

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials of Malaysian, Laotian and Australian Ambassadors



President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo together with newly-accredited Malaysian Ambassadaor to Myanmar Mr Mohd Haniff Bin Abd Rahman.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb—President U Thein Sein received Mr Mohd

Haniff Bin Abd Rahman, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Malay-

sia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Mr. Lyying Sayaxang, the

newly-accredited Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Repub-

lic to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and (See page 3)

Myanmar, Thailand look to take giant leap into digital economy together

By Ye Myint

YANGON, 26 Feb — The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) and Thailand's Federation of the Thai Industries (FTI) inked a Memorandum of Understanding on the ISO/IEC 29110 Software Development Standard for Thailand-Myanmar Industrial Sector Development on Thursday.

The signing of the MoU is aimed at enhancing cooperation in the information and communications technology (ICT) sectors of the two countries, thereby contributing towards achieving business benefits by modernizing information technology and services in Myanmar, said U Thaung Su Nyein, the

UMFCCI's CEC member.

Apart from focusing on the ISO/IEC 29110 software development standard, the MoU also includes seeking ways and means for human resources development in the ICT sector, implementation of an ISO standard in Myanmar and technology transfer from Thailand to develop it, added the CEC member who signed the MoU with his Thai counterpart.

The signing ceremony took place at the UMFCCI building in Yangon during a meeting between UMFCCI officials and a 35-member Thai business delegation that arrived in Myanmar on Thursday to discover potential benefits and create possibilities in the ICT sectors of the two countries.

(See page 2)

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 27 Feb — A majority of factory workers striking for better wages are going back to their jobs while some are continuing their sit-in protest against their employers.

Meanwhile, the Yangon Region Labour Disputes Arbitration Committee, which has worked as a moderator for settling the disputes between the workers and employers, has invited remaining striking workers to come back to the negotiation table.

The striking workers of Red Stone Garment Factory in Shwepyitha Industrial Zone and the factory's owner reached a 12-point agreement on 16 February including the factory's offer to add K15,000 to the basic salary of the workers after negotiations sponsored by the Yangon Region Labour Disputes Arbitration Committee.

Out of 903 Red Stone

Most striking workers return to work while some persist

workers at, 882, or 97 per cent of the factory's work force, showed up for work at the factory on Thursday, according to the Labour, Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department (FGLLID).

Also, a majority of the striking workers of Costec Garment Factory have

accepted their employer's offer to add K9,600 to their basic salaries and returned to their jobs from 23 February, raising the number of workers on the factory's production line on Thursday to 863, or 70 per cent of the total workers numbering 1,226, according to FGLLID.

The striking workers are worried about not getting their salaries as they are facing difficulties for their livelihood due to low payment, said Wah Wah Cho, 26, who participated in the strikes and decided to go back to her job at the factory.

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Female workers at production of textile at Ford Glory Garment Factory in Shwepyitha Industrial Zone.—PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses national planning bill

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Thursday discussed the fundamental principles of national planning bill for 2015-16.

Representative Daw Tin Nwe Oo of North Dagon Constituency said that it is important to place emphasis on industrial sector for national development and agriculture sector has encountered shortage of

labour force due to seizure of farmland and natural disasters. She added that projects that are not necessary should be cancelled and money should be spent on long term investment like education and health.

Representative Daw Khin Thanda of TadaU constituency said that it is important to give compensation and damages for confiscated land in order

to successfully implement policies, measures and objectives of agriculture sector and state-run enterprises that are making losses should be handed over to the private sector for higher productivity and skills of workers.

Representative U Kyi Tha of Gwa constituency said that 42.5 percent of Myanmar's export earnings came from the sales of

natural gas while 23.9 percent came from agriculture sector but industrial sector generated only 11 percent of export earnings. Emphasis should be placed on development of agriculture sector and industrial sector, he added, saying that it is important to get correct data and to link projects for the success of them.

Representative U Tin Maung Oo of Shwepyitha

Constituency said that it is important to collect more taxes to reduce inflation and deficit and to issue citizenship scrutiny cards in accordance with the law under Moe Pwint project.

Representative U Thein Lwin of Chauk Constituency said that distribution of fuel oil is monopolized by private entrepreneurs who failed to lower the prices when oil prices fell down in the international market

and it is important to open the market to others in order to allow competition.

Representative Daw Dwe Bu of Ingyanyan Constituency said that it is important to cooperate for development of education and health sectors in areas of national races.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session today approved the bills amending the mercantile customs act and inland customs act.—MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker meets Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann Thursday met a delegation led by Mr Jeffrey Feltman, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, at Zabuthiri Hall of Hluttaw building here.

Also present at the call were Chairmen of Pyithu Hluttaw committees and officials from the Hluttaw offices.

MNA



YTU, Tokyo University to cooperate in research on disaster risk reduction

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Ko Ko Oo held talks with Senior Representative Mr Kyosuke Inada and party of JICA Myanmar Office at his office, here, on 23 February to discuss project for development of a comprehensive disaster resilience system and collaboration platform and sending of expert on intellectual

property from JICA.

The project will focus on natural disaster risk reduction to conduct research in Bago river basin and Yangon Region. Yangon Technological University and Tokyo University of Japan co-ordinated project design matrix-PDM worth US\$ 5 million to be provided by Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)-JICA programme.—MNA

Most striking workers . . .

(from page 1)

Generally, factories are receiving few orders from overseas markets in February, March and April, said Jun Ho Mun, general manager of Costec Garment Factory.

Still, about 100 workers of the factory continue to strike for better wages, he added.

Ford Glory Garment Factory located in Shwepyitha Industrial Zone saw 65 per cent of its total work

force show up for work on Thursday after reaching an agreement with the majority of the striking workers on 23 February, according to FGLLID.

The factory has always kept its doors open to the striking workers. Out of 611 workers of Ford Glory Garment Factory, 397 are on the job at the factory, said Mr Joe Lee, the owner of Ford Glory.

He requested the striking workers to improve the quantity and quality of the factory's production, promising that the improved production would benefit all including employers and workers, he added.

To settle the labour disputes, the Yangon Region Labour Disputes Arbitration Committee has made efforts since 17 February as a moderator between the workers and employers and has achieved good results, the recent statement of the committee said.

Yangon Region Labour Minister U Zaw Aye Maung has pledged that the committee would push the factories to increase workers' wages when their income rises.

GNLM

Myanmar, Japan exchange views on situations of human rights

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb—The Third Myanmar-Japan Human Rights Dialogue was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, here, on Thursday. Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw delivered the opening statement.

The experts from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, Border Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Information, Labour, Employment and Social Security, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar National Human Rights

Commission and the representatives led by Mr Takashi Okada, Deputy Director-General of Foreign Policy Bureau and Ambassador in charge of UN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan attended the dialogue.

At the dialogue, both sides discussed and exchanged views on the progress made in Myanmar human rights situation, the situation of human rights in Japan and Myanmar-Japan cooperation in the field of human rights.—MNA

YCDC disperses Michauangkan protest

YANGON, 26 Feb — Yangon City Development Committee on Thursday morning dispersed a group staging an illegal protest over Michauangkan land issue by setting up makeshift tents occupying a sidewalk next to Mahabandoola Park in Kyauktada Township in Yangon Region.

As authorities concerned filed lawsuits against protestors at Kyauktada Township police station, respective courts charged protestors with Section 68 of Yangon City Development Committee Law and Section 18 of the law on peaceful assembly and peaceful procession.—MNA

Myanmar, Thailand look . . .

(from page 1)

During the meeting, the Thai side made presentations on the ISO/IEC 29110 software development standard, GS1 standard and website E-business of the Federation of Thai Industries.

Moreover, the Thai delegation conducted business matching activities with Myanmar IT companies before signing a MoU on cooperation between Thailand-Myanmar and Myanmar-Thailand Business Councils.

During their three-day stay in Myanmar, the delegation is scheduled

to hold discussions with Myanmar officials on trade, border trade and investment experience and guidelines sharing. Despite having other economic MoUs, the signing of the MoU on cooperation in the field of ICT was the first of its kind between the two federations. Thailand is Myanmar's second-largest bilateral trading partner. From 1-4-2013 to 10-1-2014, Myanmar's exports to Thailand totaled \$3546.522 million while its imports from Thailand reached \$999.404 million. Up to 31 January 2015, Thailand, which stands sec-



ond in Myanmar's foreign investor line-up, has invested \$3140.184 million in the existing 46 projects.

GNLM

U Thaung Su Nyein of UMFCFI and Mr. Pranontha Titavanno of FTI exchange notes after signing a MoU on the ISO/IEC 29110 Software Development Standard for Thailand-Myanmar Industrial Sector Development in Yangon on Thursday.— PHOTO: YE MYINT



President U Thein Sein accepts credentials . . .

(from page 1)
Mr Nicholas Coppel, the newly-accredited Ambassador of Australia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw, on Thursday.

Also present on the

occasions were Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and Director-General U Thuraing Thant Zin of the Protocol Department.—MNA

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials from newly-accredited Laotian Ambassador Mr. Lying Sayaxang.

MNA

President U Thein Sein accepts credentials from newly-accredited Australian Ambassador Mr Nicholas Coppel.

MNA



BANGKOK, 26 Feb — Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, together with Chief Minister of Kayah State U Khin Maung Oo and deputy ministers, visited the National Health Centre in Bangkok on Thursday morning.

Deputy Secretary General Dr Weerawat Phancrut of the centre explained comprehensive healthcare system to the vice president and party who later visited the call centre room and the data centre room. The deputy secretary general of the centre hosted a luncheon to

the vice president and party at the Rathkaew Authentic Thai Restaurant.

In the afternoon, the vice president met with Health Minister Prof Dr Rajata Rajatanavin of Thailand.

Present at the meeting were the chief minister, deputy ministers U Tin Oo Lwin, Dr Win Myint, U Htin Aung and Dr Sai Kyaw Ohn and officials.

They held discussions on cooperation in health and health for people in border areas and control measures for contagious

diseases in border areas.

Health officials from Thailand explained the public healthcare system, health management systems and cooperation in public health sector to the vice president and party.

In the evening, the health minister of Thailand hosted a dinner to the vice president and party at the Shangri-La Hotel in Bangkok.—MNA

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham views public health management systems in Bangkok



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham holds talks with Health Minister Prof Dr Rajata Rajatanavin of Thailand.—MNA

UN to cooperate in peace and national reconciliation processes of Myanmar



Vice President U Nyan Tun greets UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Mr Jeffrey Feltman.

MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — A delegation led by UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Mr Jeffrey Feltman called on Vice President U Nyan Tun at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace, here, on

Thursday afternoon.

