottama Park in Yangon.

The annual gathering collectively organized by peoples from Thandwe, Gwa and Taunggup attracted Rakhine

communities in Yangon especially from Thandwe District.

"This is the gathering of peoples from Thandwe, Taunggup and Gwa. We hold the gathering annually to make friends so that we can help one another when they need," said U

Mya Maung, Chairman of the Thandwe District Association (Yangon).

The visitors are treated with Rakhine traditional food at the gathering. Thandwe District Association (Yangon) was founded in 1945.— *Min Thit*

Five arrested on illegal fishing boat from Thailand

A NAVAL vessel intercepted an illegal fishing boat Friday in the territorial waters of Myanmar, arresting one Thai national and four Myanmar nationals who were on board. According to the ongoing investigation, the boat is owned by Ms Kruawan of Ranaung, Thailand, and the boat departed Ranaung on Wednesday and caught fish between Myanmar and Thailand and in Myanmar's territorial waters on 23rd December. The navy ship found the fishing boat 36 miles south-west of Kawthaung around 8:35am on Friday and signaled it to stop.

The boat turned and attempted to escape, but the naval ship was able to intercept it at about 9:30 am. Action is being taken against the five in accordance with the law.— *Myanmar News Agency*



The illegal fishing boat from Thailand. PHOTO: MNA

LOCAL Business



PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Lacquerware market in Bagan cool despite high season

THE lacquerware market in Bagan, a popular ancient city in Mandalay, continues to cool even in high season, according to those in industry.

“The region’s lacquerware trade mainly depends on visitors, especially foreign tourists,” said Daw Wah Wah, the proprietress of a lacquerware shop in Bagan.

“We are facing low demand for lacquerware. This year’s lacquerware trade significantly decreased compared with the same period last year, although many visitors entered the region this season.”

Daw Wah Wah said she does not know why the market is still cool even in high tourist season.

The market is normally active from October to February each year in Bagan, which is famous for its beautiful lacquerware and the numerous stores that specialise in selling the items.

Daw Thanda, a visitor from Mandalay, said when she arrives in Bagan, she usually goes to lac-

querware workshops to collect one or more traditional handicrafts which are suitable to give to her colleagues as a gift, observing the culture-based business. International visitors prefer cups, plates, kettles and lamps as well as large traditional bowls used for offering of food to monks. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

External trade reaches \$18.7b, over \$3.2b in trade deficit

MYANMAR’S trade deficit over the past nine months reached more than US\$3 billion on a trade value of over \$18 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

The export value for the period was over \$7.7b while imports surpassed \$10.9b, resulting in a trade deficit of \$3.269b. This year’s trade deficit is fallen by over \$1b compared with the same time last year.

According to the Central Statistical Organisation, the trade deficit in FY 2012-2013 was \$91.9m. It increased to \$2.5b in FY2013-2014, \$4.912b in FY2014-2015 and \$5.407b in FY2015-2016.

The ministry’s figure shows that the total external trade value between April and mid-December of this year hit around

\$18.714, a decrease of over \$343 million matched with last year.

Both imports and exports are up this year. Of total exports, normal trade accounted for \$4.676b, increasing by \$280m compared with last year, while border trade totaled \$3.045m, increasing \$70m.

Myanmar exported agricultural products worth \$1.894b, animal products worth \$5.628m, fisheries products worth \$365m, minerals worth over \$680m, forest products worth \$166m, industrial goods worth \$3.409b and other commodities worth \$1.199b to its trade partners this year.

The country imported capital goods worth \$4.345b, raw materials worth \$4.012b and personal goods worth \$2.634b. —*Kyaw Kyaw*

Banana prices double in domestic market

THE PRICES of banana doubled in Mawlamyinegyun Township in Ayeyawady Region due to low production this season, locals say.

The banana price increased to Ks1,300, the most per bunch this year from Ks200 in the last two years in the township.

“Based on the size and kinds of banana, we sell a bunch of bananas for between Ks1,000 and Ks1,300,” said U Aung Kyaw, a

commercial banana grower.

He continued to say that low production is linked to the declining number of banana growers in the region, as some farmers have reduced their efforts to develop banana plantations because of unhealthy profits in previous years.

After 2014, some banana growers selected other marketable seasonal crops.

Daw Swe Swe, a resident

of the township, said she always eats organic banana because of its essential nutrients including vitamin B-6, manganese, vitamin C, fiber, copper and potassium.

“I usually buy a bunch of banana at a price of above Ks1,000,” she added.

Villages in Mawlamyinegyun Township mainly rely on farming businesses. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

Rice export volumes down by about 150,000 tonnes

THE volume of rice exports as of mid-December in this fiscal year slumped by about 150,000 tonnes when compared to the same period of last fiscal year, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar exported nearly 600,000 tonnes of rice to foreign countries as of 16th December in this fiscal year and the export volume is down from over 700,000 tonnes in last fiscal year.

China is the main export market of Myanmar’s rice, which is

also exported to over 30 foreign countries through normal trade.

The rice is exported to China through the Muse border, but the decrease in rice exports is attributed to the confiscation of Myanmar rice by Chinese authorities and November attacks in Muse by ethnic groups. The export value in Muse border trade camp as of 16th December in this fiscal year amounted to US\$ 2,279.224million, which is down from US\$ 2518.073 in the previous fiscal

year. Import value in the same period also slumped by US\$ 6.322million, according to statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar shifted to other rice export markets when the Muse border trade was suspended due to the attacks, exporting rice to European Union countries and the African market. Around 60,000 tonnes of rice per month are exported to African countries, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation. —*Ko Htet*

Computer & mobile fair in Yangon on 6 January

THE first-ever Yangon ICT Fair (Computer & mobile) for the year 2017 will start on 6 January next year with the aim of creating new business networks as well as improving the country’s mobile and ICT sector, according to the event organiser.

The new event is scheduled to take place from 6 to 8 January at Tatmadaw Exhibition Center on U Wisara Road in Yangon, planning to showcase a wide range of modern electronic products, communication devices and software.

Computer and related accessories including the latest models of notebooks, desktops, printers, projectors, cameras, copiers and scanners as well as mobile devices, software and solutions will be on display and for sale at the event.

A total of 56 companies will participate in the upcoming expo to introduce their products and services through 140 booths.

The new ICT fair will be jointly organised by the Yangon Region Computer Professionals Association and Yangon Region Computer Entrepreneurs Association. —200

Modi says won't hesitate on tough decisions to help economy

PATALGANGA — India will not hesitate to make tough decisions to help support its growing economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday, alluding to his recent scrapping of 500 and 1,000 rupee banknotes to tackle endemic corruption.

Modi told an event organised by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, India's capital markets regulator that his government would continue to follow sound and prudent economic policies to ensure that India's long-term prospects are bright.

"We will not take decisions for short-term political point scoring . . . We will not shy away from taking difficult decisions if those decisions are in the interests of the country," Modi said.



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks after laying the foundation for the memorial of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, in Mumbai, India, on 24 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"Demonetisation is an example. It is a short-term pain but it will bring long-term gain."

Modi announced the shock move to ditch 500

and 1,000 rupee notes with a combined value of \$256 billion on 8 November, saying the large denomination notes fuelled corruption and fraud and

were even used to finance attacks by militants who target India.

With the cash economy estimated to account for a fifth of India's \$2 trillion

gross domestic product, the decision has disrupted the daily lives of hundreds of millions of Indians.

But economists and some businesses say it could ultimately help broaden the formal economy and improve tax compliance.

Modi said the government had transformed the economy in less than three years by cutting and achieving fiscal deficit targets, keeping the current account deficit low, boosting foreign exchange reserves and lowering inflation.

"Developed countries and emerging markets are both facing slow growth. Against this background, India is being seen as a bright spot. Growth is projected to remain among the highest in the world," he said.—Reuters

Beijing to keep stable home prices in 2017

BEIJING — Beijing will increase controls on the property market to maintain stable home prices in 2017, said a statement issued after a plenary session of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China on Saturday.

Housing prices in the capital are already too high, said the statement, and ensuing increased social tension brings enormous challenges to sustainable development, harmony and stability in the city.

The city will act against speculation and increase land available for building.

On 30 September, Beijing announced higher downpayments on property purchases and more than a dozen cities have followed suit and tightened purchase restrictions.

At the Central Economic Work Conference this month, policymakers highlighted the need to deal with asset bubbles next year.—Xinhua

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye

ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe

dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Expatriate Consultant Editor

Mark Angeles

markrangeles@gmail .com

Senior Translators

Khin Maung Oo, Myint Win Thein

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editor

Ye Htut Tin (Local News)

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw,

reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Computer Team

Tun Zaw (Chief of Computer Team), Thein Ngwe,

Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,

Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win, Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin

Circulation

San Lwin (+95) (01) 8604532, Hotline - 09 974424114

Advertising inquiry

01 8604530, Hotline - 09 974424848

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

Indonesian police kill two militants during raid on house in Java

JAKARTA — Indonesian police killed two suspected Islamist militants in a house in West Java on Sunday, a police spokesman said, marking the latest in a series of raids aimed at preventing planned attacks in the Muslim-majority nation.

