

## Myanmar President urges ASEAN, S. Korean businesspeople to cooperate for more growth

BUSAN, 11 Dec—President U Thein Sein addressed the ASEAN-South Korea CEO Summit at BEXCO Exhibition Centre in Busan on Thursday.

The president said that the meeting's theme of "Innovation and Dynamism: A New Take-off in ASEAN-ROK Relations" is well matched with the theme "Building Trust, Bringing Happiness" of the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-South Korea commemorative summit.

He expressed his delight at seeing trade between the two sides grow from US\$131 billion in 2012 to US\$135 billion in 2013, noting that the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is a second largest trade partner to South Korea.

President U Thein Sein urged Southeast Asian business leaders to boost linkages with South Korean industrialists for further economic growth, stressing that the two sides need to forge greater technological cooperation.

ASEAN, if considered as a single economy, ranks as the seventh largest in the world in terms of its 10 members' combined GDP, which has hit \$2.5 trillion. The Myanmar president saw an upward growth trend, with the likelihood



President U Thein Sein cordially greets South Korea's President Park Geun-hye at 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit.—MNA

of the bloc securing fourth place by 2050.

He attached importance to the development of small and medium enterprises to ensure regional economic growth.

South Korea's President Park Geun-hye also delivered an address at the summit, reports said.

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### Real estate market in industrial zones cools after Ygn Gov't suggests unutilized plots, warehouses could be seized

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 11 Dec—The real estate market for land in Yangon's industrial zones has cooled while the availability of warehouses has increased in the wake of the Yangon Region Government's issuance last month of an ultimatum to owners of vacant plots and warehouses in the zones to put them to business use by 1 February next year or turn over them to government, according to real estate market sources in industrial zones.

Owners of vacant warehouses are keen to

lease them while land prices in the Shwelinban Industrial Zone has fallen from more than K5 billion per acre to around K3.5 billion, said Daw Shwe Kyi, who is running a real estate business in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in the western part of Yangon.

The number of warehouses available for lease is up because they will be targeted by the authorities as plots if no businesses utilizing them are established, she added.

The Yangon Region Industrial Zones Management Committee has

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### FDA to educate pharmacy owners nationwide on counterfeit drugs

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 11 Dec—In order to promote public awareness of counterfeit drugs and medications, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plans to provide educational training to proprietors of pharmacies across the nation starting from January or February.

Budgetary funds have already been allocated to conduct the training sessions aimed at protecting consumers. In recent months, the FDA has already held such sessions in some areas, including Kachin and Shan states, a source told the Global New Light of Myanmar on Thursday.

Daw Theingi Zin, Director (Drug Control) of the FDA, said that it has arranged to share updated information on drugs, especially anti-malarial medications so as to prevent drug-resistant malaria. Malaria remains the most important problems for the

country.

Currently, regular inspections are carried out at drug stores in all townships of Nay Pyi Taw where inspectors have found mostly expired medicines and illegal drugs. Actions are being taken by the department against those owners in accordance with the Na-

tional Drug Law, she added.

The market for illegal pharmaceuticals, which range from useless to highly dangerous, is now truly a global phenomenon, persisting in both developed and developing countries.

The World Health Organization estimates that up to 1 percent of

medicines available in the developed world are likely to be counterfeit, while in some areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America, counterfeits can form up to 30 percent of the market and include medicines used to treat cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses.

GNLM



Director Daw Theingi Zin of FDA (middle) together with officials from DKSH, a market expansion services provider, are seen at opening ceremony of healthcare distribution centre in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in Yangon.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

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## Myanmar to overcome challenges in transition to democracy, reaffirming “no backsliding” in the process

BUSAN, 11 Dec — An honorary doctoral degree was conferred on Myanmar President U Thein Sein by the Pukyong National University on Thursday, with an address by Rector Mr Youg-Seup Kim on Thursday afternoon.

Rector Mr Youg-Seup Kim conferred the degree on the president.

The Myanmar president, in his speech, said that the honorary degree reflects that the regional and international community recognizes his genuine and all-out efforts to realize political, social and economic goals, which he describes as the earnest desires of the Myanmar people.

He pledged his continued efforts until peace, stability and economy meet success.

He spoke of his determination to overcome challenges facing his country on transition to democracy, reaffirming “no backsliding” in the process.

He expected better cooperation between Myanmar and South Korea for



Rector Mr Youg-Seup Kim of Pukyong National University confers honorary PhD degree on President U Thein Sein.—MNA

mutual interests.

The President and the rector planted a commemorative sapling and then posed for documen-

tary photo with Myanmar students.

In the evening, the President attended the Cultural Experience of Korean

Traditional Arts and Crafts Show and the dinner at BEXCO Convention Hall in Busan.

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## Myanmar hosts 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ports Association Meeting

YANGON, 11 Dec — Myanmar Port Authority joined the ASEAN Ports Association in 2005 to be able to cement relations among other member countries and international ports, Union

Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung told the 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ports Association Meeting at Chatrium Hotel held from 7 to 10 December.

He urged members of the association to set up

close relations among them and improve market competitiveness in the international trade issue.

Managing Director U Kyaw Myint of MPA extended greetings.

Myanmar hosted the

38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meetings and the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting & Associated Meetings in Mandalay from 24 to 28 November 2014.

Myanmar joined as member of the Phase II of the Project “Sustainable Port Development (SPD) in ASEAN Region”.—MNA



Union Minister U Nyan Tun Aung poses for documentary photo with delegates from ASEAN countries at 40<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ports Association Meeting.—MNA

## Philippines recognizes Myanmar’s reform and reconciliation efforts

MANILA, 11 Dec — Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, accepted a letter of acknowledgement by the House of Representatives of the Philippines on 9 December, sources said.

Mr Feliciano Belmonte, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, presented the acknowledgement, which stated that the House recognizes the Myanmar Speaker’s visit and the country’s measures for democratic reforms and national reconciliation.

The two speakers met at the House in Manila and exchanged views on parlia-

mentary functions.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann also met Mr Franklin Drilon, President of the Senate of the Philippines on Thursday. They discussed matters related to the establishment of greater cooperation between the two parliaments.

On Thursday morning, the Myanmar Speaker and his entourage visited the memorial museum of Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, and Intramuros, the oldest district and historic core of the city of Manila.

The Myanmar delegation arrived back here in Yangon in the afternoon.

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Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann cordially greets Mr Franklin Drilon, President of the Senate of the Philippines.—MNA

## U Myint Naung presents Credentials to Italian President

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Dec — U Myint Naung, Ambassador to Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Italian Re-

public, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic, on 3 December 2014 in Rome.—MNA

## Real estate market in . . .

(from page 1)

extended the deadline from 1 December to 15 December for submitting to the committee detailed business plans, including type of business, amount of investment and estimated date the business can begin.

In November, the Yangon Region government gave an ultimatum to owners of vacant plots and warehouse in industrial zones to make use of them

by 1 February next year or turn over them to the government.

There are 2,339 vacant plots and 1,299 warehouses in 29 industrial zones, equivalent to more than 4,418 acres, and they are hindering the creation of job opportunities and making land prices in industrial zones higher, the announcement said.

Those who own the plots and warehouses

signed agreements with the Human Settlement and Housing Development Department under the Ministry Construction to construct facilities on the plots within three months when they were granted the certificates of land utilization by the ministry.

They have also agreed that if they fail to operate businesses on the plots in the industrial zones, the authorities are entitled to seize them.—GNLM

# ROK, Myanmar to cooperate in sectorwise development

BUSAN, 11 Dec—Myanmar President U Thein Sein held talks with his South Korean counterpart Madam Park Geun-hye on Thursday morning in Busan, amid his visit to her country for an ASEAN-South Korea summit, and discussed with her about promotion of cooperation between their countries' governments, peoples, parliaments and armed forces.

They focused on cooperation in the agriculture, livestock breeding, industrial and rural development sectors; improvement of SME industries for production of value-added agricultural and livestock products; promotion of trade, investment, culture, education and health sectors; development of ports, waterways, electricity and energy sectors; peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula; and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Myanmar and South Korea have arranged to hold events to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2015.

President Park accepted her Myanmar counter-

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec—Although local people welcome Dawei Special Economic Zone project for development of their socio-economic status, some people worry about removal from the project area, Vice President U Nyan Tun delivered an address on his inspection tour of the Dawei SEZ project in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, on 10 December.

He noted that officials are to implement the project to be able to win the trust of people with regional development results. He stressed the need to analyze the project with the assistance of international consultative firms and sign the agreement with partners for putting investments in the project.

The vice president highlighted that priority must be given to establish factories to be able to create job opportunities for local people. He urged officials to provide assistance for the investors in order to build infrastructures such as water and power supply.

The vice president viewed round preparations



President U Thein Sein meets ROK President Park Geun-hye.—MNA

part's invitation to visit to his country at an opportune time. Her predecessor Lee Myung-Bak's visit to Myanmar in May 2012 was the first by a South Korean president in three decades.

South Korea extends assistance to Myanmar by implementing projects involving its Official Development Assistance, Economic Development Cooperation Fund and Korean International Coopera-

tion Agency.

As an example of South Korea-Myanmar cooperation, a ceremony to launch the Myanmar Development Institute and the Saemaul-Undong-New Village/Community Movement was held at Myanmar International Convention Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on 2 December, aimed at reducing the development gap between urban and rural areas in Myanmar.

South Korea is the sixth largest trade partner of Myanmar with trade valued at US\$1.57 billion in the 2013-14 fiscal year. Its companies invested US\$3

**President U Thein Sein and Dr. Thok-Kyu Limn, Founder and President of Diplomacy magazine.**

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## Dawei SEZ Project to win trust of people with regional development results



for establishment of factories and workshops, progress of resettlement task, construction of a two-way road and a port in the project area.

Although Italian-Thai Company and Myanma Port Authority signed the framework agreement for the Dawei SEZ in 2010, the financial difficulties delayed the implementation of preliminary project. MPA attempted to invite investors for implementation of the project with momentum. The MPA and international consultative firms systematically assessed the tasks undertaken by Italian-Thai Company to

enable the investor to continue implementation of the project. Upon completion of signing the agreement

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec — The Union Election Commission plans to conduct voter education trainings as it is cooperating with political parties, civil service organizations and media as part of efforts for holding the upcoming general election successfully, said U Tin Aye, Chairman of the UEC.

At a meeting with US Ambassador Derek Mitchell and U.S. State Department official Raymond Richhart in Nay Pyi Taw on Thurs-

day, the UEC chairman also said the commission will invite international observers to the general election scheduled to be held in late 2015. Asked how the UEC is preparing for the election, U Tin Aye explained about the strategic plan (2014-2015), which was drawn with assistance of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, for compiling voter lists and a pilot

## UEC Chairman, US diplomats hold talks on preparations for 2015-elections

project for compiling and computerizing them.

The UEC also plans to establish a server at its office to show the electoral process on internet so that voters can monitor it during the upcoming election, he added. Besides, the commission sought advice from political parties and CSOs to amend the by-laws relating to the election, U Tin Aye said. The UEC is

taken with momentum.

While in Dawei, the vice president inspected the Maungmagan Beach Hotel

Zone project and construction of Maungmagan Beach resort hotel.

**Vice President U Nyan Tun views implementation of Dawei SEZ project in Taninthayi Region.**

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## Forestry students undertake practical works in camps

NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec — Teachers and students of University of Forestry (Yezin) are taking a field trip to Ngalaik forest reserve beside Ngalaik Creek in Lewun Village, Ottara-thiri Township, as of 4 December. Lecturers U Ngwe Soe Oo and U Saw Kapaw Htoo, six supervisors and 123 fourth year students of the university camped at block No. 9 of the forest reserve and Lecturer U Soe Min, three supervisors and 67 third year students at Moeswe village.



The students are undergoing two weeks of training by their teachers in plant

grafting, plant establishment and forestry works.

