

■ NATIONAL

State Counsellor meets Japanese and Myanmar Girl Guides

▶ PAGE 3



■ LOCAL NEWS

Two people suspected of involvement in violent attacks in Maungtau arrested

▶ PAGE 9



■ LOCAL BUSINESS

Eleven hotels to emerge in Chin State in 2016-17 FY

▶ PAGE 4

Japanese investment set to change the face of train travel in Yangon

TOURISTS visiting Myanmar's largest city, Yangon, could be set to lose one of the star attractions of the former capital, as Japan invests in upgrading the railway which encircles the city.

While the responsibility for upgrading the 46 kilometers of track which makes up the Yangon Circular Railway rests with Myanmar Railways, the cost of new signaling and trains for the line is being met by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which is aiming to have everything up and running by 2020.

While this may be good news for commuters — currently trains take around three hours to complete a circuit, while the new system will take less than two — tourists may not welcome the change as much, with many using the line as a way of experiencing rail travel in a less-developed setting, and seeing a cross section of life in the city's urban and rural areas at a leisurely pace.

The route passes through 38 mostly ramshackle stations, beginning from Yangon Central station on the northern edge of the city's downtown area.

Speaking to Kyodo News at Yangon Central, American tourist Cari said she had opted to ride the train to relax and make the best of a rainy day.



SEE PAGE 9 >> People cross the railway near Yangon Central Railway Station in Yangon on 19 November, 2016. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee issued the Notification 1/2016 yesterday. Following is an unofficial translation of the full text of the announcement.—Ed

**The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee
Notification 1/2016
1st Waxing of Pyatho 1378 ME
29th December 2016**

“Formation of Supervision Committees for Political Dialogue at the National-Level for Kayin State, Taninthayi Region and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area”

1. Armed conflicts which have been deep-rooted for long during the administration of the successive regimes cannot be solved successfully through the use of arms. Only when they are solved through dialogues, can sustainable peace be

built. Similarly, once sustainable peace has been built, a Union based on Democracy and Federalism will be built. With a view to achieving these goals, the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 1st Conference was held in Nay

Pyi Taw from 31st August to 3rd September.

2. Prior to the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong 1st Conference and after the conference, political dialogue frameworks were reassessed. At the dialogues, not only national ethnic armed groups which signed the nationwide ceasefire agreement but also other remaining ethnic armed groups which had not yet signed the agreement were invited to attend the meetings. For those who deserve to take part in the dialogues to be included, authorities concerned are making arrangements, and simultaneously discussions to prioritize the conduct of political dialogues were made.

3. Due to the efforts of the representatives from the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw group, ethnic armed groups and political parties group which took part in the discussions on frameworks for political dialogues, discussions on working pro-

cess of political dialogues at the national level, important frameworks and guidance for working process were approved by the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.

4. Presently, in accordance with the guidance for working process of political dialogues at the national level and principles on political dialogue included in the framework of political dialogue, race-orientated political dialogue at the national level will be held in Kayin State, region-orientated political dialogue at the national level in Taninthayi Region and subject-orientated political dialogue (CSO Forum) in Nay Pyi Taw Council Region.

5. The three vice chairmen forwarded their approval of lists of nominees submitted by the respective group for the formation of political dialogue supervision committees at the national level.

SEE PAGE 3 >>

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker meets Saudi Arabian Ambassador

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than met with Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous at his office in Nay Pyi Taw this morning.

At the meeting, both side discussed promotion of bilateral friendships and cooperation.

Also present at the call were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than welcomes Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous. PHOTO: MNA

Four estates reach 16 agreements at workshop in Nay Pyi Taw

A WORKSHOP attended by personnel from the four estates — legislative, executive, Judiciary and press — concluded yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw, reaching 16 agreements including right of access to information and full cooperation between government officials and media personnel.

At the workshop, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint called on personnel from the three estates to ensure transparency of their works as they are elected by the people, urging them to have better cooperation with media personnel. To avoid friction with personnel from the three estates and to clear obstacles when they practise the press freedom, the media personnel should understand the difficulties of other estates and work to promote media freedom and democracy in the country by

encouraging the adoption of necessary laws, rules and procedures to guide and regulate their behavior, he added.

Participants of the workshop openly discussed giving correct information to the people and right of access to information. At the workshop, the three estates collectively asked media personnel to wear accreditation cards when they gather news at governmental offices while the fourth estate side urged the regional and state governments to assign spokespersons at the offices.

The Myanmar Media Council would give media training to reporters and governmental spokespersons and conduct workshops in order to promote the media sectors in regions and states, according to the workshop.

Regarding court reporting, the

workshop also reached an agreement to promote court reporting in terms of encouraging full cooperation between information officers at the courts and the court reporters in accordance with the court reporting procedures.

Besides, media corners will be established at governmental offices and parliaments, according to the workshop. Right of equal access to information would be ensured to reporters at offices of the regional and state governments.

One of the 16 agreements is that regional and state parliaments will issue one-year accreditation cards to the parliamentary reporters. Such kinds of workshops are expected to be held in regions and states. The workshop came to an end with concluding remarks by Union Minister Dr Pe Myint.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses the workshop of four estates. PHOTO: MNA

A member of KIA attacks vehicle, extorts money

AT about 4:30 pm on December 29, a member of KIA armed group stopped a Toyota Mark II with four travelers on board driven by Zaw Myo bound for Namkham from Mandalay near the

village of 12 miles.

Due to the refusal to stop the car, the armed man shot at the car with the firearm, injuring a person on board. So, the driver stopped the car, and the armed man ex-

torted K 20000 from the driver. The government troops are clearing the nearby area and giving medical treatment to the injured traveler, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*



State Counsellor, youths, to sit for "Peace Talk" on 1st Jan

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and youths will sit down for talking about peace under the title "Peace Talk" at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw on 1st January, 2017.

The "Peace Talk" will be broadcast live on MRTV beginning from 1.50 pm on that day and the live streaming will also be on Myanmar State Counsellor Office FB Page.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Myanmar Gazette

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred U Soe Lin Han, Director-General, Strategic Studies and Training Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Director-General, Planning and Administrative Department from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on the expiry of one-year probationary period from the date they assume charge of their duties.

| Name | Appointment |
|---------------------|---|
| (a) U Kyaw Zeya | Director-General Political Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| (b) Daw Nwe Nwe Win | Director-General Budget Department Ministry of Planning and Finance |

3. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Myo Myint Maung, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Union Minister's Office, Ministry of Information as Director-General of Union Minister's Office on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

National objectives for the 69th anniversary Independence Day, 2017

- To build a genuine Union in the future, making use of the common agreement which will emerge from the negotiations and discussions to be reached at the Union Peace Conference – 21st century Panglong.
- For all nationalities to collectively preserve and protect non-disintegration of the Union; non-disintegration of national unity; and perpetuation of sovereignty.
- To strive hard to draw up a constitution suitable for the union and in accord with democratic principles and norms for the emergence of a democratic federal union.
- To endeavour to create good economic conditions that ensure equitable development between the regions and the states and that will be in conformity with the national economic policy and goals.

>> FROM PAGE 1

“Formation of Supervision Committees for Political Dialogue at the National-Level for Kayin State, Taninthayi Region and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area”

6. For this, political dialogue supervision committees at the national level for Kayin State, Taninthayi Region and Nay Pyi Taw Council Region have been formed as follows.
- (a) Supervision committees for Political Dialogue at the National-Level for Kayin State
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) U Min Tin Win | (Minister for Ethnic Affairs) |
| (2) Col Tin Htut | (Tatmadaw) |
| (3) Daw Nan Than Than Lwin | (Pyithu Hluttaw MP) |
| (4) Pado Saw Shwe Maung | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (5) Naw Kapaw Htoo | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (6) Saw Sein Win | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (7) U Teza Htut Hlaing Htwe | (Political party) |
| (8) U Saw Myint Oo | (Political party) |
| (9) U Saw Tun Aung Myint | (Political party) |
- (b) Supervision committees for Political Dialogue at the National-Level for Taninthayi Region
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) U Saw Lu Kar | (Minister for Ethnic Affairs) |
| (2) Col Maung Maung | (Tatmadaw) |
| (3) Daw Tin Tin Yi | (Pyithu Hluttaw MP) |
| (4) Pado Sar Pi Toke | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (5) Pado Bee Lae | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (6) Pado Palaw Soe Win | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (7) U Kin Shein | (Political party) |
| (8) U Kyaw Kyaw | (Political party) |
| (9) U Khin Maung Myint | (Political party) |
- (c) Supervision committees for Political Dialogue at the National-Level for Nay Pyi Taw Council Area
- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) U Aung Myin Tun | (Member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council) |
| (2) Col Thein Zaw | (Tatmadaw) |
| (3) U Myo Zaw Oo | (Pyithu Hluttaw MP) |
| (4) Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (5) Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (6) U Myo Win | (Ethnic armed group) |
| (7) U Win Htein | (Political party) |
| (8) U Khin Maung Htay | (Political party) |
| (9) U Myint Oo | (Political party) |
7. The supervision committees for political dialogues at the national-level described in paragraph 6 are obliged to make efforts for the successful and systematic holding of the political dialogues at the national-level in line with the provisions and respective directives approved by the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.

Sd/Aung San Suu Kyi
Chairperson

Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomes Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor receives Ambassador of Saudi Arabia

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous, who has been newly accredited as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Myanmar at her office in Nay Pyi Taw at 3 pm yesterday.

Also present at the call were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and officials concerned.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi participates in the campfire party with the chief girl guides and officials of Osaka Girl Guides. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

State Counsellor meets Japanese and Myanmar Girl Guides

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi delivered an address at the Fourth International Camp for MGG and GSJ jointly organized by Myanmar Girl Guides and Japan Girl Guides at the Gold Camp in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday evening.

In her speech, she said that camping can promote friendship among participants and is an opportunity to learn practical skills while the essence of it is to cooperate as friends among participants.

She also pointed out that it is an opportunity to meet and know girl scouts from a foreign country.

The State Counsellor also recounted that girl scouts of Thai-

land visited Myanmar to camp with them for about one or two weeks.

In conclusion, she said that it is also an opportunity to exchange culture between Myanmar and Japan.

Dr Daw Tin Hla Kyi, Chief Commissioner, Myanmar Girl Guides and Ms Kuniko Tatamitani of Osaka Girl Scouts extended greetings

Later, Dr Daw Tin Hla Kyi, Ms Kuniko Tatamitani and Ms Michiko Hanaoka, Chief Executive Organizer of Osaka Girl Scouts, International Commissioner, and Deputy Chief Commissioner of Myanmar Girl Guides Daw Khin Saw Ohma

presented gifts.

After the ceremony, the State Counsellor, Union Ministers, the Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council and officials posed for documentary photos with the Japanese girl scouts and Myanmar girl guides before lighting the campfire with the Chief Commissioner of Girls Guides and officials of Osaka Girl Guides.

The State Counsellor also enjoyed the performance of the girl guides.