Two men had been arrested in Cibinong, in West Java, and led police to a house at the Jatiluhur dam, national police spokesman Awi Setiyono said. "There were two men there and

there was a gunfight and we had to shoot them," said Setiyono.

Earlier this week, Indonesian anti-terrorism police killed three suspects in a gunbattle on the outskirts of the capital Jakarta, and said they had foiled a suicide bombing planned for the end of the year.

Police have arrested dozens of suspected militants in recent months, including a cell on Batam island that planned a rocket attack on neighbouring

Singapore. Indonesia has foiled at least 14 attacks this year alone and made more than 150 arrests.

A gun and bomb assault in the heart of Jakarta in January 2016 killed four people and was the first attack in Southeast Asia claimed by Islamic State jihadists.

Indonesia will to deploy 85,000 police and 15,000 military personnel for the Christmas and New Year period, police said.—Reuters

South Korea prosecutor says it might raid presidential office

SEOUL — South Korea's special prosecutor investigating a corruption scandal involving President Park Geun-hye said on Sunday it was considering whether to raid the presidential offices and if it did so, it had no choice but to do so publicly.

Special prosecutors are investigating allegations that Park colluded with a friend, Choi Soon-sil, and aides to pressure big companies to contribute to foundations set up to back her policy initiatives.

"In case of raiding the Blue House ... to carry out that, there is no choice but to make it public," Lee Kyu-chul, a spokesman for the special prosecutor's team



South Korean President Park Geun-hye speaks during an emergency cabinet meeting at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

told reporters in a briefing, referring to the presidential offices.

"We are still considering whether the raid is needed and if needed what the raid should be aimed

at."

Park, whose father ruled the country for 18 years after seizing power in a 1961 coup, was indicted in a 9 December parliamentary vote.

She has denied wrongdoing but apologized for carelessness in her ties with Choi, who is facing her own trial.

Prosecutors have said previously they needed access to the presidential offices as part of their investigation. The office has denied access.

Park has immunity from prosecution as long as she is in office even though her powers have been suspended since parliament voted to impeach her.

A large crowd of protesters, including about 200 young people dressed as Santa Claus, took to the streets of central Seoul on Saturday for the ninth weekend in a row to demand the immediate resignation of the president.—Reuters

China's aircraft carrier to drill in Western Pacific

BEIJING — China's first aircraft carrier will carry out drills in the Western Pacific, in what the navy called part of routine exercises, amid renewed tension over self-ruled Taiwan that Beijing claims as its own.

The navy said in a statement late on Saturday the Liaoning, along with its accompanying fleet, would conduct "exercises far out at sea", without giving details of the location or route, in what is likely its first blue-water drill far from home waters.

"This exercise is being carried out in accordance with annual exercise plans," the navy said in a statement also carried on the front page of the official People's Liberation Army Daily.

Taiwan's defence ministry said on Sunday it had been monitoring the drills closely as the Liaoning went through the Miyako Strait, a body of water between the Japanese islands of Miyako and Okinawa, heading into the Pacific.

It said it was monitoring whether the aircraft carrier would continue into the Bashi Channel, which lies between Taiwan and the Philippines, on its return.

China's military has conducted its first ever live-fire drills using an aircraft carrier and fighters in the northeastern Bohai Sea close to the Korean peninsula this month, and has more recently been in the East China Sea.

The navy showed pictures on its official microblog from the drills in the East China Sea, including J-15 carrier-borne fighter jets launching into the sky, over-

seen by navy chief Wu Shengli.

They conducted aerial refuelling and air combat exercises on Thursday, the navy said.

China's growing military presence in the disputed South China Sea in particular has fuelled concern, with the United States criticising its militarization of maritime outposts and holding regular air and naval patrols to ensure freedom of navigation.

The Western Pacific exercise comes amid new tension over self-ruled Taiwan, following US President-elect Donald Trump's telephone call with the island's president that upset Beijing.

China's air force conducted long-range drills this month above the East and South China Seas that rattled Japan and Taiwan. China said those exercises were also routine.

China's Soviet-built Liaoning aircraft carrier has participated in previous military exercises, including some in the South China Sea, but China is years away from perfecting carrier operations similar to those the United States has practised for decades.

Last December, the defence ministry confirmed China was building a second aircraft carrier but its launch date is unclear. The

aircraft carrier programme is a state secret.

Beijing could build multiple aircraft carriers over the next 15 years, the Pentagon said in a report last year.

China's successful operation of the Liaoning is the first step in what state media and some military experts believe will be the deployment of domestically built carriers by 2020.—Reuters



A live-fire drill using an aircraft carrier is seen carried out in the Bohai sea, China, on 11 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan to maintain Russia sanctions along with economic project

TOKYO — Japan will adopt a two-prong policy on Russia of maintaining sanctions in line with the Group of Seven's protest against the seizure of Crimea, while also helping to boost the Russian economy, government sources said on Sunday.

Japan will explain to other G-7 countries the need for the policy both to settle bilateral issues and allay growing concerns that Tokyo could withdraw from the anti-Russia coalition over the Crimea annexation, the sources said.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government believes in improving ties with Russia but that this does not preclude staying tough on the Crimea issue, the sources said.

Abe, as the chairman of the G-7 summit in June, adopted a statement condemning Russia's

annexation of Crimea in 2014.

"We cannot stop condemning Russia unless Crimea's sovereignty returns to Ukraine," one of the sources said. Another said the need to continue with the current sanction regimes "is likely to be a topic" at next year's G-7 summit in Italy.

But Abe will make good on a recent agreement with President Vladimir Putin to provide a 300 billion yen (\$2.6 billion) package to help boost the Russian economy. The leaders reached the agreement during the 15-16 December summit in Japan.

Japan could help Russian corporations that are designated under sanctions imposed by other countries in connection with the Crimea issue and Russia's largest oil producer Rosneft, which is covered by the Tokyo-Moscow package, might be one such com-

pany, the sources said.

In reaction to the Crimea annexation the G-7, which groups Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, as well as the European Union took various punitive actions against Russia. On a bilateral basis Japan has suspended inter-government negotiations on relaxing conditions for visa issuance and limited imports of products from Crimea.

Japan has asked Russia to settle the decades-old dispute over Japan's claim to Russian-held islands off Hokkaido to sign a post-World War II peace treaty.

Russia has shown few signs of budging over the sovereignty of the islands former Soviet troops seized after Japan's surrender in the war in 1945.—Kyodo News

Typhoon Nock-ten intensifies on Sunday as it approaches Philippines

MANILA — A powerful typhoon strengthened on Sunday as it approached the central Philippines and authorities issued warnings of Christmas Day destruction as they moved thousands of people to safety.

Typhoon Nock-ten was packing maximum sustained winds of 185 kph (115 mph) with gusts up to 255 kph as it moved west over the ocean at 15 kmh, the national disaster agency said in its latest weather bulletin. Sustained wind was earlier 175 kph with gusts of 215 kph.

"We should be prepared because this is a strong typhoon. It could destroy houses and weak structures," said Rene Paciente of the weather bureau.

The storm was expected to make landfall in Catanduanes province on the Bicol peninsula later on Sunday, and the high-

est storm alert had been issued there.

Authorities fearing a storm surge have moved thousands of people out of coastal villages to safety.

Land, sea and air travel has been suspended in some areas, leaving stranded thousands of people heading home for the holidays in the mostly Christian country.

In 2013, more than 6,000 people were killed and 200,000 homes were destroyed when Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest-ever storm to make landfall in the Philippines, hit the central islands of Leyte and Samar.

About 20 major typhoons pass through the Philippines each year. Since 1948, at least seven typhoons have hit the country during the Christmas period.—Reuters

Under scrutiny, Trump decides to dissolve his foundation

NEW YORK — US President-elect Donald Trump said on Saturday he intends to dissolve his charitable foundation, the Donald J. Trump Foundation, which has been under investigation by the New York attorney general.

Trump gave no timeline for winding down the foundation, but said in a statement that he wanted “to avoid even the appearance of any conflict with my role as President.” He directed his counsel to take the necessary steps for the dissolution.

With less than four weeks to his 20 January inauguration, the New York real estate magnate is under increasing pressure to reduce potential conflicts of interest ranging from his vast global business operations to his family’s philanthropic work.

This week, Trump said his son Eric would stop raising money for his own foundation over concerns that donors could be seen as buying access to the Trump family. The president-elect said it was a “ridiculous shame” that his son’s foundation would stop raising money. Before Trump’s surprising election victory on 8 November, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman in October directed the Donald J Trump Foundation to stop taking donations, saying the foundation violated state law requiring charitable organizations that solicit outside donations to register with a state office.

Schneiderman’s order followed a series of reports in The Washington Post that suggested improprieties by the foundation, including using its funds to settle legal disputes involving Trump businesses.

A spokeswoman for the attorney general’s office said on Saturday that Trump cannot shutter the foundation while the investigation is ongoing.

“The Trump Foundation is still under investigation by this office and cannot legally dissolve



Republican US presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) afternoon general session in Washington, on 21 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

until that investigation is complete,” spokeswoman Amy Spitalnick said. She would not comment on expected timing for completing the investigation.

Trump said he was “very proud” of the money raised by the foundation and said it had operated at “essentially no cost for decades.”

