



■ NATIONAL

Brazilian, Saudi Arabian ambassadors present credentials to President

► PAGE 3

■ NATIONAL

Maungtau man active in development killed

► PAGE 2



■ LOCAL NEWS

Radio tracking used to learn about elephants

► PAGE 2

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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi poses for photo together with leaders from different religions after praying for Daw Khin Kyi. PHOTO: MNA

Ceremony for 28th anniversary Daw Khin Kyi's death

A meal offering ceremony to mark the 28th anniversary of the death of Daw Khin Kyi, the wife of the late national leader General Aung San, was held at the house of his daughter, the State Counsellor, at No. 54 University Avenue in Yangon yesterday morning.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi offered meals and robes to fifteen monks in commemoration of her late mother before receiving sermons from the monks. In the afternoon, leaders from different religions including Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Bahá'í prayed for Daw Khin Kyi.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Fake news about death of baby boy exposed

Authorities made a field trip to Maungtau to reveal the truth as fake news about the death of a baby, allegedly a victim of forced vaccination, was spread on social media.

A Facebook user with account name of Ro Nay San Lwin accused authorities of forced vaccination of children in Makyichau in Ward (4), Khamoungseik, Maungtau District on 23 December and said that a child died because of the vaccination on the morning of 25 December while three other children had to be hospitalised. Upon arrival and after an investigation on the ground, authorities found out that the incident was fabricated. The seven-month old baby boy on social media, identified as the son of U No Arlong, was not on the list of children who had recently received vaccinations. He died of respiratory problems and dysentery on 24 December.

The Rural Healthcare Centre in Tamantha Village in Maungtau had administered vaccination to 23 babies under the age of one year and seven pregnant women on 22 December, it is learnt.— *MNA*

SEZs, sea port, airport to be established in southern Yangon

Ko Moe

THE Yangon government disclosed a plan yesterday to establish special economic zones in the southern district of the Yangon Region.

Daw Nilar Kyaw, Yangon Region Minister for Electric, Industry and Road Transportation, said

in her answer to a question raised by an MP at the Yangon Region Parliament yesterday that the government would implement not only special economic zones but also a seaport and a new international airport on 60,000 hectares in southern Yangon. "Not only agricultural zones and small-scale industry zones but also special economic

zones will be established in the area covering Dalla, Letkokekon, Twantay, Kungyangon and Kawmu townships in southern Yangon," said Daw Nilar Kyaw.

Currently, the government is working together with international organisations and experts to draw up a master plan, she added.

The master plan to be drawn

up by several organisations would be reviewed by experts in January and would then be submitted to the parliament in March.

The Yangon Region Government is also working on the Yangon New City Project on 7,284 hectares adjacent to Twantay, Kyimyidine and Seikiy Khanaungto townships on the other side of Yan-

gon River. The Yangon Region Government will closely supervise the implementation of the project to prevent highly rising land prices.

The new city project, which includes housing and factories, is intended for the increasing population of Yangon Region, which currently has a population of more than 6 million.



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Radio tracking used to learn about elephants



An elephant with radio collar. PHOTO: MIRROR

RADIO collars were fitted on five elephants in the second week of December to explore the habitat of wild elephants at Myainghaywun elephant camp, Taikkyi Township, Yangon Region, said a responsible person from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

To monitor their behavior, the elephants were fitted with radio collars during the first week of October. This is the second time they have utilised radio tracking, said U Maung Maung,

a head keeper at the Myainghaywun elephant camp.

There were conflicts between man and elephants in Taikkyi Township due to lost hunting grounds resulting from the building of the Dabuhla dam in their habitat and the creation of private plantations in the Phalon forest reserve. Solar electric fencing was conducted to protect residents from wild elephants.

The habitation of other elephants within a 20-mile radius of a particular elephant fitted

with a radio collar can now be documented, said the one from WWF.

If wild elephants are trespassing on the villages, keepers from the Myainghaywun elephant camp will come to fit a radio collar on those elephants after they are tranquilised. These elephants are free to go within 24 hours once they are no longer under the anaesthetics, according to elephant keepers from Myainghaywun elephant camp. — *Tun Hlaing (Myaing)*

Six villagers forcibly abducted by TNLA

SIX villagers from Mongko village, Moemeik Township, were forcibly abducted by the Ta'an National Liberation Army (TNLA) on Sunday evening. Security forces are searching for the missing villagers.

The victims were reportedly taken away forcibly at 9:30 pm by six members of TNLA armed force with false accusation that they were abusing and dealing drugs. The victims are three men including U Saw Maung living at

Mong Bon village 8 miles north-east of Moemeik Township and three women. They were all taken in the direction of Pan Haing village. Security forces continue to investigate.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Heroin, yaba, opium seized in Mohnyin Township

After a tip-off to police, members of the Anti-Drugs Squad Unit 1 simultaneously raided four houses in Mongnaung village, Hopim, Mohnyin Township on Monday, discovering heroin, opium and thousands of yaba tablets.

Police seized 25 grams of heroin from the house owned by Myint Wai and his wife Ma Khin Shwe in Botesu Ward,

found one gram of heroin and 23 yaba tablets from Ma Daw Kun's house in Mya Nanda Ward, 2,000 yaba tablets and two grams of raw opium from the house of Win Myint and wife Ma Yin Yin Aye and two grams of heroin from the house of Paw Myar in Sinphyugon Ward.

On the same day, members of Anti-Drug Squad Unit 25 based in Taunggyi searched

a Subaru driven by Myo Min Thein, accompanied by Ye Kyaw Oo, at a check-point four miles away from Taunggyi. The team confiscated 375 yaba tablets and a plastic bag containing one gram of heroin.

Police have filed charges against them under the Anti Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Myint Wai, Ma Khin Shwe, Ma Daw Kun's, Win Myint and wife Ma Yin Yin Aye and Paw Myar. PHOTO: MNA

Maungtaw man active in development killed

A body was found beside the Pyuma Creek between Wat Kyein village and Badakar village, Maungtaw on 26 December, it is learnt. The victim was identified as Sirazuhut from Wet Kyein village (North).

According to the investigation, Sirazuhut was missing

since the evening of 16th December. He was found dead on the marsh land beside the Pyuma Creek. Sirazuhut was a former head of ten households of ten and was working actively with officials in the regional development activities.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Tatmadaw columns seize point 768 (Lai Hpawng by KIA) and surrounding minor camps

After the Tatmadaw had seized outposts of KIA insurgents including the fortified Gidon Post in Waingmaw Township, Kachin State on 16 this month, its columns launched a trail attack on the point 768 (Lai Hpawng by KIA) which is located seven miles east of Myitkyina-Bhamo road and where 3rd battalion under 5th brigade of KIA insurgents headquartered on 21 this month.

Based on this initial attack, the Tatmadaw made necessary preparations in detail, and launched attack with the supporting aerial bombardment and infantry, artillery, tank and heavy weapon assaults in the morning.

The first post was overrun at 3.30 pm today. Follow-up Tatmadaw offensive attacks led to the fall of the main enemy defence hill and six minor posts at 5.15 pm. Today's captured

Point-768 (Lai Hpawng called by KIA) post is located on the other side of Nantaphat creek, opposite of which lies Battalion 252's Gidon Post that KIA lost on 16 December.

It is also a post built to provide security for the communication route to KIA Headquarters Liza, Lisinpote and other posts around No.6 boundary post estimated map reference (MJ-022995) and threaten Myitkyina and Waingmaw townships.

The post was also used as a communication route to Brigade 1-controlled Ingunla region. Although KIA outposts have been occupied, information about re-deployment and casualties from both sides is being collected in detail according to time limit. After that, further news will be released, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief.—*Commander-in-Chief Office*



KIA battalion headquarters. PHOTO: C-IN-C OFFICE

Illegal timber confiscated in Pauk township

POLICE from Pauk township confiscated over 50 tonnes of illegal timber in Pauk township on Sunday in Magwe region.

"The seized timber are Padauk and teak. We confiscated timber from the four places on Sunday," said Police Major Zaw Wn Sein from the Pauk

township police station.

"Currently, we confiscated four 22-wheeled vehicles and one bulldozer, said U Nyein Chan, the head of forestry Department in Pauk township.

Police are still investigating the case.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

Brazilian, Saudi Arabian ambassadors present credentials to President

Mr Antonio Jose' Maria de Souza e Silva, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his credentials to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at Presidential Palace, Nay Pyi Taw, at 10 am yesterday.

Mr Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous, the newly-accredited Ambassador of the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar presented his credentials to U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at Presidential Palace at 10.35 am yesterday.

Present on the occasions were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin and Director-General U Ko Ko Naing of the Protocol Department.— *Myanmar News Agency*



President U Htin Kyaw receives Brazilian Ambassador Mr Antonio Jose' Maria de Souza e Silva. PHOTO: MNA

Yangon Region Hluttaw approves regional development budget

THE Third Regular Session of the Second Yangon Region Hluttaw successfully approved the additional budget that officials said would contribute to development of transportation and money flow in the region, according to the Speaker U Tin Maung Tun of the Yangon Region Hluttaw.

A total of 224 questions

were raised and seven motions approved by representatives during the second session of the Yangon Region Hluttaw.

Out of three bills submitted to the session, two were approved by the regional parliament during the session.

During its second regular session, the Hluttaw formed ten committees.— *Ko Moe*

Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Chairman receives Russian Ambassador



Thura U Shwe Mann welcomes Russian Ambassador. PHOTO: MNA

Thura U Shwe Mann, Chairman of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, received Ambassador of Russia to Myanmar Dr Nikolay Listopadov at the building of the com-

mission in the complex of the parliament yesterday.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on matters related to bilateral relations, friendship and cooperation.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Two wounded in mine blasts

U Shan Lay of NamParChi village was ploughing the field on his farm to cultivate corn when he rolled over a land mine and was injured by shrapnel Tuesday morning in Kutkai Township in northern Shan State.

Similarly, U Myo Aung from Shwe Ku Township was going fishing at the Moe Kaung Creek when he walked on a land

mine planted by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) 6,000 meters west of Shaduzut village, Tanaing Township on Friday afternoon. The extent of their injuries could not be determined. The Tatmadaw arranged for both victims to receive medical treatment at the respective township general hospitals.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Government to promote Myanmar Traditional Medicine



U Myint Swe addresses the meeting on holding 17th conference and seminar of Myanmar Traditional Practitioners. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR practitioners of traditional medicine will gather in Nay Pyi Taw next month to discuss promoting and improving traditional medicine.

The leading committee and the working committee met yesterday at the Ministry of Health and Sports in Nay Pyi Taw on convening the 17th conference and seminar of Myanmar Traditional Practitioners, which is slated to be held from 18 to 19 January as part of efforts for producing professionals in the traditional medicine field.