92 Myanmar girl guides from high schools, colleges and universities and 41 Japanese girl guides had been on a camping trip from 28 to 31 December.—*Myanmar News Agency*

VP U Myint Swe addresses meeting of Central Committee for National Level Environmental Conservation and Climate Change

IT is important for all to exert efforts conscientiously to leave a legacy of a better, cleaner and more sustainable environment for future generations, Patron of the Central Committee for National Level Environmental Conservation and Climate Change Vice President U Myint Swe said yesterday.

The Vice President was addressing the meeting of the central committee held at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation in Nay Pyi Taw.

Then, the Vice President pointed out that it is necessary to take everything into consideration carefully as the country has already experienced climate and environmental changes and to take practical and effective measures so that they are not just left on paper.

Industrialization should not leave environmental conservation behind and every member of Myanmar society should bear in mind that environmental impacts of industrialization should be kept at the minimum, the Vice President added.



Vice President U Myint Swe addresses the meeting of Central Committee for National Level Environmental Conservation and Climate Change in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

In conclusion, the Vice President urged attendees to form different levels of supervisory committees in regions/states, districts and townships and pointed out the important role of private sector investors, NGOs and civil society organizations in environmental conservation matters.

Then, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win reported to the meeting on the

work of the central committee including measures at the national and state/region level, strategy and work plans, plans for drafting laws, rules and regulations and educational programs.

Later, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin reported on international cooperation and assistance.

Officials also reported on functions of respective working committees.—*Myanmar News Agency*

LOCAL Business

Eleven hotels to emerge in Chin State in 2016-17 FY

ELEVEN hotels will be established in six townships in Chin State next fiscal year, said Salai Isac Khin, Chin State Minister for Municipal Affairs, Electricity and Industry.

About 30 local entrepreneurs submitted their proposal to build 39 hotel facilities in the state to the government.

The local authorities permitted some of them to construct a total of 11 hotels in target towns including three hotels in Haka Township, two hotels in Falam Township, further two hotels in Tiddim Township, one hotel in Khaingkan Township, two hotels in Matupi Township and one hotel in Paletwa Township.

Apart from Khaingkan, the government will provide land plot for hotel projects, which will be implemented with the investment of local entrepreneurs within three months starting from the time they received green



A file photo shows an aerial view of Tiddim City, Chin State. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

light from the authorities.

The selected companies include KL Amazing Co, King Solomon Co, Chan Tha Shwe Mye

Co, Adventures Myanmar Co, Falam Cherry Co, Unique Asia Gate Construction Co, Shwe Sin Nan Daw Co, Sweet Hotel

Group, Shwepyitagkhon Co, Chindwin Ayeya Co, Taungzalat Hotel Co and one other.

Apart from Kanpetlet

and Mindat townships, there is no hotel-level accommodation facility in other towns in Chin State.—*Myitakha News Agency*

Trade using ITCs at borders hits over Ks7.6b

BETWEEN 1 April and 16 December of this year, trade value with the Individual Trading Card (ITC) at border gates reached over Ks7.6 billion this year, according to the official figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

Over the past nine months of this year, the import value with ITCs was Ks7.003 billion, while the export value with ITCs was Ks684 million. Trade values were over Ks3.198b at Myawady trade camp; over Ks534m at Tamu trade camp, over Ks568m at Muse border gate; Ks485m at Tachilek trade camp; over Ks2.6m at Lwejel border; over Ks1.599b at Kanpikete border gate; over Ks244m at Kawthaung border town; over Ks368m at Reed border trade camp; over Ks673m at Mawtaung; over Ks10m at Kengtung and over Ks1.5m at Maese trade camp.

From 2012-2013 fiscal year to date, the Commerce Ministry issued over 1,157 ITCs to businesspersons to trade at borders. The ministry granted 292 ITCs in FY2012-13; 261 cards in FY2013-14; 317 cards in FY2014-15; 146 cards in FY2015-16 and 141 cards from April and 16 December of this FY. An ITC holder may trade up to Ks15m in five days at border trade camps and import and export offices, with a trade value of Ks3m a day on average, according to an announcement released by the ministry.—*Kyaw Kyaw*

Myanmar's rubber prices continue to rise

MYANMAR'S rubber prices have continued to increase in both domestic and export market with the global rubber price rising, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Due to growing world rubber price, the price of export rubber in border trade market significantly increased this month.

According to traders in Muse, the price of

Myanmar's rubber RSS-3 went up to Ks237,000 per tonne while RSS-5 rubber price also increased to Ks269,000 per tonne from 10 and 16 December.

The Myanmar rubber price is positively related to that of global rubber. The world rubber price increased by over \$250 per tonne compared with the first week of December. The global rubber price

was US\$1,700 per tonne in early November.

According to the ministry, Myanmar exported over 6,300 tonnes of rubber worth US\$8.706 million from cross-border trade camps linked with neighbouring China and Thailand from 10 to 16 December of this year.

The country sold 2,739 tonnes of RSS-

3 rubber, 477 tonnes of RSS-5 rubber, 350 tonnes of MSR-20 rubber and 275 tonnes of MSR-50 rubber to China through Muse (105-mile) trade zone.

RSS-1 rubber weighing 18 tonnes, RSS-3 rubber weighing 1281 tonnes, MSR-20 weighing nearly 100 tonnes and MSR-50 weighing 122 tonnes were sent to the neighbor via Chinshwe-

haw border gate.

The country exported 268 tonnes of raw rubber to Thailand from Tachilek border trade camp.

There are 1.6 million acres of rubber farms in Myanmar. Ninety-two per cent of total rubber production normally goes to export market, whereas only 8 per cent is meant for the domestic consumption.—*Shwe Wah*

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ANAN BHUM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GLODEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SUNNY HORIZON VOY. NO (1611)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SUNNY HORIZON VOY. NO (16112) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-3 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPIN LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV JIN HONG VOY. NO (052)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV JIN HONG VOY. NO (052) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPIN LTD.
Phone No: 2301928

Duterte delegates Philippines into economic sweet spot but misgivings rising

MANILA — After six months at the helm in the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte has been touting just two achievements of his presidency — a vicious war on drugs and a surprise alliance with his country's bitter rival, China.

Yet behind the curse-laden bluster and populist demagoguery that has defined Duterte's rule, he presides over one of the world's fastest growing economies, and has put cabinet colleagues to work on drafting reforms and legislation to tackle the economy's most stubborn structural problems.

Advisers say Duterte's economic successes come from using a strategy he honed as the long-time mayor of Davao City at a national level.

He concentrates on busting crime and deliberately delegates the handling of the economy to others. By his own admission, Duterte says he is no expert on the economy and leaves it to "the bright guys" in his cabinet.

Economic Planning



Workers work on steel frames as the construction of a skyway pushes through at a major thoroughfare in metro Manila, Philippines on 23 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Secretary Ernesto Pernia sees the president only twice monthly and rarely hears feedback. He said Duterte was focused almost entirely on crime and drugs.

"That has been his obsession," he told Reuters. "He essentially leaves other issues and concerns to the cabinet."

The strategy seems to have worked so far al-

though economists are beginning to question how long it can last.

"That's what we're hoping for, that his core economic team can prevail," said Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) economist Emilio S. Neri.

"The fundamentals are there but we are leaning towards deficit spending and stimulus-driven growth

and some unsustainable populist policies are worrisome."

At the national level, Duterte's signature campaigns have included his tilt toward China while turning his back on long-term ally the United States in addition to the war on drugs. He rarely mentions it, but the economy has boomed under his watch, although

some of the gains have been ascribed to the previous administration's policies and Duterte's decision to retain them.

Growth reached an annual 7.1 per cent in the third quarter of the year, Asia's second highest and the country's strongest quarter in three years. The government expects full-year growth around 7 per cent.

The economy is expected to grow 6.5-7.5 per cent in 2017, but there are worries that Duterte's erratic behaviour could impact policy, with political risk over his drugs crackdown and foul-mouthed outbursts at some big donors and investors.

Markets have signalled their concern. In the six months since Duterte took over, the main stock index has lost nearly 20 per cent in dollar terms and is among the worst performers in Asia.

Over the same period, the peso currency is down around 5 per cent to the dollar, but other currencies in the region are also depressed.—Reuters

China to fund 4,000 MW power transmission line in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — State Grid of China will help build a 4,000 MW power transmission line in Pakistan in a project valued at \$1.5 billion, Pakistan said on Friday, the latest in a series of Chinese investments in its South Asian neighbour.

The high-capacity transmission line will be the first of its kind in Pakistan and will link Matiari town in the south, near a new power station, to Lahore city in the east, a key link in transmission infrastructure, the Pakistani government said. An agreement on the project was signed on Thursday in Beijing between Mohammad Younus Dagha, Pakistan's secretary of water and power, and Shu Yinbiao, chairman of State Grid Corporation of China, the government said in a statement. Construction will begin in January, and should take about 20 months, said a spokesman for the Pakistani prime minister's office. Pakistan has been plagued by a shortage of electricity for years, with widespread rolling blackouts in both rural and urban areas.—Reuters

THE 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

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China to relax curbs on foreign investment in financial sector

BEIJING — China unveiled plans on Friday to allow more foreign investment in banking, insurance, securities and credit-rating firms, as part of a wider opening up of the world's second-largest economy.

The moves could ease some frustration among foreign firms over their lack of access, though the guidelines issued by the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) were short on detail.

The document issued by the state planner listed priority sectors for liberalisation but was unclear over the extent and time-frame for the reforms.

The focus on liberalising the financial sector should support China's strategic shift towards services to reduce reliance on traditional industries for growth.

Ning Jizhe, vice chairman at NDRC, told a news conference that the government would maintain

"some controls" even after easing curbs in foreign investment, but did not elaborate.

"The extent of relaxations for different areas will be different," the official said.

Other businesses that the NDRC earmarked for opening up in the manufacturing sector included rail transportation equipment, motorcycles, edible fats and oils, and fuel ethanol.

The NDRC also said China will lift restrictions on foreign investment in unconventional oil and gas production, which usually refers to development of shale deposits.

China will also seek to open up, in an "orderly way", sensitive areas such as telecoms, education, internet to foreign investment, as well as relaxing foreign investment restrictions on credit-rating services, the NDRC document said.

Any further opening up to foreign firms should



People walk on a bridge near the financial district of Pudong in Shanghai, in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

help redress an imbalance in investment flows, as worryingly high capital outflows have been a contributory factor behind the yuan's depreciation to an 8-1/2 year low against the dollar this year.

While Chinese companies, from insurance to property sectors, have expanded overseas at a rapid pace, with overseas acquisitions hitting a record this year, many US and European firms remain frustrated by China's restrictions on investment.

Despite repeated pledges from Beijing to improve access, particularly in the vast financial services sector, some foreign firms became tired of

waiting.

Some overseas investors in securities and asset management businesses, where foreign ownership is capped at 49 per cent, had begun to pulling out of the sector.

