



PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE FRUITFUL RESULTS OF PEACE : President U Thein Sein

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HIRI, OTTAPPA AND SEVEN DEADLY SINS

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THE TRAM IS BACK

Electric commuter tramcar line launched on Strand Road

Soe Win (SP)

MYANAMA RAILWAYS launched a 3.5-mile tram line with seven stops along Strand Road yesterday as part of an effort to expand the tramcar network around Yangon.

With a seating capacity of 180, the tram rail will run 6 times a day from 8am to 4pm with a 100-kyat fare for each commuter.

The tram rail line will ultimately be 7 miles long in total after two additional phases of development.

The tramcar line starts at Warden Jetty and ends at Linsadaung on Strand Road.

The move is aimed at easing traffic congestion and providing commuters with convenient public transportation, said U Nyan Tun Aung, the Union Minister for Rail Transportation at the ceremony to officially launch the tramcar line.

Myanma Railways and the Japan-based West Corporation signed a US\$3 million deal for tram rail project in July 2015.

This will be the first electric tram line in Myanmar. The previous one was launched in 1904.

A total of 77 electric commuter tramcars were running in Yangon before WWII, but the services stopped during the war.

The current railroad along Strand Road serves mainly as a transit route for cargo to move goods from Yangon's ports.



Passengers enjoy electric commuter tramcar on the new line along the Strand Road for the first time in more than 70 years. PHOTO: SOE WIN (SP)

First public bus system targets late Jan for launch

Ye Khaung Nyunt

A PUBLIC bus service is expected to launch its first phase with new imported buses in the last week of January.

More than 500 people have bought shares amounting to over K 1 billion so far from the pub-

lic bus service company which would run the Bus Rapid Transit system, said Dr Maung Aung, who chairs the committee responsible for forming the public company.

The service is expected not to run with all 65 buses of the first batch as it planned previ-

ously due to some delays in importing buses.

The system will operate along the main routes linking the commercial capital's north and south.

Yangon's existing bus system comprises a number of private operators who vie for

ticket profits by speeding and collecting passengers from undesignated areas. Some of Yangon's buses date back to World War II and they are infrequently cramped, while very few have air conditioning. Although private bus services will not be banned from the roads, they are

likely to be less popular than a more efficient and comfortable public service.

The buses are imported from China and Korea, as well as Sweden's well known Scania brand.

Yangon Region Government invited tenders to import buses

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MAEA to cooperate with agarwood farmers to protect forests, fight poverty

Ko Moe, Aye Min Soe

THE Myanmar Agarwood Entrepreneurs Association is planning to provide assistance to farmers growing agarwood trees as part of its effort to fight poverty in the country.

“We will start to provide plants and technology to farmers who have land but no capital to grow agarwood in June and July 2016 in Yangon and Bago regions,” said U Thaung Nyunt, the general secretary of the MAEA.

When the trees are fully grown, both sides will share the profits, he added.

According to the MAEA, the quality of Myanmar’s agarwood is higher than it is in other countries, and its price is high compared to foreign market prices.



Agarwood trees are seen at a plantation.

Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, Thailand and China are the main importers of agarwood from Myanmar.

According to agarwood farmers in Myanmar, one kilo of first-grade agarwood can fetch between US\$4,000 and \$20,000.

Since 1995, *Aquilaria malaccensis*, the primary source of agarwood, has been listed among potentially threatened species by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Myanmar has banned illegal trading on agarwood since 1947.

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry is planning to reduce the tax on agarwood produced by agarwood farms.

The ministry is working to set the tax on agarwood produced

at local farms for export at less than 25 per cent of the local price, according to the ministry.

The ministry has encouraged commercial plantations of agarwood in Myanmar to protect wild *Aquilaria agallocha* and *Aquilaria malaccensis*, two sources of agarwood, as many naturally growing trees in forests have been cut down by poachers.

Farms that have registered with the ministry and have paid the tax on agarwood are allowed to export the wood, which is one of the most expensive forest products in the world. It is highly valued as an ingredient in perfumes.

There are about 50 million agarwood trees growing on 50,000 acres of private agarwood plantations in Myanmar, according to MAEA.

Irrigation Department controls water in Inle Lake

TO reduce the decreasing water level in Inle Lake this summer, the Irrigation Department has controlled the flow from the Lake into the Bilu River by using two geo-tubes this summer.

The department found that the water level just down 4 inches in 10 days, decreasing from 8 inches after it narrowed the tubes on 10 and 16 December, said U Win Htay, Assistant Director of the Irrigation Department.

Besides, the department has been dredging silt and sediment from the rivers which flow into the lake while carrying out conservation of the lake.

The Irrigation Department

refuted the rumors that the lake is facing the threat of silting up, referring drought in some water ways in outskirts of the lake in the summer.

“The main waterways such as the route between Phaung-TawOo and Nyaung Shwe, and Alotawpauk Pagoda route are all-weathered ways,” U Win Htay said.

Inle Lake looks like a deep frying pan. There is always water in its centre, he added.

Visitors are flowing into the lake these days and all water ways are navigable despite the water level decrease a bit, said Ko Aung Moe Win, the motor boat driver.

—Nay Myo Thu Rein



Pilgrims arrive PhaungdawOo Pagoda by boat in Inle Lake. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE



Kayin dancers entertain the audience with “Don” dance at their traditional new year celebration at the National Races Village in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA



Kayin women demonstrate traditional weaving of clothes at National Races Village in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA

Preserve and protect the fruitful results of peace

-President U Thein Sein



President U Thein Sein and Saw Mutu Say Poe, Chairman of the KNU, release doves at the new year celebration in Hpa-an. PHOTO: MNA

The Kayin New Year was celebrated in Hpa-An, Kayin State, yesterday with President U Thein Sein in attendance. He said celebrating a new year means marking the transition from the old year to the new one, that all the evil deeds committed during the past year are abandoned and that the new year is welcomed with a commitment to draw lessons from past experiences, as well as to perform good deeds in the year

to come.

"It is a noble tradition of Kayin indigenous people to pay due respect to elderly people and those who are worthy of respect, to wish well upon everybody regardless of race and religion, and to preserve and protect Kayin language and culture," said President U Thein Sein.

"Our brethren the Kayins have had to endure a tough road for a very long time because of

the disunity among our brethren, and this has led to Kayin State lagging behind in development. But today, the rays of peace have already dawned, so it is incumbent upon us all to preserve and protect the fruitful results of peace. It is, therefore, time now to ensure better education, good health and socio-economic development," continued the president.

The president also said the Kayin indigenous people are hon-

est, truthful, loyal, obliging and noble minded, that they are trusted in joining hands with other national races in the effort to build a new, modern, developed nation. He said it is of the utmost importance for all national brethren to bring to the fore Myanmar's three main causes – non-disintegration of the union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and the perpetuation of sovereignty.—Myanmar News Agency

First public bus system targets late Jan for launch

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for the new public bus service last year.

The government will retain a 40 per cent share, while 60 per cent of shares will be available for the public to buy.

Myanmar's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT Lite) system has been established through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP).

The project is divided into phases, with the capital for the first phase set at K25 billion (US\$19.42 million). The government will inject K10 billion (\$7.77 million) into the first phase.

The BRT (Lite) system aims to reduce traffic congestion and pollution, as well as providing the public with a more affordable and comfortable method of transport, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe said during a ceremony held in May when the public was invited to buy shares in the scheme.

Kayin national race celebrates New Year

THE Kayin community, one of Myanmar's major ethnic groups, began celebrating its traditional New Year within the compound of Arlein Ngasint Pagoda in Insein Township, Yangon Region, on 9 January.

During the three-day festival, members of the Kayin community wear traditional woven tunics over longyi as they perform traditional dances, including the Kayin Done Dance or the Kayin Bamboo Dance.

The Kayin national flag was hoisted at dawn – around

6am – on the opening day of the event, and the ceremony was followed by several entertainment programmes, including dancing competitions, which are held every year. The Kayin New Year Festival has been held in this form since 1938 with the aim of showcasing the lives and culture of Kayin people and creating links among them. Organised by Yangon Region Kayin New Year Festival Central Committee, the three-day event comes will end on 11 January.—Khin Zarli



Kayin people perform traditional dance at their new year celebration in Insein township. PHOTO: KHIN MAUNG WIN (KYEMON)

UPDJC holds preliminary meeting on Union Peace Conference



Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee holds preliminary meeting. PHOTO: MYAWADY

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee held its fourth preliminary meeting at the Horizon Lake View Resort in Nay Pyi

Taw yesterday to discuss detailed plans for the Union Peace Conference.

The conference is scheduled

to be held from 12 to 16 January 2016 in Nay Pyi Taw. Members of the UPDJC attended the meeting.—Myawady

N Korean leader says nuclear test was 'self-defence'



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signs a document regarding the test of a hydrogen bomb, on 6 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIJING — North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un has said its fourth nuclear test was an act of self-defence against a threat posed by the United States, official media said yesterday.

It is the first time that North Korea's state-run media has reported a statement by Kim since the country conducted what it claims was a successful hydrogen bomb test on Wednesday.

During his visit to the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces, Kim said the test was "a self-defensive step for reliably defending the peace on the Korean Peninsula and the regional security from the danger of nuclear war caused by the US-led imperialists," according to the North's official *Korean Central News Agency*.

"It is the legitimate right of a sovereign state and a fair action that nobody can criticise," KCNA also quoted Kim as saying, while he was explaining the "complicated situation" facing his country to commanding officers of the Kore-

an People's Army.

It is unknown when Kim made the remarks. They are basically in line with what North Korea said in a government statement on Wednesday following its first nuclear test since February 2013 in defiance of UN resolutions.

While visiting the ministry, Kim also delivered a speech on the main task to be carried out by the army in 2016.

Among other points, he said this year's goal for the army and North Korean people will be "glorifying" a congress of the Workers' Party that will be "a historic turning point." North Korea is scheduled to hold a convention of the ruling party for the first time since 1980 in early May. The upcoming convention has been receiving much attention as to whether Kim will announce important policies, a new lineup of senior officials or some of his major achievements since inheriting power following the death of his father Kim Jong Il in December 2011.—*Kyodo News*

Nepal gov't to deploy army to launch relief operations in earthquake-hit areas

KATHMANDU — The Nepali government has decided to deploy Nepal Army helicopters to launch emergency rescue and relief operations in the earthquake-hit areas, government officials said yesterday.

An emergency meeting called by Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli made a decision to dispatch warm clothes and food items in the mountainous areas of Gorkha District including Bardiya, the epicenter of the 25 April earthquake last year, where the earthquake victims are in difficulties due to heavy snowfalls in recent days amid harsh winter.

"The army personnel will distribute warm clothes and food items to the earthquake victims and rescue them toward safe places," Nepal's Defense Minister Bhim Rawal, who also participated in the meeting, told reporters.

Chiefs of security forces, senior ministers and secretaries attended the meeting discussing about providing relief supports to the earthquake victims.

"The helicopters will be sent to the earthquake-hit areas as early as possible. We will send more if needed in next few days," Spokesman for the Nepal Army Tara Bahadur Karki told Xinhua.

On the occasion, Prime Minister Oli directed the security agencies to work in close coordination in relief operations in the earthquake-ravaged areas.

The Reconstruction Authority of Nepal, which came into operation last month, is responsible to oversee reconstruction-related works in the Himalayan country. Nepal was ravaged by the massive earthquakes on 25 April last year, in which over 9000 people lost their lives and another 23,000 thousand were injured.