“But because I will be devoting so much time and energy to the Presidency and solving the many problems facing our country and the world,” he added in his statement, “I don’t want to allow good work to be associated with a possible conflict of interest.”

The Trump Foundation, which was established in 1988, runs no programs of its own. Instead, it donates to other non-profit groups such as the Police Athletic League for youths. Scrutiny of the Trump family’s philanthropic activities heightened in recent weeks following reports of access to the family for potential donors.

Eric Trump faced criticism for an online auction sponsored by his foundation, which raises money to help terminally ill children at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, offering the highest bidder a chance to have coffee with his sister Ivanka. After the announcement that Eric would not be allowed to raise money for his

foundation, Trump tweeted: “He loves these kids, has raised millions of dollars for them, and now must stop. Wrong answer!”

Trump’s critics, however, remembered how the president-elect had attacked his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, over their family foundation. In August, Trump urged the Justice Department to investigate the Clinton Foundation, which he called a “pay-to-play” operation that rewarded big donors with favors from the State Department while Clinton was secretary of state. Eric Trump and his brother Donald Trump Jr also came under fire this week for their role in a post-inauguration charity event that offered a private reception with their father in exchange for a \$1 million donation.

The brothers were listed on a draft invitation as honorary co-chairmen of the fundraiser for conservation charities, dubbed “Opening Day,” set to be held in Washington the day after the Jan. 20 inauguration.

On Tuesday, the Trump transition team said Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump were not involved with the fundraiser and a subsequent invitation dropped references to donors meeting with any members of the Trump family.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Trump aide named to lead White House communications says he won’t take job

NEW YORK CITY — Jason Miller, who President-elect Donald Trump announced this week would serve as his White House communications director, said on Saturday he would not take the job.

Miller, the communications director for Trump’s transition team, said in a statement that his family needed to take priority over career moves. He said he and his wife were expecting their second daughter in January. Trump takes office on 20 January.

“This is not the right time to start a new job as demanding as White House communications director,” Miller said.

He said his duties would instead be handled by Sean Spicer, who Trump named his press secretary on Thursday, the same day Miller was announced as communications director. Trump also said in that announcement that spokeswoman Hope Hicks would be director of strategic communications.—Reuters

2 dead, 6 missing after China fireworks explosion

SHIJIAZHUANG — Two people were killed and six remained missing after an explosion at a fireworks workshop in north China’s Hebei Province Saturday, local police announced on Sunday.

The explosion at 1 pm on Saturday leveled down the workshop and damaged about a dozen homes nearby in Yanzhihe village in Fengrun District of Tangshan City, said the district’s public security bureau.

Sixteen more people were injured. One suffered severe eye injuries and the rest suffered bruises.

A police investigation found that the workshop owner, a villager surnamed Gao, were allegedly involved in illegal storage and production of fireworks. Police have retrieved some human tissues at the site

Sri Lanka’s president pardons over 500 inmates on Christmas Day

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka’s President Maithripala Sirisena, on Sunday, pardoned over 500 inmates who were serving sentences for minor offences in Sri Lankan prisons in order to mark Christmas Day.

Prison’s Spokesperson, TN Upuldeniya said that 567 prisoners, including 7 female inmates had received a presidential pardon.

Upuldeniya said that all the prisoners released were serving minor offences and those who could not pay their fines were also released.

Upuldeniya said that the Prison’s Department has also made special arrangements for families of Christian inmates to visit them in prison.—Xinhua

French-Swiss aid worker kidnapped in Mali town of Gao

DAKAR — A female French-Swiss aid worker was kidnapped in the city of Gao in northern Mali on Saturday afternoon, a spokesman for the Ministry of Security said.

It was not clear who was responsible for the act, or why the aid worker was taken, said Commandant Baba Cissé, but the desert nation has been beset by attacks from Islamist fighters in recent years, especially in the north.—Reuters

Fuel tank ablaze in Oil Refineries in Israeli city of Haifa

HAIFA — A fire erupted in a fuel tank at Oil Refineries Ltd in Haifa on Sunday, sending thick black smoke into the sky above the northern Israeli port city.

“We have a fuel tank on fire. The level of the fuel in it is relatively low, about a metre (three feet) high,” Uri Chibotero, a Haifa Fire Brigade spokesman, said on Israel Radio.

He said firefighters were working to prevent the flames

from spreading to nearby tanks and that he expected the blaze would be extinguished within a few hours.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said.

Video from the scene, on Israeli media websites, showed flames and black smoke pouring from the tank.

Israel’s largest oil refinery is controlled by holding company Israel Corp.—Reuters



A blaze can be seen after fire erupted in a fuel tank at Oil Refineries Ltd in the Israeli northern city of Haifa on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Independence, Myanmar Language & Myanmar Literature

25-12-2016

Editorial from the Mirror (Kyemon)

WHEN they were fighting for independence against colonialists, patriotic Myanmar nationalists shouted the slogan, "Myanmar is our country, Myanmar literature is our literature and Myanmar language is our language. Love our country, raise the standard of our literature and respect our language. They shouted these slogans not to think highly of colonialists and not to let our patriotic spirit diminish during the time of colonial occupation.

Because of the development of Myanmar language and literature, nationalism developed, and the patriotic spirit to win back the lost independence awakened and intensified. This proved to be beneficial till we achieved Independence.

As for the new generations, only if their level of un-

derstanding of the words "Myanmar is our country and Myanmar language is our language" is raised will our Independence and our national development endure for a long time.

Now is the time for our future generations to protect and preserve our Myanmar language and literature and work for its development and progress.

During the struggle for our independence, Myanmar literature saw a rebirth and growth because of the concerted efforts of the first-ever Myanmar national principal, teachers and students of the University College. Consequently, this is proof that all Myanmar nationals began to love and cherish our Myanmar literature and Myanmar language.

For a country and its

people, their language and literature are like a priceless jewel. It is for this reason that every country and every race cherish their language and literature and therefore work hard at preservation, development and propagation of their language and literature.

It can be seen that in our big neighboring country, they value and use their own language and literature. Even though the young people know English because it is the international language, they usually use their mother tongue as a priority to make sure that others give a high respect to their language.

For our country also, although we need to master the globally used language—English to keep up with the world, we need to make sure that we do not neglect our own mother language. We should not think

too highly of other foreign languages. We need to keep them on the same level as ours.

As stated in the sayings—"The people will flourish only if their literature is of a high standard," and "The race will disappear if their literature disappears," we are responsible to preserve and protect our Myanmar language and literature. It is a national responsibility. Failing that, one day we will not be able to stand tall in dignity among the other peoples of the world. Our race will vanish from the world the same way lost our independence.

We firmly believe that our efforts to preserve, develop and propagate our beloved language and literature with the spirit of nationalism will help our motherland—Myanmar to survive and endure forever.

Sexual offences in Myanmar, Singapore and India

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

(Continued from 25-12-2016)

(b) "hospital" means the precincts of the hospital and includes the precincts of any institution for the reception and treatment of persons during convalescence or of persons requiring medical attention or rehabilitation;

(c) "police officer" shall have the same meaning as assigned to the expression "police" under the Police Act 1861;

(d) "women's or children's institution" means an institution, whether caked an orphanage or a home for neglected women or children or a widow's home or an institution called by any other name, which is established and maintained for the reception and care of women or children.

Section 376A. Whoever, commits an offence punishable under sub-section (1) or sub-section (2) of section 376 and in the course of such commission inflicts an injury which causes death of the woman or causes the woman to be persistent vegetative state, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the

remainder of that person's natural life, or with death.

Section 376B. Whoever has sexual intercourse with his own wife, who is living separately, whether under a decree of separation or otherwise, without her consent, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanation.- In this section, "sexual intercourse" shall mean any of the acts mentioned in clauses (a) to (d) of section 375.

Section 376C. Whoever, being -

(a) in a position of authority or in a fiduciary relationship;

(b) a public servant; or

(c) Superintendent or manager of a jail, remand home or other place of custody established by or under any law for the time being in force, or a woman's or children's institution; or

(d) on the management of a hospital or being on the staff of a hospital, abuses such a position or fiduciary relationship to induce or seduce any woman either in his custody or under his charge or present in the premises to have sexual intercourse with him, such sexual intercourse not amounting to rape, shall be punished with



The symbol of administration of justice used around the world.

rigorous imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than five years, but which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.

Explanation 1.- In this section, "sexual intercourse" shall mean any of the acts mentioned in clauses (a) to (d) of section 375.

Explanation 2.- For the purpose of this section, Explanation 1 to section 375 shall also be applicable.

Explanation 2.- "Superin-

tendent", in relation to a jail, remand home or other place of custody or a woman's or children's institution, includes a person holding any other office in such jail, remand home, place or institution by virtue of which such a person can exercise any authority or control over its inmates.

Explanation 4.- The expression "hospital" and "women's or children's institution" shall respectively have the same meaning as in Explanation to sub-section (2) of section 376.

Section 376D. Where a

woman is raped by one or more persons constituting a group or acting in furtherance of a common intention, each of those persons shall be deemed to have committed the offence of rape and shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than twenty years, but which may extend to life which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, and with fine:

Provided that such fine shall be just and reasonable to meet the medical expenses and rehabilitation of the victim:

Provided further that any fine imposed under this section shall be paid to the victim.