The new list of areas marked for liberalisation elaborated on draft foreign investment guidelines that China published earlier this month.

In the draft, restrictions in critical banking and securities sectors remained largely unchanged, though a reference to 49 per cent foreign investment caps on some types of securities companies appeared to have been removed.—Reuters

'Comfort woman' statue installed near Japanese consulate in Busan

SEOUL — A civic group on Friday installed a statue symbolizing women forced into wartime Japanese military brothels in front of the Japanese Consulate in the southern South Korean port city of Busan, a move which could strain Japan-South Korea relations.

The local ward office earlier in the Friday reversed course by saying it would not forcibly remove the 1-ton statue if installed there, as it did two days ago.

"We will not stop the civic group from installing the statue in front of the consulate if they wish to do so," Park Sam Seok, chief of the city's Dong Ward, told a press conference, according to Yonhap News Agency.

The group installed the statue, similar to another erected in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, as part of their protest against a landmark deal reached between Japan and South Korea last year to settle the issue of the so-called "comfort women."

According to a live video streamed by the civic group, the 1-ton statue of a young girl was earlier Friday carried by forklift to the front of the consulate, with members of the group chanting "Victory to the people!" It plans hold an unveiling ceremony on Saturday. On Wednesday, the civic group tried to erect the statue on the sidewalk in front of the consulate, but police and officials confiscated it for obstructing a road.



Members of a civic group install a statue symbolizing women forced into wartime Japanese military brothels in front of the Japanese Consulate in the southern South Korean port city of Busan, on 30 December 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

The ward office was subsequently inundated with phone calls critical of the clampdown. An online forum on its website was even temporarily out of service due to the high number of angry postings.

The Japanese government has requested the removal of the statue installed in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul,

claiming that it breaches the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, an international treaty that outlines a framework for diplomacy.

Under the deal between Japan and South Korea reached in December last year, the two countries agreed to resolve the issue "finally and irreversibly." South Korea set up a foundation

into which Japan has deposited 1 billion yen (\$9.9 million), to care for the surviving comfort women and their families.

Neither government mentioned the removal of the statue as a condition for Tokyo's financial contribution, but South Korea said that it "will strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner."—*Kyodo News*

Indians line up at banks to deposit savings or see them disappear

NEW DELHI — Indians lined up outside banks across the country on Friday, the last day for them to deposit their savings or see them become worthless after large denomination notes were scrapped in a bid to fight corruption.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month said 500 and 1,000 bank notes — worth a combined \$256 billion and 86 per cent of cash in circulation — would cease to be legal tender after on 30 December, disrupting the lives of hundreds of millions.

"I'm here to deposit a few old notes before the deadline expires," said Rakesh Kumar, queuing outside a bank in New Delhi.

"But I expect the government and RBI (central bank) to quickly replenish banks and ATMs with new notes so that we can withdraw without any trouble."

Only 35-40 per cent of ATM machines were currently dispensing cash, according to Ramaswamy Venkatachalam, managing director, India and South Asia, Fidelity Information Services, a banking

technology provider.

Modi had said his government would end the chaos and restore normality in 50 days. But analysts said the impact would last at least six more months, with concerns about lower economic growth, job losses and a fall in demand for goods.

"Economic growth, the obvious casualty, will tank to about 6.5 per cent in the second half of the 2016/17 fiscal year against an average 7.2 per cent in the first half," said D.H. Pai Panandiker, president of RPG Foundation, an economic policy group in New Delhi.

Another cost would be job losses, especially in the informal sector, where most poor people work, Panandiker said.

The informal sector accounts for 20 per cent of gross domestic product and more than 85 per cent of total employment.

"I also believe that even after the 50-day deadline, people will face immense difficulty in withdrawing money as remonetising 86 per cent of India's cash will take a long time," he said.

In an interview to *India Today* magazine, Modi on Thurs-



People wait for a bank to open to withdraw and deposit their money, after the scrapping of high denomination 500 and 1,000 Indian rupees currency notes, in Ahmedabad, India, on 5 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

day said the demonetisation decision would give the economy a boost and provide long-term benefits, including forcing the vast shadow economy into the open.

"We took the demonetisation decision not for some short-term windfall gain, but for a long term structural transformation," Modi was quoted as saying.

He has said the demonetisation action was needed to fight

corruption and cut off financing for attacks by militants who target India.

Paranjay Guha Thakurta, editor of *Economic and Political Weekly*, said there was "a fair amount of evidence" to suggest that economic activity had shrunk because of the move.

"The prime minister will have a tough time justifying his action," he said.—*Reuters*

Quake hits eastern Indonesia, no reports of damage

JAKARTA — An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.2 struck on Friday off the island of Sumbawa in eastern Indonesia, the US Geological Survey (USGS) said. There was no tsunami warning issued.

The undersea quake was felt strongly in the area and some surrounding islands including the resort of Bali, but there were no immediate reports of injuries or damage, said Indonesia's national disaster management agency spokesman Sutopo.

The epicentre of the quake, initially measured as a magnitude 6.4, was 71 km (44 miles) south of Raba city and at a depth of 72 km (44 miles) below the seabed, the USGS said.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) did not issue a tsunami warning.—*Reuters*

Australian police charge man over New Year's Eve threats in Sydney

SYDNEY — Australian counter-terror officers arrested a 40-year-old man at Sydney Airport, after he disembarked from a flight from London, and charged him with making online threats "relating to New Year's Eve" festivities in Sydney, police said on Friday.

The arrest follows police raids across the southern city of Melbourne a week ago, which authorities said foiled an Islamic State-inspired plot to attack prominent sites in the city on Christmas Eve.

Damien O'Neil was arrested late on Thursday and refused bail by a court on Friday.

He was charged under criminal laws relating to suicide or encouraging suicide, not terrorism laws, police said in a statement. Police did not reveal his nationality.

O'Neil was acting alone and had "no links to any cultural groups," New South Wales state acting Deputy Commissioner Frank Mennilli told reporters in Sydney on Friday.

"He did post on social media a number of threats of some possible activity that he could be undertaking," Mennilli said, without giving any further details.

Australia, a staunch US ally which sent troops to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown radicals since 2014.

Security in Melbourne was bolstered after last week's raids and more than 2,000 police will patrol harbourside locations in a major security operation in Sydney on Saturday, where tens of thousands of revellers are expected to ring in the new year.—*Reuters*

US evicts Russians for spying, imposes sanctions after election hacks



Television crews assemble outside the Russian embassy on Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, US, on 29 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONOLULU/WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Thursday ordered the expulsion of 35 Russian suspected spies and imposed sanctions on two Russian intelligence agencies over their involvement in hacking US political groups in the 2016 presidential election.

The measures, taken during the last days of Obama's presidency, mark a new post-Cold War low in US-Russian ties and set up a potential flashpoint between incoming President-elect Donald Trump and fellow Republicans in Congress over how to deal with Moscow.

Obama, a Democrat, had promised consequences after US intelligence officials blamed Russia for hacks intended to influence the 2016 election. Officials pointed the finger directly at Russian President Vladimir Putin for personally directing the efforts and primarily targeting Democrats, who put pressure on Obama to respond.

"These actions follow repeated private and public warnings that we have issued to the Russian government, and are a necessary and appropriate response to efforts to harm US interests in violation of established international norms of behaviour," Obama said in a statement from Hawaii, where he is on vacation.

"All Americans should be alarmed by Russia's actions," he said. It was not clear whether Trump, who has repeatedly praised Putin and nominated people seen as friendly toward Moscow to senior administration posts, would seek to roll back the measures once he takes office on 20 January. Trump has brushed aside allegations from the CIA and other intelligence agencies that Russia was behind the cyber attacks. He said on Thursday he would meet with intelligence officials soon.

"It's time for our country to move on to bigger and better things," Trump said in a statement. "Nevertheless, in the interest

of our country and its great people, I will meet with leaders of the intelligence community next week in order to be updated on the facts of this situation," he said, without mentioning Russia.

The Kremlin, which denounced the sanctions as unlawful and promised "adequate" retaliation, questioned whether Trump approved of the new sanctions. Moscow denies the hacking allegations.

US intelligence agencies say Russia was behind hacks into Democratic Party organisations and operatives ahead of the 8 November presidential election. US intelligence officials say the Russian cyber attacks were aimed at helping Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers have voiced concern about Russia's actions, setting up a potential wall of opposition should Trump seek to overturn Obama's measures.

US House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, the top Republican in Congress, said Russia "has consistently sought to undermine" US interests and called the sanctions overdue.

Republican Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham said they intended to lead effort in Congress to "impose stronger sanctions on Russia."

Incoming White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus told Fox News he did not condone foreign governments hacking US institutions. "It's wrong and it's something we don't agree with," Priebus said. "However, it would be nice if we could get to a place where the intelligence community in unison can tell us what it is that has been going on and what the investigation was and what it has led to so that we can respond."

The Trump team's response could generate bipartisan discord early in the new administration's tenure.

"This is going to be a key source of tension post-inauguration," said Eric Lorber, a senior

associate at the Financial Integrity Network, which advises banks on sanctions.

Obama put sanctions on two Russian intelligence agencies, the GRU and the FSB, four GRU officers and three companies that he said "provided material support to the GRU's cyber operations."

He said the State Department declared as "persona non grata" 35 Russian intelligence operatives and is closing two Russian compounds in New York and Maryland that were used by Russian personnel for "intelligence-related purposes." The State Department originally said the 35 were diplomats.

The 45-acre complex in Maryland includes a Georgian-style brick mansion, swimming pool, tennis courts and cottages for embassy staff.

A senior US official told Reuters the expulsions would come from the Russian embassy in Washington and consulate in San Francisco. The Russian embassy declined to comment.

The Russians have 72 hours to leave the United States, the official said. Access to the two compounds will be denied to all Russian officials as of noon on Friday. The State Department has long complained that Russian security agents and traffic police have harassed US diplomats in Moscow, and US Secretary of State John Kerry has raised the issue with Putin and his foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov. The US official declined to name the Russian diplomats who would be affected, although it is understood that Russia's ambassador to the United States, Sergei Kislyak, will not be one of those expelled. Obama said the actions announced on Thursday were just the beginning.

"These actions are not the sum total of our response to Russia's aggressive activities. We will continue to take a variety of actions at a time and place of our choosing, some of which will not be publicized," Obama said. —Reuters

Russia will not expel anyone in response to US sanctions, Putin says

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin said Moscow would not expel anyone in response to Washington's decision to throw out 35 suspected Russian spies and sanction intelligence agencies it believes were involved in computer hacking in the 2016 presidential election.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov earlier proposed expelling 35 US diplomats after outgoing US President Barack Obama ordered the expulsions and sanctions on Thursday.

But Putin said he would wait for the actions of President-elect Donald Trump, who will take office on 20 January, before deciding on any further steps in relations with the United States.

"We will not expel anyone," Putin said in a statement on Friday. "While keeping the right for retaliatory measures, we will not descend to the level of 'kitchen', irresponsible diplomacy."