Vice President U Myint Swe, in his capacity as the pa-

tron of the leading committee, stressed the need to implement the resolutions that come out of the 17th conference and seminar and pointed out the continuous need to carry out research work.

"Nowadays, alternative medicine plays an important role internationally. In place of chemicals, natural raw materials are increasingly being used in medical treatment and pharmaceutical industries. Thus, upgrading the sector of traditional medicines can be of great benefit to the country and the people," said Vice President U Myint Swe. He also asked for systemat-

ic arrangements for successfully convening the conference.

"Discussions and decisions which will come out of the seminar will be emphatically implemented and research work will be carried out under the guidance of alternative medical practitioners in order to develop the field of alternative medicine," said Dr Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports and chairman of the leading committee.

Following this, Professor Dr Thet Khaing Win, secretary of the leading committee and Permanent Secretary and Dr Yi Yi Myint, Director-General and joint secretary of the leading committee, clarified the working procedures to be carried out by respective sub-committees for convening the seminar.

The Vice President made suggestions over the discussions made by the participants at the meeting concerning transportation, communications, accommodations, catering services, security and pre-conference publicity.

"Starting from 2000, conferences were convened annually. From the 17th conference on, it is necessary for implementing the decisions which will come out from seminars. Concurrently, it is necessary to continually develop research work on Myanmar traditional medicine," said the patron of the leading committee.— *Myanmar News Agency*

Four farmworkers wounded in land mine explosion

Four people were wounded on Sunday when they stepped on land mines as they were returning home Sunday afternoon from a farm where they worked in Myitkyina.

On the day of incident, the four people, including U Byar Lay of Shwe Set Ward, were working on a farm near Ma Le

village about 32 miles southwest of Myitkyina. As they returned to Ma Le village, they stepped on two mines and were wounded by the subsequent explosion. The four victims are undergoing medical treatment at Myitkyina General Hospital with the assistance of Shwe Set Ward charity organisation.— *Myanmar News Agency*



Four farmworkers are ceiving treatment for injures they got in mine blast in Myitkyina.

LOCAL Business

Export value of various peas up by nearly US\$280million

THE export value of various peas as of mid-December in the current fiscal year amounted to US\$1,057.805million, up from US\$777.960million in the previous fiscal year, an increase of nearly US\$280million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Rice plays a key role in the agricultural export sector, followed

by peas. Ninety per cent of peas produced in Myanmar are exported to foreign countries, officials said. India reportedly proposed to purchase 900,000 tonnes of peas from Myanmar, with plans to help boost production.

Myanmar exported agricultural products worth US\$1.894b, animal products worth \$5.628m,

fisheries products worth \$365m, minerals worth over \$680m, forest products worth \$166m, industrial goods worth \$3.409b and other commodities worth \$1.199b to foreign countries. Meanwhile, capital goods worth \$4.345b, raw materials worth \$4.012b and personal goods worth \$2.634b were imported into Myanmar.—*Ko Htet*



A pea farm seen in Pyay Township, Bago Region. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Swiss and UK companies to purchase coffee from Chin State

NAT Coffee from Switzerland and Prisma Coffee from the United Kingdom are gearing up to purchase coffee produced from Chin State, it is learnt from Myanmar Coffee Association.

The purchase commitments are the result of a worldwide search by Switzerland and the UK to find coffee beans that met certain criteria, which they found in Chin State

because of its favourable weather and geographic conditions, said U Ye Myint, the chair of the above said association.

Representatives from Nat Coffee and Prisma held a workshop about coffee plantation and production from 20th to 23rd December in cooperation with the Myanmar Coffee Association and Chin State Coffee Supplier

groups, it is learnt.

Nat Coffee has already noted that coffee from Chin State, Myanmar can be ordered on their website by May or June, 2017. The partnerships with Nat Coffee and Prisma are the best opportunity for estate growers in Chin State because the companies will further expose Chin State's coffee to the global market.—*200*

Real estate sector to recover in mid-2017

MYANMAR Real Estate Services Organization called for early enactment of the real estate services law to attract more foreign investment while predicting recovering of the real estate sector in mid-2017.

“Currently, rental market in the real estate sector in Yangon Region is steady and is also expected to see booming in the mid-2017,

said Daw Mo Mo Aung, General Secretary of the Myanmar Real Estate Services Organization (Central).

On behalf of the organization, she expressed her hope that the real estate services law is coming out in the near future. The organization has more than 4,800 members nationwide.—*Soe Win (MLA)*

Pre 1 Home Centre offering one stop service for construction materials

PRE 1 Home Centre, the biggest distributor of construction materials, is offering one-stop service with construction materials imported from Asia and Europe available.

The centre was opened on 20th December on No. 2 Road in Dagon Myothit (East) Township. The center aims to offer the customer the right products at the right price. All materials used in construction are available. Addi-

tionally, the centre also offers furniture. This place is convenient for the construction sites in Kyauktan, Thanlyin and Thilawa.

Opening of the Pre 1 Home Centre will create over 300 job opportunities for locals. This is the fourth centre of Pre 1 Home, which employs over 1,000 people. There are plans to establish Pre 1 Home Centres in Mandalay and Mawlamyine in early 2017, it is learnt.—*Ko Htet*

De-registration of scrapped old cars increasing

THE number of deregistered old cars hit its highest point this month at over 950 so far, according to the department of road transportation and administration (RTAD).

Especially, the 20-year-old vehicles are mostly found to be de-registered at RTAD, followed by the locally produced cars.

The rate of de-registration this month has significantly risen when compared to other past months, not only in Yangon but also outside Yangon.

The increase in de-registration is a result of a new auto policy that will take effect in a month. After a suspension on the import of per-

mit-free cars, many old car owners de-registered their vehicles to be able to return the slip to import again, it is learnt.

Currently, the competent authorities are under discussion to shorten the term of the cars for de-registration in the coming year. The prices of the cars are recorded high in the local auto market, up by Ks2 to 3million per car, resulting from the suspension on issuing of individual import permits. Similarly, the prices of those model cars which are no longer be granted permits next year are remarkably on the rise, it is learnt from the car market.—*Ko Khant*

FMI's share price hits all-time low, YSX stock trading continues to decline

THE share price of First Myanmar Investment (FMI) at Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) reached its lowest price, down to Ks14,000, on 27th December, 2016. Additionally, the stock trading of all three listed companies are on the decline, according to the statistics released by YSX.

Previously, FMI's stock trading hit its lowest price at Ks15,500 on 25th November. But the share price continued to decline down to Ks15,000 on 22nd and 23rd December. The price slipped further to Ks14,500 on 26th December and remained on the decline at Ks14,000 on 27th

December. FMI hit its highest stock trading price at Ks41,000 on 29th and 30th March at YSX.

Similarly, the share trading of Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH) is also on the decline. After a share split, MTSH's share price reached the highest at Ks5,300 per share and now, the price dropped down to Ks45,000 starting from 23rd December.

In addition, Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) has received the least interest against the other two listed companies, hitting zero trading seven times in one month.

Moreover, the stock trading in November is seen as the

worst, with a trading value of Ks2,213,328,400, with shares worth Ks4,027,821,700 traded in October.

A total of 8,811 shares of three listed companies were traded at YSX on 27th December, 2016, with a share price of Ks14,000 for FMI, Ks4,500 for MTSH and Ks9,100 for MCB, according to stock trading data of YSX.

YSX is barely over a year old and a publicity campaign will be required to make the public aware of the benefits of stock trading, an official said.—*Mon Mon*



A visitor seen outside Yangon Stock Exchange in Yangon on 11 November, 2016. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Thai police call off raid on scandal-hit Buddhist temple

BANGKOK — Thai police on Tuesday called off a raid to arrest a prominent Buddhist monk wanted for suspected money laundering after devotees barricaded entrances to his sprawling temple complex in a Bangkok suburb.

The Wat Phra Dhammakaya Temple commands a huge following and is supported by influential politicians and business people, but critics say it exploits its followers and uses religion to make money.

Thailand's attorney general said in November it would charge the temple's abbot, Phra Dhammachayo, and four others with conspiracy to launder money and receive stolen goods.

Dhammachayo's



Police officers stand guard outside the Wat Phra Dhammakaya temple in Pathum Thani province, north of Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

aides have denied the accusations against him which they say are politically motivated.

Police have tried over the past few months to question the abbot and get into the temple, but with-

out success.

On Tuesday, Reuters reporters saw hundreds of monks and devotees

inside the temple, which is near the capital's Don Muang international airport.

Some people were barricading entrances, while others wore face masks and chanted Buddhist prayers.

Police removed part of a metal fence outside the complex but by early afternoon they had withdrawn from the site.

"We have cleared the fence from the area because it was illegally constructed," Khempak Photipak, the officer in charge of the police operation, told Reuters.

"We did not move into the temple today because there are too many people and we did not receive orders to do so," he said.

He gave no fur-

ther details nor did he say when police might try to get into the temple again.

Temple officials said there were about 10,000 people in the complex.

The controversy over the abbot in part reflects more than a decade of divisive politics in Thailand, which has permeated all aspects of life, including Buddhism.

The abbot is widely perceived to have had links with populist former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, who was overthrown in a 2006 coup. Thaksin has lived in self-exile since 2008 but remains influential.

The military overthrew a government led by his sister, Yingluck Shinawatra, in 2014. — Reuters

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South Korea ruling party defectors hope UN chief Ban will join

SEOUL — A South Korean ruling party faction announced on Tuesday it would form a new party, and a prominent member of the defectors said they wanted outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the front-runner in some presidential polls, to join them.

The 29 lawmakers from President Park Geun-hye's conservative Saenuri Party were among those who supported a parliamentary motion to impeach Park over an influence-peddling scandal, which was passed overwhelmingly on 9 December. "We are hoping Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will join the New Conservative Party for Reform, and

if he joins, it will be right that he would compete in a fair primary," Yoo Seong-min, a member of the new party and a possible presidential contender, told TV station SBS, using the new party's tentative name.

In a Realmeter poll released on Monday, 23.3 per cent of respondents supported Ban, just ahead of the liberal Democratic Party's Moon Jae-in, at 23.1 per cent.

The defections cut the number of seats held by Saenuri to fewer than 100 in the 300-member chamber. Ban has not declared an intention to run for president, only saying he would devote himself to the country after his term ends this month. Nevertheless, he



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon speaks before the swearing-in of Secretary-General-designate Mr. Antonio Guterres of Portugal at UN headquarters in New York, US, on 12 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

had until recently been widely expected to run for the top job as a member of Park's party. However, running as a Saenuri candidate looks far less attractive given a corruption

scandal, in which a friend of Park's is accused of colluding with the president to pressure big businesses into paying money to foundations backing Park's initiatives.—Reuters

China says space programme must help protect national security

BEIJING — China's space programme must help protect the country's national security, but China is dedicated to the peaceful use of space and opposes a space arms race, the government said in a policy paper issued on Tuesday.

