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FIRST-CLASS DECISION

Myanma Railways to sub-contract faltering train services

Aye Min Soe

MYANMA Railways is considering giving contracts to some train services that are operating at a loss.

Union Minister for Transport and Rail Transportation U Nyan Tun Aung gave a green light to officials of Myanma Railways to transform train services running in some parts of the country into private contractors in line with the Myanmar Railways Law.

“It is necessary to scrutinise the train services that are currently operating at loss for the sake of public convenience and to run them in a win-win cooperation system with private companies,” the Union Minister said at a meeting with officials during his inspection tour of the Yangon Railway Station yesterday.

Myanma Railways is planning to buy 66 new DEMU cars as part a plan for upgrading the Circle Line in Yangon.

Train services with modern engines and air-bag coaches will start to run between Yangon and Mandalay at the end of January next year, according to U Thurein Win, the managing director of Myanma Railways.

Meanwhile, plans are underway to launch electric train services along Strand Road at the end of January next year, he added.



A passenger train is seen between Bagan and the Kyaukpadaung Raod Section. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Myanmar collects nearly US\$2.5 billion in tax revenue from oil and gas sector

Revenue collected from extractive industries accounted for about 50 percent of the country's total export revenue in the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Khaing Thanda Lwin

MYANMAR's oil and gas sector generated a total revenue of nearly US\$2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, said Dr Zaw Oo, an MEITI national coordinator, at a press conference yesterday.

This amount is equivalent to about 70 percent of the total revenues described in the first report of the Myanmar Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (MEITI), which is

expected to be published in late December this year.

With the purpose of disclosing information related to revenue received from the extractive industries to the public, the report has been compiled by the Multi-Stakeholders Group (MSG), comprising the government, private companies and civil society organisations, since mid-2014.

Deputy Finance Minister Dr Maung Maung Thein, who also serves as a chairman of the MSG, said the report has a 100 percent

scope on the oil and gas sector and also includes tax revenues generated from gem sales and mining industries.

Revenue collected from extractive industries accounted for about 50 percent of the country's total export revenue in the 2013-2014 fiscal year, said U Min Zar Ni from the MEITI National Coordination Office.

Myanmar was approved as the 45th candidate to participate in the EITI in July last year by the International EITI Board at

its 27th meeting. Myanmar will be recognised as a compliant country in mid-2017 provided that the International EITI Board concludes that the country has fulfilled all the requirements of the EITI.

The first MEITI report will be published no later than 2 January next year, and the country will publish its second report in early 2017.

Dr Maung Maung Thein said: “Not only companies but also the government face many

difficulties and challenges compiling figures for the preparation of the EITI report.”

“Initially, companies are hesitant to provide their accounts and figures due to a lack of practice. Governmental departments have weak data-entry systems and still rely on paper-based systems,” he said.

“There has been 100-percent participation from the government and 95-percent participation by private companies under in the EITI's purview,” he added.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses NCA

MEMBERS of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discussed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement at a parliament session on Monday.

Representative U Tin Maung Oo of Shwe pyithar Constituency said peace is essential for development and welcomed the efforts of the government and armed groups to sign the NCA.

Representative U Khaing Maung Yee of Ahlon Constituency said initiatives for peace should begin from wherever pos-

sible, even though nationwide peace remains elusive. He urged the session to approve the agreement.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session on Monday also discussed bills to amend the Foreign Exchange Management Law, the Evidence Law and the Pyithu Hluttaw Law.

The session approved a bill amending the rules of the Myanmar Pearl Industry.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Representatives eager to approve nationwide ceasefire agreement with ethnic armed groups. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw Roundup



Representative U Khin Win. PHOTO: MNA



Representative U Min Thu. PHOTO: MNA



Representative U Ti Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

FOUR reports were explained and six bills were discussed at the Pyithu Hluttaw session on Monday.

The reports submitted by the Public Accounts Committee, the

Banking and Financial Development Committee, the Environmental Conservation Committee and the Economic and Trade Development Committee.

The bills included the Public

Debt Management Bill, the Protection of New Plant Species Bill, the Pesticide Bill, The Industrial Law Bill, the Aungbarle Lottery Bill and the Manual Oil Well Bill.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon Region parliament passes new budget

THE Yangon Region Parliament approved its budget for the 2016-2017 fiscal year and the first five-year plan for Yangon Region Development, to span the 2011-2012 fiscal year until

the 2015-2016 fiscal year, at its special session yesterday.

During the session, officials answered one question raised by MPs and three questions related to completed projects.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U MyintSwe and Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Sein Tin Win, along with 130 MPs, were also present at the session.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Yangon Region Hluttaw to approve budget in progress. PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw reps call for landslide prevention at jade mines

REPRESENTATIVES at the Amyotha Hluttaw session on Monday discussed a motion calling for the prevention of landslides of dumped soil from jade mines in Hpakant.

Although there are eleven sites designated for dumping soil from jade mines, some companies continue to dump soil at mining sites, according to a representative.

Another representative pointed out that there are weak-

nesses in law enforcement at jade mines.

Other representatives said the government should enact a law allowing citizens to conduct gem mining at manageable levels, adding that measures for environmental conservation should be taken at gem mines.

A union-level official will respond to the motion at a future session, according to sources.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Representative U Khin Wine Kyi. PHOTO: MNA



Representative U Sai Tin Aung. PHOTO: MNA

Civil society organisations urge armed groups to hold talks with govt

The CSFoP, a peace forum comprised of civil society organisations, recently urged armed ethnic groups that have not yet signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement to meet and negotiate with the government as soon as possible.

The forum's statement also said it recognises the efforts of

the government and the eight current ethnic signatories in organising a political dialogue and appealed to all parties to stop fighting in Kachin and Shan states.

The forum was formed in August 2012 with the aim of contributing to the peace process.—*Myanmar News Agency*

NSSA gives certificates to 180 workers

THE government-run National Skills Standard Authority (NSSA) granted certificates to 136 workers, 44 occupational skilled workers and six assessment centres yesterday.

“The NSSA is Myanmar’s first step toward building the

machinery for standardising workers’ skills as part of the efforts to improve of the country’s labour force,” said Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Aye Myint at the ceremony in Yangon where the certificates were distributed.

In his remarks, the union minister also expressed gratitude to German International Cooperation (GIZ), Swiss contact and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).—*Myanmar News Agency*

Scouts discuss centennial celebration



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Nandar Kyaw Swa speaks at meeting of Myanmar Scout Federation. PHOTO: MNA

Members of the Myanmar Scout Federation gathered at a coordination meeting to discuss the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the organisation on 6 December in Yangon.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swar attended the meeting and urged all members to participate in holding the celebration, which will help the MSF en-

ter the World Organisation of the Scout Movement. MSF chairman Dr Tin Nyo discussed the organisation’s current and future activities on the organisation’s roadmap, including setting up a Training for Trainers programme.