They discussed implementation of remaining tasks in reviewing process on human rights, necessary technical assistance for graduation of Myanmar from status of least devel-

oped nations, and cooperation in peace and national reconciliation processes.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Ministers Commadore Aung Thaw, U Thant Kyaw and U Kyaw Kyaw Win.—MNA

Administrative reform coordinating committee meets

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb —Administrative Reform Coordinating Committee held its third meeting at the President Office on Thursday.

The third meeting is aimed at developing an administrative reform framework as a sound foundation is imperative for the emergence of good governance that requires a comprehensive administrative reform process, formulation of a basic foundation for the country's sustainable development goal, a framework paving the way for coordination between the stakeholders and an exact timeframe for implementation process, said Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun.

The government is considering a workshop on formulation of administrative reform framework allowing all stakeholders to take part in comprehensive discussions, he added.

There is no shortcut for the success of a reform process, said the Union minister who pointed out that it took at least 20 years to make a success story in developing countries that initiated reform process.

Reform process should be implemented in the projects in some departments and townships based on international experiences of making a success story in the process, he said.

Although it is necessary to study practices that other countries followed, a

reform model of the country is needed to be agreed with its own situations. It is also required to properly and smoothly manage the high expectation of the people.

Next, a UNDP representative made a presentation of the administrative reform framework (draft) and members of the committee made suggestions. Then, the UNDP representative elaborated on the agenda for the planned workshop and those present made supplementary reports.

During the first and second meetings of the committee, compilation of data based on public desires for the administrative reform and coordination with the ministries concerned were carried out. — MNA

New library ready to give service to local people in Pobbathiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — A new building of library was inaugurated in Thabyesan Village in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, on Thursday morning.

Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations Department Daw Thin Thin Zin, Township Administrator U Htet Aung Phyo and village library committee member U Tun Shein formally opened the new building.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Than Htay and officials visited the library and viewed books and publications.

Deputy Director Daw



Thin Thin Zin explained construction of village libraries and advantages of reading. The library is 30 feet long and 26 feet wide,

funded by the Nay Pyi Taw Council.

Shwe Ye Yint

Villagers in Yinmabin Township to get new rural health branch



YINMABIN, 26 Feb — With the aim of providing accommodation to government staff, stakes were driven for construction of a rural health branch and staff quarters in Chaungzon Village, Yinmabin

Township, Sagaing Region, at the end of January and construction started on 9 February.

Under the supervision of Yinmabin District management committee chairman U Zaw Myo Nyunt,

deputy township administrator U Myint Tun and departmental officials inspected construction of the rural health branch and staff quarters and gave instructions to officials on timely completion of the

buildings.

“The Ministry of Health allotted K60 million of budget in 2014-15 fiscal year to construct a 41 feet long, 30 feet wide and 11 feet high rural health centre and one 38 feet long, 25 feet wide and 11 feet high staff quarter, two water tanks, one tube-well, four toilets, fencing and roads. Upon completion, the rural health branch will provide medical treatment to about 2,800 local people from four villages in Yinmabin Township,” said a local.

People from the villages wish appointment of health staff at the rural health branch as soon as possible.

Tun Ko Ko
(Yinmabin)



TODAY'S
MYANMAR
NEWS SITES

India-Myanmar Expo 2015 to be displayed from 27 Feb to 1 March

MANDALAY, 26 Feb —The second India-Myanmar Expo 2015 will be held from 27 February to 1 March at the Mandalay City Hall.

The trade fair will be jointly organized by Engineering Exports Promotion Council formed with over 1,200 engineering companies of India, Indian Consulate General (Mandalay) and Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Over 70 engineering companies will showcase constructional materials, foodstuffs, agricultural machinery, trucks and excavators, iron and steel wares, mineral exploration equipment, electronics and machines to be used in production of machines at the expo. Trade promotion between India and Myanmar reached US\$ 2.1 billion in 2013-14 fiscal year.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Commission to supervise elections of members of MCDC

MANDALAY, 26 Feb — Under Section 16 of Mandalay City Development Committee Law, Mandalay Region government on 6 February formed a MCDC election commission with participation of U Khin Maung Kyaw (Director of Region General Admin-

istration Department) as Chairman, together with members retired township administrator U Aye Kyu, advocate U Soe Myint, gold foil maker U Ohn Maung, trader U Aung Thaik, loom industry owner U Than Myint and secretary retired deputy commissioner

U San Myint Aung.

The commission held the meetings on 10 and 19 February on electoral process for municipal election. The commission issued a MCDC formation rules on 22 February.

Thiha Ko Ko
(Mandalay)



LOCAL NEWS

Mandalarians donate cash to military servicemen, families, service personnel

MANDALAY, 26 Feb — A cash donation for military service personnel who sacrificed life for the nation in Kokang Self-Administered Zone, northern Shan State and family members was held at the hall of Mandalay Region Government on 23 February.

On behalf of wellwishers, U Than Win of Mann

Myanmar Co explained the purpose of donations.

At the ceremony, Construction Entrepreneurs Association donated K10 million, U Than Win, Chairman of Mann Myanmar Co and family K10 million and U Myo Hlaing Oo of Thanti Thitsa Co K5 million to the chief minister who returned certificates

of honour.

So far, wellwishers in Mandalay Region have donated K216.665 million for the Tatmadawmen, families and state service personnel. Officials send necessary foodstuffs to the military servicemen in Laukkai region.

*Thiha Ko Ko
(Mandalay)*



Shan plateau with mist-covered mountain ranges attracts tourists



TAUNGGYI, 26 Feb — Shan plateau is a great tourist destination, sharing border with Kachin State, Laos, Thailand, China, Kayah and Kayin States, Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Taunggyi-Inlay-Kal-

aw-Pindaya route is located in southern Shan State. Tourists may visit there by flights from Yangon, Mandalay and Bagan in addition to highway buses.

Among the tourist destinations in Shan State, Inlay Lake is a great attractive area located at an altitude of

2,950 feet. It has been designated as an ASEAN heritage park.

Tourists may take relaxation in Inlay Lake by motorboat so as to enjoy scenic beauty of traditional housings, rowing of boat by leg of Inn ethnics, floating islands where various

vegetables are being cultivated by local people and traditional foods. Significantly, they can visit Inlay PhaungdawU Buddha images. As a centre at Inlay region, the visitors may go trips to Kalaw, Pinlaung, Pindaya, Phekhon, Loikaw and so beautiful townships.

The tourists will have the opportunities to visit 2,478 Mwedaw Kakku pagodas, 24 miles from Taunggyi. Moreover, they can tour villages of Palaung, Pa-O, Danu and Taungyoe ethnics around Kalaw Township and visit paddy, wheat, nigre, orange and other plants. In fact, villages and towns in Shan State have different beauties from other regions and states with Shan mountain ranges covered with mists in the background.—*MoH&T*

Rode to Mandalay caravan proceeds to Bagan via Natogyi



NATOGYI, 25 Feb — A tourist caravan of classic motorcars namely “Rode to Mandalay” that made trips to Bagan from Mandalay proceeded to Taungtha Township via Natogyi on 24 February.

The caravan comprising 61 classic vehicles was scheduled to Bagan passing a 45-mile-long Manda-

lay-Myingyan route. However, the caravan passed Natogyi and went to Myingyan-Bagan road via Taungtha.

Township Administrator U Kyaw Naing and Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Soe Win provided necessary assistance to the tourists.—*Htay Myint Maung*

Agriculturists disclose experiences on use of Trichogramma in cultivation of crops

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — The Trichogramma-based multi-crop protection course for cultivation of Palethwe summer paddy, jointly organized by Crops Protection Branch of Agriculture Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Europe Aid Funded Project, kicked off in Ohhteintaung Village in Singaing Township, Mandalay Region, on 25 February.

Deputy Director Dr Kyin Kyin Win of Agriculture Department explained use of Trichogramma in protection of various species of crops.

Dr Ko Ko of Crops Protection Branch briefed the attendees on prevention of pests at the paddy plantations with the use of best species of Trichogramma gathered from Greater Mekong Subregion countries.

The training course was held on 25 and 26 February, attended by 350 farmers.

Deputy Director Dr Kyin Kyin Win and officials shared their experiences on prevention of pests at crops plantations and replied to queries raised by farmers.

*Ko Pauk
(Okkar Myay)*

New highway bus line runs along Taungtha-Welaung-Myingyan-Mandalay route

TAUNGTHA, 26 Feb — La Pyae Hein bus line launched a highway bus service to run along Taungtha-Welaung-Myingyan-Mandalay

route as of 18 February.

The bus line runs six highway buses daily. Ticket is K4,500 per passenger. In commemoration of the

launching the bus line, passengers are allowed to take the buses three day along the route free of charge.

Thanks to new bus

lines, transport service a narrows development gap between rural and urban areas in the townships.

Htay Myint Maung



Oldest Japanese-made steam train transferred to Kyoto museum



The oldest Japanese-made steam train in existence is transferred by trailer to Kyoto Railway Museum, which will open in the spring next year, from a closed Osaka museum on 26 Feb, 2015. Enthusiastic railroad fans observed the transfer of the train built in 1903. —KYODO NEWS

China's top court unveils deadlines for legal reform

BEIJING, 26 Feb — China's top court set a five-year deadline on Thursday for legal reforms to protect the rights of individuals, prevent miscarriages of justice and make its judiciary more professional as the ruling Communist Party seeks to quell public discontent. A statement on the Supreme Court's website promised specific deadlines for each goal, including support for a "social atmosphere of justice" by 2018.

It gave more details of a decision reached at a four-day meeting last year, when the party pledged to speed up legislation to fight corruption and make it tougher for officials to exert control over the judiciary. Despite the legal reforms, Chinese President Xi Jinping's administration has shown no interest in political change and has detained dozens of dissidents, including lawyers. China's top court stressed that one of the five basic principles of legal reform was adhering to the party's leadership and "ensuring the correct political orientation".

He Xiaorong, the director of the Supreme People's Court's reform division, said the court "would make officials bear respon-



Zhou Qiang, President of China's Supreme People's Court,

sibility for dereliction of duty" for cases that have a wide impact.

"Only through the establishment of such a system can we ensure that we can guarantee social fairness and justice in every case," He told a news conference, according to a transcript on the court's website. The measures reflect worries about rising social unrest. Anger over land grabs, corruption and pollution — issues often left unresolved by courts — have resulted in violence between police and residents in recent years, threatening social order.—Reuters

Gov't aims to expand ship inspections as support for foreign forces

TOKYO, 26 Feb — The government is considering expanding the scope of ship inspections conducted by the Self-Defence Forces as Japan aims to increase its logistical support for foreign troops undertaking global peace missions, senior ruling party lawmakers said on Thursday. Under the current legal framework, the SDF can inspect ships and their cargoes in times of contingencies in areas around Japan, and ask them to change course if necessary.

