

■ NATIONAL

Colour photo award presentation ceremony marks 69th Anniversary Independence Day
▶ PAGE 3



■ NATIONAL

Clerk of Village Administrative Office killed in Maungtau Township
▶ PAGE 3

■ NATIONAL

Incineration system at Buthidaung hospital helps control infectious diseases
▶ PAGE 3

■ LOCAL BUSINESS

Public Company to be established for Kyaukpyu SEZ
▶ PAGE 4

Vol. III, No. 255, 13th Waning of Nadaw 1378 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Tuesday, 27 December 2016



Vice President U Myint Swe, Chairman of the commission, addresses the coordination meeting of the commission. PHOTO: MNA

Truth about Maungtau attacks emerging: Investigation Commission Chairman

THE Chairman of the Investigation Commission on Rakhine State said the truth about the recent violent attacks in northern Rakhine is being uncovered, commenting that the attackers took their time, planning the deadly ambushes since 2012.

“The recent conflicts were different from previous ones. Previously, events were communal conflicts that took place between the two local communities. The recent occurrences were conspired after 2012 to wage an armed attack, intended to harm the sovereignty of the country,”

said U Myint Swe, Chairman of the commission, at the coordination meeting of the commission in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The recent attacks are more complicated than any previous conflicts in Rakhine, U Myint Swe said, as they were found to be linked with overseas organizations.

The report of the commission will include suggestions on how to prevent similar armed attacks in the future and how to cooperate in the interests of national security among the government, the Tatmataw, Myan-

mar Police Force and the local people.

In his remarks, Vice President U Myint Swe said that his commission will go to the affected areas to find out further information as needed so that the commission can compile a full report.

“The principal responsibility of the commission is to investigate the true situation and background factors over the violent armed attacks in Maungtau region on October 9, November 12 and 13, for similar incidents not to take place in

the area again, and to compile an investigative report suggesting as to whether the incidents were dealt with, in accord with existing rules and regulations of the State,” U Myint Swe said.

The commission visited Maungtau Township from December 11 to 13, inspecting and investigating in the villages where the armed attacks occurred — Kyikanpyin, Kyeinchaung, Ngakhura, Pyaung-pike, Pwintphyuchaung, Wapeik, Gwazone, Nganchaung, Kyetyoepin and Koetankauk.

SEE PAGE 3 >>

NEWS RELEASE

Identity card for national verification in Rakhine to return

THOSE who still hold temporary identity certificates issued under the provisions of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law are required to surrender their temporary certificates as they expired on May 31 2015, according to notification 19/2015 dated February 11, 2015 issued by the President.

Out of the 759,672 temporary certificates disbursed, only 469,183 have been surrendered. According to a news release by the State Counsellor's Information Committee, the people who failed to surrender the temporary certificates include those who received other kinds of identity cards, those who lost their cards, those whose cards were ruined, those who died and those who failed to surrender the documents because they lived outside the region, according to State Counsellor's Office Information Committee.

With effect from June 1, 2015, instead of those temporary certificates, the distribution of an Identity Card for National Verification was carried out in three categories. The main objective of distributing those cards was to scrutinize them as to whether they were entitled to become a citizen in accord with the provisions of the 1982 Myanmar Citizenship Law, and to acknowledge them as residents in Myanmar.

The three categories are mapping, posting buildings on the map and checking of number of people. As of December 23, 2016 out of 469,183 who surrendered the temporary certificates, 32,016 were given the Identity Card for National Verification.

Out of 397,497 who surrendered the temporary certificates in Rakhine State only, 6077 were given an ICNV, it was described in the information released.



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

President signs Bill Amending the Caste Disabilities Removal Act into law

PRESIDENT U Htin Kyaw signed the Bill Amending the Caste Disabilities Removal Act into law yesterday.

“Whereas it is enacted by section 9, Regulation VII, 1832,

of the Bengal Code, that” in the previous act is substituted with “Whereas there is a principle that,” in the amended act while “Whereas it will be beneficial to extend the principle of that en-

actment” in the previous act is substituted with “Whereas it will be beneficial to extend the principle”, according to the announcement of the President Office yesterday. —GNLM

Independence Day commemorative stamps to put on sale



THE Myanmar Postal Service will put on sale special stamps worth Ks100 in commemoration of the 69th anniversary Independence Day starting at 9:30 am on 4 January 2017, at the post offices in Regions and States.

As a special programme, General Post Office's in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay will imprint dates on the stamps bought on 4 January 2017.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Over 3,000 tourists visit Myeik Archipelago by boat in past 11 months

MORE THAN 3,000 motorboat tourists from Asia, Africa and some European countries visited Myeik Archipelago over the past 11 months of this year, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The Myeik Archipelago, which consists of more than 800 natural islands, is part of the Taninthayi Region. All islands lie in the Andaman Sea off the coast of southern Myanmar.

In November alone, the

coastal area hosted almost 600 motorboat tourists, an increase of about 100 travellers compared with the same period last year.

Last year, a total of 3,270 visitors entered Myeik by boat to enjoy beautiful landscapes along the coast such as coral reefs, mangroves and a diverse species of birds and aquatic animals and traditional culture, such as the sea-based life of the Salon (aka sea gypsy), a seafar-

ing ethnic group.

Tourists mostly visited the country's first marine national park on Lampi Island, 115 Island, Nyaungwee Island, Philar Island, Myaukni Island, Bocho Island, Nanatthi Island, Tower Rock Island, Cave Island and Satan Island.

Tourism in Myanmar is growing rapidly. International tourists arrivals have increased significantly every year since 2011.—*Nyein Chan*

2nd solo show of artist Nyein Chan Su on 27 December



One of the works of artist Nyein Chan Su to be displayed at Yangon Gallery today and tomorrow.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NYEIN CHAN SU

ARTWORK by Nyein Chan Su, one of prominent contemporary artists in the country, will be showcased at his solo event to be held in Yangon this month.

“Floating Field”, the new art exhibition, will run between 27 and 30 December at Yangon Gallery, located within the compound of People's Park near the Planetarium Museum on Ahlon Road.

This is the second time for

the gallery to promote the artist and his new artworks, and this time the artist used his memories from Inle as inspiration for his work, according to the gallery organiser.

About 15 colourful handiworks of the famous artist will be displayed at the gallery during the two-day exhibition. Subject matters will include culture, tradition and lifestyle of the Intha people, the lake dwellers, the

natural beauty of Inle Lake and floating objects.

The first solo show of the artist Nyein Chan Su was held in last December at the same venue.

Since entering the art scene, Nyein Chan Su has had many art exhibitions both at home and abroad, including Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Hong Kong, Singapore and Germany.—*Khine Khant*

Japan hands over two rural health centres in Chin State

THE handover ceremonies of the two projects--the project for construction of sub rural health centre, US\$97,533 worth, in Chun Chone Village, Hakha Township, Chin State and the project for construction of rural health centre, US\$119,413 worth, in Aibur Village, Htan Ta Lan Township, Chin State-- took place in Haka Township and Htan Ta Lan Township on 21st and 23rd December 2016 respectively.

Present at the ceremony were Mr.Keita IWASE, Second Secretary of the Embassy of Japan, U ZoBawi, Hluttaw Speaker of Chin State, U Pau Lun Min Thang, Social Welfare Minister of Chin State, U Swan-Htet, Htan Ta Lan Township Administrator, Dr. DawtHlei Zing, Htan Ta Lan Township Medical Officer, Committee Chairpersons, committee members of the construction projects, and local residents. The wooden sub rural health centre (SRHC) building in Chun Chone Village established in 1969. The Japanese Government provided funding

for construction of a one-storey reinforced concrete construction (R.C.C.) SRHC building, a staff quarter with full furniture and 7 items of medical equipment. The project will benefit 3,892 residents of 4 villages.

The Rural Health Centre (RHC) in Aibur Village was established in 1954 and had provided medical services for the people of surrounding 13 villages. The new one-storey R.C.C. RHC building has included a staff quarter with full furniture and 18 items of medical equipment. The project will benefit 5,225 residents of 13 villages.

The Government of Japan has assisted 802 various grassroots projects in Myanmar under the GGP scheme since 1993: the number consisting of 391 education projects, 198 healthcare projects, 138 public welfare and environment projects, 42 infrastructure projects and 35 other projects. It is anticipated that these assistances will further strengthen the existing friendly relations between Japan and Myanmar.—GNLM



Rural health centre in Chin State formally being opened.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Crime NEWS

Yaba and heroin seized in Lashio

A combined team comprising members of Anti Drugs Squad Unit 24 based in Lashio searched a passenger bus called Shanmann near the Technology University in Hopaid village, Lashio Township on 25 December and seized 1710 yaba tablets and 44 gram of

heroin from Naing Tun, 32, Ye Aung, 24 and Min Thein, 28, who were passengers of the bus.

Police have filed charges against the suspects under the Anti Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Laws.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Naing Tun, Ye Aung and Min Thein. PHOTO: MNA

Incineration system at Buthidaung hospital helps control infectious diseases

AN incineration system at the Buthidaung 50-bed hospital in Maungtaw District, Rakhine State, is now in use, becoming one of the main ways to control the spread of infectious diseases.

The incinerator installed at the hospital with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) can burn biological waste such as syringer and needles, food scraps and waste from the X-ray room. The work on installation of the system started six months ago.

“The incineration system can turn the biological waste to fertiliser soil. This machine can last at least five years,” said Dr Than Tun Kyaw of the hospital.

The machine can also safely incinerate cords and dead foe-

tuses safely and can provide bio security to the people, he added.

The hospital has been providing health care to local people without discrimination since 9 October attacks in northern Rakhine.

Buthidaung Township has a population of more than 340,000 living in seven wards in the town and 419 villages in the rural areas.

More than 200,000 are Muslims and the remaining 80,000 are Buddhists and other religions.

Under the hospital, there are two station hospitals, six rural health care centres and 23 rural health care dispensaries providing health care services to the peoples.—*Tin Maung Lwin, Zeyar (Mirror)*

PHOTO MAUNG HMWE



Truth about Maungtaw attacks emerging: Investigation...

>> FROM PAGE 1

As a result of the commission's trip to the area to investigate and interview people in the region and provide timely press releases on the situation, it was the commission's wish to arrange for independent journalists to cover the situation there without restriction in the affected areas, in consultation with respective ministries.

At the meeting, Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win clarified outbreaks of fire that took place recently in the Maungtaw region and armed attacks, threatening and killing of villagers by terrorists and the most recent situations in Maungtaw region.

Then, U Zaw Myint Pe, Secretary of the commission,

explained the introduction, aims and objectives of the report, facts on Rakhine State, findings of the commission, matters to be investigated further and the contents of the report to be compiled.