Faculty members and students undertake practical

works in forests every December.—*Shwe Ye Yint*

## Migratory water birds arrive at Inlay Lake Sanctuary



NYAUNGSHWE, 11 Dec — Migratory water birds have arrived at Inlay Lake, Sagar Lake and Moebye Dam in the area of Inlay Lake sanctuary in southern

Shan State as of mid-October.

A total of 6,720 migratory water birds of 11 species were counted, along with 1,022 resident water

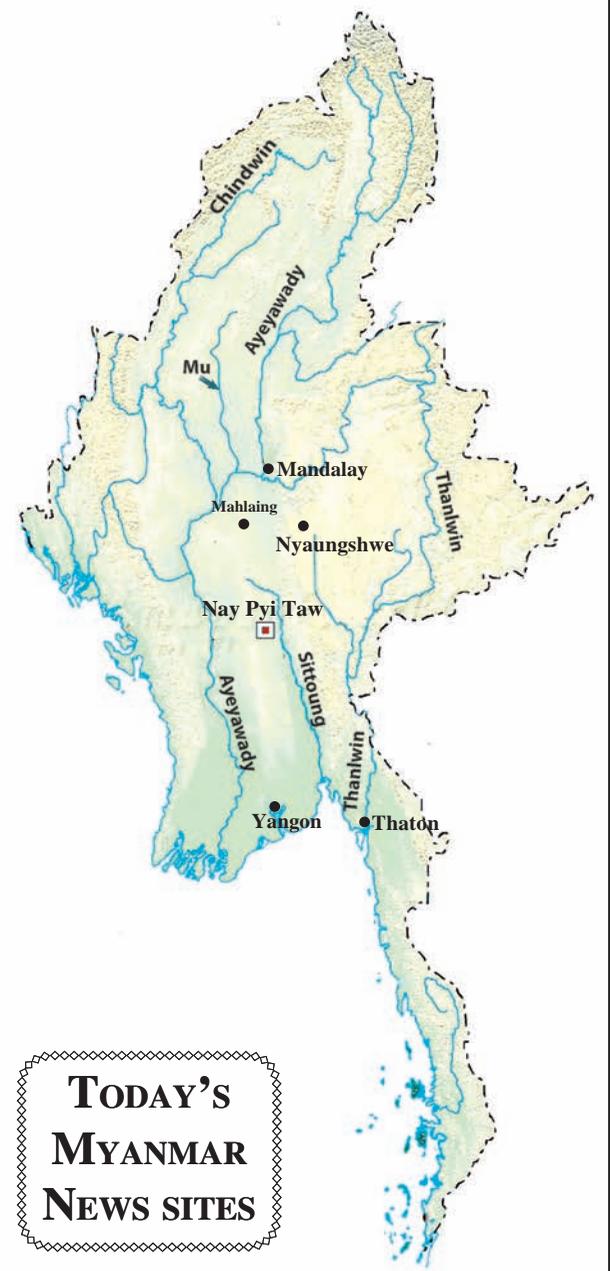
birds of 13 species, totaling 7,742 birds, an official of Inlay Lake sanctuary administrator office said, adding that 2,561 migratory forest-dwelling birds

have also been counted at the sanctuary.

Local and foreign guests and researchers are interested in viewing the rich biodiversity of Inlay Lake, one of Myanmar's prime wetland areas.

The migratory birds arrive in the nation's wetland areas every year in the cold season.

*Nay Myo Thurein*



## Local people attend literacy course in Mahlaing

MAHLAING, 11 Dec — As a literacy campaign, the 3-Rs course, jointly conducted by Mahlaing Township Maternal and

Child Welfare Association, Township Women's Affairs Organization and Township Education Office, concluded at the

Dhammayon in Ywadan-shay Village, Mahlaing Township, Mandalay Region, on 10 December.

Patron of Mandalay Region MCWSC and WAO Daw Myat Ngwe made a speech and presented clothes and MRTV set top boxes to the trainees.

Chairperson of District WAO Daw Hla Hla Htay and officials presented prizes to the outstanding trainees.

Altogether 88 trainees attended the 15-week course.

*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



## Lewe Township gets self-reliant rural village



NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec — As a gesture of hailing the 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2015, Shwepyigy library, built by youth volunteers on a self-reliant basis, was opened in Okshithlaing Village in Lewe Township on 10 December.

Deputy Head of Township General Administration Department U Zay Naw Win and Head of Township Information and Public Relations Department Daw Wai Kyi San Aung cut the ribbon to open the library.

Local people provided K1.5 million in funds for

construction of the library building, which measures 24 feet long and 18 feet wide.

On 9 December, writer Maung Hsanda (Lewe) and comedian Bay Lu Wa gave literary talks to the local people in front of the library.

*Ko Pauk (Okkar Myay)*

## REGIONAL

# Putin, Modi in push to revive jaded Russia-India relationship

NEW DELHI, 11 Dec — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin got straight down to talks on Thursday on boosting nuclear and defence cooperation at a summit aimed at reviving an old friendship that has faded over the years.

Putin's one-day visit to India comes at a time when Russia is at odds with the West over Ukraine, and its economy is stalling as oil prices tumble to their lowest in five years.

India does not support Western sanctions against Russia, but the Crimean leader's presence may prove an irritant before US President Barack Obama visits India next month.

Modi, elected by a landslide six months ago, is expected to give Obama a far more lavish reception as chief guest of India's Republic Day celebrations than Thursday's formal summit.

Yet Moscow's eye has wandered too since its Soviet-era romance with



Russian President Vladimir Putin (L) shakes hands with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a photo opportunity ahead of their meeting at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on 11 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

New Delhi. Bilateral trade, at \$10 billion, is now one-ninth of that between Russia and China — the focus of Putin's pivot away from an increasingly critical Europe.

"Russia is a tried and trusted friend — a country that has helped us in times of trouble," an Indian offi-

cial told *Reuters*. "But that friendship hasn't delivered in terms of its economic potential."

The two leaders presided over the signing of a "vision" document setting out a roadmap for cooperation over an extended period, with the most ambitious area nuclear energy.

Russia's state-owned Rosatom said that under an agreement signed on Thursday it would supply 12 nuclear energy reactors for India over 20 years.

A 1,000-megawatt reactor is operating at the Russian-built Kudankulam power station in south India, with a second due on-stream in 2015. Putin had been pushing for Rosatom to increase the number of reactors it could supply to as many as 25.

Indian officials say a total of six reactors will be built at Kudankulam, with a further six to follow at a site that has not yet been determined.

Other strategic deals were expected to cover oil exploration and supply, infrastructure and an increase in direct diamond sales to India by Russian state monopoly Alrosa.

On defence, the two sides will seek to move ahead with long-delayed projects to develop a joint fifth-generation fighter jet and a multi-role transport aircraft.

*Reuters*

## LDP to gain 28% in proportional section of lower house election

TOKYO, 11 Dec — The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is projected to win 28.0 percent in the proportional representation section of Sunday's general election, compared with 11.8 percent for the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, the latest *Kyodo News* survey showed on Thursday.

In the poll, the support rate for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Cabinet

stood at 48.7 percent, compared with a disapproval rate of 41.1 percent.

Meanwhile, 51.8 percent of respondents in the survey expressed opposition to Abe's economic policy mix, dubbed "Abenomics," featuring aggressive monetary easing, massive fiscal spending and growth-oriented reforms, while 37.1 percent expressed support.

*Kyodo News*

## Thai police beef up security for US Embassy amid torture scandal

BANGKOK, 11 Dec — Thai Deputy Police Commissioner General Jakthip Yomjinda said on Thursday that he has instructed the Metropolitan Police Bureau to tighten up security for the US Embassy.

The US government issued a warning that Thailand might be a target for reprisals after the release of reports on interrogations against terrorist suspects.

Jakthip said police have been dispatched to guard the embassy on around-the-clock basis.

Prime Minister's Office Minister Suwaphan Tanyardhana said on Thursday that there have been no secret jails used by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to detain and torture terror suspects of al-Qaeda or other terror groups in Thailand. Suwaphan, who is also head of the National Intelligence Agency, made the remarks when asked to comment on a US Senate report that refers to alleged CIA torture of terror suspects at facilities said to be in Thailand.—*Xinhua*

## Philippine Islamist militants free Chinese-Malaysian captive

MANILA, 11 Dec — Al-Qaeda-linked militants in the southern Philippines have freed a Malaysian-Chinese man they had kidnapped seven months ago, a military spokeswoman said on Thursday, after negotiations with community leaders.

Islamist Abu Sayyaf militants released the man, a trader working for a Malaysian fishing company, near the town of Indanan on the southern Philippine island of Jolo on Tuesday but no ransom had been paid, the spokeswoman said.

He had been kidnapped at gunpoint, along with a Filipino worker, in the Malaysian state of Sabah on Borneo island in May and taken to Jolo.

"We were informed the kidnap victim was freed and took a speed boat to Sabah," spokeswoman Captain Maria Rowena Muyuela said in a text message to reporters. She said the military had played no part in the negotiations.

sular officials in Malaysia identified the man as a trader from the southern Chinese province of Guizhou. Malaysian newspaper *The Star* identified him as the manager of a Sabah fish farm.

Abu Sayyaf is known for kidnapping, beheading victims and bombings in the southern Philippines. The United States has labelled it as a terrorist organization.

The small but violent group is still holding as captives a Dutch wildlife photographer, a Japanese treasure hunter, and a Malaysian police officer in their jungle hideouts.

The Philippine military also said a teenage Filipino student taken by Abu Sayyaf had escaped and was found on Tuesday.

Ibrahim Patrassa, 16, escaped in Indanan nine hours after he was abducted outside his school on Jolo, said Colonel Allan Arrojado, commander of ground forces on the island.

*Reuters*

## China police search for missing Vietnamese brides

SHANGHAI, 11 Dec — Police in northern China are investigating the disappearance of more than 100 Vietnamese women who had been sold as wives to Chinese men via a broker who is also missing, the *China Daily* reported on Thursday.

The women vanished from Handan county in Hebei province near Beijing at the end of November, and an unidentified official suspected the disappearance was organized, according to the

newspaper.

Since the start of the year, a woman from Vietnam who married a local man and had been living in the country for around 20 years, said she could introduce bachelors to Vietnamese brides. "If they liked each other, the man would pay ... an amount of money based on his and the woman's ages, and then they could marry," the report said.

One man, who the newspaper said paid 115,000

yuan (£11,847) for a bride, was told by the broker's father-in-law she had gone abroad to arrange residency permits for the Vietnamese brides so they could settle in China.

The unidentified official said bride buying had become "a local tradition" in rural areas. The newspaper quoted the police of Handan as saying international matchmaking services and cross-border marriage brokerages were illegal, and the

case may be related to human trafficking.

A cultural preference for male offspring coupled with China's one-child policy have created a wide gender gap that has made it hard for some men to marry. The official birth rate for first-born children showed 118 boys for every 100 girls, against 113 boys for 100 girls just four years ago, according to a United Nations women's rights watchdog.—*Reuters*

## Malaysia summons US ambassador over comments on Sedition Act

KUALA LUMPUR, 11 Dec — Malaysia has summoned the US ambassador after he questioned a government decision to strengthen a law against sedition, which critics say has been used to crack down on government detractors, despite an earlier promise to scrap it.

Joseph Y Yun was called in on Wednesday to explain the US position following his comments in an interview with an online news portal, the Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs said in a statement.

The ministry called for the United States to respect Malaysia's internal affairs and allow it "the space ... to ensure continued peace, security and stability".

The 1948 Sedition Act is a relic of British colonial rule aimed at keeping a lid on tension in the multi-ethnic country. It criminalises speech with an undefined "seditious tendency".

Rights groups and lawyers say it inhibits free speech.

Prime Minister Najib

Razak had pledged to repeal the Act in 2012 as part of liberal reforms to promote openness.

But last month, he said it would be bolstered to defend the sanctity of Islam, and penalise anyone who called for the break away of the eastern states of Sabah and Sarawak, where separatist talk has occasionally arisen. Yun said in an interview with the Malaysia Kini news site on 4 December the United States was "a little bit puzzled" when Malaysia announced

it would not repeal but strengthen the act.

"For the government to have this change of position on an issue that is important to basic freedom, freedom of speech and dealing with the very plural society of Malaysia, there must be a good reason," Yun told Malaysia Kini. The ministry said decisions on the act were the government's prerogative and unwarranted comment by external parties would be seen as interference.

In a flurry of cases this year, prosecutors have charged some anti-government activists and opposition politicians with sedition.—*Reuters*

## US chokehold protesters stage 'die-ins', issue demands in NY



Demonstrators converge on the Federal Courthouse during a protest in Oakland, California on 10 Dec, 2014. — REUTERS

BERKELEY, (Calif) / NWE YORK, 11 Dec — Students at medical schools around the United States staged “die-ins” to protest the chokehold death by police of an unarmed black man, and New York activists demanded the city take action after a grand jury declined to indict the officer involved.

Protests intensified last week after the grand jury decision not to charge a

white New York City police officer in the July death of Eric Garner. The decision came roughly a week after a Missouri grand jury did not indict a white officer in the shooting death of unarmed black teen Michael Brown.

In New York, a group calling itself the NY Justice League asked local officials to fire Officer Daniel Pantaleo over Garner’s death. They also urged the state

to name a special prosecutor to investigate and called for clearer laws regarding police use of lethal force.

Hip-hop impresario Russell Simmons, who is behind the music label Def Jam Records, said he had spoken with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio about the group’s demands.

“Their demands are so legitimate and so easy

to understand,” Simmons said. The killings of Garner and Brown have aggravated already strained relations between police and black Americans and rekindled a national debate over race relations.

Students at about 70 medical schools around the country including in Chicago, Atlanta and Boston staged die-ins on Wednesday to protest the killings.

Police said more than 100 demonstrators marched in Berkeley, California, which has a history of social activism. Under cloudy skies, turnout was smaller than earlier in the week, when demonstrators in the area threw rocks at police and shut down a major freeway.

Dozens of people were arrested in those actions, but Berkeley police spokeswoman Jennifer Coats said there had been no incidents or arrests on Wednesday night. In an unusual show of solidarity, the police chief for the nearby city of Richmond on Tuesday joined protesters in his

city, and held a sign that read “#blacklivesmatter,” according to the *Contra Costa Times*. Separately, at recent National Basketball Association games, some players including Los Angeles Laker Kobe Bryant and Cleveland Cavalier LeBron James have worn T-shirts during warm-ups that read, “I can’t breathe,” Garner’s last words.

Even though a grand jury has decided against charging Pantaleo, the New York officer, he still faces the possibility of discipline from an internal police investigation.

### UK police arrest 76 at London Eric Garner “die-in” protest

British police said on Thursday they had arrested 76 people at a protest about the death of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man killed in New York in a police chokehold, after demonstrators attacked a shopping centre in west London.

London’s Metropolitan Police said a small

group had broken away from the main protest, a “die-in for Eric Garner” on Wednesday night, and tried to break into the Westfield shopping centre, one of Europe’s largest inner city malls.

They clashed with security staff and damaged property, leading to 76 arrests for public disorder offences.

“We will always work with those that wish to demonstrate lawfully — as the majority of protestor did yesterday,” said Chief Superintendent Mark Bird who led the policing operation. “However, we will not tolerate the small minority that offer violence or commit other criminal acts, such as that witnessed outside Westfield yesterday evening.”

There have been protests across the United States since a grand jury decided not to charge a white New York City police officer over the death of Garner in July.

Reuters

## Australian Senate inquiry finds government responsible for deadly asylum-seeker riots

SYDNEY, 11 Dec — The Australian government failed to protect asylum seekers in its custody during a deadly riot at an immigration detention centre earlier this year, and as such was guilty of human rights abuses, said a Senate inquiry report released on Thursday.

The blistering 200-page report also found that staff from security company G4S took part in the violence, and accused Australia’s immigration minister of deliberately misleading the public to cast blame on the riot’s victims.

Australia uses offshore detention centers in Papua New Guinea and the tiny South Pacific island nation of Nauru to process would-be refugees trying to reach the country, often in unsafe boats after paying people smugglers in Indonesia.

One asylum seeker, Iranian citizen Reza Barati, was killed and more than 70 injured during riots in February at one such facility on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea.

A rapid influx of new asylum seekers, together with a lack of any clear pathway for the assessment of their asylum claim, resulted in the “eminently foreseeable” result of the riots, the Senate committee found. “The inability of the centre’s infrastructure to cope with this influx, combined with the complete absence of any clear refugee status determination and resettlement framework to deal with these asylum seekers, created an environment where unrest and transferee protests were the inevitable result,” it said.

The long-delayed inquiry, prepared by parliament’s Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee, recommended that Australia “acknowledge and take responsibility for violations of human rights” during the riots.

It blasted Immigration Minister Scott Morrison, saying that he sought through repeatedly misinforming the public on the details of the riots to “unfairly apportion blame to

the asylum seekers themselves for the violence that was done to them”.

The report was mixed in its assessment of British-based G4S, which at the time provided security for the facility, praising it for safely containing much of the early protest activity. “It is undeniable that a significant number of local service provider staff, as well as a small minority of expat staff, were involved in the violence against transferees,” it added.

Reuters

## US diplomat repeats call for Japan-S Korea reconciliation

WASHINGTON, 11 Dec — A senior US diplomat repeated his call on Wednesday for Japan and South Korea, close US allies in East Asia, to improve their relations and on North Korea to abandon its nuclear programmes.

“The improvement and the restoration of open, friendly, fully cooperative ties between Japan and (South Korea) is a high priority for the United States,” Daniel Russel,



Firefighters work on the scene where a man was killed during explosions from a gas tanker truck which caught fire on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv Highway, after an accident in which it hit a car-carrier trailer, near the Ben Shemen junction, on 10 Dec, 2014. A gas tanker truck exploded outside Jerusalem on Wednesday after colliding with a vehicle, killing one person, the Israeli police said. According to the police, the gas truck flipped over after colliding with a car-carrier trailer in the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv Highway, causing the gas-laden truck to burst into flames.—XINHUA

assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said at an event in Washington. Russel said an early thaw in Tokyo-Seoul relations will be necessary to deal with various challenges the international community faces such as uncertainty about the global economy.

Bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea have soured over the past few years due mainly to disagreements over the

interpretation of history related to Japan’s colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula, including the issue of women who had to work at wartime Japanese military brothels. Russel describes the history-related disputes as “serious and painful issues which remain as the legacy of the previous century.” In Tokyo, a Japanese government spokesman said the country understands the importance of improving relations with

South Korea when asked to comment on Russel’s remarks at a Press conference on Thursday.

“South Korea is our most important neighbouring country,” Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroshige Seko said. “It is extremely important for both Japan and South Korea to cooperate toward regional peace, stability and prosperity. We will try to update the United States on our efforts.”—Kyodo News

## WORLD

## Trucks with humanitarian aid to eastern Ukraine reach Russia's southern Rostov region

MOSCOW, 11 Dec — Russian emergency ministry's truck with relief aid to eastern Ukraine have reached Russia's southern Rostov region, a spokesman for the ministry told TASS early on Thursday. About 40 trucks with humanitarian cargos set off from the town of Noginsk outside Moscow early on 9 December.

"In the evening of 9 December, they reached the Rostov region where a humanitarian convoy to Donbass will be arranged," the spokesman said, adding that trucks with humanitarian cargos had also been sent from Askaniya, Tver, Taganrog, Krasnod-

ar, Voronezh, and other Russian regions. Earlier, Russian Emergency Ministry Spokesman Alexander Drobyshevsky said that the next humanitarian convoy would be made up of more than 120 trucks that were to deliver more than 1,200 tonnes of humanitarian cargos — foodstuffs and everyday essentials.

It will be ninth Russian humanitarian convoy to eastern Ukraine. Since 11 August, 2014, the previous eight convoys delivered more than 10,700 tonnes of relief aid to east Ukrainian cities of Donetsk and Luhansk.

*Itar-Tass*

**About 40 trucks with humanitarian cargos set off from the town of Noginsk outside Moscow early on 9 Dec, 2014.**

ITAR-TASS



## Kerry, Israel's Netanyahu to meet in Rome for Middle East talks

WASHINGTON, 11 Dec — US Secretary of State John Kerry will travel to Rome on Sunday for talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on developments in Israel and the West Bank, the State Department said on Wednesday.

"John Kerry will travel to Rome on Sunday to meet with Prime Minister Netanyahu on developments in Israel, the West Bank, Jerusalem and region," department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said on Twitter.

The talks come as Israeli politicians campaign ahead of March elections.

Psaki said the meeting will include discussions on various proposals at the United Nations to create a Palestinian state. Jordan circulated a Palestinian-drafted resolution to the 15-member council last month calling for Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory to end by November 2016.

France, Britain and Germany are also drafting a resolution. "There are a growing number of countries that are pushing for action on this issue at the UN," Psaki said, adding: "This warrants discussion with Israel, the Palestinians and key members of the international community."

Palestinians seek statehood in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and blockaded Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as their capital. All three areas were captured by Israel in the 1967 war.

Israel accepts the "two-state solution" of an independent and democratic Palestinian state along-



*US Secretary of State John Kerry*

side Israel, but has not accepted the 1967 pre-war borders as the basis for final negotiations, citing security and other concerns.

Meanwhile, tensions between Israel and the Palestinian Authority escalated on Wednesday after a Palestinian minister died shortly after an Israeli border policeman shoved and grabbed him by the throat during a protest in the West Bank.

Psaki said the United States was "deeply concerned" over the death of Ziad Abu Ein, a minister without portfolio, and called for a swift, fair and transparent investigation of his death. Abu Ein was convicted of killing two young Israelis in a bomb attack in 1979 and released as part of a prisoner swap in 1985.—Reuters

## Psychologist says US Senate's CIA report makes false charges

WASHINGTON, 11 Dec — One of the two psychologists who devised the CIA's harsh Bush-era interrogation methods said on Wednesday that a scathing US Senate report on the torture of foreign terrorism suspects "took things out of context" and made false accusations.

"It's a bunch of hooey," James Mitchell told Reuters from his home in Florida when asked for his response to the Senate Intelligence Committee's findings released on Tuesday. "Some of the things are just plain not true." A day after the Senate report was issued, the US Defence Department said it was shutting its detention facility at Bagram and no longer has custody of any prisoners in Afghanistan, closing another controversial chapter of Washington's long fight against Islamic militancy.

The United States faces mounting criticism from the United Nations as well as foreign governments that Washington often reprimands for human rights violations.

The Senate report concluded CIA interrogation tactics were ineffective and often too brutal.

The CIA paid \$80 million to a company run by the two former Air Force psychologists without experience in interrogation or counter-terrorism who recommended waterboarding, slaps to the face and mock burial for prisoners captured after the 11 September, 2001 attacks, according to the Senate investigation.

Mitchell and his colleague, Bruce Jessen, are referred to in the report by pseudonyms but intelligence sources have identified them by name. Jessen could not be reached for comment.

The report accused them of violating professional ethics as architects of a system that committee chair Dianne Feinstein said amounted to the torture of some CIA detainees.

In a brief telephone interview, Mitchell declined to specify what he considered wrong in the report, citing a non-disclosure agreement with the government.

But he suggested political bias was behind the report, which was put together by the committee's Democratic majority and which he said sought to "smear" those involved in the programme.

The CIA outsourced more than 80 percent of its



**Senate Intelligence Committee Chairwoman Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) (L) discusses a newly released Intelligence Committee report on the CIA's anti-terrorism tactics, in a speech on the floor of the US Senate, in this still image taken from video, on Capitol Hill in Washington on 9 Dec, 2014. —REUTERS**

interrogation programme to the company, Mitchell Jessen & Associates of Spokane, Washington, for its work from 2005 until the termination of the arrangement in 2009.

The American Psychological Association called the details in the report "sickening and reprehensible" and while saying that Jessen and Mitchell were not members and therefore outside the reach of its disciplinary process, it said they should be held "fully accountable" for violations of human rights and laws.

Also on Wednesday, the Pentagon said it had closed its last detention facility at Bagram airfield, the largest US base in Afghanistan, with the transfer to Afghan custody of two Tunisians and the release of a Jordanian.

The US military had rushed to empty the small jail of prisoners it would no longer be allowed to keep in Afghanistan when the mission for US-led force there ends later this month.

A US official said the prisoner transfers was a legal requirement under a US-Afghan security pact and was not related to the Senate report.

But among those handed over to Afghan authorities

was Redha al-Najar, a Tunisian who is one of the longest-serving detainees from the US "war on terror." He was captured as a suspected bodyguard of Osama Bin Laden in May 2002.

Najar was one of the first objects of harsh interrogation techniques in a CIA "dungeon" near Kabul, his lawyer told Reuters, and the Senate report said his treatment became a model for other detainees at secret CIA prisons.

Some US allies either condemned the CIA's methods or played down any involvement, fearing embarrassment or legal liability for any role in the CIA's "enhanced interrogations" during the administration of former President George W Bush.

"The CIA's practice of torture is gruesome," German Justice Minister Heiko Maas told German newspaper *Bild*. "Everybody involved must be legally prosecuted."

Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said according to the Convention Against Torture, not even a state of war justified torture.

The White House said the Justice Department had reviewed the interrogations and found no reason to indict anyone.

Former Vice President Dick Cheney told Fox News the report was "full of crap." "How nice do you want to be to murderers of 3,000 Americans on 9/11?" Cheney asked. "We were perfectly justified in doing it and I'd do it again in a minute."

China, Iran and North Korea, regularly under fire for their human rights records, prodded Washington on its methods.

"China has consistently opposed torture," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said. "We believe that the US side should reflect on this, correct its ways and earnestly respect and follow the rules of related international conventions."

A Twitter account associated with Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the report showed the US government was a "symbol of tyranny against humanity." North Korea's Foreign Ministry accused the United Nations of ignoring "inhuman torture practiced by the CIA" while focusing too much on Pyongyang's human rights practices.—Reuters

## PERSPECTIVES

Friday, 12 December, 2014

## The quality of teachers is more crucial than the system of education

By *Kyaw Thura*

It is widely accepted that educational might decides the economic growth and future of a country. Raising the equality of teachers is clearly more important than amending the educational system. A glance at countries with educational systems that are world class will reveal that teaching enjoys the highest status as a profession.

The education momentum in our country has stood still for various reasons. One major

cause is putting too much focus on pass rate through rote learning and spoon-feeding. These teaching practices are poisonous to innocent students, especially younger ones.

The increase in the number of graduates with unsatisfactory academic achievements signals a radical reform of the education sector, which is absolutely essential for our children to receive the proper education they deserve.

There is every reason to believe that sound education enables children to shape their own destiny and the society around them, choose fulfilling jobs, enrich their lives and become masters of their own fate. In other words, education can provide a route to liberation from narrow horizons and limited hopes.

Educational reform is not just about modernizing curricula. It also involves improving the quality of teachers and encouraging professionals to render collaboration in the process. In this re-

spect, comprehensive plans should encompass profound structural change as well as attracting and training better teachers.

Our country has had a long tradition of regarding teachers as noblest and most invaluable assets. This esteem places a responsibility on the shoulders of teachers to fulfill the destiny of their students. All in all, there is no calling more noble, no profession more vital and no service more important than teaching.

### Write for us

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

ICIMOD Feature Article for International Mountain Day 2014

## Family Farming for Food Security and Prosperity in the Mountains

*Tashi Dorji and Surendra Raj Joshi*

The UN General Assembly has designated 11 December International Mountain Day. International Mountain Day is an opportunity to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life and to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development. The theme for this year's International Mountain Day is 'Mountain Farming'. The theme seeks to recognize and support the contribution of family and smallholder farms in reducing rural poverty and food security through small-scale, sustainable agricultural production. There are more than 570 million farms in the world of which over 500 million are family-owned and are responsible for at least 56% of agricultural production. Family farming is common in both developing and developed countries. In North and Central America, family farms make up 83% of the total farmland, while 85% of farmland in Asia and 68% in Europe is family-owned.

Family farming is a predominant farming system in the Hindu Kush Himalayas, where the majority of people are smallholder farmers engaged in subsistence agriculture. Family farming has deep economic and cultural significance in the mountain region. Apart from being a crucial means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisher-

ies, pastoral and livestock production, family farming is also an integral element of local tradition, as it is associated with family values and ownership that is passed down from generation to generation.

For centuries, family farmers have been diversifying and integrating multiple natural resource bases for their sustenance and livelihoods. Family farming is a major source of employment and the largest contributor of GDP in mountain areas. With their low carbon foot-print and their respect for the environment, family farmers play a key role in conservation and sustainable development. In addition, family farms help provide ecosystem services that are vital for development in areas beyond the mountains. These services include provision of freshwater, disaster risk reduction, preservation of biodiversity including agro-biodiversity, and space for recreation and tourism. Family farms in the HKH region are diverse in terms of their size, activities, availability of resources, and the degree of market integration. They operate in different economic, agro-ecological and social contexts.

Despite the rich biodiversity and ecological resources of the mountains, mountain family farmers are faced with numerous challenges. They have inad-



equate access to farm inputs, financial resources, technology, training, research and advisory services, and to basic infrastructure such as roads, transport, market and communication. Mountain farmers are often politically marginalized; their voices are often unheard by policy makers. Moreover, due to the alarming rate of out-migration among youth, family farming in mountain areas increasingly relies on women and elderly people. Almost 1,500 Nepali youths leave the country for foreign employment every day. Although the migrants send remittances (Nepal receives over \$3 billion in remittances per year, which is equivalent to more than 20% of the GDP), it also means heavier workloads for those who stay behind, mostly women. Also, shrinking arable land and increasing fragmenta-

tion of farms make it difficult for mountain farmers to realize economies of scale. Their farm yield fluctuates a lot due to climate change and climate variability, and the price of farm inputs is volatile. Unlike large-scale farmers in the plains who are able to bargain and purchase more competitively, mountain farmers have weak bargaining power due to the low scale of their economy. Environmental degradation and human-wildlife conflict is another challenge mountain farmers face. Policies and programmes are often biased towards large farms and green revolution agriculture, with little attention to small family farms and mountain farming communities.

The International Year of Family Farming provides a unique opportunity to pave the way towards more

inclusive and sustainable approaches for improving the livelihoods of small mountain farmers. The growing public awareness about food safety and hygiene has opened up new opportunities for small family farmers. They can produce high-value niche products (e.g., organic food, medicinal and aromatic plants) that can fetch better prices in the competitive markets. Their productivity and marketing capacity can be enhanced through value addition, farm aggregation and resources pooling to increase volume, reduce costs and increase efficiency. Contract farming arrangements would also help improve their capacity, bargaining power and cash

income. Governments need to promote mountain-specific policies and strategies favourable to family farming. Similarly, there is a need to ensure family farmers' access to services and agro-inputs, along with some incentives, to promote family farms. This would also help promote traditional crops that have high nutritional value and are more resilient to climate change.

ICIMOD's regional programmes and initiatives promote successful models in value chain development for small family farmers in the mountains. These initiatives encourage private sector involvement and promote the principles of ecosystems-based conservation, access and benefit sharing and gender equity, while also trying to strengthen governance mechanisms. To build mountain farmers' adaptive capacity, ICIMOD supports community-based micro planning from the perspective of the food-energy-water nexus and helps build upstream-downstream linkages. ICIMOD also documents and disseminates indigenous knowledge and practices that small farmers have honed over centuries. ICIMOD continues to support national organizations in developing policies that foster sustainable family farming.

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LOCAL NEWS



## Stone inscriptions to get chamber in precinct of Shwesaryan Pagoda

THATON, 11 Dec — With the aim of renovating the ancient stone inscriptions, well-wishers plan to fund the construction of a stone inscription chamber in the precinct of Shwesaryan Pagoda in Thaton, Mon State. On 10 December, Buddhist monks, Mon State Chief Minister U Ohn Myint, Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win

and departmental officials attended the ceremony.

The monks, the chief minister and the commander drove stakes for construction of the chamber.

The stone inscription plaques were donated by hermit U Khanti 92 years ago. The stone plaques bear Buddhist treaties. The chamber will be 136 feet long and 64 feet wide.

*Thet Oo (Thaton)*

## New lecture hall ready to admit students

MANDALAY, 11 Dec — A lecture hall was commissioned into service at Mandalay University of Foreign Languages in Aungmyethazan Township on 10 December.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing, Rector in-charge of Sagaing Education University Dr Saw Pyone Naing and Pro-Rector Dr Tint Tint of MUFL formally opened the ceremony.

Myanmar students are learning such languages as English, French, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, German and Russian at lecture halls of the university, while foreign students are learning Myanmar language.

*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

## Korean bank grants stipends for MUFL students

MANDALAY, 11 Dec — Shinhan Bank, based in the Republic of Korea, presented stipends to students who are pursuing Korean language studies at the Mandalay University of Foreign Languages in Mandalay on 8 December afternoon.

Pro-Rector Dr Tint Tint of the university gave an opening address.

Chief Representative

Mr Hong Suk Woo of Shinhan Bank explained the purpose of providing cash assistance to the university students and presented K150,000 each to 30 students.

Assistant Lecturer Daw Aye Aye Thin and fourth year student Ma Nang Mo Mo Khaing spoke words of thanks.

*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



## YCDC spends K5.9 billion on Mingala Taungnyunt-Dawbon Bridge

YANGON, 11 Dec —Mingala Taungnyunt-Dawbon Bridge crossing Ngamoeyeik Creek is under construction, near Pathein Nyunt railway bridge.

Yangon City Development Committee will spend K5.9 billion to construct the bridge, which workers and engineers are trying to complete by March 2015, Assistant Chief Engineer

U Kyin Ohn of Engineering Department (Road and Bridge) of YCDC told media on 10 December.

Construction commenced in mid-October.

The 1,215-foot long bridge will have a 24-foot-wide motorway and six-foot wide pedestrian walkway on either side. Construction of one of its two approach bridges is already halfway complete, ACE U Kyin Ohn said.

He explained, "Pathein Nyunt railway bridge was built during the period of independence struggles of the country. After Thakayta new town was established in 1959, the rail tracks were removed from Pathein Nyunt bridge. Military engineers squad spent K150,000 on renovation of the bridge for use as a motorway for public transportation on 21 January, 1959. Con-

struction Minister Thayay Sithu U San Nyunt opened the old bridge with the title of Thakayta Bridge on 17 February, 1959. Now, the bridge cannot handle transport of motorcars, so YCDC maintains it for use by pedestrians, bicycles and trishaws."

The new bridge will have a clearance of 15 feet over Ngamoeyeik Creek and can withstand 50-ton loads.—*Saw Thein Win*



## Tourist transport vehicles to take work licence

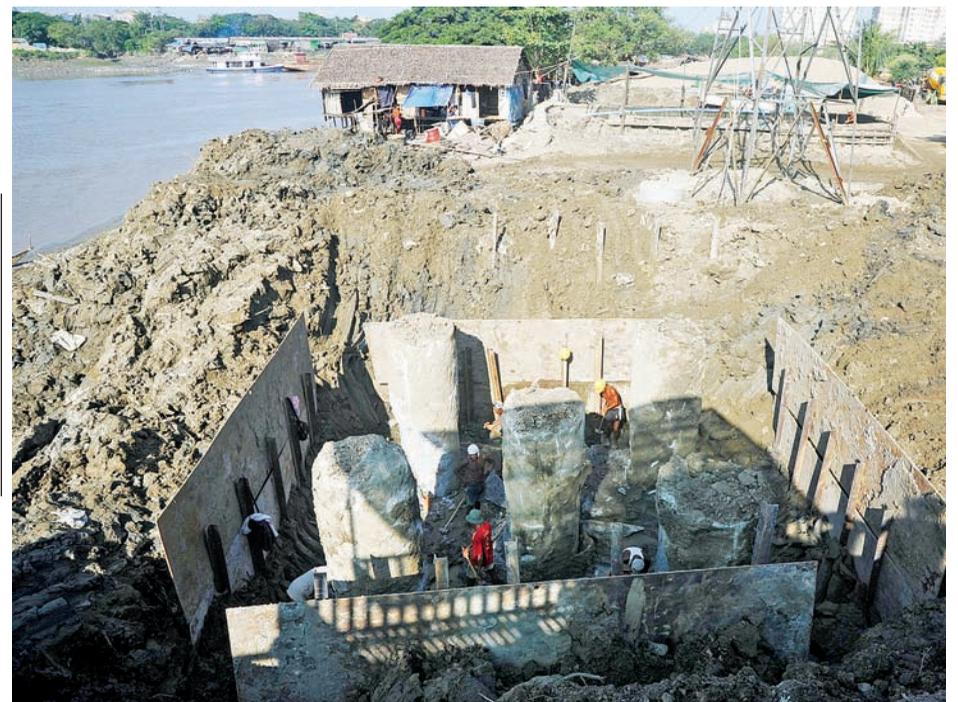
NAY PYI TAW, 11 Dec — Road and Inland Water Transport Board is issuing licenses allowing transport of foreign tourists to owners of vehicles already registered with Myanma Hotels and Tourism Services.

Some entrepreneurs and companies run transport services for foreign tourists by using private cars with the black number plates, without being licensed by the departments concerned. The board announced that if they fail to obtain licenses to under-

take such services, action will be taken against them under the 1963 Road and Inland Water Transport Law. The Mandalay Re-

gion Transport Planning Department has sent directives to the tour companies.

*Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)*



## Iraqi Shiite cleric urges followers to defend Samarra from IS attacks

BAGHDAD, 11 Dec — Iraq's firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr has ordered his followers to prepare for jihad, or holy war, against the extremist Sunni Islamic State (IS) militant group, which is reportedly preparing to attack the city of Samarra, an al-Sadr aide said on Thursday. "Our brothers the Mujahedeen (holy warriors) in the Peace Brigades must be ready to meet the call of jihad within 48 hours," Abu Du'aa al-Isawi, al-Sadr's assistant for jihad affairs, said in a statement. Earlier in the year,

Sadr called on his followers to form a new militia of "Peace Brigades" to protect Iraq's shrines and holy sites as the IS pushed forward in northern and central parts of the country.

The predominantly Sunni city of Samarra, some 120 km north of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, is home to the Shiite shrine of Imam Ali al-Hadi. The shrine contains the tombs of Ali al-Hadi and his son Hassan al-Askari, the 10th and 11th of the Shiites' 12 most revered Imams. Shiite pilgrims visit the shrine

from all over the world. On 22 February, 2006, the Samarra shrine, also called the Golden Mosque, was hit by a bomb attack in which its 100-year-old Golden Dome was badly damaged. In 2007, insurgents again bombed two minarets of the shrine.

The attacks sparked killings between Shiite and Sunni communities that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis.

Sadr's statement came amid intelligence reports that the IS group was preparing for major attacks on

several cities and towns in Salahudin province, including the sensitive religious city of Samarra, which remains under government control.

Large parts of the province have been under IS control since 11 June, a day after bloody clashes broke out between Iraqi security forces and the group which took control of the country's northern city of Mosul and later seized swathes of territories in Nineveh and other predominantly Sunni provinces.

Xinhua

## Suicide bomber attacks Afghan army bus in Kabul, six killed



Afghan National Army soldiers (ANA) inspect the site of a suicide attack in Kabul on 11 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

KABUL, 11 Dec — A suicide bomber targeted a bus carrying Afghan army personnel, killing six soldiers and wounding 11 on Thursday on the outskirts of the capital, Kabul, the Defence Ministry.

Five Afghan school children were also reported killed in a foreign forces airstrike, local officials said. The international coalition had no immediate comment.

Thursday's bombing comes after almost a two-week lull in Taliban attacks in Kabul in the wake of a wave of bombings on guesthouses, government officials and vehicles of foreign aid workers in the heavily-guarded capital last month.

Taliban insurgents have stepped up their attacks in recent months in Afghanistan with deadly suicide and roadside bombings as most foreign troops prepare to leave the country after 13 years of war.

Dawlat Waziri, deputy spokesman for the Afghan Defence Ministry, said a bomber on foot targeted the bus in the Tarakhil area

of eastern Kabul early in the morning when the army personnel were on their way to work.

"Unfortunately, we lost six soldiers and 11 others were wounded in the suicide attack," said Waziri.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks and said 12 officers were killed and 13 others wounded. Taliban insurgents often exaggerate casualties they inflict on national and international troops.

Meanwhile, five Afghan students were killed in a foreign forces air strike in northern Parwan province on Wednesday, Mohammad Zaman Mamozai, the provincial police chief told Reuters.

The International Security Assistance Force did not immediately respond to questions on the incident.

Civilian casualties caused by air power have been one of the most contentious issues of the war, though there are often conflicting claims and confirming identities of those killed takes time.—Reuters

## US launches 20 airstrikes against Islamic State in Syria, Iraq

WASHINGTON, 11 Dec — The United States launched 20 airstrikes against Islamic State militants in recent days, military officials said in a statement on Wednesday.

Since Monday, US forces conducted seven strikes against the militant group in Syria and led 13 strikes in Iraq with its partner nations, according to the statement

from the Combined Joint Task Force for the coalition overseeing the operation.

The strikes, centered in the Syrian border town of Kobani as well as near Sinjar, Qaim, Ramadi, Mosul and Samarra in Iraq, hit numerous Islamic State fighting positions, buildings, vehicles and fighting units, the statement said.—Reuters

## Palestinian, Israeli officials dispute autopsy on dead Palestinian minister



Palestinian minister Ziad Abu Ein (C) scuffles with an Israeli border policeman near the West Bank city of Ramallah on 10 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

RAMALLAH, 11 Dec — Israeli and Palestinian officials issued conflicting accounts on Thursday over the results of an autopsy on a Palestinian minister who died after

being shoved and grabbed by the neck by an Israeli policeman at a West Bank protest on Wednesday. The incident comes at a time of heightened tension between

Israel and the Palestinians, following months of violent unrest in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the Israeli-occupied West Bank. A top Palestinian official, Hussein al-Sheikh, told Reuters that Jordanian and Palestinian doctors involved in the late night examination of the body said Ziad Abu Ein, 55, had died from "being struck, inhaling tear gas and a delay in providing medical attention."

But an Israeli medical source familiar with the autopsy results told Reuters the minister died from a heart attack and had a pre-existing heart condition. "His death was caused by a coronary occlusion, brought on by stress. The stress may have been brought on by

him being grabbed by the neck," said the source, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. About 30 Israeli soldiers and border policemen fired tear gas and sound grenades at about 100 people protesting against a Jewish settlement by planting olive trees in the village of Turmusiya north of Ramallah on Wednesday.

A scuffle ensued in which a border policeman pushed Abu Ein and grabbed his neck firmly with one hand. Footage of the incident and pictures taken by Reuters do not show Abu Ein responding with any violence.

Reuters

## Libya's recognized PM vows military campaign to seize Tripoli

CAIRO, 11 Dec — Libya's recognized government will continue a military campaign to claim back the capital Tripoli, Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni said on Wednesday.

Libya is divided between two governments since a group called Libya Dawn seized Tripoli in August after a month-long battle with a rival group, setting up its own parliament and government.

Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni has been



Libya's Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thinni speaks to reporters in Abu Dhabi on 10 Sept, 2014.

REUTERS

forced to work from the East where the elected House of Representatives is also based, part of turmoil three years after the ousting of Muammar Gaddafi.

Thinni told Dubai-based TV channel al-Arabiya his forces were advancing on Tripoli from the west and would also seize the main border crossing to Tunisia.

"Our troops are moving towards Tripoli to liberate it," he said, claiming his forces had seized a town west of the capital. Thinni's forces, allied to a former general and tribesmen in Zintan in the western mountains, have launched air strikes on Tripoli.

The rival Tripoli government, accused by its opponents of relying on Islamists, says Egypt and the United Arab Emirates help Thinni with the air strikes.

Thinni has denied this. When asked whether Saudi Arabia and the UAE were offering humanitarian assistance, Thinni said in the television interview: "Our brothers in Saudi

Arabia, the UAE and our brothers in Egypt are ready to fulfill what the government and House of Representatives demand."

On Monday, UN Special Envoy Bernardino Leon said he planned to launch next week a new round of peace talks to bring together both conflict parties.

Leon said talks would this time also include the rival parliament based in Tripoli to widen a dialogue which has failed to make progress.

Reuters

## BUSINESS &amp; HEALTH

## Asia down as oil fall hits sentiment, dollar gets respite

TOKYO, 11 Dec — Asian stocks fell on Thursday as falling oil prices added to global growth concerns, while the dollar saw a bit of a respite against the yen and euro after successive sharp losses.

Spreadbetters expected the bearish tone for equities to continue into Europe, forecasting Britain's FTSE to fall by as much as 0.3 percent at the open, and Germany's DAX and France's CAX to start 0.4 percent lower.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was down 0.7 percent as another large decline in oil prices took a heavy toll on energy shares and hit Wall Street hard overnight.

The volatile Shanghai Composite Index shed earlier gains and fell 0.8 percent after regulators announced a flood of IPO approvals, which could signal authorities are growing increasingly concerned over the China markets' massive rally in the last two weeks.



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on 10 Dec, 2014. — REUTERS

Tokyo's Nikkei lost 1 percent, pulling further back from 7-1/2 year highs hit at the week's start, with sentiment bruised by the rout in US stocks.

Crude oil prices fell as much as 5 percent overnight after data underscored weak US demand and Saudi Arabia reiterated that it has no plans to curb output. Brent crude ticked up 0.8 percent to \$64.73 a barrel but stayed within reach of a five-year low hit in the previous session, with the market's bearish tone largely intact.

The dollar edged up 0.3 percent to 118.165 yen, getting some respite after retreating to as low as 117.445 from a seven-year high of 121.86 reached on Monday.

The S&P 500, at a record high just last Friday, fell to its lowest since early November on Wednesday.

"Recent nervousness in equity market sentiment is consistent with our view that equity fund positioning is near peak levels, which points to a near-term pull-back," strategists at Bar-

clays said in a note to clients. "With underperformance by active managers, we worry that redemptions will continue and force an unwind of currently extended positioning," they said.

In addition to declining oil, concerns over the political situation in Greece have also dented appetite for risk assets.

The euro was steady at \$1.2449 after rising to \$1.2496. The common currency had rallied back from 2-1/2 year trough of \$1.2247 hit on Monday before losing steam.

Despite the recent volatility displayed by the dollar, the divergence in US monetary policy from Europe and Japan could continue to favour the greenback in the long term.

New Zealand's central bank governor said he expected to see the most quantitative easing since 2011 around the world next year, particularly as economic risks in Japan and Europe remain.

Reuters

Mobile phones  
"likely to be safe" to human health

LONDON, 11 Dec — The magnetic fields created by mobile phones and power lines are "likely to be safe" to human health, according to research from the University of Manchester, it was reported on Wednesday.

Several past studies have suggested that the magnetic fields created by phones, high-voltage power lines and other electrical equipment are harmful for humans. Although some later studies have failed to find such a link, the International Agency for Research on Cancer categorized low frequency magnetic fields as "possibly carcinogenic."

But a mechanism for this association has never been found. The new study, published on Wednesday in the Journal of the Royal Society Interface, studied

the effects of weak magnetic fields (WMFs) on key human proteins, including those crucial for health.

It found that they have no detectable impact. They looked at how WMFs affected a protein class called flavoproteins, which are key to processing healthy human functions such as the nervous system, DNA repair and the biological clock. If these proteins are affected, there are serious knock-on effects for human health.

"More work on other possible links will need to be done but this study definitely takes us nearer to the point where we can say that power-lines, mobile phones and other similar devices are likely to be safe for humans," said Prof Nigel Scrutton, co-lead author of the paper. — Xinhua

## Japan machinery orders tumble in another blow to economy and PM Abe

TOKYO, 11 Dec — Recession-hit Japan suffered a fresh blow on Thursday as data showed a key gauge of capital spending tumbled in October — a worrying sign for its recovery given that business investment was a big drag on the economy in the third quarter.

The machinery order data is a stark reminder of the challenges facing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who heads into an election on Sunday seeking a fresh mandate for his economic-revival strategy that critics have panned as a failure. Abe is expected to win the election comfortably, but doubts about his "Abenom-

ics" recipe of aggressive monetary stimulus, fiscal spending and pro-growth reform have sharpened since Japan unexpectedly slipped into a recession in the third quarter.

The slump was triggered by a sales tax hike in April, which chilled consumption, while capital expenditure also carved out a big slice off output, sliding a bigger-than-expected 0.4 percent in the third quarter.

The 6.4 percent on-month fall in core machinery orders, a highly volatile data series seen as an indicator of capital spending in the coming six to nine months, suggests business invest-

ment will struggle to underpin a rebound in the economy. The figure issued by the Cabinet Office was far worse than a 2.4 percent fall forecast by economists in a Reuters poll, and followed a 2.9 percent month-on-month gain in September. "Firms' activity in domestic output is unlikely to gather strength until they get rid of inventory" that piled up after the tax hike, said Kenta Ishizu, economist at Mizuho Securities.

"I don't think capital spending will be accelerating ahead. As long as the economy remains weak, companies will continue to revise down their spending

plans." The government sees capital spending picking up, though some analysts say sluggish domestic demand after April's sales tax hike will continue to drag on business investment.

The Bank of Japan's tankan showed firms' positive stance on investment. But companies have so far been slow to implement their spending plans and remain wary of boosting wages, highlighting the challenges Abe and the BOJ face in nursing the economy to sustainable growth and meeting the central bank's 2 percent inflation goal.

Reuters

## High-fiber diet could offset some smoking damage to lungs: New Zealand research

WELLINGTON, 11 Dec — A high-fiber diet can help curb damage to the lungs caused by smoking, New Zealand researchers said on Thursday.

The University of Auckland researchers said that quitting smoking was the best action smokers could take to reduce the risk of lung cancer or emphysema, but a high-fiber diet could help reduce lung inflammation. Lung inflammation had been shown to have a critical role in causing progressive lung damage, ultimately leading to diseases such as emphysema and lung cancer, shortening a smoker's life by 15

to 20 years.

"This study supports the key hypothesis that the beneficial effects of a high-fiber diet come largely through increased absorption of naturally-occurring anti-inflammatory chemicals, called small chain fatty acids, produced by 'protective' gut bacteria," said study author Associate Professor Robert Young. "These protective bacteria flourish in the gut of people consuming a high-fiber diet, but diminish in those whose diets are low in fibre and high in refined foods, where 'harmful' gut bacteria predominate," Young said in a statement. — Xinhua

## Unchecked superbugs could kill 10 million a year, cost \$100 trillion

LONDON, 11 Dec — Drug-resistant superbugs could kill an extra 10 million people a year and cost up to \$100 trillion by 2050 if their rampant global spread is not halted, according to a British government-commissioned review.

Such infections already kill hundreds of thousands of people a year and the trend is growing, the

review said, adding: "The importance of effective antimicrobial drugs cannot be overplayed."

Former Goldman Sachs chief economist Jim O'Neill, who led the work, noted that in Europe and the United States alone around 50,000 people currently die each year from infections caused by superbug forms of bacteria such as E coli. "Unless some-

thing is done by 2050, that number could become 10 million people losing their lives each year from then onwards," he told a briefing in London. Antimicrobials are a class of drugs that includes antibiotics, antivirals, antiparasitics and antifungals. The review of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is based on analysis by two sets of researchers, RAND and KPMG, esti-

imating the future impact of AMR under different scenarios for six common infections — three bacterial infections, plus malaria, HIV and tuberculosis. But it excludes indirect effects of growing drug resistance which could "cast medicine back to the dark ages", the review said, by making routine procedures more dangerous.

Reuters



A policeman (L) asks questions on how to protect themselves from Ebola disease after a training given by Chinese public health experts at the Police Club in Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone, on 10 Dec 2014. Chinese public health trainers arrived in Freetown on 10 November to give lessons to 500 local policemen in the next few days. — XINHUA

# Three Japan-born Nobel laureates receive prize

STOCKHOLM, 11 Dec — Three Japan-born physicists who won this year's Nobel Prize in Physics for inventing efficient blue light-emitting diodes were awarded their prize at a ceremony in Stockholm on Wednesday.

The three are Shuji Nakamura, a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who was born in Japan and later acquired US citizenship, Isamu Akasaki, a professor at Meijo University in Nagoya, and Hiroshi Amano, a professor at Nagoya University.

Nakamura, 60, Akasaki, 85, and Amano, 54, were given their medals and diplomas by Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf.

In introductory comments before the award was conferred, a Nobel selection committee noted that the three "succeeded where all others had given up." "After several years of hard work ... with great persistence, skills and perhaps a bit of luck, they were able to produce fine gallium nitride crystals and give them the properties needed for efficient light emission," the committee said, adding that they performed more than 2,000



(From L) Isamu Akasaki, a professor at Meijo University in Nagoya, Hiroshi Amano, a professor at Nagoya University, and Shuji Nakamura, a professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, who won the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physics, pose for photos with their medals after the award ceremony at the Stockholm Concert Hall in the Swedish capital on 10 Dec, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

experiments.

After the ceremony, Nakamura said with a smile, "It's finally over." Amano looked relieved, saying, "I was terribly nervous." Akasaki said, "It has been a long journey."

The winners will share equally the 8 million Swedish kronor in prize money.

Two days before the award ceremony in the Swedish capital, the three

gave lectures about their invention — which helped pave the way for the development of longer-lasting and more energy-efficient lighting for use in various applications including giant display screens and traffic lights — at Stockholm University.

The awards for Akasaki, Amano, and Nakamura bring the total number of Japanese and

Japanese-born recipients of the Nobel Prize in Physics to 10. Prior to this year, the last Japanese to win a Nobel Prize was scientist Shinya Yamanaka, a 52-year-old Kyoto University professor, who in 2012 shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with John Gurdon of Britain.

The overall number of Japanese and Japa-

nese-born Nobel award winners is now 22.

Akasaki, when he was a professor at Nagoya University, worked with Amano to produce gallium nitride crystals. The two eventually created in 1989

the world's first blue LED. Nakamura, while working at Nichia Corp, a Tokushima-based company, independently succeeded in commercializing blue LEDs in 1993.

*Kyodo News*

## Pakistan's Malala, Indian activist receive Nobel Peace Prize

OSLO, 11 Dec — Pakistani teenager Malala Yousafzai, who was shot in the head two years ago for advocating girls' right to education, and Indian children's rights advocate Kailash Satyarthi on Wednesday received Nobel Peace Prize for this year.

"This award is not just for me," said 17-year-old Malala, the youngest Nobel laureate ever. "It is for those forgotten children who want education. It is for those frightened children who want peace. It is for those voiceless children who want change."

Malala was shot in the head by Taleban fighters while returning home on a school bus in 2012, after she gained international attention for her campaign to secure education for girls

in Pakistan.

"The terrorists tried to stop us and attacked me and my friends, who are here today, on our school bus in 2012, but neither their ideas nor their bullets could win," she said in her acceptance speech at a ceremony in Oslo. "We survived. And since that day, our voices have only grown louder."

Malala and Satyarthi, 60, will share the 8 million Swedish kronor in prize money, worth about \$1.1 million. "The first place this funding will go to is where my heart is...to build schools in Pakistan" to help girls receive a quality education, Malala said.

"I will continue this fight until I see every child in school," she said.

*Kyodo News*

## Latvia supports Serbia in opening EU accession chapters



Serbian counterpart Ivica Dacic and Latvia's Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma.—TANJUG

RIGA, 11 Dec — Latvia will try to ensure that some chapters in Serbia's EU accession talks are opened during its EU Presidency, starting on 1 January, Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said on Wednesday after a meeting with his Serbian counterpart Ivica Dacic.

Dacic met in Riga with Latvia's Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma, Parliament Speaker Inara Murniece and the foreign minister.

Latvia will do everything to ensure that the EU and Serbia start the accession negotiations on several chapters, Rinkevics told a joint Press conference after the meeting with Dacic.

We must, of course, wait for the opinion of the European Commission but we believe that the opportunity for close cooperation will open during our presidency, Rinkevics added.

Dacic thanked Riga on the continuing sup-

port to Serbia on its EU path and expressed hope that Latvia will help Serbia start opening the negotiation chapters during its EU presidency.

Serbia's main strategic goal is to join the EU and we want to continue making swift and substantial progress towards that goal, said Dacic.

He voiced hope that overcoming the difficulties with the formation of the government in Pristina will help resume the implementation of the Brussels agreement and speed up the decision on the opening of certain negotiation chapters.

The entire Western Balkans expects Latvia to confirm the EU's commitment to the region's European integration, said Dacic.

The two ministers also discussed the strengthening of bilateral ties, and Dacic said that all the pre-conditions for this have been met as the two countries have no open issues.

We also discussed the coordination of foreign policy between the EU and the candidate countries, as well as bilateral ties, the need to strengthen the economic cooperation and promote our political contacts and dialogue, said Rinkevics.

One of the topics was Serbia's forthcoming OSCE Chairmanship.

Serbia will strive to be a neutral and fair negotiator and put its contacts and support to the service of a peaceful resolution of conflicts. Our position, of course, is based on the fundamental principles upon which the OSCE was founded, stressed Dacic.

Rinkevics said that Latvia is ready to support Serbian efforts to reach a solution for the east of Ukraine, with maximum involvement of all sides.

*Tanjug*

## Magnitude 6.1 quake hits off Chinese Taipei — USGS

TAIPEI, (China), 11 Dec — A strong, 6.1-magnitude earthquake struck northeast off the island of Taiwan on Thursday, the US Geological Survey said.

It said the quake struck at 5:03 am on Thursday (2103

GMT on Wednesday) at a depth of 158.1 miles (254 km) below the seabed, which would have lessened its impact. The epicenter was 66 miles (106 km) northeast of Chinese Taipei.

*Reuters*

## US, Japan named least cooperative on global warming reduction

LIMA, 11 Dec — A group representing environmental NGOs from around the world on Wednesday named the United States and Japan joint recipients of its "Fossil of the Day" award, bestowed on countries considered uncooperative toward reducing global warming.

The Climate Action Network said the United States is insisting upon removing a portion of text concerning measures to deal with the "loss and damage" brought by a natural disaster from the draft of a statement to be decided in the ongoing 12-day UN conference on climate change.

It also said Japan has been

selected for providing support to the cause of the United States, after separately receiving the dubious honor on 2 December for its assistance in building a coal-fired power plant in Indonesia.

Germany, Peru and Colombia have been presented with "Ray of the Day" award for their cooperation. The 20<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework on Climate Change, or COP20 where participants are discussing elements that will comprise the new framework in 2020, will be completed on Friday.

*Kyodo News*

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO (083N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.12.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

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

**(21/2014)**

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-103(14-15)	Telecommunication Equipment (3) Items	US\$
(2)	IFB-104(14-15)	160D-173-74 Type Pumping Units & Spares (5) Sets	US\$
(3)	IFB-105(14-15)	114D-119-86 Type Pumping Units & Spares (12) Sets	US\$
(4)	IFB-106(14-15)	80D-133-54 Type Pumping Units & Spares (8) Sets	US\$
(5)	IFB-107(14-15)	6 1/2" & 7 3/4" Spiral Drill Collars (2) Items	US\$
(6)	IFB-108(14-15)	5" Drill Pipe (1,000) Mtr	US\$
(7)	IFB-109(14-15)	Skid Mounted Water Transfer Pump with Motor (700 GPM x 700 Ft HD) (3) Units	US\$
(8)	IFB-110(14-15)	Skid Mounted Crude Transfer Pump with Motor (200 GPM x 350 Ft HD) (2) Units	US\$
(9)	IFB-111(14-15)	Skid Mounted Crude Transfer Pump with Motor (400 GPM x 400 Ft HD) (2) Units	US\$
(10)	IFB-112(14-15)	Mobile Type Welding Machine (Engine Driven) (400 AMP) (5) Units	US\$
(11)	IFB-113(14-15)	Portable Welding Machine and Accessories (200 AMP) (3) Units	US\$
(12)	IFB-114(14-15)	5 Ton Air Winch (2) Nos	US\$
(13)	IFB-115(14-15)	Rig Alignment Jack (4) Nos	US\$
(14)	IFB-116(14-15)	Choke and Manifold (2) Items	US\$
(15)	IFB-117(14-15)	2 3/8" & 2 7/8" Tubing (2) Items	US\$

Tender Closing Date & Time - 7-1-2015, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2014 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise  
Ph.+95 67-411097/411206

**WEATHER REPORT**

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2014:** Isolated light rain are likely in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin State and weather will be generally fair in Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Motama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach(35) mph. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar water.

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**25 hospitalized after ammonia leak at Arkansas plant**

HOUSTON, 11 Dec — An ammonia leak at a poultry processing plant in the US state of Arkansas sent 25 workers to local hospitals on Wednesday, officials said.

The leak happened on Wednesday afternoon at Tyson Foods Chick-n-Quick plant in Rogers, located 340 km northwest of Arkansas' capital city, Little Rock.

The company said in

a statement that the leak occurred when contractors were performing maintenance on the facility's roof. A small amount of an ammonia smell was pulled into the plant through the air conditioning system.

Tyson said they evacuated 250 employees who were inside the plant as a precaution. A total of 25 workers who had inhalation injuries were sent to hospitals. As of Wednesday

night, 24 of them have been discharged from hospitals.

"We're still gathering details, but initial readings inside the plant indicate that ammonia was not detected in the environment," the statement said.

A local fire department official also said the leak has been contained inside the building and there was no threat to the public.

Xinhua

**Woman gives birth on flight over California**

PHOENIX, 11 Dec — A woman and her baby are doing well after an unexpected midair birth on a Phoenix-bound plane over California shocked passengers and crew members, Southwest Airlines officials said on Wednesday.

Southwest Flight 623 started its trip from San Francisco to Phoenix on Tuesday with 111 passengers but landed with 112 after the woman gave birth and the plane was rerouted to Los Angeles, airline spokeswoman Emily Samuels said.

Paramedics met the baby and mother, who are not being identified by the airline, after they landed and took them to a nearby hospital. The passengers were later put on another plane to Phoenix.

"We're definitely in touch with them and helping them in any way that we can," Samuels said. "We're hoping we've got a little Southwest customer for life there."

Flight crew members and an emergency room nurse who happened to be on board delivered the baby, Los Angeles Fire Department spokeswoman Katherine Main said. The mother and newborn were in good condition when paramedics transported them.

Reuters



*A firefighter puts out a fire that hits a slum area in Manila, the Philippines on 11 Dec, 2014. The fire razed more than 200 shanties early Thursday morning, leaving 500 families homeless.*  
XINHUA

## Taylor Swift holds Billboard 200 top spot for fifth week



Recording artist Taylor Swift performs during KIIS FM's Jingle Ball 2014 at Staples Centre in Los Angeles, California on 5 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 11 Dec — Pop singer Taylor Swift continued her reign at the top of the revamped US Billboard 200 album chart on Wednesday, shaking off new entries.

Swift's "1989" album sold 230,000 full copies, 435,000 songs and was streamed 27,000

times, according to figures from Nielsen SoundScan, totalling 274,000 sales units and holding the top spot for a fifth non-consecutive week.

According to the new chart formula unveiled by Billboard last week, 10 songs equal one album unit and 1,500 online

streams equals one album unit.

"Shake It Off," Swift's lead song from "1989," scored three Grammy nominations, including two for top categories last week.

At No 2 this week, a cappella group Pentatonix holds steady with its festive record "That's Christmas to Me" totalling 221,000 units, while veteran rockers AC/DC entered the chart at No 3 with its latest album "Rock or Bust" topping 174,000 units.

The only other new entry in the top 10 of the Billboard 200 chart was R&B singer Mary J Blige's "London Sessions" at No 9.

Swift's song "Blank Space" held the top spot on the digital songs chart with another 254,000 digital downloads, while actress Jennifer Lawrence's rendition of James Newton Howard's "The Hanging Tree" from "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1," held steady at No 2 with 168,000 downloads.—Reuters

## Dark showbiz comedy 'Birdman' leads SAG film award nominations

WEST HOLLYWOOD, (Calif) 11 Dec — The cast of dark existential comedy "Birdman" led the Screen Actors Guild film award nominations on Wednesday, earning four nods from its peers in the kick-off of the Hollywood awards season.

"Birdman" was followed by coming-of-age chronicle "Boyhood," biographical drama "The Theory of Everything" and World War Two drama "The Imitation Game," with three nominations each.

Those films, along with the Wes Anderson comedy "The Grand Budapest Hotel," each scored a nomination for best ensemble cast, the top film prize handed out by the organization.

Notable omissions were the World War Two story "Unbroken" and the Martin Luther King biopic "Selma."

"Birdman," about a has-been Hollywood star bent on reviving his career on the stage, netted nominations for Michael Keaton (best actor), Emma Stone (best supporting actress) and Edward Norton (best supporting actor).

"An ensemble like this hardly ever comes around, and all of us made this very unique film work — (led) by our maestro, director Alejandro Inarritu," Keaton said in a statement.

Early Oscar favourites Julianne Moore ("Still Alice") and Reese Witherspoon ("Wild") earned best actress nominations along with Jennifer Aniston ("Cake").

Golden Globe nominations

will be announced on Thursday.

More than 100,000 actors vote on the SAG Awards, which will be handed out on 25 January in Los Angeles.

They are one of the most closely watched honours because actors comprise the largest voting bloc for February's Academy Awards.

British actor Benedict Cumberbatch earned a best actor nod for his role as World War Two code-cracker Alan Turing in "The Imitation Game," while co-star Keira Knightley received a best supporting actress nomination.

Director Richard Linklater's "Boyhood," which was shot over a dozen years, scored nominations for Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette for supporting actor and actress.

British actor Eddie Redmayne was nominated for best actor for his role as physicist Stephen Hawking in biopic "The Theory of Everything." Co-star Felicity Jones also earned a best actress nomination for her role as Hawking's wife, Jane Wilde Hawking.

"Foxcatcher," a biographical drama about DuPont heir John du Pont, who murdered the brother of Olympic wrestler Mark Schultz, picked up nods for best actor for Steve Carell and best supporting actor for Mark Ruffalo.

In the television category, ABC's irreverent comedy "Modern Family" earned the most nominations with four, including best cast in a comedy series.

Reuters



Director Alejandro Inarritu (3<sup>rd</sup> R) poses with actors Amy Ryan (L), Edward Norton (2<sup>nd</sup> L), Emma Stone (3<sup>rd</sup> L), Michael Keaton (2<sup>nd</sup> R) and Andrea Riseborough (R) during the photo call for the movie "Birdman or (The unexpected virtue of ignorance)" at the 71<sup>st</sup> Venice Film Festival on 27 Aug, 2014. — REUTERS



Angelina Jolie: My son Maddox became a teenager. That was a marker in my year.—PTI

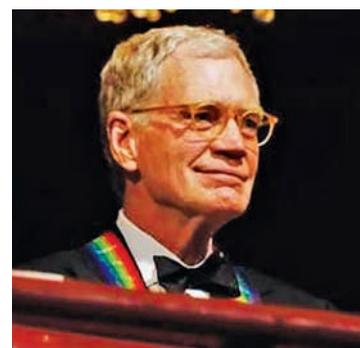
## Highlight of 2014 was son becoming teenager: Angelina Jolie

LOS ANGELES, 11 Dec — Hollywood actress-director Angelina Jolie has revealed her year highlight wasn't her wedding to beau Brad Pitt, but actually her eldest son Maddox becoming a teenager when he turned 13. The 'Maleficent' actress wed her long-term partner and fellow actor in August, but revealed her eldest son hitting 13 has been the most memorable moment of the year, reported *People* magazine. "My son Maddox became a teenager. That was a marker in my year," she said.

However, the 39-year-old star said she is simply thankful her family are fit and well, following a health scare last year which led to her having a double mastectomy to avoid the high possibility of contracting breast cancer. "More than anything, like any mom, I'm just happy the kids are healthy. I married their dad. My health is good," Jolie added.

The 'Unbroken' director's brood also includes Pax, 11, Zahara, nine, Shiloh, eight, and six-year-old twins Knox and Vivienne.—PTI

## David Letterman's final 'Late Show' set for 20 May



Late-night TV talk show host David Letterman is pictured on the balcony at the 2012 Kennedy Centre Honours at the Kennedy Centre in Washington on 2 Dec, 2012. —REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 11 Dec — Late night US talk show host David Letterman will anchor his final broadcast on 20 May before retiring and handing the reins of

the "Late Show" to Stephen Colbert, network CBS Corp said on Wednesday.

The comedian, known for his sardonic wit, announced his retirement in April. CBS has not said when Colbert, the host of Comedy Central's faux political news show "The Colbert Report," will begin as "Late Show" host.

Colbert's final broadcast of "The Colbert Report" is scheduled to air on 18 December.

Letterman, 67, began his late night career as the host of NBC's "Late Night" in 1982. He left that network in 1993 after losing out to Jay Leno to be the host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

Letterman's retirement marks the end of a generational shift in the late night TV landscape as networks look to attract younger audiences.—Reuters

## Cuba Gooding Jr, Sarah Paulson join 'American Crime Story'

LOS ANGELES, 11 Dec — 'Butler' actor Cuba Gooding Jr and 'American Horror Story' actress Sarah Paulson will star on 'American Crime Story: The People vs OJ Simpson', a new anthology series from Ryan Murphy.

Academy Award-winning actor Gooding Jr will portray the retired football player and convicted felon, while Paulson will play prosecutor Marcia Clark, reported *Ace Showbiz*.

The first season will tackle

the OJ Simpson trial told from the perspective of the lawyers that explores the chaotic behind-the-scenes dealings and maneuvering on both sides of the court, and how a combination of prosecution confidence, defence williness, and the LAPD's history with the city's African-American community gave a jury what it needed: reasonable doubt. It is based on Jeffrey Toobin's 'The Run of His Life: The People v OJ Simpson'.—PTI

## Nestle invests more in skin care strategy with 10 research centres

GENEVA, 11 Dec — Nestle on Thursday will announce plans to open 10 skin care research centres worldwide, deepening its investment in a faster-growing market for healthcare products.

The Swiss company, known globally for its chocolate bars, baby food and coffee, signaled a heightened interest in skin care earlier this year. It spent \$5.7 billion for the rights to some injectable wrinkle treatments of Valeant Pharmaceuticals and for L'Oreal's share of a dermatology joint venture the two operated.

Nestle is also spending about \$350 million on dermatology research and

development this year, said Humberto Antunes, chief executive of Nestle Skin Care.