UN Security Council resolutions or approval by the flag state are required to conduct such operations, and foreign military ships

are not included.

The government made the proposal to Liberal Democratic Party Vice President Masahiko Komura and other senior lawmakers who are members of the ongoing coalition talks on security.

The ruling bloc is seeking to reach an agreement by the end of March on an outline of security-related legislation that will give teeth to a landmark Cabinet decision in July to rework Japan's security policy.

Within the LDP, which supports giving the SDF a greater role abroad, there are some lawmakers who question the effectiveness of the current law on ship

inspections. The government and the LDP are expected to consider making it easier for the SDF to conduct ship inspections with greater authority, the lawmakers said. The Komeito party, the junior coalition partner, is cautious about loosening the restrictions on the SDF.

The government proposed on 20 February that Japan should remove geographical limits on SDF operations and expand logistical support for foreign troops.—Kyodo News

Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew still in intensive care in hospital



Singapore's former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew

SINGAPORE, 26 Feb — Singapore's elder statesman Lee Kuan Yew is still in the intensive care unit of a hospital three weeks after being admitted with severe pneumonia, the government said on Thursday.

The 91-year-old Lee "is still warding in ICU at Singapore General Hospital," said a statement from the office of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, his son.

Lee's doctors "have restarted him on antibiotics, and are continuing to monitor him closely," the brief statement said. On Wednesday evening, several state-owned media quoted government sources dispelling rumors that he had died.

The senior Lee was Singapore's prime minister from 1959 until 1990 and has been credited for the small island state's transformation from a colonial backwater into Southeast Asia's wealthiest economy.

In a book he wrote, "One Man's View of the World," published in 2013, Lee revealed that he had an "advance medical directive" signed by a lawyer friend and a doctor that gave instructions that if he has to be fed by a tube and that it is unlikely that he will ever be able to recover and walk about, "my doctors are to remove the tube and allow me to make a quick exit."

Kyodo News

Philippine military kills 14 Abu Sayyaf militants in Mindanao

MANILA, 26 Feb — The Philippine military has killed 14 Abu Sayyaf militants and wounded 19 others in ongoing offensives in the southern island of Sulu in Mindanao from Wednesday, a military spokeswoman said on Thursday.

Capt Maria Rowena Muyuela said joint government forces have been engaging some 300 members of the al-Qaeda-linked Abu Sayyaf group in Patikul town since Wednesday morning and the firefight continued on Thursday.

The Abu Sayyaf, estimated to be no more than 500 in strength, was formed

in the 1990s and has since carried out, among others, deadly bombings and kidnappings-for-ransom, including of foreign nationals, making it one of the Philippines' most serious security threats.

Both the US and Philippine governments regard the Abu Sayyaf as a terrorist organization with links to al-Qaeda and the latter's Southeast Asian cell Jemaah Islamiyah.

Muyuela said two government troopers were killed and 16 others were wounded in the ongoing clash.

Kyodo News

Avalanches kill 186 in Afghanistan



Relatives of avalanche victims return after conducting a search for the victims in Panjshir Province on 25 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

KABUL, 26 Feb — More than 180 people have been killed in north Afghanistan in some of the worst avalanches there for 30 years, officials said on Thursday, with heavy snow set to last for two more days after an unusually dry winter led to fears of drought.

Officials warned of an imminent humanitarian emergency in areas most severely hit by the bad weather, with snow sweeping through villages and blocking off roads.

"We haven't seen this much snow, or this many avalanches, for 30 years," said Abdul Rahman Kabi-ri, acting governor of the mountainous province of Panjshir, north of Kabul, where 186 people were

killed and more than 100 injured in avalanches.

Despite bringing misery to so many people, the snow is vital for Afghanistan, where much of the rural population dependent on agriculture relies on snow melting in the mountains to sustain crops in the spring and summer.

Farming drives the troubled Afghan economy, with about three quarters of the people living in rural areas, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimated in 2004. Irrigation is not extensive in Afghanistan, most of which is semi-arid, and aid efforts over the past decade or more have focused on trying to extend it, with mixed results.—Reuters

WORLD

Australian PM strikes conciliatory note over Indonesia executions



Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott addresses members of the media after a party room meeting at Parliament House in Canberra on 9 Feb, 2015.

REUTERS

SYDNEY/JAKARTA, 26 Feb — Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott struck a conciliatory tone on Thursday after speaking with Indonesian President Joko Widodo about the looming execution of two convicted Australian drug traffickers.

Abbott said he spoke with his “friend” Widodo on Wednesday evening, adding that the Indonesian leader “absolutely understands our position ... and I think he is carefully considering Indonesia’s position”.

Widodo has denied

clemency to 11 convicts on death row, including Australian, French, and Brazilian nationals, ratcheting up diplomatic tensions amid repeated pleas for mercy.

Abbott had previously angered Jakarta by linking his pleas for clemency for the pair to Australia’s aid to Indonesia after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Jakarta responded by warning that threats were not part of diplomatic language.

“It was a positive sign that the conversation took place,” Abbott told reporters in Canberra. “It’s a sign

of the depth of the friendship between Australia and Indonesia.”

He declined to comment on the conversation in detail. “I don’t want to raise hope that might turn out to be dashed,” Abbott said.

“I want to ensure that as far as is humanly possible, I am speaking out for Australians and for Australian values, but I also have to respect and defend Australia’s friendships.”

Indonesian government officials have repeatedly said the planned executions, to be carried out by firing squads, would not be delayed or canceled despite diplomatic pressure. No date has been set for the executions. “We understand the efforts made by Australia to represent their nationals. That’s the duty of all governments,” said Armanatha Nasir, spokesman for Indonesia’s foreign ministry.

Widodo, who also took calls from Brazil, France, and the Netherlands this week, has warned those nations against interfering

in Indonesia’s sovereign affairs.

Brazil had a citizen executed last month and another is among the next group on death row, along with a French national, the Australians and seven others. A Dutch citizen was executed last month.

“We are keeping communications open with Brazil and we anticipate only good things in our relations with other countries,” Nasir said. Indonesia has harsh penalties for drug trafficking and resumed executions in 2013 after a five-year gap. On Tuesday, a court in Jakarta threw out an appeal by the two Australians, Myuran Sukumaran, 33, and Andrew Chan, 31, against Widodo’s rejection of their request for presidential clemency.

Lawyers for the members of the so-called Bali Nine group of Australians, convicted in 2005 as the ringleaders of a plot to smuggle heroin out of Indonesia, have said they plan to appeal against that decision.—*Reuters*

UAE court sentences six Iranians to life in jail over British businessman’s kidnap

DUBAI, 26 Feb — A court in the United Arab Emirates has sentenced six Iranians, three of them in absentia, to life in prison for kidnapping a British businessman who went missing in Dubai in 2013, newspapers reported on Thursday.

Abbas Yazdi, a businessman of Iranian descent who owns a general trading company in Dubai, disappeared in June 2013 and his wife, Atena, told a UAE newspaper at the time that she feared he may have been kidnapped by Iranian intelligence officers.

Iran has denied any role in Yazdi’s disappearance.

Prosecutors in Dubai have said the defendants attacked and drugged Yazdi and smuggled him out of the country to Iran through a port in the UAE emirate of Sharjah.

The Gulf News identified the three who stood trial as “RA” aged 32, “KG”, 52, and “NA” 55, and said they had denied the charges of kidnap, assault and theft. “RA” however admitted he had driven the car used in

the abduction, the newspaper said.

It identified the three convicted in absentia as “HB”, “BN” and “IN”. The newspaper added that a further defendant, identified as “SH”, who had planned the kidnapping, had died in custody.

UAE newspaper *7 Days* has cited Yazdi’s wife as saying the trader and investor, 44 at the time of his disappearance, was a close childhood friend of the son of former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

British media had reported that, at the time of his disappearance, Yazdi was giving evidence by video link to an international arbitration tribunal in The Hague intended to settle a long-running commercial dispute involving United Arab Emirates-based Crescent Petroleum and the National Iranian Oil Company.

There is no suggestion that this involvement in the arbitration is connected to his disappearance, British media have said.—*Reuters*

S Korean court rules adultery law unconstitutional

SEOUL, 26 Feb — South Korea’s Constitutional Court on Thursday ruled unconstitutional an adultery law regarding marital infidelity as a criminal act, abolishing a law enacted in 1953.

In the nine-member apex court, seven justices voted to scrap the law while two supported retaining the legislation.

Under the landmark ruling, about 5,000 people who were punished after 31 October, 2008, when the court last upheld the law, can seek to have their sentences overturned.

South Korea has been one of the few non-Muslim countries to retain such an

ti-cheating law. Adultery as a crime in South Korea was punishable by up to two years in jail.

Any unmarried person who knowingly had sexual relations with someone who is married was also liable for prosecution.

Critics demanded repeal of the law on the grounds it encroaches on individuals’ privacy to make decisions on their own sexual activities.

Supporters of the law argued it should be upheld to protect the maintenance of a family and women’s rights.

“The adultery law violates the Constitution by infringing on people’s rights

to make own decision on sex and also on freedom of being guaranteed with secrecy for privacy,” the majority ruling said, according to *Yonhap News Agency*.

“Not only is the anti-adultery law gradually losing its place in the world, it no longer reflects our people’s way of thinking,” the ruling said.

How to maintain a married life and a family should be left to the free affection of those involved, the ruling said.

Meanwhile, two justices who voted to retain the law said in their ruling that the law “needs to safeguard sex morals and maintain the system of a marriage

and a family.”

The law has been deliberated by the Constitutional Court four times and was upheld each time before on grounds that social morality would be weakened. In 1990 and 1993, three out of nine Constitutional Court judges voted to scrap the law, but in 2001 only one did. In 2008, the law was upheld by a slimmer majority.

It is rare for people to be jailed, but that does not stop thousands of angry spouses from filing criminal complaints each year.

More than 100,000 people have been punished for violating the law since 1953.—*Kyodo News*



Hajime Funada (C), head of the Liberal Democratic Party’s taskforce to promote constitutional change, speaks during a meeting in Tokyo on 26 Feb, 2015, to discuss the issue of amending the supreme law. Funada and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have agreed that a constitutional change should be proposed following an upper house election to be held in the summer of 2016. —Kyodo News

Japanese investors in China look to Bangladesh for new investment

DHAKA, 26 Feb — Japanese companies invested in China feel there are better trade opportunities coming in Bangladesh this year and are considering Bangladesh as their next destination after India, according to a recent survey by the Japan External Trade Organization.