Commission members also gave comments and the Vice President made the closing speech.

Present at the meeting were members of the investigation commission on Rakhine State — U Aung Kyi, U Tun Myat, Dr Thet Thet Zin, Dr Aung Tun Thet, U Nyunt Swe, U Saw Thalay Saw, Daw Kyein Ngaik Man, Police Major-General Zaw Win, U Aung Naing, Dr Hla Maung, U Tha Nyan, Secretary U Zaw Myint Pe and responsible officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Private insurance companies to sell health insurance next year

Ko Moe

PRIVATE insurance companies will sell a new version of health insurance to Myanmar citizens and foreigners, beginning January 2017, according to Myanmar Insurance.

The private insurance companies are Apex Insurance, International Co Ltd, IKBZ Insurance International Co Ltd, Ayeyar Myanmar Insurance, Myawady Insurance Co Ltd, Great Future International Insurance Co Ltd, Capital Life Ltd Insurance Application, Global Standard Insurance Public Co Ltd and Green Asia Insurance Co Ltd.

The premium rates have

classified based on the age groups between 6 and 65, with a basic premium of Ks 44,000 per unit and a highest premium of Ks66,000 per unit.

Each person can buy a one-year basic health insurance from two to five units and other insurance coverage insurance from one to 10 units.

The new version of health insurance has guaranteed to pay Ks20,000 per day for 60 days for hospitalisation expenses and K2million insurance coverage for accidental deaths.

Myanma Insurance has sold this kind of health insurance since July 2015.

Clerk of Village Administrative Office killed in Maungtaw Township

A clerk of the administrative office of Yedwingyun Village in Maungtaw Township was murdered and his body riddled with cuts and stab wounds was found on 25 December.

Rawphi, 28, left his home on

the evening of 24 December and did not come back.

His body was found by a relative at about 2 pm on 25 December near U Shaekya Creek near the village school.

His body was found with

stab wounds on the chest and neck, with additional cuts elsewhere.

Security forces sent the body to Maungtaw People's Hospital and were investigating the case.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Colour photo award presentation ceremony marks 69th Anniversary Independence Day



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint visits the booth displaying award-winning photos. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

Dr Pe Myint, Union Minister for Information, took part in the ceremony for awarding of prizes in the colour photo contest in commemoration of the 69th anniversary Independence Day under the sponsorship of the information and public relations department of the Ministry of Information held at the Sule Shangri La Hotel in Yangon yesterday morning.

Before U Pe Myint presented the prizes to the winners, he reminded the gathering of the importance of photographers and their work to disseminate knowledge of Myanmar's natural beauty throughout the world.

“Contestants and winners include neo-photographers of new generation, so the present contest can be regarded to help

young photographers emerge. As a picture is worth a thousand words, veteran photographers are the ones who exhibit our natural beauties and landscapes of nature that inspire love and admiration of our land and our people, through their photography.

Only if unity is built based on love for the country can we defend our independence we attained through our collective efforts. And we can develop to the level of keeping up with other countries. For doing so, photographers play an important role.”

The Union Minister presented first prize to Zaw Maw Oo, the second prize to Pyi Soe Tun (artist) and third prize to Kyaw Win Hlaing (University of Culture), followed by special prizes

from U Pe Myint Oo, chairman of the Myanmar Photographer's Association and U Maung Pe, director-general of information and public relations department to Pyi Soe Tun (artist), Thant Zaw Oo, Khaing Zar Mon, Zaw Zaw Tun and Kyaw Kyaw Win (university of cooperative).

Afterward, U Pe Myint Oo explained the selection of prizes and Zaw Maw Oo spoke words of thanks on behalf of the winners. At the end of the ceremony, Union Minister inspected the pictures of winners. The title of the colour photo contest of the 69th anniversary Independence Day is Myanmar is The Peaceful Land. Participants in the contest were 320 photographers with 1,228 photos.—*Ye Ye Myint*

LOCAL Business

Sculpture industry faced with scarcity of raw materials and labourers

MYANMAR's traditional stone sculpture industry is faced with a scarcity of raw materials and labourers, resulting in an inability to meet demand.

Stone sculpture products such as kitchenware and decorated stone veneer produced from Khattakan Myauk village in Monywa Township are sent to Monywa, Yangon, Mandalay, Meiktila, Nay Pyi Taw, Nyaunglebin, Pakokku, Kyungyangon, Kyauklata, Pyay, Bago, Hinthada, Nyaungdon and Sagaing.

The stones used in stone sculpturing are extracted from the Phoeikhaung mountain ranges in the Bawdithaung Thar precinct.

Stone sculpture is the pride

of this village and residents are maintaining the traditional crafts of sculpting. The traditional sculpture techniques are passed down from generation to generation. Some have recently upgraded to commercial scale, said a sculptor.

There are around 10 businessmen in the village engaged in the sculpture business on a commercial scale, while others are sculpting on a manageable scale. Villagers who were financially doing well shifted to other businesses, resulting in a scarcity of labourers. With the shortage of raw materials and labourers, it has become difficult to meet the demand.—*Mon Mon*



A man sculpts marble stones as he sits amid half-made Buddha sculptures at Zagyin (Marble) village in the Madaya township, Mandalay, on 26 February 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar-China border trade value this year increases by US\$142.547million

THE value of trade through Myanmar and China border trade camps as of 16th December in this fiscal year 2016-2017 was up by US\$142.547million, whereas the trade value in last fiscal year was US\$755.068million, according to the border trade statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Myanmar-Thailand trade value as of 16th December totalled US\$897.615million, with a trade value of US\$51.482million from Tachilek, US\$624.038million from Myawady, US\$75.094million from Kawthaung, US\$134.879million from Myeik, US\$10.165million from Htee Khee and US\$1.957million from Maw Taung.

The commodities are currently flowing in and out through Muse, Lweje, Chin Shwe Haw, Kan Pike Tee, Keng Tung, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, Htee Khee, Maw Taung, Maese, Sittwe, Maung Taw, Tamu and Reed border trade camps in order to conduct border trade with the neighbouring countries of China, Thailand, India and Bangladesh.

The external trade value as of 16th December in this fiscal year was US\$18714.21174million, which is down by US\$343.553million from the last fiscal year since the import value decreased. The government is scrutinising import items, except for essential items, to reduce the deficit rate.—*Mon Mon*

150 import items no longer need to seek licence

OUT of over 4,100 import items, 150 items no longer need to have a licence starting in January, according to an announcement released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The commodities which will be granted relief include coffee, tea leaves, spices, rubber and associated products, aluminium and associated materials, metal and associated materials, locomotives and associated engines

and auto parts, it is learnt.

The relief in import licence for these products brings it in accordance with the trade rules and regulations of the World Trade Organization and ASEAN, Myanmar of which is a member of both country. The Commerce Ministry granted relief on 152 export items and 166 import items in this fiscal year in a bid to facilitate trade and reduce the trade deficit, it is learnt.—*200*

Domestic gold price dropped back to below Ks 840,000 per tical

WITH the exchange rate of US dollar slipping slightly, the price of domestic gold dropped to a five-month low of under Ks840,000 per tical on 24th December, according to gold and jewelry shop owners.

The global gold price bounced back to US\$1,139 per ounce on 19th December from a downward trend after the US presidential elections. The domestic gold price is positively related to the US exchange rate. With the US exchange rate dropping back after 22th December, the gold

price fell under Ks840,000 per tical on 24th December.

The US dollar index in the global market was 102.95 at closing time on 23rd December, whereas the index was over 103 points on 20th and 21st September. However, the US dollar price is still on the rise against other hard currencies.

Unlike the global dollar price, the US dollar exchange rate drops back in the domestic market. The rate hit the record high at Ks1,438 a dollar on 16th December and then fell back to Ks1,383 on 19th

December and 1,397 on 20th December. The dollar price rose to Ks1,405 on 21st December and then, slipped to Ks1,397 on 22nd December. The dollar price was Ks1,376 on 23rd December and remained on a downward trend, slipping to Ks1,363 on 24th December, according to the external exchange market.

Meanwhile, the Central bank of Myanmar (CBM) set the exchange rate of a dollar at Ks1,365 on 16th and Ks1,370 on 19th and Ks1,375 on 20th December.—*Ko Khant*

Public Company to be established for Kyaukpyu SEZ

A public company comprising Myanmar enterprises will be established for a Kyaukpyu special economic zone project, according to the Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee (Yangon).

Kyaukpyu SEZ plays an important role in enhancing Myanmar's economy.

China's CITIC Group Corporation gained a significant foothold with 85 per cent of the shares in the project, with only the remaining 15 per cent available to citizens.



A small-scale model of Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone. PHOTO: KYAUKPHYU SEZ

Myanmar entrepreneurs expressed their dissatisfaction, so a public company comprising Myanmar businessmen are being set up for Kyaukpyu SEZ Project.

In a bid to review and scrutinise the project, Kyaukpyu SEZ Management Committee was

formed. Those who want to cooperate in the public company were asked to submit an application to the committee by 15th December, but the date has been extended one more month to meet the target in establishing the public company, it is learnt.—*200*

China smog war moves to courts with range of crimes to widen

SHANGHAI —China's courts will widen the range of offences that constitute "environmental crimes" to make it easier to take legal action against polluters, a senior judiciary official told a news briefing on Monday.

The new rules could allow prosecutors to take on persistent offenders in northern China's Hebei province, which was engulfed in heavy smog last week despite being on the front line of China's nearly three-year "war on pollution".

Yan Maokun, head of a research office at the Supreme People's Court, told reporters authorities had struggled to gather evidence required to prosecute, according to a transcript of a briefing published on China's official court website (www.chinacourt.org).

"Air pollution is different from water pollution or soil pollution, and it is

extremely difficult to get evidence for air pollution crimes because after the pollution is emitted it undergoes a large degree of dispersal, and is very quickly diluted," Yan said.

Prosecutors would focus on specific offences such as tampering with sensor equipment or providing false emissions data, and firms found guilty would be punished regardless of the amount of pollution involved, he said.

"It doesn't matter how much you emit because in fact that is very hard to detect, but if you have distorted or fabricated data or interfered with the operation of equipment, this ... will constitute an environmental crime," Yan said.

Public anger is mounting in China about pollution, and what many see as government talk, but little action, to end it. Worries about pollution has on oc-

casions sparked protests.

Eight cities in Hebei launched "red alerts" last week in response to the smog, which reached record levels at some monitoring stations.

Hebei came under fire from the Ministry of Environmental Protection, and a number of its steel firms were singled out for failing to suspend operations.

Governor Zhang Qingwei said in the province's first official response that the province would learn lessons and step up its efforts.