Section 376E. Whoever has been previously convicted of an offence punishable under section 376 or section 376A or section 376D and is subsequently convicted of an offence punishable under any of the said sections shall be punished with imprisonment for life which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, or with death.

Different country has different definitions, different classifications and different punishments of sexual offences which we should worthy to study for our country's future legislation.

Platinum Partners arrests are scant consolation for alleged victims



John Hoffman is pictured at a black elk platform in the Gulf of Mexico for a joint research project with LUMCON (university of Louisiana) in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — When six executives of Platinum Partners, including founder Mark Nordlicht, were arrested on Monday 19 December on federal charges of running a more than \$1 billion hedge fund fraud, people who had long alleged they were harmed by the New York-based firm felt some vindication.

But the possibility that each defendant might face prison terms has done little to soothe their continued anger over losses that may never be recouped.

One such person is Houston-based energy entrepreneur John Hoffman. In the charges, the US Department of Justice and the US Securities and Exchange Commission alleged what Hoffman had long believed — that Platinum, with the help of a seventh man also arrested, Jeffrey Shulze, had illegally profited from the failure of Hoffman's company, Black Elk Energy Offshore Operations LLC.

Hoffman said in a telephone interview on Wednesday that he did not expect to recover anything and that his involvement with Platinum had cost him the company he founded and at least \$500,000 in legal fees. He also

described stress-related health problems and difficulty fundraising for a new energy venture.

Hoffman expressed anger that thousands of Gulf Coast-area families were stiffed: mostly the small businesses that were never paid for work on Black Elk's oil and gas drilling platforms before it went bankrupt amid lower oil prices and Platinum's alleged corporate cash grab.

All six Platinum executives pleaded not guilty and an attorney for Shulze told Reuters he plans to do the same. A spokesman for Platinum declined to comment for this article, and the firm has not offered any public comment. A person familiar with Platinum's thinking told Reuters in April that the firm always acted within the limits of the law despite its aggressive investment approach.

Launched in 2003, Platinum was known as a high-performing hedge fund manager that backed struggling companies and employed esoteric investment strategies such as litigation finance and high-interest consumer loans.

The government charges on Monday included allegations of over-valuing assets and misleading clients on the health of the

firm. The government demanded that the hedge fund return money that was allegedly illegally taken from clients and Black Elk bondholders, and pay related penalties.

That appears to complicate an already messy stew of competing claims for a relatively small pot of assets, which include funds already in supervised liquidation and bankruptcy.

Others seeking money from Platinum include approximately 600 clients whose money was frozen, and creditors and shareholders of its now-bankrupt or struggling portfolio companies, according to a variety of lawsuits against Platinum.

Marc Powers, an attorney for a Platinum fund investor with BakerHostetler in New York, said it was too early to speculate on how much would be recovered from Platinum, including its hedge funds, executives, and allegedly improperly favored firm clients. But he added that it was unlikely his client and others would be made whole based on the number of claims and the facts of the case.

"It clearly doesn't look good for any of the victims," Powers said.—Reuters

Chinese firms face competition to maintain role in developing Iranian oilfields

DUBA — Iran plans to ask international oil companies to bid for the second phase of development of its Yadavaran and North Azadegan oilfields, a senior official said on Saturday.

That means Chinese firms China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC) [CNPET.UL] and Sinopec (0386.HK), which have played a leading role in developing the fields until now, will have to compete with other firms if they want to maintain that position.

"CNPC would like to extend its North Azadegan contract, but we have announced that ...they should take part in the bidding for a new contract," Gholamreza Manouchehri, deputy head of the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

"The Chinese have finally accepted this proposal," Manouchehri said. He gave no details on the timing of the tender. President Hassan Rouhani officially launched the first phases of the Yadavaran and North Azadegan fields as well as the North Yaran field in November, as the

country ramps up its production after the lifting of sanctions.

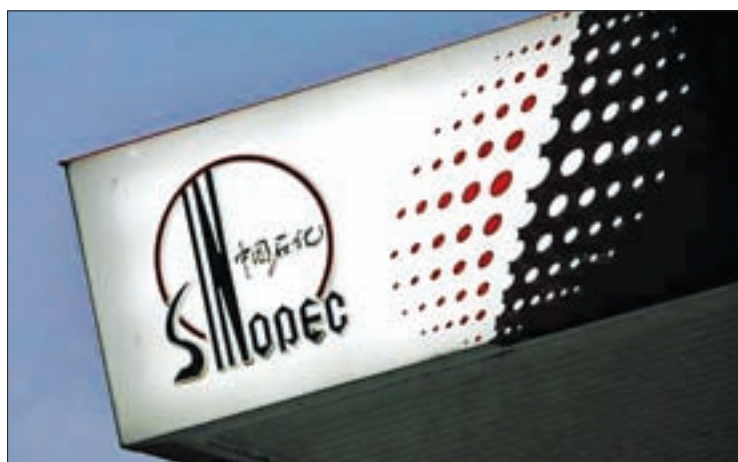
Yadavaran will have a production of up to 115,000 bpd in its first phase and North Azadegan's output is 75,000 bpd, the Iranian oil ministry's news agency SHANA said.

The Chinese firms helped Iran develop the fields after Japanese and European companies pulled out of the country due to sanctions over Iran's nuclear program.

Iran said in December 2007 that Sinopec would invest around \$2 billion to develop the huge Yadavaran oil field. CNPC signed a deal with Iran in January 2009 to develop the North Azadegan oilfield, a project also worth \$2 billion in its first phase.

In April 2014, however, Iranian news agency SHANA reported that Iran had terminated CNPC's contract to develop the Azadegan field after the Chinese energy giant ignored repeated appeals to work on it.

While the Chinese companies took part in the first phase of development of the fields, there



The Sinopec logo is seen at one of its gas stations in Hong Kong, on 26 April 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

had been "some criticism of their performance," IRNA said on Saturday, without elaborating.

"There have also been talks with Sinopec regarding the Yadavaran field for which an international tender is set to be held," Manouchehri said, according to the IRNA report.

Yadavaran has reserves of 31 billion barrels of light and heavy crude oil while North Azadegan has 5.7 billion barrels of crude

reserves. Separately, the head of a regional state oil firm in central Iran said 20 tenders would be held to develop new gas and oil fields and boost production at existing ones, the semi-official Mehr news agency reported.

Salbali Karimi, chief executive of the Iranian Central Oil Fields Company, said the projects would require \$2 billion in investment to boost crude output by 100,000 barrels per day.—Reuters

Snapchat buying Israeli augmented reality start-up Cimagine

VENTURA (California) — Messaging app Snapchat is buying Israeli augmented reality startup Cimagine Media for an estimated \$30-\$40 million, marking Snapchat's first acquisition in Israel, the Calcalist financial daily reported on Sunday.

Cimagine developed True Marketless Augmented Reality — technology that allows users to virtually place furniture and appliances they wish to purchase in the space of their home, on their mobile devices, at the click of a button.

Cimagine will become Snapchat's research and development centre in Israel and is expected to rapidly expand its workforce from its current 20 employees, Calcalist said.

The company's highly-skilled team is probably the main reason for the acquisition, rather than its technology, Calcalist said.

Officials at Cimagine declined to comment on the report. The company was founded in 2012 and has raised a few million dollars.

Venice, California-based Snapchat is expected to go public as early as March with a valuation of as much as \$25 billion.—Reuters

Beijing to take more steps to cool residential property market: Xinhua

BEIJING — one of China's hottest residential real estate markets, will step up property controls to keep home prices stable next year, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday.

Stoked by speculators, home prices in the capital are already

too high, and rising social tensions pose enormous challenges to Beijing's stability, Xinhua reported, citing the Beijing Municipal Committee.

Average new home prices in Beijing rose 26.4 per cent in November from a year earlier, slowing for the second month

following cooling measures taken by the government.

On 30 September, Beijing announced a requirement for higher downpayments on property purchases.

More than a dozen Chinese cities including Tianjin, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen

have taken measures to curb property speculation, partly fueled by easy credit.

China will impose strict limits on credit flowing into speculative buying in the property market in 2017, top officials said at an annual economic conference earlier this month.—Reuters

Russian jets step up raids on rebel-held Idlib and rural Aleppo

AMMAN — Russian jets stepped up strikes on several towns in Syria's rebel-held Idlib province and rural Aleppo two days after the evacuation of rebels from their last pocket in the northern city of Aleppo, rebels and residents said on Saturday.

They said at least eight strikes targeted Binish, Saraqeb and Jisr al Shaqour — main towns in the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib. There were reports of several casualties, mainly among civilians.

Idlib province for months has been a target of Russia's heavy bombing campaign against rebel-held areas. It came even while the former eastern part of Aleppo under insurgent control faced an escalation in aerial raids and shelling until its defenses collapsed and the rebels were forced to agree to an evacuation deal.

The Syrian army has hinted the next major campaign after its victory in Aleppo was to rout insurgents in their stronghold of Idlib province, where mainly Islamist brigades operating under a coalition known as Jaish al Fateh are in control.