The World Organisation of the Scout Movement and the Asia-Pacific Scout Region will organise a National Strategic Planning Work-

shop from 24 to 29 February and a Youth Programme Workshop in the first week of February in Yangon. The Myanmar Scout Federation has invited young people who want to attend new scouting courses to attend a meeting at No. 1 Basic Education High School in Lanmadaw Township on 19 December.—*Ko Latt (Myanmar News Agency)*

Jade goes on sale in Nay Pyi Taw



Merchants evaluate jade stones at Sales of raw and cut jade in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

SALES of raw and cut jade launched yesterday at the Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw, attracting local and foreign merchants.

More than 150 raw jade lots

and 6,826 pieces of cut jade are to be sold through a tender system, which will conclude later this week.

According to officials of the event, merchants are able to submit

their tender forms for raw jade lots on 7 and 8 December, and winners will be announced on 9 December.

Meanwhile, the tender forms for the cut jade will open on 10 December.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Govt opens 267 one-stop shops

THE Union Government has opened 267 one-stop shops in 72 townships, according to a statement released by the committee for opening one-stop shops.

The shops will provide people with services such as issuing licences, taxation, issuing permits for stage shows, granting citizenship accreditation cards, birth and death certificate, receiving complaints, municipal works, forestry, social security, labour affairs, job opportunities, livestock breeding and other services.

With 13 directors from

different ministries as members, the committee, which is led by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint and two directors-general, was formed in May. It began establishing the one-stop shops in July 2015.

The opening of the service centres is aimed at preventing corruption through in public and encouraging checks and balances among governmental departments, said Home Affairs Minister Lt-Gen Ko Ko at a coordination meeting for implementing one-stop shops in Nay Pyi Taw on 7 October.—*GNLM*

ADPC, MHD discuss improvements to Myanmar meteorology systems



Participants pose for documentary photo at joint meeting. PHOTO: MNA

THE Thailand-based Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre and Myanmar’s Meteorology and Hydrology Department held a meeting yesterday, reviewing the work of the Myanmar weather bureau from 2012 to 2015.

During the meeting, officials of the two sides discussed MHD’s achievements in improving its human resources and equipment while conducting meteorology and disaster preparedness operations and earthquake monitoring with the assistance of the ADPC.

The meeting also discussed a plan for meteorology and earthquake monitoring in Myanmar up to December 2017.

“We sent our staff to trainings in Norway to catch up with advanced technology for meteorology with the assistance of the Norwegian government. Only when our weather forecasts are correct will warning systems be helpful to minimise losses caused by natural disasters,” said U Hla Tun, deputy director-general of the government’s weather bureau.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Basic tour guide course to be opened in Yangon

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will open a basic tour guide course on 1 February in Yangon with the aim of developing human resources in the country’s tourism industry.

People who want to take an entrance examination for the course may send their application

forms to the Tourism Training School at the corner of Mahabandoola Road and 31st Street no later than 1 January 2016.

The entrance exam will be held on 10 January at National Management College on Botahtaung Pagoda Road.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Authorities speed up reconstruction in flood-hit areas



Most of the people affected by the flood in July and August have moved to their new houses in Kalay and other areas. PHOTO: CHINDWIN THAR

NEARLY 50 houses have been rebuilt for families who lost their homes in the flood in July and August in Kalaywa,

Sagaing Region.

The new houses were built in a new section of the town.

The floods, caused by tor-

rential rains, destroyed 91 houses and damaged more than 100 in the town. The floods were reported as being the most destructive

in Myanmar in over 100 years.

More than 50 percent of the damaged houses have been repaired, and the remaining 24

houses are under repair, according to local authorities.

With the assistance of the government and donations from the public, the reconstruction effort began as soon as the waters receded.

District and township disaster management committees are speeding up the construction works to complete the work as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, people affected by the flood in Kyaukkar Village, Kalay Township, in the same region have moved to new houses in another part of the village.

Out of 358 houses which are targeted to be constructed in the area, more than 220 have been completed, and 78 are under repair.

The project is expected to be completed this month.

Four states and regions—Chin, Magwe, Sagaing and Rakhine regions—were declared natural disaster zones by the government.

The flooding inundated more than 1 million acres of farmland nationwide, damaging more than 426,000 acres and destroying more than 56,000 acres nationwide, according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation.—*Chindwin Thar and Jo Natt*

Crime News

10 kilos of marijuana seized on Loikaw-Pyinmana train

POLICE seized about 10 kilos of marijuana were seized from passengers on the Loikaw-Pyinmana train in Aungpan on 5 December.

Police discovered the marijuana in plastic bags be-

longing to four passengers.

Action has been taken against Sein Wi, 51, Moe Win, 32, Ma Phyu Phyu Win, 49, and Ma Hnin Hnin Moe, 24, under the Anti-Narcotics Act.—*Stringer*



(From L to R) Sein Wi, Ma Phyu Phyu Win, and Ma Hnin Hnin Moe, Moe Win, 32. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

2,000 stimulant pills, illegal jade stones seized in achilek

POLICE seized 2,000 stimulant pills and five jade stones from two men in Tachilek on 5 December.

A combined team comprising officers from a local anti-narcotic squad and police stopped and searched a car that was enroute from Kengtung to Tachilek

The team discovered the stimulant pills hidden in the pant pockets of passenger Sai Lar, 23, along with five jade stones. Action was taken against Sai Kwan Sein, 53, the driver of the car, and Sai Lar, 23, under the Anti-Narcotics Act and the Myanma Gems Law.—*Stringer*



Sai Kwan Sein (Left) and Sai Lar. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

Mother dies in motorcycle fall

A WOMAN died in Taninthayi Township after falling from a motorcycle on 5 December, said police yesterday.

Ma Tin Tin Yu, 35, fell to the ground as an umbrella she

held snagged on a branch of a tree while she rode as a passenger on a motorcycle driven by her husband. She was rushed to the hospital but died there.

The victim was holding her

3-month-old daughter when the accident happened. The baby is safe, according to the police.

Maung Aye, the husband of the victim, was brought to a local police station.—*Stringer*

Philippine crime-fighting mayor tops opinion polls for president

MANILA — A tough-talking, seven-term mayor, who has built a reputation for fighting crime in the insurgency-plagued southern Philippines, has become favourite to succeed President Benigno Aquino in May elections, an opinion poll showed yesterday.

Rodrigo Duterte, 70, mayor of Davao City, was the top-rated contender for 38 percent of 1,200 respondents, the Social Weather Stations poll said.

Senator Grace Poe, who topped surveys in June and September, slid down to second spot with 21 percent in a tie with Vice President Jejomar Binay, who led opinion polls early this year. Poe had 26 percent support in September and Binay had 24 percent.

Poe last week was barred for running because she fails to meet the 10-year residency requirement but she is hopeful that decision will be reversed on appeal.