"We need to seriously study and analyse our responses, sum up our experiences, and find problems and deficiencies in order to draw up more focused measures," Zhang was quoted as saying on an official website (www.hebei.gov.cn).

Experts say enforcement is lax amid concern



Trucks are seen stranded near a highway during a polluted day in Shijiazhuang, Hebei province, China on 20 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

about the impact on economic growth and jobs in Hebei, which surrounds Beijing and was home to seven of China's 10 smoggiest cities last year.

In the provincial capital of Shijiazhuang, aver-

age concentrations of small breathable particles known as PM2.5 were higher than 500 micrograms per cubic metre for three consecutive days last week — 50 times higher than World Health Organisation

recommendations.

In comments published on Monday, Zhang said better "top-level planning" was needed as Hebei sought to adjust its industrial and energy structures. —Reuters

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Chief Editor - Khin Maung Aye

ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Deputy Chief Editor - Aye Min Soe

dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Expatriate Consultant Editor

Mark Angeles

markrangeles@gmail .com

Senior Translators

Khin Maung Oo, Myint Win Thein

editor2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Editor

Ye Htut Tin (Local News)

editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

International Editors

Tun Tun Naing (Editor)

intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor)

Translators

Khaing Thanda Lwin,

reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Hay Mar Tin Win,

translator@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Ei Myat Mon

Chief Reporter

Tun Aung Kyaw,

reporter2@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Computer Team

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

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

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

Circulation

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

Advertising inquiry

01 8604530, Hotline - 09 974424848

marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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

Typhoon eases but Philippines braces for floods, mudslides; two dead

MANILA — A typhoon weakened as it cut across the Philippines on Monday after bringing down trees and power lines, and authorities warned of flash floods and mudslides although casualties were few with police reporting only two deaths.

Typhoon Nock-ten's wind speed eased to 130 kph (80 mph) as it headed west toward the South China Sea, passing through provinces south of the capital Manila at a speed of 20 kph. Land, sea and air transport slowly

resumed operations, but the weather bureau said stormy weather would affect parts of the country for another 36 hours or so, until the storm moved away toward southern Viet Nam.

Energy Minister Alfonso Cusi promised that power would be restored quickly in badly hit Camarines and Albay provinces. "We've prepared for it and we are currently on the ground to assess the damage and quickly restore compromised energy facilities," he said. The Philippines is one

of the world's worst-affected countries when it comes to typhoons, with an average of 20 a year passing or hitting the archipelago of more than 7,000 islands. More than 300,000 people in the predominantly Christian country spent Christmas in shelters after authorities moved them to safety on higher ground, said Mina Narasigan, spokeswoman for the national disaster agency. Police reported two deaths, in Camarines and Quezon provinces, while the coastguard was inves-

tigating reports that a small ferry had been swamped by giant waves. Radio DZBB reported a boy was killed in Quezon province when he was pinned down by a coconut tree and another girl injured in Camarines Sur when a house collapsed. The reports could not be immediately verified. Emergency workers were mobilized to clear roads of debris, like fallen trees and power lines in the coconut-growing region, with some central areas plunged into darkness.—Reuters

Friend of South Korea's impeached Park 'says sorry' for scandal

SEOUL —The detained friend of impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye, at the centre of a corruption scandal engulfing Park's administration, said she was sorry on Monday when questioned by a special parliamentary committee, an opposition MP said.

Choi Soon-sil, whom Park has said she turned to at difficult times, denied key allegations against her, including colluding with Park to pressure big businesses into paying money to foundations she controlled, the MP said.

"I am sorry to the people of the country," Choi was quoted as saying by opposition Democratic

Party MP Sohn Hye-won, who visited Choi at the Seoul Detention Centre and later told a committee hearing what she had said.

Choi and former government officials are on trial for abuse of power and fraud and are also under investigation on other charges by a special prosecutor who is probing Park's role in the scandal. The visit came after Choi ignored several summons to appear at parliament hearings. Prosecutors who indicted Choi last month said Park had colluded with her and her former aides to pressure big conglomerates to contribute 77 billion won (52.12 million pound) to foundations

set up to back her policy initiatives. Park has denied wrongdoing but apologised for carelessness in her ties with Choi. Park's 9 Decem-

ber impeachment is being reviewed by the Constitutional Court which has up to 180 days to reach a decision.—Reuters



Choi Soon-sil, a long-time friend of South Korean President Park Geun-hye who is at the center of the South Korean political scandal involving Park, arrives for her first court hearing in Seoul, South Korea, on 19 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chinese carrier enters South China Sea amid renewed tension

TAIPEI — A group of Chinese warships led by the country's sole aircraft carrier entered the top half of the South China Sea on Monday after passing south of Taiwan, the self-ruled island's Defence Ministry said of what China has termed a routine exercise.

The move comes amid renewed tension over Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own, ineligible for state-to-state relations, following US President-elect Donald Trump's telephone call with the island's president that upset Beijing.

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

Taiwan's Defence Ministry said the carrier, accompanied by five vessels, passed southeast of the Pratas Islands, which are controlled by Taiwan, heading southwest.



China's Kuznetsov-class aircraft carrier Liaoning sails the water in East China Sea, in this handout photo taken on 25 December by Japan Self-Defence Force and released by the Joint Staff Office of the Defence Ministry of Japan. PHOTO: REUTERS

The carrier group earlier passed 90 nautical miles south of Taiwan's southernmost point via the Bashi Channel, between Taiwan and the Philippines.

"Staying vigilant and flexible has always been the normal method of maintaining airspace security," said ministry spokesman Chen Chung-chi, declining to say whether Taiwan fighter jets were scrambled or if submarines had been deployed.

Chen said the ministry was continuing to "monitor and grasp the situation".

Senior Taiwan opposition Nationalist lawmaker Johnny Chiang said the Liaoning exercise was China's signal to the United States that it has broken through the "first island chain", an area that includes Japan's Ryukyu Islands and Taiwan.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said people should not read too much into what the carrier was up to, as its movements were within the law.

"Our Liaoning should enjoy in accordance with

the law freedom of navigation and overflight as set by international law, and we hope all sides can respect this right of China's," she told a daily news briefing.

Influential state-run Chinese tabloid the Global Times said the exercise showed how the carrier was improving its combat capabilities and that it should now sail even further afield.

"The Chinese fleet will cruise to the Eastern Pacific sooner or later. When China's aircraft carrier fleet appears in offshore areas of

the US one day, it will trigger intense thinking about maritime rules," the newspaper said in an editorial.

China has been angered recently by US naval patrols near islands that China claims in the South China Sea. This month, a Chinese navy ship seized a US underwater drone in the South China Sea. China later returned it.

Japan said late on Sunday it had spotted six Chinese naval vessels including the Liaoning travelling through the passage between Miyako and Okina-

wa and into the Pacific.

Japan's top government spokesman said on Monday the voyage showed China's expanding military capability and Japan was closely monitoring it.

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

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

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

China claims most of the South China Sea through which about \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. Neighbours Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Viet Nam also have claims.—Reuters

South Korea mobilises army to speed up extended poultry cull in worst bird flu outbreak

SEOUL — South Korea on Monday mobilised armed forces to play an active part in its biggest-ever poultry cull as the spread of a highly contagious strain bird flu continued, ordering that another 1.6 million birds be destroyed in affected areas within 24 hours.

The latest cull, announced in a statement by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, brings the total number of birds to be destroyed to 26 million in an

outbreak first confirmed on 18 November. Quarantine and sanitary restrictions were implemented after the initial cases but the flu has spread.

Having previously stood guard at facilities affected by the outbreak, Korea's military will now actively help destroy birds and disinfect farms to accelerate the cull, the ministry said. Culls announced previously took two to three days to complete because of a lack of manpower,



South Korean health officials bury chickens at a poultry farm where the highly pathogenic H5N6 bird flu virus broke out in Haenam, South Korea, on 17 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

er, it said. The rapid spread of the H5N6 strain of the virus has caused Seoul to raise its bird flu alert to the highest level possible for the first time. The army's

mobilisation comes amid fears of a regional epidemic across Northeast Asia, with Japan and China also battling to curb the spread of bird flu.—Reuters

100 gold bars seized in Bangladesh

DHAKA — Customs officials in Bangladesh's main airport in capital Dhaka seized 100 gold bars weighing about 11.6 kg on Monday, from a Qatar Airways flight, an official said.

Acting on a tip-off, the customs official who preferred to be unnamed, told Xinhua that they searched the aircraft and found the gold bars worth about 60 million taka (about 7.23 million US dollars) beneath a passenger seat.

Coming from Doha,

the flight landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka at around 11:00am local time.

No one was arrested in connection with the seizure.

Sources said organised gangs of local smugglers having link with their foreign sidekicks have been increasingly using Bangladesh as a transit for the illegal transportation of gold, foreign currencies, contraband drug and medicines.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAERSK ATLANTIC VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAERSK ATLANTIC VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC JAVA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC JAVA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PACITA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PACITA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA

Phone No: 2301185

Obama says serving as commander in chief a privilege in Christmas Hawaii base visit



US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama speak to US Marines and personnel on Christmas day at Marine Corps Base Hawaii during his Christmas holiday vacation in Kailua, Hawaii, on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

KANEOHE BAY, HAWAII — President Barack Obama said on Sunday it had been the “privilege of my life” to serve as US commander in chief and promised his continued gratitude and commitment to service members and their families during a Christmas Day visit to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

“Although this will be my last time addressing you as president, I want you to know that as a citizen, my gratitude will remain, and our commitment to standing

by you every step of the way, that won’t stop,” Obama told several hundred people gathered in a mess hall decorated with Christmas trees and wreaths.

Obama said greeting service members and their families, some of whom held up cell phones for photos as he spoke, was one of his favourite traditions. He said that the day before, he called people deployed overseas, telling them Americans back at home understood they were fighting for freedom.

Obama, standing beside first lady Michelle Obama on a small platform, said when he leaves office in January, he will not be a stranger to those stationed in Hawaii, where he was born and still often spends vacations.

“We look forward to seeing you for many years to come, because I understand that I still have a little bit of rank as ex-president,” Obama said to laughs. “So I still get to use the gym on base and, of course, the golf course.”—*Reuters*

Winter storm hits northern US states

WASHINGTON — A winter storm brought a white Christmas to the northern areas in the United States on Sunday, with fierce blizzard conditions that threatened holiday travel plans, according to the US National Weather Service.

The agency reminded drivers of keeping alternate routes in mind and preparing for possible delays.

Blizzard warnings were in effect in eastern Montana and swaths of North and South Dakota on Sunday afternoon, with winter storm warnings issued in Minnesota, Wyoming and parts

of northern Nebraska.