President Xi Jinping has called for China to establish itself as a space power, and it has tested anti-satellite missiles, in addition to its civilian aims

China has repeatedly said its space programme is for peaceful purposes, but the US Defence Department has highlighted its increasing capabilities,

saying it was pursuing activities aimed to prevent adversaries from using space-based assets in a crisis. In its policy paper, the government said the space programme was an important part of the country's overall development strategy. "China always adheres to the principle of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and opposes the weaponisation of or an arms race in outer space," it said. The programme must also "meet the demands of economic, scientific and technological development, national security and social progress",

the paper added, without elaborating on the security part. However it included past weapons tests as part of the history of its space programme, in which the military has all along been deeply involved with.

"Over the past 60 years of remarkable development since its space industry was established in 1956, China has made great achievements in this sphere, including the development of atomic and hydrogen bombs, missiles, man-made satellites, manned spaceflight and lunar probes," it said. China completed its longest

manned space mission to date last month, when two astronauts spent 30 days aboard the Tiangong 2 space laboratory, or "Heavenly Palace 2", which China is using to carry out experiments ahead of a longer-range plan to have a permanent manned space station around 2022.

The white paper also repeated a plan to launch its first Mars probe by 2020 and to land the first probe ever on the dark side of the moon in 2018, but gave no details about a previously mooted goal of landing a Chinese person on the moon by 2036.—Reuters

Abe tours military graves, historic sites ahead of Pearl Harbour visit

HONOLULU — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe spent on Monday in Hawaii touring sites of significance in the history of Japan-US relations, setting the stage for his visit to Pearl Harbour with US President Barack Obama the following day.

The first of Abe's two days in the island state began with a visit to US military graves and ended with a dinner with some of Hawaii's Japanese-American residents, tracing the progress of bilateral relations from bitter enmity to close alliance.

That narrative, and the power of reconciliation at its core, is certain to be at the centre of Abe's speech Tuesday after he and Obama take part in a remembrance ceremony at a memorial to the US battleship Arizona, sunk in the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbour 75 years ago that drew the United States into World War II.

"Tomorrow I will visit Pearl Harbour with President Obama, and I want to demonstrate (our) remembrance (of the war dead) and the power of reconciliation to Japan, the United States and the world," Abe said at the dinner with the Japanese-American community.



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from L on front) visits a monument in Honolulu, on 26 December 2016, dedicated to the nine people who died in a 2001 collision off Hawaii between the Ehime Maru, a Japanese fisheries school training boat, and a US naval submarine undergoing a demonstration cruise carrying civilians. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

With Obama set to leave office early next month, the leaders are expected to hail the importance of the Japan-US alliance in their final bilateral meeting Tuesday and reaffirm their commitment to making sure the horrors of the war are never repeated.

The National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, or "Punchbowl," includes the graves of those who died in Japan's attack on the harbour on 7 December, 1941, as well as casualties in the rest of the war and subse-

quent conflicts including the Viet Nam War.

Abe, who arrived in Honolulu Monday morning, was accompanied at the cemetery by Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and Defence Minister Tomomi Inada, as well as US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy.

The Japanese prime minister placed flowers at the grave of Daniel Inouye, the first Japanese-American in the US Senate, who died in 2012 and is also interred at the Punchbowl cemetery.

Abe also paid his respects at the nearby Maki-kiki Cemetery for Japanese who died in Hawaii in both peace and wartime, including in the Pearl Harbour attack.

He also visited a monument in Honolulu dedicated to the nine people, including four high school students, who died in a 2001 collision off Hawaii between the Ehime Maru, a Japanese fisheries school training boat, and a US naval submarine undergoing a demonstration cruise carrying civilians.

Abe visited a memorial to Lt. Fusata Iida, a Japanese naval pilot who died in the Pearl Harbour attack, before touring a US Defence Department facility dedicated to recovering and identifying the remains of personnel missing in overseas wars, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Abe is not the first sitting Japanese leader to visit Pearl Harbour, but his joint visit with Obama to the Arizona memorial will break new ground. Former Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda had visited the Punchbowl cemetery while in office in 2011.—Kyodo News

Cambodian opposition leader sentenced to five years in jail over Facebook post

PHNOM PENH — Cambodia's exiled opposition leader Sam Rainsy was sentenced to five years in prison in absentia on Tuesday for posting a fake government pledge to dissolve the Southeast Asian country's border with Viet Nam.

The sentence follows months of tension between Cambodia's two main political parties, the Cambodian People's Party of Prime Minister Hun Sen and the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP).

Hun Sen has been Cambodia's leader for three decades but his grip on power was shaken in a 2013 general election when the CNRP won 55 seats in the National Assembly, leaving the Cambodian People's Party with 68 seats in the 123-seat assembly.

Members of the opposition have complained of a crackdown by the government and its allies in a bid to intimidate critics before a general election in 2018.

The Phnom Penh Municipal Court found Sam Rainsy and two members of his social media team, Ung Chung Leang and Sathya Sambath, guilty of citing the false 1979 border treaty.

The fake treaty, which they posted on Facebook, purported to show Viet Nam and Cambodia agreeing to get rid of their mutual boundary.

Presiding Judge Leang Samnath sen-



Cambodian opposition leader Sam Rainsy delivers a speech to members of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) at a hotel in metro Manila, Philippines on 29 June. PHOTO: REUTERS

tenced Sam Rainsy to five years in prison and Ung Chung Leang and Sathya Sambath to three years, all in absentia.

"The court orders the arrests of Ung Chung Leang, Sathya Sambath and Sam Rainsy to serve these sentences," Judge Leang Samnath told the court.

Cambodia has fretted for centuries about its much bigger neighbours, Viet Nam to the east and Thailand to the northwest, encroaching on its territory. The issue remains emotive and many Cambodians are suspicious of both countries. Sam Rainsy has been living in France since 2015 to avoid arrest in a separate defamation case. He did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday but said on Twitter the case against him and the two others had been "fabricated" by a "kangaroo court".

The CNRP said it had no knowledge of the whereabouts of Ung Chung Leang and Sathya Sambath.—Reuters

23 dead in Pakistan after drinking homemade wine

ISLAMABAD — As many as 23 people have died and some others were in critical condition after drinking homemade wine on Christmas night in a suburb of Faisalabad in central Pakistan, police and hospital officials said on Tuesday.

Doctors at Allied Hospital in Faisalabad said that

60 people from Christian Colony in Toba Tek Singh suburb were hospitalised Monday morning in an unconscious state. They had been drinking home-made wine during the night. Three people died within hours and the toll has since risen to 23, while several others were in critical condition,

the doctors said. Local police have registered a case against unknown people for brewing alcohol and a senior officer has been designated to investigate the incident.

The manufacturing and sale of alcohol is prohibited in Pakistan, and only non-Muslims are eligible to receive a quota from local

breweries dating back to re-partition era. The breweries, one in Islamabad and another at Quetta in Balochistan, are also prohibited from increasing their production. The ban has led to a thriving black market and large-scale production of homemade wine and alcoholic drinks.—Kyodo News

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC MERGUI VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.12.2016 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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ASIATIC CLOUD VOY. NO (008)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ASIATIC CLOUD VOY. NO (008) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.12.2016 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 WAN HAI LINES PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.12.2016 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Pope pays tribute to Iraqi Christians persecuted by Islamic State

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis paid tribute on Monday to Middle East Christians who have clung to their faith during persecution by Islamist militants, saying there are more Christians martyrs now than in the Church's early days.

The pope spoke to thousands of people in St. Peter's Square for his holiday blessing on the feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

He mentioned the persecution of Christians in Iraq, many of whom were able to spend their first Christmas since 2013 in churches after towns and cities were retaken from Islamic State.

"This was an example of fidelity to the Gospel," he said. "Despite trials and dangers, they courageously show that they belong to Christ," he said.

"Today, we want to think of them and be close to them with our affection, our prayers and even our tears," the pope said.

Christians in northern regions of Iraq held by Islamic State were given an ultimatum:



Pope Francis blesses during his Angelus prayer in Saint Peter's square at the Vatican, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

pay a tax, convert to Islam, or die by the sword. Most of them fled to the autonomous Kurdish region to the east.

Leaders of various churches, including the Coptic Church in Egypt, whose members have been beheaded and churches bombed, have called the fact that Christians of all denomi-

nations were being killed in the Middle East an "ecumenism (unity) of blood."

"There are more Christian martyrs today than in the first centuries," said the pope, who has often denounced Islamic State and condemned the concept of killing in God's name.—Reuters

Obama says he would have outrun Trump, but Trump says, 'No way!'



US President Barack Obama waves as he leaves the podium after speaking to journalists during his last news conference of the year at the White House in Washington, US, on 16 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONOLULU — US President Barack Obama said in an interview broadcast on Monday that he would have won most Americans' support if he had been able to run against Donald Trump for a third term.

"No way!" Trump countered in a tweet, citing as liabilities US companies taking jobs overseas, the fight against Islamic State militants and Obama's signature healthcare law.

Barred by the US Constitution from seeking a third

four-year-term, the president told his former adviser David Axelrod in a podcast that Americans would have backed Obama's vision.

"I'm confident that if I had run again and articulated it, I think I could've mobilized a majority of the American people to rally behind it," Obama said, referring to his 2008 campaign message of hope and change. A wealthy businessman, the Republican Trump will assume his first public office

when he succeeds Obama on 20 January. He defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton on 8 November with a promise to clean up Washington.

In a tweet, Clinton spokesman Brian Fallon said Obama would have beaten Trump and Clinton would have won if not for an FBI statement shortly before the election disclosing new material on Clinton's email practices as secretary of state.

Clinton's aides have said FBI Director James Comey's announcement, which led to no charges, swung the election, a charge Trump's team has dismissed.

Obama said Clinton "performed wonderfully under really tough circumstances." He said she focused on Trump's flaws and could have argued more that the Democratic Party agenda helped working people.

Trump garnered more than 270 of the 538 state-by-state electoral votes to win the presidency. Clinton won 48.2 per cent of the popular vote compared with 46.1 per cent for Trump, according to the Associated Press.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Serbia arrests three after 77 migrants found hidden in vehicles

BELGRADE — Serbian authorities arrested three men on suspicion of people trafficking after 77 migrants were found hidden in cargo vehicles, the defence ministry said on Monday.