Residents and rebels said Russian and Syrian jets also staged heavy strikes on rebel-held parts of western and southern parts of rural Aleppo for the second day since the last rebels left their remaining pocket of territory in Aleppo city.

They raided the town of Khan al Asal, about 14 km (9 miles) west of Aleppo, with cluster bombs while several strikes hit Hreitan and Andan, according to a rebel fighter from Jaish al Mujahdeen. The nearby town of Atareb was also hit.

Although the Syrian army, with the help of Iranian-backed



Civil defence members work at a site hit at night by an airstrike in Saraqeb, in rebel-held Idlib province, Syria on 11 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

militias, was able to take full control of Aleppo city after Russia conducted hundreds of raids that pulverized rebel-held parts, large swathes of western and southern Aleppo countryside remain in rebel hands.

Rebels said they repelled an Iranian-backed militia assault on Saturday to gain ground in the Rashideen area, west of Aleppo city.

The Syrian army continued to comb areas in eastern Alep-

po that fell under its control on Thursday. The Lebanese Hizbolah-run military news service said weapons caches left by insurgents exploded, causing two deaths and wounding scores. —Reuters

Turkish authorities investigating 10,000 social media users

ANKARA — Turkish authorities are investigating some 10,000 people on suspicion of using social media to support terrorism, the interior ministry said on Saturday, part of a wide crackdown that has alarmed rights groups and some Western allies.

Turkey, which faces security threats from Kurdish and leftist militants and Islamic State, has sacked or suspended more than 100,000 people following an attempted military coup in July. It says the measures are necessary to root out supporters of the putsch and other terrorists.

Rights groups and some European countries have said President Tayyip Erdogan is using the current state of emergency to quash dissent. Since the coup, more than 150 media outlets have been shut down and 140 journalists arrested.

The interior ministry said on Saturday the fight against terror-

ism was being carried out "with determination" in social media.

In the last six months, authorities have detained 3,710 people for questioning, the ministry said. Of those, 1,656 have been formally arrested and 84 are still being questioned.

The remaining 1,970 have been released, although 1,203 of those are still being monitored, it said.

Access to social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook is commonly blocked, particularly after bombings or other deadly attacks, internet monitoring groups have said. Turkey denies that it blocks the internet, and has previously blamed outages on spikes in usage after major events.

Technical experts at watchdog groups say the blackouts on social media are intentional, aimed in part at stopping the spread of militant images and propaganda. —Reuters



People use computers at an internet cafe in Ankara on 6 April 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel to re-assess UN ties after settlement resolution, says Netanyahu

JERUSALEM — Israel will re-assess its ties with the United Nations following the adoption by the Security Council of a resolution demanding an end to Israeli settlement building, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Saturday.

The vote was able to pass the 15-member council on Friday because the United States broke with a long-standing approach of diplomatically shielding Israel and did not wield its veto power as it had on many times before — a decision that Netanyahu called "shameful".

"I instructed the Foreign Min-

istry to complete within a month a re-evaluation of all our contacts with the United Nations, including the Israeli funding of UN institutions and the presence of UN representatives in Israel," Netanyahu said in broadcast remarks.

"I have already instructed to stop about 30 million shekels (\$7.8 million) in funding to five UN institutions, five bodies, that are especially hostile to Israel ... and there is more to come," he said. The Israeli leader did not name the institutions or offer any further details.

Defying heavy pressure from long-time ally Israel and

President-elect Donald Trump for Washington to use its veto, the United States abstained in the Security Council decision, which passed with 14 votes in favor.

Israel for decades has pursued a policy of constructing Jewish settlements on territory captured by Israel in a 1967 war with its Arab neighbours including the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

Most countries view Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as illegal and an obstacle to peace. Israel disagrees, citing a biblical connection to the land. —Reuters

Asylum seekers riot at Papua New Guinea detention camp

SYDNEY — Asylum seekers held at a Papua New Guinea detention centre briefly took control of two compounds and expelled guards following the death of a refugee who fell ill at the centre, Papua New Guinea police said on Sunday. Senior Sergeant Thomas Lelepo, from Lorengau Police Station on Manus Island, said guards at the Manus Island regional processing centre were expelled by residents last night.

"There was a situation there ... over the death of a resident," he told Reuters by phone, adding that order had been restored.

A 27-year-old Sudanese man, who was identified as Faysal Ishak Ahmed by refugee advocates, col-

lapsed at the centre and was evacuated to hospital in Australia this week. Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Protection said he died on Saturday.

The man's death is not being treated as suspicious by Australian authorities, but detainees and refugee rights groups have claimed the man was seriously ill for months and had made repeated requests for medical assistance before the emergency. Under Australia's tough border security policy, asylum seekers intercepted trying to reach the country by boat are sent for processing at the camps on Papua New Guinea's Manus island and Nauru in the South Pacific. They are never eligible for

resettlement in Australia.

An Australian immigration department spokesperson confirmed an incident on Manus Island overnight.

"The Department is aware of a disturbance involving a group of residents in the mess area of Manus RPC," the spokesperson said in a statement on Sunday. "The disturbance has now been resolved. There is minor property damage and no reported injuries."

Photos posted to Facebook by Iranian refugee Behrouz Boochani, who is among the asylum seekers held on Manus Island, showed what appeared to be damage to a mess area inside one of the compounds. —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	

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	

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AIRLINE CODES

8M = Myanmar Airways International

BG = Biman Bangladesh Airlines

MH = Malaysia Airlines

MU = China Eastern Airlines

NH = All Nippon Airways

SQ = Singapore Airways

PG = Bangkok Airways

UB = Myanmar National Airlines

VN = Vietnam Airline

3K = Jet Star

AI = Air India

CI = China Airlines

DD = Nok Airline

KA = Dragonair

MI = Silk Air

TG = Thai Airways

AK = Air Asia

CA = Air China

CZ = China Southern

Europe on Christmas high alert after truck attack in Berlin

ROME — Security was heightened for the Christmas weekend in Italy and at the Vatican on Saturday after Italian police killed the man believed to be responsible for the Berlin market truck attack while other European cities kept forces on high alert.

In France, Britain and Germany, which have all been targets of Islamist militant attacks, police increased their presence at tourist spots in major cities and other densely populated areas.

Anis Amri, a 24-year-old Tunisian suspected of carrying out the truck attack which killed 12 people, was shot dead in a town near Milan early on Friday after he pulled a gun on police during a routine check.

He had travelled undetected to Italy from Germany via France, taking advantage of Europe's open-border Schengen pact. As investigators sought to determine

if Amri had accomplices in Italy, and associates were being arrested in his home country of Tunisia, national security officials in Italy beefed up security at sensitive spots.

Rome authorities banned vans or trucks from entering the city centre and anti-terror police wearing masks and wielding machine guns set up roadblocks on routes leading to famous tourist sites or areas where crowds traditionally gather.

At the Vatican, where Pope Francis was due to celebrate Christmas Eve Mass in St. Peter's basilica on Saturday evening, police cars and military jeeps stood about every 100 metres (yards) along streets leading to the Vatican.

Security was also stepped up in central Milan and other Italian cities, particularly near major churches where the faithful were attending Christmas services.



French police cars are parked in front of the Notre Dame Cathedral as emergency security measures continue during the holiday season in Paris, France, on 23 December 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

In France, where Islamist militants killed 130 people in shooting and bomb attacks in Paris in November 2015, authorities said more than 91,000 policemen and soldiers would be deployed, with additional security

measures being enforced at churches.

Emergency rule has been in place since the Paris attacks, and French soldiers patrol the capital's streets. Police have been given wider search and arrest powers

to target suspects considered a threat to security.

In Germany, federal police reinforced armed patrols at airports and rail stations, officials said. They have also reintroduced spot checks on people coming

into Germany along a 30-km (19 miles) corridor inside the international frontiers.

German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere has said the danger of an attack in Germany remains high despite the death of the suspected attacker.

More than 100 investigators would be working through the holidays searching for any accomplices or support network for Amri. "The level of threat remains high," he told reporters late on Friday. Britain is on its second-highest threat level, meaning an attack by militants is considered highly likely.

Police there have increased security at a number of popular tourist attractions, including around Queen Elizabeth's London residence, Buckingham Palace. Armed officers patrol major shopping centres, Christmas markets and places of worship.—Reuters

Russian military plane crashes en route to Syria with 92 on board



Russian Emergencies Ministry members work at a quay of the Black Sea near the crash site of Russian military Tu-154 plane, in the Sochi suburb of Khosta, Russia, on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

MOSCOW — A Russian military plane with 92 people on board has crashed into the Black Sea on its way to Syria, Russian news agencies reported on Sunday, and it was unlikely there would be any survivors.

Russian agencies, citing unnamed security sources, said the TU-154 aircraft had crashed in the sea near the southern Russian city of Sochi after disappearing from radar screens.

The plane was carrying Russian servicemen and members of a renowned military choir and dance ensemble, the Alexandrov Ensemble, who were being flown into Russia's Hmeymim air base in Syria to en-

ertain military personnel in the run-up to the new year, the RIA news agency quoted the Defence Ministry as saying. The plane was carrying 84 passengers and eight crew members, agencies quoted the ministry as saying. Nine Russian reporters were among the passengers, agencies said. Fragments of the plane have already been found at a depth of 50-70 metres at a distance of around 1.5 kilometres (0.93 miles) from the Russian coast, agencies reported.