To the west, snow was also forecast for much of Idaho, Montana, Utah and northeast Colorado.

“I don’t think anybody’s going to be going anywhere, not if they’re smart,” said John Rowe, a senior meteorologist at the Weather Channel.

“Tomorrow in the Dakotas and in Minnesota the wind is going to be so strong that whatever snow is on the ground is going to be blowing all over the place,” Rowe said.

In Arizona, more than 80 kilometres of the I-40 highway

were brought to a complete standstill overnight due to multiple crashes and heavy snow on the roads.

The storm itself was moving up into Canada, Rowe was quoted by a NBC report as saying, but rain associated with the weather front was moving towards northeastern America.

Freezing rain was forecast to hit parts of New York and neighbouring Pennsylvania late Sunday and into Monday morning, according to Rowe, who warned commuters could expect a wintry mix in parts of northeastern states.—*Xinhua*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Greece reports H5N8 bird flu in wild swan — OIE

PARIS — Greece has reported a case of the highly contagious H5N8 bird flu virus in a wild bird, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) said on Monday, citing official information from Greece.

The virus was found in a wild swan in the Evros river delta in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food said on a report posted on the OIE website.

Several countries in Europe and the Middle East have found cases of highly contagious bird flu in the past few weeks. Outbreaks in Asia have led to large-scale culling of poultry in South Korea, China and Japan.

The H5N8 virus has not been found in humans and cannot be transmitted through food.—*Reuters*

Thirteen people killed in Mexican wave of drug violence

MEXICO CITY — Thirteen people were killed in the restive Mexican states of Michoacan and Guerrero, Mexican authorities said on Sunday, amid feuds between rival drug gangs that have racked the country.

The prosecutor’s office of the western state of Michoacan said in a statement the heads of six men were found in front of a business in the town of Jiquilpan, near the border with Jalisco, where drug traffickers from the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) operate.

A threatening message signed by the New Michoacan Family (NFM), a rival criminal group, was left next to the heads, the prosecutor’s office also said.—*Reuters*

Prime Minister Abe to send message Japan won’t repeat war atrocities

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday he wants to send a message to the world during his visit to Pearl Harbor that Japan will never repeat the atrocities of past wars.

“The alliance between Japan and the United States is one with hope in dealing with various problems in the world,” Abe said in a speech to the Japanese business lobby Keidanren.

“I hope this visit will be a historical one with leaders of Japan and the United States jointly visiting Pearl Harbor in a show of reconciliation,” he said. Abe’s 27 December visit with President Barack Obama comes 75 years after the attack that thrust the United States into World War II.—*Reuters*

Chinese premier extends condolences to Russian PM over military plane crash

BEIJING — Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Monday extended condolences to Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev over the crash of a Russian military plane.

In a message, Li mourned the dead and extended condolences to their families.

A Russian military Tu-154 crashed into the Black Sea on Sunday, killing all 92 people aboard.

Among the passengers were 64 members of the Alexandrov Ensemble, a renowned choir of the Russian Armed Forces, as well as nine Russian journalists. They were heading to the Hmeimim air base in the Syrian port city of Latakia for New Year celebrations.

The plane crashed shortly after takeoff from the Black Sea resort of Sochi at 5:40 a.m. Moscow time (0240 GMT).—*Xinhua*

2-year-old American boy shoots himself dead with father’s gun

WASHINGTON — A two-year-old boy accidentally shot himself dead with his father’s gun, US media reported Sunday.

The child was taken to hospital from his home in Ohio City, Cleveland, following the incident Friday morning, and died during surgery.

A neighbour told local media that she heard the boy’s brother run outside the house when the gun went off and then she called 911.

She said the child suffered a gunshot wound to the head and was lying on the floor.

The boy’s father, a 54-year-old police officer, has been on duty since 1993, according to a Cleveland police statement. Investigations are still under way. There have been no arrests.—*Xinhua*

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

Volunteerism—powerful means for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Htun Tin Htun

VOLUNTEERISM is a basic expression of human relationships. It also forms the backbone of many national and international non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations, as well as social and political movements. Volunteers are more likely to develop civic skills, to attach more importance to serving the public interest as a personal life goal and to be more politically active. Volunteerism is in fact a powerful means for bringing more people into the fold, already expanding the space in which we achieve the future we want. Volunteers facilitate changes in mindsets by raising awareness or championing those changes and inspiring others.

Volunteerism can help to expand and mobilize consti-

ties, and to engage people in national planning and implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthening civic engagement, safeguards social inclusion, deepens solidarity and solidifies ownership of development results. Volunteers from the United Nations (UNV) embrace volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognize volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity. Volunteers can provide technical support and enhance capacity in all thematic goal areas. Volunteerism is a powerful means for bringing more people into the fold.

Volunteers help leave no one behind by reaching out to people, including those marginalized or

difficult to reach, to bring people's voices and knowledge into collective actions. Volunteer organizations can serve as brokers of engagement, connecting governmental strategies and initiatives with complementary, yet essential, community voluntary action. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. Volunteer groups can help to localize the new agenda by providing new spaces of interaction between governments and people for concrete and scalable actions.

Volunteers deliver basic services, help transfer skills and foster exchanges of good practices, and add valuable international

and local expertise through domestic, South-South, South-North and North-South exchanges, playing a particular role in this regard, by making their expertise available to public institutions as well as to fragile communities. Volunteers from the United Nations (UNV) contribute to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. Volunteerism is recognized, therefore, as a vehicle for sustainable development. And the volunteers from the Union of Myanmar are happy to actively engage in the implementation of SDGs.

The 69th Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination of 2017 to be grandly held starting from 27th December 2016

Ba Sein (Religious Affairs)

IT is known that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been a predominantly Theravada Buddhist nation in the world for nearly one thousand years, and about (90) per cent of nation's population has taken faith in Theravada Buddhism since then. Furthermore, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has been recognized as a permanent higher learning centre of genuine Theravada Buddhism not only in the Buddhist world but also throughout the world. According to historical records of Buddhism, the Fifth and the Sixth Great Buddhist Councils (Synods) were successfully convened in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with a view to purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana (the Buddha's teachings) all over the world. The Sixth Great Buddhist Council, which was attended and participated by Maha Theras from Five Theravada Buddhist Nations, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, was successfully held in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in 1954.

In order to carefully preserve genuine Theravada Buddhism, a great number of Buddhist Monastic Institutions and learning Centers of Buddhist Scriptures have been established in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for years. For the time being, the

two Pariyatti Sasana Universities, one in Yangon and another in Mandalay have been so far established to promote and propagate the Theravada Buddhism throughout the world. At present, Buddhist monk students are attending these two universities, and if they have got through the prescribed examinations held by these Universities, they will be conferred Takkasila Dhammacariya Degree (Bachelor of Arts) in Buddhism and Tekkasila Maha Dhammacariya Degree (Master of Arts) in Buddhism respectively. And now, the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University, the very first one in the Buddhist world has been also already established in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in order to propagate, promote and flourish genuine Theravada Buddhism throughout the world, and to share the knowledge of Buddhism both in theory and practice with the peoples of the world to promote their happiness and moral well-being.

According to the Pariyatti (learning canonical Texts) Education System of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, there are seven kinds of religious examinations including the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination yearly held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The seven kinds of religious examinations are as follows: -

- (1) Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination
- (2) Dhammacariya Examination
- (3) Pathamagyi Examination
- (4) Pathamalat Examination
- (5) Pathamange Examination
- (6) Abhidhamma / Visudhimagga Examination (only for Laymen and Nuns)
- (7) Five Nikaya Examination

Out of these seven kinds of religious examinations, the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination has been separately held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar since sixty six years ago. Buddhist monk candidates who wish to appear for this Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination must have passed at least the Pathamagyi Examination. In fact, the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination is quite different from other religious examinations because the candidates have to take (33) days to sit for this examination. They have to take both oral examination consists of Pali Texts, 8026 pages of Tipitaka canons and the written examination consists of Pali Texts Athakatha (Commentaries) and Tika (Sub-Commentaries) of 9934 pages of Tipitaka canons respectively. Only the candidates who have got through both oral and written examinations will be presented the Title of Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida (the

Title of Religious Heroes). Up to now, only thirteen outstanding members of Sangha (Bhikkhus) (Religious Heroes) were presented the Title of Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida within over 68 years' duration of the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination.

It is learnt that many members of Sangha throughout the country appeared for the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination from year to year. However, most of them were not successful. In fact, the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination is the most difficult of the religious examinations which are yearly held in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Such Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination can be held only in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar which has carefully preserved the genuine Theravada Buddhism for nearly one thousand years. It is learnt that such examination cannot be held in other Theravada Buddhist nations.

Members of Sangha, multifarious Buddhist people and Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, hand in hand, are striving to propagate, promote and flourish the genuine Theravada Buddhism not only in homeland but also at abroad. We all Buddhists know that the Sasana is of the three kinds, viz (1) Pariyatti Sasana (Learning the Buddha's teaching), (2) Patipatti Sasana (Practical application of the Buddha's teaching) and (3) Pativedha Sasana (Realization of the Buddha's teaching). Out of them, the Pariyatti Sasana is the most important one which mainly leads to the purification, per-

petuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana (the noble teachings of the Buddha). The aims and objectives of holding the Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination are to preserve, promote and flourish the genuine Theravada Buddhism all over the world.

The 69th Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination of 2017

We all Buddhists throughout the country are very pleased and honoured to learn that the 69th Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination is being held at the Mahapasana Cave (Great Cave) in the precinct of the Siri Mangala Kaba Aye Pagoda, Yangon, Myanmar, and it will take (33) days starting from 27th December 2016. It is learnt that the entitled candidates of members of Sangha who have been enrolled throughout the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will sit for the 69th Sacred Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Selection Examination in the year of 2017. The oral examination will be held from 27th December 2016 to 19th January 2017, and the written examination will be held from 22nd to 28th January 2017 respectively. Lodging and messing (four kinds of requisites) for candidates will be provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, other donors and well-wishers throughout (33)days. It is further learnt that devotees, well-wishers and other people are cordially invited to visit the Mahapasana Cave (examination centre) for paying profound respect to the Ven. chief monks and the candidate-members of Sangha at the examination centre, Mahapasana Cave (Great Cave), Kaba Aye Pagoda hillock, Yangon, Myanmar.

Christian youths honour Senior General Min Aung Hlaing with hymns



Christian youths honour Senior General Min Aung Hlaing with hymns. PHOTO: C-IN-C OFFICE

CHRISTIAN youths visited Senior General Min Aung Hlaing's house on 25 December and sang Christmas carols and prayed for peace.