Serbia was a pinchpoint for migrant flows last year, when hundreds of thousands of people fleeing wars and poverty in the Middle East and Asia journeyed up through the Balkans to reach the European Union. That route was effectively closed off in March, but since then Serbian authorities estimate a further 110,000 migrants have passed through the country, many crossing its now sealed border with Hungary illegally.

On Monday members of a military and police task force detained two men in central Serbia attempting to smuggle 36 migrants from Afghanistan and Mali in the back of a large van, the ministry said. In a separate incident in the same region, 41 migrants were found in the cargo compartment of a truck with German registration plates after its Serbian driver was stopped.—Reuters

Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev says ready to host Syria peace talks in Astana

MOSCOW — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev said on Monday he was ready to host multilateral talks on the conflict in Syria in the Kazakh capital of Astana.

"Kazakhstan is ready to host all sides for talks in Astana," Nazarbayev said during a visit to St. Petersburg where he has been meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin said on Friday that Russia, Iran, Turkey and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad had all agreed the Kazakh capital should be the venue for new Syrian peace negotiations.

Putin also said last week the next step for Syria would be a nationwide ceasefire.—Reuters

Senior IS commander in Syria likely killed — monitor

BEIRUT — One of Islamic State's top commanders in Syria was probably killed in combat as the jihadists sought to stave off an advance by US-backed Syrian forces towards a strategic dam in northern Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Tuesday.

The commander known as Abu Jandal al-Kuwaiti was killed as Islamic State fighters tried to drive the Syrian Democratic Forces from the village of Jabar captured from the jihadists on Monday, Observatory Director Rami Abdulrahman said.

The Islamic State counter attack, launched overnight, failed. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including the powerful Kurdish YPG militia, have advanced to within 5 km (3 miles) of the dam, Abdulrahman said.—Reuters

Six Indonesians found dead after being locked in bathroom during robbery

JAKARTA — Police in the Indonesian capital found on Tuesday six people, including a nine-year-old child, dead from suffocation in a tiny bathroom where armed robbers had locked them the previous day. Petty crime is common in Jakarta, a teeming city of 10 million people, but violent crime including armed robbery is rare.

Up to four intruders broke into the house in an upmarket neighbourhood on Monday, Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono said. The robbers locked 11 people — including family members, maids and drivers — in the two metre by one metre (6.5 ft by 3.3 ft) bathroom and they were not found until early on Tuesday, Yuwono said. "They were carrying firearms and machetes," Yuwono said of the robbers, citing a witness account.—Reuters

Russia grounds all its TU-154 planes after Black Sea jet crash — Ifax

MOSCOW — Russia has grounded all Tupolev-154 planes until it understands why one of the ageing Soviet planes crashed into the Black Sea on Sunday, killing all 92 on board, the Interfax news agency cited an unnamed source as saying on Tuesday.

Russian news agencies cited the Defence Ministry earlier on Tuesday as saying that authorities had found one of the downed plane's flight recorders.—Reuters

Opinion

Write for us

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

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The need for balance and fine tuning

23-12-2016
Editorial from
Myanma Alinn

A country needs to impose taxes to carry out the plans of government. Revenues must be in proportion to the government spending. Only then will the government be able to implement the various public projects fully without interruption.

The proportion of GDP to the revenue collected is only 7.4 per cent. Countries which have been designated as least developed countries like Cambodia and Laos have a percentage way higher than Myanmar. Cambodia's tax to GDP ratio is 6 per cent, while that of Laos is 16.1 percent. These ratios for

Cambodia and Laos have been taken from 2014 statistics. We are presenting these figures here to underscore the need for Myanmar to step up the work of revenue collection and to broaden the revenue base as much as possible.

However, we may say that Myanmar tax imposition on a financial year basis has been growing significantly. In the 2011-2012 financial year, the amount of taxes and revenues collected was Ks. 2538 billion, while in 2015-2016 this figure rose to Ks. 4636 billion. Therefore, in order to keep up this momentum of growth to a de-

sired level, just as there is a need to work harder to educate the people on an extensive basis, there is also a need to work harder to make the tax collection process more effective and more extensive. On this matter, the collection of taxes and revenues effectively and on a more extensive basis is one side of the coin while there is also a need to fulfill the needs of the other side of the problem. We need to ensure that economic enterprises which are capable of paying taxes increase in number and strength. Only when we are successful in working for the establishment of strong

and vibrant economic enterprises, will we be able to collect more taxes and consequently the purchasing power of the citizens will increase. Only then will our nation really progress and develop.

A proposal has been put forth which states that while we are in the process of trying to collect more taxes, we should not create an adverse effect on the task of developing the investment climate. It also states that we should undertake this process in a balanced way. I wish to respectfully state that I welcome and support this proposal.

Returning the Gratitude to Alma Mater

Dr. Nyan Tun

THE person who knows, emphasizes and returns the gratitude of others either animate or inanimate is none other than the Buddha Himself and who pave the way for all either Buddhist or non-Buddhists alive to follow this norm to those who know the gratitude of others and He says '*Kataññūkatavedi puggalo dullabho lokasmim*' which means it is very rare to see the person in the world who knows the gratitude of others as well as who returns it. Buddhist philosophy and the teachings of the Buddha play the most important role in our Myanmar society for majority of the people are Buddhists. Every Buddhist knows and keeps in mind the word 'gratitude' little or much due to the guidance of our ancestors. The persons who inscribe the word 'gratitude' and the benefits of it in the heart of our people with the strenuous effort are successive respected Buddhist monks, the spiritual leaders who had led the country in education and social sectors and who laid down foundation in religion, culture, literature, tradition and custom highly and firmly as being civilized society since immemorial time. From Buddhist social and ethical point of view, dealing with the gratitude, there are five persons in the world who owned much more gratitude to all their fellows and whose gratitude cannot be returned fully. They are the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, the *Sangha*, the parents and the teachers. It is common scene in our community about 'paying respect ceremony' especially in education sector in every corner of the

country. This is invaluable and civilized Buddhist culture which has been exercising in our Myanmar society even today. I would like to say that knowing and returning the gratitude of others is Buddhists' inborn spirit.

I would like to focus on the alumnus of State *Pariyatti Sasana* University (Yangon) who return the gratitude to their Alma Mater. We learned that this is for the third time biannually conducted this function gathering in unity and earnestly at the University campus by performing several functions such as *Dhamma* talk, paper reading, sharing their experienced in their respective fields in their missions both at home and abroad, paying their respected to their Masters: Venerable monks and lay scholars, both serving and retired ones, and supporting financial and other facilities to the hostels where they stayed while studying at their Alma Mater.

On the eve of the function, the alumnus arranged evening *Dhamma* Talk for three days at the convocation hall. There are many popular *Dhamma* preachers (*Dhammakathika*) produced by the University and the well-known preachers who came to preach at the ceremony were Ven. Dr. *Nandamalabhivamsa*, Rector, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University; Ven. *Vicitta* (known as *Manapadaya* Sayadaw as well as Korean Sayadaw) and Ven. Dr. *Kovida* (Majjimagoneyee Sayadaw) respectively. Ven. *Vicitta* and Ven. Dr. *Kovida* are the products of the *Sasana* University (Yangon) who are renowned in Myanmar community as eloquent *Dhamma* preacher Sayadaws. Before the *Dhamma*

talk started, one programme called '*Dhamma* presentation' was conducted by the members of alumnus to the audiences. That function was really interested in and attracted to the audiences because it was sharing general knowledge experienced in the fields of mission both at home and abroad encountered by the presenters themselves.

Another function is paper reading or seminar which is the field of academic career and they presented the papers in respective fields that they are practically doing. Let me share you some of the papers they read out at the functions. One paper entitled 'Korean Buddhism and the ways and means of ordination ceremony' presented by Ven. Suvanna who is doing his mission in Korea. Another paper 'America and Myanmar Theravada Buddhism' read out by Ven. *Khemeinda* who is performing his career in U.S.A. The next one 'The situation of European religions and the prospect of Buddhism' presented by Ven. *Kusalasami* who is performing his mission in Germany. The next paper 'Missionary experienced at the hill region' by Ven. *Pannissara* who is serving at Chin State. Another paper is 'Let us produce our new generation by setting up monastic education' by Ven. *Kusala*. All papers are presented out of their daily life that they are conducting in those fields so the presenters shed light on the current situation of the environment.

The State *Pariyatti Sasana* Universities have been serving the welfare of the new generation monks and the people for three decades and within these three decades, the products of the Uni-

versities have been spreading around the world doing their missions in the fields they are standing: setting up learning centers, meditation centers; conducting *Dhamma* talk as preachers; devoting their lives as missionary monks in rural, remote and hill regions; establishing monastic education schools and social welfare of the needy people especially for underprivileged children who are unable to go to schools due to poverty as reformers. They are really fulfilling the blank for the requirement of the country in social, education and religion even in politic at home and abroad. They are really heroes for *Buddha Sasana* who are stepping into the footprint of their predecessors. Actually, Buddhist monks are the persons who have sacrificed their lives for the welfare and happiness of other fellows because they renounced everything they belonged to even their families by exercising the path stepped by the Buddha.

State *Pariyatti Sasana* University was opened in June, 1986 under the patronage of State *Sanghamahaya* Committee and the management of Central Administrated Body. By opening the two *Sasana* Universities; one is in Yangon, the commercial city and the other is in Mandalay, the last capital of Konbaung dynasty, it opened the new page for the future generation monks to jump into the modern world as reliable sources to impart the philosophy and the essence of Buddhism that lead every affairs for the people: harmony, prosperous, peace and stability for multi social, culture, education, economic, politic and interfaith around the world.

Gathering and paying respect

ceremony sponsored by alumnus '*Takkasilahitadhara*' by name was held at the gracious convocation hall in 22nd December, 2016. Most of old senior and junior students living at home and abroad actively and earnestly participated the function. At the event, Venerable *Mahatheras*, members of State *Sanghamahanayaka* Committee, retired and in service senior respected rector, pro-rectors, professors, heads of departments Venerable Sirs and lay scholars attended. This grand function creates the moment of emotional feeling for me to write down this article to return the gratitude, as one of the products of our Alma Mata.

At the function, Ven. *Tilokabhivamsa*, *Aggamahapandita*, In-Charge of Insein Ywama learning Center, Pro-Rector (Retired), member of State *Sanghamahanayaka* Committee (Retired) Patron of Patriotic Association of Myanmar (known as *Mabhatha*) gave admonition to his disciples by relating the historical background that the two main benefactors to whom we must return the gratitude: one who had a dream to upgrade the monastic education into modern world and the other one who carried out the dream do come true so the two esteemed persons played the most important role to open the door to the modern world for the young generation of Myanmar monks by giving them the excellent in the field of education, social and moral as a norm for Theravada Buddhism. Now, the glory of State *Pariyatti Sasana* Universities spreads and well known by the international community.