Russia's RIA news agency, citing an unidentified security source, said preliminary data indicated that the plane had crashed because of a technical mal-

function or a pilot error.

The Interfax news agency cited an unnamed source as saying the plane had not sent an SOS signal.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Sunday it was too early to say what had caused the crash. President Vladimir Putin was being kept informed of latest developments, Peskov added.

Russia's Defence Ministry regularly flies musicians into Syria to put on concerts for military personnel. The base they were heading for, Hmeymim, is in Latakia province. It is from there that Russia flies air strikes against Syrian rebels.—Reuters

INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (5/2016) [TENDER NO. MPPE/HSD/T/3(2016-2017)]

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Ministry of Electricity and Energy for the supply of High Speed Diesel (470,000 ± 10% Barrels)
2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 5-1-2017, 12:00 Hrs
3. Tender Opening Date & Time - 5-1-2017, 13:00 Hrs
4. Delivery Time - January 2017 to February 2017
5. Tender documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during our office hours commencing 26-12-2016 on payment of Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyats 100,000) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director
Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Electricity and Energy
No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

Contact Phone No.
067-411487/411486/411280

Cuba, US work to bolster ties before Obama term ends

HAVANA — Cuba and the United States are working to consolidate restored diplomatic ties with less than a month left before US President Barack Obama's term ends.

The two countries signed on Wednesday new memorandums of understanding in Washington on cooperation and research in fields of mutual interest, including meteorology, seismology and wildlife conservation.

As both sides are aware that the incoming administration of President-elect Donald Trump may be less than supportive of the bilateral rapprochement, they have stepped up the effort

to normalize ties. Trump, who will take office on 20 January, has criticized the White House's about-face on Cuba on more than one occasion.

Following the death of Fidel Castro, Cuba's revolutionary leader, Trump's designated Chief of Staff Reince Priebus said his boss "will definitely reverse" Obama's foreign policy on Cuba, unless Cuban authorities agree to make more concessions.

According to state daily Granma, the agreements signed on Wednesday call for jointly studying climate models, expanding and integrating weather monitoring networks, and studying

hurricane forecasting systems.

"We trust this step will be the beginning of a sustained scientific relationship and of greater collaboration between the meteorological communities of Cuba and the United States," the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment's Deputy Minister Fernando Gonzalez said.

Since the two countries jointly announced on 17 December, 2014 their decision to start restoring ties, they have exchanged 24 high-level visits and signed 12 agreements, with more on the way. In addition, there have been upwards of 1,200 exchanges in the

fields of culture, sports and education, among others.

Cuba hopes the new US administration will value the breakthroughs in bilateral relations made since 2014 after more than 50 years of animosity.

While the US-led trade embargo against Cuba remains in place, the White House has relaxed some restrictions, mainly in travel between the two countries.

Thousands have taken advantage of the thaw. In the first half of the year, 136,913 US travelers came to Cuba, almost 80 per cent more than the same period the year before, according to Cuba's national bureau of statistics.—Xinhua

China confirms aircraft carrier heading to Pacific for drill

BEIJING — A spokesman for China's navy has announced that the country's first aircraft carrier, Liaoning, was on Saturday headed for the Western Pacific to take part in an open-sea training exercise.

"Liaoning will conduct military drills in the West Pacific," People's Liberation Army Navy spokesman Liang Yang said on Saturday, China's state-run Global Times reported.

It is the first time for navigation of a Chinese aircraft carrier through the so-called first island chain linking Okinawa, Taiwan and the Philippines to the Pacific Ocean to be reported.

The Western Pacific stretches from China to New Zealand and encompasses countries in the Pacific, Oceania and parts of Asia.

The mission appears aimed at sending a message to US President-elect Donald Trump, who has questioned whether Washington should continue to adhere to its nearly four-decade policy of recognizing Taiwan as part of "one China."

Early this month, Trump broke with decades

of diplomatic practice by accepting a congratulatory phone call on his election win from President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan, infuriating Beijing which considers the self-ruled democratic island an inherent part of its territory.

The Liaoning, considered a symbol of China's recent naval expansion, is a refurbished Russian-made vessel purchased from Ukraine in 1988. It was commissioned by the Chinese navy in 2012.

The Japanese Defence Ministry announced on Sunday that a Japanese defence destroyer on Saturday spotted the Liaoning in the central part of the East China Sea for the first time.

The fleet consists of seven other vessels — three guided-missile destroyers, three frigates and one supply ship — and was cruising eastward when the Maritime Self-Defence Force destroyer spotted it at around 4 pm.

The MSDF is closely monitoring the situation given the possibility that the Chinese naval vessels may transit waters near Japan and proceed to the western Pacific Ocean.—*Kyodo News*

Public hearing on Japanese food products canceled amid melee

NEW TAIPEI, (Taiwan)

— The first of three public hearings on whether Taiwan should ease its ban on imports of Japanese food products imposed in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster was canceled Sunday amid shouting, table pounding, and physical altercations.

Hundreds of protesters mobilized by the main opposition Nationalist Party (KMT) clashed with police outside the public hearing venue in New Taipei city. A truck parked outside the venue bore placards calling President Tsai Ing-wen "Japan's servile follower" and demanding her resignation.

Participants allowed inside criticized organizers for blocking people outside from entering the venue. One opponent who prepared her own microphone said the public hearings are meaningless because Tsai has the final say on the matter.

In addition to the protest in the morning, the KMT also organized a march in Taipei in the afternoon, at which KMT Chairwoman Hung Hsiu-chu alleged the Democratic Progressive Party government was forcing people to eat radiation-contaminated food imported from Japan.

She also criticized the administration for ignoring polls that she said show that a majority of the people in Taiwan oppose easing the ban, calling the government's decision-making process "opaque" and "shameful." The KMT claimed 15,000 people participated in the march. Following the March 2011 disaster, Taiwan banned food imports from Fukushima Prefecture and nearby Ibaraki, Gunma, Tochigi, and Chiba prefectures, and in addition has been conducting random radiation checks on nine categories of imported foods.

The Tsai administration recently formulated a plan to relax the ban in two stages. Under the proposal, Taiwan plans to keep in place its ban on the import of all food products from Fukushima but conditionally allow imports of certain products from the four other prefectures. The implementation of the first stage of the plan would serve as a reference for the further relaxation of the restrictions in the second stage, possibly about six months later.

Sunday's public hearing, video conferencing with participants on the outlying Matsu Islands and streamed live on the Internet, was the

first of three the administration promised to hold after 10 were held across the island last month.

The KMT criticized the Tsai government for holding the 10 hearings in three days, questioning whether it has made a secret deal with Japan in exchange for something. The administration then decided to hold three more, one in New Taipei on Sunday, another in Kaohsiung in the island's south on Jan. 2, and the third in Taipei on 8 January.

During Sunday's public hearing, opponents alleged the event was not organized properly and documents not provided in an appropriate manner. The organizers decided to cancel the event but allowed participants to voice opinions in the afternoon, calling it a discussion session. The morning session began with chaos, with participants shouting, throwing documents and pounding and jumping on the tables.

KMT Vice Chairman Hau Lung-bin argued that Sunday's public hearing was "illegal" and "meaningless" because the Tsai administration has already planned to ease the ban.

Hau, who initiated a signature drive to endorse a referendum on whether to

relax the ban, said the administration is duty bound to explain the possibility of it using the relaxation of the ban as a bargaining chip in exchange for a trade deal with Japan and how such a trade deal would benefit Taiwan. KMT Legislator Wang Yu-min said Chiou I-jen, chairman of the Association of East Asian Relations, Taiwan's semi-official agency handling the island's relations with Japan, should attend Sunday's public hearing because he is responsible for negotiating the trade deal. She also argued the administration is in no position to talk about the government's plan to ease the ban because it cannot ensure food safety, citing the recent discovery that soy sauce packets subject to the ban entered the country illegally.

Following the discovery, the Executive Yuan, or Cabinet, said before a mechanism is established to ensure the safety of food products imported from the five prefectures and public confidence in the government is restored, easing the ban is not an option. It also emphasized that the government does not have any set position and there is no timetable set for easing the ban.—*Kyodo News*

China to levy new taxes in bid to strengthen pollution fight

BEIJING — China's largely rubber-stamp parliament passed a law on Sunday that will levy specific environmental protection taxes on industry for the first time from 2018, as part of a renewed focus on fighting the country's pollution woes.

Anger has risen in the world's second-largest economy at the government's repeated failure to tackle land, water and air pollution, with large parts of northern China enveloped in dangerous smog in recent days.

"Tax revenue is an important economic means to promote environmental protection," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The tax rate will be 1.2 yuan (\$0.17) per unit of atmospheric pollution, 1.4 yuan per unit of water pollution, 5 yuan per tonne of coal waste and 1,000 yuan per tonne of "hazardous waste".

Industrial noise pollut-

ers will also be levied 350 yuan per month if they exceed limits by 1-3 decibels, 700 yuan for 4-6 decibels and 11,200 yuan per month for 16 decibels and more.

The law goes into effect on 1st January, 2018.