Following the singing by the Christian youths, Reverend Saw Shwe Lynn, a member of the

Public Relations Committee of the Myanmar Christian Council, expressed his wish for peace.

The Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met with the Christian youths, who were given an electronic organ and cash as Christmas presents.

In turn, Reverend Saw Shwe Lynn presented a Bible as a Dhamma gift.

The Senior General and family served the Christian youths with a meal and posed for a group photo. — *Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*

Myanmar Cultural troupe leave for Cambodia

TO further the cultural exchange between the People's Republic of China and Association of South-east Asian Nations, the Myanmar Cultural Dance Troupe left for Siem Reap, Cambodia from

Yangon International Airport to attend the ASEAN-China Joint Cultural Performance Connectivity in Diversity from 26 to 29 December.

The delegation of 20 youth

artists were accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Department of Fine Arts of Religious Affairs and Culture. — *Myanmar News Agency*



Myanmar Cultural delegation posing for a group photo before departure. PHOTO: MNA

Six-lane roads to be built between Dala and Letkhotkon Beach

AS PART OF a development project to be implemented on the other side of the Yangon River from downtown Yangon, authorities have a plan to build a new six-lane road which will link between Dala Township and Letkhotkon Beach, a spokesperson of the Yangon City Development Committee said.

The new roads will play

a vital role in developing the deep-sea port project and new urban development project which are planned to be implemented on the other side of Yangon.

The six-lane roads are likely to be constructed only after finalising the projects drafting by the YCDC under the five-year development plan in coopera-

tion with Japan, South Korea, France and the UK.

The government will control the price of land in the project areas, a member of the committee said.

Almost all works, including establishment of infrastructure, designs and land management, will be carried out through the tender system.—200

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Bahadur Shah Zafar Mausoleum

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited Bahadur Shah Zafar Mausoleum in Dagon Township, Yangon yesterday morning.

At the Bahadur Shah Zafar Mausoleum, the Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met with officials of the memorial and

fulfilled the necessary obligations. Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last king of India, who ruled from 1837-1857.

He was exiled to Myanmar by the British in 1857 and died in Yangon five years later. — *Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services*



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits Bahadur Shah Zafar Mausoleum. PHOTO: C-IN-C OFFICE

Mandalay to host international travel event next month

THE 2nd Myanmar International Travel Mart will take place in Mandalay next month, with the aim of promoting the country's tourist industry, especially outbound tour companies.

With the support of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, the Union of Myanmar Travel Association will organise MITM 2017, scheduled to be held on 12-13 January at Mandalay's Diamond Plaza, inviting industry preventatives and all lovers of travel.

During the two-day event, outbound tour operators, airlines, hotels, restaurants, bankers, foreign hospitals, telecommunications companies and related businesses will display their services through over

120 booths.

For more information, dial 095135657 and 092005648 of the UMTA.

The ministry started issuing outbound tour licenses last December. By mid-September, over 300 companies have been granted permits for outbound tour operation, according to the ministry.

The country received over 4.6 million international visitors last fiscal year, an increase of 52 per cent compared to 2014. The ministry estimates that the number will increase to 5.5 million this fiscal year.

According to the master plan of MoHT, international tourist arrivals in Myanmar are likely to reach over 7 million by 2020.—Sanda

At least one killed in car bombing in S. Afghan province: official

LASHKAR GAH — At least one Afghan policeman was killed after a car bombing rocked Lashkar Gah city, capital of southern Helmand province, on Monday, a local official said.

“A terrorist rammed a car bomb into a moving police hum-vee vehicle in Darwaz-e-Kandahar locality of the city. As we knew, one policeman died and two others were wounded by the explosion,” a provincial police official told Xinhua.

The official who declined to be named said, “We have no more details, but we will try to get more information and provide details later in the day.”

Witnesses said they heard a heavy explosion at around 11:00 a.m. local time in the area which is located in the eastern edge of the city, 555 km south of Afghan capital of Kabul.

Security forces have cordoned off the area for precautionary measures.

Unofficial sources said a senior provincial police official was travelling in the targeted vehicle to visit and monitor an ongoing military operation along Helmand-Kandahar highway.

The road was shut and several vehicles were intercepted by armed militants earlier on Monday.

So far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Taliban militant group has launched similar attacks in the past.—Xinhua



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (2nd R) attends the weekly cabinet meeting at his Jerusalem office on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli PM, angered by anti-settlement UN vote, summons US ambassador

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday summoned the US ambassador to Israel to discuss the US abstention in a UN Security Council resolution demanding an end to settlement-building.

Separately, the envoys of 10 other nations were called in to the Israeli Foreign Ministry to be reprimanded on Sunday, and Netanyahu had more harsh words for Washington over Friday's UN vote. An Israeli spokesman gave no details of when Netanyahu would meet US Ambassador Daniel Shapiro. The resolution was

passed in the 15-member Security Council because the US broke with its long-standing approach of diplomatically shielding Israel and did not wield its veto power, instead abstaining.

Netanyahu put his personal imprint on Israel's show of anger by repeating at the weekly cabinet meeting what an unidentified Israeli government official contended on Friday — that the administration of US President Barack Obama had conspired with the Palestinians to push for the resolution's adoption. The White House has denied the allegation. “Accord-

ing to our information, we have no doubt the Obama administration initiated it (the resolution), stood behind it, coordinated the wording and demanded it be passed,” Netanyahu told the cabinet in public remarks. Another official said Netanyahu had ordered that for the coming three weeks, until President-elect Donald Trump takes office, cabinet ministers refrain from travelling to or meeting officials of countries that voted in favour of the resolution.

The envoys from 10 of the 14 countries that voted for the resolution and have embassies in Israel

— Britain, China, Russia, France, Egypt, Japan, Uruguay, Spain, Ukraine and New Zealand — were summoned to the Foreign Ministry. Sunday is a regular work day in Israel, but most embassies are closed, and calling in envoys on Christmas Day is highly unusual.

At the weekly cabinet meeting on Sunday, Netanyahu described a telephone conversation with US Secretary of State John Kerry on Thursday, when Israel and President-elect Donald Trump successfully pressed Egypt to drop the anti-settlement resolution it had put forward.—Reuters



A worker lowers the Russian national flag to half-mast on a roof of the city administration building, as the country observes a day of mourning for victims of the Tu-154 plane which crashed into the Black Sea on its way to Syria on Sunday, in Krasnoyarsk, Russia, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia mourns over the death of 92 killed in Black Sea jet crash

MOSCOW — Russia held a national day of mourning on Monday, a day after a Syria-bound military plane crashed into the Black Sea killing all 92 people on board, and expanded a search operation to try to recover passengers' bodies and the jet's black box.

The plane, a Russian Defence Ministry TU-154, was carrying dozens of Red Army Choir singers, dancers and orchestra members to Syria where they were meant to entertain Russian troops in the run-up to the New Year.

Nine Russian reporters were also on board as well as military servicemen and Elizaveta Glinka, a prominent member of President

Vladimir Putin's advisory human rights council.

Flags were flown at half-mast on Monday, mourners placed flowers at the airport in Sochi, southern Russia, where the plane took off from, and in front of the Moscow headquarters of the Russian Army's Alexandrov song and dance troupe. Russian Transport Minister Maxim Sokolov told reporters on Monday that pilot error or a technical fault were the most likely explanations for the tragedy.

“The main versions (for the crash) do not include the idea of a terrorist act,” Sokolov told a news conference in Sochi, the RIA news agency reported.

“So we are working on the assumption that the reasons for the catastrophe could have been technical or a pilot error.”

The jet, a Soviet-era Tupolev plane built in 1983, had been carrying 84 passengers and eight crew members. Major-General Igor Konashenkov, a Defence Ministry spokesman, said on Monday that 11 bodies had been recovered so far and that a huge sea and air search operation involving around 3,500 people was being expanded.

Thirty nine ships, five helicopters, a drone, and more than 100 divers were involved, he said, and soldiers were scouring the Black Sea coastline as well.—Reuters

E China city halts live poultry trade amid bird flu concerns

NANJING — Live poultry trade has been suspended in Suzhou City in eastern China over bird flu concerns.

The ban is effective starting Monday, according to a notice on the website of the Suzhou government.

During the ban, market regulators will disinfect the poultry trading areas, the notice said.

Sources with the city health department said the ban could last a few days or a month. Live poultry bans are usually adopted when a local government decides there is high bird flu risk.

The Suzhou government ordered health authorities to closely monitor the H7N9 avian flu strain. Live poultry markets are a major source of the virus.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in March 2013 in China. It

is most likely to strike in winter and spring.

There have been sporadic reports of the virus since winter began. Two deaths were reported in eastern China's Anhui province.

In November, an 81-year-old patient was infected with the flu in the southern province of Guangdong.

Last week, two more infections were reported in Xiamen and Shanghai. A 44-year-old man was diagnosed with the flu in Siming District of Xiamen City in east China's Fujian Province.

The Siming district government halted poultry sales for a day to reduce the risk of infection.

The Shanghai patient was a 45-year-old man who had traveled from Nantong City, Jiangsu Province. —Reuters



Workers wearing protective suits cull ducks after some tested positive for H5 bird flu at a poultry farm in Aomori, northern Japan, on 29 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



Woman wears sunglasses to protect from the sun. PHOTO: REUTERS

New technology to detect skin cancer early

WASHINGTON — Researchers have developed an automated technology that combines imaging with digital analysis and machine learning to help physicians detect melanoma at its early stages.

People with melanoma often have mole-looking growths on their skin that tend to be irregular in shape and colour and can be hard to tell apart from benign ones, making the disease difficult to diagnose. "There is a real need for standardisation across the field of dermatology in how melanomas are evaluated," said James Krueger, Professor at Rockefeller University in the US.

"Detection through screening saves lives but is very challenging visually, and even when a suspicious lesion is extracted and biopsied, it is confirmed to be melanoma in only about 10 per cent of cases," said Krueger.

In the new approach, images of lesions are processed by a series of computer programmes that extract information about the number of colours present in a growth and other quantitative data.

The analysis generates an overall risk score, called a Q-score, which indicates the likelihood that the growth is cancer-

ous. A recent study evaluating the tool's usefulness indicates that the Q-score yields 98 per cent sensitivity, meaning it is very likely to correctly identify early melanomas on the skin.