Meanwhile, the Nepali government yesterday said that it will provide 6,000 Nepalese rupees (approximately 60 US dollars) to an earthquake victim's family in mountainous region to purchase warm clothes.

The prime minister addressed a Parliamentary meeting that the additional amount will be provided to victims to cope with the chilling cold. Earlier, the Nepali government had provided 10,000 rupees (approximately 100 dollars) each family.—*Xinhua*

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Japan PM aims for constitutional revision with help from opposition

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday he aimed to get a two-thirds majority from his ruling bloc and like-minded opposition parties at an upper house election this summer to enable him to revise the constitution.

Abe has made clear he wants to revise the US-drafted, pacifist constitution, but formal amendment requires approval by two-thirds of both houses of parliament and a majority in a referendum.

Abe's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its junior coalition partner, the Komeito party,

already command a two-thirds majority in the lower house, but only hold a simple majority in the upper chamber. "It will be very difficult for the ruling bloc alone to win a two-thirds majority," Abe told a TV news programme. "Besides the LDP and Komeito, I aim to form a two-thirds majority with those positive and responsible people who are thinking of a constitutional revision." Abe mentioned "Osaka Ishin No Kai", or the Osaka Innovation Party, as one possible partner backing the revision. Admirers view the constitution as the source of Japan's

peace, prosperity and democracy.

Many of Abe's conservative backers, who have long wanted to rewrite the constitution but lacked the political means, view it as a shoddy document written, in the words of one commentary, "with malice and vengeance" to keep Japan forever subdued.

A change proposed by the LDP would make clear Japan has the right to maintain a military and deploy it at home and abroad, but Abe said debate would probably deepen as to which chapter of the constitution should be revised.—*Reuters*

Kanazawa firefighters perform at New Year ceremony



Firefighters perform "Kaga Tobi" acrobatic stunts dating from the Edo period (1603-1867) on 6-metre-high ladders during an annual New Year ceremony in Kanazawa Castle Park in Kanazawa, Ishikawa Prefecture, on 10 January 2016. The role of firefighters in the Edo period was to destroy adjoining houses in order to prevent the spread of fires. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Sri Lanka government proposes new constitution to devolve power

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka's new government on Saturday presented its plan for a new constitution aimed at devolving power and preventing the sort of ethnic tensions that led to a long and bitter civil war that ended in 2009.

The move comes as reformist President Maithripala Sirisena's administration takes some steps to promote post-conflict reconciliation and address alleged war crimes committed during the 26-year conflict between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels.

Sirisena, who unseated former leader Mahinda Rajapaksa in a bitterly contested poll last year, promised a new constitution to strengthen democracy and fundamental rights. According to the document presented to parliament on Saturday, the government intends to strengthen democratic rights, promote national reconciliation and establish a political culture that respects the rule of law.

The new constitution will also guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms that assure human dignity and promote responsible and accountable government, it said.

"The main idea is to devolve power to the grassroot level and strengthen democracy in order to prevent another war," a ruling party legislator who is close to



Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena and his wife Jayanthi.

PHOTO: REUTERS

the president told Reuters, asking not to be named.

Some opposition members, however, have alleged that the new constitution has been drafted to please some Western nations and to dilute the main religion, Buddhism, in Sri Lanka. The government has rejected such accusations. Ethnic minority Tamils were often favoured for higher government positions under British colonial rule. After independence in 1948, many lost their positions as successive governments pursued language and other policies favouring the majority Sinhalese population.

Tensions erupted into a full-fledged armed conflict in 1983 that only ended when government forces seized the last areas controlled by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

"The extremists in the south and the north have caused the loss of thousands of young lives ... We must ensure reconciliation and harmony so that we will never go back to war. I believe now, through our past bitter experiences, we must prepare ourselves for future challenges," President Sirisena told the parliament.—Reuters

2 proxy test-taking cases found in unified college entrance exams

TOKYO — Sixty-five cases of irregularities including substitute test-taking on two occasions were found at the annual unified college entrance examinations held across Japan over a 10-year period through 2015, a body that supervises the exams said Saturday.

As a result, 67 people, including those involved in the substitute test-taking, were punished by having their tests in all subjects invalidated, according to the National Centre for University Entrance Examinations.

The centre said there have been cases of misconduct found every year from 2006 to 2015, but the centre until now had not disclosed the details of the misconduct, which took place at test centres in 31 prefectures.

The cases came to light before this year's two-day unified college entrance examinations from 16 January.

Of the 65 cases, 30 concerned test takers continuing to work on their answers past the expiration time, 13 involved using rulers when they were not supposed to, and eight concerned using or possessing cheat sheets. In 2008, a senior high school student took math exams at a testing site on the campus of the Tokyo University of Marine Science and Tech-

nology on behalf of a schoolmate after learning she would be unable to finish the exams as she felt sick.

The student attempted to take two math tests using the name and examinee number of her schoolmate, but the supervisor discovered that the examinee number on the answer sheet was different from the exam admission slip on her desk. The substitute test-taker, who was asked to leave during the test, later said she pitied her schoolmate who needed to take the math exam.

The other case of test-taker fraud took place at the testing site on the campus of Kyoto Tachibana University in 2010. Two male students from the same senior high school took a math test writing each other's names and examinee numbers. The irregularity became clear at the time of exam grading.

Substitute test-taking during college entrance examinations is relatively rare, but cases have come to light before, including one during the entrance exam for Chuo University in 2009. That discovery prompted the school to nullify its admission given to the applicant.

A major scandal involving proxies taking entrance exams occurred at Meiji University in 1991, resulting in the arrests of several people including a former manager of the university's baseball team.—Kyodo News

Iranian poet released on bail before appeal hearing

DUBAI — An Iranian poet who was detained on Friday on arrival back in Tehran has been released on bail after being informed she had been convicted and sentenced in absentia on charges related to her cultural activities, a relative told Reuters yesterday.

Hila Sedighi was arrested at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport as she returned from the United Arab Emirates where she has been living with her husband for the last three years.

Her arrest was the latest in a series of arrests of artists, journalists and US citizens as part of a crackdown on what authorities have called a Western "infiltration". The clampdown follows a nuclear deal Iran signed with world powers in July, that hardliners fear may open Iranian society to what they see as corrupting Western influences.

The relative, who asked not to be identified, said Hila visited Iran regularly and was shocked to hear she had been sentenced in absentia. She has lodged an appeal against the in absentia conviction. Iranian officials have not commented on Sedighi's case.

She has been sentenced by a court dealing with media and cultural issues, the relative said.

Sedighi was awarded the Hellman/Hammett prize for free expression by Human Rights Watch in 2012. Another Iranian recipient of that prize, journalist Isa Saharkhiz, was arrested in November.

Dozens of journalists, activists and artists have been arrested on charges such as publishing "propaganda" since October in an apparent crackdown on free expression and dissent ahead of next month's election of a parliament and an assembly that will choose the Supreme Leader's successor.

Hila Sedighi backed a reformist candidate in 2009's disputed presidential election and one of her poems was used as a campaign slogan by Mirhossein Mousavi who is now under house arrest. After hardline incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was announced the winner of the election, demonstrators took to the streets claiming the election was fraudulent, and Sedighi recited poetry at the protests.—Reuters

Pakistan tells US that India attack probe will 'bring out the truth'

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has told US Secretary of State John Kerry his country is swiftly investigating who was behind last week's attack on an Indian air force base, and that it would "bring out the truth".

The assault on the base near the Pakistan border has thrown into doubt diplomatic talks planned for later this month between the nuclear-armed rivals.

Kerry, speaking to Sharif by telephone, said he hoped the attack would not derail the talks that he said were in the interests of regional security, according to a statement from the Pakistani prime minister's office late on Saturday.

"The Prime Minister told Secretary Kerry that we are swiftly carrying out investigations in a transparent manner and will bring out the truth," it said. "The world will see our effectiveness and sincerity in this regard."

A meeting between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan had been scheduled for 15 January, but it is unclear if it will

still happen, after six militants launched an assault on 2 January against the base and killed seven security personnel.

India has called on Islamabad to take "prompt and decisive" action against militants it blames for the assault, which only ended after a four-day operation to secure the base. New Delhi has long accused Islamabad of supporting militant groups and helping them to launch attacks inside India, an accusation

Pakistan rejects.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday visited the base, at Pathankot in the northern state of Punjab, where he was briefed on how security forces had responded to end the attack.

It remains unclear how the attackers infiltrated the fortified base, which has a 24-km (15-mile) perimeter surrounded by a 3-metre (10-foot) wall topped with concertina wire.—Reuters



An Indian security personnel stands guard on a building at the Indian Air Force (IAF) base at Pathankot in Punjab, India, on 5 January 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Anti-migrant protest turns violent as German welcome cools



Police use pepper spray against supporters of anti-immigration right-wing movement PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West) during a demonstration march, in reaction to mass assaults on women on New Year's Eve, in Cologne, Germany, on 9 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

COLOGNE — Riot police broke up far-right protesters in Cologne on Saturday as they marched against Germany's open-door migration policy after asylum seekers were identified as suspects in assaults on women on New Year's Eve.

The attacks, ranging from sexual molestation to theft, shocked Germany, which took in 1.1 million migrants and refugees in 2015 under asylum laws championed by Chancellor Angela Merkel, despite fervent opposition.

Shortly before Saturday's protest began, Merkel hardened her stance toward migrants, promising expulsion for criminals and a reduction in migrant numbers over the longer term to Germany.

Police said around 1,700 people attended the rally organised by the far-right anti-Islam PEGIDA movement, which has seized on the alleged involvement of migrants in the Cologne attacks as proof Merkel's policy is flawed.

Demonstrators, some of whom bore tattoos with far-right symbols such as a skull in a German soldier's helmet, had chanted "Merkel must go" and "this is the march of the national resistance". "Rapefugees not welcome," one banner read.

A police spokesman said roughly half of those at the PEGIDA protest were from the 'hooligan scene'. Some in the crowd threw bottles and fire crackers at officers, and riot police used water canon to disperse the protesters.

Two people were injured in the clash, and police detained a number of demonstrators, a Reuters witness said.

PEGIDA, or Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, almost fizzled out last year when its leader resigned after a photo was published of him posing as Adolf Hitler.

But its ranks have swelled as resentment spread of Merkel's welcoming stance to refugees.

In all, about 1,700 police officers were on the streets of Cologne, dwarfing the number on duty during the chaotic scenes of New Year's Eve when at least 120 women were robbed or sexually molested.

"The events on New Year's Eve led to a lot of emotion," said a police spokesman. "We had feared that emotions would boil over."

"Serial offenders who repeatedly rob or repeatedly affront women must feel the full force of the law."

Merkel

About 1,300 people attended a rival left-wing protest in Cologne, according to police.

"No means no. Keep away from our bodies," read one sign held by one of the demonstrators, most of them women.

Merkel's remarks on Saturday were in stark contrast to her earlier optimism about the influx to Germany, which has taken in far more migrants than any other European country.

Her 'we can do it' slogan irritated many Germans, uneasy about the mass arrivals.

"The right to asylum can be

lost if someone is convicted, on probation or jailed," Merkel said after a meeting of the leadership of her Christian Democrats (CDU) party that was overshadowed by the attacks in Cologne and other cities.