JETRO’s Dhaka office, in a release highlighting the survey results, stated most

Japanese firms currently operating in China are attracted by low production costs in Bangladesh.

According to the survey, 71.7 percent of Japanese firms in China want to take advantage of opportunities in Bangladesh, 78.2 percent in India, 66.0 percent in Vietnam and 60.9 percent in Thailand.

JETRO has been conducting similar surveys

since 1987, gathering opinions from 10,078 firms from 20 countries.

Last year, it also interviewed chief executive officers of the firms between October and November.

The survey said Bangladesh has the lowest worker wage levels among competing countries, with wages in the manufacturing sector in Bangladesh averaging \$100 a month.

Wages in Cambodia, second-lowest, average \$113 a month.

In addition, around 84 percent of the CEOs in the survey think Bangladesh has the widest room for cost-cutting. In comparison to Japan, the cost of production in Bangladesh is less than half at 48.7 percent, while it is 77 percent in China and 71 percent in Vietnam. The average rate

of productivity in Bangladesh is 31.6 percent, while it is 44.4 percent in China and 42.1 percent in India.

The rate in Sri Lanka is 77.8 percent and 68.4 percent in Pakistan, the study indicates.

The survey, however, suggests worker efficiency in Bangladesh can be improved through basic education and vocational training.—*Kyodo News*

PERSPECTIVES

Friday, 27 February, 2015

Educational benefits are beyond doubt

By Kyaw Thura

Myanmar has witnessed dramatic structural reforms in politics, economy and education in the past few years. These efforts have got the country back on track to democracy, with the result that it now basks in the adulation of the international community.

Despite improvements in other sectors, the educational policy is found still lying in tatters. Universities and schools receive low budgets, thereby making their management difficult and

their development sluggish.

It is however an encouraging sign that the country is restructuring its university system in collaboration with international institutions with the aim of pumping more investments into upgrading schools and universities nationwide. The efforts to tie up with foreign institutions will enable the country to secure more funds and other resources. In addition, Yangon University has now come alive with students taking various courses, with foreign professors and experts engaged in updating syllabuses and curricula in several disciplines.

In a sense, the opening in itself is a trap. It is impossible to let every institution come in and play a dominant role in our educational reform. Take private primary and secondary schools. Most of them are run by foreign investors, with wealthy families being their prime target and making enormous demands on ordinary families.

This highlights that the government needs to

do something serious in promising more spending on education in order to raise the education standard. When it comes to the education system in the country, much remains to be done.

For our education to move forward and keep abreast of international standards, all that stakeholders need to do is create an education environment where teachers teach and train and students learn and practise. Whether education can enrich the social welfare of the grass roots of society is beyond doubt.

Write for us

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

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

DEMOCRACY

Kyi Mun

1. (C&U) (country with principles of) government in which all adult citizens share through their elected representatives.
2. (C&U) (country with) government which encourages and allows rights of citizenship such as freedom of speech, religion, opinion, and association, the assertion of the rule of law, majority rule, accompanied by respect for the rights of minorities.
3. (C&U) (society in which there is) treatment of each other by citizens as equals.

- The Advanced Learner's Dictionary

- D** for Defense and Development of the National Sovereignty, Independence and Freedom.
- E** for Enhancement of Human Rights
- M** for Motherland's Unity, Solidarity & Fraternity
- O** for Open Society & Culture with National Characteristics
- C** for Civil, Cultural and Educational Development
- R** for Reforms of Politics, Economy, Technology and Socio-Culture
- A** for Alignment of Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers
- C** for Commitment to Freedom of Speech, Publication and Assembly
- Y** for Yielding of the Fruits of Liberty, Equality and Justice

Development and Defense of the National Sovereignty, Independence and Freedom

In every democratic country, the primary importance is the development and defense of the national sovereignty, independence and freedom. Under the conditions of political, economic, educational and socio-cultural overt and covert invasions of the globalization age, it is imperative to safeguard our own sovereignty, independence and freedom.

Enhancement of Human Rights

In a democracy, human rights are of supreme importance. The prevalence of full human rights in the political, economic, educational, cultural and religious fields has become more and more important in the present-day world of great divides. The world of today has to face many contradictions and conflicts internally as well as externally. Hence, the importance of safeguarding the national sovereignty, etc.

Motherland's Unity, Solidarity and Fraternity

In the age of democracy, the unity, solidarity and fraternity of the Motherland is of supreme importance. Political and economic imperialism might be on the waning trend, but we have got to be very vigilant to safeguard ourselves against the onslaught of socio-cultural imperialist tendencies. If a herd of cows is divided within itself, the danger of the tiger always prevails, it is said as a proverb in Myanmar.

Open Society & Culture with National Characteristics

Every democratic country has got to preserve its own traditions of socio-cultural heritage. But, we cannot afford to live and move and have our being in a closed environment. A democratic country is obliged to be an open country with the proviso of preserving the national culture and traditions. A democratic country has got to be strategically nationalistic but tactically internationalistic.

Civil, Cultural and Educational Development

In a democratic country, it is a matter of top priority to continuously develop the civil, cultural and educational standards of its people. Every nation's caliber is the sum total of the standards of its people in civil, cultural and educational spheres. For the optimum development of democracy, the maximum attainment of education by its people is imperative. In fact, education is the cornerstone of the foundation of democracy.

Reforms of Political, Economical, Financial, Educational, Legal and Environmental Fields

In a democracy, the radical reforms in the political, economical, financial, educational, legal and environmental spheres are of vital importance. In democratizing a country, the vision, mission, goal, objectives, strategy and

tactics of the ruling elite must be squarely based on the objective requirements of the broad masses of the people as a whole.

Alignment of Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers

In a democracy, there must be the three separate pillars of Executive, Legislative and Judicial Powers which ought to be ideally interdependent and collaborative for maximum effect. The three pillars must be of equal strength and importance, but they must be strategically operated in co-operation and consultation for the maximum development of democracy. The fourth pillar of Public Media should act as the Umpire.

Commitment to Freedoms of Assembly, Speech, Opinion, Publication, etc

Without the full-fledged prevalence of the freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of publication, freedom of movement, etc., a democracy will surely be an out and out hypocrisy. The very essence of democracy is that man should be born in freedom, die in freedom, and live and move and have their being in freedom in between.

Yielding of the Fruits of Liberty, Equality and Justice

A democracy that doesn't yield an abundance of the fruits of Liberty, Equality and Justice is certainly a sham democracy. In a true democracy, scarcity, severity and sorrow should be wiped out, and peace, progress and prosperity must positively prevail.

CONCLUSION

D	=	Dedication to Freedom
E	=	Education
M	=	Mission
O	=	Objective
C	=	Commitment
R	=	Responsibility
A	=	Accountability
C	=	Competency
Y	=	You for All; All for You

U Kyi Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co.,Ltd.

Draft of Myanmar national prevention of violence against women law to be submitted to Hluttaw in April or May

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 26 Feb — A draft of Myanmar's national prevention of violence against women law will be submitted to the Pyithu Hluttaw (lower house) in

April or May this year, according to an organizing body. Daw Myint Swe, leader of the Violence against Women Working Group, of the Myanmar

Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF), said the main aim of the law is to promote the elimination of violence against women.

"The law covers a total of 20 chapters such as prevention of all forms of violence, tough penalties and

rights to inheritance," said Daw May Sabei Phyu of the Gender Equity Network (GEN), who called on the policymakers to include provisions on marital rape and other forms of partner abuse.

Since 2013, the law

has been drafted by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in cooperation with UN Gender Theme Group, the GEN, the MWAFF and other organizations.

According to the GEN's research paper released on Monday, a majority of Myanmar women experience some forms of both physical and psychological violence from their partners. It is found that a number of those victims

have to financially rely a lot on their spouses.

"This study can help the policymakers in drawing up the evidence-based policies in the country," said Daw May Sabei Phyu, adding that continued efforts will be made to make ensure that officials concerned thoroughly understand these suggestions.

She said the organization will disseminate the law to the public when it comes out. —GNLM

NATIONAL

Union FM meets Sri Lankan Ambassador to Myanmar



Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin receives Mr. Handunnethi Rannulu Piyasiri, Ambassador of Sri Lanka.
MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received Mr. Handunnethi Rannulu Pi-

yasiri, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, who will be leaving soon upon completion of his tour of duty, today at 16.30 hrs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed and exchanged views on enhancing their friendly ties of relations and cooperation in a cordial manner.

MNA

ITBMU offers suggestions on proposed national education bill

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — The International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University has suggested sticking to a clause embedded in the National Education Law that requires social and religious organizations to seek approval from relevant ministries to run schools, warning that its exclusion will

amount to losing control over religious schools. The proposed national education bill has excluded that clause.

The university called for leaving out some paragraphs concerning the use of 'mother tongue', stressing possible different shades of interpretation.

"It will mean different races like Chinese and

Bengalis are allowed to use their own languages in schools."

Another suggestion is concerned with the reconsideration of the abolition of a proposal that holds the government accountable for capacity enhancement of teachers and acquisition of international experience.

MNA

NNER, CSOs discuss bill amending national education law

YANGON, 26 Feb — The National Network for Education Reform held a discussion with civil society organizations over the bill amending the National Education Law agreed by the four-party talks at House of Media and Entertainment in Botahtaung Township in Yangon on Thursday afternoon.

Organizer James of the discussions said that he believes it would be more beneficial for Hlut-taw representative to learn the points of view and decisions of civil society organizations over the bill and the discussions were held to explain the bill more comprehensively.

At the discussions, Dr Thein Lwin of the NNER said that the network was linked with individuals and organizations that were

interested in education reform and the network had held discussions in 25 places across the country to draft the bill. Then, Ko Nanda Sit Aung of the Action Committee for Democracy Education Movement explained the situations of

student protestors.

U Thein Baw, who attended the discussions, said that negotiations would be smooth if both sides discussed without prejudice and tolerance was essential to resolve further issues but it was important to tell the



NNER and CSOs hold discussions on amendment of national education law.—MNA

Myanmar Gazette

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred the following heads of service organizations shown against them from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Win Khant Director-General Department of Transport Ministry of Transport	Managing Director Inland Water Transport Ministry of Transport
(b) Professor Dr Shwe Toe Rector University of Dental Medicine (Mandalay) Medical Science Department Ministry of Health	Rector University of Dental Medicine (Yangon) Medical Science Department Ministry of Health
The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.	
Name	Appointment
(a) Dr Khin Maung Latt Deputy Director-General Atomic Energy Department Ministry of Science and Technology	Director-General Atomic Energy Department Ministry of Science and Technology
(b) U Win Maw Tun Deputy Director-General Department of Technical and Vocational Education Ministry of Science and Technology	Director-General Department of Technical and Vocational Education Ministry of Science and Technology

Tatmadaw accelerates military operations in Laukkai

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — Tatmadaw columns have speeded up their military operations to comb Laukkai area of insurgents, forcing them to hide in jungles and mountains and ambush the Tatmadaw columns.