The elections will be closely watched by investors, who fear the political succession in one of Asia's fastest-growing economies could derail gains made during Aquino's rule.

Under Aquino, the Philippines has seen annual economic growth of more than six percent on average, its best five-year record in four decades. He has also battled to rein in corruption.

About 54 million Filipinos are eligible to vote to choose a president, vice president and more than 18,000 local govern-



Rodrigo Duterte, a seven-term Philippine mayor. PHOTO: REUTERS

ment executives and lawmakers in the general elections, which happen every six years. Aquino's chosen successor, former interior minister Manuel "Mar" Roxas, was fourth in the poll, falling from 20 percent support in September to 15 percent.

Political analysts said the rise in support for Duterte could be attributed to his anti-crime crusade. As mayor, Duterte has turned around the reputation of Davao, once one of the most crime-plagued cities in the country.—Reuters

Man arrested over laser aimed at US military aircraft in Okinawa

NAHA — Police arrested a 56-year-old local businessman yesterday on suspicion of beaming laser-like rays at a US military aircraft flying near a controversial US base in Okinawa in July.

Katsuro Hiraoka, who runs a video-related company, was arrested on suspicion of beaming green rays three times at a helicopter carrying four Marines near the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma from a parking space at his nearby home from around 9 pm on 1 July. He has admitted to the allegation, according to the police.

The Okinawa police said they received reports from US forces between July last year and this July that their aircraft have been beamed at six times by what suspected lasers. The police said they are investigating whether Hiraoka has been involved in other cases as well. They have collected what they believe is a laser pointer in a house search Monday, they said. The US Marine Corps has expressed concern about the beams, with an official telling Kyodo News last week such flight-interfering activities "pose a threat to the safe operation" of aircraft at the Air Station Futenma.—Kyodo News

Mt. Aso in southwestern Japan has small-scale eruption

TOKYO — Mt. Aso in Kumamoto Prefecture, southwestern Japan, had a small-scale eruption Monday morning, its first eruption since 23 October, the weather agency said.

The eruption spewed smoke about 700 meters above the No. 1 crater of Mt. Nakadake, one of the five peaks that constitute Mt. Aso, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. There have been no reports of people injured so far.

The agency maintained its volcanic alert level at 2 on the scale of 5, warning people not to approach the crater. Rocks could fall within 1 kilometer of the crater, it said.

"An eruption of this level can happen at any time," an official of the agency's Fukuoka Regional Headquarters said.

The alert level for Mt. Aso was raised to 3 following its eruption on 14 September, which warned against approaching the mountain, but it was lowered by one notch on 24 November amid diminished volcanic activity.—Kyodo News

India's foreign minister to visit Pakistan for first time since 2012

NEW DELHI — Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj will hold talks with Pakistan on Wednesday, the first visit by India's top diplomat to its rival in three years, part of efforts to restart a peace dialogue plagued by militant attacks and distrust. Swaraj will lead an Indian delegation to Islamabad for talks on Afghanistan, India's foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said on his Twitter page.

Top Pakistani foreign affairs official Sartaj Aziz said Swaraj would meet him and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

"This is a good beginning, that the deadlock that was present has to some extent been removed," Aziz, the prime minister's adviser on security and foreign affairs, told reporters.

The visit comes after the collapse of talks in August that raised questions about the ability of the nuclear-armed rivals to overcome animosity that has festered since their independence from British rule almost seven decades ago. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sharif resumed high-level contacts with a brief conversation at climate change talks in Paris last week and their national security advisers met in Bangkok on Sunday. Kanwal Sibal, a former Indian foreign secretary, said the foreign minister's visit showed the Modi government had softened its hardline stance towards Pakistan after realising that the lack of sustained



India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj in New Delhi. PHOTO: REUTERS

talks yielded no returns.

"The countries can agree to disagree, but they will have to start talking," Sibal said.

Taken by surprise, Indian opposition parties questioned the government's on-off approach to talks and a former foreign minister from Modi's party said the policy was being conducted in the shadows.

Since taking office in 2014, Modi has authorised a more robust approach to Pakistan, giving security forces the licence to re-

taliate forcefully along their disputed border and demanding an end to insurgent attacks in Indian territory. Swaraj's visit is the first ministerial-level visit to Pakistan since the then foreign minister, S.M. Krishna, travelled to Islamabad in 2012, which was before Modi became prime minister.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since 1947, two of them over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which both claim in full but rule in part.—Reuters

"The countries can agree to disagree, but they will have to start talking."

Kanwal Sibal
Former Indian foreign secretary

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Paris a reminder India risks missing lessons from Mumbai attack

MUMBAI — Last month, during an exercise to test India's readiness for a militant attack, teams of coast guards approached Mumbai and surrounding areas by sea, just as assailants did before deadly strikes in 2008. Several teams slipped through undetected.

Officials say the response to the mock assault in Maharashtra was not a disaster, but the shortcomings it exposed were a reminder of India's vulnerability to the kind of violence that hit Mumbai seven years ago, when 166 people were killed, and Paris only last month.

"There was a mixed result," said a navy spokesman in Mumbai, describing the mid-November exercise that, by coincidence, came days after gunmen targeted Paris on 13 November, killing 130.

"We do find weaknesses, but over the years the number of people who can go through (our defences) is much less."

The atrocity in France drew immediate comparisons with events in Mumbai in 2008, when 10 gunmen landed on the city's shores by boat, split into pairs and attacked various high-profile sites using semi-automatic weapons.

In response, Mumbai police got better equipment, and a unit of the National Security Guard (NSG) was deployed to the financial capital. Fishermen have been made aware of the seaborne threat



Members of the Force One Commandos from Maharashtra police demonstrate their skills during their inauguration ceremony in Mumbai, in 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

and can call a helpline if they spot anything suspicious.

Maharashtra also set up its own elite counter-terrorism police unit: Force One.

But the initial zeal with which the threat was treated has faded, security experts said.

"A lot of effort goes in at first. But over time, people lose interest. Momentum is lost. There is no leadership continuity," said Govind Sisodia, a senior com-

mander of the NSG at the time of the Mumbai raid.

Sisodia, now retired, was unable to scramble his elite force from its headquarters in New Delhi for 12 hours after the start of the Mumbai attack because no plane could be found.

Poorly armed, trained and equipped police first-responders were no match for the heavily armed gunmen who simultaneously attacked multiple targets.

The drama evolved into a hostage crisis that dragged on for three days.

Seven years after the attack, Force One has yet to move into its promised purpose-built headquarters outside the city.

For now, it protects one of the world's largest metropolitan areas from a modest office on the fourth floor of a shabby low-rise building which it shares with a police academy. Lines of drying

laundry hang from the windows.

"From every incident, we take a lesson, we revise our protocols," said Sanjay Saxena, the inspector general of police running the unit, when asked about the Paris attack.

Saxena gave little away about how his squad operated, including how he might scramble his hand-picked team from a northern suburb to districts in Mumbai's historic south along the city's jammed roads.