In withering remarks, Putin even invited US diplomats and their families to a party in the Kremlin.

It was not clear whether Trump, who has repeatedly praised Putin and nominated people seen as friendly toward Moscow to senior administration posts, would seek to roll back the measures which mark a new post-Cold War low in US-Russian ties.

Russian officials have portrayed the sanctions as a last act of a lame-duck president and suggested that Trump could reverse them when he takes over

the White House.

"Further steps towards the restoration of Russian-American relations will be built on the basis of the policy which the administration of President D. Trump will carry out," said Putin.

The US sanctions also closed two Russian compounds in New York and Maryland that the administration said were used by Russian personnel for "intelligence-related purposes".

However, a former Russian Foreign Ministry employee told Reuters that the facility in Maryland was a dacha used by diplomatic staff and their children.

Lavrov also proposed banning US diplomats from using a dacha in Moscow's prestigious waterfront park area, Serebryany Bor. But Putin said Russia would not prohibit US diplomats and their families from their usual vacation spots. "Moreover, I invite all children of American diplomats accredited in Russia to the New Year and Christmas party in the Kremlin," he said.

Obama, a Democrat, had promised consequences after US intelligence officials blamed Russia for hacks intended to influence the 2016 election. Officials pointed the finger directly at Putin for personally directing the efforts and primarily targeting Democrats. Washington put sanctions on two Russian intelligence agencies, the GRU and the FSB, four GRU officers and three companies that he said "provided material support to the GRU's cyber operations". —Reuters

At least nine killed, many trapped in Jharkhand coal mine collapse

BHUBANESWAR, (India) — At least nine Indian miners were killed and nearly two dozen trapped when mine waste collapsed at a coalfield in Jharkhand, officials said on Friday, hitting production at one of the country's largest mines.

The accident occurred on Thursday evening at the Lalmatia mine owned by Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), a subsidiary of the world's largest miner.

"So far, nine bodies have been recovered," R.R. Amitabh, a general manager at the ECL project office told Reuters. A rescue operation was underway and the exact number of people trapped had yet to be ascertained, he said.

Coal India has a poor safety record, with 135 accidents reported last year, killing 37 people and injuring 141, the company said in a report, highlighting concern about working conditions.

Operations at the mine in Godda district, about 280 km

(175 miles) from the state capital, Ranchi, have been stopped, Amitabh said.

The mine has an annual capacity of 17 million tonnes and accounts for about half of ECL's coal production, he said. Last month, ECL accounted for about 9 per cent of Coal India's total production of 50 million tonnes.

Mine waste piled up near the mine caved in, state police spokesman R.K. Mullick said.

"At that time, about 40 people were working in the mine and some of them managed to escape. Some of them have injuries," Mullick said. The operation of the mine had been outsourced to a private company, Mullick said.

The Coal Ministry has ordered an investigation.

With coal accounting for about 70 per cent of India's power generation, the country is the world's third-biggest producer and importer of the fuel, and government wants to boost domestic output to cut imports. —Reuters

Opinion

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Government's actions were within the law

Tha Sein

THE deadly attacks in Rakhine State witnessed a surge of fabricated news and invented stories made by those who are hell-bent on committing high-handed and arbitrary practices through the mass media. In order to formulate a necessary response, the Investigation Commission on Rakhine State was tasked to investigate the true situation at the ground level regarding the atrocities and take necessary measures to meet the special needs of both communities in distress. The commission was able to convince the public that it is taking the task seri-

ously by conducting a full and proper investigation into the events after concluding its first field trip to the region.

Looking into what is a bone of contention, the commission said the truth about the violent attacks is being uncovered, commenting that the attackers took their time, planning the deadly ambushes since 2012. It added that recent conflicts were different from previous ones which were in the form of communal strife which had erupted between the two communities; that the recent ones were conspired to harm the national sovereignty of the country as

they were found to be linked with overseas organizations.

Contrary to what was said to have happened in the region that had quashed any hope of a quick end to the conflicts, former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan who led the commission said the claims of "genocide" being bandied about internationally were unfounded. The comment of Mr. Kofi Anan has changed the international community's reading of the handling of the conflicts.

In the context of both previous and recent conflicts between the two communities, this may pose a challenge for

the government, though such a scenario looks remote in the immediate future, for the region has long suffered alarming levels of violence, in part because of a crushing economic crisis.

At a time when violence remains an all-pervasive worry for both communities, with frequent ambushes on security personnel still erupting, people should not read too much into how the government had responded and the measures it had taken to bring the situation back to normal. It is abundantly clear to everyone that all its actions were within the law.

Doomsday could be real

Khin Maung Myint

SOME of you may have watched an American TV series called the **Doomsday Preppers**. As for me, when there was nothing else better to do, and there were no other interesting programmes, I sometimes watched them. Though the themes of the shows seem to be absurd and the actors are real life characters who genuinely believe the notions of the looming **Doomsday**, and their anxieties seem to be far-fetched, they are quite entertaining.

For the benefit of those who haven't watched them, I will describe them briefly. **Doomsday preppers** are people who believe that some sort of catastrophe would befall and the end of the world is nearing. They are preparing themselves to endure and survive all the eventualities in case that should happen. They fortified their houses or build underground dwellings and stock them up with foods and other necessities to last for at least six months to a year. They armed themselves with assortment of weapons to defend themselves. Different episode have different themes as to the concepts of how the world will come to an end or destruction.

At the beginning, I watched them just as entertainments to while away my time, but never had given serious thoughts about

the **Doomsday**. I viewed the **Doomsday preppers** as paranooids. However, as of late, I am starting to believe that the coming of the **Doomsday** could be real. Have paranoia set in me or have I become a doomsday cultist myself? It's neither. However, I have very sound reasons to believe thus. So, what are those reasons?

Well, of all the various concepts concerning the **Doomsday**, I'll be mentioning only three of the most plausible ones. **First:** if a very large asteroid of the magnitude similar to the one that impacted the Earth in the Caribbean Basin, off the Yucatan Peninsula in what is Mexico today, which wiped out the dinosaurs 65 millions years ago, should strike the Earth, all living creatures would be exterminated. **Second:** an all out nuclear war that could cause an equally devastating effect as a huge asteroid impact would also bring about the end of the world. **Third** and last, but not least is the climate change getting out of control giving way to extreme rises in temperatures leading to extreme global warming could also be a cause for concern about the end of the civilization, which is considered as the **Doomsday**.

To depict a clearer picture, I'll attempt to analyze the aforementioned threats one by one. To begin with, the chance of a huge asteroid impacting the Earth is quite remote. According to the renown physicist Stephen Hawk-

ing's forecast, it could only happen about a thousand years from now. Thus, this threat is not so worrisome for the time being.

The threat of an all out nuclear war and the climate change getting out of control are becoming more imminent today than a few months ago. My statement may sound strange or absurd, but I can prove my stand. After the **Cold War** that spanned over many decades, the world is enjoying a retrieve from the threat of another world war, until lately. However, with the emergence of unpredictable, undiplomatic and undisciplined leaders who don't watch their mouths, in some countries today, though there may be only a few, are real threats to the world at large. War could breakout anytime and with more countries in possessions of nuclear weapons, an all out nuclear war is quite imminent.

According to the scientists, if such a scenario should emerge, the world would face destruction on a scale equal to that of the asteroid impact at Yucatan Peninsula. All living beings and vegetations would disappear from the surface of Earth. The nuclear explosions would give rise to a thick layer of radioactive dusts engulfing the Earth and block out the sun rays from reaching it for a very long duration. There would be drastic decreases in temperatures making it extremely cold for living things to survive and without sunlight all vegetations

would also be unable to thrive. Thus, even those few who managed to escape death from the direct effect of the nuclear explosion, wouldn't be able to survive the extreme colds and starvations. They even have a name for such a condition---"**The Nuclear Winter**".

Then there are the threats of the climate change due to the global warming. Their destruction wouldn't be as quick as in the case of an all out nuclear war, but they would create chaos and havocs that would last for years or even decades. It would be worse as the world have to face it for a long term.

So, how will the climate change affect the world? The rise in average temperatures due to global warming are already causing the glaciers all over the world to melt. These melting ice caused the ocean levels to rise, which in turn shrank the land masses. Furthermore, the global warming combined with frequent draughts are causing the disappearance of lush grasslands and turned them into deserts, depriving grazing grounds for cattle and other animals that are bred for domestic uses and food for human consumptions. Arable lands have also decreased due to desertification and lack of water for agricultural purposes.

If such situations get worse, people would scramble to get hold of whatever habitable and arable land remained, for their

existence. These would lead to widespread social unrests resulting in armed conflicts, looting and plundering that would create chaos and wreak havocs. Eventually the world will be devoid of humans and animals and the civilization would cease to exist or in other words the world would be doomed.

This would be the worst case scenario if the climate change and the global warming issues cannot be addressed in time. So, if one or more of the large carbon-emitting nations reject the threats of the climate change, accusing it as a **hoax** and withdraw from the Paris Agreements reached in 2015 and had recently come into force, the above mentioned scenario could become a reality.

Thus, if any nation does not recognize or rejects the threats of the climate change and withdraws from the Paris Agreements, that nation must be made responsible for the adverse consequences that would ensue. The individuals who are in position to make such decisions should be mindful that if they decide to withdraw from the Paris agreements they will be making a very grave mistake. No body in a normal state of mind will commit such inhumane act. If they do, they would be committing a grievous crime, not only against humanity, but also to all living beings and the Mother Nature too. Such heinous acts would tantamount to waging a war on the whole world and is absolutely unacceptable by any means.

Two people suspected of involvement in violent attacks in Maungtaw arrested

UPON receipt of the information that those involved in armed attacks on the No 1 border guard police outpost near the village of Kyikanpyin in Maungtaw entered Kyikanpyin village (west) again, the government troops and border guard control police forces made an area clearance operation in the village at 2 pm

or so on December 29, capturing Kordi Mular, son of Zawki Armauk who took part in the attack and Mammud Arlong son of Auli Armat, a fugitive.

It is learnt that arrangements are being made to take legal action against them in accord with the law.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Kordi Mular and Mammud Arlong. PHOTO: MNA

Hand grenades seized in northern Shan State

A COMBINED force seized two hand grenades from a man during the surprise check programme operated near Lashio, a town in the north of Shan State on Thursday afternoon.

The force including members of anti-drug squad searched a suspected motorbike being driven by U Sai Loon Hsar on Lashio-Tangyan Road near an old cement factory located five

miles from the town at around 2 p.m. on that day.

The authorities discovered a cache of two hand grenades plus over one million kyats and two handsets from the man.

Lashio Myoma Police Station systematically accepted the transfer of suspect who will face legal charges under the existing laws.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Eleven CEO and Chief Editor denied bail for third time

THE Chief Executive Officer and the chief editor of the Eleven Media Group, who were sued by the Yangon Region Government, were denied bails by Tarmway Township Court for the third

time yesterday. Although the trial was assumed to hear the plaintiff, he applied for a leave and the bail was rejected by the court.