On 25 February, the insurgents ambushed Tatmadaw columns in the northeast of Laukkai, between Chinshwehaw and Lonhtan and at 23 milepost between Laukkai and

Kongyan and skirmishes erupted.

In the afternoon on the same day, the military column moving to Laukkai to reinforce the Tatmadaw forces in the area was ambushed by KIA (Kachin) and SSA (Wanghai) troops near Namslam and Tatmadaw columns are combing them out of the area.

On Thursday morning, a skirmish broke out between a Tatmadaw col-

umn and Kokang insurgents near Manchu village in Laukkai and Tatmadaw troops are pursuing the insurgent.

During the skirmishes, Tatmadaw troops seized a body of insurgents, one M22, 5 Chinese grenades, 286 bullets and 13 MN-DAA uniforms while 4 officers and other ranks of the Tatmadaw lost lives and three others were injured.

Myawady

A map show clashes between government's troops and Kokang insurgents in Laukkai region



German conservatives back Greek aid extension in test vote

BERLIN, 26 Feb — An overwhelming majority of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives supported an extension of the Greek bailout in a test ballot on Thursday, one day before a vote in the Bundestag lower house of parliament, according to participants.

In the test ballot, 22 lawmakers in the conservative bloc opposed the ex-

tension and five abstained. In total, there are 311 lawmakers in the bloc, which includes members of the chancellor's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its sister party, the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU).

The Social Democrats (SPD), who share power with Merkel's conservatives, voted unanimously for the extension in their

test vote, participants told Reuters.

The coalition has a big enough majority to easily win the vote on Friday to extend the rescue by four months. Still, many lawmakers, including Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, have expressed concern in recent days about whether Athens can be counted on to stick to its reform promises.—Reuters



A Greek national flag flutters as Greek Orthodox priests make their way on main Constitution (Syntagma) square in Athens on 25 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

Protests continue in Venezuela as teen shot by police is buried

SAN CRISTOBAL, (Venezuela), 26 Feb — Sporadic protests flared in different parts of Venezuela on Wednesday, a day after a policeman shot dead a teenager during a demonstration against President Nicolas Maduro's government in the volatile city of San Cristobal.

The worst unrest was again in San Cristobal, where distraught relatives of 14-year-old Kluibert Roa held a wake and funeral following his killing on Tuesday.

Witnesses said dozens of masked protesters faced off with security forces in streets blocked with rubbish and tires, and two police motorcycles were burned in the Andean city, a center of last year's anti-Maduro protests and violence that killed 43 people.

Local authorities declared a day of mourning, and many shops stayed closed in fear of trouble as well as to honour Roa.

"My son was neither an opposition supporter nor



Opposition supporters shout during a gathering to protest the death of a student in Tachira State, in Caracas on 25 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

a 'Chavista,' he was my son, the apple of my eye," his father, Erick Roa, said at the funeral. "They killed an innocent person."

Some 200 students and neighbours are camping out at the site of Roa's death and have installed an altar in his honour.

Maduro, the successor to late socialist leader Hugo Chavez, condemned Roa's death but also charged that violent radicals in San Cristobal and elsewhere are seeking to oust him.

The exact circumstances of Roa's death remain unclear.

Relatives and students insist he was a bystander to the protests and targeted at point-blank range, while authorities say he was shot when police were cornered by thugs. A 23-year-old policeman has been detained and charged.

The case has exacerbated tensions amid a severe economic crisis and government crackdown on opposition leaders it accus-

es of conspiring to topple Maduro with US aid. Foes say Maduro is panicked at his falling popularity and the prospect of losing control of parliament in a vote later this year.

In Caracas, dozens of opposition supporters rallied at the Interior Ministry and marched to the Vatican envoy's office.

In the western city of Maracaibo, hooded opposition members burned a truck carrying medicines, Maduro said. "Is that a democratic struggle or terrorism?" the president asked during a rally in the southern city of Guayana.

In Tachira's town of Rubio, protesters hijacked and burned a truck belonging to state oil company PDVSA that was transporting gas, authorities said.

Venezuela's perpetual political tensions spiked last week with the arrest of Caracas Mayor Antonio Ledezma, whom the government accused of backing a coup attempt.

Reuters

Colombia peace deal should ensure criminals held to account — Annan



Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos (L) shakes hands with former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the presidential palace in Bogota on 23 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

BOGOTA, 26 Feb — Those responsible for crimes committed during Colombia's 50-year war must be held accountable as part of a peace deal between the government and Marxist rebels, ex-United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said on Wednesday.

Annan, who led the international organization for nine years, visited Colombia to meet with President Juan Manuel Santos, judicial authorities and the head of the opposition, former President Alvaro Uribe. He has no official role in Colombia's peace process but is hoping to promote progress.

The ex-secretary general will now head to Cuba, where he will meet with negotiators from the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels at the talks, a bid to end the five-decade conflict which has killed 220,000 people and displaced millions.

"All those who committed crimes should be held accountable," Annan said at a Press conference. "However, justice should be adapted to Colombia's context at the same time that it respects international laws."

Whether the rebels will serve jail time is a thorny issue at the two-year-old negotiations. The guerrillas have said they will not accept prison sentences for what they say is a political struggle against state aggression.

But opposition figures including Uribe say that the FARC must pay for human rights violations committed during the conflict.

Santos has said the country needs to find a middle ground which allows those who committed massacres, rapes, forced displacements and disappearances to confess, ask for forgiveness and provide reparations to victims.

"We are conscious that no one measure is appropriate for everyone," said Annan. "Ending such a long war isn't easy. Passions and tensions will not disappear immediately and dialogue is important to control tensions and avoid differences."

Negotiators have so far reached partial agreements on land reform, political participation for ex-rebels and an end to the illegal drugs trade. Discussions on victim reparations and demobilization are ongoing.—Reuters

Kiev likely to order heavy artillery withdrawal

KIEV, 26 Feb — Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko is likely to order government forces to start pulling back heavy weapons in the country's east on Thursday under a 12 February peace deal, a military source said.

"We expect the statement by the president later today," the

source said. Separatists say they have started to pull back heavy weapons under the agreement. Kiev has said its forces will start pulling back their big guns only when the shooting stops, and fighting has eased considerably in the past few days.

Reuters
Military vehicles of the Ukrainian armed forces are seen near Artemivsk, eastern Ukraine, on 25 Feb, 2015. REUTERS



Russian fighters jets to stage exercises over Barents Sea

MOSCOW, 26 Feb — Russian fighter jets will take part in exercises on thwarting a potential missile attack in the Barents Sea, RIA news agency said on Thursday.

It said MiG-31 jets were taking part in the initial part of the exercises in the Perm region and the next stage would be launched in the next few days from the Monchegorsk airfield in the Murmansk region of northern Russia.

The Barents Sea is off the coasts of Russia and NATO member state Norway. NATO states have voiced concern over an increase in Russian military exercises and "near misses" with Russian military aircraft since the conflict in east Ukraine began.—Reuters

WORLD

Four bombs explode in Cairo, one killed

CAIRO, 26 Feb — One person was killed and two were wounded when a bomb exploded outside a restaurant in the residential Imbaba district of Cairo on Thursday, the Egyptian Interior Ministry said in a statement.

Three other bombs exploded in the nearby and mainly middle-class district of Mohandeseen, the interior ministry said. They caused limited damage to mobile phone shops, but no injuries.

While most of the worst attacks in Egypt have hit the Sinai peninsula, a remote but strategic region bordering Gaza, Israel and the Suez Canal, smaller blasts have become increasingly common in Cairo and other cities.

Television footage on Thursday showed the facade of a small restaurant damaged, and shrapnel along a street.

There was no claim of responsibility for the attacks.—*Reuters*

Suicide bomb strikes top NATO envoy team in Afghanistan



Turkish soldiers take pictures of a vehicle at the site of a suicide attack in Kabul on 26 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

KABUL, 26 Feb — A suicide bomber rammed a car laden with explosives into a vehicle belonging to NATO's top envoy in Afghanistan, killing one Turkish soldier and wounding at least one person, Turkish officials said.

The explosion struck in the heart of the heavily fortified capital Kabul, close to the German, Iranian and Turkish embassies, rattling windows and putting embassy staff on high alert.

The NATO Senior Civilian Representative and former Turkish ambassador to Afghanistan could not immediately be reached by phone. Details on his location at the time of the attack were unclear.

"A car bomb attack has been carried out on the vehicle of the security team of Turkish envoy Ismail Aramaz," the Turkish military said in a statement.

The Taliban swiftly claimed responsibility but appeared to have mistaken the Turkish security team for a US convoy, clarifying on Twitter that they had not intended to kill any other country's citizens.

"The purpose of today's attack in Kabul was a convoy of US troops. The embassy or any other country nationals were not objective," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid tweeted. The Senior Civilian Representative's vehicles are factory-made, armored Mercedes SUVs. The Afghan interior ministry said the



Afghan policemen stand at the site of a suicide attack in Kabul on 26 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

one targeted belonged to the Turkish embassy and the driver had been killed in the explosion.

A security report circulated among international security sources in Kabul showed the car had caught fire after the blast, and was burning on its side at the edge of the road just outside the so-called Green Zone.

It was the second time a diplomatic vehicle has been targeted by insurgents in the capital in recent months, after a British embassy car was attacked by a suicide bomber in November.

Afghanistan has taken over full responsibility for efforts to end the Taliban insurgency with the withdrawal of most foreign troops at the end of last year.—*Reuters*

US charges three with conspiring to support Islamic State

NEW YORK, 26 Feb — Three men were charged on Wednesday with conspiring to support Islamic State, including two who planned to travel to Syria to fight on behalf of the radical group, US authorities said. One of the men, Akhror Saidakhmetov, 19, of Kazakhstan, was arrested on Wednesday at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York, where authorities said he was attempting to board a flight to Turkey on his way to Syria.

Another defendant, Abdurasul Hasanovich Juraboev, 24, of Uzbekistan, previously purchased a ticket for a March flight to Istanbul, said Loretta Lynch, US Attorney in Brooklyn.