The ability of the test to correctly diagnose normal moles was 36 per cent, approaching the levels achieved by expert dermatologists performing visual examinations of suspect moles under the microscope. "The success of the Q-score in predicting melanoma is a marked improvement over competing technologies," said Daniel Gareau, instructor in clinical investigation in the Krueger laboratory. The researchers developed this tool by feeding 60 photos of cancerous melanomas and an equivalent batch of pictures of benign growths into image processing programmes. They developed imaging biomarkers to precisely quantify visual features of the growths. Using computational methods, they generated a set of quantitative metrics that differed between the two groups of images - essentially identifying what visual aspects of the lesion mattered most in terms of malignancy - and gave each biomarker a malignancy rating. —PTI

Brain re-tuning observed in speech recognition research

SAN FRANCISCO — Neuroscientists with the University of California, Berkeley, have observed brain re-tuning in action by recording directly from the surface of a person's brain as the words of a previously unintelligible sentence suddenly pop out after the subject is told the meaning of the garbled speech.

Working with epilepsy patients who had pieces of their skull removed and electrodes placed on the brain surface to track seizures, a procedure known as electrocorticography, UC Berkeley graduate student Chris Holdgraf presented seven subjects with an auditory test by playing a highly garbled sentence, which almost no one initially understood, and then playing a normal, easy to understand version of the sentence, and immediately repeating the garbled

version.

The result: almost everyone understood the sentence the second time around, even though they initially found it unintelligible.

When the garbled sentence was first played, activity in the auditory cortex as measured by the 468 electrodes on the brain surface was small. The brain could hear the sound, but couldn't do much with it, said Knight, first author of a study published this week in the journal *Nature Communications*.

When the clear sentence was played, the electrodes recorded a pattern of neural activity consistent with the brain tuning into language. When the garbled sentence was played a second time, the electrodes recorded nearly the same language-appropriate neural activity, as if the underly-

ing neurons had re-tuned to pick out words or parts of words.

"They respond as if they were hearing unfiltered normal speech," Holdgraf said. "It changes the pattern of activity in the brain such that there is information there that wasn't there before. That information is this unfiltered speech."

"It is unbelievable how fast and plastic the brain is," co-author Robert Knight, a UC Berkeley professor of psychology and Helen Wills Institute researcher, was quoted as saying in a news release. "In seconds or less, the electrical activity in the brain changes its response properties to pull out linguistic information. Behaviorally, this is a classic phenomenon, but this is the first time we have any evidence on how it actually works in humans." —Xinhua

Cucumbers grown in space show how plants sense gravity

TOKYO — Scientists have examined cucumber seedlings germinated under microgravity conditions of the International Space Station (ISS), to understand how plants sense gravity and stimulate their own growth.

Cucumbers feature specialised protuberances, or pegs, whose formation is regulated by gravity. These pegs form during the plant's early growth stage to help the seedlings emerge from their hard seed coat and anchor the developing plant in the soil while its roots form.

When seeds are placed before germination either in a vertical position with their embryonic roots pointing down or subjected

to microgravity conditions, a peg develops on each side, said Hideyuki Takahashi from Tohoku University in Japan.

However, when they are placed horizontally on the ground, peg formation on the upper side is suppressed in response to gravity. Using samples grown on board the ISS, researchers highlight the valuable contribution of the gravity-sensitive CsPIN1 protein to this process.

The role of the protein in facilitating the transport of the growth hormones had first been suggested in previous experiments conducted on Earth.

To gain further insight, researchers loaded cucumber seeds

into specially designed canisters, which were sent up to ISS.

Water-absorbent plastic foam in the container was irrigated and the now-germinating seedlings were grown in the microgravity compartment of the cell biology experiment facility for 24 hours. Then the cucumber seedlings were either maintained in microgravity or gravi-stimulated by applying a one-gram centrifugal force for a further two hours. One of the big challenges facing the team was finding a suitable fixative to "freeze" the status of the seedlings germinated on the space station so that the samples could be analyzed in detail back on Earth. —PTI

Japan, US agree in principle on new pact limiting SOFA coverage

TOKYO — The Japanese and US governments have reached a substantial agreement on a new pact narrowing the scope of legal immunity provided to US military base workers under the bilateral status of forces agreement, the Japanese foreign minister said Monday.

Japan seeks to sign the pact before the new US administration takes over in January, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said.

The two countries have been negotiating the conditions of limited immunity provided under the agreement since the arrest of a civilian US base work-

er over the murder of a local woman in Okinawa in April that heightened the anti-US base sentiment in the southernmost island prefecture.

The new pact will supplement the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement, under which the United States has primary jurisdiction over US base workers classified as "civilian component" and US military personnel if they are accused of a crime while on duty.

Kishida said the new pact will "clarify the scope of civilian components, allow management of them, and lead to prevention of crimes.

Japan and the United States agreed in July that they will "clarify" the scope of the "civilian component," deciding to set up four categories of civilian personnel and agreed to exclude from protection under SOFA those who do not belong to any of the groups.

Kishida said the two governments share the view that Kenneth Franklin Shinzato, who was arrested by local police in May while working for an Internet firm at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa and is to be tried over the young woman's murder in a Japanese court, would be excluded from SOFA protection.

The Japanese and US governments will also review the scope of "civilian component" covered by SOFA on a regular basis, Kishida said.

"It is a groundbreaking (pact) and the agreement is a good example of how the Japanese and US governments can produce visible outcomes if they cooperate. I believe it will lead to the further deepening of the Japan-US alliance," the foreign minister said.

As of March this year, there were about 7,000 US civilian workers at US military bases in Japan, US officials said.—*Kyodo News*



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida announces in Tokyo on 26 December 2016, that the Japanese and US governments have reached a substantial agreement on a new pact narrowing the scope of legal immunity provided to US military base workers under the bilateral status of forces agreement. Japan seeks to sign the pact before the new US administration takes over in January, Kishida said.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

China detains 11 for dumping garbage in Yangtze: Xinhua

SHANGHAI — China has detained 11 people for dumping more than 2,900 tonnes of garbage into the Yangtze river in Jiangsu province, the official Xinhua news agency reported late on Sunday.

The garbage was dumped earlier this month after two firms entrusted to dispose of household garbage subcontracted the work to third parties, Xinhua said.

China has been cracking down on pollution in a bid to reverse the damage done to its water, soil and air in many regions, but officials have acknowledged that oversight and enforce-

ment remain inadequate.

With most of its cities encircled by landfill, rapidly urbanizing China is also struggling to deal with growing amounts of waste.

The environment ministry said in November that its 246 large- and medium-sized cities produced 185 million tonnes of household waste in 2015, and 1.91 billion tonnes of industrial waste.

China said in a plan published in September that it would need to spend 192.4 billion yuan (\$27.7 billion) from 2016 to 2020 to improve waste treatment rates.—*Reuters*

Six decapitated heads found in central Mexico

MEXICO CITY — Residents of a small town in central Mexico woke up on Christmas Day to find six decapitated heads left out on the street, local media reported.

Near the heads authorities found a message scrawled on a piece of cardboard, but they have not released the contents of the message, the daily *Excelsior* said.

The six heads, all belonging to "young men,"

were found in Jiquilpan, a town of no more than 50,000 residents in the state of Michoacan.

"According to preliminary information, the incident is the result of a turf war between criminal gangs," the daily said.

Security around the town was beefed up, and state police set up checkpoints and patrols, as authorities braced for possible retaliation from the rival gang.—*Xinhua*

Suspect held after one killed in suburban New York club shooting — media

NEW YORK — A 36-year-old man was taken into custody on suspicion of fatally shooting a suburban New York nightclub owner and wounding five others after being ejected from a Christmas party on Sunday, local media reported.

The suspected shooter in the incident in Mount Vernon, New York, is from the Bronx and currently has an open attempted murder case against him, the *New York Daily News* reported, citing law enforcement sources.

Mount Vernon police refused to comment on the incident that took place about 12 miles (20 kms) northeast of central Manhattan in the pre-dawn hours of Sunday.

The owner of The Mansion Club was killed.

All of the victims, including the owner, were found in the club's lobby and outside the club, which was hosting the party, media reports said.

"I've never seen anything like this on Christmas Day," police Captain Edward Adinaro told reporters, the paper reported.

It was not known what led to the suspect, who has not yet been named, being ejected from the club, he said. Security guards tackled the suspect and police were quickly on the scene to arrest him, WABC-TV reported.

"It is a dark day in our city. No person, no family should ever spend Christmas like this," the broadcaster reported. Mount Vernon Mayor Richard Thomas as saying.—*Reuters*

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 29th December (Thursday) 2016 "Kayin New Year Day" under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SHAMIM VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SHAMIM VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S LAND AND SEA SHIPPING
LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MANDALAY STAR VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MANDALAY STAR VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA**

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 01 VOY. NO (-)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DYNAMIC OCEAN 01 VOY. NO (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING
PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

Major quake jolts Chile tourist region on Christmas Day

SANTIAGO — A major 7.6 magnitude earthquake jolted southern Chile on Sunday, prompting thousands to evacuate coastal areas, but no fatalities or major damage were reported in the tourism and salmon farming region.

Witnesses reported intense shaking in their homes and were shocked by the loud noise. The quake disrupted Christmas celebration plans for thousands of people who fled on foot, in cars and on horseback, seeking higher ground amid torrential rains in some places as sirens warned of a potential tsunami.

“It was the biggest scare of our lives,” said Denisse Alvarado, a resident of the southern Chile fishing town of Quellon, located on Chiloe Island, a tourist destination in Chile’s Los Lagos region northwest of Patagonia.

Chile’s National Emergency Office (ONEMI) lifted both the evacuation order and a tsunami watch three hours after the Christmas Day quake struck, telling nearly 5,000 people who had evacuated they could return to their homes.

Onemi said one bridge in the area was impassable and some roads were closed as crews worked to restore electricity to some 21,000 homes left without power.

Officials had issued a tsunami warning earlier for areas within 1,000 km (621 miles) of the epicentre, just 39 km (24.5 miles) southwest of Quellon, off the coast. But the warning was downgraded to a tsunami watch. Eight mostly small ports in the area were closed, Chile’s Navy said.

“It’s great news that as of now, we don’t have to



A damaged road is seen after a quake at Chadmo, on Chiloe island, southern Chile, on 25 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

mourn any deaths as a result of the earthquake in the south,” Chilean President Michelle Bachelet said on Twitter. “Our goal is to re-establish normalcy in the affected communities.”

The quake was felt on the other side of the Andes mountains in Argentina, in the southwestern city of Bariloche, but structural damage in areas close to the epicentre was limited, witnesses said.

The quake was relatively shallow, at a depth of about 34.6 km (21.5 miles), according to the US Geological Survey (USGS).

“There was a lot, a lot of movement here, but besides that nothing of note, there weren’t houses falling,” said Alamiro Vera,

owner of the Cabanas Hotel in Quellon. “It was just scary, and some things inside fell.”

Alvarado, 46, said she was preparing to travel to the countryside to celebrate Christmas with friends when she felt the quake and ran out of her home.