The trial was adjourned to 6 January.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

TNLA Armed Group attacks government troops

DURING the area clearance operation in Kyaukme township in northern Shan State at 11 am or so yesterday, a soldier sacrificed his life for the country, hit by a land mine planted by the armed group near Tawtpe village, with some soldiers wounded by the shrapnel.

And, at 11 am or so, the government troops conducting an area clearance operation in

Kyaukme township were attacked by TNLA armed group comprising about 20, one mile to the southwest of Tawtpe village with firearms and artillery. Due to the cross-fire from the government troops, the armed group retreated to the north west of the village.

It is learnt that the government troops are clearing the nearby area.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Korea embassy provides supplies to students of School for Disabled Children

THE embassy of the Republic of Korea, together with students of Korean Language Department in Yangon University of Foreign Languages (YUFL) visited “School for Disabled Children” in Mayangone Township to encourage disabled children on 30 December 2016.

The embassy provided school supplies and lunch for the students while students of YUFL encouraged disabled children by performing Korean traditional dance and Taekwondo.

In his opening speech, Mr. Yoo Jae-Kyung, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, delivered the new-year message to the disabled children focusing hope and friendship which reflects the relation between Korea and Myanmar.



Korean diplomats and the embassy staff pose for photo together with children at School for Disabled Children” in Mayangone. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The Embassy organized this event to bring public attention to disabled children in Myanmar as well as to cultivate public service spirit of local young people.

In the same spirit, the embassy with local Taekwondo learners will visit “Mary Chapman School for the Deaf” on 3 January 2017.—*GNLM*

Japanese investment set to change . . .

>> FROM PAGE 1

“My plan is just to do something that’s a little bit laid back and to be able to see a lot of different parts of Yangon culture,” she said.

And culture is in abundance on the Yangon Circular Railway. Da Nyin Gone station provides a market selling fresh fruit and vegetables beside the railway, while Wai Bar Gi station lies right on the boundary of Yangon International Airport, allowing the chance to see planes taking off and landing.

At other stations, vendors board and leave the train, offering their wares along the carriage, while elsewhere people dry their clothes beside the track, or walk leisurely along the rails.

Phil, a teacher from Britain, said he intended to jump on and off

the train at whichever stops looked interesting, adding that the markets appealed to him.

“It looked interesting, see a bit of the city you wouldn’t see just wandering around the middle,” he said.

Asked about the upgrades to the line, Phil said it was impractical to keep the railway as it is just for tourists. “If it helps local people, you can’t really (keep it the same) just for tourists to come and see the old way. You can’t do that.”

Ayumi Kiko, a representative of JICA who is dealing with the upgrade, did not share concerns over Yangon potentially losing one of its prime tourist attractions, saying “I think it’s very interesting still, because...you can see people’s lives, people’s living environment

from the line, which you cannot see from taking a taxi or a bus.”

She told Kyodo News recently that the upgrade is not aimed at changing the balance between private and public transport.

“We think that this circular line has very big potential for the people’s access to many places, because currently the ratio of using public transport is 80 percent, which is quite good...we don’t want to change that ratio,” she said.

“The Yangon regional government is trying to reorganize the bus transformation, so together with those bus improvements and railways improvements, people can use the public transportation so that the traffic congestion is not going to be worse (than now),” she added.—*Kyodo News*

Vehicle accidents happen on Ygn-Mdy express way

A NISSAN driven by Aung Nating Tun en route from Mandalay to Yangon hit a road-divider and overturned when the man at the wheel fell asleep between mile-posts 208/4 and 208/5 on Yangon-Mandalay express way on the morning of 30 December. Out of three passengers on board, the driver and a Buddhist nun were injured but not seriously. The victims were taken by Pan Tin Highway Police Station to Nay Pyi Taw 1000-bed General Hospital to receive medical treatment.

In addition, an AD van driven by Tun Zaw Lin hit a road-divider when he fell asleep at the wheel and lost control. But all four people on board inclusive of the driver were not injured in the accident.

Likewise, a light truck driven by Min Aung collided with the back of a Toyota Van driven by Jay Nyi Nyi when the light truck driver lost control because of high speed en route from Nay Pyi Taw to Yangon between mile-



Overturned AD van seen on Ygn-Mdy express way. PHOTO: MPF

posts 175/3 and 175/4 at 5:50 pm on 29 December. Because of the collision, two passengers out of three were injured but not seriously and the injured passengers were taken by Thagara Highway Police to Yedashay hospital for receiving medical treatment.

In addition, a Mark-II driven by Min Kyaw Zin en route from Nay Pyi Taw to Mandalay overturned when the tire of left-front

wheel burst out between mile-posts 308/4 and 308/5 at 10 am on 29 December. Three passengers aboard were injured but not seriously and were taken by TheeKon Highway Police to Meiktila Hospital to receive medical treatment.

Police from respective highway police station have filed charges against the all reckless drivers.—*Than Oo (Lemyethnar)*

Syria ceasefire, backed by Russia and Turkey, holds after initial clashes

BEIRUT — A nationwide ceasefire in Syria, brokered by Russia and Turkey which back opposing sides in the conflict, appeared to hold early on Friday after a shaky start during the night in the latest attempt to end nearly six years of bloodshed.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, announced the ceasefire on Thursday after forging the agreement with Turkey, a longtime backer of the opposition.

Monitors and a rebel official reported clashes almost immediately after the truce took force at midnight (2200 GMT Thursday) between insurgents and government forces along the provincial boundary between Idlib and Hama, and isolated incidents of gunfire

further south. Hours later calm prevailed in areas included in the deal, they said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the United States could join the peace process once President-elect Donald Trump takes office on 20 January. He also wanted Egypt to join, together with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Jordan and the United Nations.

A number of rebel groups have signed the agreement, Russia's Defence Ministry said. Several rebel officials acknowledged the deal, and a spokesman for the Free Syrian Army (FSA), a loose alliance of insurgent groups, said it would abide by the truce.

One FSA commander was optimistic about the truce deal, the third serious attempt at a nationwide



Evacuees from a rebel-held area of Aleppo, stand near their tents in al-Kamouneh camp, Idlib province, Syria, on 29 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ceasefire this year.

"This time I have confidence in its seriousness. There is new international input," Colonel Fares al-Bayoush said without

elaborating.

Syria's civil war, which began when a peaceful uprising descended into violence in 2011, has resulted in more than 300,000 deaths

and displaced more than 11 million people, half its pre-war population.

The ceasefire, in the waning days of US President Barack Obama's ad-

ministration, was the first major international diplomatic initiative in the Middle East in decades not to involve the United States. —Reuters

Iraqi forces face Islamic State car bombs, fierce resistance in south Mosul

NEAR MOSUL, (Iraq) — Iraqi forces faced car bombs and fierce resistance from Islamic State militants in southern Mosul on Friday, the second day of a renewed push to take back the city after fighting stalled for several weeks.



A tank is seen during battle with Islamic State militants in Mosul, Iraq, on 29 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

An officer in the federal police forces, which joined the battle on Thursday, said there were heavy clashes in the southeastern Palestine district, but they had made progress in two other neighbourhoods, disabling a number

of car bombs.

Another officer, from an elite Interior Ministry unit fighting alongside federal police, said his forces were gaining ground in the Intisar district despite heavy clashes there.

Iraqi forces in the east and north of the city were clearing areas they had recaptured on Thursday before advancing any further, officers said, and the army was trying to cut supply lines to the town of Tel Keyf, north of Mosul.

Since the offensive began 10 weeks ago, US-backed forces have retaken a quarter of the jihadists' last major stronghold in Iraq in the biggest ground operation there since the 2003 US-led invasion that

topped Saddam Hussein.

Recapturing Mosul would probably spell the end for Islamic State's self-styled caliphate, and Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has said the group would be driven out of Iraq by April.

Elite forces pushed into Mosul from the east in October but regular army troops tasked with advancing from the north and south made slower progress and the operation stagnated.

After regrouping this month, they renewed the offensive on Thursday, advancing from the south, east and north of the city, which has been under militant control for more than two years.

The second phase of the operation will see US troops deployed closer to the front line inside the city.

On Friday, a Reuters reporter saw a handful of Americans in their MRAP vehicles, that tower over Iraqi tanks, accompanying top commanders to meetings in a village just north of Mosul.

Although the militants are vastly outnumbered, they have embedded themselves among Mosul residents, hindering Iraqi forces who are trying to avoid civilian casualties. Despite food and water shortages, most civilians have stayed in their homes rather than fleeing as had been expected. —Reuters

Possible civilian casualties in Mosul air strike: Pentagon

WASHINGTON — An air strike by the US-led coalition near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul hit a van in a hospital compound parking lot and could have killed civilians, the US military said on Thursday. A van carrying Islamic State fighters was targeted and hit in the air strike, the Combined Joint Strike Force said in a statement. "The van was struck in what was later determined to be a hospital compound parking lot resulting in possible civilian casualties," it said. —Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE (INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER)

(17 / 2016)

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

| Sr.No | Tender No | Description | Remark |
|-------|----------------|---|---------|
| (1) | IFB-075(16-17) | Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) for Gas Coalescing Filter (22,680) | US\$ KG |
| (2) | IFB-076(16-17) | Spares for Mack Truck (17) Items | US\$ |
| (3) | IFB-077(16-17) | Spares for Mitsubishi 8DC8 1A Engine Ex Mitsubishi Fuso Bowser (26) Items | US\$ |
| (4) | IFB-078(16-17) | Spares for CAT D 379 Engine (45) Items | US\$ |

Tender Closing Date & Time - 19-1-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 30TH December, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ph . +95 67 - 411206 / 411274

Turkish parliamentary commission approves constitutional change draft law

ANKARA — The Turkish parliament's constitutional commission approved a draft constitutional reform law on Friday, paving the way for the general assembly to debate a bill expanding the president's powers, parliamentary sources said.

After a parliamentary vote, Turkey is set to hold a referendum on the changes by spring, a move that would enable President Tayyip Erdogan to acquire the executive presidency he has long sought.

The commission com-

pleted approval of the draft in a marathon 17-hour session that finished early on Friday, the sources said.

The draft was presented to the commission on 10 December with 21 articles, but the approved version was reduced to 18 articles.

Debate on the bill is expected to begin in the parliament's main assembly in January.

Erdogan has turned a largely ceremonial presidency into a powerful platform by drawing on his

unrivalled popularity. His opponents say the constitutional proposals could lead towards authoritarian rule in Turkey.

The ruling AK Party, founded by Erdogan more than a decade ago, wants the backing of the nationalist MHP opposition to see the plan through parliament.

Any constitutional change needs the support of at least 330 deputies in the 550-seat assembly to go to a referendum. —Reuters

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE



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

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

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

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

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

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

| YGN TO 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 | |

| 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 | |

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AIRLINE CODES

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

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

Hong Kong confirms 2nd human bird flu infection this winter

HONG KONG — Hong Kong authorities on Friday confirmed the city's second case of human bird flu infection this winter, five days after the death of a first patient who contracted the same H7N9 strain of the disease.