Abror Habibov, 30, of Uzbekistan, was accused of funding Saidakhmetov's efforts. All three men live in Brooklyn.

At a hearing in Brooklyn federal court for Juraboev and Saidakhmetov, Adam Perlmutter, a lawyer for Saidakhmetov, called his client "a very young



New York Police Department Commissioner Bill Bratton (C) speaks while Diego Rodriguez (L), Assistant Director in Charge New York Field Office of the FBI, and Bill Sweeney, special agent in charge of the Counterterrorism Division of the New York Field Office, look on during a news conference about three men charged with conspiring to support Islamic State, in New York on 25 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

man" and said they would fight the case "vigorously."

Habibov was expected to appear in federal court in Jacksonville, Florida, on Wednesday as well.

Juraboev drew the attention of federal agents when he posted messages on an Uzbek-language website stating his desire to join Islamic State and his willingness to kill US President Barack Obama. A US-led coalition has

been fighting Islamic State, which controls swaths of Iraq and Syria.

Agents interviewed Juraboev at his home in August 2014, when he acknowledged wanting to fight for Islamic State in Syria and confirmed he would be willing to harm Obama, according to the criminal complaint.

He also told the agents about a friend, Saidakhmetov, who shared sim-

ilar views, the complaint said.

Investigators recorded conversations between the two men using a confidential informant who approached Juraboev at a mosque, posing as a sympathizer.

The men discussed how to carry out attacks in the United States, according to the complaint.

"I will just go and buy a machine gun, AK-47, go out and shoot all police," Saidakhmetov said during one conversation, the complaint said.

Saidakhmetov worked for Habibov, who operates mobile phone repair kiosks in malls in Florida, Georgia, Virginia and Pennsylvania, prosecutors said.

Habibov paid for Saidakhmetov's ticket and promised additional funds, according to the complaint.

A number of others have been charged recently with aiding Islamic State. At a speech in Washington earlier on Wednesday, FBI Director James Comey said Islamic State was using propaganda to attract "troubled souls."

Comey said there are Islamic State-related investigations into homegrown extremists in all 50 states.

Reuters

Islamic State in Syria has abducted 220 from Christian villages this week

BEIRUT, 26 Feb — Islamic State militants have abducted at least 220 people from Assyrian Christian villages in northeastern Syria during a three-day offensive, a monitor that tracks violence in Syria said on Thursday. The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the abductions took place when Islamic State took 10 villages inhabited by the ancient Christian minority near Hasaka, a city mainly held by the Kurds, over the past three days.

Hundreds of Christians have now fled to the two main cities in Hasaka Province, according to the Syriac National Council, a Syrian Christian group.

"ISIS now controls ten Christian villages," Observatory head Rami Abdulrahman said by phone, using an acronym name for Islamic State. "They have taken the people they kidnapped away from the villages and into their territory," he said.

Islamic State has not claimed any of the abductions. The Observatory tracks the conflict using a network of sources on all sides of the civil war which spiralled as security forces used violence to suppress protests against President Bashar al-Assad's rule in 2011.

Islamic State has killed members of religious minorities and Sunni Muslims who do not swear allegiance to its self-declared "caliphate". The group last week released a video showing its members beheading 21 Egyptian Coptic Christians in Libya.

The abductions in Syria follow advances by Kurdish forces against Islamic State in parts of the northeast near the Iraqi border, an area of vital importance to the group as one of the bridges between land it controls in Iraq and Syria.—*Reuters*

India unveils populist yet reformist railway budget

NEW DELHI, 26 Feb — India on Thursday unveiled its railway budget for the next financial year, in what is being billed as a populist yet reformist one.

Indian Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu presented Prime Minister Narendra Modi government's first full-fledged budget in the Parliament, keeping passenger fares intact and announcing to invest a record 137 billion US dollars to revive the ailing train networks in the next five years.

The Minister also pledged to make the world's fourth largest railway network an abode of cleanliness and spelt out measures to improve passenger safety like installations of closed-circuit TV cameras in women com-

partments and launching a pan-India helpline.

"There will be no hike in passenger fares. But there will be an SMS service to inform passengers about train timings and Wi-Fi services will also be available at 400 railway stations," Prabhu said, but he did not announce any additional trains, in a clear move away from tradition.

On investments of 137 billion US dollars over the next five years, he said that the infusion would include funds raised by market borrowing. "Spending will be focused on improving and expanding existing railway lines," he said.

Spelling out passenger safety, the minister said that surveillance cameras would soon be introduced in select trains and subur-

ban trains for women safety. "We will also start an all India toll free helpline number 182 for safety related complaints," he said.

In accordance with Modi's "Clean India campaign," he announced a series of measures in this regard, including replacement of ordinary toilets in trains with bio toilets in the future. He also appealed to commuters to keep trains clean.

In the beginning of his budget speech, he laid out four goals — sustainable improvement in customer experience, making railways a safer means of travel, expansion of capacity and modernizing rail infrastructure, and attaining financial sustainability.

The Indian prime minister has hailed the budget,



Indian Railway minister Suresh Prabhu (C) holds the briefcase containing the railway budget for the year 2015-16 upon arrival at the parliament in New Delhi, India, on 26 Feb, 2015. India's railway budget, to be presented later on Thursday, will signal the direction of long-term reforms needed to revamp the world's fourth-largest rail network, Prabhu said. —XINHUA

saying that arrangements have been made for women's security, helpline, better food and how to make world class railway stations. "Rail budgets used to

focus on adding number of coaches but now its development centric. We want services that are transparent. The railways minister has taken step towards cor-

ruption-free future," Modi said. The Indian Railways criss-crosses the country from north to south, carrying millions of passengers daily.—Xinhua

Two Japanese in most powerful Asian businesswomen list from Forbes

SINGAPORE, 26 Feb — Two Japanese women have made it onto international business magazine *Forbes'* list of Asia's 50 most powerful businesswomen this year, the magazine said on Thursday.

Mayumi Kotani, president of Japanese industrial robot maker Yushin Precision Equipment Co, was lauded by the magazine for her successful leadership in the male-dominated manufacturing sector.

Takako Suzuki heads ST Corp, a major Japanese maker of mothproofing agents, deodorizers and air fresheners founded by her father.

The magazine said her company reaped over \$400 million in sales in the year through March 2014 and also practices gender diversity, with four women among its nine board directors. *Forbes* said its selection is based on factors such as the women being active in the upper echelons of the business world in Asia, wielding significant power and having access to robust financial resources.

China dominated the list, with nine women from the mainland, followed by India and Thailand with six each on the list.

Kyodo News

Japanese Buddhist monk-actor trying to promote Zen in Germany

BERLIN, 26 Feb — A 34-year-old Japanese Buddhist monk and actor living in Berlin is trying to teach his students there "how to apply Zen wisdom to modern life."

Seigaku, who was born Seitaro Higuchi in Yonago, Tottori Prefecture, in January 1981, became an actor when he was a student at Tokyo's Keio University, and encountered Zen Buddhism as part of his actor's training.

"I recognized that acting and Buddhism are the same in the sense that each requires the practitioners to know themselves," he said.

He spent three years undergoing relentless train-

ing at Eiheiiji, the head temple of Soto Zen Buddhism, in Fukui Prefecture. Life at the temple was the absolute opposite of ordinary daily life, but he did not consider it painful.

Seigaku said he listened to the "voices of my body" during Zen meditation, ate simple meals and cleaned floors until they were spotless.

"As we don't know what will happen tomorrow, we should do what we can do today," he said, recalling his conclusion that Zen can be practiced even in big cities.

In October 2011, Seigaku moved to Berlin with his wife on a scholarship

from a temple in Yokohama. As the scholarship lasted for only a year, Seigaku said he and his wife, who now have two children, "are barely surviving."

But he has no worries about life as the participants in his Zen meditation sessions make donations from time to time, and he also receives bread and vegetables when he goes out to seek alms.

The meditation sessions are held at a cafe early in the morning and attended by about 10 people of various nationalities, including German, Spanish, Brazilian and Japanese.

Zen Buddhism is based on living a humble life and

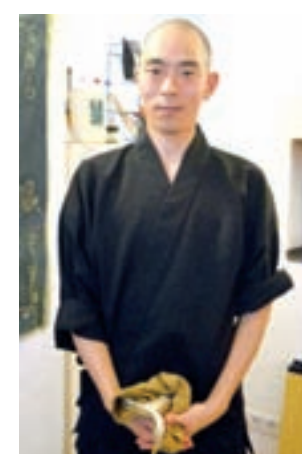
so can be widely accepted in Germany, with its large population of Christians who respect living in honorable poverty, according to Seigaku.

Seigaku published an introductory book about Zen Buddhism in Japan in 2012 which attracted many readers, and has just released another in January.

"Our 3-year-old first son has recently begun sitting in a Zen fashion following our example," Seigaku said.

Although Seigaku has stayed away from acting for so long, he said he still intends to pursue a career in that field as well.

Kyodo News



Seigaku, a 33-year-old Japanese actor-turned-monk as seen in this file photo taken on 4 Sept, 2014, hosts Zen meditation sessions at a cafe in Berlin. KYODO NEWS

Russia's Gazprom says can exempt rebel-held areas from Ukraine gas contract



The Gazprom logo is seen on the side of the company's headquarters in Moscow, on 24 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

Moscow, 26 Feb — Kremlin-controlled Gazprom said on Thursday it would exempt gas supplies to rebel-held regions from its main contract with Ukrainian Naftogaz, days before Kiev uses up gas volumes it has already paid for. The

dispute flared up last week when Gazprom said it started direct gas supplies to the regions of eastern Ukraine held by pro-Moscow rebels. Gazprom said Naftogaz would have to pay for these supplies to the rebel-held areas. But on Thursday,

Gazprom spokesman Sergei Kupriyanov said: "We are ready at the moment to exclude our gas supplies to Donbass from our discussions (with Ukraine)."

He also told the Rossiya-24 TV channel that Ukraine had prepaid for Russian gas until the end of the week. Gazprom and Ukrainian state energy firm Naftogaz have accused each other of not sticking to agreements on gas supplies. Kiev has said it was unable to control gas flows to east Ukraine and pay for it. It has earlier accused Gazprom of reducing gas supplies to Ukraine.

When asked if Russia in theory would be ready to supply gas to east Ukraine free of charge, Kremlin

spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "I can not speak of supplies now. But of course, these issues would be urgently considered if needed."

President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday that Russia would halt gas supplies to Ukraine if it did not receive advance payment, raising the possibility of onward deliveries to Europe being disrupted for the fourth time in a decade.