To be continued

Parade for graduation ceremony of women military cadets intake 3 of Defense Services Academy held



Parade for graduation ceremony of women military cadets Intake 3 of Defense Services Academy.

PHOTO: MNA

SENIOR GENERAL Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, addressed the graduation ceremony for women military cadets intake 3 of the Defence Services Academy held at the parade grounds of the academy in Yangon yesterday morning.

During the ceremony, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services received the salute from the corps of cadets and inspected the companies. Following this, cadet companies paid tribute with a slow-march and quick-march.

After the ceremony, the

Senior General gave words of congratulations to award-winning cadets and their parents — the best cadet award winner was cadet graduate Wut Yi Aung and the best sharpshooter award winner was cadet graduate Eindra Aung Kyaw.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Tourists interested in Kalaw-Inle trekking

TOURISTS and local travellers interested in Kalaw-Inle trekking, which affords the chance of observing the lifestyles of the local people and seeing the natural scenic beauty of the region, according to a tour guide.

“Previously, the local

people were not interested in Kalaw-Inle trekking. The trekking tours first became popular among the tourists only in 2014. We have already offered package tours to 20 groups for Kalaw-Inle trekking in 2016. We found that more local people are

now interested in Kalaw-Inle trekking,” said Ko Hsan Lin, a tour guide.

Palaung, Danu, Taung Yoe and Pa-O ethnics live near Kalaw town. Tourists can go on an overnight trip to that region or stay for longer periods. — 200

Union Attorney-General's Office participates in Independence Day sports competitions



ABOUT 300 staff members of the Union Attorney-General's Office led by Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo took part in walking exercises in Nay Pyi Taw at dawn

yesterday. Afterwards, sport competitions were held and winners were presented with prizes.

U Win Myint, the deputy union attorney-general and officials

also participated in the sport competitions.

Staff were served with breakfast and lunch at the event.—*Myanmar News Agency*

National objectives for the 69th anniversary Independence Day, 2017

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

Fishing period discussed

FISHING entrepreneurs yesterday demanded to set closed fishing season from April to June next year at Closed Season and Closed area Workshop in Yangon.

This year, closed season was set from June to August and only 40% of 3,030 fishing vessels were allowed fishing.

The fishing entrepreneurs at the workshop also demanded the fishery department to still allow not less than 40% of fishing vessels in the coming year.

Maung Maung Soe, Chairman of Myanmar Sea Fishing Association has urged the au-

thorities to set the closed season to start from April as April is full of holidays.

“As we used to face labor issue in the closed season, we demand 40 % or more of fishing vessels to be allowed fishing,” he said.

The workshop also focused on limited fishing period which the government and the entrepreneurs set.

While the entrepreneurs refuse reconsidering the period, it needs reconsideration due to the difficulties fishermen face at sea, Deputy Director of Fishery Department said.—*GNLM*



Fishing boats are seen in Sittway, Rakhine State. PHOTO: FILE/GNLM

More Myanmar workers heading to Japan

THE number of Myanmar workers going to Japan has dramatically increased because of the country's increasingly high demand for labourers, it is learnt from an overseas employment agency.

“There were 116 workers who went to Japan in August, 186 workers in September, 297 people in October and 328 people in November. On average, there are between 300 and 400 Myanmar workers per month going to Japan,” said U Kyaw

Htin Kyaw, general secretary of the Association of Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies.

Most of the Myanmar workers are working in the construction, garment, manufacturing and agriculture sectors in Japan, it is learnt from an overseas worker in Japan.

Myanmar workers can choose the jobs they want but have to pay a US\$2,800 commission to local agencies.— 200

Fresh advance in east Mosul to begin within days — US commander

EAST OF MOSUL, (Iraq) — Iraqi forces will resume their push against Islamic State inside Mosul in the coming days, a US battlefield commander said, in a new phase of the two-month-old operation that will see American troops deployed closer to the front line in the city.

The battle for Mosul, involving 100,000 Iraqi troops, members of the Kurdish security forces and Shi'ite militiamen, is the biggest ground operation in Iraq since the US-led invasion of 2003. The upcoming phase appears likely to give American troops their biggest combat role since they fulfilled President Barack Obama's pledge to withdraw from Iraq in 2011.

Elite Iraqi soldiers have retaken a quarter of Mosul, the jihadists' last major stronghold in Iraq, but their advance has been slow and punishing. They entered a planned "operational refit" this month, the first significant pause of the campaign.

A heavily armoured unit of several thousand federal police was redeployed from the southern outskirts two weeks ago to reinforce the eastern front after army units advised by the Americans suffered heavy losses in an Islamic State counter-attack.

US advisers, part of an international coalition that has conducted thousands of air strikes and trained tens of thousands of Iraqi ground troops, will work directly with those forces and an elite Interior Ministry strike force.

"Right now we're staging really for the next phase of the attack as we start the penetration into the interior of east Mosul," Lieutenant Colonel Stuart James, commander of a combat arms battalion assisting Iraqi security forces on the southeastern front, said in a Reuters interview late on Sunday.

"So right now, positioning forces and positioning men and equipment into the interior of east



US soldiers stand near military vehicles at an army base in Karamless town, east of Mosul, Iraq, on 25 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Mosul... it's going to happen in the next several days."

That will put US troops inside of Mosul proper and at greater risk, though James said the danger level was still characterized as "moderate". Three US servicemen have been killed in northern Iraq in the past 15 months. James, speaking from an austere outpost east of Mosul where several hundred US troops are stationed, said the pace of the upcoming phase on the eastern side would depend on resistance from Islamic State, also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh.

"If we achieve great success on the first day and we gain momentum, then it may go very quickly. If Daesh fights very hard the first day and we run into a roadblock and we have to go back and go OK that was not the correct point of penetration, it may take longer," he said.

Further integration with the

Iraqi troops — to what commanders described as an unprecedented level for conventional US forces — will help synchronize surveillance, air support and force movement, according to James.

"It increases our situational understanding. The man on the ground knows what's going on best," he said. "It's just better when they're on the ground talking to each other and saying, 'Hey, have you looked at that area over there? That's decisive terrain. Have you thought about putting forces there?'"

Mosul, the largest city held by Islamic State anywhere across its once vast territorial holdings in Iraq and neighbouring Syria, has been held by the group since its fighters drove the US-trained army out in June 2014.

Its fall would probably end Islamic State's ambition to rule over millions of people in a self-

styled caliphate, but the fighters could still mount a traditional insurgency in Iraq, and plot or inspire attacks on the West.

A multi-ethnic city where up to 1.5 million people of a pre-war population of around 2 million are still thought to be living, Mosul is divided roughly in half by the Tigris River. The western section, which Iraqi forces have yet to penetrate, has built-up markets and ancient narrow alleyways which will complicate future advances.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi had said he would win Mosul back by the end of this year, a deadline now certain to be missed. His commanders say their advance was held up by the need to protect civilians, fewer of whom fled than initially expected.

Inclement weather has repeatedly delayed ground advances which rely heavily on aerial surveillance and air strikes.—Reuters

Russia calls US move to supply Syria rebels weapons a hostile act

MOSCOW — Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday it viewed a US decision to ease restrictions on weapons supplies to Syrian rebels as a "hostile act" which threatened the safety of Russian warplanes and military personnel, the RIA news agency reported.

RIA quoted the ministry as saying the administration of Barack Obama was attempting to complicate the situation in the world before Donald Trump took over the White House in January. Obama lifted some restrictions on arms deliveries to Syrian rebels earlier this month.

The Kremlin, whose air force is supporting the government of President Bashar al-Assad, said the move was risky and that weapons could end up in the hands of "terrorists".—Reuters

Video shows fleeing Berlin truck attack suspect in Lyon: judicial source

PARIS — The Tunisian suspect behind the truck attack that killed 12 people in a Berlin Christmas market last week appears to have passed through Lyon in France as he fled to Italy, a French judicial source said on Monday.

Video surveillance footage showed Anis Amri at the Lyon-Part-Dieu train station on Thursday, and officials believe it was at the station that he bought a ticket for Chambéry, the source said, between Lyon and the Italian border.

Amri was shot dead near Milan in Italy in the early hours of Friday after he pulled a gun on police who had asked for his identification papers.—Reuters

Syrian army escalates campaign to capture Damascus water supply

AMMAN — The Syrian army escalated aerial bombing of a rebel-held valley northwest of Damascus in an offensive begun last week to recapture the strategic area where a major spring provides most of the capital's water supplies, rebels and residents said on Tuesday.

They said the army shelled and bombarded several towns in Wadi Barada valley about 18 km (11 miles) northwest of the capital in a major offensive launched since Friday. The roads leading to the towns in the valley and the mountain cliffs surrounding the area are under the control of elite Republic Guards and the Lebanese Shi'ite Hezbollah group, they said.

Residents said fighting on Monday focused on Baseimeh village at the edge of the valley where the army and its allies are pushing to advance deeper in an enclave where 10 villages are inhabited by an estimated 100,000 people.

The rebels said the army was emboldened by gaining full control of Aleppo city and was seeking to force them to either leave or face all out war.

"They are seeking to push us into a surrender deal to and we will not hand over our land," said Abu al Baraa, a commander in Ahrar al Sham, a rebel group present in the area.

Through a series of so-called settlement agreements and army

offensives, the Syrian government, backed by Russian air power and Iran-backed militias, has been steadily suppressing armed opposition around the capital.

Alongside the main spring in Wadi Barada, the area lies on the road from Damascus to the Lebanese border that is used as a supply line for the powerful Iranian-backed Hezbollah group which is heavily involved in fighting alongside Syrian President Bashar al Assad's army.

A resident and rebels said the aerial bombing has put out of commission the main Ein al Fija spring's water pumping station where a underground pipeline normally provides around 65 per cent

of the water to the capital's neighbourhoods.

A picture taken by a rebel and seen by Reuters showed the pumping station's ceiling has collapsed. Several videos uploaded on social media show damage and fires with plumes of smoke near the pumping station. Others show damage to houses.

Rebels and residents said the bombing has also killed 14 civilians and hit a medical clinic and civil defense unit in the area that has been besieged with limited access for food and fuel.

The army said it was targeting "terrorists."

The Syrian army has blamed rebels for polluting the springs with

diesel fuel in a move the water authorities said had forced them to cut supplies coming into the capital and resort to reserves to temporarily cover the shortfall.

The rebels have allowed the government's water authority engineers to maintain and operate the station and supply the capital since they took control of the area in 2012. The rebels draw from both Islamist and Free Syrian Army factions. Fighters from the area have cut water supplies several times in the past as a pressure card to prevent the army from overrunning the area.