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health said a 70-year-old man with underlying illnesses, who was admitted to hospital on 27 December, was diagnosed with the H7N9 strain on 29 December and was in stable condition.

The case comes as fears grow over the spread of bird flu — in varying strains — in neighbouring South Korea and Japan, as well as mainland China. At least two people have died from bird flu on the mainland and five have been infected so far this winter, the season when bird flu most frequently occurs. Hong Kong officials said the source of infection was still under investigation. "Avian influenza is expected to increase in winter based on its seasonal pattern," a spokesman for the health protection centre said.—Reuters

Obstetricians balk at FDA warning on anaesthesia in pregnant women

NEW YORK — Repeated or lengthy use of general anaesthetic and sedation drugs in infants, toddlers and pregnant women in their third trimester might damage children's developing brains, the US Food and Drug Administration warned this month.

Upset that the warning about pregnant women was based solely on animal studies, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, or ACOG, shot back its objection.

"ACOG is unaware of data on pregnant women that support the FDA's claims," the group said in a practice advisory to its members. "These warnings may cause patients and providers to inappropriately reject the use of these medically indicated drugs."

Dr. Chris Zahn, vice president of practice activity for ACOG, said that the nonprofit, which represents physicians who care for women, and the FDA have had a close working relationship and in the past have discussed similar warnings before they were announced. But the warning about pregnant women and anaesthetic was different.

"We were caught entirely off guard, and we are concerned about the practical applicability of this warning and its potential negative impact on women's

health, particularly pregnant women," Zahn said in a phone interview.

On 14 December, the FDA issued a safety announcement urging that healthcare providers, parents and patients weigh the potential benefits against the risks while considering the timing of non-emergency surgery, particularly for pregnant women in their third trimester and children less than 3 years old.

The FDA based its safety advisory — and a requirement that drug manufacturers add warning labels on 11 anaesthetic and sedation drugs — on both clinical human studies and animal studies. But the human studies include only children, not pregnant women.

Studies have shown that more than three hours of general anaesthetic and sedation drugs in pregnant and young animals caused widespread loss of nerve cells in the offspring's brains, FDA spokeswoman Sarah Peddicord said. Research showing adverse effects on behaviour and brain development has been done in multiple animal species, from flatworms to non-human primates.

Asked why the FDA included pregnant women without clinical evidence of a problem, Peddicord said, "This is some-

thing we have been looking at, and based on the information we have, we thought it was important to get the information to the public."

At the same time, the FDA announcement seeks to reassure some parents of children contemplating surgery. "Consistent with animal studies, recent human studies suggest that a single, relatively short exposure to general anaesthetic and sedation drugs in infants and toddlers is unlikely to have negative effects on behavior and learning," it says.

The FDA and ACOG both agree that more research is needed. To that end, in 2010, the FDA and the International Anaesthesia Research Society created SmartTots, a public-private partnership studying gaps in knowledge about the safe use of anaesthetic and sedatives in children.

About 2 million American children undergo anaesthetic annually, mostly for common, non-emergency procedures, such as hernia repairs, circumcisions and tonsillectomies.

Dr. Lena Sun, professor of anaesthetic and pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Centre in New York City, has been studying the issue in children and said she believes the

FDA acted in an abundance of caution.

"We do not need to unduly alarm the public, but we want the public to be aware of this potential risk," she said in a phone interview.

"While we are pretty sure and reassured that single and brief exposures in healthy children should not raise any concerns, we cannot offer the same reassurance for prolonged and repeated exposures," she said.

Sun, however, is unaware of any research in humans indicating pregnant women's exposure to anaesthetic could harm the brains of their newborn children.

Dr. Maurice Druzin, professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Stanford University School of Medicine in California, described the FDA's inclusion of pregnant women in the advisory as "unfortunate" and "inappropriate fear-mongering."

"A patient is going to say, 'wait a minute; I don't want to have this surgery because it's going to destroy my baby's brain cells,'" Druzin told Reuters Health.

In the end, though, he said he expects the warning to have little impact on his obstetrics practice because he rarely uses general anaesthetics nowadays.—Reuters

Serbia has no more beds for migrants as bottlenecks build

BELGRADE — Serbia's centres for housing migrants are completely full, the UN refugee agency said, leaving more than a thousand facing a winter sleeping rough in the Balkan country that has become a bottleneck as the European Union sealed its borders.

At least 7,000 migrants mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria are trapped in Serbia, many spending months in a country culturally and financially ill-equipped to care for them and where few of them want to stay.

Despite the official closure of the so-called Balkan route, which has eased pressure on rich nations like Germany, aid agencies estimate more than 100 new migrants are entering Serbia every day, while only around 20 are allowed to enter Hungary — Serbia's only neighbour in Europe's Schengen visa-free area.

About half of those are children, and every 10th child is classified as unac-



Migrants stand in line to receive free food outside a derelict customs warehouse in Belgrade, Serbia, on 22 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

panied, a spokeswoman for Save the Children told Reuters at an overcrowded Belgrade centre where the international NGO encourages children to take part in activities to help them come to terms with their trauma.

Serbia has pledged to make 6,000 beds available and has reached almost that total but has appealed for

more help from the European Union to help it ease the crisis. "All the reception centres are full, full," a UNHCR spokeswoman said, adding that it was unclear whether Serbia would make any more capacity available.

The Serbian government agency for refugees and migration, the SRC, was not immediately

reachable for comment.

A warehouse in central Belgrade without basic facilities has become the home of more than 1,000 men — women and children are given priority in official camps — many of whom are reluctant to enter the system for fear their onward journey will be hindered.

It is one of the largest

camp of its kind in a European capital. The site it occupies is due to become part of the Belgrade Waterfront project, a new luxury development being built by Emirati developer Eagle Hills.

"Serbia is becoming a buffer zone, some kind of purgatory," said Rados Djurovic, executive director of the Asylum Protection Centre, a Serbian non-profit organisation that provides legal and psychological support to displaced persons.

Many migrants are turning to people-traffickers to smuggle them into Hungary or Croatia, with the short Croatian border effectively sealed and a months-long waiting list at the barbed-wire Hungarian border.

Serbian authorities found 77 migrants hidden in two cargo vehicles on Monday. On Thursday, three Afghan migrants including a child died in a traffic accident in southern Serbia. The driver, a suspected people-smuggler, fled the scene.—Reuters

Brazil police believe body found in Rio is missing Greek ambassador

SAO PAULO — Brazilian police suspect a body discovered inside a charred vehicle in Rio de Janeiro is Greece's ambassador to Brazil who went missing three days ago, television channel Globo reported on Thursday. A police spokesman could not be immediately reached for comment.

Ambassador Kyriakos Amiridis, 59, was last seen Monday evening leaving the home of friends of his Brazilian wife in a poor and violent suburb of Rio's metropolitan area, police had said earlier on Thursday. A Rio state police official said the ambassador's wife reported him as missing on Wednesday. Globo showed images of the burned-out white car in the Nova Iguaçu neighbourhood where the ambassador went missing. The station reported that the licence plates on the car matched those of Amiridis' rental vehicle.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (159)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY. NO (159) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ALLY VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ALLY VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185



A coal fired power plant is pictured near a construction site in Beijing, China, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

China fines 605 power plants 328 million yuan for environmental breaches

BEIJING — Companies running 605 Chinese coal-fired power plants have been fined a total of 328 million yuan (\$47 million) by the country's economic planning agency for breaching environmental rules and falsifying data to claim green subsidies.

Excessive levels of pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and dust were released by the power plants in question, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said on Wednesday. A subsidiary of China's power giant Shenhua Group [SHGRP.UL] was fined 52.14 million yuan and a plant controlled by China Guodian Corpora-

tion had to pay 7.73 million yuan, the NDRC said in a statement. While the NDRC has fined power producers before for breaching environmental rules it has not previously published the size of the penalties. In 2014, China, the world's biggest consumer of coal, raised the price it pays for electricity from plants that have installed expensive equipment to cut the emission of pollutants in a bid to improve China's air quality.

For example, the price of electricity from plants that remove sulfur from their emissions is 0.015 yuan higher than the normal price per kilowatt-hour (KWh) for electricity.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV INNWA STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DA QIANG VOY. NO (141)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DA QIANG VOY. NO (141) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD.

Phone No: 2301928

Cubans surf the web at home in Havana pilot project

HAVANA — Downtown Havana resident Margarita Marquez says she received a special Christmas gift this year: web access at home, a rarity in a country with one of the lowest internet penetration rates in the world.

Marquez, a 67-year-old retired university professor, was among those selected by the government two weeks ago to participate in a pilot project bringing the web into the homes of 2,000 inhabitants of the historic centre of the island's capital.

Most of Communist-ruled Cuba's 11.2 million inhabitants only have access to internet at Wi-Fi hotspots, and only then if they can afford the \$1.50 hourly tariff that represents around 5 per cent of the average monthly state salary.

Only 5 per cent of Cubans are estimated to enjoy internet at home, which requires government permission. This is usually granted mainly to academics, doctors and intellectuals.

"It's like a dream come true," said Marquez, who lives with her sister in a second-story flat in a colonial-era building. "To be in



Retired teacher Margarita Marquez, 67, uses the Internet after it was recently installed at her home in old Havana, Cuba, on 29 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

touch with the outside world is important."

Her 80-year-old sister, Leonor Franco, said the news they had been selected came as a surprise and she was excited to be surfing the web for the first time.

"I had never had any experience of internet," she said, seated in front of a laptop she has owned for two years without web access, searching for videos of her favourite singers on YouTube.

She said she wanted to learn

how to surf the web properly so she could make the most of the experiment, and for as long as the government provided free internet access.

"From March we will have to start paying and we don't know if

we will be able to continue. So at least we are going to enjoy January and February," she said.

While the cost of internet has dropped in recent years, it is still prohibitive for most Cubans.

Cuba says it has been slow to develop network infrastructure because of high costs in part due to the US trade embargo. Critics say the real reason is fear of losing control.

Before Wi-Fi signals became available last year, broadband internet access had been limited largely to desktops at state internet parlours and pricy hotels.

However, the government has said it wants to ensure everyone has access and has installed 237 Wi-Fi hotspots so far. In September, it announced it would install Wi-Fi along Havana's picturesque seafront boulevard, the Malecon.

"There are many places now where you can go and sit and connect along the Malecon," said Eliecer Samada as he sat on the stone wall lining the boulevard, checking social media on his phone. "We're happy with this."—Reuters

Oil, metals post stellar 2016 gains on output cuts, demand hopes

SINGAPORE — Crude oil, rubber and metals were set to end 2016 on Friday with strong gains, bouncing back from several years of losses on the back of output cuts and expectations of firmer demand.

Benchmark zinc, steel rebar and rubber have all rallied around 60 per cent this year, while Brent crude has climbed more than 50 per cent.