"Serial offenders who repeatedly rob or repeatedly affront women must feel the full force of the law," Merkel told journalists in Mainz.

Under German law, asylum seekers are now typically only deported if they have been sentenced to at least three years in prison, and providing their lives are not at risk at home.

Merkel's conservative party said it wanted to reduce and control migration to Germany, and send those who had been refused asylum home promptly. Such a move would require a change to German law.

"Cologne changed everything," Volker Bouffier, one of the conservative party's most senior members, told the meeting, according to people present.

Earlier in the week, German federal police said they had identified 32 people who were suspected of playing a role in the attacks on women on Cologne, 22 of whom were in the process of seeking asylum in Germany.

They documented 76 criminal acts, most of them involving some form of theft, and seven linked to sexual molestation.

Of the suspects, nine were Algerian, eight Moroccan, five Iranian and four Syrian. Three German citizens, an Iraqi, a Serb and a US citizen were also identified.

Similar assaults happened in other cities such as Frankfurt.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

US may deploy aircraft carrier to Korean peninsula next month — Yonhap

SEOUL — The United States is considering deploying an aircraft carrier to the Korean peninsula next month, South Korea's Yonhap News Agency said yesterday.

US Forces Korea said it had no knowledge of the matter, when asked about the Yonhap report.

US forces flew a B-52 bomber over its ally South Korea yesterday following North Korea's nuclear bomb test last week.

Yonhap said it was possible that a carrier would join a US-South Korea joint naval exercise to send a warning message to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, who said his country conducted a hydrogen bomb test as a self-defence step against what it said was a US threat of nuclear war.—Reuters

Egypt's parliament convenes after more than three-year absence

CAIRO — Egypt's new parliament convened its opening session yesterday, state television reported, more than three years after the old Islamist-dominated chamber was dissolved.

The new parliament, which will be dominated by an alliance loyal to Sisi, has 568 elected members plus another 28 appointed by the president himself. Egypt's last parliament was elected in 2011-12 in its first free election following a popular uprising that ended autocrat Hosni Mubarak's 30-year presidency. A court dissolved that parliament in mid-2012.—Reuters

Task force on EU enlargement to meet in early 2017

BELGRADE — The prime ministers of Serbia and Malta, Aleksandar Vucic and Joseph Muscat respectively, said in Belgrade on Saturday evening that the Serbian capital will host a meeting of the task force on EU enlargement in early 2017, when Malta will hold the EU presidency.

At a joint news conference, Vucic thanked Malta for strong support and assistance to Serbia along the EU path, while his Maltese counterpart underlined that his country pursues a consistent policy of advocating for EU enlargement to the countries that adhere to the criteria, and Serbia's EU membership.

"I am convinced that we can count on Malta's support along Serbia's EU path in the future as well. Malta will hold the EU rotating presidency in the first half of 2017. I am very glad that they decided to hold a meeting of the taskforce on enlargement in Belgrade," Vucic said.—Tanjung

Two winners share record 66m stg UK lottery jackpot

LONDON — Britain's biggest-ever national lottery win was shared by two players, organisers said on Saturday after huge numbers of tickets were sold for the 66 million pound (\$96 million) tax-free jackpot.

The Saturday night UK national lottery draw attracted many more players than normal, and came the same day as Americans flocked to get tickets for a record jackpot of more than \$900 million in the United States' Powerball draw.

The previous biggest British national lottery jackpot was 22.6 million pounds more than 20 years ago.

British winners of the pan-European Euromillions lottery draw have received far more in recent years. The biggest win came in 2011 when a Scottish couple collected 161 million pounds.

Britain launched its national lottery in 1994. The twice-weekly game is run by Camelot, a company now owned by the teacher's pension fund for the Canadian province of Ontario, and raises over 34 million pounds for charity each week.—Reuters

UK PM says govt would have to make EU exit work if public vote for it

LONDON — If Britons vote to leave the European Union at a membership referendum due by the end of 2017, the government will have to make it work, Prime Minister David Cameron said yesterday.

The Conservative leader said he did not think that leaving the EU was the right decision if he achieves his planned reforms to Britain's relationship with the bloc.

"The British public will make their decision. We must obey that decision whatever it is," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr show. "Were that (exit) to be the answer, we would have to do everything necessary to make that work."—Reuters

Ambassador denies US conducting helicopter raids in northern Iraq



US Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAGHDAD — The US ambassador to Iraq has denied reports that the United States has been carrying out helicopter raids against Islamic State militants in northern Iraq.

“There have recently been reports of US helicopter raids in Hawija and Kirkuk. As Defence Minister Obaidi and numerous other Iraqi officials have stated, reports of these raids are untrue,” Stuart Jones said in a statement on Saturday.

Recent reports of more than half a dozen air raids led by US special forces have been decried

by powerful Iranian-backed Shi’ite militias and other critics of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi as violations of Iraqi sovereignty.

“I want to stress what I have said many times before: Iraqi sovereignty is sacred and must be respected. All coalition activities conducted in Iraq are and will be in consultation with the Iraqi government,” Jones said, referring to the US-led coalition bombing Islamic State targets and training Iraqi forces. Iraqi parliament speaker Salim al-Jabouri told Reuters on Thursday foreign special forces

have been conducting raids behind Islamic State lines in Hawija ahead of an offensive planned later this year to retake Mosul, the largest city under Islamic State control.

He said the raids were carried out “from time to time” and “supported by Iraqi forces” but did not specify whether the United States had played a role or how many had occurred. Dubai-based al-Hadath TV and Iraqi media have reported several air raids over the last month in and around Hawija, 210 km (130 miles) north of Baghdad.

Washington said last month it was deploying a new force of around 100 special operations troops to Iraq to carry out strikes against Islamic State there and in neighbouring Syria. US officials gave no details. Both the US and Iraqi military have denied that US forces have carried out military operations on the ground in Hawija since October, when US special forces and Kurdish peshmerga commandos rescued 69 Iraqis in a raid in which one US commando was killed.—Reuters

Bombs hamper troops two weeks after victory declared in Iraq’s Ramadi

BAGHDAD — Two weeks after declaring victory over Islamic State in Ramadi, Iraq’s elite counter-terrorism forces have pushed militants out to its eastern suburbs, but bombs littering the streets are holding up efforts to rebuild the city, officials said.

Ramadi, the largest city retaken by government forces, was touted as the first major success for Iraq’s army since it collapsed in the face of Islamic State’s lightning advance across the country’s north and west 18 months ago.

But almost all the city remains off-limits to its residents, most of whom fled before the army advance, said security services.

“The security forces are advancing to a large degree inside Ramadi. Most areas are now under their control,” Anbar governor Sohaib al-Rawi said

on Saturday at a temporary government complex southeast of the city.

“Most of the streets in Ramadi are mined with explosives so it requires large efforts and expertise,” he added.

The counter-terrorism forces which spearheaded the military campaign to retake the capital of western Anbar province are securing only main streets and buildings considered tactically important, security sources said. They have built up earth banks at the entrance of central neighbourhoods deemed clear of militants but still laden with explosives, and marked many buildings’ exteriors as “mined”, the sources added.

The United Nations Development Programme is still waiting for the green light from the Iraqi government to enter the city and start work to rebuild it.—Reuters

Air strike kills dozens in Syria as UN envoy visits Damascus

BEIRUT — An air strike reportedly killed dozens of people in a rebel-held town in Syria on Saturday as a UN envoy visited Damascus to advance preparations for peace talks planned this month despite opposition misgivings.

Agreement was also reached for aid to be delivered on Monday to an opposition-held town besieged by pro-government forces where United Nations says there have been credible reports of people dying of starvation, sources said. Aid will be sent simultaneously to two villages blockaded by rebels.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 57 people were killed in the air strike, which hit a court house and prison in the town of Maarat al-Numan in Idlib Province. It identified the jets as Russian, and said the court house was operated by the al Qaeda-linked Nusra Front.

Russia has been staging air strikes in Syria in support of President Bashar al-Assad since September. The building was struck with four missiles. The dead included 23 members of the Nusra Front, three women and at least one child, the Observatory said.

Syrian officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

The war has raged on since last month when the Security Council endorsed a plan for peace talks, a rare case of US-Russian agreement over a conflict that has killed 250,000 people. The

talks are due to begin on 25 January in Geneva.

The Syrian government told UN envoy Staffan de Mistura on Saturday it was ready to participate but wants to know who would take part from the opposition, Syrian state media reported.

Foreign Minister Walid al-Moualem also said it was important to see a list of groups that would be classified as terrorists as part of the new diplomatic process, flagging another poten-

tial complication.

Damascus views all the groups fighting to topple Assad as terrorists, including rebels who support a political solution and are represented in a recently formed opposition council tasked with overseeing the negotiations.

A statement from de Mistura’s office described Saturday’s meeting as useful and said the envoy had outlined preparations.

“The Special Envoy is looking forward to the active partic-

ipation of relevant parties in the Geneva talks. He will be continuing his consultations in the region,” it added.

Syrian rebels and opposition politicians have expressed doubts over whether the peace talks will begin as planned. Their concerns over the diplomatic bid include the absence of any mention of Assad’s fate.

Earlier this week, they told de Mistura that before negotiations the Syrian government

must stop bombing civilian areas, release detainees and lift blockades imposed on opposition-held areas.

“Can the international community achieve the implementation of this pre-negotiation stage in the few remaining days? If it can, there is no problem. But I doubt they can,” Riyadh Naasan Agha, a member of the opposition council, told Reuters.

Another opposition official said on Friday the opposition would not name its negotiating team until the government did so.

The outlook for the talks has been further clouded by increased tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which back opposing sides in the conflict. Tensions have risen since Saudi Arabia executed Shi’ite cleric Nimr al-Nimr.

The aid deal agreed on Saturday will result in humanitarian supplies being sent to the opposition-held town of Madaya at the Lebanese border, and to two villages in the northwestern province of Idlib that are blockade by rebels. Aid agencies have warned of widespread starvation in Madaya, where some 40,000 people are at risk. The United Nations said on Thursday that Damascus had agreed to allow access to all three areas, but did not say when the delivery would take place. “Both date and time have been set. Aid will go to three towns on Monday morning, all at the same time,” said a source familiar with the matter. A second, pro-Syrian government source confirmed the details.—Reuters



Residents carry an injured woman on a stretcher in a site hit by what activists said were airstrikes carried out by the Russian air force in the rebel-controlled area of Maarat al-Numan town in Idlib province, Syria on 9 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

OPINION

Hiri, Ottappa and Seven Deadly Sins

Khin Maung Aye

IN Myanmar tradition, *hiri* and *ottappa* are the two *dhammas* (laws) that govern the world according to Buddhism; the former represents shame and modesty, which deters a man from committing sins, whereas the latter represents fear of the commitment of sins. Nowadays, people, regardless of race and religion, are increasingly daring in their commitment of sins. This has the potential to ultimately lead to

an outbreak of crimes. Sins are often acts of recklessness and hardness of heart—or *anottapa* in Pali. Another force that is degrading the world is *ahirika*, or shamelessness, which can be attributed to decadent culture and a lack of self-esteem in the pursuit of material well-being.

It is worth quoting the Bible here, particularly the statement “We are all sinners”. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. According to the Bible, there are seven deadly sins—the capital or cardinal sins. These include lust, gluttony, greed, laziness, wrath, envy and pride. These sins, too, can be divided into two types: sins of commission and sins of omission.