China has not previously imposed any specific environmental taxes, and the new levy will replace an earlier system of miscellaneous charges that are regarded as far too low to deter polluters.

Officials have repeatedly stressed that the new policy is not designed to increase the tax burden on enterprises.

"The core purpose (of the policy) isn't to increase taxes, but is to improve the system, and encourage enterprises to reduce emissions - the more they emit the more they will pay, and the less they emit the less they will pay," environment minister Chen Jining said earlier this year.

The details of the new law have been fiercely contested by the Ministry of Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Finance, the State Taxation Administration and local governments, and has been subject to repeated delays.

Conflicts of interest have emerged as other departments worry about lost revenues once the previous system of emission discharge fees is abolished. Some government researchers have also argued that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases should be included in the plans.

Jia Kang of the Ministry of Finance's Institute of Fiscal Science complained this year that the environmental tax proposals were far too conservative, with the tax rate per tonne of sulphur dioxide still much cheaper than paying for the equipment required to stop it entering the atmosphere.—*Kyodo News*

ကွန်ပျူတာ စနစ်ဖြင့်ထိန်းသော
MECHANICAL CAR PARKING

Side View: 14'4" x 7'2" x 18'

Front View: 7'2" x 7'2"

Plan View: 21'5" x 14'6"

TRW
Honesty coming true
Tel: 09.25.981.36.36

No. (31), Room (5), 7 Miles,
Pyay Road, Yangon
T: 09.259.81.36.36
: 09.259.81.37.37
: 09.259.81.46.46

အမှတ်(၃၁)၊ အခန်း (၅)၊ ၇မိုင်၊ ပြည်လမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်။

Carrie Fisher's celebrity friends wish her a fast recovery

LOS ANGELES — Friends and colleagues of Hollywood actress Carrie Fisher shared their hopes for the “Star Wars” star’s swift recovery on Saturday, a day after she was admitted to the intensive care unit of a Los Angeles hospital.

Fisher, 60, suffered heart problems during a flight on Friday from London, where she had been shooting the third season of the British television comedy “Catastrophe.” Her younger brother, Todd Fisher, said she was taken to the hospital in critical condition and was undergoing treatment in the ICU.

No further details on her condition or prognosis were immediately available on Saturday, and a spokeswoman at the Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center declined to comment, citing patient confidentiality laws.

“I’m shocked and saddened to hear the news about my dear friend,” actor Harrison Ford told The Hollywood Reporter on Saturday. Ford played the swash-buckling Han Solo opposite Fisher’s Princess Leia in the original “Star Wars” film trilogy.

“Our thoughts are with Carrie, her family and friends.”

Fisher caused a stir in November with the disclosure that



Actress Carrie Fisher arrives with her dog on the red carpet for the screening of the film “The Handmaiden” (Agassi or Mademoiselle) in competition at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on 14 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

she had a love affair with Ford during the making of the first “Star Wars” movie. Fisher revealed the secret to People magazine while promoting her new memoir, “The Princess Diarist,” just before it went on sale.

Her friend William Shatner, best known for his role in the “Star Trek” television and film series, posted an old photograph on Twitter of him and Fisher embracing, writing that she was “all I want for Christmas.”

One of the more attention-grabbing messages appeared to come from Fisher’s dog Gary, who has his own Twitter account and was reported to be with her at the hospital. “I’ll be waiting right here mommy,” Gary tweeted in a

post with a photo of the French bulldog staring attentively through a window - ears perked, paws perched on the sill.

Other celebrities, including Ellen DeGeneres and Christina Applegate, took to social media to share their sadness, while the singer-actress Bette Midler described Fisher as “hilarious on paper and in person, and just plain beloved.”

Fisher reprised her “Star Wars” role in two sequels, gaining sex symbol status in 1983’s “Return of the Jedi” when the Leia character appeared, wearing a metallic gold bikini, as a captive of an evil alien.

She returned last year in Disney’s reboot of the “Star Wars” franchise, “The Force Awakens,” appearing as the more matronly military resistance leader, General Leia Organa.

Fisher’s career has been dogged at times by substance abuse and mental health issues, about which she has spoken openly. Her bestselling novel “Postcards from the Edge,” based on her experience in drug rehab, was adapted into a 1990 movie starring Meryl Streep. Fisher has also said she was briefly hospitalized in 2013 due to bipolar disorder.—Reuters

Status Quo guitarist Rick Parfitt dies aged 68



Rick Parfitt (L) and Francis Rossi of British rock group Status Quo perform at the Glastonbury Festival 2009 in south west England, on 28 June 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Rick Parfitt, the guitarist of British rock group Status Quo, died in hospital on Saturday in Spain aged 68 after suffering from a severe infection.

“He will be sorely missed by his family, friends, fellow band members, management, crew and his dedicated legion of fans from throughout the world, gained through 50 years of monumental success with Status Quo,” his family and Status Quo Manager Simon Porter said in a joint statement.

“He died in hospital in Marbella, Spain as a result of a severe infection, having been admitted to hospital on Thursday evening

following complications to a shoulder injury incurred by a previous fall,” his family said.

Parfitt is survived by his wife Lyndsay, their twins Tommy and Lily and Rick’s adult children Rick Jnr and Harry.

“I cannot describe the sadness I feel right now. To many he was a rockstar, to me he was simply ‘Dad’, and I loved him hugely. RIP Pappa Parf,” Rick Jnr said on Twitter.

Born in Woking, in Surrey, England, on 12 October 1948, Parfitt learned the guitar at 11 and met future Status Quo partner Francis Rossi at Butlins holiday camp when they were teenagers

in the 1960s.

The meeting would herald one of the most successful British rock bands of the 20th Century, with hits such as “Rockin’ All Over The World” and “Whatever You Want”.

Thrashing long blond hair while playing a white Telecaster guitar, Parfitt, in the words of Queen guitarist Brian May, “joyfully rocked our world”.

Beside the fame, wealth and women of a top rock career, Parfitt battled drugs and alcohol which took a toll on his health. He had quadruple heart bypass in 1997 but while recovering he continued to smoke in hospital.

He was a self confessed drug addict for many years, though he later kicked the habit. “I haven’t smoked a joint for 27 years and I haven’t done any cocaine for 10 years. I just do normal stuff — the kids keep me busy and I go shopping with the missus,” he told reporters in 2014. Parfitt pulled out of the band’s tour on medical advice.

In a music career spanning more than 50 years, Parfitt appealed to millions with the Quo’s brand of boogie-woogie rock, particularly with hits such as “Whatever You Want” which he co-wrote.

“Turn around, give me a shout, I take it all, You squeeze me dry, And now today, You couldn’t even say goodbye,” the lyrics read.—Reuters

A&E network cancels ‘Escaping the KKK’ documentary over cash payments

LOS ANGELES — The A&E cable television network said on Saturday it has canceled an upcoming documentary about efforts to help Ku Klux Klan members break away from the hate group, after learning cash payments were made “to facilitate access” to the film’s subjects.

The documentary series, “Escaping the KKK,” completed after a year and a half in production, was set to premiere on 10 January and air in eight parts, capped by a town hall-style special broadcast on ending hate in America.

The decision to scrub the project came shortly after A&E said it had changed the series title to “Escaping the KKK,” from “Generation KKK,” in order to better reflect that the film was a work of documentary journalism rather than reality-TV entertainment.

The network also had announced a partnership with a civil rights group, Colour of Change, which was to produce accompanying segments featuring civil rights leaders to furnish context for the documentary series.

As described by A&E, the series was intended to examine “anti-hate extractors,” who work to help individuals extri-

cate themselves from the Klan, a white-supremacist group with a long history of violence, primarily against blacks, but also Jews, immigrants and other groups.

The film drew controversy soon after plans for the series were unveiled earlier this week, with actors Wendell Pierce and Ellen Pompeo among those criticizing the project on social media and Pierce calling for a network boycott, Variety reported.

Pierce demanded A&E provide evidence that the documentary subjects were not paid for their participation, as subjects of reality TV programs typically would be, and the network insisted that no such payments were made, according to Variety.

On Saturday, however, the network acknowledged learning from its third-party producers that some cash payments were made to Klan members who participated in the documentary “in order to facilitate access” to them.

The network statement said the payments, though “understood to be nominal,” were nevertheless “a direct violation of A&E’s policies and practices for a documentary.”—Reuters

Santa Claus on track to deliver gifts despite storm — US military



A man dressed as Santa Claus ice skates at The Rink At Rockefeller Center on Christmas Eve in Manhattan, New York City, US, on 24 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

DENVER— A powerful Christmas Eve snowstorm descending on much of North America will not slow Santa Claus as he delivers presents to good girls and boys, US military officials who track his annual flight said on Saturday.

“Santa is an excellent pilot and since he lives on the North Pole he knows how to navigate through adverse weather conditions,” said John Cornelio, spokesman for the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), based at Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs.

The National Weather Service has issued winter storm and blizzard warnings and watches for the

western United States all the way up to northern-tier states. It warned of treacherous travel conditions for those not aboard airborne sleighs.

For 61 years, the defense command has tracked Santa, also known as Kris Kringle, St Nicholas or Father Christmas, as he and his reindeer-powered sleigh laden with presents traverses the globe.