Crude oil output cuts announced by OPEC, stronger-than-expected demand in top commodities market China and expectations of higher infrastructure spending in the United States after the victory of Republican candidate Donald Trump all boosted prices.

Looking forward, oil prices should gradually rise towards \$60 a barrel by end-2017, a Reuters survey found, but gains will be capped by a strong dollar, more US oil exports and the possibility that some OPEC members won't meet their agreed cuts.

"Accelerating non-OPEC (production) declines and OPEC's decision to cut were key to the price rise in 2016," Energy Aspects analyst Nevyn Nah said, while robust demand growth also helped support prices.

"But the rebalancing process is still in its infancy and speculators want to position for that," he added.

Benchmark TOCOM rubber futures were on track for their biggest gain since 2009, main-

ly driven higher by the rally in crude oil and fund buying.

In the base metals market, copper remains on course for a gain of about 17 per cent — the first annual rise since 2012.

Prices for steel rebar, used in construction, have soared more than 60 per cent this year on better-than-expected spending on building and infrastructure and soaring costs for coking coal due to government-enforced coal mine closures.

"I expect the steel price rally to continue in the first half of 2017 when stock piling will be at a final phase and infrastructure construction programmes will start," said Zhou Guangyan, steel analyst at Zhongcai Futures.

However, demand was likely to wane in the second half, with inventory at a new peak and the

market feeling the effects of real estate regulations and potentially tighter monetary policy in China, he added.

Zinc, which is used in steel production, climbed to a nine-year peak last month with support from a series of mine closures that have tightened ore supply, fuelling a speculative rally.

For precious metals, gold is up more than nine percent this year, snapping three years of losses as the market was lifted by a demand surge during periods of economic and political uncertainty.

However, gold's outlook for 2017 is bearish as the outlook for a rising US dollar and higher interest rates, combined with strong equity markets, will dampen demand for non-interest-paying bullion.—Reuters



A worker walks past oil pipes at a refinery in Wuhan, Hubei Province in 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

Winter storm socks US New England region

NEW YORK — A winter storm socked the US New England region with heavy snow and high winds early on Friday, with some areas expected to see as much as 24 inches (61 cm) of snowfall, the US National Weather Service said.

Winter storm warnings and advisories were in effect for areas stretching from northern New York through most of Maine, where snow was falling at a rate of about 3 inches per hour in parts of the state early on Friday.

"This is the first strong nor'easter New England has seen this season. What is impressive about it is how rapidly it is strengthening tonight from Cape Cod into Maine," said Todd Foisy, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Caribou, Maine.

Much of the region was set for at least 6 inches (15 cm) of snow with the possibility of 24 inches (61 cm) in some parts, the National Weather Service said,

warning of reduced visibility on roadways as gusts of 35 mph (56 kph) blow the snow around.

"Blowing snow will cause whiteout conditions. While lashing a rope to yourself might be an option, it is better to stay inside if at all possible," the Bangor, Maine Police Department said on Facebook.

Most winter storm warnings in the region were expected to expire by Friday evening.

More than 35,000 customers were without power throughout the region early on Friday as a result of the storms, data from utility companies showed.

Some 20 flights were canceled and another 68 were delayed in and out of Boston's Logan International Airport on Thursday as a result of the inclement weather, a common part of winter in New England.

A winter storm warning for parts of West Virginia and western Maryland was in effect until Friday afternoon.—Reuters

Sorin Grindeanu named as Romania's prime minister designate

BUCHAREST — Romania's President named Sorin Grindeanu from the ruling leftist Social Democrat Party (PSD) as prime minister designate on Friday, his office said.

Grindeanu, a 43-year-old mathematician and former deputy mayor of the western city of

Timisoara, is expected to win parliament's backing as early as next week.

His party won an 11 December election by a wide margin and together with coalition partner ALDE, has 250 of the 465 seats in the two houses of parliament.—Reuters



R&B singer Trey Songz.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Singer Trey Songz arrested after concert outburst: police

SAN FRANCISCO — R&B singer Trey Songz was arrested after throwing microphones and other equipment off the stage when his concert in Detroit apparently was cut short, police said on Thursday.

A police sergeant was treated for a concussion after being hit on the head with an object, Detroit Police Department spokesman Dan Donakowski said.

The 32-year-old Songz, whose given name is Tremaine Aldon Neverson, was arrested on suspicion of malicious destruction of property and resisting arrest, Donakowski said. He was still being held at a police detention center Thursday morning.

Songz was nearing the end of his set at the Joe Louis Arena around 11:30 pm on Wednesday when he was directed to finish up, Donakowski said.

Songz then became “belligerent” and started throwing microphones, speakers and other items off the stage, Donakowski said.

Representatives for the artist could not be immediately reached for comment.

Celebrity news website TMZ posted a video of Songz saying the venue had threatened to cut off his microphone because he was “taking too much time” and then saying he would go “crazy” if it did.

Another video retweeted by the official Trey Songz Twitter account appeared to show Songz, who was headlining the concert with fellow R&B singer Chris Brown, walk from the stage and into the crowd.—Reuters

WORLD number two tennis player Serena Williams has become engaged to Alexis Ohanian, co-founder of the social media company Reddit.

“Down on 1 knee. He said four words. And/r/isaides,” the 35-year-old American said on the social media site on Thursday.

“I came home. A little late. Someone had a bag packed for me.

And a carriage awaited. Destination: Rome ... back to where our stars first collided.”

The New York-born Ohanian, 33, confirmed the news on his Facebook page, writing: “She said yes”.

Williams is the best player of her generation. She has won 22 grand slam singles titles, the same as German Steffi Graf and trailing only Australian Margaret Court (24).—Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

Serena Williams gets engaged to Reddit co-founder Ohanian

As Trump moves up, ‘Celebrity Apprentice’ gets Schwarzenegger spin

LOS ANGELES — As Donald Trump prepares to take office as US president, another celebrity turned politician is about to take over his “Apprentice” TV show hot seat, and is hoping for higher ratings.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the “Terminator” movie star who served two terms as California governor, promises a more humorous touch on “The New Celebrity Apprentice,” starting on 2 January on NBC with a new round of stars taking on business-related challenges.

Schwarzenegger, 69, said he asked for the reality show to move from New York to California and to reflect his personality.

“Even though it looked very dramatic and terrific when you saw the boardroom in New York, it was kind of dark. I wanted to see everything more bright. I’m a very upbeat person and I have a good sense of humor,” Schwarzenegger told reporters ahead of the premiere.

“I want to play up my personality. Trump did a great job playing up his personality,” he

said.

Trump’s 11-year stint on “The Apprentice” and sister show “Celebrity Apprentice” catapulted him from New York businessman to a household name. More than 20 million Americans were regular watchers in the show’s early years, falling to around six million in 2015.

News that Trump will retain an executive producer credit on the show, which usually involves a payment, caused a media furor earlier in December about potential conflicts of interest.

Schwarzenegger has said he doesn’t expect Trump to take an active role in the show and has defended the arrangement

as similar to his own transition from movie star to politician in 2003.

“I am the new host. I hope I can match up with what he has done and continue on with a great, successful show ... I want to have my ratings a little higher than his were,” he quipped.

The new show has some serious star power with its advisers, who include billionaire investor Warren Buffett, as well as ex-Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and former supermodel Tyra Banks.

The 16 contestants include singer Boy George, Motley Crue lead singer Vince Neil, boxer Laila Ali, and former “Jersey Shore” star Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi.

Trump used the catchphrase “You’re fired!” but Schwarzenegger says viewers will have to wait and see what tagline he has chosen.

“You’re terminated? Hasta la vista baby? Consider this a divorce? There’s many, many lines we can grab. That’s the great thing when you have had a long movie career,” he said.—Reuters



Host Arnold Schwarzenegger and Tyra Banks participate in a panel for ‘The New Celebrity Apprentice’ in Universal City, California, on 9 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fans send message to SMAP in newspaper ad before band’s breakup

TOKYO — Thousands of fans of SMAP, one of Japan’s most popular and longest-lived pop groups that is set to break up as the year ends, placed a newspaper advertisement on Friday pledging to keep rooting for their idols.

The eight-page ad, which included messages such as “We love SMAP forever,” was paid for by an online crowdfunding cam-

paign that had solicited about 39 million yen (\$334,000) by early Wednesday morning from over 12,800 fans.

The band’s planned breakup, formally announced in August, shocked throngs of fans in Japan and other parts of Asia.

The ad, which also included the names of the fans, ran in the Friday morning edition of major

Japanese daily the Asahi Shimbun a day before SMAP’s breakup.

SMAP, which was formed in 1988, on Monday made a final appearance as a group in their signature variety show but offered no explanation as to why they are disbanding.

Ryo Sato, one of the three fans who initiated the campaign, said he was “surprised at the larg-

er-than-expected support.”

“We would like to convey an encouraging message through the ad that we will root for SMAP in any form (they might take),” Sato, 23, said. The fundraising project ran from 20-28 December.

After the five-member group’s agent, major talent agency Johnny & Associates Inc., announced the breakup, fans

launched an online petition drive collecting 373,515 signatures from Japan and abroad to call on the group not to disband.

Messages of gratitude and encouragement from fans of SMAP, which stands for Sports Music Assemble People, were also carried on the newspaper’s online message board section.—Kyodo News

Qatar World Cup construction workers to get 'cooling' hats

DOHA — Migrant workers building football stadiums in Qatar's desert heat are to be given 'cooling' hard hats to reduce their body temperature and risk of suffering heat stroke, tournament organisers said.

Scientists at Qatar University designed the solar-powered hard hats to improve conditions for 2022 World Cup labourers who rights groups say have suffered abuses.

A fan in the top of the helmet blows air over a cold pack onto the person's face reducing skin temperature by up to 10 degrees centigrade, said Saud Ghani, an engineering professor at Qatar University.

"Our objective was

to reduce heat stress and heat strokes for workers in Qatar and the region," said Ghani.

About 5,100 construction workers from Nepal, India and Bangladesh are building stadiums in the wealthy Gulf Arab state which has drawn charges by human rights groups of labour abuse, including poor safety at work and squalid living conditions.

Summer temperatures in Qatar can reach 50 degrees and Doha enforces a ban on outdoor work for several hours a day during the hottest months of the year.

But migrant workers have complained about heat exhaustion and dehydration while working in summer.

Around 260 migrant workers from India died in the whole of Qatar in 2015, according to figures from the Indian embassy in Doha seen by Reuters.

In May an Indian labourer died of a heart attack while performing steel work on a World Cup stadium in Doha in an incident officials denied was caused by working conditions.

The helmets, which can provide cooling in hot temperatures for up to four hours, will be introduced at all World Cup building sites next summer, said an official from Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, the body overseeing the tournament's organisation.