In this regard, one has to atone for one’s sins according to the law of nature, or *dhamma*. If one commits a crime and is found guilty and has a sentence passed upon him, he has to atone for his sin, often through rigorous labour in a correctional facility, wasting precious time. To be able to avoid serving time, people should be shameful

and fearful of doing evil things.

In this function, The Global New Light of Myanmar would like to remind its readers to strictly abide by the law and urge the authorities to further enforce the rule of law, to conduct more educational campaigns to promote awareness of the evil consequences of law-breaking and to curb the entertainment industry, which is very often the root cause of outbreaks of crimes.

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 khinmaungaye@hotmail@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.

Great Expectations – Hluttaw keeping the public informed

Tobias Flessenkemper

The momentous elections in November have returned hundreds of new Members of Parliament (MPs) who are going to come to Nay Pyi Taw and enter the Parliament in a couple of weeks from now. Over the next five years these new MPs will be addressing many political, social and economic challenges that the country is facing. Expectations are high among the general public, MPs and the international partners of Myanmar to develop and stabilise democracy. With increasing intensity preparations for the post-election period have dominated the work of the staff of the Parliament in Nay Pyi Taw.

Everyone in the new Parliament will need time to settle into their new roles as MPs, elected and appointed representatives, as well as the people working in the Hluttaw. This time is important in a situation where democracy is still not firmly settled. The new MPs will identify ways to develop an institutional parliamentary attitude and willingness to respect and integrate the rights and views of those who are not in the majority. Yet, it seems many MPs will also face some more mundane challenges in Nay Pyi Taw, such as appropriate accommodation, creating a more susceptible atmosphere in the Parliament complex that encourages open exchange and interaction. Some ideas immediately come to mind such as installing more catering facilities but also to establish a solar-powered electric system of transport; e.g. light and easy to navigate mini-vehicles that would allow MPs and staff to move freely and spontaneously within the compound facilitating their communication and exchange.

Preparing Hluttaw staff

One of the most inspiring opportunities the new chapter of par-

liamentary history of Myanmar will be how MPs and more than 1,500 staff working for the Hluttaw are going to jointly take forward democracy. Over the last years a number of activities have been carried out to develop the capacity of the staff working in Parliament. For instance, staff of the UK House of Commons supported the development of the Research Service as well as Committee Secretariat, the UNDP and the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) assisted, among its many other activities, in developing a comprehensive welcome package for the new Parliament. This included the organisation and facilitation of a study visit in September, funded and hosted by the European Parliament (EP) to Brussels. Here a delegation of the top management of the three houses of the Hluttaw, led by Director-General Kyaw Soe of the Union Parliament, familiarised themselves with the approach, methods and procedures of the EP in organising the transition from one legislature to the next on a technical level. How are the new members welcomed? What is done to make the check-in hassle-free and speedy, from handing out ID-cards to information about salaries, allowances and travel arrangements? Who provides instructions to the MP for the handling of the voting system? Directly from Brussels the delegation travelled to Berlin. Here elbarlament was honoured to organise a study visit on the regional dimension of democracy but mainly focussing on public information. This focus is an obvious necessity in order to inform if and how the Parliament is meeting the expectations placed in it.

Public information – a key factor

The elections have been a success not least because the public was well informed about the process. Elections are a single event, which requires the direct involvement of the citizens. Yet, citizens

are so far not very familiar with the working of representative democracy. While the attention commenced being drawn to the work of the Parliament over the last years, the general public’s attention remained glued to the role of individuals and the broader political question of transition to a new form of governance. Starting in February 2016, MPs will have the chance to assume a more prominent role in the political process. This means the institution of the Parliament will need to be ready to inform even more, better and responsively about the work of the MPs, the Hluttaw’s role in the political system and how one can get access to and receive information about the Parliament.

Already in 2013 the leadership and management of the Hluttaw anticipated such a development. They invited elbarlament to develop a parliamentary support project based on the requirements and requests from their staff. The aim was to build the individual and collective capacity of the Parliament office to develop a comprehensive approach towards public information. This cooperation was possible thanks to the intensified relations between Myanmar and Germany and the funding provided by the German Federal Foreign Office aimed to strengthen democratic institutions in Myanmar.

Parliaments in Europe, and in particular the German parliamentary environment, have gained over the last three decades experience in public information from which the colleagues in Nay Pyi Taw wished to benefit. In 2015, a series of workshops in Nay Pyi Taw and the study trip to Berlin were organised by elbarlament. This work culminated in December 2015 in the detailed analysis of existing and prospective public information strategies, services and products which will give the newly elected MPs an orientation

on what is already being done and where the staff in the Hluttaw sees potential for development. These documents are being finalised and will inform activities during the second term of the parliament. While exponential growth took place during the last years, there is a wish and need to integrate better internal and external information flow. To succeed, Parliament will necessarily provide everyone working within its compound with more information. Investments there will pay huge dividends as external communication, mainly with the general public and civil society, becomes more effective. Thanks to our project, preparations for the upgrading of visitors’ services are well underway. There is agreement that mobile outreach tools, such as travelling exhibitions and info-trucks to bring information about the parliament to places all over the country, will need to be developed. Such facilities are also a platform for local MPs to inform about their work in Nay Pyi Taw. Another field of action is the integration of internet-based information tools from facebook.com, to websites, mobile apps to web-TV and radio and databases, also across the three Hluttaw houses. This will also require establishing a public information and media strategy covering the entire Hluttaw.

Hluttaw entering dialogue

Yet, the largest single challenge remains. How to work and support media reporting about the work of the elected representatives? The new MPs will be tested soon, as they will not be spared of criticism either. Making democracy public also means to accept that also the scrutinisers are subject to scrutiny, that MPs are not only holding others accountable for their action but are themselves held accountable by the public. Building a platform and attitude of an informed and open exchange on

policy and politics through and with the media professionals in the country remains crucial. This will open the way for a dialogue of the Hluttaw with the citizens and become a representative of the entire population and not only political parties. An important aim of every Parliament’s public information work.

Expectations for the future quality of the democratic process and the Parliament are high. The interest in the work of the Parliament will increase among citizens of Myanmar, civil society, business and lobbyists, international partners and hence the domestic and international media. A public information and media strategy will help to be prepared to manage those expectations. Therefore plans are being made to continue the co-operation with elbarlament in 2016 based on a renewed invitation of the Hluttaw. Already now, the participants of our activities told us that they feel more prepared for the times ahead. Their trust and confidence in public information matters has increased, and most importantly they have started to develop a professional information culture. As the activities have always brought together staff from the three houses of Parliament they also help to strengthen internal cohesion in what is probably the most dynamic and open political institution in Myanmar.

Tobias Flessenkemper is leading the project “elbarlament in Myanmar” which supports the staff and management of the Parliament Office in developing their public information capacities, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. He is Managing Director of elbarlament.org, an independent organisation providing advice in democratic and good governance. elbarlament is member of the community of practice of the European Partnership for Democracy (www.epd.eu).

Mandalay hosts mini marathon

AIMED at ensuring the physical strength of Mandalayans, the Mandalay Mayor's mini-marathon contest, held every year, was staged in Mandalay yesterday.

Local athletes and enthusiasts nationwide as well as tourists visiting Mandalay took part – 56 men and 39 women in the open event and 1244 men and 559 women in the amateur event participated in the race.

The race was launched in front of the Mandalay Development Office at 6:30 am. The finish line was at Bahtoo Stadium. Maung Sann Lin got first prize in the amateur event and Ma Myint Myint Aye received gold in the open event.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



A woman participates in Mandalay Mayor's mini marathon in Mandalay. Photo: Tin Maung (Mandalay)



A farmer drives goats to graze in Salin. PHOTO: KYAW SWA

Farmers in Salin adopt goat farming to boost incomes

FARMERS in Salin Township, in Myanmar's central arid zone, have taken up goat farming to supplement their incomes from agribusiness.

"Many breeds of goat are suitable for the region. It is a profitable business for farmers, as the township has a large area of vacant and uncultivated land," one farmer said. Eight types of goat can be bred in the region. However, most of the farmers prefer the Htainsan breed, which is known for its black head

and white body and for its ability to handle hot weather. Females give birth twice a year and can give birth to two offspring at a time. The goats eat grass and leaves that grow naturally in the area, which reduces farmers' food expenses. However, some farmers cultivate a non-native grasses to help their animals gain weight, according to breeder Daw Khin Than Nwe.

Every house in the township has bred at least five goats, said Daw Khin Than Nwe, who owns

50 goats and has plans to expand her goat farm.

The natural life expectancy for a goat is around six years.

Breeders in the region normally sell one-year-old goats and goat faeces as fertiliser. China and Thailand are the main buyers of Myanmar goats, buffalos and cows.

"Because they are susceptible to certain diseases, exported goats need to receive regular vaccinations," said Dr Chaw Su Thwe.—*Kyaw Swa*

Crime News

Two trade workers electrocuted in Kawthaung

TWO trade workers were electrocuted whilst smoothening a cement wall in Kawthaung, Taninthayi on Wednesday. According to a police investigation, U Kyaw was electrocuted while smoothening

cementing as he touched a nearby wire.

Another trade worker named Myo Hsan saw U Kyaw being electrocuted and was also electrocuted while trying to free him.—*Police*

Squatter huts burned in Hlaingtharyar

A FIRE broke out in Pimoenin road, Hlaingtharyar 5th ward on Thursday. A man was reportedly seen spraying accelerant on the structure before starting the fire.

"I saw him leave in the direction of Ward 3," said Daw

Nu Lwin who witnessed the act of arson.

"Now people living in the squatter huts, a community numbering more than 3,000, say they are concerned about further acts of arson."—*164/Myanma Alin*

10-wheel truck collides with PAJERO



PAJERO car is seen after head on collision with 10-wheel truck. Photo: Ko Min

A 10-wheel truck collided head on with Pajero in Indaw township, Sagaing region on Thursday, leaving one dead and four others injured.

The Pajero was being driven by one Than Tun Aung, 29 with five passengers on board at milepost 147/2 on the Mandalay- Myitkyinar road in Indaw township.

The collision killed Daw Khin May Yee on the spot and injured four others on board.

The police are still investigating the accident.—*Ko Min (Inntaw)*

8,130 yabba pills seized in Shan State

A LOCAL anti-drug check point seized 8,000 yabba pills from a motorbike heading from Laukai to Chin Shwe Haw, being driven by one Shee Shauk Sin

alias Shee Wun Chan on Thursday.

Member of the police searched a betel shop being run by Linn Yaung Chi and a restaur-

ant owned by one Naychi and found 130 yabba pills in Muse. The police station is filing charges against the suspects under the Anti-Narcotic Law.—*Police*

Luxury, trucks to take centre stage for Japan carmakers at Detroit show

DETROIT — The North American International Auto Show will open Monday in Detroit where Japanese Automakers are set to unveil luxury models and pickup trucks as the industry looking to capitalise on the low gas prices and low interest rates fueling the radiant US market.

Coming off a record year that saw US new car sales hit 17.47 million and shatter the record set in 2000, automakers from around the world will unveil more than 40 vehicles in Detroit with a heavy emphasis on the luxury markets and light trucks — a segment that grew 13 per cent last year.

Honda Motor Co. will introduce the second generation of its Ridgeline truck Monday to capture share in the hot pickup segment. The truck, first shown in Detroit in 2005, will be manufactured at the company's plant in Alabama.