The tradition began in 1955 when a Colorado Springs newspaper misprinted the phone number of a local department store for kids to call and speak to Santa.

The call instead went to what was then called the Continental Air Defence Command, and the on-du-

ty commander assured the kids who called that Santa was aware of their Christmas wish lists and that all systems were go.

Three years later, the command began the tradition of offering the public updates on Santa’s yuletide trek.

Children and their parents can follow his global journey by logging on to www.noradsanta.org for real-time satellite tracking of Santa, and through various social media apps.

In addition, the website features so-called “Santa Cams” that stream videos of Santa as he hits various geographic points.

Children can also call a phone number listed on the NORAD website for

updates on his whereabouts, or email questions to teams of Santa’s helpers who are in constant contact with him and air traffic controllers.

NORAD’s Cornelio, a retired US Army lieutenant colonel, said that as St. Nick enters North American airspace, he slows down to greet US and Canadian fighter jet pilots who are scrambled to escort his sleigh. Cornelio cautioned, however, that while Santa is committed to bring gifts to children, there are certain conditions that must be met. “Not only do kids have to be good boys and girls, but they also have to be in bed before he can bring presents,” he said.—*Reuters*

Finland’s Christams charity dinner caters to 2,000 guests: report

HELSINKI — A Christmas Eve charity dinner on Saturday at the Helsinki Fair Centre saw nearly 2,000 guests in need, local media reported.

While the dinner has been offered for decades by a local charitable organization, its attendance figures have grown over the years.

Christmas dinners in Finland usually include ham and casseroles.

Media reports cited Heikki Hursti, the main organizer, as saying that among the guests on Saturday were many people who had work but with their income were not able to make ends meet.

There is no official criterion for poverty in Finland. Statistics Finland, however, determines that a single person with an income less of 1,190 euros is poor.

The National Institute of Health and Well-being reported in October 2016 that the income level of 440,000 Finns, or 8 percent of the national population, remained under the requirements of meeting essential consumption needs.

Most vulnerable are those who live alone in rental accommodations and receive basic unemployment benefits, the Institute said.—*Xinhua*

Britain’s Queen Elizabeth to miss Christmas church service due to “heavy cold”



Queen Elizabeth II visits Goodenough College, the leading residential community for British and international postgraduate students studying in London, during a visit in London, Britain, on 1 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Britain’s Queen Elizabeth, 90, will miss a traditional Christmas church service on Sunday for the first time in nearly 30 years due to a heavy cold, a Buckingham Palace spokesman said.

Elizabeth, the world’s longest-reigning living monarch, and her husband Prince Philip, 95, suffered what the Palace described as heavy colds this week that delayed by a day their journey to their Sandringham country residence in eastern England.

They travelled instead by helicopter on Thursday. Elizabeth has attended the Christmas service at the parish church of St Mary Mag-

dalene in Sandringham every year since 1988.

“Her Majesty The Queen will not attend Church at Sandringham this morning. The Queen continues to recover from a heavy cold and will stay indoors to assist with her recovery,” a Palace spokesman said.

“Her Majesty will participate in the Royal Family Christmas celebrations during the day,” the Palace said.

After more than six decades on the throne, the Queen has cut back on international tours but still regularly performs official duties around Britain, although she said on Tuesday she would reduce the number of her patronages.—*Reuters*

Skiers blocked in cabins in Italy after lift breaks down

ROME — ski lift in northern Italy broke down on Saturday, blocking more than 120 holiday skiers in gondola cabins about 30 metres (yards) off the ground and a res-

cue operation was underway, officials said. Alpine rescue officials said the breakdown in the Cervinia mountain of northern Italy near the French border was likely due to winds.

Rescue squads were entering the cabins from hatches in the top of the gondolas and lowering the stranded skiers to the ground. A spokesman for the ski area told Italian tel-

evision that the situation was under control. He said more than half of the skiers had been lowered and that the operation was due to be completed in several more hours.—*Reuters*

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(26-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 27-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Sculpture-Work of Art
07:42	Am	Mobile House
07:53	Am	Sticky Shan Snack
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Khin Zaw Latt
08:38	Am	Oboist and His Life
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business
09:38	Am	Natural Mineral Water
09:53	Am	Colonial Buildings and a New Yangon
10:03	Am	News

10:25	Am	A Journey for Healthy Future (The 36 th Geumsan Insam Festival) Day1
10:42	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: IN-LEAF

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (EP-6)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Discovering Tribes “MUUN” (Epi- II)
08:50	Pm	Attractions around Hopong Hill Station

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

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

United have moved away from traditions on transfers, says Moyes

LONDON — David Moyes has questioned his former club Manchester United's transfer policy as he prepares Sunderland for Monday's Premier League clash at Old Trafford.

United have splurged about 500 million pounds (\$614.50 million) in the transfer market since Alex Ferguson ended his 26 trophy-laden years in charge in 2013.

Despite the vast outlay they have failed to add to their record 20 English league titles and are already 13 points off the pace this season under Jose Mourinho.

Moyes, who replaced Ferguson but lasted less than a season despite signing the likes of Chelsea midfielder Juan Mata for 37 million pounds and Marouane Fellaini for 27 million, said United have moved away from their

traditions. "They were a football club who enjoyed traditions with the way they spent," Moyes, whose Sunderland side are third from bottom, told the BBC.

"They didn't try to compete with all the other clubs. They did what they thought was the right thing to do and spent the right way.

"Maybe that has had to change because of the current situation. (But) Sir Alex (Ferguson) went out and bought wisely and correctly in the transfer market and what he thought he needed to do."

Mourinho's arrival at Old Trafford signalled another huge transfer outlay, with Paul Pogba arriving from Juventus for a world record 89 million pounds and the likes of Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Eric Bailly also joining for

large fees.

"There have been a few changes at Manchester United but that's the way they have chosen to go," Moyes said.

The Scot added that one of the biggest regrets of his ill-fated stay at United was not signing Wales forward Gareth Bale from Tottenham Hotspur.

"When I first went in my real target was Gareth Bale," said Moyes. "I felt all along that Gareth Bale was a Manchester United player. "I fought right until the last minute. We actually offered a bigger deal than Real Madrid. But Gareth had his mind made up on going to Real Madrid."—Reuters



Ma Chaw Kalyar Htoo, left, is awarded first prize in the senior event of the Physique Contest marking the Independence Day 2017 by Prof Dr Thazin Lwin of the Yangon University of Education yesterday. The Body Building and Physique Contest is organised by the Myanmar Sports Writers Federation and was held at Aung San Gymnasium in Yangon. PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

Sam Allardyce says priority is plugging leaks at Crystal Palace

LONDON — Plugging the leaks in Crystal Palace's porous defence will be the first priority for the south London club's new manager Sam Allardyce as he looks ahead to a hectic Christmas period.

Former England boss Allardyce replaced the sacked Alan Pardew on Friday with Palace just above the relegation zone with the third-worst defensive record in the Premier League.

"We have a very important job of stopping the goals going in at the other end," Allardyce, said in a video on Palace's website (www.cpfc.co.uk).

"Attacking players when you are in possession are fantastic this season. The strengthening in that

area by the club and by Alan has brought a lot of flair to the team and I think that has brought quite a lot more goals. "But the other side is that when we are not in possession we have got to stop conceding and make sure that those goals we score win us games. It sounds simple but it's not that easy."

Allardyce is seen as one of the best managers in English football when it comes to surviving a relegation scrap. The experienced 62-year-old was available to Palace after his short reign as England manager ended after just 67 days in September following comments he made in a newspaper sting about "getting around" FA rules on player transfers.—Reuters

Lampard to stay in close contact with Chelsea

NEW YORK CITY — Former England midfielder Frank Lampard says he will be "in close contact" with his old club Chelsea as he decides on his next career move. The 38-year-old left New York City in November and media speculation has mounted that he could return to the London team in a coaching role or some other capacity.

Lampard watched Premier League leaders Chelsea's 1-0 home win over West Bromwich Albion earlier this month and was an onlooker at training on Wednesday when manager Antonio Conte said he was in good enough shape to continue his playing career.

"I'm still waiting for the five-year contract to come through from Chelsea, they haven't called yet," Lampard joked during an interview on Sky Sports television on Saturday.

"Whatever happens, in some capacity I will be at Chelsea, whether that's with my season ticket watching them...I don't know. I will be in very close contact. "Whether I have a role is not all in my hands so I can't go any further than that. I am very relaxed about it which is a nice place to be.

"I'm not kind of eager that the end of my career is coming and thinking, 'What's going to happen now?'," added Lampard.

"If the right thing comes then I'll take it. Obviously Chelsea, I would love that, but it doesn't always work that way."

Lampard won three Premier League titles and the 2012 Champions League with Chelsea and is the club's all-time record scorer with 211 goals. He also netted 29 times in 106 appearances for England.

"I've taken this Christmas to enjoy family, a couple of beers and an extra turkey and I'll make a decision in January whether I carry on playing — I have a few options — or finish and move on to whatever the next thing will be," he said.—Reuters



NYCFC midfielder Frank Lampard (8) and DC United midfielder Rob Vincent (26) pursue a loose ball during the first half at Yankee Stadium. PHOTO: REUTERS