American athletes



Migrant labourers work at a construction site at the Aspire Zone in Doha, Qatar, on 26 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

have used body-based cooling technology including "ice hats" to im-

prove their performance but this would be the first time the technology has been used on a wide-scale basis in construction. —Reuters

Dentsu subjected to on-site probe 10 times before overwork suicide

TOKYO — Labour authorities conducted on-site inspections at Japan's top advertising agency Dentsu Inc. 10 times during the past decade through December 2015 prior to the alleged overwork-related suicide of one of its young female employees, sources close to the matter said Thursday.

During investigations into allegations such as illegally long working hours, the company received five warnings for excessive overtime hours, the sources said, hinting the firm could have dragged its feet in improving conditions for staff.

Dentsu has declined to comment to Kyodo News about the matter.

The fresh revelation came a day after Dentsu President Tadashi Ishii announced he will quit his post in January following

the suicide of 24-year-old employee Matsuri Takahashi on Christmas Day last year.

Also Wednesday, the labour ministry referred the company and one of its male executives to prosecutors on suspicion of forcing Takahashi and another employee to work and underreport illegally long hours.

The sources said local labour standards inspection offices carried out the on-site inspections from September 2005 to December 2015 at Dentsu's Tokyo headquarters and its Kansai, Kyoto and Chubu branch offices in western and central Japan.

The bulk of inspections, which looked into cases of Dentsu employees' "karoshi" — or death from overwork — as well as work-induced psychological problems, were carried

out after June 2014 and before Takahashi's death.

Of the 10 inspections, five appeared to have resulted in the labour authorities warning Dentsu that the way employees are made to work is illegal and urging the firm to rectify the situation. But the remaining five inspections did not find any illegal practices.

At Wednesday's press conference, Dentsu said it did take steps to improve the long work hours after being warned. According to Dentsu, it was able to cut the monthly average of overtime from 34.3 hours in 2013 to 28.9 hours in 2015.

However, the number of cases where workers stayed in the office more than an hour after supposedly declaring the end of working hours was 5,626 on average in 2013 to 8,222 in 2015, Dentsu said, sug-

gesting employees may have underreported their work hours.

Takahashi, who joined the company in April 2015 and showed signs of depression prior to her death, was found to have worked overtime in excess of the maximum number of hours allowed under a labour-management agreement. She jumped to her death from the upper floor of a company dormitory on 25 December last year, according to a lawyer for her family.

The Tokyo labour standards inspection office in September this year recognised Takahashi's suicide as a case of karoshi, as her overtime hours had significantly increased from around 40 hours a month to over 100 hours before she began to suffer from depression. —Kyodo News

"Pokemon Go" most searched term on Google in 2016

LOS ANGELES — Smartphone game "Pokemon Go" was the most popular term globally on Google Inc.'s search engine in 2016, the company revealed recently.

The second most popular term was "iPhone 7," Apple Inc.'s new smartphone launched in September, followed by Donald Trump, the US President-elect.

"Pokemon Go,"

launched in the summer by three co-developers including Nintendo Co., was also the most searched term on Google in Japan this year.

The second most popular searches in Japan were for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, followed by SMAP, one of the country's most popular and longest-running pop groups that will disband at the end of the year.

—Kyodo News



Young people play the "Pokemon Go" smartphone game in Nagoya in this file photo taken on 22 July 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(31-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 1-1-2017 07:00 AM) MST

| | | |
|-------|----|--|
| 07:03 | Am | News |
| 07:26 | Am | Great Shwedagon-Historic And Mysterious Places |
| 07:54 | Am | Sticky Shan Snack |
| 08:03 | Am | News |
| 08:26 | Am | Clay Toy Pots Festival |
| 08:44 | Am | Lacquerware Technology College |
| 09:03 | Am | News |
| 09:27 | Am | A Glance At A Naga Family Life |
| 09:46 | Am | Civic Duty |
| 10:03 | Am | News |
| 10:26 | Am | Next Generation "Sammy Tin (Clarinetist)" |

| | | |
|-------|----|---|
| 10:35 | Am | Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA OBOE) |
|-------|----|---|

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Friday 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 | Travelogue: "Anyar Myay" or Upcountry (Part-1) |
| 07:49 | Pm | Today Myanmar: Seatbelt & Road Safety |
| 08:03 | Pm | News |
| 08:26 | Pm | National Literary Icon and Guiding Light of Myanmar Literature "Sayar Zaw Gyi" (Episode-2) |
| 08:50 | Pm | Myanmar Masterclass: ARTIST SOE HNIN AUNG |

(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday 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)

The Klopp and Pep show is perfect year-end treat

IT is the perfect year-ending treat: Liverpool versus Manchester City, two Premier League title challengers brimful of attacking, pass-and-move brio and full of goals duelling at high pace at one of England's noisiest and most storied venues.

"If I wasn't sitting on the bench, I would buy a ticket!" boomed Juergen Klopp with a smile on Thursday as he pondered Anfield's blockbusting prelude to the New Year's Eve celebrations on Saturday.

In pursuit of Chelsea, who have been making serene, faultless progress, second-placed Liverpool and Pep Guardiola's City may feel this is a match they simply must win.

A draw would not be much use to either with the prospect of Chelsea, who should make it 13 wins in a row against Stoke City earlier in the afternoon, ending the year eight points clear of Liverpool and nine ahead of City.

It is not a slight on Antonio Conte's leaders to suggest Liverpool and City are, on their day, the most dazzling teams in the division but their problem remains that no-one can be confident when that day will be.

Will we see the Liverpool who eviscerated Stoke City 4-1 to chill the bones



Juergen Klopp.
PHOTO: REUTERS

of a very cold-looking, flat-capped but suitably impressed Guardiola at Anfield on Monday?

Or the Liverpool who looked as if they couldn't defend to save their lives as they twice surrendered a two-goal lead to lose 4-3 at humble Bournemouth earlier in the month.

Likewise, will it be the crisp Guardiola machine that made his old Barcelona charges look lost at the Etihad in the Champions League? Or the hapless, strangely dispirited bunch who were crushed at struggling Leicester City recently.

"There are a lot of games to come but it is the most important game I can imagine against an outstanding, strong team," Klopp conceded.

"The advantage is that it's at Anfield. We must try to use this. It will be really difficult for both teams but I'm really looking forward to it. We love playing against the best.

"This is a very big game for both of us. Six clubs fight for four positions or one position. Each game is kind of a final." For the moment, these sides remain two thrilling but inconsistent works in progress, the heaviest scorers in the league with 84 goals — Liverpool 45, City 39 — between them.

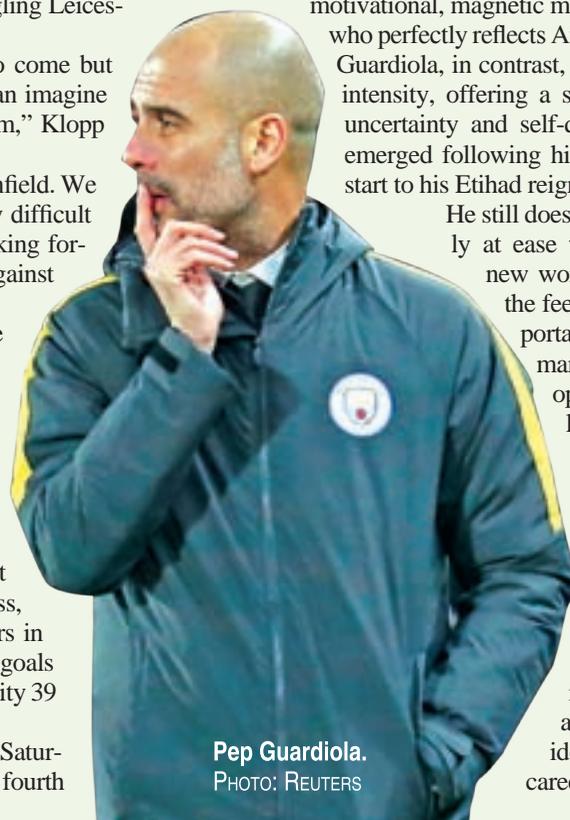
Yet a win on Saturday would mean a fourth

league victory in succession for one of them, offering crucial momentum to propel them into the New Year.

It is also the renewal of a personal duel between two of the game's finest coaches who have brought their respectful rivalry from the Bundesliga where Klopp's Borussia Dortmund never could unseat Guardiola's magisterial Bayern Munich. Who is the pressure on most? Well, Klopp has been an unqualified success on Merseyside, a motivational, magnetic man of the people who perfectly reflects Anfield's passion.

Guardiola, in contrast, is a cauldron of intensity, offering a surprising air of uncertainty and self-questioning that emerged following his stellar 10-win start to his Etihad reign.

He still does not seem wholly at ease with his frantic new world and this has the feel of another important step in his managerial development in England. Klopp is a fan. "Maybe Johan Cryuff started it, but Guardiola perfected it at Barcelona," he said. "He's a really influential manager with clear ideas. Fantastic career." —Reuters



Pep Guardiola.
PHOTO: REUTERS

Ronaldo rejects 300 million euro move to China — agent

MADRID — World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo has turned down the chance to leave Real Madrid for an unnamed Chinese club for a transfer fee of 300 million euros (257 million pounds), his agent said on Thursday.

Speaking to Sky Italia at the Globe Soccer Awards in Dubai, Jorge Mendes said the deal would have been worth 100 million euros a year to the Portugal striker.

"From China they've offered 300 million euros to Real Madrid and more than 100 million per year to the player," Mendes was quoted as saying.



Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates with the Golden Ball trophy. PHOTO: REUTERS

"But money is not everything. Real Madrid is his life. Cristiano is happy at Real Madrid and it is impossible to go to China.

"The Chinese market is a new market. They can buy a lot of players but then

again it is impossible to go for Ronaldo."

News of the offer made to European champions Real came on the same day Argentine striker Carlos Tevez joined the Chinese Super League side Shanghai Shenhua from Boca Juniors. No financial details were disclosed but media reports said Shenhua had paid 84 million euros for former Manchester City and Manchester United forward Tevez.

Last week Brazil midfielder Oscar joined local rivals Shanghai SIPG from Chelsea for a fee that media reports put at 60 million euros.—Reuters

I tried to kill myself, says former world champion Hatton

LONDON — Former world boxing champion Ricky Hatton tried to kill himself when he suffered from depression after quitting the ring, the Briton said on Thursday.

Hatton, who won titles at light-welterweight and welterweight, retired in 2012 but had already been struggling with depression, drink and drugs.

"I tried to kill myself several times," the 38-year-old told BBC radio. "I used to go to the pub, come back,



Britain's Ricky Hatton reacts after losing to Ukraine's Vyacheslav Senchenko in their boxing match at the Manchester Arena in Manchester, northern England, on 24 November 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

take the knife out and sit there in the dark crying hysterically.

"In the end I thought I'll end up drinking myself to death because I was so miserable."

Hatton, who registered 45 wins in 48 bouts, said that even if he did

not always drink he still could not cope with depression and that led to cocaine use.

"I was coming off the rails with my drinking and that led to drugs. It was like a runaway train," he explained.— Reuters

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