“All of a sudden it shook and shook and shook,” Alvarado told Reuters. “I thought the house would fall and the ground would open because it was very strong and very loud.”

Though there were dozens of weaker aftershocks, damage was concentrated along a highway that runs across Chiloe Island, where traffic was shut in one section and on

smaller roads and bridges.

Local television showed damage to some homes, especially in Quellon and surrounding areas.

Chile, located on the so-called “Pacific Ring of Fire,” has a long history of deadly quakes, including a 8.8 magnitude quake in 2010 off the south-central coast, which also triggered a tsunami that devastated coastal towns.

But death and destruction are limited by strict construction codes especially designed to withstand earthquakes.

The area hit by Sunday’s quake was south of Valdivia, Chile, where 1,655 people died in a magnitude 9.5 quake in 1960, ranked by the USGS as the most powerful earthquake ever recorded in the world.

The region is home to several industrial salmon farms, but there were no signs of structural damage at farms or processing plants, said Jose Miguel Burgos, director of the National Fish and Aquaculture Service, a government agency.

“Damage was limited, and neither fishing nor aquaculture activity will be affected by this event,” Burgos said.

Fishing and agriculture company Empresas AquaChile SA said its employees in the watch zone had been evacuated and were safe, adding that there was no damage to its facilities.

Several other companies have industrial salmon farming operations in the region, including Blumar SA, Cia Pesquera Camanchaca SA, Australis Seafoods SA, Multiexport Foods SA, Invermar SA, and the local unit of Norway’s Marine Harvest ASA.—Reuters

Magazine sales set to fall short of book sales for 1st time in 41 yrs

TOKYO — Magazine sales by value in Japan are expected to fall short of that of books for the first time in 41 years in 2016, on the back of sluggish comic magazine sales and growing demand for online publications, a research institute said Monday.

The overturn of the long-held trend of magazines selling more than books is a major concern for small bookshops, many of which consider magazines as their mainstay products.

Sales of magazines,

excluding electronic publications, are expected to slip 7.7 per cent from a year earlier to around 720 billion yen (\$6.1 billion) in 2016, down for the 19th consecutive year, with its market value falling to about 46 per cent of its peak in 1997, according to an estimate by the Research Institute for Publications.

Book sales are estimated to drop 1.6 per cent from the previous year to around 730 billion yen, marking a 10th straight yearly fall. But

the drop was limited thanks to robust sales of the latest book in the Harry Potter series and “Tensai” (Genius) by former Tokyo Gov. Shintaro Ishihara, the institute said.

While weekly magazine Shukan Bunshun, which ran a series of exclusive stories, and women’s fashion and beauty magazines saw solid sales, sales of other magazines targeting men or focusing on hobbies remained sluggish.

An official at the institute attributed the weak

magazine sales to a notable decline in comic magazines and said, “With the spread of electronic publications, more consumers are now thinking they do not have to read comics in paper magazines.”

The institute estimates combined sales of books and magazines will sag about 4.7 per cent from a year before to 1.45 trillion yen, falling for the 12th straight year and coming below the 1.5-trillion-yen mark for the first time in 35 years.—Kyodo News

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Myanma Posts and Telecommunications (MPT)
INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION
IFP No. MY-P9/CNIP/ PQ Invitation / 16-17
Communication Network Improvement Project (CNIP)
JICA ODA Loan: L/A No. MY-P9

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a loan from Official Development Assistance (ODA) of JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA) toward the cost of Communication Network Improvement Project (MY-P9) to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract as "Single Contract" for procurement of Carrier Grade Transmission Equipment (100Gbps DWDM/ ROADM), Internet Gateway Overhaul & ISP Upgrading for IPv6 (High Capacity Routers, Servers), Power Plant, Air Conditioners, Optical Fiber Cable Laying and Civil Works (110km-duct installation) covering 27 sites from Mandalay to Yangon as well as 27 exchanges in Yangon Metro in Myanmar including related Installation/ Construction , Testing and Commissioning.

The Executing Agency, MPT, intends to prequalify potential bidders for a bid after prequalification which will be conducted through the procedures specified in JICA Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans (April 2012) and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as specified in the Guidelines.

Prequalification (P/Q) notice with the following contents:

1.	Package/ Project Name	Communication Network Improvement Project (CNIP) , MY-P9
2.	P/Q Document Issuance Time and Venue	Between 10:00 to 15:30, from January 2 nd ~ 3 rd , 5 th ~ 6 th , 2017. Ministry of Transport and Communications, MPT Managing Director Office @ Office No.2, Nay Pyi Taw.
3.	P/Q Document Fee and Necessaries	A complete set of the Prequalification Document fee is MMK 600,000 (Myanmar Kyats Six Hundred Thousand only) (non-refundable) with the submission of a written Application to the above address as for registration.
4.	P/Q Document Submission Closing Date and Time	February 17 th , 2017 at 12:00 noon. (Myanmar Standard Time)
5.	Submission Venue	Ministry of Transport and Communications, MPT Managing Director Office @ Office No.2, Nay Pyi Taw.
6.	Important Notice	<p>□ Applications for P/Q should be submitted in sealed envelopes, and be clearly marked "Submission of P/Q on Communication Network Improvement Project (MY-P9)"</p> <p>□ The applications for prequalification shall be submitted by in person and allows registered applicant(s) only.</p> <p>□ If Applicant is only one , it would be unopened and returned.</p>
7.	Eligibility for Applicant	<p>A minimum requirement for qualification is to have successfully carried out similar projects in overseas countries, demonstrating technical capacity and sound financial possibility / solvency, as it is specified in the Instruction to Applicants (ITA) of the P/Q Documents.</p> <p>An Applicant must refer to all the P/Q Documents, especially "4. Qualification Criteria" and clear the following in order to satisfactorily perform the contract for the Project:</p> <p>□ Eligibility</p> <p>□ Historical Contract Non-Performance</p> <p>□ Financial Situation</p> <p>□ Experience</p> <p>Procurement method; International Competitive Bidding "ICB" (Open to all Applicants) with P/Q, Single Contract.</p>
8.	Contact Person (Office hour)	U Myo San (Executive Engineer) MPT Managing Director Office , Office No.2, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw. Phone; +95 67 407188 +95 9 45000016 Email Address; myosan@mptjo.com.mm
9.	Websites	http://www.mct.gov.mm http://www.motc.gov.mm

Advertise with us. Hotline : 09-974424848

'Rogue One' dominating holiday box office, 'Sing' solid

LOS ANGELES — "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" remains powerful at the US holiday box office with a dominant \$15 million on Christmas Eve and projections of a \$120 million-plus haul over the six-day 21-26 December period.

Illumination-Universal's animated comedy "Sing" easily led the rest of the pack on Christmas Eve with a solid \$7.9 million, followed by Sony's "Passengers" with \$2.9 million, Fox's "Assassin's Creed" with \$2.2 million and Fox's "Why Him?" with \$1.8 million.

Paramount launched Denzel Washington-Viola Davis's "Fences" with \$750,000 at 1,547 sites in Saturday night showings and plans to expand the drama to about 2,200 locations Sunday.

Overall moviegoing slowed on Christmas Eve, as is typical, with "Rogue One" falling about 33 per cent from Friday and "Sing" declining about 40 per cent. Business should rebound sharply on Christmas Day on Sunday and on Monday, an official holiday for many.

Disney-Lucas film's "Rogue

One," starring Felicity Jones, wound up business on Christmas Eve with about \$260 million domestically in its first nine days and is projected to finish the holiday on Monday with about \$327 million. That will be enough to pull it past "Suicide Squad" as the eighth highest domestic grosser of the year. "Rogue One," the eighth Star Wars movie, is running about 42 per cent behind the pace "Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens," which opened a year ago and grossed a still-stunning \$571 million in its first 11 days on

its way to a record \$948 million domestic total.

"Sing" is projected to come in a second with about \$71.5 million over the six days - in line with forecasts - followed by the Jennifer Lawrence-Chris Pratt sci-fier "Passengers" at about \$29 million to \$30 million and videogame adaptation "Assassin's Creed" at \$22.6 million. James Franco's romantic comedy "Why Him?," which opened Friday, is forecast to finish the four-day weekend with about \$14.4 million.

Martin Scorsese's historical

drama "Silence" is projected to finish the four days with \$170,000 at four theaters. The film stars Liam Neeson, Andrew Garfield and Adam Driver as 17th century priests who face brutal persecution in Japan.

"Patriots Day," from CBS Films and Lionsgate, took in \$34,336 on Christmas Eve from seven locations and is project to wind up the six-day holiday break with about \$280,000. The Boston Marathon bombing movie is directed by Peter Berg and stars Mark Wahlberg.—Reuters



Members of the cast and director Gareth Edwards (R) and producer Kathleen Kennedy (L) arrive at the European Premiere of Star Wars Rogue One at the Tate Modern in London, Britain on 13 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Singer George Michael of Wham! fame dies at 53

LONDON — British singer George Michael, who became one of the pop idols of the 1980s with Wham! and then forged a career as a successful solo artist with sometimes sexually provocative lyrics, died at his home in England on Sunday. He was 53.

In the mid-1980s, Wham! was one of the most successful pop duos ever, ahead even of Simon & Garfunkel, with singles like "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go", "Careless Whisper", "Last Christmas" and "The Edge of Heaven".

"It is with great sadness that we can confirm our beloved son, brother and friend George passed away peacefully at home over the Christmas period," his publicist said in a statement.

"The family would ask that their privacy be respected at this difficult and emotional time. There will be no further comment at this stage," the statement said. British police said Michael's death was "unexplained but not suspicious."

Born Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou on 25 June 1963 in London to Greek Cypriot immigrant parents in a flat above a north London laundrette, Michael once played music on the London underground train system before finding fame with Wham!.

With a school friend, An-



British singer George Michael performs on stage during his 'Symphonica' tour concert in Vienna on 4 September 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

drew Ridgeley, he formed Wham! in 1981, a partnership that would produce some of the most memorable pop songs and dance-floor favourites of the 1980s.

"I am in deep shock," said Elton John. "I have lost a beloved friend — the kindest, most generous soul and a brilliant artist. My heart goes out to his family and all of his fans. @GeorgeMichael #RIP."

The duo had their first hit with their second release "Young Guns (Go For It)" (1982) before their debut release "Wham Rap" became a hit the following year. The 1984 album "Make It Big" was a huge success in the United States.—Reuters

Carrie Fisher 'stable' after cardiac incident, mother says

NEW YORK/CHICAGO — Hollywood actress Carrie Fisher was in stable condition, her mother Debbie Reynolds said on Sunday, after the "Star Wars" star suffered a cardiac episode two days earlier on a flight from London to Los Angeles.