But they deny poisoning the water as they say it would harm them before anyone else.—Reuters

Germany culling some 55,000 poultry as bird flu found on farms

HAMBURG — The culling of about 55,000 turkeys, chickens and ducks is underway after bird flu of the highly contagious H5N8 strain was found on farms in a major poultry production region in the north German state of Lower Saxony, authorities said on Tuesday.

Poultry culling on the three farms where H5N8 was found and three others which had contact with them was started over the Christmas weekend and should be completed on Tuesday, the Lower Saxony agriculture ministry said in a statement.

A 72 hour standstill order has been issued banning the sale and transport of poultry from the latest area involved, the ministry said.

The contagious H5N8 strain has been found in more than 500 wild birds in Germany in recent weeks. Outbreaks on farms have been rare after the government introduced tough sanitary rules to prevent infection by wild birds, including orders to keep poultry indoors in high-risk regions.



Work begins at a poultry farm in Kawaminami, Miyazaki Prefecture, southwestern Japan to bury chickens culled after a highly virulent strain of bird flu was detected on 20 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Several European countries and Israel have found cases of H5N8 bird flu in the past few weeks and some ordered poultry flocks be kept indoors to prevent the disease spreading. France

has widened high-risk restrictions to the entire country after the detection of several cases of the H5N8 strain.

South Korea has mobilized its armed forces to help in its

biggest-ever poultry cull as the spread of a highly contagious strain bird flu continued, with another 1.6 million birds be destroyed in affected areas.—*Reuters*

Indian state orders poultry cull after bird flu outbreak

BHUBANESWAR, (India) — An eastern Indian state ordered the cull of more than 2,500 chickens and other poultry after four dead crows and three dead poultry tested positive for the highly pathogenic H5N1 virus, officials said on Tuesday.

The bird flu virus was confirmed at Keranga village, about 35 km (22 miles) from Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha state, veterinary officials said, days after dozens of crows and chickens were found dead. More than 30,000 birds were culled in a similar outbreak in the region in 2012.

“We have issued an advisory to follow immediate measures to complete culling operations, surveillance and sanitization in the infected area,” Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the state’s Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Department Bishnupada Sethi told Reuters. “Over 2,500 poultry birds are being culled within one kilometer of the epicenter for control and containment of bird flu. It’s the first time in the current season that this type of bird flu was detected in the state and in the same area.”—*Reuters*

New tag to help study whale behavior, marine environment

SAN FRANCISCO — A new type of tag, known as “Advanced Dive Behavior,” or ADB, can record data every second for weeks at a time to provide a view of whale behavior, biology and travels deep beneath the sea, over thousands of kilometers and their interaction with the prey.

In a study published in the journal *Ecology and Evolution*, researchers with Oregon State University (OSU) outlined the continued evolution and improvements made in the ADB technology from 2007-15, in which it was used on sperm, blue and fin whales.

Findings from data collected by the tag showed, among others, sperm whales diving all the way to the sea floor, more than 1,000 meters deep, and being submerged for up to 75 minutes; and baleen whales lunging after their food.

“By using this technology on three different species, we’ve seen the full range of behavior that is specific to each species,” said Daniel Palacios, co-author on the study. “Sperm whales, for instance, really like to dive deep, staying down a long time and appearing to forage along the sea-floor at times. During summer the baleen whales will feed as much as possible in one area, and then they move on, probably after the prey density gets too low.”

The tag, according to the researchers, expands by several



This file photo taken on 3 March 2015 shows a grey whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) emerging from the waters of the Ojo de Liebre Lagoon, Baja California Sur State, Mexico. PHOTO: XINHUA

orders of magnitude the observations that can be made of whale feeding and behavior, and it is showing what whales do while underwater; when, how and where they feed; how they might be affected by passing ships or other noises; and what types of water temperatures they prefer.

Unlike earlier technology that could not return data from the deep sea for much longer than a day, ADB tags are designed to acquire data constantly, for up to seven weeks at a time, before they detach from the whale, float to the surface and are retrieved in the open sea to download data. The retrieval has worked well as the tags would transmit global positioning

system (GPS) locations and flash light-emitting diode (LED) lights once they have released.

“With this system we can acquire much more data at a lower cost, with far less commitment of time by ships and personnel,” Ladd Irvine, the corresponding author on the study, was quoted as saying in a news release from OSU. “This tag type yields amazing results. It’s going to significantly expand what we can accomplish, learning both about whale ecology and the ocean itself.”

The tag can sense water depth, whale movement and body orientation, water temperature and light levels.—*Xinhua*

World’s smallest diamonds used to make wires three atoms wide

BOSTON — Scientists have used the smallest possible bits of diamonds to assemble electrical wires just three atoms wide, an advance that could pave the way for fabrics that generate electricity.

By grabbing various types of atoms and putting them together LEGO-style, the new technique could potentially be used to build tiny wires for a wide range of applications, including optoelectronic devices that employ both electricity and light and superconducting materials that conduct electricity without any loss.

“What we have shown here is that we can make tiny, conductive wires of the smallest possible size that essentially assemble themselves,” said Hao Yan, post-doctoral researcher at Stanford University in the US.

“The process is a simple, one-pot synthesis. You dump the ingredients together and you can get results in half an hour. It’s almost as if the diamondoids know where they want to go,” said Yan.

This animation shows molecular building blocks joining the tip of a growing nanowire.

Each block consists of a diamondoid — the smallest bit of diamond — attached to sulphur and copper atoms.

Like LEGO blocks, they

only fit together in certain ways that are determined by their size and shape.

The copper and sulphur atoms form a conductive wire in the middle, and the diamondoids form an insulating outer shell.

Although there are other ways to get materials to self-assemble, this is the first one shown to make a nanowire with a solid, crystalline core that has good electronic properties, said Nicholas Melosh, from the US Department of Energy’s SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory.

The needle-like wires have a semiconducting core — a combination of copper and sulphur known as a chalcogenide — surrounded by the attached diamondoids, which form an insulating shell.

Their size is important because a material that exists in just one or two dimensions — as atomic-scale dots, wires or sheets — can have very different, extraordinary properties compared to the same material made in bulk, Melosh said.

The new method allows researchers to assemble those materials with atom-by-atom precision and control.

The diamondoids they used as assembly tools are tiny, interlocking cages of carbon and hydrogen.—*PTI*

India's Jet Airways plane skids off Goa runway, 12 hurt

MUMBAI — A Jet Airways Boeing 737 aircraft with 161 people on board veered off an airport runway in Goa shortly before take off just before day-break on Tuesday, crossing a field before spinning into a ditch on the side of a service road.

A dozen people suffered injuries as the 154 passengers and seven crew on the Mumbai bound flight were evacuated, Jet said in a statement.

"The flight 9W 2374 from Goa-Mumbai skidded off the runway at Dabolim airport this morning due to a technical glitch while aligning for takeoff," the statement said.

December is the busiest month for Dabolim airport, outside state capital Panjim, as holidaymakers flock to Goa's palm fringed beaches and exotic tourist markets during the winter season.

Television images showed injured lying on stretchers in darkness on the service road, with fire engines parked near the stricken plane, which appeared to have lost its front undercarriage, and damaged a wing as it rested on its belly and engine casings.



A passenger is stretchered after a Jet Airways aircraft skidded off the runway before takeoff at an airport in Goa, on 27 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Some passengers said they saw smoke in the cabin as the aircraft began taxiing on the runway. One of the injured described how the accident unfolded.

"I fractured my leg," said Dinesh Kumar, a passenger on Times Now TV channel. "The moment the plane started running on the runway, it slipped into the nearby field and there was smoke inside the flight."

A Jet Airways spokeswoman said the carrier was looking into how the incident occurred.

dent occurred.

"It needs time for proper investigation to go on and we are cooperating with the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation)," she said.

The airline is India's second largest passenger carrier.

In a separate incident in New Delhi airport, a Spicejet airplane was preparing to take off at the same time as a flight run by Indigo had landed and was headed to the runway's taxiway, but the

pilots avoided a collision and no-one was injured, the two companies said in separate statements.

Indigo and Spicejet said they were working with authorities investigating the incident.

Air travel is surging in India, one of the world's fastest growing economies. Passenger numbers on domestic flights jumped 21 per cent in 2015 to more than 80 million. The government foresees that number growing to 300 million by 2022.—Reuters

China targets 'toilet revolution', rustbelt regions in plan to boost tourism

BEIJING — China said it will boost investment in tourism, with plans to develop rustbelt regions and upgrade public toilets high on its to-do list as it looks to lift the sector's contribution to economic growth.

Announcing a new plan for the sector, China said it aims to invest 2 trillion yuan (\$290 billion) in tourism between 2016 and 2020 which would translate to annual growth of more than 14 per cent in direct investment in the industry.

Old industrial and resource-dependent cities, particularly in the north of the country, will be encouraged to develop tourism and the government has promised to set up "demonstration tourist bases" in those areas. Several depleted coal cities have already made efforts to turn defunct mines into parks.

The plan also promised a "toilet revolution", prompted by wide-spread complaints about toilet hygiene levels at China's tourist spots and said the country would aim to build or renovate as many as

100,000 public toilets over the period.

The investment will help China's emerging tourism industry account for 12 per cent of annual economic growth by 2020, up from 10.8 per cent last year, the country's cabinet said.

The total sum of tourism services purchased by the country is set to reach 7 trillion yuan (\$1 trillion) by 2020, equivalent to more than an 11 per cent increase in tourism revenue per year, the State Council said.

The government predicted domestic travellers would take 6.4 billion trips annually by 2020, up from 4 billion in 2015, while the number of trips to China by overseas travellers is set to rise to 150 million, from 134 million last year.

China's state planner said this month that tourism investment targets will be met by attracting more private investment into the industry. China has been keen to develop and expand services industries to offset the impact of persistently weak global demand for its exports.—Reuters

Russia finds first black box from Black Sea crash jet

MOSCOW — Russia has found the first flight recorder from a military plane that crashed into the Black Sea killing all 92 on board, the Defence Ministry said on Tuesday, amid unconfirmed reports that authorities had grounded all air-

craft of the same type.

The recorder, one of several reported to be on board, contains information that could help investigators identify the cause of Sunday's crash, which killed dozens of Red Army Choir singers and dancers

en route to Syria to entertain Russian troops in the run-up to the New Year.

Investigators have so far said that pilot error or a technical fault, rather than terrorism, are most likely to have caused the Defence Ministry Tupolev-154 to

crash into the sea.

The first black box, which was founded by a remote-controlled underwater vehicle at a depth of around 55ft (17 meters) and 1 mile (1,600 meters) from the resort of Sochi, will be sent to a Defence

Ministry facility in Moscow for analysis.