"We developed this new Honda Ridgeline to offer something new and fundamentally better suited to the way many buyers use their truck," American Honda Senior Vice President

Jeff Conrad said in a press release ahead of the show.

Honda's luxury Acura brand will debut the Precision concept car Tuesday that will give consumers a look into the "strong and sharper focus" of brand's future design, especially for its upcoming sedan models.

While Nissan Motor Co. is expected to debut a truck concept Tuesday, its luxury Infiniti division will unveil the 2017 Q60 sport coupe Monday.

The two-door model is the production version of a concept vehicle Infiniti revealed at the 2015 show.

Toyota Motor Corp. will use the show to focus on its Lexus luxury brand and is expected to debut the LC full-size sport coupe Tuesday. The new model would be a production version of the LC-LF hybrid sport coupe introduced at the show in 2012.

Meanwhile, American and European automakers will showcase a variety of models to drum up excitement about their product lines as US consumers continue to flock to showrooms in record numbers.



Honda Motor Co President and Chief Executive Takahiro Hachigo speaks next to NSX during a presentation at the 44th Tokyo Motor Show in Tokyo, Japan, on 28 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

General Motors Co., the largest automaker in the country, will unveil the redesigned Cruze hatchback Monday to compete against other small hatchback cars, a recently growing market in the United States. The new hatchback is about 91 kilograms lighter than the previous sedan model.

"With 9 per cent market

growth in small hatchbacks last year, it's the perfect time to bring the Cruze Hatch to America," GM North America president Alan Batey said in a press release ahead of the show.

Ford Motor Co. is anticipated to debut a new version of its Fusion Energi plug-in hybrid sedan, while its Lincoln luxury division will likely introduce a pro-

duction version of the flagship Continental sedan.

FCA US LLC will unveil the 2017 Chrysler Town & Country minivan, which is expected to have an improved V-6 engine as well as a hybrid option.

German luxury automaker Daimler AG, maker of Mercedes cars, will debut the 2017 E class midsize sedan Sunday, which is expected to come with safety and driving-assistance features, such as pedestrian detection and adaptive cruise control, currently in its flagship S class sedan.

Volkswagen AG, currently under fire for rigging some of its diesel engines to skirt US emissions laws, is expected to reveal a plug-in hybrid sports utility vehicle concept Monday.

The concept could signal the automaker's commitment to electrification and other green technologies as it struggles to overcome the emissions scandal.

The 28th annual show, which had over 800,000 visitors last year, is open to the media Monday and Tuesday. It will open to the public 16 to 24 January.—Kyodo News

Gold falls further from 9-week high after upbeat US data



An employee poses for photographs with a one kilogram gold bar at the Korea Gold Exchange in Seoul, South Korea, on 31 July 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Gold fell further from an earlier nine-week high but was still on track for its strongest week since August on Friday as stronger-than-expected US payrolls data boosted the dollar and stock markets, shoring up a recovery in equities.

The Labour Department said US job growth surged in December, and revised employment for the prior two months sharply higher, suggesting that a recent manufacturing-led slowdown in economic growth would be temporary.

That surprisingly strong payrolls report initially lifted stocks but they later lost ground. The dollar rose versus the euro.

Spot gold XAU= initially rose to the highest since early No-

vember in overnight trade at \$1,112 an ounce. It was down 0.9 per cent at \$1,098.84 an ounce at 2:15pm EST (1915 GMT), breaking a four-day winning streak. US gold futures GCv1 for February delivery settled down 0.9 per cent at \$1,097.90.

"(These are) very strong numbers, good for the US dollar," said Georgette Boele, analyst at ABN Amro. "The US dollar is the most important negative driver for gold prices, so this will add pressure."

A strong report could be seen as prompting the Federal Reserve to lift interest rates at a faster pace. Rising rates typically weigh on gold, as they lift the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets, while boosting the dollar.

"The week provided a good gold rally as stocks were slammed but today (a) 5 per cent jobs report added some bears to gold as (the) Fed seems on path with future rate hikes on this news," said George Gero, precious metals strategist for RBC Capital Markets in New York.

Jitters over the Chinese economy had spooked global stock markets earlier this week, sending investors sprinting to safe-haven assets, and pushing gold sharply higher.

"Although we expect further Fed tightening and dollar strength to prove headwinds for gold over the coming year, the price should be supported by safe-haven demand, a pickup in US inflation and strong buying from emerging economies," said Capital Economics in a note.

Investment appetite for bullion showed signs of picking up this week. Holdings of the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, New York-listed SPDR Gold Shares (GLD), rose 4.2 tonnes on Thursday, data from the fund showed.

Silver XAG= was down 2.6 per cent at \$13.93 an ounce, while platinum XPT= was up 0.04 per cent at \$874.15 an ounce. Palladium XPD= was down 0.2 per cent at \$491.50 an ounce. Palladium fell below \$500 for the first time since September 2010 on Thursday, reaching a low of \$481.67. It is set to end the week down 12.5 per cent.—Reuters

German spies revive internet snooping work with US

BERLIN — Germany's BND intelligence agency has resumed joint internet surveillance with the US National Security Agency (NSA) after halting collaboration with Washington last year following a row over spying practices, German media reported.

Last May, German intelligence sources told Reuters that the BND had stopped sending the NSA information gathered from its surveillance station in Bad Aibling in Bavaria.

That move, which followed allegations the BND had helped the NSA spy on European officials and firms, strained German-US relations and created divisions within Chancellor Angela Merkel's government.

German newspapers on Friday said that collaborations at the Bad Aibling station have

been resumed and the NSA is again being supplied with intelligence by the BND.

The station is considered central to surveillant crisis countries in the Middle East, such as Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Libya, the papers said.

Officials did not immediately comment on the report but the move comes amid heightened security concerns across Europe following militant attacks in Paris on 13 November and an alert over possible suicide bombings in Munich over New Year's Eve.

In response to the Munich security alert, which was probably the result of a tipoff from a friendly intelligence service, German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere called for closer cooperation with foreign security services.—Reuters



A general view of the monitoring base of the US intelligence organisation National Security Agency (NSA) in Bad Aibling south of Munich, in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

Same battles rage on 100 years after first US birth control clinic

NEW YORK — Outside the crumbling Brooklyn building where the first US birth control clinic opened 100 years ago, Alexander Sanger reflected on the move that landed his grandmother in jail and fueled a controversy over women's reproductive rights that has raged ever since.

"This is where it all started," said the grandson of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger in his first visit to the Brownsville, Brooklyn, site where she started her clinic in 1916.

"She threw down the gauntlet and said, 'Preventing women from contraception is inhumane,'" said Sanger, 68, chairman of the International Planned Parenthood Council and a former president of Planned Parenthood New York City.

City records show the desolate building with bricked up windows is not abandoned, although it appears unoccupied, a far cry from the busy clinic shown in historic photographs with baby carriages parked out front.

Some of the reproductive



Alexander Sanger, Chair of the International Planned Parenthood Council poses for a photo outside of where his Grandmother Margaret Sanger opened the first birth control clinic 100 years ago, in the Brooklyn borough of New York, on 12 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

rights battles that Margaret Sanger fought a century ago were remarkably similar to the challenges facing Planned Parenthood today, particularly organised religion's objection to sex education, her grandson said.

"There is a direct correlation," he said. "If the hormones

are raging among young people and you don't get them preventive information and preventive methods, they are going to get pregnant."

Father Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, said the Roman Catholic Church's opposition was rooted in a far deeper

philosophical divide. "It's not just a question of 'Let's teach them sex education so they'll know how to prevent the pregnancy,'" Pavone said. "The fundamental disagreement comes on that basic question of 'What's human sexuality all about?'"

The religious-liberty fight over contraception is back in the US Supreme Court, which will rule by July on whether religious groups deserve a blanket exemption so that they do not have to pay for their employees' contraceptive coverage as mandated under President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.

Abortion is the flashpoint in other conflicts that are vastly and violently different from those Sanger faced before her death in 1966. Opponents have waged a decades-long string of attacks on abortion providers, the most recent in November when a gunman killed three people at a Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood clinic. Since 1993, there have been 11 murders and 26 attempted murders due to anti-abortion violence,

according to the National Abortion Federation, a group of health-care providers.

Lawmakers continue to tighten restrictions on abortion, with 288 such limits passed by states since 2011, according to Elizabeth Nash of the Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit that focuses on reproductive health.

The Supreme Court also plans to rule on a Texas law that mandates costly hospital-grade facilities for abortion providers, who say it actually aims to shut clinics and chip away at a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy. Planned Parenthood itself is in the crosshairs, with the Republican-led Congress voting as recently as this week to cut all of its federal funding, although Obama, a Democrat, has vowed to veto the measure when it reaches his desk.

A USA Today poll in December found Americans overwhelmingly oppose cutting off federal funds for Planned Parenthood. Some 59 per cent of Republicans and 89 per cent of Democrats are against the idea.—Reuters

New US cancer cases holding steady, deaths declining

NEW YORK — The number of new cancer diagnoses in the US is largely steady while the number of cancer deaths continues to decline, according to a new report from the nation's leading cancer advocacy group.

This year, the US will see nearly 1.7 million new cancer cases and nearly 600,000 cancer deaths, according to American Cancer Society projections published in CA: A Cancer Journal for Clinicians.

The report's authors point out that cancer continues to be a leading cause of death in the US, however, and new diagnoses for some cancers are increasing.

"It's kind of a good news, bad news story," said ACS's Rebecca Siegel, who is based in Atlanta.

Cancer deaths fell by 23 per cent in the decade before 2012, the latest period for which data are

available. The decrease represents about 1.7 million fewer deaths since rates peaked in 1991, says the report.

The decrease is largely due to fewer deaths from breast, colon, rectal and prostate cancers. Also, there are fewer lung cancer deaths as a result of fewer people smoking.

Breast cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death for women ages 20 to 59, and leukemia is the leading cause of cancer death among men ages 20 to 39. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for older men and women.

The number of new cancer diagnoses appears mostly stable in women. Among men, the rate of new cases fell 3 per cent per year between 2009 and 2012, with the drop largely due to a reduction in prostate cancer screening.

Rates of some cancers are increasing, including those often associated with obesity.

For example, incidence and mortality rates for endometrial cancer are up, said Siegel, "likely due to the obesity epidemic."

The report says endometrial cancer risk climbs 5 per cent with every five-point gain in body mass index, which is a measure of weight in relation to height.

Another area of concern are gaps between races, Siegel told Reuters Health.

For example, black men have the highest rates of new cancer diagnoses and deaths. In fact, black men have higher diagnosis and death rates than non-Hispanic white men for every malignancy except kidney cancer.

"The improvements in cancer prevention and early detection and treatment aren't disseminated



A cancer patient shows off her breast cancer survivor bracelet. PHOTO: REUTERS

equally among the population," said Siegel.

"Extending these improvements to underserved populations would accelerate a decline in death rates," she said.

The report too says existing tools to fight cancer need to be applied to all segments of the population. Also, advancing the fight will require more research and funding. "A lot of progress has been made, but there is more work to do," said Siegel.—Reuters

China kicks off precision medicine research

BEIJING — The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) announced Saturday its precision medicine research plan targeting Chinese people.

Precision medicine is a medical model for high-efficiency, low-cost prevention and treatment of diseases tailored to individual patients based on their genetic content.