"Carrie is in stable condition. If there is a change, we will share it. For all her fans and friends, I thank you for your prayers and good wishes," Reynolds said on Twitter.

Fans of the actress who famously portrayed Princess Leia in "Star Wars" said they were saddened by the 60-year-old's illness and hospitalization. But they said they were inspired by the appearance of a young Princess Leia in the saga's most recent movie playing in theaters this weekend.

Fisher suffered heart problems shortly before her flight landed in Los Angeles on Friday and received emergency treatment on the plane before she was rushed to a hospital.

A stable condition would be an upgrade from Friday, when her brother, Todd Fisher, said she was in critical condition.

The Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center has declined to comment, citing patient confidentiality laws.

The daughter of a Hollywood power couple, movie star Reynolds and entertainer Eddie Fish-

er, she achieved her own fame portraying Princess Leia in the cinematic space saga launched in 1977.

After celebrity friends and co-stars wished her well on Saturday, many fans went to a Christmas Day screening of "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," in which a digital replica of the young Princess Leia appears on screen at the end.

"It's kind of surreal that this movie is coming out now and to think of Carrie Fisher/Princess Leia having a heart attack, it's pretty terrifying," Mike Rosenberg, 28, who works in finance, said at a Times Square cinema. "It's Christmas Day. I'm sure

everyone has her in their heart today."

The audience gasped when seeing Princess Leia, said Heather Kemp, a 44-year-old attorney who had just seen "Rogue One" in a Times Square cinema. "It was sad and it was inspiring at the same time," Kemp said. "Whenever you see any of the characters like C3PO and R2D2, there were reactions. But yeah, definitely for her."

The Princess Leia character, who was courageous and a capable fighter as well as glamorous, was a role model for Kemp when she first saw the original movie.

"She's spunky," Kemp said.—Reuters



Actress Carrie Fisher waves as she arrives at the premiere of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" in Hollywood, California on 14 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Indonesia's Aceh marks 12 years since tsunami, lacks warning system

BANDA ACEH, (Indonesia) — A ceremony and other events commemorating 12 years since the deadly disaster in Indonesia's far-western province of Aceh were held Monday, as the Southeast Asian nation struggles with a lack of a tsunami early warning system.

Families and relatives visited a mass grave and offered prayers for victims of the deadliest disaster in Indonesian history, while the acting governor of Aceh, Soedarmo, reminded people about the need to have a tsunami warning system in place.

Sukiyati Helmi, 57, said she is still gripped by the sadness of losing her two daughters and grand-

daughter. At the time of the disaster, she and her husband were participating in a Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

"I came to the commemoration to feel better and share (my) feelings with others," said Helmi, who attends the ceremony every year.

About 1,000 people including bereaved kin also went to a mosque to pray.

A magnitude-9.1 quake off Indonesia's Sumatra Island triggered massive tsunamis that badly hit Aceh, as well as areas around the Indian Ocean such as Sri Lanka and Thailand.

The December 2004 disaster killed or left missing at least 220,000 people.

Located in northern Sumatra, Aceh alone lost some 180,000 people.

Soedarmo said in an address at the ceremony sponsored by the provincial government that Aceh, one of the highest tsunami disaster risk areas in Indonesia, must look at how other disaster-prone areas such as Japan and China brace for disasters.

"What about us? We must also be well prepared," Soedarmo said.

After tsunamis struck in 2004, Indonesia introduced an early warning system consisting of 22 buoys to detect changes in the sea level surface when a tsunami comes. Now, none of those buoys are functional.

As a result, Indonesia can only count on Australia's buoy in the Indian Ocean, Thailand's in the Andaman Sea and a US one in the Pacific Ocean. To check on those buoys, Indonesia has a reading station that operates 24 hours.

But no tsunami detection buoys have been installed in Indonesia since last year, according to Muhammad Ilyas, head of Marine Survey Technology at the Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology. Ilyas warned that the foreign countries' tsunami detection buoys would not be effective anyway "if the earthquake happened outside" those areas with no buoys in place.—*Kyodo News*



People pray at a mass grave in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, on 26 December 2016, as the day marked the 12th anniversary of the earthquake-tsunami disaster off Sumatra Island that killed or left missing at least 220,000 people. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

140th birth anniversary of Pakistan's founder celebrated in Islamabad



People attend an event to mark the 140th birth anniversary of Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah in Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

Bombed-out Aleppo soapmaker revives age-old tradition in Paris

SANTENY (France) — A Syrian soapmaker who fled Aleppo after the factory he worked in was bombed has set up shop in a Paris suburb, reviving a tradition he says dates back millennia.

Hassan Harastani left Syria in 2012, first for Lebanon and then two years later moving to France at the invitation of Samir Constantini, a Franco-Syrian doctor who was already importing the distinctive Aleppo soap.

"In Aleppo, this type of soap was manufactured maybe 3,000 years ago," said Harastani, who mar-

kets his version - which he sells on the internet and through a shop in Angers in western France - under the brand name Alepia. The soap is made from olive and laurel oil and water, with sodium hydroxide added to harden the mixture. It is cut by hand and left to dry for up to three years before being sold in bars weighing around 200 gramme (7 ounce).

"Aleppo is stricken, people are outside in the streets, they don't have homes... (This) is a way for us to continue to perpetuate tradition," Constantini said.—*Reuters*



Franco-Syrian Samir Constantini (L), CEO of Alepia brand, and Syrian master soapmaker Hassan Harastani, who fled Syria and decided to produce Aleppo soap on French soil, pose on 22 December 2016, holding bars of soap at the company's factory in Santeny, near Paris. PHOTO: REUTERS

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(27-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 28-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Irrawaddy Dolphin
07:40	Am	The Recycle Art: Tyre
07:56	Am	Dances of Myanmar "Akha Traditional Dance"
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Swan Hein Cave
08:44	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Palm
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Bagan Choral Dance
09:33	Am	Choral Dance (Duel)
09:41	Am	Next Weekend

09:51	Am	Today Myanmar: Seatbelt & Road Safety
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	A Journey for Healthy Future (The 36 th Geumsan Insam Festival) Day 2
10:47	Am	Myanma Agarwood

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Monday 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	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-5)
07:53	Pm	Talented Musicians
08:03	Pm	News
08:25	Pm	Taste of Myanmar (Glass Noodle Soup)
08:44	Pm	Doctor Painter
07:49	Pm	Kayin Child Boxer

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

I won't die if I don't win Ballon d'Or: Neymar



Barcelona's Neymar reacts during the "Clasico", Spanish La Liga Santander at Nou Camp Stadium, Barcelona, Spain on 3 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BARCELONA forward Neymar "is not going to die" if he fails to win the FIFA Ballon d'Or and says he plays the game to be happy, not for individual honors.

In an interview published on the official La Liga website on Sunday, Neymar said he was unconcerned at not being named as one of three finalists for football's highest individual award this year.

"It's obvious that [the Ballon d'Or] is a source of motivation, but I'm not going to die if I don't win it," the 24-year-old Brazilian said.

Neymar was a Ballon d'Or finalist for the first time last year, eventually missing out to teammate Lionel Messi, who claimed the prize for a fifth time.

The 2016 award will be contested by Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Antoine Griezmann, with the winner to be announced next month.

"Above all I want to be happy and at Barcelona I'm happy," Neymar said. "If I don't win the Ballon d'Or nothing will change. I don't play football for that. I play to be happy. Only one player can win it."

Neymar said Barcelona are upbeat about their chances of winning La Liga this season, despite being three points behind Real Madrid, who also

have a game in hand.

"There is still a long way to go," the former Santos prodigy said. "We are just focused on our matches. We can't be worried about Real Madrid. Last year we were 11 points ahead of second but we only won the league in the last match of the season. It's a tough competition and every game is difficult."

Of his relationship with fellow Blaugrana forwards Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez, Neymar said: "We are creating history and we are getting better. We want to be happy on the pitch and stay together."

"It's a big pleasure and a little bit strange because we are Brazilian, Argentinian and Uruguayan. We're rivals in international football but we have a great friendship. We're always joking around with each other. It makes me very happy to have people like that in football."

The Barcelona No. 11 also had the highest praise for teammate Andres Iniesta, who he believes is peerless in world football.

"Andres [Iniesta] is the best midfielder I have ever seen, for his quality, for everything," Neymar said. "He's incomparable because he's very, very different. Andres has an elegance and a classiness that distinguishes him from the rest." — *Xinhua*

Lampard to stay in close contact with Chelsea

LONDON — Former England midfielder Frank Lampard says he will be "in close contact" with his old club Chelsea as he decides on his next career move.

The 38-year-old left New York City in November and media speculation has mounted that he could return to the London team in a coaching role or some other capacity.

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

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

"Whatever happens, in some capacity I will be at Chelsea, whether that's with my season ticket watching them...I don't know. I will be in very close contact."

"Whether I have a role is not all in my hands so I can't go any further than that. I am very relaxed about it which is a nice place to be."

"I'm not kind of eager that the end of my career is coming and thinking, 'What's going to

happen now?'," added Lampard.

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

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

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

Guardiola: Messi another level to Cristiano Ronaldo

LONDON — Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola on Sunday insisted that there's no need to compare Lionel Messi with Cristiano Ronaldo because the Argentine is of different level to the Portuguese.

Ronaldo collected his fourth Ballon d'Or award after

a marvellous year. The Portuguese captain won the Champions League with his club Real Madrid and he also claimed the first European title for his nation at 2016 Euro France. However, Guardiola still thinks the Real player cannot match Messi.

"Messi is the best, he is defi-

nately the best," the former Barca coach told a news conference. "He knows how to play, score and make the other players play. He is always there. "With all the respect to all the players, first to Cristiano Ronaldo, congratulations to him for the award. I think Messi is on another level." — *Xinhua*

The Strongest beat Bolivar in Bolivian title playoff

LA PAZ — The Strongest were crowned Bolivian champions for the 12th time when they beat arch-rivals Bolivar 2-1 in a play-off for the Apertura title in La Paz on Saturday.

Argentine striker Fabricio Pedrozzi opened the scoring for

The Strongest after half an hour and Pablo Escobar increased their lead in the 74th minute of the decider at the Hernando Siles stadium. Spaniard Juanmi Callejon pulled one back in the 89th minute for Bolivar, who were then down to 10 men after midfielder

Jorge Escobar had been sent off six minutes earlier. Bolivar, who have a record 20 titles since the Bolivian Professional Football League was created in 1977, had finished level on points with The Strongest in the final round of matches in midweek. — *Reuters*



Players of The Strongest celebrate after winning the Bolivian League during the "Clasico" against Bolivar at Hernando Siles stadium, La Paz, Bolivia on 24 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS