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President urges to review safety policies as 114 die in landslide

Aye Min Soe

FOLLOWING a recent deadly landslide at a jade mining site in Hpakant, Kachin State, President U Thein Sein spoke on the weakness of safety enforcement and regulations at risky work sites in his message to the country.

He expressed a deep sorrow for the deaths in the 11 November landslide at a mountain of dump soil, stressing that the tragedy was a message to the country to review safety policies and practices.

It is necessary to 'strictly enforce' safety rules as well as provide safety equipment to allow quick responses to accidents at work sites, said the president.

Local authorities in Hpakant are making arrangements to provide the necessary assistance to the relatives of victims, he added.

U Min Zar Ni, Senior Technical and Policy Analyst of the Myanmar EITI, pointed out weakness in the technology used for dumping soils from mines, suggesting the adoption of long-term policies for dumping soil.

The Ministry of Mines has adopted rules for the dumping of soil but has been weak to monitor and enforce those rules," he said to *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

The expert also suggested raising awareness of 'risk factors' in mining areas in regards to landslides, such a program would be aimed at proving knowledge to mine workers and the local authorities.

U Khet Htain Nan, an MP



Miners search for jade stones at a mine dump at a Hpakant jade mine in Kachin state on 25 November. PHOTO: REUTERS/SOE ZEYA TUN

from Kachin State, brought the issue of frequent landslides in Hpakant to the parliament on 30 November, stressing the need to make amendments to the Myanmar Gems Law in order to guarantee the safety and livelihoods of local people. He also pointed out the weakness of law enforcement for jade mining operations, which

has failed to prevent the dumping of waste soil. The regulation of transportation, environmental conservation and marketing in the jade industry was also highlighted.

"The environment in Hpakant has been deteriorating for about 40 years. Environmental conservation is very weak and companies have used lots of heavy

machinery in their jade mining operations," said the MP at the parliamentary meeting.

In an effort to prevent future landslides, local authorities have planned to inspect mountains of dump soil routinely, according to Hpakant Township Administration Office.

"We have relocated 108 mi-

grant miners living in high risk areas to a safety site which is about 3,000 ft away from the local mountains of dump soil," said U Tint Swe Myint, the Hpakant Township Administration Officer in an interview with *The Global New Light of Myanmar* yesterday over the phone.

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Draft of political dialogue framework released to further peace process

Ye Myint

SPOKESPERSONS representing political parties, the government and ethnic ceasefire signatories assured *The Global New Light of Myanmar* daily that political dialogue is at hand following an approved draft framework at a press conference yesterday.

A 24-member drafting committee approved a draft political dialogue framework which was drawn up by a team of three members from each group at Myanmar Peace Centre in Yangon yesterday.

"Political dialogue will be held in accord with the timeline – within 90 days of the inking of the ceasefire agreement", said Dr Salai

Lian Hmung Sakhong of Chin National Front, one of the ceasefire signatory groups.

We moved a step closer to a solution to the country's political problems through political means as the draft political dialogue framework was approved today", U Sai Kyaw Nyunt of Shan Nationalities League for Democracy

representing political parties on the drafting committee said.

An agreement was reached on the final round of the drafting committee meeting that stakeholders will have the same ratio of representation in political dialogue, the ethnic spokesperson added.

"The details will be revealed after the UPDJC meeting", said Dr

Kyaw Yin Hlaing, another spokespersons representing the government. According to the drafting committee the approved framework will be submitted to the Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee-UPDJC for further approval.

The UPDJC meeting is scheduled to be held on 14 December in Nay Pyi Taw.

Tourist arrivals expected to top seven million by 2020

Singapore has topped the tourism investors list with US\$1477.164 million, according to the ministry's official figure

Khaing Thanda Lwin

MYANMAR'S tourism industry has a great future, said Hotel and Tourism Union Minister U Htay Aung at a press conference yesterday while inviting investors to make entrepreneurial inroads, especially on the country's hundreds of islands.

Myanmar will top the list of tourist destinations, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council's estimation about the future prospects and sustainable development of 180 countries between 2015 and 2025, based on tourism contribution to the GDP ratio, development rate, employment opportunities, investments and exports.

The country sees a massive influx of tourist every year.

Tourist arrivals up until now have reached more than 4.2 million, with the ministry estimating that the number will increase up to 5 million by April next year.

According to the ministry's master plan (2013-2020) based on the country's conditions, tourist arrivals are estimated to hit 7.49 million by 2020.

According to the official figures, there are 1,276 hotels with nearly 50,000 rooms across the country. The ministry has assumed that this number can satisfy increasing demands for hotel rooms to accommodate the rising number of tourists.

Singapore has topped the tourism investors list with US\$1477.164 million, followed by Vietnam with \$440 million and Thailand with \$343.13 million.



The beauty of Bagan, one of the main tourist destinations in Myanmar. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

The number of tourism companies has increased to 1,922 from 1,670 in 2014, 1,822 of which are citizen-owned com-

panies. There were only around 600 such companies last year.

Transportation plays an essential part in tourism develop-

ment, the Union Minister said, who added the country needs to focus on infrastructural development and improving services.

Respect-paying ceremony for seasoned literati held in Yangon

TO MARK the country's Literati's Day (Sarsodaw Day), the Myanmar Journalists Association organised a ceremony to pay respect to the seasoned literati at Yangon's City Hall yesterday, Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint was in attendance.

A total of 115 doyen literati were presented K100,000

(US\$80.15) each and offertories by the well-wishers.

About 100 donors provided K 26,234,111 (\$21,026.82) and offertories worth K4,280,000 (\$3430.45) to the literati.

Hanthawaddy U Ohn Kyaing urged the junior journalists to maintain the role of the country's media industry.—Yi Yi Myint Ohnma Thant



Journalists pay respect to old-aged literati at ceremony to mark Literati's Day. PHOTO: YI YI MYINT

Ancient palm-leaf inscriptions of U Po Thee Repository in Thahton to be digitised



Ancient palm-leaf inscriptions is being digitised at U Po Thee Repository of Thatdhammazawtikayama Monastery in Thahton. PHOTO: THET OO-THAHTON

TO ensure the imperishability of the ancient palm-leaf inscriptions kept at the historic U Po Thee Repository of Thatdhammazawtikayama Monastery at Myatabeit Hill- Base, in Thahton town, the Thuwunnabumi Pariyati Satanahita Association intends to digitise the inscriptions, according to association secretary U Soe Naung Oo.

He added that the cataloged inscriptions will be available online and can be downloaded as a PDF.

"The palm-leaf inscriptions are 130-250 years old. Pali, Mon and Myanmar-language as well as foreign researchers come to study the inscriptions. As they are very delicate and becoming too vulnerable to handle often we are making the digitised archive instead," said U Soe Naung Oo.

Thahton's University of Computer Science had help a lot

in the process, he said.

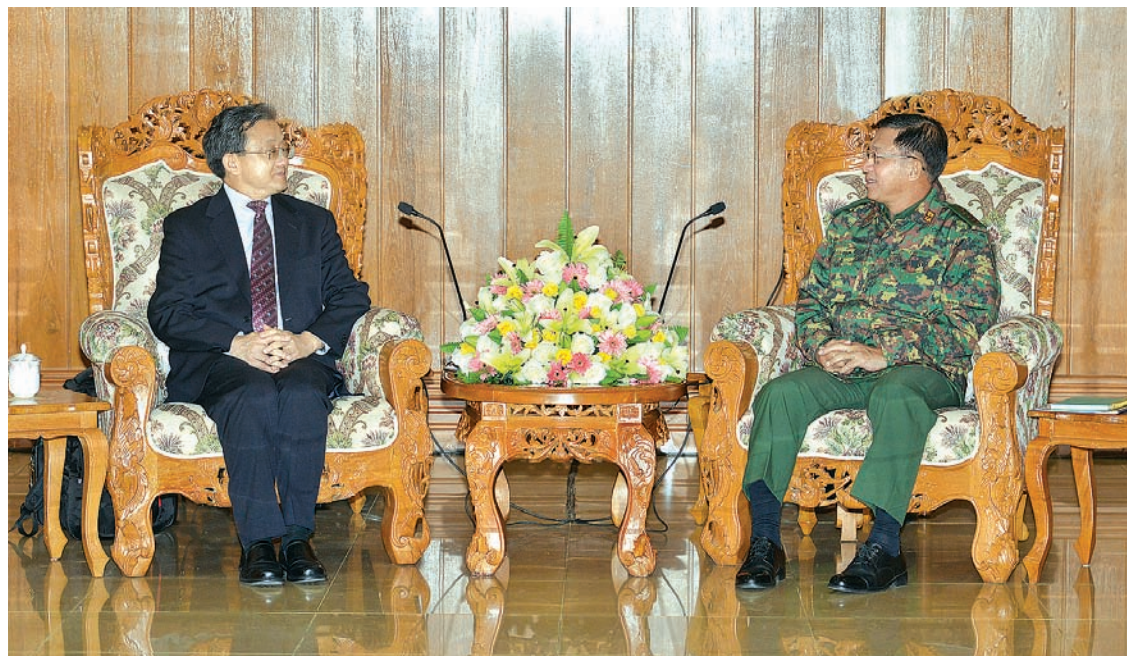
The palm-leaf inscriptions were first collected, preserved and kept 90 years ago by association chairman U Po Thee. They were used by the Sangha to study before their annual Pariyati examinations. The association has continued to maintain the repository, which is in southern Myanmar Tannithayi Region.

The total of 166,900 palm-leaf inscriptions were kept in gold gilded cupboards at the repository. The inscriptions are in forms of 788 palm-leaf packages and 28 tablet-folds.

At present, 156,900 palm-leaf inscriptions have been digitised with a further 10,000 needing to be processed.

Publication Administrator Dr William Pruitt of Pali Text Society(UK) said he was delighted to hear the news.—(The Oo-Thahton)

Commander-in-Chief meets Special Envoy from Chinese Government



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Special Envoy of the Chinese Government Mr Liu Zhenmin. PHOTO: MYAWADY

COMMANDER-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met Special Envoy of the Chinese Government Mr Liu Zhenmin who also serves as a Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Defence Services Academy in PyinOoLwin yesterday. Both sides discussed Myanmar's reform processes, the Tatmadaw's role in the post-election period, efforts to strengthen relations between the two armed forces, border region manage-

ment and matters related to cooperation between the two sides.

Also present at the meeting were senior military officers and the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar.—*Myawady*

A call to act on mines

>> From page 1

Currently, local authorities have formed 11 inspection teams at the ward-village level and have carried out inspections at 11 mountains of dump soil. This will continue to occur twice per week.

Meanwhile, a township-level inspection team is conducting inspections there every Saturday, said U Tint Swe Myint.

In Hpakant, there have been 37 landslides of dumped soil, in-

cluding the 11 November landslide, which killed more than 114 migrant miners searching for jade in the piles of waste soil on the mountainside.

So far, 70 makeshift tents in the at-risk area have been removed, according to local authorities.

"If we find conditions that show that landslides can happen in the mountains, we will stop companies from dumping waste soil

there," said U Tin Swe Myint.

The deadly landslide was caused by the collapse of a 200-foot mountain of dump soil. It buried around 70 makeshift huts located in the ravine between two mountains of dump soil, killing 114 migrant miners.

The dump soil was deposited there by jade mining companies.

Only five huts in the ravine escaped the landslide, according to a local resident.

Disaster Management Training Centre opened in Ayeyawady Delta

THE Disaster Management Training Centre, the first ever for Myanmar, was opened in Hinthada, Ayeyawady Region, on Friday.

In her opening remarks at the ceremony to inaugurate the cen-

tre, Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin pledged that the government will assist people who are hit by natural disasters and will provide social protection to them in line with the Myanmar National Strategic Plan on Social Protection.

The government is also taking disaster management measures in accordance with the country's Disaster Management Law and its rules, she added.

A total of 60 youths including staff from the ministry and locals who are interested in disaster management will receive training at the newly opened centre for 12 days. The centre has a plan to conduct a diploma course as well as pre- and post-graduate courses on disaster management and research courses in the future.

Following the opening ceremony, the course No. 1/2015 on Disaster Management will kick off at the centre.

The centre was built on 22 acres and had been under construction since the 2013-2014 fiscal year.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin opens the Disaster Management Training Centre in Hinthada, Ayeyawady Region. PHOTO: MNA

President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Finland

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Sauli Vainamo Niinisto, President of the Republic of Finland on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Finland, which falls on 6 December 2015.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Finland

U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Juha Sipila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Finland, which falls on 6 December 2015.—*Myanmar News Agency*

U Wunna Maung Lwin sends message of felicitations to Finland

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Timo Juhani Soini, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Finland on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Finland, which falls on 6 December 2015.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ambassador Appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Thura U Thet Oo Maung, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Arab Republic of Egypt, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Korea.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ambassador Appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Daw Yin Yin Myint, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Republic of Germany, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Finland.—*Myanmar News Agency*



U Wunna Maung Lwin and wife are welcomed by Thai Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Pisanu Suvanajata on his arrival at a reception for marking the Thailand National Day and Thai Emperor's Birthday in Yangon on 5 December. PHOTO: MNA

JPN Govt to fund four projects in Myanmar

UNDER the Japanese Grant Assistance programme for the Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) the Japanese Government will provide a total of US\$ 472,521 to four projects in Myanmar.

The grant contracts were signed by Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Mr Tateshi Higuchi and chairmen of the committees from the state and regions concerned on Friday.

According to the press release of the Japanese Embassy on Friday, the grant fund would be shared between the

project for construction of Prosthetic Orthotic Building in Mandalay Orthopedic Hospital in Chanmyatharsi Township, the project for construction Ye Na Thar village Monastic Post Primary School in Madaya Township, Mandalay, the project for Construction of Moe Mauk Basic Education High School in Moe Mauk Township, Kachin State, and the project for Construction of Kwin Kauk Basic Education High School in Ingapu Township, Ayeyarwady Region.—*GNLM*



Ambassador Mr Tateshi Higuchi shakes hands with a responsible person from Moe Mauk Township after signing grant contract for construction of Moe Mauk Basic Education High School.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY JAPANESE EMBASSY

Telenor launches e-learning video courses at its light houses



Children pursue lessons through e-learning video. PHOTO: TELENOR

TELENOR Myanmar has begun piloting novel e-learning video courses at selected Telenor Light-houses to help develop the basic computer literacy and English language skills of the local communities.

E-learning video courses will offer affordable, quality basic computer literacy skills in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and English education.

U Min Thu, head of Myanmar Telenor Corporate Social Responsibilities, said the courses will benefit communities, particularly children from low income households.

Apart from e-Education courses, the Light Houses offer mobile and computer training including how to use mobile inter-

net, Viber, Facebook and basic computer skills, like using Microsoft Word.

“Students can self-learn computer literacy and English courses by following the instructions on the instructional videos. They will be supervised by the Lighthouse entrepreneurs in case they have any questions. We aim to expand the project at Light Houses nationally if the pilot is successful,” U Min Thu said.

Telenor aims to improve digital literacy through nationwide initiatives for school-children and boost user adoption of mobile connectivity and Internet in rural areas. The centres are run by local entrepreneurs and will be open to anyone in the local community.—*GNLM*

CRIME NEWS

Two men accused of street-level drug dealing in Yangon

TWO men accused of street-level drug dealing were arrested in Yangon along with two others who were believed to be drug users earlier this week as a result of an undercover narcotic investigation, police said Saturday.

Acting-on tip off, an an-

ti-drug squad searched a taxi in Kyauktada Township and discovered 33 tablets printed ‘WY’ and one green stimulant.

After interrogating the driver a further three suspects, who are believed to be connected with selling stimulant tablets, were arrested the next day.

Of the four suspects, two are believed to be users and the other two are street-level dealers, police said.

The 1993 Anti-Drug Law calls for up to a five-year jail term if a man uses drugs and up to five years jail for dealing.—*Myint Maung*

Snatcher gets caught in Lanmadaw township

AN elderly woman has been charged with robbery after looting a gold chain from a passing woman, according to a police station in Lanmadaw township, Yangon Region.

On 1 December, Ma Aye

Thein followed Ma Ei Ei Soe in Lanmadaw township, asking for help and saying that she wanted a gold chain similar to what the victim was wearing.

When the victim showed

the gold chain, she snatched and ran away with it but had to drop it as the victim shouted for help. The people nearby helped catch the culprit and brought her to the police station.—*Myint Maung*

Fire at Myanmar Railways compound in Einmae

A FIRE broke out at the Myanmar Railways office compound in Nyaungwaing village of Einmae township in delta Ayeyawaddy Region, on Saturday at around 2 pm.

Early reports stated that two staff quarters were burnt down.

Firefighters of the Township Fire Services Department came to extinguish the fire, which was put out at around 2:40 pm.

The cause and cost of the damage is under investigation, said an official.—*Htay Htay Hlaing-Einmae IPRD*

Pickpocketed girl found by police officer

OFFICERS of the Yangon Region police Force have recently been patrolling on the lookout for cases of pickpocketing and robberies around Dagon Township. A pickpocketing suspect was arrested at the Shwedagon Pagoda.

Ma Mar Lar (a) Khin Mar, a 19 year-old was arrested for stealing K 4000 and a wallet from a female visitor to the pagoda. The Dagon Myoma police station opened files with Pa 241/2015, under section 379/54 of the criminal code.—*Myint Maung*

More than 126 Buddhist monks, nuns to do Sediyinga Exam

MORE than 156 Buddhist monks and nuns will do at examination for Sediyinga at the Shwedagon Pagoda from 5 to 11 December.

The ceremony to open the examination was held at the pagoda yesterday. During the ceremony, the congregation took

the Five Precepts from Chauk-hetgyi Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nandaw Barsa and Kalaywa Tawya Sayadaw Bhaddanta Zargara Bhivumsa delivered a speech.

The examination turns into 32th times this year.—Zaw Min Latt



Buddhist monks do Sediyinga examination at the Shwedagon Pagoda. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT



Officials of Myanmar and China shake hands during a handover ceremony of aids. PHOTO: MNA

Aluzinc sheets donated by Yunnan Province arrive in Mandalay

ALUZINC sheets donated from by the People's Government of Yunnan Province, China, for house roofing in Rakhine State arrived in Mandalay on Friday.

A total of 200,000 aluzinc sheets measuring seven feet by 3 feet were transported from China on 24 October by truck.

They are currently being stored at the government's warehouses, according to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

"An official ceremony to hand over the aluzinc sheets to the Myanmar government is set to be held in the second week of December in Nay Pyi Taw," said U Soe Naing, Permanent Secre-

tary of the ministry.

The donation comes after the meeting between President U Thein Sein and the Communist party secretary of the Yunnan Province in Kunming during the president's visit to the 70th Anniversary of the Second World War.

Heavy rain from June to early November hit 14 regions and states including Sagaing and Magway regions, Rakhine and Chin states, displacing more than 1,692,000.

Aid from local and foreign donors for the people in flood-hit areas have been distributed and cash (kyat and dollars) have been collected for spending on reconstruction.—Myanmar News Agency

US plans to amend trade sanctions on Myanmar

THE United States is planning to ease trade sanctions on Myanmar, following the complaints of banks about the limitations of monetary transfer through the Asia World's port terminal, a company blacklisted by the US.

The suspension of some sanctions is expected to come into effect next week. This move is seen as the US's willingness to promote economic ties with the country because it successfully held its historic general elections on 8 November.

The trade volume between the two countries is small but

growing. The bilateral trade rose from \$185 million in 2014 to US\$306.1 million in the first 10 months of 2015.

Three years ago, the White House suspended its sanctions on Myanmar in terms of investment and trade in recognition of the country's political and economic reform.

At the request of US business people, the US Department of the Treasury took the matter of easing the sanctions into consideration, with reports saying that the Obama administration is preparing to amend sanctions on the country.—Myanmar News Agency

Refilling station construction causes fire concern



Refilling station is under construction in Mahlaing. PHOTO: STRINGER

CONSTRUCTION of a refilling station downtown has made residents of Mahlaing, Meiktila District, concerned regarding the risk of fire.

"We have lodged complaints

about the construction of the refilling station to local authorities because it is located very near school. We don't any chance of accidents" said U Win Maung, a resident of Mahlaing.

Residents have requested the local authorities move the construction site to another location outside the town. Currently, there are four refilling stations in the township.—013 (Mahlaing)

Thais celebrate king's birthday amid widening royal insult probe

BANGKOK — Thais marked the birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest-reigning monarch yesterday, by giving alms at temples around the country.

Celebrations in Thailand, where the monarch's birthday is also national Father's Day, come amid a widening police investigation into a group of people charged with insulting the monarchy.

Ten people, including senior police and military officers, have been charged with a range of offences, including corruption and alleged royal defamation, over their involvement in two nationwide cycling events aimed at celebrating the royals.

Two suspects have died in military custody.

Criticism of Thailand's monarchy is outlawed by draconian lese majeste laws that provide for jail sentences of up to 15 years for each perceived

insult to the monarchy.

Since taking power in a May 2014, the ruling junta has cracked down on perceived royal insults and has doled out record jail sentences of up to 60 years for lese majeste offences.

The royal insult investigation comes amid growing concern over the health of the king, who is highly revered by Thais, and the question of succession — an issue which will dominate political developments in the Southeast Asian country.

King Bhumibol, who turns 88, was last seen in public on 1 September, and officials say he will not be making a public appearance on his birthday.

The king has spent the past few months at a Bangkok hospital where he was treated for 'water on the brain', or hydrocephalus, a build-up of cerebrospinal fluid that surrounds the brain.

He cancelled a public appear-



Citizens gather at an open ground to observe the King Bhumibol Adulyadej's 88th birthday inside the Siriraj Hospital, where the King currently lives, in Bangkok, Thailand, on 5 December. PHOTO: XINHUA

ance to mark his birthday last year, on medical advice.

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn is expected to carry out ceremonies to mark his father's birthday, including an evening candle-lighting ceremony in Bangkok to pay tribute to

the king. Having reigned for nearly seven decades, King Bhumibol is the only monarch that most Thais have known, and anxiety over the eventual succession is seen as an aggravating factor in Thailand's bitter political divide.

"I have a deep love for him

and want him to be healthy," said Suchada Charan, a retiree from Bangkok, after giving alms to Buddhist monks in honour of the king's birthday.

"Father's Day in Thailand is the king's day. He is our father," she said.—Reuters

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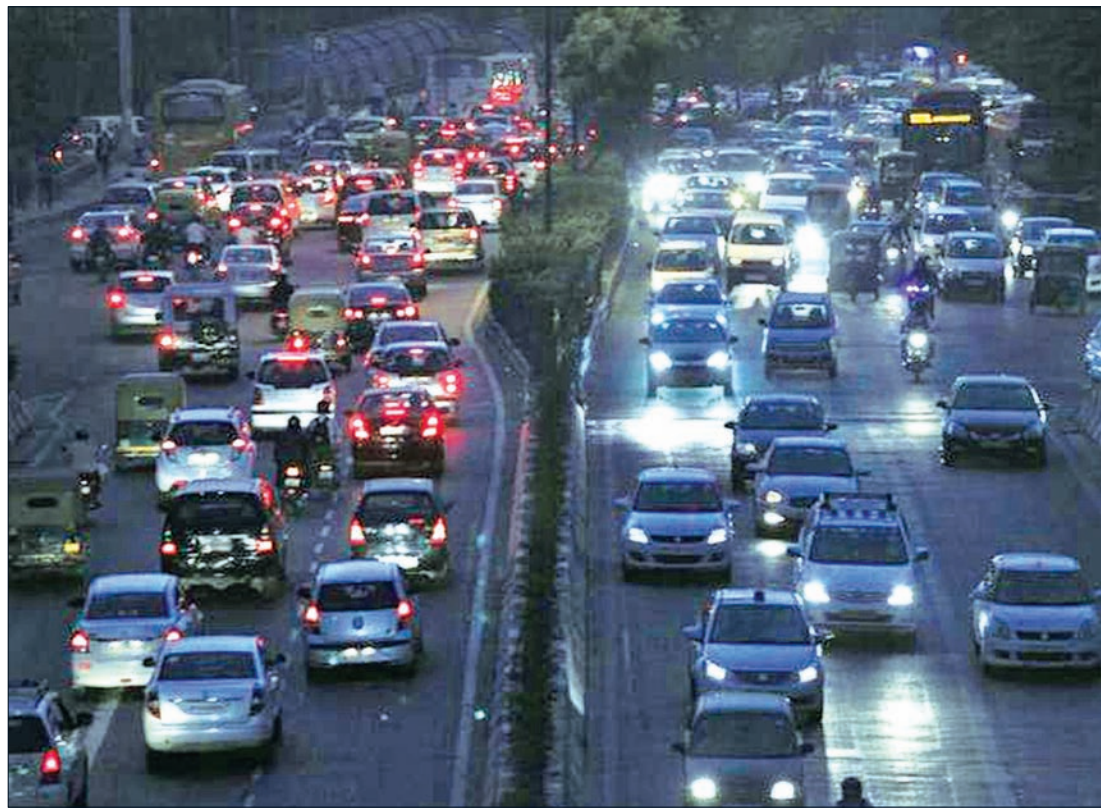
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New Delhi to ration road use by registration number to cut pollution



Heavy traffic moves along a busy road during the evening in New Delhi in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW DELHI — India's capital will soon ban private cars from its roads on alternate days, according to their registration numbers, in an attempt to improve air quality in the world's most polluted city.

Smog has blanketed New Delhi this week, as countries try to thrash out a deal to fight climate change at a UN summit in Paris.

"Particularly in winter when the pollution is high, we will implement for some time odd-and-even-number vehicle opera-

tions," Delhi Chief Secretary K.K. Sharma told reporters on Friday after an emergency meeting. "We will make all efforts to start it from the first of January." The government will run extra buses and ask the metro rail network to increase its services to cope with more people, he said. It will also consider shutting down inefficient coal power plants. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said implementation would be a challenge.

"But something urgent need-

ed to be done in view of the emergency situation," he tweeted. "Let's assess after trying for a few days."

The World Health Organisation said last year India had 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world, and poor air caused hundreds of thousands of premature deaths each year. The federal government is planning to force all commercial trucks more than 15 years old off the road from April and is reviewing how it checks vehicle emissions.—Reuters

Lee Kuan Yew: The Straits Times Asian of the Year 2015

SINGAPORE — Singapore's late Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew is awarded The Straits Times Asian of the Year 2015, which has been given posthumously for the first time, announced Singapore Press Holdings Ltd in a press release yesterday.

The Straits Times Asian of the Year recognises an individual or organisation that has contributed significantly to improving lives either at home or in the wider neighbourhood. The editors of the newspaper picked the late prime minister, who passed away on 23 March at the age of 91, as their choice from a crowded field for the annual award.

Lee Kuan Yew had been respected as the architect of Singapore's prosperity, transforming it from a port city into a wealthy global hub.

"He played key roles in introducing policies and attracting investments that turned Singapore into a modern, economic success story," said the citation bestowing this year's award posthumously on Lee Kuan Yew.

Warren Fernandez, editor of *The Straits Times* who chairs the editorial board that picks the Asian of the Year, said that very few people in Asia have influenced their nations and their neighborhood as Lee Kuan Yew did in his long years as national leader and international statesman.—Xinhua

Malaysia arrests five with suspected IS, al-Qaeda links

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia's police said yesterday that it had arrested five people, including a European employed as a teacher, on suspicion of links with militant groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda.

Malaysia is on heightened alert after reports on Friday that ten Syrians linked to Islamic State entered neighbouring Thailand in October to attack Russian interests.

Police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said in a statement that four of those arrested were foreign nationals and one was a Malaysian. The arrests were made between 17 November and 1 December.

Among them was a 44-year-old European who was employed as a temporary teacher in the state of Penang, and had links with al-Qaeda and allegedly participated in militant activities in Afghanistan and Bosnia, the police said.

Three other suspects — a 31-year-old Indonesian man, a Malaysian and a Bangladeshi — were part of a cell linked to the Islamic State (IS) group and are being tasked with recruiting volunteers to take part in militant activities overseas. The leader of the cell was the Indonesian who is said to have vowed allegiance to IS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi through Facebook in 2014.

"He, along with the Malaysian national, is suspected of acting as facilitator to organise individuals from Malaysia and some Southeast Asian countries to join the Islamic State in Syria," said Khalid.

Southeast Asia faces the threat of Islamic State-inspired attacks designed to "glamorise terrorism", a Malaysian minister said last month, voicing fears of battle-hardened fighters returning from Syria to launch Paris-style attacks. In September, Malaysian police thwarted a plot to detonate bombs in Kuala Lumpur's vibrant tourist area of Bukit Bintang.—*Reuters*

Exceptional objects, treasures from British Museum on display in Singapore

SINGAPORE — An exhibition of 237 exceptional objects and treasures from the British Museum opened to the public at the National Museum of Singapore yesterday.

This is the first time that collections of the British Museum have been presented as a comprehensive exhibition in Southeast Asia.

The exhibition showcases the personal collections by Sir Stamford Raffles when he was in Southeast Asia and many precious artefacts, including paintings from Cave 17 of China's Dunhuang, two 11th-century chess pieces discovered on

the Hebridean Island of Lewis off the northwest coast of Scotland, and an exquisitely painted mummy board from ancient Egypt.

The oldest object in the exhibition is a stone handaxe from Tanzania made around 800,000 years ago, while the most recent artefact dates to 2013.

The exhibition will last till 29 May, 2016, during which visitors can also enjoy public programs such as workshops, curated tours, and lectures by representatives from the British Museum and other historians, as well as theater performances in the gallery.—*Xinhua*

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Contestant Ding Yi from Kunming of southwest China's Yunnan Province makes up for a dog during a pet beautician competition in Nanning, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 4 December. PHOTO: XINHUA

Sri Lankan securities regulator arrested for misappropriation

COLOMBO — A top securities regulator was arrested on Friday in Sri Lanka on suspicion of financial misappropriation, a police spokesman said.

Dharmika Perera, the deputy director of the Sri Lankan Securities and Exchange Commission, is now under compulsory leave.

He was arrested by the Financial Crime Investigation Department, police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said, after a seven-month investigation of a suspected 5 million-rupee (\$34,940) misappropriation that occurred in 2013.

The money was given to a youth organisation, Tharuyata Hetak or "Better Tomorrow for Youth", headed by Namal Rajapaksa, a parliamentarian and the eldest son of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa,

police said. Perera headed the SEC investigation unit in Rajapaksa's government.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, addressing a function at the Colombo Stock Exchange on Wednesday said the country needs an efficient and transparent stock market and want Colombo Stock Exchange to grow and become the centre for South Asia.

"It also requires complete confidence in the stock exchange so it's best you address these issues for yourself," Wickremesinghe said at a ceremony in Colombo to mark 30 years of the foundation of the Colombo Stock Exchange on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka's stock market index .CSE plummeted over 36 percent after reaching a record high of 7,863.74 points on 15 February 2011.—*Reuters*

Protests greet Australia's first returning nuclear waste

SYDNEY — Anti-nuclear protesters in rubber dinghies and water police shadowed a vessel carrying a shipment of reprocessed nuclear waste as it docked yesterday at an Australian port after a two-month voyage from France.

Environment group Greenpeace questioned the safety of transporting the 25 tonnes of waste, which originally came from an Australian reactor producing radioactive isotopes for industrial and medical uses and was sent overseas for treatment.

Now embedded in glass and inside a reinforced protective container, it is the first such shipment to be returned to Australia after reprocessing to make it safe for long-term storage.

A small number of protesters were among those who greeted the ship, the BBC Shanghai, as it docked amid tight security and a heavy police presence at

Port Kembla, south of Sydney, on Saturday afternoon, witnesses said.

Greenpeace spokeswoman Emma Gibson questioned the choice of vessel used for the journey from Cherbourg in northern France, and said details of the shipment from the Australian government did not tally with those released by French authorities.

"We followed the ship all the way in, as far as we can. We are going to be documenting its handling and following it all the way to Lucas Heights," Gibson told Reuters.

Unloading is due to take place overnight and the waste will be transported by road to the Lucas Heights reactor in Sydney, where it originally came from.

It will be stored at Lucas Heights until Australia has a permanent storage site for spent nuclear waste. The country does

not have the capacity to reprocess nuclear waste.

Australia's nuclear regulators have rejected criticism of the shipment and said there was "no credible chance of any incident" during transport.

Australia produced the waste and had a responsibility to take it back, said Phil McCall, spokesman for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO).

"It is in line with international best practices that the countries that benefit have the responsibility to deal with the waste," he said.

Australia is a major exporter of uranium ore. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull triggered controversy recently by suggesting the country should expand its role in nuclear energy by preparing and leasing out fuel rods to other countries and then storing the nuclear waste.—*Reuters*

China says to start claiming compensation from polluters

SHANGHAI — The Chinese government plans to begin claiming compensation from polluting companies and individuals, particularly those who damage state property, over the next two years, China's cabinet has said.

The State Council said on its website late on Thursday it would trial the policy in a few provinces before rolling it out nationwide in 2018. The plan would cover air, water and soil pollution, as well as damage to plants and animals.

China already allows government-registered environmental organisations that have been operating for at least five years to launch legal action against polluters.

High pollution levels have sparked widespread social unrest and become a major concern for China's leadership. Environmentalists say China's big polluters routinely exceed government emission limits.

China's capital Beijing suffered choking pollution this week, triggering an "orange" alert, the second-highest level, closing highways, halting or suspending construction and prompting a warning to residents to stay indoors.

That coincided with a meeting of world leaders in Paris to address climate change. China said after the meeting on Wednesday it would cut emissions of major pollutants in its power sector by 2020.—*Reuters*

OPINION

Change is a constant rather than transitory process

Kyaw Thura

It is undeniable that public engagement in the political process has gathered pace over the past five years as a direct consequence of the government's relaxations of political restrictions.

A good example of this is the wider participation of political parties in the 8 November election, which was internationally recognised as the freest and fairest of the country in 25 years.

It is no exaggeration to assume that the successful completion of the elections marks an important milestone in the history of our country during its smooth transition to democracy. In other words, the incumbent government has set a good example to governments to come.

In retrospect, every future government of our country is to shoulder the responsibility for further success in democratic reform by paying undivided attention to such crucial issues as stability and sustainable development.

It is therefore safe to say that the political situation in the country has reached a crucial junction in cultivating a new political culture of inclusive participation and closer cooperation so as to realise a win-win situation through negotiation.

It is understandable that there exist certain concerns about the smooth transfer of power to the incoming government in such a transitional period. In this respect, President U Thein Sein and Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing have often reassured the public and political parties about the smooth handover at every opportunity.

Ensuring a peaceful transition to democracy is as crucial as sustaining peace and stability. After all, these two obligations are the immediate political exigencies that call for all the political forces to collectively participate and make combined efforts in this process.

Write for us

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

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

POEM

Uphill

A poem by Christina Rosetti sent to The Global New Light of Myanmar by U San Maung of Bago

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Rosetti

The Health Benefits of Lemongrass

Khin Maung Myint

TODAY people all over the world are becoming more and more aware of the benefits of the herbal plant: lemongrass. Most of us know the lemongrass as a kind of spice used in cooking. In the past it was mostly used in Asian countries to spice up their foods. However, the lemongrass is becoming very popular worldwide, not only as a culinary ingredient, but also as a health drink. The lemongrass teas are on the menus of many restaurants around the world.

So, what are the reasons behind this growing craze for the lemongrass teas? They are not only refreshing and pleasant to drink, but are also packed with nutrients and properties that benefit the health. The lemongrass is a rich source of vitamins A and C, folate, folic acid, magnesium, zinc, copper, iron, potassium, phosphorous, calcium and manganese. It also has minute traces of vitamin B.

The lemongrass has many medicinal properties including: analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antipressant, antiseptic, antibacterial, antifungal, astringent, carminative, diuretic, insecticidal, sedative and anti-cancer properties. The leaves, stems and bulbs of the lemongrass are used in various treatments. The medicinal benefits are so great and diverse that they are widely used in alternative or complementary medicines.

The Health Benefits

As there are various medicinal properties, the lemongrass is packed with many health benefits. According to the Top 10 Home Remedies, the health benefits are as follows:—

1. Helps Digestion. Lemongrass tea helps treat digestive healths like indigestion, constipation, heartburn, diarrhea, bloating, flatulence, stomach spasms, vomiting and cramps.

For a healthy digestive tract, drink lemongrass tea on regular basis. However, it is not recommended for small children.

2. Controls Cholesterol Levels. Lemongrass tea helps to lower the bad cholesterol (LDL) level and also helps to lower blood pressure.

Drink a cup of lemongrass tea everyday and it will help lower your bad cholesterol level and blood pressure. It would reduce the risks of heart diseases and strokes.

3. Cleanse and Detoxifies. Drinking lemongrass tea helps cleanse and detoxify the body. As the lemongrass increases the frequency

and quantity of urination, it helps to remove toxins, uric acids and bad cholesterol from the body. Urination also clean out the kidneys. The cleansing properties of the lemongrass tea also help purify the liver, kidneys, bladders and pancreas. It also increases the blood circulation, which is important for the overall health.

Drink lemongrass tea on a regular basis to help your body to get rid of harmful elements.

4. Heals Colds and Flu. The properties of the lemongrass help your body to cope with cough, fever and other cold and flu symptoms. As it is loaded with vitamin C, it boosts your immune system to fight the infection. It is also effective in breaking down mucus and phlegm buildup, which can alleviate problems with breathing. Beneficial for those suffering from bronchitis and asthma. To make a medicinal drink with lemongrass:—

- Boil a few stalks of lemongrass, 2 or 3 cloves, a small piece of cinnamon, 1 tea spoon of turmeric powder in a cup of milk.
- Strain and drink it when it cools down. Drink once a day for a few days.

5. Fights Cancer. Researches have shown that lemongrass tea can help fight cancers. A component found in lemongrass can cause the cancer cells to die out without damaging the healthy cells.

To help the healing process, cancer patients in Israel are encouraged to drink lemongrass tea while undergoing radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

6. Reduces Arthritis Pain. Lemongrass helps treat arthritis, rheumatism, osteoarthritis, gout and other types of joint pains. It also alleviates muscle spasms or spasms, which in turn reduces the pain-related symptoms.

- Mix lemongrass oil with coconut oil in 1:2 ratio and rub it on the affected area. Leave it for a few hours before rinsing it off. Do this daily for a few weeks.
- You can also drink lemongrass tea twice daily for best results.

7. Benefits New Mothers. Lemongrass tea helps increase breast milk production. It also helps keep the baby healthy and free from infections.

Breast-feeding mothers can drink one to two cups of lemongrass tea daily, but should avoid during pregnancy.

8. Fights Depression. The antidepressant properties of lemongrass tea help treat depression. It relieves anxiety, boosts self esteem, uplifts spirits, gives confidence and improves mental strength.

Drink a cup of lemongrass tea whenever you feel depressed or have a low mood. It helps you to

keep calm and cool and also helps you to sleep better.

9. Reduces Body Odor. Diluted lemongrass oil is an effective deodorant. It is better than any deodorant on the market.

10. Keeps Skin Healthy. It is also beneficial for the skin. It can alleviate various skin issues. You can either use lemongrass oil by diluting with water or another base, such as olive oil or mix one-half cup of freshly sliced lemongrass in a cup of olive oil and heat for five minutes and apply when it is cooled.

The Side Effects

According to WebMD, the lemongrass is LIKELY SAFE for people when used in food amounts and POSSIBLY SAFE to take by mouth or applied to the skin, short-term, for medicinal purpose. However, there have been some toxic side effects such as lung problems after inhaling lemongrass leaves and a fatal poisoning after a child swallowed a lemongrass oil-based insecticide. It is LKELY UNSAFE to take by mouth during pregnancy.

(Avoid smelling lemongrass leaves and keep away lemongrass oils from the children.)

How Should it be Consumed?

The best way to consume the lemongrass, other than as a culinary ingredient, is as tea. Here, I would like to clear a common misconception of tea, which I noticed most of us are confused. Tea doesn't necessarily mean it must contain any tea leaf, either green or black. The term tea stand for any leaf, flower, root or bulb brewed with water. I'm emphasizing this fact

because I had came across some who mixed green tea to prepare lemongrass tea or any other herbal tea. That may be more potent as the green tea has many health benefits of its own. However, the taste may not be as pleasant as the pure lemongrass tea.

So, the best way to prepare the lemongrass tea would be to boil three bulbs of the plant, without the leaves, either crushed or sliced, in a litre of water. When the water comes to a rolling boil, wait a few minutes before taking the pot off the heat. Sift the boiled lemongrass tea and add pure honey or sugar to taste and drink it either hot or chilled. Honey is more preferable. A squeeze of lime or lemon would add more refreshing flavour or zest to the drink. I guarantee that it would do you good and the cost is low and so easy to prepare that everyone can do it themselves. Some juiced the lemongrass and drink it as a juice, but I wouldn't recommend that, as it would be too hot and sear the throat.

I had recommended many people to drink the lemongrass tea and received positive feedbacks. Most of the feedbacks were related to the relief of the indigestions, bloating and flatulences. As there are no known serious side effects we should drink a cup of lemongrass tea everyday. It would keep stomachs discomfort-free. One person said, even if you do not take into consideration the benefits that it is said to provide, the lemongrass tea is a very tasty, refreshing and pleasant drink that is worth drinking.

If possible you should grow your own organic lemongrass. It wouldn't need much land space or any at all, as you can grow them in a flower pot or even in an old plastic bucket. You can grow them on the veranda if you live in a highrise building. A small sapling will become a clump of lemongrass in no time and if properly maintained

you will never be out of supply. By that way you can also be sure that they are really organic and safe for consumption.

My advice to you is not to over-indulge, use your discretion and stay safe, in consuming lemongrass for medicinal purpose. However, from my experience, drinking a cup of lemongrass tea everyday day would be harmless and beneficial to the health.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Jessica Mudditt's travelogue published in The Global New Light of Myanmar on 28 November was very informative and poetic. I love to read it again and again. As a Myanmar citizen I am very proud of your article 'Awed by Kalaw.'

Though our country is very

poor, it is a good tourist destination. As a Myanmar citizen, I want to do this trek. Your English is quite lovely and attractive. I am a lawyer and now I am translating Myanmar law into English. I also learnt some new words for me. Please accept my appreciation for it. I also made

some copies of your article and emailed it to some of my friends who are living in Australia, Austria and France. You will be my English teacher. I am an old man and a jurist. I am 71-years-old and a devout Buddhist.

Thank you
Jurist U San Maung of Bago

MCDC carries out checks on drinking water companies

MANDALAY City Development Committee has halted the operations of a number of drinking water companies after checking FDA recommendation letters and companies license documents on 1 December.

Along with MCDC, the

Health Department, Head of the Food and Drug Administration, Trade Promotion and the Consumer Affairs Department, Mandalay City Development Committee jointly planned the surprise checks in Mandalay Region with the goal of prevent-

ing public health hazards. Following the inspections, Dagon Shwe Mynmar Skyline Clean, Ayar Oo, Nadi, Sanda Pyat, Chan Aye Tharsan, Laminthar have been instructed against producing further drinking water. —Maung Pyi Thu



Mandalay City Development Committee banned six brands of bottled drinkign water. PHOTO: THHA KO KO

Electric trains to be introduced in 2016

Ko Moe

ELECTRIC trains will be introduced to Myanmar commuters in January next year. So far 90 percent of railway lines have been upgraded to accommodate the new trains and provisions have been made for a steady supply of electricity, Man-

ager U Kyaw Soe Linn of Department Myanmar Railway said.

The electric trains will run from Botahtaung to Wahtan and will offer commuters 10 services a day. There are also plans for services to be launched from Kyimyindine to Pazundaung.

Currently around 60,000 pas-

sengers travel by train every day in Myanmar. It is estimated that there are 215 locomotives and 23 coaches in Yangon.

Manager U Kyaw Soe Linn expressed his gratitude to JICA for its support to the introduction of electric trains on the Yangon-Mandalay route.

TOT training to be provided in Sagaing

WITH the aim of spreading Buddha's teaching among young Buddhists, a Training-of Trainers course will be opened in Kawlin Township in Sagaing Region in February of next year.

The course is scheduled to be

opened to the public from 22 to 28 February.

This is the third time Kawlin Township Dhamma School Committee has organised a TOT training course since 2014, it has turned out about 200 trainers.

A fanfare for those Dhamma schools will held on 2 January.

The township has 34 Dhamma schools established by the committee.—Ko Ko Nyein (Kawlin)

Retail association to select new committee members

THE Myanmar Retailers Association will soon elect members to form its Central Executive Committee for 2016-17 financial year.

The selection process is scheduled to take place at Sayar San Plaza in Bahan Township in Yangon on 12 December.

Members of the incumbent

management and CEC members are required to be present on the occasion. For further information, call 09-31422555 or 09-31422777.

Investigators piece together portrait of Pakistani woman in shooting massacre

ISLAMABAD — Tashfeen Malik's path to accused mass killer in California began in a small city on the Indus River in Pakistan's Punjab Province.

It was from here, when she was a toddler, that she moved with her father Gulzar 25 years ago to Saudi Arabia, where he became more deeply religious, more conservative and more hardline, according to a family member.

A picture slowly emerged on Friday of the role and possible motivations of 27-year-old Malik in this week's killing of 14 people in California, including her apparent pledge of allegiance to the leader of the Islamic State militant group, according to US officials.

Malik, with her husband Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, is accused of storming a holiday party on Wednesday in San Bernardino, California, and opening fire in America's worst mass shooting in three years.

The intensive search for clues, extending to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, could help US investigators piece together what drove Malik and her husband to leave their infant daughter with his mother, don assault-style clothing and carry out the shooting.

Malik, who entered the United States on a fiancée visa, and Farook, the son of immigrant parents from Pakistan who had worked as a health inspector, were killed in a shootout with police just hours after the attack.

US investigators were evaluating evidence that Malik, a Pakistani native who had been living in Saudi Arabia when she married Farook, had pledged allegiance to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, two US government sources said. They said the finding, if confirmed, could be a "game changer" in the probe.

CNN reported that one US official said Malik had made the pledge to al-Baghdadi in a posting on Facebook on Wednesday, the day of the attack, under an account that used a different name.

Though large information gaps remain, it appeared to be the strongest evidence so far that the attack may have been inspired by Islamic State. But US government sources said there was no sign that it had been directed by the militant group, which has seized swathes of Syria and Iraq and claimed the deadly 13 November attacks in Paris.—Reuters

At halfway, chance of UN climate deal higher, but ambition lower, than in 2009

PARIS — Near the halfway mark of a UN climate change conference in Paris, hopes for a deal are far higher than at the last, failed summit in Copenhagen, even if the agreement on offer is less ambitious this time.

Back in 2009, many had hoped for a sweeping treaty to cut the greenhouse gas emissions that are changing the climate. This time, nearly 200 countries will choose their own policies in the hope of binding both rich and poor into the effort to combat global warming.

With seven days of negotiations left before the conference closes on 11 December, two alternative draft texts are circulating, which all nations agreed on Friday to accept as the basis for talks.

At 38 and 48 pages long, they have shrunk from above 50 at the start of the week. At the same stage of Copenhagen, the drafts ran to 300 pages.

"I'm optimistic," said Robert Stavins, director of Harvard University's Environmental Economics Program. "It's drastically different from Copenhagen."

But the text still has hundreds of brackets, marking points of disagreement on everything from fi-



French President Francois Hollande (C) poses with local representatives including Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo (4th L), London Mayor Boris Johnson (L), New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg (3rd R), Seoul Mayor Park Won-soon (R), Istanbul Mayor Kadir Topbas, Dakar Mayor Khalifa Sall (2nd L) and Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes during a summit on climate with local representatives at Paris town hall, as part of the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21), France, on 4 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

nance for developing nations beyond 2020 to where to set the long-term goal for cutting or phasing out the use of fossil fuels.

"It's hugely frustrating," EU chief negotiator Elina Bardram said.

But she said there was no comparison with Copenhagen as China, the world's biggest emitter was determined to be part of the deal and the presence of 150 heads of state at the start of the talks on Monday had shown strong politi-

cal will. The idea is that the text will be cut and sent to French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius by midday (1100 GMT) on Saturday. After that, it will be up to ministers to try to hammer out a deal next week.—Reuters

US puts request for bigger Turkish air role on hold

WASHINGTON — Since Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet last week, the United States has quietly put on hold a long-standing request for its NATO ally to play a more active role in the US-led air war against Islamic State.

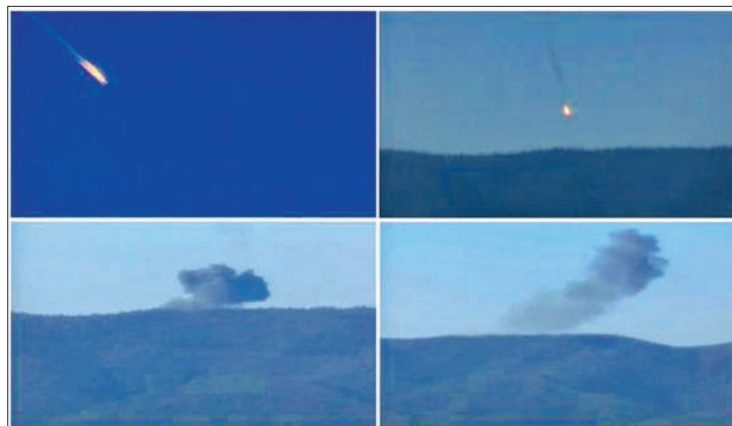
The move, disclosed to Reuters by a US official, is aimed at allowing just enough time for heightened Turkey-Russia tensions to ease. Turkey has not flown any coalition air missions in Syria against Islamic State since the 24 November incident, two US officials said.

The pause is the latest complication over Turkey's role to have tested the patience of US war planners, who want a more assertive Turkish contribution — particularly in securing a section of border with Syria that is seen as a crucial supply route for Islamic State.

As Britain starts strikes in Syria and France ramps up its role in the wake of last month's attacks on Paris by the extremist group, US Defense Secretary Ash Carter publicly appealed this week for a greater Turkish military role.

The top US priority is for Turkey to secure its southern border with Syria, the first official said. US concern is focused on a roughly 60-mile (98-km) stretch used by Islamic State to shuttle foreign fighters and illicit trade back and forth.

But the United States also



A combination picture taken from video shows a war plane crashing in flames in a mountainous area in northern Syria after it was shot down by Turkish fighter jets near the Turkish-Syrian border on 24 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

wants to see more Turkish air strikes devoted to Islamic State, even as Washington firmly supports Ankara's strikes against Turkey's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), viewed by both countries as a terrorist group.

Carter told a congressional hearing this week that most Turkish air operations have been targeted at the PKK rather than at Islamic State, but US officials acknowledge some promising signs from Turkey, including moves to secure key border crossings.

For example, Turkish F-16 fighter jets last month joined an air operation to support Syrian rebels taking back two villages from Islamic State along the so-called

Mara Line, a senior Obama administration official told reporters, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The United States does not give data on the number or type of missions conducted by Turkish air force flights in Syria.

Turkey rejects any suggestion it is not playing its part in the fight against ISIL.

"We have taken part in at least half of the operations," a senior Turkish official told Reuters. "Apart from that, Turkey takes part in identifying targets and providing logistics and bases. We are in close cooperation with the US."

Russian President Vladimir Putin branded Turkey's shoot-down a war crime on Thursday

and said Turkey would face further sanctions. Moscow has already banned some Turkish food imports as part of a wider package of retaliatory sanctions.

The United States hopes that tensions between Moscow and Ankara will ease quickly, allowing Turkey to take a more prominent role inside the US-led coalition's air campaign, the first official said.

The Pentagon declined to comment on the status of Turkish flights since the shoot-down. Two Turkish officials declined to directly comment but stressed that Turkey remained part of the air coalition. "For us nothing has changed," a senior Turkish official told Reuters.

US officials stressed that overall coalition air operations had been unaffected by the tensions between Turkey and Russia.

There is debate within the Obama administration on how hard to push Turkey. US officials broadly acknowledge its support has been vital to the US-led campaign in Syria, allowing the coalition to stage strike missions out of a Turkish air base.

Turkey, for its part, has grown frustrated over the past few years at what it sees as indecision on the part of the United States and its Western allies, arguing that only Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's removal from power can bring lasting peace.—Reuters

EU mulls plan to take charge of Europe's borders

BRUSSELS — The European Union is considering giving a new EU border force powers to intervene and guard a member state's external frontier to protect the Schengen open-borders zone, EU officials and diplomats said on Friday.

Such a move might be blocked by states wary of surrendering sovereign control of their territory. But the discussion reflects fears that Greece's failure to manage a flood of migrants from Turkey has brought Schengen's system of open borders to the brink of collapse.

Germany's Thomas de Maiziere, in Brussels for a meeting of EU interior ministers, said he expected a proposal from the EU executive due on 15 December to include giving responsibility for controlling a frontier with a non-Schengen country to Frontex, the EU's border agency, if a member state failed to do so.

"The Commission should put forward a proposal ... which has the goal of when a national state is not effectively fulfilling its duty of defending the external border, then that can be taken over by Frontex," de Maiziere told reporters.

He noted a Franco-German push for Frontex, whose role is largely to coordinate national border agencies, to be complemented by a permanent European Border and Coast Guard — a measure the

European Commission will propose on 15 December.

Greece has come under heavy pressure from states concerned about Schengen this week to accept EU offers of help on its borders.

Diplomats have warned that Athens might find itself effectively excluded from the Schengen zone if it failed to work with other Europeans to control migration.

On Thursday, Greece finally agreed to accept help from Frontex, averting a showdown at the ministerial meeting in Brussels.

After threatening Greece with triggering rules allowing for internal border controls within Schengen for up to two years, the ministers meeting in Brussels on Friday have not asked the bloc's executive arm to activate the procedure.

"It is not legally possible to exclude a state from the Schengen area. We cannot expel or exclude a member state from the Schengen area... We weren't targeting any country in the north or the south or the centre," said Jean Asselborn, the minister of foreign affairs and migration of Luxembourg, which first tabled a paper invoking the two-year rule.

EU diplomats said the proposals due on 15 December to bolster defence of the external Schengen frontiers would look

at whether the EU must rely on an invitation from the state concerned.

"One option could be not to seek the member state's approval for deploying Frontex but activating it by a majority vote among all 28 members," an EU official said.

Under the Schengen Borders Code, the Commission can now recommend a state accept help from other EU members to control its frontiers. But it cannot force it to accept help, something that may in any case not be practicable.

The code also gives states the right to impose controls on internal Schengen borders if external borders are neglected. As Greece has no land border with the rest of the Schengen zone, that could mean obliging ferries and flights coming from Greece to undergo passport checks.

Asked whether an EU force should require an invitation or could be imposed by the bloc, Swedish Interior Minister Anders Ygeman said: "Border control is the competence for the member states, and it's hard to say that there is a need to impose that on member states forcefully."

"On the other hand," he said, referring to this week's pressure on Greece, "we must safeguard the borders of Schengen and what we have seen is that if a country is not able to protect its



Macedonian soldiers erect a metal fence on the border with Greece, near Gevgelija, Macedonia, on 28 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

own border, it can leave Schengen or accept Frontex. It's not mandatory, but in practice it's quite mandatory."

Ministers and the Commission welcomed Greece's decision on Thursday to accept more help from Frontex.

"Greece is finally taking responsibility for guarding the external European border," Austrian Interior Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner said. "I have for months been demanding that Greece must recognise this responsibility and be ready to accept European help. This is an important step in the right direction."

A dramatic increase in EU powers over national territory

would be deeply controversial in much of Europe. On Thursday, Danes, who are part of the Schengen zone, heeded Eurosceptic calls and voted against giving their government power to deepen its cooperation with the EU police agency.

The European Union faces another test over the next two years as Britain, its second biggest economy, prepares to hold a referendum on whether to quit.

Although not a member of the 26-nation Schengen zone, and so unaffected by increased powers for EU border guards, increasing Brussels's say over security policies in Schengen states might fuel the campaign to leave.—Reuters

Iraqi president says Turkish deployment inside Iraq violates international law

BAGHDAD — Iraqi President Fouad Massoum yesterday called the deployment of several hundred Turkish troops inside Iraq near the northern city of Mosul "a violation of international norms and law".

A Turkish security source said on Friday the forces would provide training for Iraqi troops near Mosul, which is controlled by Islamic State.

Iraq's prime minister and foreign ministry have called for Turkey to withdraw its forces.

In an online statement, Massoum also called on Turkey to withdraw the troops and asked Iraq's Foreign Ministry to take the necessary measures "to preserve the country's sovereignty and independence".

Islamic State militants overran Mosul in June 2014. A much anticipated counter-offensive by Iraqi forces has been repeatedly postponed because they are tied down in fighting elsewhere.

A senior Kurdish military officer based north of Mosul told Reuters that additional Turkish trainers had arrived at a camp in the area overnight on



Iraq's President Fouad Massoum. PHOTO: REUTERS

Thursday escorted by a Turkish protection force.

A small number of Turkish trainers was already at the camp to train a force called Hashid Watani (national mobilisation), which is made up of mainly Sunni Arab former Iraqi police and volunteers from Mosul.

The United States was aware of Turkey's deployment of hundreds of Turkish soldiers

to northern Iraq but the move is not part of the US-led coalition's activities, according to defence officials in Washington.

Powerful Iraqi Shi'ite Muslim armed groups have pledged to fight a planned deployment of US forces to the country.

Turkey has in recent months been bombing Kurdish militant positions in northern Iraq.—Reuters

After deaths, Egyptians grow bolder in challenging police abuse

TAHANOUB — Fathia Hashem was preparing for bed when Egyptian plainclothes police burst into her house, forced her into a van and ordered her to lead them to her son Amr Abushanab's apartment.

Three days later, she watched police escort him to be questioned by prosecutors. Two officers held him up as he struggled to walk, his face pale and his vest stained with blood.

He told her he had been beaten and subjected to electric shocks. Within hours he was dead.

He was 32. Unlike the families of scores of other Egyptians that rights groups say die in police custody every year, Abushanab's family has gone public, as have those of two other men who died in police custody in the span of a week.

The spate of deaths has drawn rare media attention and prompted some street demonstrations, an echo of the public anger over police brutality that helped spark the revolution that brought down President Hosni Mubarak five years ago. "If 1,000 million officers died in front of my very eyes I would not cry for them because of

my son," Abushanab's mother wailed in the courtyard of the family home in the village of Tahanoub in the Nile Delta north of Cairo. "The fire in my heart will not be extinguished until (the perpetrator) dies like my son."

Egypt has a long history of police abuse under generations of military rulers. The "Arab Spring" revolt that toppled Mubarak began as a protest march during a national holiday to celebrate the police force in January 2011, fed in part by a "We are all Khaled Said" Facebook campaign by activists over the death of a man beaten to death by police on the street in Alexandria.

Nearly five years later, the latest deaths are creating rare pressure on another general-turned-president, Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Abushanab's family has launched a "We are all Amr Abushanab" page on Facebook.

In the eastern city of Ismailiya, protesters burned tyres in the streets after a middle-aged veterinarian died in custody hours after being hauled from his wife's pharmacy on 25 November.—Reuters

US arms makers strain to meet demand as Mideast conflicts rage



Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) fighters gather at the eastern entrance to the town of Tel Abyad of Raqqa governorate, on 15 June 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Top US arms makers are straining to meet surging demand for precision missiles and other weapons being used in the US-led fight against Islamic State and other conflicts in the Middle East, according to senior US officials and industry executives.

Global demand for US-made missiles and so-called smart bombs has grown steadily since their use in the first Gulf War. But the United States and a host of allies are now rushing to ensure a stable supply of such weapons for what is expected to be a long fight against Islamic State, whose rise has fuelled conflict in Syria and across a swathe of the Middle East.

US officials say arms makers have added shifts and hired workers, but they are bumping up against capacity constraints and may need to expand plants or even open new ones to keep weapons flowing. That could create further log-jams at a time when US allies are voicing growing concern that Washington's processing of arms sales orders is too slow.

Islamic State's deadly attacks in Paris last month have added urgency to the US-led bombing campaign against the group in Iraq and Syria. The campaign had resulted in 8,605 strikes at an estimated cost

of around \$5.2 billion as of 2 December.

Meanwhile, a Saudi-led coalition including Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and backed by Washington is carrying out a nine-month-old military campaign against Iran-backed rebels in Yemen. Gulf states are also supplying US-made arms to rebels fighting Syria's government in that country's four-year-old war.

"It's a huge growth area for us," said one executive with a US weapons maker, who was not authorized to speak publicly.

"Everyone in the region is talking about building up supplies for five to ten years. This is going to be a long fight" against Islamic State.

The impact is palpable in Troy, Alabama, where Lockheed Martin Corp builds its 100-pound Hellfire air-to-ground missiles at a 3,863-acre highly secured facility surrounded by woods and horse pastures. Realtors are adding staff in anticipation of new hiring at the plant, and the large grocery chain Publix is opening a store soon.

"What's good for Lockheed is good for Troy," said Kathleen Sauer, president of the Pike County Chamber of Commerce, adding that the expansion was helping a local economy where unemployment

rates are already among the lowest in the state.

"Look at our downtown," she said. "Almost all the stores are open and we have more coming in." Lockheed has added a third shift at its plant, which employed 325 workers as of February, and is now at "maximum capacity," said one executive familiar with the issue. The company announced in February that it will add 240 workers by 2020 and expand the facility, which also produces a 2,000-pound air-to-surface stealthy missile.

Frank Kendall, the Pentagon's chief arms buyer, told Reuters this week there has been particularly strong demand for the Hellfire missiles. At \$60,000 to \$100,000 apiece they are inexpensive compared to many missiles and can be launched from everything from aircraft and helicopters and ships to destroy armoured vehicles or punch into buildings.

Kendall and other senior US officials told Reuters they are working with Lockheed, Raytheon Co and Boeing Co. to ramp up production of precision munitions and potentially add new capacity.

"We are watching that closely. We are looking at the need to increase capacity," Kendall said.—Reuters

Oil smuggled into Turkey not enough to be profitable

WASHINGTON — The amount of oil being smuggled into Turkey from Syria was not enough for anyone to profit from it significantly, a senior US State Department official said on Friday, rejecting claims by Russia that top Turkish officials were benefitting by smuggling oil from areas of Syria controlled by Islamic State.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States believed most of the oil smuggled from Islamic State-controlled areas was going into Syrian government-controlled territory

and some into Iraq. The Russian defence ministry claimed this week that it has proof Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and his family were benefitting from smuggling oil from Islamic State-held territory. Erdogan denied the charges, saying he would stand down if such allegations were proven true.

"Our assessment is that there is not a lot of smuggling happening of any significant volume between ISIL controlled territories and Turkey," the official said. "The volume itself of the oil being smuggled is extremely low and has

decreased over time."

The official estimated that to smuggle about 20,000 barrels of oil into Turkey per day it would take about 1,000 trucks, a number that had not been seen crossing the border.

"The economics don't make sense for that to happen," the official said. "The evidence doesn't suggest that we would see thousands of trucks going through this territory and it would have to cross several different areas of control, and at every point have to pay fees."—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Mexico police say million-dollar jewel thief was on probation

ALBUQUERQUE — The prime suspect in a \$1.3 million jewel heist during a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony at a fashionable New Mexico plaza a week ago has been identified and was on probation for committing a similar crime last year, police said on Friday.

A judge has issued an arrest warrant for Luis Villalba Boca-Negra, 45, in connection with the audacious 27 Novem-

ber theft of the jewellery from a boutique in the Santa Fe plaza, said Santa Fe Police Detective Abe Maes.

Authorities say Boca-Negra was arrested in October 2014 for stealing a \$35,000 ring from a store five doors down from the shop hit last Friday.

He pleaded guilty to that theft and was on probation at the time of last week's heist, Maes said.—Reuters

Eastern Congo militias test UN peace enforcement

GOMA — As the battered pickup lurched down the road from Mount Nyiragongo, Lieutenant Bongani Mdebele took a closer look at its passengers, six men in faded camouflage fatigues with AK-47s over their shoulders.

"Government forces — I think," the South African peace-keeper said. "It's often hard to tell round here."

In the hills of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, along the border with Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, Mdebele's uncertainty can be forgiven.

For years, the region, including the slopes of Nyiragongo, Africa's most active volcano,

has been home to a patchwork of rebel militias who have killed thousands and displaced millions in their quest for control of timber, gold, tin and tantalum.

Many date back to the 1998-2003 Congolese civil war, fuelled by Rwandan intervention, in which millions died, either in the conflict or of hunger and disease.

However, the biggest militia still at large, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, known by the French acronym FDLR, is led by ethnic Hutus who fled to Congo from Rwanda after helping instigate the 1994 genocide.—Reuters

Two people held hostages in Australia's Melbourne

MELBOURNE — A gunman held two people as hostages Saturday morning in a bakery in Melbourne, Australia's second largest city.

According to local policemen at the scene, the gunman with a firearm initially took one woman as hostage at around 7:45 am, and no evidence of

terrorist attack has been found yet. The area around the bakery, which sits in the corner of Point Nepean Road and Ozone street, has been cordoned off.

Witnesses said the gunman might be a business partner of one of the hostages and there was an argument between them.—Xinhua

32 workers die after fire on Azeri oil platform

BAKU — Thirty-two workers have died after an offshore oil platform operated by Azerbaijan's state energy company SOCAR caught fire in the Caspian Sea, the head of an independent committee said yesterday.

SOCAR declined repeated requests for comment from Reuters.

"According to our information, 32 workers died, while 42 workers were rescued last night. ... The fire on the platform was finally extinguished," said Mirvari Gakhramanly, head of Azerbaijan's Oil Workers' Rights Protection Committee.

SOCAR said on Friday that the fire on a platform in Azer-

baijan's Guneshli oil field had started after a gas pipeline on the platform was damaged in heavy wind. It said rescue attempts were being complicated by a severe storm.

One worker called a Reuters correspondent from the platform and said there were 84 people trapped there. The worker did not want to be named. It was not clear whether his statement was now out of date. SOCAR said on its Facebook page on Saturday that 26 workers had been rescued from the platform. It did not give details on whether there had been deaths or how many people were initially on the platform.—Reuters

Blizzardy Buffalo turns balmy, breaks 116-year record for no snow

NEW YORK —

The notoriously snowy city of Buffalo, which was buried under nearly seven feet of powder in a single storm by this time last fall, on Friday broke a 116-year-old record for its longest period without measurable snow, meteorologists said.

The western New York municipality known for brutal winters that start early and end late has gone 255 days without registering snow for the first time since 3 December, 1899, National Weather Service meteorologist Thomas D'Amore said.

"We always get so much snow and so when you go so long without it, everybody wonders what's going on," D'Amore said from the service's Buffalo office.

This year's El Niño weather phenomenon, expected to be the strongest in nearly 20 years, is what's going on, D'Amore said.

El Niños in the past have delivered sizable winter rainfall to drought-stricken parts of the country and unseasonably warm temperatures to others.

Forecasters say Buffa-



A man digs snow following a massive snow storm in Buffalo, New York in 2014.

PHOTO: REUTERS

lo, which typically sees its first dusting of snow by 24 October, is likely to remain without snow for another seven to 10 days.

Last year, Buffalo was blasted with so much of the white stuff that the National Guard was called in for snow removal and wicker weather resulted in the deaths of more than a dozen people in the region before the end of November.

Friday's record-breaking news was welcomed by Buffalo residents who cheered the no-show snow

on social media. "No complaints here!," wrote a Twitter user by the name of @mattpitts.

Business owners in the area, too, welcomed the fair weather.

Bill Gersitz, who owns Gersitz Hardware & Supply Co. in Buffalo, said he's seen an upswing in customers buying roofing items and other products to fix up their home exteriors.

"Normally people would be shut in if we had snow like we did last year," said Gersitz. "It has been

great weather."

The National Weather Service measures snow using instruments placed in strategic locations and registers it once the amount is at least a tenth of an inch. No measured snow does not necessarily mean not a single flake has fallen.

Forecasters also cautioned that the lengthy time without snow this season does not necessarily indicate a mild winter. "It just means the weather will start later in the year," D'Amore said.—Reuters

Police raid Argentina media regulator ahead of power handover

BUENOS AIRES — Police raided the headquarters of Argentina's media regulator on Friday, prompting the watchdog's head to accuse President-elect Mauricio Macri of involvement in what he called a "mafia plot" designed to force his resignation.

Martin Sabbatella said Macri wanted to replace him as president of the Federal Authority of Audiovisual and Communication Services (AFSCA) but that he would stay in his post until the end of his mandate in 2017.

The raid was the latest incident pointing to increasingly testy relations between conservative Macri and the outgoing leftist president, Cristina Fernandez, ahead of his 10 December swearing in. "This raid is about the institutional future of AFSCA," Sabbatella told reporters after the police operation.

A spokesman for Macri was not immediately available for comment.

Macri opposes a law signed by Fernandez in 2009 that limits the number of radio and television licenses a single company can hold, a move her critics said was aimed at hobbling media company Grupo Clarin (CLA.BA). Clarin

has been highly critical of Fernandez's eight years in power.

During campaigning, Macri said he would push for Sabbatella's removal if he won the presidential race and install Miguel de Godoy, an official in the Buenos Aires city administration that he headed. Sabbatella said that de Godoy visited his office on Thursday and asked him to step down. A judge ordered the raid after Grupo Clarin, led by CEO Hector Magnetto, filed a legal complaint against the regulator over the company's restructuring obligations needed to comply with the 2009 law.

"You can't avoid the feeling that there is a mafia plot, that Macri and Magnetto sent de Godoy to ask us in a friendly way that we break the law," Sabbatella said. "Since we said we weren't ready to do such a thing they sent the other part of this mafia plot to carry out a raid that has no sense." Last month, police raided the central bank on the orders of the same judge who was acting on another legal complaint filed by two opposition lawmakers. Macri, who won the 22 November run-off election, wants to replace the central bank chief with a more trusted ally.—Reuters

Spaniards leave in ever greater numbers despite economy's return to growth

MADRID — More Spaniards moved abroad in the first half of this year than at any point since the country entered a long economic downturn in 2008, statistics show.

Although the Spanish economy has rebounded to grow faster than most other countries in the euro zone, close to 51,000 Spaniards packed their bags, nearly as many as left during the whole of 2010, in the depths of the country's debt crisis, the figures from the National Statistics Institute showed.

The mass of people leaving Spain marks a near 30 percent increase on the first six months of the previous year.

The number of Spaniards returning home also rose, but net migration of Spaniards widened to nearly 28,000. The bulk of the emigrants are of working age, between 25 and 44 years old, the report on Spain's population said.

The top destination was



Vegetables are on display at a fruits and vegetable stand at the Plaza de Dia market in Madrid, Spain, on 24 July. PHOTO: REUTERS

Britain, attracting more than 6,000 Spaniards in the first half, followed by France and Germany.

High immigration is controversial in Britain and is likely to be a major issue in the referendum on Britain's EU membership that Prime Minister David Cam-

eron has promised by the end of 2017.

Spaniards have been driven to look abroad by falling wages, job insecurity, and a youth employment rate even higher than Greece's, despite Spain's emergence from recession in mid-2013, with GDP growing by 0.8

percent in the third quarter of this year. Over the last four years average monthly wages for those aged between 16 and 24 fell by 12 percent, and those between 25 and 34 by almost 5 percent, according to a November report from the statistics office.—Reuters

Ministry of Energy

Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise Invitation for Opened Tender (8/2015)

1. Open tenders are invited for supply of Multi Grade Diesel Engine Oil 15W 40 CF4/SG (40)Drums (Open Tender No. MPPE/POL/T/1(2015-2016)) in Myanmar Kyats.

2. Tender Closing Date & Time - 16-12-2015, 12:00 Hrs

3. Tender documents are available at our office starting from 3-12-2015 during office hours and for further detail please contact: Phone: 067-411487.

Planning Department

Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, No(6) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw

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Coen brothers' 'Hail, Caesar!' to open Berlin film fest

BERLIN — “Hail, Caesar!”, an all-star look at the Hollywood Golden Age by the Academy Award-winning director duo Joel and Ethan Coen, will be the opening film of the 66th Berlin International Film Festival on 11 February, the festival an-

nounced on Friday.

George Clooney, Scarlett Johansson, Josh Brolin and Ralph Fiennes feature in the cast of the movie which will focus on the latter years of the period when the Hollywood studios reigned supreme, from roughly the 1920s

to the 1960s.

“It’s wonderful that Joel and Ethan Coen are once again opening the Berlinale. Their humor, unique characters and fantastic narrative skill are guaranteed to thrill the audience. ‘Hail, Caesar!’ is the perfect start for the 2016 Berlinale,” Festival Director Dieter Kosslick said in a statement.

The film, which also stars Alden Ehrenreich, Jonah Hill, Frances McDormand, Tilda Swinton and Channing Tatum, is set in the 1950s and “follows a single day in the life of a studio fixer who is presented with plenty of problems to fix”, the statement said.

The Coen brothers have been leading figures of international cinema for more than 30 years, since their debut film “Blood Simple” in 1984. They have won Academy Awards for several of their films, including “Fargo” and “No Country for Old Men”, and also have appeared regularly at the Berlin film festival, notably with “The Big Lebowski” in 1998.

Their western “True Grit” was the festival opener in 2011.—Reuters



Jury Presidents Ethan Coen (L) and Joel Coen stand in front the entrance of the Festival Palace as they arrive to attend the screening of the film “Lumiere!” to celebrate the 120 years of the invention of the Cinematographe Lumiere during the 68th Cannes Film Festival. PHOTO: REUTERS

Arthur Miller's first play to have London world premiere

LONDON — It is hard to believe that a decade after his death, and a hundred years after his birth, the first play Arthur Miller wrote could be having its world premiere, but that is what will happen in London next week.

“No Villain”, which Miller wrote at 20 as a literature major at the University of Michigan, and which won a \$250 prize that helped fund his studies, will be performed at the 60-seat Old Red Lion Theatre from Tuesday into early January.

Sean Turner, a 29-year-old director, unearthed the play in an Arthur Miller archive, “courted” the foundation that owns the rights to allow him to put it on, and says that while it may not be the equal of “Death of a Salesman” or “The Crucible” it is a worthy part of the Miller canon.

“I can see why there is a temptation to say it was probably ‘lost’ for a reason, so let’s leave it there,” he told Reuters at the theater in a pub in Islington.

“But I don’t think it was ever lost for a reason, I think he just didn’t have the means with which to produce it. There doesn’t seem to be any evidence to suggest that he thought it was

substandard in any way,” Turner said.

Turner went on a treasure hunt for the play after seeing a reference to it in a biography of Miller, who was one of Marilyn Monroe’s three husbands.

He said the Arthur Miller Foundation, which had heard of the play but not seen it, gave him permission to ask the University of Michigan to search its archives.

“Six weeks later they came back with a microfilm copy of it — a scanned version of his original transcript is there, complete with handwritten penciled notes,” Turner said.

The play, like many of Miller’s works, draws on the dynamics and interactions of Miller’s own family. His father, who had immigrated from a village that is now part of Poland, owned a clothing manufacturing business in New York City but the family lost almost everything in the 1929 Wall Street Crash. The plot centers on a student, recognisably based on Miller, returns home from university, filled with Marxist ideas, to challenge his father, who is struggling to keep the family business afloat in hard economic times.—Reuters

Adele's '25' fastest million-selling album in UK chart history

LONDON — Adele’s “25” sold 1 million copies faster than any album in British chart history and topped the album charts for the second week running on Friday.

Fans bought up 1 million copies of the British singer’s third album in just 10 days, beating previous record holder Oasis’ “Be Here Now”, which took 17 days to hit the milestone in 1997, the Official Charts Company said. Coming four years after her chart-topping album “21”, 25 sold 439,000 copies this week and outsold the rest of the top 10 albums combined.

Elsewhere in the album charts, Elvis Presley held second position with the “If I Can Dream” compilation while Justin Bieber’s “Purpose” held on to third.

Bieber and Adele are also fighting it out in the UK singles chart, with Bieber pushing his own single “Sorry” out of number one position to replace it instead with “Love yourself”. Adele’s “Hello”, from 25, followed at number three.

Love yourself was the most streamed single of the week with 5.97 million plays.—Reuters

‘Star Wars’ proves treasure trove for philosophers

AS any philosopher will tell you, there is a lot more to “Star Wars” than a bunch of spaceships, lightsabers and princesses.

Rich in mythology, symbolism and theology, the movie franchise set in a galaxy far, far away has for decades proved a treasure trove for earthbound philosophers, raising issues such as the nature of good and evil, free will and determinism, the prophecy of the chosen one, and the true nature of The Force.

“Star Wars’ is very powerful because it helps us understand ourselves in the light and dark side of The Force. We feel this in our lives when we have this pull of immediate gratification but a desire to achieve long term goals,” said George Backen, professor of philosophy at Adams State University in Colorado.

“George Lucas hit on a perfect mixture of myth, Flash Gordon, Westerns and Japanese culture, and it really resonates with people,” Backen added.

For more than 30 years, academics, students and people of faith have used ‘Star Wars’ as a springboard to explore themes like moral ambiguity, father-son relationships, concepts of feminine beauty and the yearning for something better in life.

Now they are anticipating new topics to explore with the



A Yoda character used in Star Wars movies is pictured at the Discovery Store Times Square in the Manhattan borough of New York on 11 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

arrival on 18 December of “Star Wars: The Force Awakens.”

“I wonder if ‘The Force Awakens’ theme is a kind of post 9/11 take, where former certainties are rattled and things we thought were reliable are disrupted?” said Kevin Decker, professor of philosophy at Eastern Washington University and co-editor of the book “The Ultimate Star Wars and Philosophy.”

Decker, who has seen the six movies more than 100 times, will also be looking for any radical changes to the concept of The

Force as the ultimate arbiter of who is good and who is bad.

“If, for example, ‘The Force Awakens’ means all kinds of people wake up suddenly being able to use The Force who have never had any training or knowledge of it, that would be a fundamental shake-up in the ‘Star Wars’ universe,” Decker said.

Spiritualism is a major “Star Wars” theme. Creator George Lucas was quoted as saying some 15 years ago that The Force embodies “a concept of religion based on the premise that there is

a God and there is good and evil.”

Caleb Grimes, the Virginia-based author of the “Star Wars Jesus” book and website, believes young Luke Skywalker’s initial yearning for something more in life echoes “our desire to know a personal God.”

Philosophers debate whether human-like droids, such as R2-D2, are conscious or self-aware, and how could that be tested. The Imperial Stormtroopers have long been likened to Nazi armies, and many feminists view Princess Leia’s gold metal bikini and metal-collar captivity in “Return of the Jedi” as embodying a tyrannical ideal of feminine beauty.

Backen, who has seen the movies countless times, said that although the characters are not actively wrestling with philosophical concepts, the movies help explain a lot of human experience through their stories.

“Lord of The Rings’ and the Marvel universe are popular but they don’t have the cultural influence that ‘Star Wars’ has,” Backen said. College philosophy courses based on “Star Wars” are hugely popular with students, he said.

“It’s another way that students want to express their fandom and be part of the ‘Star Wars’ universe. The courses give them this opportunity and also they end up learning a lot of philosophy. Hopefully.”—Reuters

Japan's Eiheiiji temple: a night's stay in the 13th century

EIHEIJI — If you want to glimpse life that has not changed much in eight centuries, Eiheiiji temple in the mountains just outside Fukui city in central Japan is the place to find it.

Just mind the monk with the stick, who may tap you with it if you fail to meditate.

Isolated from other parts of quiet Eiheiiji town on Japan's western coast, the complex of more than 70 buildings stands on a hill among a thick forest of tall cedar trees.

The temple, established by the Buddhist monk Dogen in 1244, is an active monastery where about 150 monks are in training. They follow the Soto Zen School's traditional, simple ways of living and are happy to welcome you to join them.

Visitors can tour the temple for a day or stay there overnight as Eiheiiji provides lodging, including two meals and the chance for zazen meditation and the reading of Buddhist scripture.

The charge is 8,000 yen (\$65) per person for an overnight stay with two meals. Reserva-

tions are required, particularly for non-Japanese speakers who must reserve well in advance so the temple can secure an English-speaking monk to attend them.

The black-garbed monks welcome you at the entrance of the complex and give a brief lecture on the temple and their life.

When they move from building to building, the monks form two lines and walk side by side.

At mealtimes, you can smell food as the monks carry their meals from the kitchen building, called "daikuin", to their training quarters called "sodo".

A monk lets his colleagues know the food is ready by ringing a bell that is actually a large piece of wood curved in the shape of a fish.

Monks keep their own lacquered dishes and cutlery. Their founding monk Dogen did not allow his followers to waste water, so after each meal, they rinse the bowls with hot water, drink the water and clean the bowls with a cloth-topped stick.

Meals are all vegetarian

dishes known as "shojin ryori", derived from the dietary restrictions of Buddhist monks. The meal is served in a set of five lacquer bowls in different sizes that can be stacked together when not in use.

The day's dinner may consist of a bowl of rice and miso soup, along with stewed vegetable and fried tofu, daikon and carrots marinated in vinegar as well as a dish with eggplants marinated with sesame.

Eiheiiji's special sesame (goma) tofu, something like pudding made from sesame paste, water and kuzu power, is also served.

Visitors who stay overnight eat the same meal as the monks but during the meal, they are not allowed to talk or make sounds. When you finish, tea is poured into your cup and you dip chopsticks in it to wash them. You will use the same chopsticks for breakfast.

Visitors stay in a modern building, called "kichijokaku" and are given a room with tatami mats with a futon and a table, but



Karamon gate is pictured at the Eiheiiji temple in Eiheiiji town, Fukui prefecture, on 14 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

there are no amenities like television sets or mini-bars.

After a dinner that ends before 6 pm, visitors may take part in zazen. For this you sit with crossed legs on a "zafu", or cushion, while you look down at the floor at a 45-degree angle, take a deep and slow breath and meditate.

You face the wall when you take part in Soto School's za-

zen. If you cannot concentrate, a monk walking around could hit your shoulder with a wooden stick called a "kyosaku".

In the morning visitors may join the reading of scripture that starts a little before 4 am. The sun emerges in the quietness of the temple and trees gradually gleam with light.

The whole experience ends after breakfast.—Reuters

Paris Christmas bookings suffer after militant attacks

BERLIN — Demand for Christmas trips to Paris has slumped following last month's Islamist militant attacks in the French capital, according to data from travel information firm ForwardKeys.

Overall, net bookings — calculated by taking new bookings and deducting cancellations — recovered in the week starting 23 November, compared to the week immediately following the 13 November attacks, thanks to fewer cancellations.

New bookings, however, remain around 25 percent lower compared to last year, and Christmas demand has stagnated at pre-attack

levels. There is a lack of new bookings from all major source countries, including Britain, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United States, Forward Keys said.

"Put another way, in a normal year bookings for Christmas would be accumulating well now but following the attacks, enthusiasm has been dented," CEO Olivier Jager said. Travel companies are feeling the impact, with several airlines saying the numbers of travelers heading to France are down, although many expect the effect will be short-lived. Didier Le Calvez, who is managing director of luxury hotel Le Bristol and heads the

luxury section at hotel association UMIH, said earlier this week that high-end Paris hotels had only sold 40-50 percent of their rooms for the end-of-year festive period, whereas normally they would be 80-90 percent booked.

The CEO of AccorHotels has said the French hotel group is seeing fewer last-minute bookings for the second half of December compared with a year ago and that the impact will probably last three or four months. The ForwardKeys database contains reservations handled by more than 200,000 online and offline travel agencies worldwide.—Reuters



News Channel in Brief

(6-12-2015, Sunday)

6:00 am
• Pritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw
7:35 am
• Business News
8:35 am
• Meet The Successful
9:35 am
• Weekly Entertainment
10:35 am
• Poem For Children
11:15 am
• Documentary (NEWS Media)
11:35 am
• Amazing World
3:35 pm
• Myanmar Movies

4:15 pm
• Documentary (NEWS Media)
5:15 pm
• Documentary
5:35 pm
• People's Talks
6:35 pm
• Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society)
7:15 pm
• Radio Drama
8:00 pm
• News/ International News/ Weather Report
9:00 pm
• News
• Tasty Trip
• Sing & Enjoy

HOURLY NEWS BULLETINS (LOCALS + INTERNATIONAL)



Entertainment Channel

(6-12-2015, Sunday)

6:00 am
• Shwe Pyi Aye Music Troupe
6:20 am
• Myanmar Video
8:20 am
• Fashion Music
8:30 am
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
8:55 am
• Sing & Enjoy
9:35 am
• Myanmar Movie
12:00 noon
• Close Down

mitv Myanmar International

(6-12-2015 07:00 am~ 7-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Myanmar's Export: Mango
07:35	Am	Myanmar Traditional Instruments (MYANMA DRUM)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	On the River
08:47	Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-I) "Osi"
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Dawei - Tavoy, Travel To The Southern Part Of Myanmar
09:44	Am	Cultural Shows: Theatrical Art
09:52	Am	Independent Filmmaker
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The Mountain with antique stone sculptures & Mural Painting
10:43	Am	A Chance to Change Their Future

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar's Secret Beautifier
07:50	Pm	Today Myanmar
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Great Po Sein
08:51	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Khin Maung Zaw

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

Saints won't sell even for 100 million pounds, says Koeman

LONDON — Southampton manager Ronald Koeman is adamant they will not lose any players in the January transfer window and dismissed speculation that striker Sadio Mane is set to move to Manchester United or German champions Bayern Munich.

Mane, who joined Southampton from Salzburg last season, was strongly linked by British media with a move to United in the close season and has scored seven goals for the Saints in all competitions this campaign.

"We will sell nobody in January. Nobody. Even when they pay 100 million (pounds)," Koeman said at his pre-match news conference on Friday.

The Dutchman added that despite the reported interest, Mane was not yet the finished product.

"I think he (Mane) can still improve in some cleverness to know what's his position on the pitch," Koeman said.

"I think still he can be more dangerous if he knows exactly when to have that movement in the space behind the defenders.

"And in front of the goal he can be a more scoring player, but he's young, a great player, and it's a pleasure to work with (him)."

Tenth-placed Southampton host bottom side Aston Villa on Saturday.

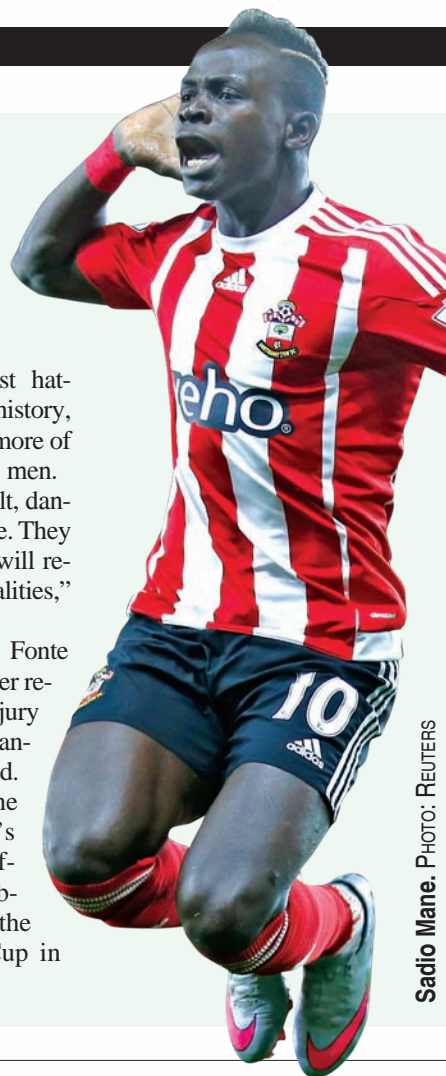
They won the corresponding fixture 6-1 last season when

Mane grabbed the fastest hat-trick in Premier League history, but Koeman is expecting more of a fight from Remi Garde's men.

"They are in a difficult, dangerous situation in the table. They need the points and they will react because they have qualities," he said.

Saints captain Jose Fonte has returned to training after recovering from the knee injury he picked up against Manchester City at the weekend.

He could return to the heart of Southampton's defence against Villa, after missing the 6-1 drubbing by Liverpool in the Capital One (League) Cup in midweek.—Reuters



Sadio Mane. PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar's chess master to compete in Jakarta

INTERNATIONAL chess master Win Zaw Tun will compete in the 3rd ASEAN individual Champion Chess Tournament in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 21 to 31 December.

Mr Win Zaw Tun said "I will try my best. I don't necessarily expect to win but I have been videos of my rivals to improve my chances of success," he said.

The event allows for one or two grand masters, international masters and FIDE Masters with a rating above 2300 in ASEAN countries to compete.—Ko Moe

David Beckham says new site secured for Miami football stadium



PHOTO: REUTERS

MIAMI — After a two-year-long search, retired English football star David Beckham and a team of investors said on Friday they had secured a site in Miami where they hope to build an arena for a Major League Soccer team.

Miami Beckham United said in a statement that most of the nine-acre tract just west of Interstate 95 in the urban Overtown neighbourhood was private property that it had under contract to buy for an undisclosed sum.

Miami-Dade County owns the remainder of the land, which the group

said it plans to buy at "fair market value" once the site is approved by the MLS Board of Governors, which is expected to meet on Saturday.

The league's Commissioner Don Garber said this week that if a deal for a stadium could not be finalised, then Miami was not going to have a MLS team.

"We appreciate the support and patience of our fans who share David's dream of fielding a world-class soccer club in Miami," Miami Beckham United said. "We've never been closer to making that vision a reality."

The move caps nearly two years of failed efforts by Beckham, American Idol founder Simon Fuller and Sprint chief executive

Marcelo Claure to secure public land for the nearly \$250 million, 30,000-seat stadium.

Beckham's arrival in Miami in 2013 garnered international media attention as he exercised an option in his MLS contract from his playing days with the Los Angeles Galaxy to own a franchise. But several proposed sites were rebuffed after a \$500 million baseball park for the Miami Marlins drew criticism for favouring the team's wealthy owners.

Plans for football stadiums on publicly owned lots on the Miami's island port and in downtown Miami have been rejected.

Most recently, Beckham's group sought to build the team's future home in the heavily Hispan-

ic Little Havana neighbourhood adjacent to Marlins Park. Investors were unable to finalise those plans, however, after a handful of private landowners whose lots were needed for construction demanded "exorbitant" prices, a Miami Beckham United spokesman said.

The site in Overtown is within walking distance of several public transit options and the Miami River District, the group said.

The 20-team MLS plans to grow to 24 teams by 2020 with expansion teams already announced for Minnesota, Atlanta, and Los Angeles. Cities including Sacramento have been vying for one of the coveted franchises as the Beckham group's efforts faltered.—Reuters

Toro Rosso to use Ferrari engines next year

LONDON — The Red Bull-owned Toro Rosso team will use year-old Ferrari engines in Formula One next season, both sides said on Friday.

Toro Rosso used Renault power units this year and the switch was expected

after Red Bull fell out with the French carmaker.

"Toro Rosso and Scuderia Ferrari have reached an agreement that will see our team use the current Ferrari power unit in the

2016 Formula One season," they said in a joint statement.

Renault will be returning as a full works team next year after taking over Lotus while Red Bull will use an engine provided by Renault but with the branding of the team's new partner, luxury watchmaker Tag Heuer.—Reuters



Toro Rosso Formula One driver Carlos Sainz of Spain drives during the first free practice session of Abu Dhabi F1 Grand Prix. PHOTO: REUTERS

Real thrown out of Cup over ineligible player

MADRID — Real Madrid's woes deepened on Friday when the Spanish football federation (RFEF) expelled them from the King's Cup for using an ineligible player in Wednesday's last 32, first leg match at third-tier Cadiz.

Real included Denis Cheryshev in their starting lineup for their first match of the 2015-16 competition even though he should have been serving a one-match suspension and the Russia forward opened the scoring in a 3-1 victory.

Real president Florentino Perez insisted on Thursday the club had not broken the rules

as neither Cheryshev nor Real were notified he was banned.

In a nine-page ruling published on Friday, the RFEF sharply criticised Real, saying they should have been aware of the sanction, and as well as disqualifying the club fined them 6,001 euros (£4,320). Already smarting after bitter rivals Barcelona thrashed them 4-0 at the Bernabeu in last month's La Liga 'Clasico', it is another embarrassing setback for the world's richest club by income following their failed attempt to sign Spain goalkeeper David De Gea from Manchester United in the close season.—Reuters