Headed by the Beijing Institute of Genomics under the CAS, a cross-disciplinary team consisting of researchers from multiple institutes will spend four years collecting genetic information of 4,000 volunteers. Comprehensive research will target 2,000 of all volunteers, involving whole genome sequence analysis, building genome sequence health profiles, and early warning and intervention research for the risks and drug reactions concerning the genetic factors in key chronic diseases. The research programme also covers diabetes and cancers.

"Human genome sequence studies brought new concepts for the treatment of complicated diseases such as cancer, metabolic diseases, and cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases," said Zeng Changqing, the programme's chief scientist.

According to Zeng, precision medicine will realise the customization of healthcare, and those volunteers' genome health profiles will pave way for a precision medicine initiative that covers all Chinese people.—Xinhua

Death toll in Nigeria's Lassa fever outbreak rises to 40

LAGOS — The Nigerian government has confirmed the death of 40 people out of 86 reported cases of Lassa fever outbreak in the country.

Minister of Health Isaac Adewole told a news conference late on Friday that the casualties were recorded in 10 states of the federation.

Adewole advised communities to improve on their hygiene, including food hygiene and food protection practices.

He also urged the public to avoid contact with rodents and rats as well as food contaminat-

ed with rat's secretions and excretions.

The minister said affected states have been advised to intensify awareness on the signs and symptoms of the disease.

According to him, the affected states are Bauchi, Nasarawa, Niger, Taraba, Kano, Rivers, Edo, Plateau, Gombe and Oyo.

He said the ministry had ordered for the immediate release of adequate quantities of ribavirin, the specific antiviral drug for Lassa fever, to the affected states for prompt treatment of cases.

Adewole added that the ministry deployed rapid response teams to all affected states to assist in investigating and verifying the cases as well as tracing of contacts.

He said also clinicians and relevant health care workers had been sensitised and mobilized in areas of patient management and care in the affected states.

Besides, he advised family members and health care workers to always be careful and avoid contact with blood and body fluids while caring for sick persons infected by the disease.

He also directed health facilities in the country to emphasize routine infection prevention and control measures and ensure that all Lassa fever patients are treated free.

Adewole said Nigeria has the capability to diagnose Lassa fever, adding that all the cases reported so far were confirmed by our laboratories.

The first case of the current outbreak was reported from Bauchi in November 2015. In 2012, Lassa fever claimed more than 40 lives in 12 states across Nigeria.—Xinhua

Hackers used malware to confuse utility in Ukraine outage

WASHINGTON — Hackers likely caused a 23 December electricity outage in Ukraine by remotely switching breakers to cut power, after installing malware to prevent technicians from detecting the attack, according to a report analysing how the incident unfolded.

The report from Washington-based SANS ICS was released late on Saturday, providing the first detailed analysis of what caused a six-hour outage for some 80,000 customers of Western Ukraine's Prykarpattiaoblenergo utility.

SANS ICS, which advises infrastructure operators on combating cyber attacks, also said the attackers crippled the utility's customer-service centre by flooding it with phone calls to prevent customers from alerting the utility that power was down.

"This was a multi-pronged attack against multiple facilities. It was highly coordinated with very professional logistics," said Robert Lee, a former US Air Force cyber warfare operations officer who helped compile the report for SANS ICS. "They sort of blinded them in every way possible."

Experts widely describe the incident as the first known power outage caused by a cyber attack. Ukraine's SBU state security service blamed Russia, and US cyber firm iSight Partners identified the perpetrator as a Russian hacking group known as "Sandworm."

Ukraine's energy ministry has said it will hold off on discussing the matter until after 18 January, following completion of a formal probe into the matter. The utility's operators were able to quickly recover by switching to manual operations, essentially disconnecting infected workstations and servers from the grid, according to the report. SANS ICS said on its blog it had "high confidence" in its findings, which were based on discussions and analysis from "multiple international community members and companies". The report's authors declined to identify those sources.

US critical infrastructure security expert Joe Weiss said he believed the report's findings would be validated. "They did a phenomenal job," he said. There is strong interest in the outage because of concerns that similar techniques could be used to launch more attacks on power operators around the globe.

"What is now true is that a coordinated cyber attack consisting of multiple elements is one of the expected hazards (electric utilities) may face," SANS ICS Director Michael Assante said in a blog.

"We need to learn and prepare ourselves to detect, respond, and restore from such events in the future," said Assante, former chief security officer of the quasi-governmental North American Electric Reliability Corp.—*Reuters*

US flies B-52 over South Korea in show of force to North



US Air Force B-52 is seen through the window of another during a training mission in the United Kingdom's airspace in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — The US military yesterday dispatched a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber on a flight over South Korea, in an apparent show of force to North Korea following its globally condemned fourth nuclear test.

The long-range bomber took off from a US air base in Guam in the morning, US Pacific Command said in a statement. It was seen flying above Osan in western South Korea around noon, flanked by South Korean F-15 and US F-16 fighters.

Osan, located south of the capital Seoul, is where a US air base is located. After the low-level flyover, the plane returned to US Andersen Air Force Base on the Pacific island

of Guam without landing.

The mission, aimed at showing North Korea the US military's overwhelming military capability, happened only four days after the North's claimed hydrogen-bomb test. By contrast, following North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013, the US military flew a bomber over the South about a month after the test.

There was no immediate reaction from North Korea's state media to the fly-over, however earlier in the day the country's official media reported a statement by its leader Kim Jong Un that Wednesday's test was "a self-defensive step" against a threat posed by the United

States. Adm. Harry Harris Jr., commander of the US Pacific Command forces, said that the mission "was a demonstration of the ironclad US commitment to our allies in South Korea, in Japan, and to the defence of the American homeland."

Harris called North Korea's nuclear test a "blatant violation of its international obligations," adding that US joint military forces in the Indo-Asia-Pacific "will continue to work with all of our regional allies and partners to maintain stability and security."

James Schoff, a senior associate in the Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that in

addition to the participation of bombers and submarines in joint training exercises, the US military could respond with deployment of the land-based Terminal High Altitude Area Defence system in South Korea.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on national broadcaster NHK yesterday that Japan would respond to the North's provocation in a "determined and resolute manner."

Also Sunday, the South Korean Defence Ministry said Defence Minister Han Min Koo has instructed the South Korean military's missile command to retaliate "speedily and accurately" if North Korea makes any provocations.—*Kyodo News*

China arrests four labour activists amid crackdown — lawyers

BEIJING — China has formally arrested four labour activists who have helped workers fight for their rights, lawyers for two of them said yesterday, as the government steps up a crackdown on activists pressing for change within the system.

Rights groups say the current clampdown on dissent is the most sweeping in two decades in China, where a slowing economy has led to a surge in labour disputes, particularly in the southern manufacturing powerhouse of Guangdong.

Zeng Feiyang, director of the Panyu Migrant Workers Centre in the southern city of Guangzhou, was charged with

"disturbing social order", said Cheng Zhunqiang, his lawyer.

Zeng is one of China's most prominent labour activists, many of whom have campaigned for the legal rights of workers, such as proper work contracts and social insurance contributions.

Two other activists, Meng Han and Zhu Xiaomei, have also been arrested on the same charge, said Yan Xin, Meng's lawyer, and Cheng.

He Xiaobo was arrested on a charge of embezzlement, according to New York-based rights group China Labor Watch. The lawyers for Zhu and He could not be reached for comment.

Both Cheng and Yan told Reuters by telephone that prosecutors in Guangzhou told them of the arrests of Zeng and Meng on Friday, but did not give any reason for the charges.

Both lawyers said they had been unable to meet their clients since their detentions, in contravention of Chinese law.

Prosecutors in Guangzhou's Panyu district did not answer Reuters' repeated telephone calls to seek comment. The Guangdong government did not respond to a faxed query.

A formal arrest usually leads to a trial. Last month, police in Guangzhou detained seven labour activists, sparking

criticism from rights groups. Two of them have since been released, Cheng said.

At the time, state media accused the seven detained labour activists of "inciting workers to go on strike", accepting foreign funding and "disturbing social order".

They also said the married Zeng had "at least eight long-term lovers", a charge that Zeng's supporters call a smear against him.

The number of strikes in China surged to a record 2,774 last year, or double the figure for 2014, Hong Kong-based advocacy group China Labour Bulletin said last week.—*Reuters*

Sean Penn interview helped nab Mexico drug lord 'Chapo' Guzman

MEXICO CITY — An interview that Hollywood star Sean Penn conducted with Mexican Joaquin "Chapo" Guzman late last year helped Mexico's government catch the world's most wanted drug lord, sources said on Saturday.

Guzman told Penn in the interview published in Rolling Stone on Saturday that he sent tunnel engineers to Germany for training prior to his prison break through a mile-long passage to his cell last year.

Guzman, the legendary boss of the Sinaloa drug cartel, was arrested in northwest Mexico on Friday morning,

and sent back to the jail he broke out of in July through a mile-long tunnel that led straight into his cell.

Mexico now aims to extradite him to the United States as soon as possible after recapturing him following a bloody shootout and frantic search in which the wily kingpin almost gave pursuers the slip again.

The interview, which is the latest twist in Chapo's larger-than-life career, and also features video clips of the drug lord in a colourful shirt and black cap in a rural setting, gives rare insight into the life of an almost mythical figure.

Penn calls it "the first interview El Chapo had ever granted outside an interrogation room." Mexico's government was aware the interview was being conducted, and was closely monitoring all movements, a government source said.

In the interview, brokered by Mexican actress Kate Del Castillo, who herself played a Mexican drug queen in a well-known soap, Penn says Guzman sent engineers to Germany for three months of training on how to avoid problems when excavating near "the low-lying water table" beneath the prison.—Reuters



Joaquin 'El Chapo' Guzman is escorted by soldiers during a presentation at the hangar belonging to the office of the Attorney General in Mexico City, Mexico on 8 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japan, Britain defence chiefs eye latter's stronger Asia involvement



British Defence Secretary Michael Fallon (L) and Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani shake hands before their talks in Tokyo on 9 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — Japanese and British defence ministers agreed Saturday to seek Britain's greater involvement in the Asia-Pacific region, in the wake of North Korea's latest nuclear test and China's maritime assertiveness in the South

China Sea.

Meeting in Tokyo, Gen Nakatani and his British counterpart Michael Fallon agreed to closely cooperate in actions against North Korea, which said Wednesday it successfully tested a hydrogen bomb.

Their meeting came a day after the two and Japan and Britain's foreign ministers held so-called "two-plus-two" security talks.

Despite the perception that Britain is drawing closer to China for economic gain, Japan is keen to strengthen ties with Britain not only to increase international pressure on North Korea but also to keep China in check.

North Korea's nuclear test "significantly hurts the peace and security of the international community and cannot be accepted," Nakatani told reporters after his talks with Fallon.

Underscoring the view that the situations in North Korea and the South China Sea undermine the security environment of the Asia-Pacific region, Nakatani said, "We have created a foundation with Britain, which upholds rules-based international order, to jointly raise our voices and cope" with security issues.

Nakatani and Fallon confirmed Friday during their two-plus-two meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond to work "urgently" to adopt a new UN Security Council resolution against North Korea.

Given recent developments such as the resumption of South Korea's loudspeaker broadcasts of anti-North Korea propaganda across its border with the North, Nakatani said his ministry will "keep close watch over the situation on the (Korean) peninsula with strong interest."

The resumption is certain to draw a fierce backlash from Pyongyang, which has in the past threatened to fire artillery at the speakers.

On top of greater security cooperation between Japan and Britain, Nakatani and Fallon agreed to create a new framework aimed at

helping the militaries of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations upgrade their security capabilities, Japanese officials said.

Four ASEAN members — Brunei, Viet Nam, Malaysia and the Philippines — and Taiwan are embroiled in competing territorial claims with China over islets in the South China Sea. ASEAN also comprises Indonesia, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand.

China claims almost all of that sea, and its massive land reclamation work in the area has made the smaller Asian claimants uneasy.

During Saturday's meeting, Nakatani expressed his concern about China's fast-paced land reclamation activities, according to the officials.

Also regarding the spate of terrorist attacks worldwide including Paris, Nakatani said, "We strongly

condemn terrorism of every kind and reaffirmed the importance of the international community's united front in counterterrorism measures."

The two defence chiefs also agreed to plan for British Typhoon fighters to fly to Japan this year for a joint drill with Japan's Air Self-Defence Force.

Nakatani said he and Fallon also agreed that the Japanese Self-Defence Forces and the British military will conduct a joint drill during multilateral minesweeping exercises in the Persian Gulf.

Just as they confirmed in their two-plus-two talks, Nakatani and Fallon reiterated the two nations will speed up negotiations for the early conclusion of an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement. That would enable the SDF and the British military to share supplies and transportation services during UN peacekeeping operations.—Kyodo News

Suspect charged in shooting of Philadelphia policeman

PHILADELPHIA — A man claiming allegiance to Islamic State militants was charged on Saturday with attempted murder in the shooting of a Philadelphia police officer this week, the prosecutor said.

Edward Archer, of Philadelphia, is accused of ambushing an officer in his squad car shortly before midnight on Thursday.

He is also charged with several other crimes and is being held without bond, the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office said on its

Twitter account. Police released still images from surveillance video that showed the gunman dressed in a long white robe walking toward the car and firing, eventually getting close enough to shoot at point-blank range through the window.

The city's police commissioner said on Friday that Archer told authorities he ambushed the patrol car "in the name of Islam."

"He has confessed to committing this cowardly act in the name of Islam," Richard Ross told a news

conference, adding that the 30-year-old assailant also referenced Islamic State militants. There was no evidence as yet that the shooter had worked with anyone else, Ross said, adding, "He was savvy enough to stop just short of implicating himself in a conspiracy."

A top US Muslim advocacy group said it had found no evidence that Archer was an observant Muslim.

US officials have been on high security alert following a series of Islamic State-linked attacks at home

and abroad over the last few months.

In November, gunman and suicide bombers affiliated with Islamic State killed 130 people in a series of attacks in Paris. Last month a married couple fatally shot 14 people in San Bernardino, California, in an attack inspired by Islamic State.

Those concerns have led to calls by some Republican governors and presidential hopefuls to restrict the admission of Syrian refugees fleeing that country's long civil war.—Reuters

DECLARATION TO KNOW THE CONCERNING PERSONS

I, MA MYO PA PA TUN (5/ Sa Ka Ta (Naing) 096648), hereby declare as follows:-

1. I am a villager residing at Kanthit Village, Sintgaing Township, Mandalay Division.
2. That **DAW AYE SANDAR** who had been legally married to my cousin, **U MYO MIN THEIN**, and her legitimate sister, **DAW THIDAR SWE**, have been taken the prosecution under the Civil Regular Suit No. 606/2015 at Yangon Eastern District Court and under Criminal Regular Suit No. 254/2015, Section 406 of Misuse of Invested Share Entrustment at Lanmadaw Township Court and the said, **DAW AYE SANDAR** and **DAW THIDAR SWE** are facing with prosecution as defendants at Lanmadaw Township Court. So, I declare with generosity for the persons concerning to them not to be suffered the losses as like me.

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Tibetan film director wins 1st prize at Tokyo film festival



Pema Tsenden, a film director from a traditionally Tibetan region of China. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — Pema Tsenden, a film director from a traditionally Tibetan region of China, has won the Grand Prize as well as the Student Jury Prize at an international film competition held in Tokyo in 2015.

Tokyo Filmex, held last November, aims at discovering and nurturing young talent in the Asian region. Last year was the 16th time the event has been held.

The film, “Tharlo,” depicts Tibetan culture through the life of a Tibetan shepherd with humor and pathos. In the 123-min-

ute black-and-white movie — the director’s fifth feature-length film — Tharlo, the shepherd, is told by local police to apply for a proper ID card. So he goes to a photo studio in town, which begins to turn his life on its head. Against the backdrop of the story is the Chinese nationwide policy of replacing original ID cards with new ones with IC chips in the early 2000s. The ID cards are issued for all Chinese citizens aged 16 or above, including those in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Seduced by an attractive hairdresser he meets, the shepherd for the first time tries karaoke and experiences nightlife in the city. Eventually, he shaves off his traditional Tibetan braided pigtail and sells his sole possessions — his sheep. “A simple man loses track of himself while in search for himself. That’s what I wanted to depict,” Tsenden said in an interview.

The actor playing the role of Tharlo is Shide Nyima, a comedian widely known in Tibet. Tsenden picked him as his “melancholic” mood matched the shepherd’s image, and the deciding factor was that he had long hair grown out for 17 years, the director said,

noting there are fewer Tibetans with pigtails today. Shide Nyima was first unable to make up his mind to star in the movie because he had to have his pigtail cut in the course of filming, Tsenden said. Although he accepted the lead role, he again hesitated at the moment his hair was to be cut, only giving consent the following day, according to Tsenden. Tsenden, 46, made a debut as a novelist when he was a college student. His novels, written both in Tibetan and Chinese, have won many literary awards and some of his works have been translated into Japanese.

In recent years, Tsenden has achieved international acclaim as a film director as well.

His previous movie “Old Dog” has also won the Grand Prize at the film festival in 2011. “I really feel that I’m inseparable from this film festival,” he said. “Especially this time, it greatly encouraged me that my film was supported by the student jury, which enabled me to confirm that my works can reach out to young generations beyond borders,” he added.—*Kyodo News*

Katy Perry to present at Golden Globes



Katy Perry. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Katy Perry, Matt Damon and Will Ferrell have been added to the line-up of presenters at the 73rd annual Golden Globe Awards this weekend. The trio are among the final batch of presenters announced for the upcoming ceremony, which will also see Kate Bosworth, Sophia Bush, Chris Evans, Will Ferrell, Tom Ford, Tom Hanks, Jonah Hill, John Krasinski and Andy Samberg take to the stage

throughout the night. Previously announced presenters include Amy Adams, Eddie Redmayne, Channing Tatum, Jamie Foxx and Amy Schumer. Meanwhile, host Ricky Gervais recently admitted he plans to get drunk at the ceremony on Sunday. The comedian is returning to host the show for the fourth time and admitted he won’t be entirely sober when he takes over proceedings at the 73rd annual awards show.—*PTI*

‘Star Wars’ opens at record pace in China, Disney says

LOS ANGELES — Global blockbuster movie “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” broke records in China with an estimated \$33 million in ticket sales on its first day in the world’s second-largest film market, Walt Disney Co said on Saturday.

The figure represents the Disney film studio’s biggest opening day ever in China and the highest Saturday opening day in the country in industry history, the company said. “Force Awakens,” the seventh installment in the science fiction franchise created by George Lucas, is the top-grossing movie of all time in the biggest movie market — the United States and Canada — and has set records around the world.

Global sales through Thursday reached \$1.6 billion, Disney said. Updated results will be released on Sunday. China will help decide if “Force Awakens” tops “Avatar” as the highest-grossing film in Hollywood history. “Avatar” took in \$2.8 billion after its December 2009 debut.

The “Star Wars” film saga that began in 1977 had not been a cultural phenomenon in China like it was in other countries. The original movies weren’t shown in Chinese theaters until last June. Disney launched a marketing blitz to build buzz, featuring 500 Stormtroopers on the Great Wall and promotions with a pop star dubbed China’s answer to Justin Bieber.—*Reuters*



A fan wearing a face mask waits for a red carpet event before the China premiere of the film “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” amid heavy smog in Shanghai, China, on 27 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Leonardo DiCaprio still open to marriage

LONDON — Newly-single Leonardo DiCaprio has not ruled out marriage in the future, insisting “that time will come”. The “Wolf of Wall Street” star was recently reported to have parted ways with model-actress Kelly Rohrbach late last year, after dating for around five months.

She joined the likes of Gisele Bündchen, Blake Lively, Bar Refaeli, Toni Garrn, and

Erin Heatherton on Leonardo’s list of exes.

“That time will come when that time comes. The truth is, you can’t predict marriage. You can’t plan it. It’s just going to happen when it happens.”

DiCaprio, 41, is instead choosing to focus on his career as his work allows him to escape the monotony of everyday life, even though he is still baffled by the intensity of his fame.—*PTI*

Harrison Ford named highest-grossing Hollywood actor

LONDON — Harrison Ford is the highest-grossing actor in Hollywood history, thanks to the unprecedented box office success of “Star Wars: The Force Awakens”.

The 73-year-old actor’s 41 movies have grossed a total of USD 4.7 billion, with Harrison’s latest movie, “Star Wars: The Force Awakens”, pulling in a whopping USD 770 million, according to BoxOffice Mojo. Ford has

ousted Samuel L Jackson from the top spot, with the 67-year-old actor falling to second place. His 68 movies have taken in a total of USD 4.6 billion. Tom Hanks, Morgan Freeman and Eddie Murphy round out the top five.

“Star Wars” has been breaking records since its release, starting with its opening weekend when it made a staggering USD 248 million at the box office.—*PTI*

Cultural exhibition 'Blooms of Vitality, Colours of Life' launched in Singapore

SINGAPORE — A cultural exhibition, "Blooms of Vitality, Colours of Life", which showcases Chinese culture in Singapore, was launched here Saturday.

The exhibition was officiated by Baey Yam Keng, parliamentary secretary for Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, at Singapore Conference Hall adjacent to

the building of the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre (SCCC).

"Blooms of Vitality, Colours of Life" is Singapore's first multimedia exhibition on local Chinese culture, which amasses information and materials provided by some 300 local agencies, clan associations, cultural organisations and individuals last year with an investment of

550,000 Singapore dollars (381,260 US dollars).

Organised by the SCCC, the exhibition explores Chinese culture in the city state from perspectives of humanities, and presents its vitality through poetic narratives.

The exhibition showcases the evolution of Singapore's unique Chinese culture with vivid expressions, interactive exhibits

and special visual projections with four sections.

The exhibition will open to the public from Sunday to 31 January. A series of specially designed "Cultural Weekends" activities will be held during the period, including "My Singapore Story" micro film showcase, topical lectures, new music creations and multicultural dances.—Xinhua

Demand for reprint of Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' (My Struggle) overwhelms publisher

MUNICH — Heavy demand for the first edition of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" to be printed in Germany since his death is taking its publisher by surprise, with orders received for almost four times the print run.

The two-volume political treatise, which was written between 1924 and 1926 and posits a global Jewish conspiracy, is regarded as one of the Nazis' main propaganda tools. It has been re-issued as a 2,000-page annotated version after its 70-year copyright expired.

The head of the Munich Institute for Contemporary History, which published the work, said it had received orders for some 15,000 copies against a print run of just 4,000.