"During the night during the (search operation) ... a further five fragments of the plane were found," the ministry said in a statement. They included pieces of fuselage and engine

fragments. The Interfax news agency cited an unnamed source as saying Russia had grounded all TU-154 planes until the cause of Sunday's crash became clear. There was no official confirmation of that.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV CAPE FLORES VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.12.2016 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.

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MALACCA STAR VOY. NO ()

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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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)

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Philippines seizes \$120 million worth of 'shabu' in record drugs haul

MANILA — Philippine authorities have seized about 6 billion pesos (\$120 million) worth of methamphetamines in a series of anti-narcotics operations this month that have yielded the biggest haul in the country's history, the justice minister said on Tuesday.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) conducted the operations, including one on Monday in San Juan City in the capital Manila where drums of chemicals used to produce methamphetamines, or "shabu" as it is known, were seized.

That followed a raid on Friday in a quiet neighbourhood in the same city, when six people were arrested and 560 kg (1,200 lb) of suspected methamphetamines was found, worth an estimated \$67 million.

"It is not only the biggest haul this year, but the biggest so far in history," Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre said in

a news conference.

The seizures will be a boost for President Rodrigo Duterte, who is facing allegations of widespread human rights violations in a bloody war on drugs dominated by killings of drug users and pushers, with few known arrests of major drug lords. Duterte has expressed his frustration at the failure of anti-money laundering authorities to chase the trail of drug money, accusing them of helping to fuel corruption and threatening to charge them with crimes. Agents of the NBI said their latest operation involved an apartment rented by a Chinese national, who was not there when the raid took place.

More than 6,000 people have been killed in the crackdown since Duterte took office in July, roughly a third in police operations. The other deaths are classified as under investigation, many believed to be the work of vigilantes.—Reuters

Venezuela leader's foes say no more talks without concessions

CARACAS — Venezuela's opposition on Monday ruled out returning to Vatican-led talks with President Nicolas Maduro's government unless it makes major concessions amid a crushing economic crisis and bitter political standoff.

The opposition Democratic Unity coalition blames Maduro for the OPEC nation's shrinking and dysfunctional economy and wants to bring forward the next presidential vote, due in late 2018.

However Maduro, 54, the self-declared "son" of late socialist leader Hugo Chavez, accuses the opposition of seeking a coup and sabotaging the economy to undermine him.

A Papal envoy, South American bloc Unasur and former heads of government from Spain, Panama and the Dominican Republic brought the feuding sides together at the end of October.

But the opposition walked out earlier this



Jesus Torrealba, secretary of Venezuela's coalition of opposition parties (MUD), holds a letter from Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin as he talks to the media during a news conference in Caracas, Venezuela, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

month, saying officials were reneging on accords to allow humanitarian aid, reform the national election board, free jailed activists and restore the National Assembly's powers.

"If these demands ... have not been satisfied by 13 January, obviously there will be no conditions to re-establish dialogue," said coalition head Jesus Torrealba, referring to the next potential date for talks mooted by mediators.

"They are mocking the Venezuelan people and the international community," he told reporters.

Maduro, whose popularity has hit its lowest level of under 20 per cent, according to pollster Datanalysis, said his team would be ready for 13 January talks come what may.

"I want to affirm to Pope Francis ... my commitment to dialogue, peace and the word of God," he told a radio show. "If not

talking means Torrealba is going to take up arms and call for an intervention in Venezuela, he will never achieve it."

Opposition leaders say the coalition needs a re-launch in the New Year after the dialogue stalled momentum from large street protests and a symbolic trial of Maduro in the Assembly.

The president has threatened that the opposition-led legislature may not exist much longer. The government-leaning Supreme Court has ruled it is in "contempt" of the law.

Hardline opposition leaders are pushing for a civil disobedience campaign, but moderates believe that could lead to more violence and play into the government's hands by allowing Maduro to depict them as irresponsible troublemakers.

Opposition protests in 2014 led to 43 deaths and marches this year have resulted in clashes with security forces.—Reuters

Sincere Apologies

Eleven Media Group and Eleven Media Group CEO featured the opinion article titled "A year after the polls" published by the Daily Eleven newspaper at the news agencies, members of ANN (Asian News Network), in the Daily Eleven and posted it on the Facebook page.

Eleven Media Group only sent the article for the column on global affairs alternatively written by members of ANN formed with 22 media from 21 Asian countries. However, it is deeply regrettable that the concerned editorial group of Singapore-run The Straits Time, also a member of ANN, published the article "Myanmar: a year after the Nov 8 polls" together with a photo of State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which is likely to cause misinterpretation.

It is also regrettable that some points mentioned in the editorial were wrong and groundless accusations regarding the Yangon Region chief minister and the Yangon Region government.

The CEO and those responsible from Eleven Media Group would like to express their sincere apologies to the Yangon Region chief minister and the government for damage caused by the article written based on inaccurate and groundless information. We make a solemn promise that we would not do such an act next time.

Eleven Media Group

Taylor Swift surprises World War II veteran



PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — Singer Taylor Swift paid a surprise visit to a 96-year-old World War II veteran's Missouri home.

A day after Christmas, the “Blank Space” hit-maker and her parents decided to visit Cyrus Porter's home, reported E! online. The singer delivered a surprise performance of “Shake It Off” and met with close to 60 relatives for more than an hour.

“My Popo was ecstatic! He was grinning from ear to ear and even had tears in his eyes. The first thing he said to her was ‘How did you get here?’ He loved every moment. He told her how he was proud of his family, his country and Taylor Swift!” family member Caroline Fowler said. The surprise also comes at a special time for Cyrus who recently lost one of his daughters.

“It was the best day ever and our family is thankful for this!. It meant so much for the family to see him so happy!” Caroline added.

Family member Robert Frye posted on Twitter, “It’s a Christmas Miracle!!! Thank you @taylorswift13. My grandpa was so excited! Won’t be able to get the smile off my grandpa’s face for months.”

Cyrus had made headlines for being the oldest “Swiftie”. He had said that he’s been to multiple Swift concerts, using his love for the 27-year-old singer to bring him closer to 20+ grandchildren.

“I’ve been to two concerts. Memphis and St Louis. Look what she does...She puts on a show no one else puts on. I just enjoyed going to see ‘em and her. I would as soon go see her right now as anybody!” he had said.—PTI



Members of the band Pearl Jam (L-R), Stone Gossard, Mike McCready, Matt Cameron, Eddie Vedder, and Jeff Ament of the film “Pearl Jam Twenty” pose during the 36th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

Eddie Vedder donates USD 10,000 to family after Christmas ad

LOS ANGELES — Pearl Jam's frontman Eddie Vedder donated USD 10,000 to a family in need after a Maryland mother Tyshika Britten wrote a plea on Craigslist, asking for help to give her six kids an enjoyable holiday season.

After the families story went viral, they received a trove of gifts from various donors and a cheque from Vedder, reported Entertainment Weekly.

“I was just so moved by the story and what this mother did for her children. I thought those kids must be so proud of their mother for reaching out. That

takes a lot of courage.

“There were years (in his childhood that) there were toys from Santa, but they were used and they came from garage sales and they didn’t always work,” Vedder said.

In addition to her Craigslist ad, Britten created a GoFundMe page seeking a USD 6,000; the campaign has earned over USD 18,000 as of this posting. After Britten's ad, many UPS trucks came by the house and dropped off packages sent by benevolent strangers. The kids received new electronics, Legos, winter clothes, and more.—PTI

Britney Spears victim of Twitter hack, death hoax

LOS ANGELES — Sony Music Global's Twitter account was hacked and posted fake tweets about death of pop star Britney Spears.

The first two messages were posted early Monday on the hacked Twitter page.

“RIP @britneyspears,” the first tweet read. It was followed by a tearful emoji and hashtag “#RIPBritney 1981-2016.”

The second tweet, seven minutes later, was, “Britney spears is dead by accident! We will tell you more soon #RIPBritney.”

Soon after the tweets Spears' manager Adam Leber told CNN “Britney is fine and well. There have been a few Internet clowns over the years who have made similar claims about her death, but never from the official Sony Music Twitter account.”

“I assume their account has been hacked. I haven't spoken to anyone... As of yet but I am certain their account was hacked,” he added.

Sony Music issued a statement mid Monday that read, “Sony Music Entertainment's Twitter account was compromised. This has been rectified. Sony Music apologizes to Britney Spears and her fans for any confusion.—PTI



Actor Ryan Gosling. PHOTO: REUTERS

I was overwhelmed by ‘Blade Runner 2049’ sets, Ryan Gosling

LOS ANGELES — Actor Ryan Gosling says he was overwhelmed by the incredible set of his upcoming film “Blade Runner 2049”.

Praising the director of the film, Denis Villeneuve, Gosling said he has all the qualities required in a great filmmaker, reported Entertainment Weekly.

“If you made a list of all the characteristics you hoped for in a director and sent it to Santa Claus, there'd be a Denis Villeneuve under your tree Christmas morning. Maybe a little drunk on eggnog, but he'd be there!” Gosling said.

Production on the sequel to the 1982 classic began last sum-

mer in Budapest on the large-scale practical sets with an intention to minimise the amount of green-screen CGI work.

“It's really incredible. I was so overwhelmed by the scale of them and how specific and, although, beautiful they are,” he said. The 36-year-old actor also complemented the cinematographer Roger Deakins.

“Roger is a master. If there's a Mount Rushmore of DPs, he'd be right there in the middle. He goes about his work very modestly and quietly, but you learn so much from just looking. You realize that once you are in one of his shots, half your job is already done.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

30 kg gold jewellery stolen from branch of gold loan company

MUMBAI — Gold jewel- lery weighing 30 kg was stolen from the office of a gold loan company at Ul- hasnagar in Thane district, police said on Tuesday.

“We suspect the in- cident might have taken place last night. A security guard, who is missing, may be involved in it. Unidenti- fied thieves made a hole in wall of the office adjacent

to water tap and staircase”, a senior police official said.

The incident came to light when the office was opened this morning, po- lice said.

Prima facie, thieves entered the office through the hole, and used gas cut- ters to open the lockers where the gold ornaments were kept. They had also tampered with the CCTV

surveillance system of the office, the police officer said, adding, around 12 boxes of gold jewellery were left untouched.

The incident was re- ported by the company’s staff to Vitthalwadi Police Station. The crime branch of Thane Police has started parallel investigation in the case, the official said.

“Police have dis-

patched four teams to Jharkhand and Nepal in search of the security guard. A case has been reg- istered against unidentified persons,” he said.