The first of the new research hubs, dubbed Nestle Skin Health Investigation, Education and Longevity Development (SHIELD) centres, will open mid 2015 in New York, followed by Hong Kong and Sao Paulo, and later others in North America, Asia and Europe, Nestle said.

Antunes likened the centres to "a theme park" for scientists, academics and other experts in skin health.

"What we aspire to do is create an environment that is multi-disciplinary," Antunes said. "We're going



The logo of Nestle is seen on the company building in Mexico City, on 24 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

to put (known technologies) together so that we can discover new approaches to caring for the health of people."

Nestle knows skin health will be a growth mar-

ket, "certainly faster growing and more profitable than packaged foods and drinks," Kepler Cheuvreux analyst Jon Cox said. "But no one knows how it is really going to shape up."—Reuters

### MYANMAR TV

(12-12-2014, Friday)

- 6:00 am**  
\* Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
- 6:30 am**  
\* Physical Exercise
- 7:00 am**  
\* News / Weather Report
- 7:20 am**  
\* Hyper Sports
- 8:00 am**  
\* News / International News
- 8:35 am**  
\* TV Drama Series
- 9:45 am**  
\* Documentary (ASEAN)
- 10:00 am**  
\* News
- 10:20 am**  
\* Documentary
- 11:10 am**  
\* Clever
- 12:00 noon**  
\* News/ International News / Weather Report
- 12:30 pm**  
\* Myanmar Movies
- 3:45 pm**  
\* Musical Programme
- 4:40 pm**  
\* University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) —First Year (Botany)
- 5:00 pm**  
\* News
- 6:20 pm**  
\* Amazing World
- 7:20 pm**  
\* Teleplay
- 8:00 pm**  
\* News/ International News / Weather Report
- 8:35 pm**  
\* People Talks
- 9:00 pm**  
\* News
- 9:30 pm**  
\* Socio Economic Scenes
- \* Hyper Sports

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MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(12-12-14 07:00 am~ 13-12-14 07:00 am) MST

- \* Local News
- \* Enchanting Rakhine Land
- \* World News
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- \* Local News
- \* The Great Po Sein
- \* World News
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- \* Local News
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- \* In the Studio: Ki Ma
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## Aguirre mum on match-fixing allegations, targets world No 15 for Japan



Japan coach Javier Aguirre attends a Press conference in Tokyo on 10 Dec, 2014, at which he announced next year's fixtures for both the men's and women's national sides, and set the bar high for himself by targeting the top 15 in the 2015 world rankings. KYODO NEWS

TOKYO, 11 Dec — Japan coach Javier Aguirre did not take questions regarding his alleged involvement in a match-fixing scandal in Spain on Wednesday.

Aguirre attended a Press conference to announce next year's fixtures for both the men's and women's national sides, but did not touch on recent reports that Spanish prosecutors are investigating him for possibly being involved in a fix three years ago when he was manager of Zaragoza.

Aguirre instead set the bar high for himself by targeting the top 15 in the 2015 world rankings.

"We have the World Cup qualifiers next year

and my goal is to take the team to the top 15 in the world," the former Mexico coach said.

Aguirre has picked a provisional squad of 50 for the 9-31 January Asian Cup in Australia, and will name his final 23 on Monday. The Mexican said players he hasn't called up yet — like the J-League's two-time defending top scorer Yoshito Okubo and on-loan Arsenal winger Ryo Miyaichi — have every chance of featuring in the squad.

"If we win the Asian Cup, we can tackle the rest of 2015 feeling refreshed," Aguirre said.

"Of the 50, only seven have never played for the national team before.

Whether they play in Europe or in the J-League, I've been keeping a tab on all the players who are on the list. So even if I haven't called some of them up yet, it's possible they could be in the 23."

The Japan Football Association said Japan's first game after the 9-31 January Asian Cup in Australia will be on 27 March versus Tunisia at Oita, followed by a friendly at Ajinomoto Stadium four days later against opponents yet to be decided.

The draw for the first phase of 2018 World Cup qualifying will be held in April, with the campaign set to begin during the 8-16 June international dates.

Kyodo News

## Nearly 269,000 tons of plastic floating in world's oceans

WASHINGTON, 11 Dec — Nearly 269,000 tons of plastic pollution may be floating in the world's oceans, a study said on Wednesday.

Plastic pollution is ubiquitous throughout the oceans, yet estimates of the global abundance and weight of floating plastics have lacked data, particularly from the Southern Hemisphere and remote regions.

To better estimate the total number of plastic particles and their weight floating in the world's oceans, Marcus Eriksen from the Five Gyres Institute in the US and

colleagues used data from 24 expeditions collected over a six-year period between 2007 and 2013 across all five sub-tropical gyres, coastal Australia, Bay of Bengal, and the Mediterranean Sea.

The data included information about microplastics collected using nets and large plastic debris from visual surveys, which were then used to calibrate an ocean model of plastic distribution.

"This is the first study that compares all sizes of floating plastic in the world's oceans from the

largest items to small microplastics," said the study in the open-access journal PLOS ONE.

"Based on our model results, we estimate that at least 5.25 trillion plastic particles weighing 268,940 tons are currently floating at sea."

Large plastics appear to be abundant near coastlines, degrading into microplastics in the five subtropical gyres, and that the smallest microplastics were present in more remote regions, such as the subpolar gyres, it said.

Xinhua



A beach in the Azores is pictured littered with plastic garbage, in this undated handout photo obtained by Reuters on 9 Dec, 2014. —REUTERS

## Resurgent United keen to add to Liverpool's woes



Manchester United's Robin van Persie (R) celebrates after scoring his team's second goal during their English Premier League soccer match against Southampton at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England on 8 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

LONDON, 11 Dec — Manchester United will bid for a sixth straight Premier League victory to heap more misery on Brendan Rodgers and his beleaguered Liverpool side when the bitter rivals meet at Old Trafford on Sunday.

United, who finished seventh last season, continued to recover from their poor start to the campaign with a fortunate 2-1

win at high-flying Southampton on Monday that lifted them into third place for the first time since August 2013.

By contrast, last term's runners-up Liverpool are ninth and suffered an early Champions League exit with a 1-1 home draw in their final group game against FC Basel on Tuesday.

The Anfield club have struggled to recapture the form that



Liverpool's Steven Gerrard (L) celebrates after scoring his team's second goal during their English Premier League soccer match against Leicester City at the King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on 2 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

took them to the brink of the title and, after two wins in their last six league matches — including a 0-0 home draw with Sunderland on Saturday — they have 21 points.

United striker Robin van Persie scored both goals in the victory at Southampton and three strikes in as many games have helped silence the critics following his poor early form.

The Netherlands captain said he and his team mates, who are eight points adrift of leaders Chelsea with 28 after 15 games, are finding their top form.

"The next game is Liverpool, so we're looking forward to that," Van Persie said. "We are really happy that we are on the way up now. We have to keep the momentum going."

Table-topping Chelsea

will look to bounce back when third-bottom Hull City visit Stamford Bridge on Saturday after Jose Mourinho's side suffered their first defeat of the season in a 2-1 loss at Newcastle United last weekend.

Chelsea had already qualified for the Champions League last-16 with a game to spare before easing past Sporting Lisbon 3-1 in their final group game on Wednesday.

Second-placed Manchester City took full advantage of Chelsea's slip by moving within three points of the leaders with a battling 1-0 home win against Everton.

However, they will have to do without their top scorer Sergio Aguero, who could miss up to six weeks with a knee injury, for Saturday's trip to bottom club Leicester City.

City reached the Champions League knockout stage with a gritty 2-0 victory at AS Roma on Wednesday.

West Ham United, exceeding all expectations in fourth, visit Sunderland while Southampton, who have slipped to fifth, will look to halt a run of three straight defeats when they travel to second-bottom Burnley on Saturday.—Reuters

## Man City complete great escape in Rome

ROME, 11 Dec — Manchester City concluded one of the great Champions League Houdini acts on Wednesday as they qualified for the knockout stages with goals from Samir Nasri and Pablo Zabaleta sinking Roma 2-0 to eliminate the Italians at the Stadio Olimpico.

The Frenchman's 60<sup>th</sup>-minute thunderbolt, before he laid on a second for the Argentine in the 86<sup>th</sup> minute, ensured the English champions did not suffer another frustrating early exit in Group E.

City's great escape into the last 16 seemed unthinkable when they trailed in their penultimate game at home to Bayern Munich with just five minutes remaining before Sergio Aguero completed his famous hat-trick.

Victory or a score draw offered City's most realistic chance of progressing from the group behind Bayern Munich in a fevered atmosphere in Rome and even without their injured totem Aguero, Manuel Pellegrini's men produced a performance full of resolve.

Nasri, given too much space on the edge of the box, hammered a glorious 20-metre shot which cannoned off the post and into the net, and City defended manfully before Nasri freed the rampaging Zabaleta to score his first Champions League goal.

"People wrote us off without our key players (like Aguero and Vincent Kompany) but we're a strong unit, we believed in what we could do," City keeper Joe Hart told Sky Sports.

"You don't win two Premier League titles in three years easily. We have resolve, character and fantastic players. Add that together and you've got a chance."

With various permutations at the start of the night leaving it possible for Roma, City or CSKA Moscow to join Bayern in the last 16, the game effectively became an Anglo-Italian shootout once news of Bayern's early lead over the Russians filtered through. The English champions had their moments in the first half, especially when James Milner twice forced sharp saves from Morgan De Sanctis.

Hart then stepped up with some crucial stops from the moment he spread himself to block

Jose Holebas's fifth minute shot from point-blank range.

As the hour mark approached, Roma seemed to be running out of ideas when the inform Nasri celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> appearance in the competition with a marvellous goal.

Roma, by now needing to score twice, came closest when Hart made another crucial intervention to push Kostas Manolas's header on to the post and Martin Demichelis blocked a shot on the line before Zabaleta calmed City nerves.

Roma had the minor consolation of qualifying for the Europa League, ahead of CSKA Moscow who lost 3-0 at Bayern in their final group match.

Reuters



AS Roma Radja Nainggolan (R) challenges Manchester City Jesus Navas during their Champions League group E soccer match at the Olympic stadium in Rome on 10 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

## Neymar rocket helps Barca secure top spot



Barcelona's Neymar celebrates after scoring a goal against Paris St Germain during their Champions League Group F soccer match at the Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona on 10 Dec, 2014.—REUTERS

BARCELONA, 11 Dec — Neymar scored a spectacular goal as Barcelona came from behind to beat Paris St Germain 3-1 in their Champions League showdown for top spot in Group F on Wednesday. Former Barcelona striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic put the French side ahead after 15 minutes with their first threat on goal but Lionel Messi restored parity as he maintained his remarkable scoring form with his eighth goal in Europe this season.

The Argentine slotted in at the far post from a Luis Suarez cross and although they continued to look exposed at the back, Neymar scored with a drive from distance which nestled in the corner of the net. It was a disjointed performance from Barca and they were hanging on before Suarez knocked in a rebound from a Neymar shot that was saved by Salvatore Sirigu. The win put them on 15 points, two more than PSG who beat Barca in France.

Messi extended his Champions League scoring record to 75 goals and now has three more than

arch-rival Cristiano Ronaldo.

Barca coach Luis Enrique decided on an experimental three-man defence in the absence of suspended right back Dani Alves with Pedro and Neymar playing wide on the wing. There were no surprises in the PSG team who were hoping to take advantage of Barca's defensive frailties led by the towering Ibrahimovic who proved his fitness after injury with a double in the weekend victory over Nantes in Ligue 1. Barca's build-up play was more tentative than assured and PSG tore through them on the counter with Ibrahimovic given time plenty of space in the centre of the penalty area to score. The Catalan side hit back through Messi and Neymar but Luis Enrique's tactical plan was exposed at the other end with clear chances for Lucas and Edinson Cavani. There was desperate last-ditch defending from Barca in the second half with Barca looking ragged but the introduction of Ivan Rakitic and Xavi helped settle the team before Suarez's goal finished off the contest.—Reuters

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