There had been requests for translations into Italian, French and English, and demand from Turkey, China, South Korea and Poland, Andreas Wirsching told a news conference on Friday.

The publication has unleashed fierce debate in



A copy of the book 'Hitler, Mein Kampf. A Critical Edition' lies on a display table in a bookshop in Munich, Germany, on 8 January 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Germany, a country still struggling with its Nazi past and its responsibility for the killing of over 6 million Jews during the Holocaust. Some German Jewish community leaders have said the "anti-Semitic diatribe" should remain banned. But the institute, which added some 3,500 notes to the text, defended

the publication.

"The edition unmask Hitler's false allegations, his whitewashing and outright lies," Wirsching said.

The book became a bestseller in Germany in the 1930s, after Hitler had become chancellor, and sold 12 million copies by the time World War Two ended in 1945. It was trans-

lated into 18 languages, but after the war it was banned in Germany by the Allied occupying powers.

"The book is not only a historical source, it's a symbol," said Christian Hartmann, co-editor of the edition. "And we wanted to dismantle that symbol once and for all."—Reuters

Special guest China prominent at New Delhi book fair

NEW DELHI — As the New Delhi World Book Fair has begun in the Indian capital, all roads seem to lead toward the city's Pragati Maidan, a vast venue designed for exhibitions.

Book lovers, young and old, are making a bee-line to the halls, which are showcasing a wide array of books and cultural activities.

The fair will go on until 17 January, much to the delight of visitors and those interested in looking at the world through the books.

This year, the guest of honor is China, which

has set up a beautifully designed pavilion spread across 1,200 square metres at hall number 7.

At the pavilion, visitors walk through the chambers housing hundreds of Chinese books translated into English displayed on its shelves.

"It is really good to be part of this book fair," said Yin Yamin, Rights Manager, Intellectual Property Publishing House.

"We want to introduce our concept of publishing in India and offer our help to the publishers here in understanding the patent literature publishing."

More than 250 Chinese delegates including publishers and authors are participating in the book fair that kicked off on Saturday.

Around 5,000 Chinese books will be showcased in the nine-day long fair and books translated from the Chinese language into English and Hindi are conspicuously on display.

The visiting publishers from China hope to strengthen their ties with India by providing a glimpse into China's culture and knowledge.

"We want more and more people to visit us, read our books and under-

stand them. People in India can read our work and see how we have moved forward," said Yolanda Liu, Vice Director of China Renmin University Press.

"Once we will understand each other, we can come closer and strengthen our relations," said Liu.

"We publish academic work in philosophy, economics, politics, law sociology finance, aesthetics and other subjects," said Liu. "This programme and exchange would certainly help to bring us closer to our counterparts in India and would go a long way in strengthening our ties."—Xinhua

World's highest salt lake receives record number of tourists in 2015

LHASA — Namtso lake, the highest altitude salt lake in the world in Lhasa, southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, welcomed 776,000 international and domestic tourists in 2015, the local government of Lhasa announced on Friday.

The number of tourists increased by 31 per cent compared with 2014, reaching a record high, according

to local authorities.

To boost tourism development of Namtso lake, the local government has introduced five new tourism products for the scenic spot last year, and launched a coach line to connect downtown Lhasa and the lake.

Namtso lake, the world's highest at 4,722 metres, has always been a favourite destination for tourists.—Xinhua

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(11-1-2016, Monday)

6:20 pm

• Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:35 pm

• Fashion Show

7:00 pm

• TV Drama Series

7:50 pm

• TV Drama Series

8:35 pm

• Musical Programme

8:55 pm

• Myanmar Video

10:15 pm

• Myanmar Video

12:00

• Close Down

From 11.1.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm

To 12.1.2016 (Tuesday) 06:00 Pm

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

mitv Myanmar International

(11-1-2016 07:00 am~ 12-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations- Gem Stone Painting
07:45	Am	Amazing: Magician Sak Kaw Ma
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Classic Cars Rally 2015 (Part-I)
08:39	Am	Around The Maha Boditahtaung
08:51	Am	Lines & Wash Painting
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Marvelous Solo Cane Ball Playing
09:43	Am	Excavation At Kawhmu
09:53	Am	Cosplayer
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Those who never give up (Ep-5) Shwe Min Thar Foundation
10:45	Am	The Caves

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

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-8) (Part-1)
07:53	Pm	Art Students: Theatrical Art
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Shan Noodle Salad)
08:44	Pm	Director: Thiha Kyaw Soe
09:03	Pm	News
09:26	Pm	Marvelous Solo Cane Ball Playing
09:43	Pm	Excavation At Kawhmu
09:55	Pm	Now in Yangon

(10:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (10:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

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

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

Djokovic crushes Nadal to start year with title

DOHA — Novak Djokovic moved ahead for the first time in his long-running rivalry with Rafael Nadal when the world number one thrashed the Spaniard to win the Qatar Open in Doha on Saturday.

The Serb, appearing in his 16th consecutive final, won 6-1, 6-2 in little more than an hour and now has 24 career victories over Nadal, compared to 23 for the former world number one.

Djokovic dominated 2015, winning three of the year's four grand slams, and already looks in the groove in the build-up to this month's Australian Open.

He and Nadal boast the most prolific rivalry, in terms of meetings, in the professional era of

men's tennis but the latest only emphasised how dominant Djokovic has become.

The Serb has now won nine of his last 10 clashes with Nadal.

Saturday's one-sided affair saw Djokovic claim a 60th career ATP title, one of only 10 players to achieve such a feat.

The 28-year-old suffered one of his few blips last year in Doha when he was surprisingly beaten by Ivo Karlovic, failing to reach a tournament final for the only time in 2015.

But he made up for that with an immaculate week alongside the Arabian Gulf.

Nadal was powerless to stop Djokovic as he watched 16 winners fly past him in the opening



Novak Djokovic of Serbia holds the trophy as he stands next to second place Rafael Nadal of Spain after winning his Qatar Open men's single tennis final match in Doha, Qatar, on 9 January 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

set. World number five Nadal, competing in his 99th final, fared little better thereafter and has now lost 11 consecutive sets against Djokovic since the 2014 French Open final.

"I played pretty much perfect tennis today. From the very beginning I managed to get every

shot the way I wanted," said Djokovic.

"The way I played today gives me great satisfaction."

Djokovic will aim to retain the Australian Open crown in Melbourne where he has won half of his 10 major titles.—Reuters

Bale gives Zidane flying start, Messi lifts Barca

MADRID — Zinedine Zidane got off to a flying start as Real Madrid coach when Gareth Bale hit a hat-trick in a 5-0 win over Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday after a Lionel Messi treble had fired Barcelona to the top of La Liga.

Zidane, a former Real and France midfielder who took over from the sacked Rafa Benitez on Monday, was given a hero's welcome by his adoring fans at the Bernabeu and the team responded with a dominant performance, with Karim Benzema scoring twice, against ninth-placed Deportivo.

A sparkling Messi had earlier inspired Barca to a 4-0 success at home to struggling Granada that lifted the Spanish and European champions above Atletico Madrid into top spot at the half-way stage of the campaign.

Barca, who have a game in hand over their main rivals, lead on 42 points, with Atletico a point behind in second ahead of their game at fifth-placed Celta Vigo (31 points) on Sunday.

Real have 40 points in third spot, four ahead of fourth-placed Villarreal (36) who host Sporting Gijon on Sunday.

Sevilla (29) moved up to sixth after French forward Kevin Gameiro's double secured a 2-0 victory against seventh-placed Athletic Bilbao (28) at the Sanchez Pizjuan.

Sevilla's stuttering local rivals Real Betis fell 1-0 at Getafe, piling pressure on under-fire coach Pepe Mel.

The Real faithful gave Zidane a rousing reception before

kickoff, in marked contrast to their recent treatment of the unpopular Benitez, who was abruptly discarded after less than half a season in charge.

Zidane had in-form compatriot Benzema to thank for opening the scoring in the 15th minute when he cleverly backheeled a Sergio Ramos effort past Deportivo

goalkeeper German Lux.

Bale, who scored four goals against Rayo Vallecano last month, made it 2-0 seven minutes later when he headed in a Dani Carvajal centre and the Wales winger



PHOTO: REUTERS

crossed for Cristiano Ronaldo to nod against a post six minutes before halftime.

Ronaldo turned provider four minutes into the second half and Bale clipped the Portugal forward's low cross firmly past Lux to make it 3-0.

The world's most expensive player completed his hat-trick, his third for Real, in the 63rd minute when he powered another header into the net from a Toni Kroos corner. Bale is the first player in La Liga to score two trebles this season and the fans gave him a huge send-off when he was replaced by James Rodriguez with around 15 minutes left. Ronaldo squandered a host of chances before Benzema crashed home a shot in added time. "Amazing return to the Bernabeu following the New Year," Bale posted on his Twitter feed along with a picture of him with Zidane. Earlier at the Nou Camp, Turkey playmaker Arda Turan, making his La Liga debut for Barca, set captain Messi up to score the opening goal from close range in the eighth minute. The Argentina forward, who missed two months at the end of last year with a knee injury, made it 2-0 six minutes later from a clever Luis Suarez assist and a dominant Barca wasted several chances before halftime.

Messi, favourite to win a fifth FIFA Ballon d'Or award on Monday, completed his 25th La Liga treble in the 58th minute after Neymar's shot came back off a post, ending his longest hat-trick drought in six years.—Reuters

Rooney spares United blushes, agony for Eastleigh

LONDON — It was not a day for FA Cup romantics as Manchester United scrambled past Sheffield United and minor league Eastleigh came within a whisker of causing the third round's only genuine shock on Saturday.

Old Trafford fans endured more than 90 minutes of insipid stalemate before Wayne Rooney's stoppage-time penalty gave 11-times winners Manchester United a 1-0 win against a third-tier side 48 places below them in the football pyramid. None of the 25 matches played on Saturday will enter the folklore of the historic competition but tiny Eastleigh did their best against four-times winners Bolton Wanderers, a club steeped in FA Cup tradition. On a gluepot of a pitch at their 5,000-capacity Ten Acres ground, the part-timers who are nicknamed the Spitfires after the World War II plane that first flew from the local airfield, led through Dorian Dervite's own goal.

However, they had their wings clipped when debt-ridden second tier strugglers Bolton levelled three minutes from time. Holders Arsenal, bidding to become the first club to win the trophy three times in succession since Blackburn Rovers in the 19th century, came from a goal down to beat Sunderland 3-1. Manchester City and Everton advanced, Manuel Pellegrini's men winning 3-0 at Norwich City in one of four all top-flight clashes while Roberto Martinez's team ended the hopes of fourth-tier Dagenham and Redbridge with a 2-0 victory at Goodison Park.

Wycombe Wanderers will be in the hat for the fourth round, along with fourth-tier rivals Exeter City, after a 1-1 draw at home to the Premier League's bottom club Aston Villa who have now gone 16 matches without a win. Exeter held Liverpool to a 2-2 draw on Friday. Watford beat Premier League rivals Newcastle United 1-0, Crystal Palace overcame Southampton 2-1 and West Ham United edged past second tier Wolverhampton Wanderers 1-0 at Upton Park. On Sunday, Leicester City visit Tottenham Hotspur, Chelsea host Scunthorpe United and Swansea City hope to avoid embarrassment at fourth tier Oxford United.—Reuters