Police said similar kind of thefts occurred earlier at Bhiwandi and Ambarnath in the district and the modus operandi in those incidents are also be- ing probed.—PTI

Community mediators boost social harmony in Nepal’s villages



Community mediators, trained by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, congregate in the mediation room in Jhangajholi Ratmati village in Sindhuli district, Nepal, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Buddhism statue in Hainan attracts thousands of visitors



Aerial photo taken on 25 December 2016 shows the 108-metre-tall Buddhism statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, or Guanyin, at Nanshan resort in Sanya, south China’s Hainan Province. About 15,000 tourists visited the statue every- day since 1 December. PHOTO: XINHUA

SITALPATI, (Nepal) — A pig that wandered off its sty and feasted on food grains in the neigh- bourhood resulted in four years of enmity between two neighbours in Sital- pati, an impoverished vil- lage in Sindhuli district, about a 100-kilometre drive east of Kathmandu.

A year ago, com- munity mediator Benuka Thapa, 60, stepped in.

Using skills she learned at a training camp organised by Japan In- ternational Cooperation Agency’s community me- diation project, she and two other local mediators listened to the disputants, both women in their late 40s.

“We resolved the problem in a day,” said Uddab Raj Giri, a VDC official who mediated the dispute. “The husband no longer drinks or gambles or beats up his wife.”

While mediation to resolve local disputes isn’t a new concept in Nepal, the traditional local bod- ies called Panchayat prac- ticed a zero-sum method that almost always left the punished side embittered and vengeful. Panchayat meetings to resolve dis- putes were invariably chaired by a male elder, whose decision was final. In such setups, nepotism was rife.

Discussions were held to ascertain the quan- tity of food grains that the pig possibly gobbled up and the amount that its owner should offer in compensation.

“Eventually, the oth- er party to the dispute agreed that it was unlikely the pig consumed a large amount of her food grains. She forfeited her claim for compensation after the pig’s owner agreed to confine her pig to the sty to prevent it from wan- dering off again,” Thapa said. The neighbours have been friends ever since.

“What we are prac- ticing is different,” said Nirmala Kumari Shrest- ha, 42, a trained commu- nity mediator residing in Jhangajholi Ratmati vil- lage. “The resolution we reach at is acceptable to both disputants. There is no winner or loser,” she added.

In nearby Jhanga- jholi Ratmati village, a 62-year-old woman suf- fered violence from her 67-year-old husband, a retired postman and a reg- ular drinker and gambler, for years. Tired of daily abuse, she was about to seek police help when locals suggested she try community mediation.

To help Nepal repair the social fabric ravaged by a 10-year Maoist in- surgency that ended in 2006, aid groups started training community me- diators from as early as 2001. Although a rela- tively late entrant to the scene, JICA’s Project for Strengthening Commu- nity Mediation Capacity for Peaceful and Harmo- nious Society that was launched in 2010 stands out because it convinced the government to incor- porate community me- diation as an essential service to be delivered by government. “From the very beginning, we implemented the project in coordination with the Ministry of Federal Af- fairs and Local Develop- ment,” said Dilli Poudel, the project’s monitoring and evaluation officer.— Kyodo News

China tourism revenue to reach 1 trillion USD in 2020

BEIJING — China plans to raise tourism revenue to 7 trillion yuan (about 1 tril- lion US dollars) by 2020, the Chinese government has said.

A State Council five- year tourism plan (2016- 2020) says China will strive to develop tourism into a major driver for eco- nomic transformation and upgrades.

The sector made more than 4 trillion yuan last year.

By 2020, investment in tourism is expected to grow to 2 trillion yuan, and the sector will contribute more than 12 per cent of GDP.

Travel agencies will be encouraged to sell more diverse products, such as countryside trips and tours

of old revolutionary bases.

The quality of tour- ist destinations must be raised, partly through five tourist city clusters and 10 national tour belts. Public services for tourists will be improved, including trans- portation. Green tourism will also be promoted.

Inbound tourism will get stronger policy support and cooperation between

the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan will be strength- ened. The government also expects moderate growth in outbound travel.

The services sector made up a majority of eco- nomic growth in the first three quarters. Tourism will create jobs and help poverty alleviation in rural areas.—Xinhua

Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(28-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 29-12-2016 07:00 AM) MST		
07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Coconut Shell Artist
07:49	Am	A Happy Visit to Zoological Garden (Nay Pyi Taw)
08:03	Am	News
08:27	Am	Pole Star for the Blind
08:55	Am	Dances of Myanmar “Lisu Traditional Dance”
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Chef Life “Myo Min Soe Oo”
09:36	Am	Maha Myatmuni Buddha Image In Rakhine
09:48	Am	To The Blue Ridge Mountains

of Rhododendrons

10:03 Am News

10:27 Am The Precious Lands Of Myanmar (Mandalay Region)

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)- Tuesday 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
07:27	Pm	Cruising To Precious Islands (Part-1)
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 2)Myanmar Chinthe(Myanmar Lion)
08:41	Pm	Myanmar Street Foods
07:46	Pm	Local Tour Guide: Pho Khant

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

Slow-starting Man United leave Mourinho wanting more

MANCHESTER United stretched their unbeaten run to 11 games in all competitions with a 3-1 Premier League home win over Sunderland but their coach Jose Mourinho was not entirely happy with Monday's performance at a festive Old Trafford.

United survived several scares in an end-to-end opening period before Dutch defender Daley Blind fired them ahead with a powerful 39th-minute strike for his first goal of the season.

"I didn't like the first half performance. I like the result," Mourinho said after late strikes from Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Henrikh Mkhitaryan sealed his team's win.

"I liked very much the second half. I was expecting us to start much better. (In the) second half we had everything back, the intensity to recover the ball high and play fast passes."

Ibrahimovic, who teed up Blind for the opener, continued his rich vein of form by scoring the second and setting up the third for Mkhitaryan, who netted with a spectacular backheel effort although television replays showed he was marginally offside.

It was Ibrahimovic's 17th goal of the season in all competitions while Mkhitaryan returned to action with aplomb after sitting out the last two weeks with an ankle injury.

Fabio Borini drove in a dipping 90th-minute volley to give Sunderland fans something to cheer, but it was scant consolation for the Black Cats who stayed in the relegation zone.

It was an unhappy first return to Old Trafford for former United boss David Moyes, who endured a torrid 10-month stint at the club before he was sacked in 2014.

Mourinho, however, praised Sunderland's effort.

"I know David Moyes and Sunderland deserved credit for what they did in the first half," he said.

"The good performances we had for quite some time. Finally we have the good results, four victories and 12 points in a row.

"The players know the principles of how we play and they are comfortable but we need to improve." —

Reuters



Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic in action during Premier League at Old Trafford, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Neymar to play in Chapecoense benefit match

RIO DE JANEIRO — Barcelona forward Neymar has accepted an invitation to play in a charity match for families affected by the Chapecoense plane crash, Brazilian media reported on Monday.

Former Argentina international midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron and Spain World Cup winner Joan Capdevila will also feature in Wednesday's fixture at the Maracana stadium.

In addition to

remembering victims of the November 28 plane crash — which killed 71 people, including 19 Chapecoense players and most of the Brazilian club's coaching staff — the match will pay homage to Brazil's 1970 World Cup-winning captain Carlos Alberto Torres, who died in October.

More than 20,000 tickets have already been sold for the game, which is being organized by former Brazil great Zico.

Neymar is currently on holiday in Brazil as Spanish football takes its annual winter recess. —Xinhua



Chelsea's Pedro and Nemanja Matic in action with Bournemouth's Dan Gosling during Premier League at Stamford Bridge, on 26 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Record-breaking Chelsea surge seven points clear

LONDON — Spaniard Pedro scored twice as Chelsea tightened their grip on top spot by sweeping past Bournemouth 3-0 on Monday, a club record 12th successive Premier League win taking them seven points clear.

Approaching the halfway point of the season, Chelsea have 46 points to the 39 of Manchester City who won 3-0 at Hull City.

Liverpool, who host Stoke City on Tuesday, and Arsenal, who needed a late Olivier Giroud goal to sink West Bromwich Albion 1-0, both have 37 points.

With Diego Costa suspended, Chelsea manager Antonio Conte opted to play without a recognised striker and he was rewarded with inventive attacking displays from Pedro, Belgian Eden Hazard and Brazilian Willian.

Pedro's sumptuous chip put the home team ahead after 24 minutes before Hazard made it 2-0 with a penalty at the start of the second half.

Bournemouth, who won this fixture last season when

Jose Mourinho was in charge at Stamford Bridge, conceded a third goal when Pedro's deflected shot went in during stoppage time. The victory took Chelsea past their 11-game winning run from 2009, leaving them within two of the top-flight record set by Arsenal in 2002.

"To win 12 in a row is not easy in this league. It's a fantastic run but it's important to continue that now," Conte told reporters.

"We have another tough game (at home to Stoke on Saturday) and we have to prepare very well because, now, every team wants to beat you."

Bournemouth manager Eddie Howe said: "They are an outstanding team. They have individuals of such quality that we couldn't keep them quiet the whole game."

It was a similar story for bottom club Hull who contained Pep Guardiola's Manchester City for 72 minutes before Andy Robertson's rash tackle on Raheem Sterling gave the visitors a penalty that Yaya Toure tucked away with ease. —Reuters

Man City go second with 3-0 win over Hull

LONDON — Yaya Toure slammed home a penalty and Kelechi Iheanacho netted a simple goal for Manchester City as they secured a 3-0 win at struggling Hull City who again came up empty-handed despite a battling display on Monday.

Hull held out for more than an hour but their resistance finally crumbled when Raheem Sterling was upended by Andrew Robertson in the 72nd minute and Toure fired the ball in from the spot.

Six minutes later Kevin De Bruyne, who hit the post earlier with a dipping shot, and David Silva combined to create a simple chance for Iheanacho as he tapped in from close range.

An own goal in injury time by defender Curtis Davies rounded off a miserable 20-minute spell for Hull who have not won in the league since beating

Southampton on 6 November.

The win put Pep Guardiola's side second in the table on 39 points, seven behind leaders Chelsea.

Manchester City next travel to fellow title hopefuls Liverpool on New Year's Eve while bottom club Hull host Everton on Friday.

"We won but like always had to work hard for it," said Guardiola. "In the first half we forgot where the goal was, in the second half our strikers saw the goal a bit more and after the first goal it was easy."

"There is always pressure for us because the top of the league is tough and the other teams at the top won today. Every game we play is like a final."

Hull manager Mike Phelan said the penalty was the turning point.

"Andrew Robertson is heartbroken because he knows he has



Manchester City's Yaya Toure celebrates after scoring their first goal. PHOTO: REUTERS

suffered a harsh lesson," explained Phelan. "He has to stay on his feet and shuffle the player across to an area where maybe his team mate can do a little bit better at making an attempt to tackle."

"Until then we put everything together the best way we could. We got to their players quickly and definitely frustrated them." —Reuters