Europe received around 147 billion cubic meters of Russian gas last year — or around a third of its total needs — with roughly 40 percent shipped via Ukraine. The Gazprom spokesman said that Ukraine had only 206 million cubic metres left for which Kiev had already

paid.

"With the current level of supplies, prepayments will be enough only up till the end of the week. If Kiev doesn't make new payments, we, naturally, won't be able to continue supplying Ukraine with gas," he said.

Moscow cut off supplies to Kiev last June and restored them only in December, after a European-brokered deal secured supplies through the winter. Under the deal, Ukraine is required to pay in advance for gas. The so-called winter gas deal is due to expire at the end of next month, with Kiev managing to reduce its dependence on direct Russian gas supplies over the last year. —Reuters

ADVERTISEMENT & GENERAL

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES — FIRMS SELECTION)The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Electric Power Project

Credit No.: IDA-53060-MM

Assignment Title: Implementation Consultant of CCGT power plant at Thaton, Mon State, Myanmar

Reference No.: MEPE-CS-8

The Ministry of Electric Power has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Electric Power Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services plans to build a 105 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plants at Thaton, Mon State, Myanmar. MEPE invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. The consulting services ("the Services") include the following scopes:

1. Project Management
2. Design Audit and Construction Supervision
3. Testing and Commissioning
4. Training and Capacity Development
5. Environment and Social Management
6. Contract Administrative/Financial management

The Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE) now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services.

The shortlisting criteria are:

1. The firm should have the general experience in power plant engineering and construction management for at least twenty five (25) years.
2. The firm should have provided consulting services involving design audit and construction supervision for at least two CCGT projects with the capacity of 100MW or over that the firm has successfully competed in the last 10 (ten) years; and
3. The firm should have experience of working in the Client's country or similar country environment.

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to paragraph 1.9 of the World Bank's Guidelines: *Selection and Employment of Consultants [under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants] by World Bank Borrowers January 2011 ("Consultant Guidelines")*, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

Consultants may associate with other firms in the form of a joint venture or a sub-consultancy to enhance their qualifications.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality Cost-based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Consultant Guidelines.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours [09:30 to 16:30 hours].

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in person, or by mail or by e-mail) by the close of business of **16th March, 2015**.

Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE)

Attn: U Win Myint, Chief Engineer,

Thermal Power Department

Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise

Ministry of Electric Power

Building No. 27, Nay Pyi Taw

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Telephone: +95 67 410443, 410557

Email: gtceoffice@gmail.com

Tsuyako Matsumoto (L) holds a photo carrying a message from US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy at a nursing home in the northern Japan city of Kitami on 26 Feb, 2015. Matsumoto gifted a set of traditional Japanese "hina" dolls to the ambassador's father, President John F Kennedy, in 1962. The panel was delivered by JoEllen Gorg (R), principal officer at the US Consulate General in Sapporo City, on behalf of Kennedy. —KYODO NEWS

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND
INTERPRETER/TRANSLATOR
MYANMAR — ENGLISH
ASSIGNMENTS IN MYANMAR

The International Monetary Fund is seeking Myanmar-based **interpreter/translators** to work under short-term contracts for its missions to Yangon and/or Nay Pyi Taw as well as under long-term contracts for its technical assistance (TA) experts in Nay Pyi Taw. Candidates must be professional interpreters with knowledge of economic terminology, capable of interpreting **into Myanmar and English** and producing final written translations into both languages in electronic format. Assignments with TA experts may also involve office support and administrative duties. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed and asked to take interpretation and translation tests in Yangon.

Please send your CV listing your qualifications, interpretation and translation experience, and your complete contact information **by March 20, 2015** to languagecandidates@imf.org.

Attn: Mrs. Susana Eri, Chief Interpreter
(Subject line should contain MMR-missions", "MMR-long-term projects", or both)

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV BAO JI VOY NO (CAM058)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BAO JI VOY NO (CAM058) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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 Claims 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 CAM SHIPPING
CO LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

US envoy Kennedy sends letter
to thank Japanese woman for
doll set gift

TOKYO, 26 Feb — US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy sent a letter on Thursday to thank a 92-year-old woman from Kitami, Hokkaido Prefecture who gifted a set of traditional Japanese dolls decades ago that is now on display at the envoy's residence in Tokyo.

The letter was delivered to Tsuyako Matsumoto, who now lives in a nursing home in Kitami, by JoEllen Gorg, principal officer at the US Consulate

General in Sapporo City, on behalf of Kennedy, who had official duties elsewhere.

Matsumoto sent the "hina" dolls to the ambassador's father, President John F Kennedy, at the White House in 1962. She said she was inspired to give the gift after writing to President Kennedy one day and receiving back a letter expressing gratitude from a presidential secretary.

The ambassador has kept the set since her childhood. The dolls are typically on display at Japanese homes for the 3 March Girls' Day festival.

The sender was discovered after Kennedy solicited support from the news media to discover the origins of the gift when she visited Sapporo earlier this month.

Kyodo News

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 2nd March (Monday) "Peasant Day" and 4th (Wednesday) "Full Moon of Tabaung Day" 2015 being public holidays under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims 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 CONTINETAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (118)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESM CREMONA VOY NO (118) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.2.2015 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 Claims 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 ORINET OVERSEAS
CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

WEATHER REPORT

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 27th February, 2015: Light rain are likely to be isolated in Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Northern Shan and Chin States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).
OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperature in the upper Myanmar areas.



Madonna stumbles whilst performing on stage during the Brit Awards 2015 at the O2 Arena in London, on 25 Feb, 2015.—PTI

Madonna falls off stage during Brit Awards performance

LONDON, 26 Feb — Pop diva Madonna, who fell onstage at the BRIT Awards in London, says she is “fine” after a scary tumble.

Madonna, 56, took to Twitter to blame her tight Armani cape behind her fall from the stage during her night performance on

Wednesday.

“Armani hooked me up! My beautiful cape was tied too tight! But nothing can stop me and love really lifted me up! Thanks for your good wishes! I’m fine!,” she wrote.

This was the pop superstar’s return to the awards ceremony after 20

years. She was marred by the fall at the beginning of her set, which prompted audience members to gasp and dancers to surround her after she fell backwards down stairs.

Madonna carried on with the show but appeared to be limping during a dance routine.—PTI

Jon Voight wants to work with Angelina Jolie

LOS ANGELES, 26 Feb — Actor Jon Voight has expressed his desire to work in a film directed by his daughter Angelina Jolie.

The 76-year-old ‘National Treasure’ actor praised the ‘Unbroken’ director’s skill, reported E! online.

“I think her direction is extraordinary. I had my mouth open. I said, ‘Holy smokes. This is really something.’ She’s a director that I’d say I want to work with her,” Voight said at Vanity Fair’s Oscars party.

The actor also slammed the Oscars for snubbing Jolie’s name from the best director nominations list.



Actor Jon Voight has expressed his desire to work in a film directed by his daughter Angelina Jolie.—PTI

“I think the nominations were mostly right. They don’t get everybody. I’d like to have seen my daughter’s film get a few more nominations,” he said.

‘Unbroken’ was nominated for three awards including Best Cinematography, Best Sound Editing and Best Sound Mixing at the 87th Academy Awards.—PTI

Pop star JJ Lin encourages Singapore students to hone bilingual-bicultural competencies

SINGAPORE, 26 Feb — Addressing some 1,000 Singaporean teenage students at the China-Quotient Student Forum 2015 on Wednesday afternoon, Singaporean singer-songwriter JJ Lin encouraged students to upkeep their bilingual-bicultural competency and pursue their dreams. Speaking in Chinese, JJ Lin Junjie, 2014 Business China Young Achiever Award recipient, encouraged the students to capitalize on the vast opportunities made available to them within the educational framework, continue to hone their bilingual-bicultural competencies and work



Singaporean singer-songwriter JJ Lin

hard to realize their potentials. Jointly organized by Business China and St Andrew’s Junior College (SAJC), the China-Quotient Student Forum 2015 was held at Cultural Centre of SAJC.

Themed “Daring to Dream, Acing with Bilin-

gualism and Biculturalism”, the highly interactive forum attracted youths and students from more than 20 Junior Colleges, IP Schools, Polytechnics, Universities and other Institutes of Higher Learnings (IHLs).

Xinhua

AKB48 Theater welcomes 1 millionth visitor since opening in 2005

TOKYO, 26 Feb — The AKB48 Theater in Tokyo’s Akihabara district, the base for all-girl pop group AKB48, on Wednesday welcomed its 1 millionth visitor since opening on 8 December, 2005.

There were only

seven people in the audience during the first performance in the 250-seat theater of the group, which has churned out a host of million-seller singles in recent years.

Yui Yokoyama, a 22-year-old leading member of AKB48, thanked

fans of the idol group and said, “We will join forces to achieve 2 million and 3 million visitors from now on.”

The 1 millionth visitor to the theater was a 19-year-old university student from Osaka Prefecture.—Kyodo News

Taylor Swift donates USD 50,000 to New York public schools

NEW YORK, 26 Feb — Country star Taylor Swift has made a donation of USD 50,000 to New York public schools.

The 25-year-old singer, who has been named a Global Welcome Ambassador for NYC, has given the sum she earned from the sales of her single ‘Welcome to New York’ in order to support public education in the Big Apple, reported *New York Daily News*.

Swift made a pledge to donate proceeds from the song during an appearance on ‘The View’ last October.

“It’s selling really well — which is good, because I’m donating all of my proceeds to New York City public schools,” the Pennsylvania-born star said back then.

The donation is a one-time deal only. But Swift’s generosity was greatly appreciated.

“We’re deeply appreciative of this kind gesture to donate her proceeds of the single ‘Welcome to New York’ to benefit NYC public schools,” said Devora Kaye, a spokeswoman for the Department of Education.—PTI

Imagine Dragons oust Drake from Billboard 200 throne



Imagine Dragons perform during the half-time show at the CFL’s 102nd Grey Cup football championship between the Calgary Stampeders and the Hamilton Tiger Cats in Vancouver, British Columbia, on 30 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 26 Feb — Alt-rockers Imagine Dragons knocked rapper Drake from the top spot of the weekly US Billboard 200 album chart on Wednesday, after a strategically placed commercial with retail store Target during the Grammy Awards drove up exposure.

“Smoke + Mirrors,” the sophomore album from the Las Vegas band, sold 172,000 copies and 172,000 songs, and was streamed 7.6 million times, bringing its total unit tally to 195,000, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan.

The Billboard 200 chart

tallies album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

Sales of “Smoke + Mirrors” were aided by a Target commercial featuring a live performance by Imagine Dragons during the 8 February CBS telecast of the Grammy Awards, music’s top accolades. Nielsen Music said the band’s commercial reached 10.5 million in the 18-49 demographic that advertisers covet.

Drake’s “If You’re Reading This, It’s Too Late” dropped to No 2 this week with a unit tally of

187,000, while the “Fifty Shades of Grey” soundtrack, which features Beyonce and Ellie Goulding, dropped one spot to No 3 with 165,000 units.

Imagine Dragons was the only new entry in the top 10 of this week’s album chart.

On the digital songs chart, which measures online download sales, Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars’ throwback upbeat “Uptown Funk!” climbed back to No 1 with 257,000 downloads after being knocked off last week by Ed Sheeran’s “Thinking Out Loud.”

Reuters

GENERAL

Dominant Leverkusen upset the odds against Atletico

LEVERKUSEN, (Germany), 26 Feb — Bayer Leverkusen stunned last season's runners-up Atletico Madrid 1-0 in their Champions League round of 16 first leg on Wednesday courtesy of a fine strike by Hakan Calhanoglu.

The Turkey international scored the 57th-minute winner to set Leverkusen, who are struggling for form in the Bundesliga, on the way to their first ever win at this stage of the competition.

"This was a very, very good game from us," goalkeeper Bernd Leno, who twice rescued his team in the first half, told reporters.

"We showed a reaction to the criticism of the past week. We had some bad games but tonight we bounced back."

For Atletico, who were left with 10 men when Tiago was sent off following a second booking in the 76th minute, it was only their second loss

in a Champions League away game since September 2013.

The Spanish champions will also be missing key defender Diego Godin for the return leg after the Uruguayan was booked and will be suspended in Madrid.

"They play as they do and they do it well," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone.

"We each had a clear chance and they took theirs and we didn't. It could have been a worse result. But I am confident for the return leg."

Leverkusen had hoped the European stage would lift their game after a rocky start to the year sent them down to sixth in the Bundesliga.

They did not have to wait long for a chance with Atletico striker Mario Mandzukic clearing an Emir Spahic effort on the line in the 12th minute.

The Bosnian defender came even closer in the 26th when his thundering drive bounced off the crossbar.

The Spaniards needed almost 40 minutes to find their feet and responded



Bayer Leverkusen's Hakan Calhanoglu challenges Atletico Madrid's Tiago Mendes (L) during their Champions League round of 16, first leg soccer match in Leverkusen on 25 Feb, 2015. — REUTERS

with a chance of their own, Leno clearing a cross at the last moment with Antoine Griezmann ready to head in.

Leno saved the hosts with a brilliant reflex effort on the stroke of halftime, palming away a powerful volley from Tiago.

In a very physical encounter in which coaches Simeone and Roger Schmidt had a heated argument on the sidelines, Leverkusen grabbed a deserved lead

through Calhanoglu.

Karim Bellarabi drew three players on to him before cleverly flicking the ball on for Calhanoglu who lashed the ball into the roof of the net.

Atletico, who will be without Godin and Tiago in the return leg, were toothless even when Simeone brought on striker Fernando Torres to form a three-pronged attack for much of the second half.— Reuters

German company to help Albania build power line connection with Italy

TIRANA, 26 Feb — Albania has signed an agreement with a German company for a power line connection project between Albania and Italy, *Albanian Daily News* reported on Thursday.

Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama greeted the agreement signed by Albanian Minister of Energy and Industry Damian Gjijnuri and German company Max Streicher as "good news".

"An agreement was signed in Germany on a power line connection with Italy. This is key to energy restoration in the country," Rama wrote in his Twitter account. The connection project, at a cost of up to 200 million euros, is seen with much interest by the European Union because it can provide energy security and integrate the Southeast Europe region with the European energy market.—Xinhua

Japan's Kei Nishikori faces off against Lu Yen-hsun in the second round of the Mexico Open in Acapulco on 25 Feb, 2015. Nishikori defeated Lu 6-1, 6-3 to advance to the quarterfinal.
KYODO NEWS



game easier."

Nishikori will next face Ukrainian fifth seed Alexandr Dolgoplov, who beat Austrian Andreas Haider-Maurer 6-2, 6-3.

In women's doubles ac-

tion, Japan's Eri Hozumi and Makoto Ninomiya opened with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Argentine Maria Irigoyen and Mariana Duque-Marino of Colombia.

Kyodo News

Average weekly Australian income rises to 1,477 Australian dollars

SYDNEY, 26 Feb — The average weekly earnings for full-time workers in Australia rose 2.8 percent to 1,477 Australian dollars (1,160 US dollars) in the 12 months up to November, the Australian Bureau of Statistics said

on Thursday.

That equates to an annual income of 76,804 Australian dollars (60,262 US dollars).

The average ordinary full-time gross earnings for men came in at 1,587.50 Australian dollars (1,246.86

US dollars) a week, while women earned 1,289.40 Australian dollars (1,012.09 US dollars), the statistics agency said.

The agency said factors contributing to the pay rise include variations in the proportion of full-

time, part-time, casual and junior employees, variations in the occupational distribution within and across industries, and variations in the distribution of employment between industries.

Xinhua

mitv Myanmar International

(27-2-2015 07:00 am~ 28-2-2015 07:00 am) MST

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MRTV Entertainment Channel

(27-2-2015, Friday)

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 6:00 am | 8:00 am |
| • Mono Classical Songs | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:20 am | 8:50 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • TV Drama Series |
| 6:45 am | 9:35 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Musical Programme |
| 7:10 am | 9:50 am |
| • Song Programme | • ASEAN Cultural Fair 2014 |
| 7:30 am | 10:10 am |
| • Myanmar Series | • Myanmar Video |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(27-2-2015, Friday)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6:00 am | 2:00 pm |
| • Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw | • Myoemanyein Music Troupe (Part-6) |
| 6:45 am | 3:00 pm |
| • Documentary | • News |
| 7:00 am | 3:35 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • People's Talks |
| 7:35 am | 4:35 pm |
| • National Sports Games | • 2015 University Entrance Examination (History) |
| 8:35 am | 5:30 pm |
| • Current Affairs | • Head Line News |
| 9:00 am | 6:00 pm |
| • News/ International News | • News/ Weather Report |
| 9:35 am | 6:35 pm |
| • Weekly Entertainment | • Hyper Sports |
| 10:35 am | 7:35 pm |
| • MRTV's Youth Programme | • Documentary |
| 11:35 am | 7:45 pm |
| • Science and Technology Programme | • Documentary |
| 12:00 noon | 8:00 pm |
| • News / International News / Weather Report | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:35 pm | 9:00 pm |
| • Hluttaw Image | • News |
| 1:35 pm | • Documentary |
| • Talk on Old Film | • Hluttaw Image |
| | • National Sports Games |
| | • Amazing World |



Medal tally in 4th National Sports Festival 2015 on 26-2-2015



State/Region	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Yangon	79	53	40	172
Mandalay	45	48	58	151
Bago	23	22	27	72
Magway	20	13	14	47
Nay Pyi Taw	15	8	17	40
Ayeyawady	14	18	35	67
Rakhine	12	15	25	52
Kayin	12	7	8	27
Mon	11	25	27	63
Kayah	11	11	13	35
Sagaing	8	15	16	39
Kachin	8	11	13	32
Taninthayi	7	12	23	42
Shan	4	13	27	44
Chin	3	2	2	7

University students join rowing contest

YANGON, 26 Feb — Yangon Universities' Boat Club organized the Inter-University/College (Yangon) Rowing Contest at Inya Lake in Kamayut Township, here, on 25 February.

Rector of University of Economics Dr Daw Khin Naing Oo extended greetings and greeted the rowers. Student rowers participated in 62 matches of the men's and women's singles events, men's and women's doubles events, four-oar event, men's and women's two-oar event and Myanmar traditional Dragon boat event.

The final matches of rowing contest will be held tomorrow in conjunction with the prize presentation ceremony.—Khin Cho Win

Mon athlete secures champion in decathlon event



An athlete enters finishing line in men's marathon at Wunna Theikdi Stadium in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Feb — Union Minister for Sports U Tint Hsan visited stadium and gymnasiums where sports events were held on Thursday and inspected preparations for giving meals to athletes at the Nay Pyi Taw sports training centre.

The union minister enjoyed men's and women's marathon at Wunna Theikdi stadium and presented the first prize to athlete from Mon State, the second to Sagaing Region and the third to Kayin State in the men's decathlon event.

At Wunna Theikdi gymnasium (A), the union minister attended the launching of Karatedo contest and greeted athletes and referees. He watched participation of Yi Nway Tun of Shan State and Yin Hua of Chin State in the women's singles Kata event.

The union minister inspected construction of the Sports University near Nay Pyi Taw Sports Training Centre. He also attended a co-ordination meeting on formation of Coach Association at the centre.

Defence Services Inspection and Auditor-General (Army, Navy and Air) Lt-Gen Soe Thein presented prizes to winners in the men's marathon event and enjoyed Karatedo, weightlifting and boxing events.—MNA



Two boxers compete for title at Wunna Theikdi Stadium.—MNA

Monaco heap more Champions League agony on Arsenal



Alexis Sanchez (C) of Arsenal controls the ball during the UEFA Champions league Round of 16 first leg match between Arsenal and Monaco at the Emirates Stadium in London, Britain, on 25 Feb, 2015. Monaco won 3-1.—XINHUA

LONDON, 26 Feb — AS Monaco gave Arsenal a lesson in patient, counter-attacking football to win their Champions League last 16 first leg-match 3-1 in London on Wednesday, heaping more European agony on Arsene Wenger.

Arsenal boss Wenger, a former manager at Monaco, is now facing elimination at this stage of the competition for the fifth straight season after the shattering home defeat.

French midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia put the visitors ahead after 38 minutes, when he crashed in a long range shot that

took a deflection off Arsenal defender Per Mertesacker, leaving goalkeeper David Ospina helpless.

Bulgarian veteran Dimitar Berbatov, continually jeered by the home fans because of his past links with their arch-rivals Tottenham Hotspur, added the second after 53 minutes after a devastating Monaco counter-attack.

Arsenal pulled one back in stoppage time when substitute Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain curled home from the edge of the area, but Monaco scored even later to restore their two-goal advantage when substitute Yannick Ferrei-

ra-Carrasco scored with a shot that went in off the post.

Arsenal wasted several chances with Olivier Giroud spurning four scoring opportunities to leave Arsenal with a mountain to climb when Wenger takes his side back to the principality for the second leg on 17 March.

Wenger's Arsenal, who had won eight of their last nine matches in all competitions, flew out of the blocks against his old team, testing the resilience of Monaco's rock-solid defence with a series of early raids.

Reuters