Some of the commandos in Force One, modelled on Germany's GSG 9 special forces, are allowed to live at home. According to some officials, the 600-strong force trains on a police parade ground.

A critical worry, say security experts, is that tactics used by militants are evolving.

While the attack on Paris echoed elements of that in Mumbai, it also differed, for example in the use of suicide belts to maximise casualties and rule out capture.

"Mumbai ushered in a new era," said G.K. Pillai, India's home secretary after the Mumbai attacks. "This is a new type of terrorism: multiple, very well-trained teams striking a variety of targets."

"The lesson was that in cities you need to have a few hundred of these elite commandos available within 10-15 minutes, whether it is Paris or London."—Reuters

North Korea test site activity could be bluff, nuclear ban monitor says



Lassina Zerbo, head of the organisation preparing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — Heightened activity at a North Korean nuclear test site could be a bluff rather than preparations to set off an atomic device soon, the head of an international body set up to monitor a ban on nuclear testing said yesterday.

A report by 38 North, a North Korea project at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, said satellite images showed construction of a test tunnel at Punggye-ri, on North Korea's

east coast where it conducted its three previous nuclear tests.

"I'm tempted to believe that the fourth tunnel is just a bluff to put pressure on the international community to resume discussion with them," Lassina Zerbo, head of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO), told Reuters.

North Korea has conducted three underground nuclear tests since 2006.

The last, in 2013, drew inter-

national condemnation including from China, its main diplomatic ally. Isolated North Korea is under UN sanctions that prohibit trade that can fund its arms programme.

Diplomatic talks amongst six countries including the United States and North Korea aimed at ending its nuclear programme produced a deal in 2005 from which the North has since walked away.

North Korea has been steadily working on its nuclear programme, but a fourth test is not seen as imminent.

While a new tunnel at the site could well indicate North Korea was preparing a test, the timing would "probably depend on political factors more than technical ones," said Jeffrey Lewis, author of the 38 North report.

The North's agreement with South Korea in August to work towards easing tension and improving ties also meant a test was less likely, said Zerbo.

"One would not anticipate that North Korea would go for new testing at a time when they are engaged in discussions with their brothers from the South," Zerbo said. —Reuters

Japan to cooperate with US over terrorism in wake of shooting case

TOKYO — Japan said yesterday it will step up cooperation with the United States over counterterrorism measures in the wake of last week's shooting rampage in southern California.

"Our country will continue efforts to prevent terrorism in close cooperation with the United States and the international community," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said in response to US President Barack Obama's condemnation of the case as "an act of terrorism."

"I express my condolences to all the victims and their families, and extend my sympathies to the injured," Suga said at a news conference. The top government spokesman was referring to Wednesday's shooting in San Bernardino that killed 14 people and wounded 21 others. It followed the 13 November deadly terrorist attacks in Paris that killed 130 people.

"Japan expresses its solidarity with the US government and people," he said. "Terrorism must never be tolerated for any

reason and we resolutely condemn it."

Suga said Japan will take antiterrorism measures in the country with a firmer sense of security and ensure the safety of Japanese citizens living and traveling abroad.

In a rare Oval Office address Sunday, Obama determined the shooting case as "an act of terrorism designed to kill innocent people."

"So far, we have no evidence that the killers were directed by a terrorist organisation overseas or that they were part of a broader conspiracy here at home," Obama said. "But it is clear that the two of them had gone down the dark path of radicalization, embracing a perverted interpretation of Islam that calls for war against America and the West. They had stockpiled assault weapons, ammunition, and pipe bombs," he said.

"The threat of terrorism is real, but we will overcome it," the president said.—Kyodo News

Obama in speech to nation vows to defeat 'new phase' of terrorist threat

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Sunday laid out the most sweeping defence yet of his strategy to defeat Islamic State, but he offered no US policy shift to confront what he called a “new phase” in the terrorist threat after a mass shooting in California.

In a rare Oval Office address, Obama sought to calm a US public increasingly jittery about the fight against Islamist militancy that once appeared to be waged overseas. His remarks failed to quiet Republican critics who have long accused him of underestimating the militants' strength and staying power.

Speaking in a measured tone, Obama used his 14-minute nationally televised appearance to draw a careful line about what he would and would not do. He pledged, for example, to “hunt down terrorist plotters” anywhere they are. But he insisted: “We should not be drawn once more into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria.”

Obama spoke just four days after US-born Syed Rizwan Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, opened fire on a holiday party for civil servants in San Bernardino, California, killing 14 people. The pair were killed hours later in a shootout with police.

Obama condemned the attack

as “an act of terrorism designed to kill innocent people.” But he also said San Bernardino showed that “the terrorist threat has evolved into a new phase” as Islamic State used the Internet to “poison the minds” of potential assailants.

Obama also made a connection between national security and the need for gun control following America's latest mass shooting.

The FBI is investigating the paramilitary-style attack in California as inspired by Islamic State, which controls swaths of Syria and Iraq and has shown an expanded reach beyond its Middle East strongholds, including complicity in the 13 November assaults in Paris that killed 130 people.

But Obama, whose restraint contrasted sharply with French President Francois Hollande's impassioned words after the Paris attacks when he vowed a “merciless” response, said there was no evidence the California assault was directed by a militant group overseas or part of a broader conspiracy at home.

Nevertheless, Obama sought to show his administration was on top of the crisis, despite new questions raised about the country's defences against homegrown extremism.

“The threat from terrorism is

real but we will overcome it,” Obama said.

Obama's Republican critics, including the party's presidential candidates, quickly panned his speech, just the third he has delivered from the Oval Office since he took office in January 2009.

“People are scared not just because of these attacks but because of a growing sense that we have a president that is completely overwhelmed by them,” Florida Senator Marco Rubio, who is seeking the Republican presidential nomination for the November 2016 election, told Fox News.

Delivering his speech from a lectern, Obama called on Silicon Valley to help address the threat of militant groups using social media and electronic communications to plan and promote violence, setting up renewed debate over personal privacy online. Obama also seized the opportunity to make the case again for US gun control, something he has done to little avail because of stiff Republican resistance, following numerous shooting sprees during his presidency.

“We also need to make it harder for people to buy powerful assault weapons like the ones that were used in San Bernardino,” Obama said. “What we can do - and must do - is make it harder for



US President Barack Obama speaks about counter-terrorism and the United States fight against Islamic State during an address to the nation from the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on 6 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

them to kill.” A senior administration official said Obama had no immediate plans to visit San Bernardino.

At the same time, Obama cautioned against overreaction to the militant threat at home.

“We cannot turn against each other by letting this fight be defined as a war between America and Islam,” he said, alluding to the incendiary rhetoric by Republican presidential candidates like Donald Trump, which is seen by critics as fear-mongering against the Muslim community.

Given that the California couple were not on the US national security radar before they launched their shooting spree on Wednesday, Obama faced the challenge of convincing the US public he is doing everything possible to deal with an evolving militant threat.

There was mounting evidence that the pair were “lone wolf” assailants who may have become radicalised by Islamic State propaganda and then acted independently, making it all the more difficult for authorities to track them.

Last week's massacre, if proven to be linked to or motivated by foreign Islamist militancy, would be the deadliest such incident on US soil on Obama's watch and since the 11 September, 2001, hijacked plane attacks on New York and Washington.

Obama's address came amid growing pressure from Republicans and even some Democrats for a tougher response to Islamic State now that the San Bernardino shootings have raised fears among Americans about the threat of more attacks at home.—Reuters

'Clock ticking to catastrophe', Ban urges strong climate deal

PARIS — Warning that the “clock is ticking toward climate catastrophe”, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged governments yesterday to agree a strong deal to limit global warming and transform the economy to greener energy.

“Outside these negotiating halls, there is a rising global tide of support for a strong, universal agreement,” Ban told environment and foreign ministers at the start of an intense home stretch of the talks, due to end on Friday.

He urged delegates from almost 200 nations not to duck the hard choices they face as four years of often glacial-paced negotiations peak. The talks are aimed at producing the strongest agreement yet to bind both rich and poor to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

“The world is expecting more from you than half-measures and incremental approaches,” Ban told the negotiators, calling for “a transformative agreement.”

Ban said a final deal should include a review of national



United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon delivers his speech during the Action Day at the World Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) at Le Bourget, near Paris, France. PHOTO: REUTERS

pledges at five year intervals starting before 2020. Some developing nations are reluctant to commit to such an early timetable.

He also said the private sector needed a clear signal that a shift to low emissions was “inevitable” and told rich nations to lead in cutting emissions. Ban said emerging nations also needed access to \$100 billion a year promised by 2020 to help them tackle climate change.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, dispatched to secure a deal meant to cement President Barack Obama's legacy as a guardian of the environment, will work alongside ministers from almost

200 nations this week to try to secure a deal.

Negotiators approved a pared-down draft text on Saturday, and handed over the toughest questions to their bosses, who will spend the week hammering out thorny issues including a system for funding developing nations and the mechanisms for monitoring national pledges to reduce emissions.

Almost every nation will make brief speeches this week outlining national policies and hopes. They are due to reach a final accord on Friday, but the talks are widely expected to run into overtime, as previous summits have.—Reuters

NEWS IN BRIEF

Natural disasters kill 47 in China in November

BEIJING — Natural disasters left 47 people dead, four missing and affected more than 2.47 million people across China in November, according to official figures.

The most notable events included frost, snow and landslides, with the south suffering rare winter floods, the Ministry

of Civil Affairs said on Monday in a statement.

Natural disasters caused about 4.8 billion yuan (about 750 million US dollars) in direct economic losses.

More than 59,000 residents were relocated and some 35,000 needed emergency assistance.—Xinhua

7.0-intensity quake hits Tajikistan; tremors felt in India

NEW DELHI — A high-intensity earthquake hit the Central Asian country of Tajikistan yesterday, tremors of which were felt in parts of north India, including Delhi and Kashmir.

According to National Seismological Division of the Ministry of Earth Science, the 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Tajikistan at 1.20PM (IST). The depth of the earthquake was recorded at 25 km.—PTI

Russia to consider Afghanistan's request for arms supply 'carefully'

MOSCOW — Russia will consider Afghanistan's request for arms supply in a careful manner, but that task belongs first of all to the United States, RIA news agency cited Kremlin's special envoy to Afghanistan as saying yesterday.

Zamir Kabulov told the agency that Russia has already

received some requests from Afghanistan.

“They are being worked out, but all will be decided proportionally, reasonably and carefully,” Kabulov said. “Let the Americans take care of the supplies as they are there with NATO forces - this is the their problem first of all.”—Reuters

OPINION

The true driving force of progress

Myint Win Thein

ACCORDING to some theories of social development, every human society progresses through struggles between its social classes. This means that the struggle between the dominant class and the oppressed classes will lead to the development of a society. For example, the struggle be-

tween feudal landlords, the peasantry and bourgeoisie gave birth to the development of capitalism in Europe over the past few centuries.

However, there have been intentional and unintentional attempts to distract people, including world leaders, from the lens of class struggle. For instance, some social theories suggested that clashes between civilisations, not class struggles, are a driving force of world affairs. Some of these theories treat class struggle as an out-dated perspective. Now, it can clearly be seen that theories about clashes of civilisations are very costly and will not lead to progress. They can only produce violence and bloodshed instead of progress and prosperity. Though they sometimes derail society from its course, they cannot always do so in the long run.

Human society will continue on its natural course

again soon. Therefore, it is important that social theories or political policies should reflect the true nature of progress in human society. A policy that cannot grasp the true nature of the world will lead to nothing.

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.

I HINK TO BLINK; BEWARE OF STARE !

Dr. Aung Soe (a) Aung Kyaw Moe
Retiered State Medical Superintendent

TV watchers who spend long hours looking at screens have changes in their tear fluid similar to people with the disease known as dry eye.

The protein MUC5AC, secreted by cell in the upper eyelid, makes up part of the normally accruing mucus layer, or "tear film" that keeps the eye moist. But study participants with the most screen time had MUC5AC levels nearing those of people with diagnosed dry eye. "To understand patients' eye strain, which is one of major symptoms of dry eye disease, it is important that ophthalmologist pay attention to MUC5AC concentration in tears," said Dr. Yuichi Uchino, who is an ophthalmologist at the school of Medicine at Keto University Tokyo. When people stare at screen, blinking times decreased compared to reading a book at the table, the study reveals. Same is in Myanmar as Japan. People staring at screens also tend to open their eyelids wider than while doing other tasks, and the extra exposed surface area in addition to infrequent blinking can accelerate tear evaporation and is associated with dry eye disease, Ochino said, which also applies to Myanmar people as well as Myanmar doctors, I believe, especially "live" broadcast fans.

Dry eye may be chronic for some but can be managed with over the counter or prescription eye drops. The subject "dry eye" pushed my mind into my past days. When I was assigned periodically during 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s at numerous hospitals at different positions in Central Myanmar, so called "dry zone" under Ministry of Health as well as different assignments at Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) under Ministry of Energy and also duties under Ministry of Mines, I noticed plenty of similar dry eye patients among the employees and also in the general public. So also in some tropical countries where I served under UNDP as UNV. Past research suggests that up to 5 million men and women over age 50 in the United States suffer from dry eye disease, the researchers write in their report. In Japan, tens of millions of people report some dry eye symptoms.

Seven percent of men and 14 percent of women were diagnosed with 'dry eye disease,' meaning they reported symptoms of eye problems like irritation, burning or blurred vision and had poor quality or quantity of tear film, according to the tests.

Overall, participants looked at screens for just over eight hours a

day and had an average of about 6.8 nanograms of MUC5AC per milligram of protein in each eye. "Mucin is one of the most important components of the tear film," said Dr. Yuichi Hori, "Mucins (like MUC5AC) function to hold water on the ocular surface of the epithelia that synthesize them, hence, they are major players in maintenance of the tear film on the ocular surface," Hori says. He is chair of the department of Ophthalmology at Toho University Omori Medical Centre in Tokyo.

Concentration of the protein was also lower for people with symptoms of eye strain than for people without symptoms, according to the results published in JAMA Ophthalmology. People with dry eyes at work tend to be less productive and are more likely to be depressed, according to previous studies, Uchino said. Those who are worried about dry eye can make some simple changes to decrease their risk, Uchino said. "The exposed ocular surface area can be decreased by placing the terminal at a lower height, with the screen titled upward," Uchino suggested. Doctors also recommend using a humidifier for the eyes and avoiding being in the direct path of the wind from an air conditioner.

Let me sincerely remind Koria-movies-addict Myanmar families who watch three or four or even more movies continuously. Ref. The NEW LOOK JOURNAL

POEM

The Triumphant Elite of the Future

Together everyone achieves more; team spirit is of paramount importance
Health is the precious gain and contentment is the greatest wealth.
Enduring patience is the highest austerity
Trustworthy person is the best kinsman
Right man in the right place at the right time at the right place with right placement and right promotion
Indeed, association with the wise is happy, like meeting one's own kinsmen
Understand that "To avoid evil, to cultivate good and to cleanse one's mind-this is the teaching of the Buddhas."
Mutual respect and cooperation are also essential to democracy
People hold dear him who embodies virtue and insight, who is principled, has realized the truth, and who himself does what he ought to be doing
Hunger is the worst disease, conditioned things are the worst suffering, knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nibbana, the highest bliss.
A sound sense of justice, moral principles, appropriate cooperation, good citizenship and a desire to protect the people are important elements of responsible citizens
Nothing is impossible to one with a will, wish-to-do, work-hard and wisdom.
To strive to become leaders who can promote the best image of the military academy
Easily seen is the fault of others, but one's own is difficult to see
Let a man be well controlled in mind, watchful of speech and not commit evil in bodily action
If by renouncing a lesser happiness one may realize a greater happiness, let the wise man renounce the lesser, having regard for the greater.
Those disciples of the Buddha Gautama ever awaken happily who day and night constantly practice Mindfulness of the Body
Excellent it is to see the Noble Ones; to live with them is ever blissful, one will always be happy by not encountering fools.
One of the basic principles of democracy is rule of law.
For a liar who has violated the one law (of truthfulness), who holds in scorn the hereafter, there is no evil that he cannot do.
Though one may conquer a thousand times a thousand men in battle, yet he indeed is the noblest victor who conquers himself.
He who is full of faith and virtue and possesses good repute and wealth- he is respected everywhere, in whatever land he travels
Excellent is the man who has subdued himself
For a person, better it is to live one day virtuous and meditative than to live a hundred years immoral and uncontrolled
Until life is end, good is virtue, good is faith that is steadfast, good is the acquisition of wisdom, and good is the avoidance of evil
The man who utters gentle, instructive and truthful words, who imprecates none-him do the Buddha call a holy man
Understand that "He whose lust and hatred, pride and hypocrisy have fallen off like a mustard seed from the point of a needle-him do the Buddha call a holy man."
Right speech, right action and right livelihood (Morality) is the fundamental foundation of peace and happiness for all mankind
Exceedingly difficult to do are things that are good and beneficial

Htun Tin Htun

LETTERS TO THE EDITER

Dear Editor

The UN has successfully accommodated over 100,000 ethnic Nepali refugees originally from Bhutan and restructured in camps of eastern Nepal to different countries including Canada. The city of Lethbridge, in the province of Alberta has been one of the important destinations of the Bhutanese Nepali refugees in Canada. The city of Lethbridge now has a vibrant ethnic Nepali refugee community that has nicely integrated with the Canadian society. The pluralist and multi-cultural Canadian society and the city of Lethbridge have been extremely warm to receive these refugees facing discrimination, persecution and humiliation in their original country of origin in Bhutan. The local Bhutanese Nepali refugees has formed a cultural group called The Bhutanese Canadian Association; and is a member of a local socio-cultural organization representing and celebrating ethnic diversity called the Southern Alberta Ethnic association (SAEA). The refugee community members have been doing an excellent job of exposing ordinary Canadians citizens to the life and culture of Bhutan and the ethnic Nepali population once settled there (<http://www.saeamulticultural.org/>). Canada through her constitution proudly embraces the principle of multiculturalism in her national life and a global leader of humanity, peace and democracy. I sincerely appeal to all to follow this pluralistic model to accommodate helpless refugees and transform them from being looked as a burden in to a productive section of the society. If we all come across together on a common platform and concentrate our efforts, we could certainly make differences to all humanitarian crises plaguing our planet currently. What we need is a change towards positive attitude to create a better world.

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

Myanmar tourism expected to increase in post-election period

MINISTER for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung said on Saturday at Yangon's National Management College that he expects more tourists to visit during the current post-election period, although tourism during December is usually low in Myanmar. He was participating in a discussion on 'The Development of Tourism in Myanmar and its Potential', hosted by the college.

Myanmar's general election was held on 8 November across the country.

"Tourism in Myanmar has been increasing yearly. Not only via airports; they now come in through border gates. In previous years, they didn't usually visit Myanmar during the December holidays. But this year, during the post-election period, the number of tourists has increased," said the minister.

Up to November this year,

4.2 million foreign tourists have visited Myanmar, and it this figure is expected to reach 4.7 million by the end of the year. The number of tourists is expected to reach five million by the end of the 2015-2016 fiscal year on 31 March 2016, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

"The lowest number of tourists comes during the raining season. But when we develop the northern areas, where there are snow-peaked mountains, and the archipelagos of the south, more tourists will visit all year round. The government, the private sector and the public must participate in these efforts, which will boost incomes for everyone," added the minister.

The rise in the number of tourists in recent years has also been facilitated by more accessible visas and the opening of border gates.—Zaw Gyi (Panita)



Tourists are seen in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Vocational education trainers leave for China

UNDER an agreement between Myanmar and China to exchange livelihood trainings, 20 teachers from the Department of Technical and Vocational Education left for China on 2 December to attend a 4-week course in Wenzhou.

The course is aimed at preparing trainers to use of electronic technology training assessment devices in vocational trainings provided by the department next year.

A total of 10 devices were donated by the Myanmar-China Friendship Association, the China-Myanmar Friendship Association and their partners in August this year.

The delegation was seen off by U Sein Nyunt, an executive of the MCFA.—GNLM

Complaints on unruly motorists increases in Yangon



Cars are crawling on a busy road in outskirts of Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

The No. 2 Traffic Police Squad in Yangon has revealed that public complaints on fellow motorists who break road rules have increased month by month. The traffic police had opened an Online Complain Center (OCC) since August (of this year) at its office, and the complaints can be called to its Viber number: 09 979120328.

During August there were 438 reports and in November the reports increased to 1767 from Viber calls. A total of 5055 complaints were made from August to November.

Traffic Police Colonel Aung Ko Oo said, "We have taken action against 3653 cars. The com-

plaints must be with pictures, time and place. The most complaints involve driving against a one-way road, parking on no-parking areas, double parking and crossing the (red) traffic lights."

OCC verifies the reported car's specifications and sends to the owner of its offense with time and place by mail post. Bus lines Supervisory Committee ?? and the City Development Committee also take action against the law-breaking cars, he said.

Police Captain Myo Aung Myint of the Traffic Police Squad said, "We do not fine the unruly cars, but the respective judge of the Motor Vehicle Court decides the fine. If the cars

breaks the City Development Law it will also be taken action by that law."

He added that OCC also get reports of car crashes, and for information about motorcar and road rules and laws. It gets advices on traffic and being asked for help on other services, he said.

Traffic Police Colonel Aung Ko Oo says, "We don't want to arrest nor take action on the terrorists. We only want them to abide the road and traffic rules. Therefore, we occasionally gave educative talks on road and traffic laws to the motorists".—Ye Khaung Nyunt, Myat Tanda Maung)

Nigre sesame plantations thriving in Pauk Township

POST-MONSOON Nigre sesame-hybrid plantations, which were planted in late October, are thriving in Chetkan Village in Pauk Township, Magway Region, according to a local.

Sesame is farmed as an oil seed crop in Myanmar.

Since the village does not have easy access to groundwater, the plantations depend on rainwater.

The early-monsoon Nigre sesame-hybrid plantations failed due to insufficient rain, and farmers almost lost seeds for the next year's crop.

Since the post-monsoon rains have been favourable, farmers have high hopes for the sesame plantations. They even expect better yields than last year, said a farmer.—Nyan Toe (IPRD)



Nigre sesame-hybrid plantations in Chetkan Village in Pauk Township. PHOTO: NYAN TOE (IPRD)

NATO says won't send ground troops to fight IS

ZURICH — NATO has ruled out sending ground troops to fight against Islamic State militants in Syria, NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg told a Swiss newspaper, stressing the need to bolster local forces in the conflict.

"That is not on the agenda of the coalition and the NATO allies," he told the Tages-Anzeiger paper when asked about dis-

patching ground forces to accompany air strikes.

"The United States has a limited number of special forces. In the foreground, however, is strengthening local forces. This is not easy, but it's the only option," he added.

Stoltenberg stressed that the conflict was not a war between the West and the Islamic world, but rather against "extremism and

terrorism". "Muslims are on the front line in this war. Most victims are Muslims, and most of those who fight against the IS are Muslims. We can not carry on this struggle for them," he said.

Stoltenberg pointed out that NATO would help Turkey improve its air defences after Turkey shot down a Russian military jet last month. The alliance will adopt a package of

measures for Turkey before Christmas, he added.

He emphasized the need to calm the standoff with Russia after the plane was shot down.

"Now it is important to de-escalate and to develop mechanisms to prevent similar incidents in the future. We see a significant build-up of the Russian military presence from the far north to the Mediterra-

nean. There, too, we need to avoid similar incidents such as in Turkey," he said.

He called for Russia to "play a more constructive role in the fight against IS. So far, Russia has attacked other groups and focused on supporting the Assad regime."

US President Barack Obama said last week his decision to send more US special forces to combat

Islamic State in Iraq was not an indication that the United States was heading for another invasion like the one in 2003.

Obama has said his strategy to fight the militant group in Iraq and Syria does not include US ground combat troops, but the Pentagon announced it would send a new force of special operations troops.—Reuters

Man remanded over weekend knife attack at London underground station

LONDON — A 29-year-old man appeared in court yesterday after being charged by counter-terrorism officers with attempted murder in a weekend knife attack at an underground station in east London.

Wearing a grey t-shirt and grey track suit bottoms, Muhaydin Mire of east London spoke only to confirm his name, age and address at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

A 56-year-old unnamed man suffered serious but not life-threatening injuries in the attack at Leytonstone underground station, about six miles (10 km) east of central London, while a second person suffered minor injuries.

Prosecutor David Cawthorne said the attack occurred at 1900 GMT on Saturday as the victim walked through the station.

"It was a violent, sustained and unprovoked attack during which the victim was punched, knocked to the ground and repeatedly kicked on the ground," he said.

The victim suffered a 12-cm (5-inch) wound to his neck and was in surgery for five hours, he said.

Mire was remanded in custody to appear at London's central criminal court, the Old Bailey, on Friday.—Reuters

Venezuela opposition thrashes 'Chavismo' to win legislature



Venezuelan opposition leader Henrique Capriles casts his vote at a polling station during a legislative election, in Caracas, on 6 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

CARACAS — Venezuela's opposition trounced the ruling Socialists on Sunday to win the legislature for the first time in 16 years and gain a long-sought platform to challenge President Nicolas Maduro's rule of the OPEC nation.

The opposition Democratic Unity coalition won 99 seats to the Socialists' 46 in the 167-national National Assembly, the election board said, with some districts still to be counted. Fireworks were set off in celebration in pro-opposition districts of Caracas when the results were announced, while government supporters dismantled planned victory parties.

Maduro, 53, quickly acknowledged the defeat, the worst for the ruling "Chavismo" movement since its founder Hugo Chavez took power in 1999.

"We are here, with morals and ethics, to recognise these adverse results," Maduro said in a speech to the nation, although he blamed his defeat on a campaign by business leaders and other opponents to sabotage the economy. "The economic war has triumphed today," Maduro said. His quick acceptance of the results eased tensions in the volatile nation where the last presidential election in 2013, narrowly won by Maduro, was bitterly disputed and anti-government protests last year led to 43 deaths.

Opposition leaders, who have lost over-and-over since Chavez's first election victory 17 years ago, were jubilant, even though their victory was mainly thanks to public disgust at Venezuela's deep economic recession. "We're going

through the worst crisis in our history," coalition head Jesus Torrealba said. "Venezuela wanted a change and that change came ... a new majority expressed itself and sent a clear and resounding message." Opposition sources predicted that once counting was finalised, they would win as many as 113 seats. That would give them a crucial two-thirds majority needed to shake up institutions such as the courts or election board. The result could also embolden government foes to seek a recall election against Maduro in 2016 if they garner the nearly 4 million signatures needed to trigger the referendum. The government's defeat was another blow to Latin America's left following last month's swing to the centre-right in Argentina's presidential election.—Reuters

4 Syrian soldiers die in suspected US coalition strike

BEIRUT — An air strike believed to have been carried out by the US-led coalition killed four Syrian military personnel in Deir al Zor Province, which is mostly held by Islamic State, a monitoring group said yesterday, in what would be the first

time coalition warplanes had hit Syrian government forces. A source close to the Syrian government confirmed the strike and said there had been casualties and vehicles destroyed.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the

strike hit part of the Saeqa military camp near the town of Ayyash in western Deir al Zor Province and wounded 13 military personnel in the first such incident since the coalition began its bombing campaign against Islamic State in Syria. The strike had

hit some time in the last 24 hours, it said. The US-led force's campaign is against Islamic State, which controls most of Deir al Zor, including its capital, and has regularly targeted the group in the eastern Syrian province.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV AMOY ACTION VOY NO (001)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV AMOY ACTION VOY NO (001) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-4 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S COSCO SHIPPING CO LTD.
Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MCC HA LONG VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S'PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV TAN BINH 89 VOY NO

(TB89-V,14-2015)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TAN BINH 89 VOY NO (TB89-V,14-2015) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T-2 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
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VTech hack exposes ID theft risk in connecting kids to Internet

BOSTON — Parents who gave their child a Kidizoom smart-watch or a VTech InnoTab tablet may have exposed them to identity theft after Hong Kong-based VTech said hackers stole the personal information of more than 6 million children.

The breach underscores how digital products aimed at kids often have far weaker security than other computer products, and may pose a threat to a booming industry. Shipments of toys that connect to the Internet will rise 200 percent over the next five years, according to estimates by UK-based Juniper Research.

It's not clear what the motive was for the VTech breach nor whether it has resulted in any identity theft so far. Still, it's a warning for people who don't understand how much data and sensitive information is in a child's toy.

"The last thing you would ever imagine is that a toy manufacturer would lose your child's identity," said Liam O'Murchu, a Symantec Corp (SYMC.O) researcher known for his work dissecting complex malware produced by nation states. "This

shows that it's harder and harder to do things safely online," he said.

In VTech's case, buyers of the company's cameras, watches and tablets are encouraged to provide names, addresses and birth dates when signing up for accounts where they can download updates, games, books and other content.

VTech said the hackers compromised its Learning Lodge app store, which provides content for children's tablets, and its Kid Connect mobile app service that lets parents communicate with those tablets.

Toys that gather data on the user, like VTech's line of cameras, watches and tablets and their associated websites, will grow by 58 percent annually, according to Juniper. That category includes dolls like Mattel Inc's (MAT.O) recently introduced Hello Barbie, which connects to home wireless networks and communicates with servers to enable conversations by uploading audio and getting responses from the cloud.

Mobile security firm Bluebox and independent security researcher Andrew Hay on Friday

disclosed that they had jointly uncovered multiple vulnerabilities in iOS and Android apps that work with the device, as well as its cloud servers operated by technology partner ToyTalk.

Among their findings, they claimed that the app could be hacked to reveal passwords, could be tricked into connecting to hostile networks controlled by hackers and that the servers were vulnerable to some types of attacks.

Mattel spokesman Michelle Chidoni said that the toymaker and Hello Barbie technology partner ToyTalk have taken steps to ensure the products meets security and safety standards.

ToyTalk said in a statement that it had already fixed many of these issues raised.

It's too soon to say if the breach will hurt VTech's sales. Still, its stock fell 2.6 percent this week as it hired forensic experts, responded to government investigations on three continents and temporarily shut down more than a dozen websites, including a messaging service and kids' app store.

Mark Stanislav, a researcher at the security firm Rapid 7 Inc



VTech's products are seen on display at a toy store in Hong Kong, China on 30 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

(RPD.O), whose wife is expecting their first child in a few weeks, began looking into problems with children's products after hearing about security flaws in baby monitors, and he subsequently found such problems in products from eight baby monitor vendors.

After disclosing the flaws to the companies earlier this year, he said most have been fixed. He told Reuters he has since found problems in websites that connect oth-

er types of devices to kids, including one from a major manufacturer. He will go public with those findings next month after giving manufacturers time to fix the problems.

Identity thieves use compromised data to pose as their victims, get loans or credit cards or apply for services such as utilities. Other types of criminals assume stolen identities to evade capture by police.—Reuters

Asia stocks wary of China data, oil pressured

SYDNEY — Asian share markets turned mixed yesterday as caution grew ahead of Chinese data, though sentiment stayed supported by hopes the US economy would be able to handle an expected first increase in interest rates in almost a decade.

Oil prices were near their lowest since 2009 in the wake of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries' decision to keep production high despite depressed demand.

Brent was last down 27 cents at \$42.73 a barrel, while US crude lost 37 cents to \$39.60.

Equity investors were wary ahead of a bevy of Chinese data which are expected to show a still sluggish economy. Trade figures are due on Tuesday, followed by inflation on Wednesday and industrial output and retail sales on Saturday.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan managed only a 0.1 percent gain, with Australia and South Korea .KS11 both going flat.

Japan's Nikkei .N225 was the best performer thanks to a soft yen and added 0.99 percent. In China, the CSI300 index .CSI300 of the largest listed companies in Shanghai and Shenzhen dithered either side of zero.

Financial spreadbetters expected Britain's FTSE 100 .FTSE to open up 0.6 percent, Germany's DAX .GDAXI 0.9 percent and France's CAC .FCHI anywhere from 0.8 to 1.4 percent higher.

On Wall Street, the Dow .DJI had rallied 2.12 percent on Friday, while the S&P 500 .SPX gained



Businessmen walk past screens displaying market indices outside a brokerage in Tokyo. PHOTO: REUTERS

2.05 percent and the Nasdaq .IXIC 2.08 percent. The gains followed a US payrolls report that showed employers hired 211,000 people in November while even greater numbers joined the workforce.

All but one of the primary dealers polled by Reuters expect the Federal Reserve will hike rates next week, while futures markets imply around an 80 percent probability of a rate hike.

Yet extreme market positioning and a lack of liquidity led to some counterintuitive moves, with the dollar ending the week lower while Treasury yields actually fell.

"So while the Fed's decision is shaping as somewhat of a done deal, how the market reacts to a Fed hike still contains an element of uncertainty," said David Cannington, a senior economist at ANZ.

"The logical reaction — a stronger US dollar and modestly higher US interest rates — may not

be what transpires, at least not initially."

Indeed, currency markets were still reeling from last week's savage rally in the euro which saw its biggest one-day rise in more than six years.

So swift was the move that dealers suspect many investors were unable to exit their short positions and were now hoping desperately for a pullback to sell into.

Yet that in turn gave other speculators reason to keep the euro from falling, perhaps why the single currency suffered only limited losses on the US jobs report.

On Monday, the euro was holding at \$1.0862 EUR=, off last week's \$1.0980 peak but still far above the \$1.0538 low.

The dollar fared better on the yen, up at 123.26 JPY= from as low as 122.44 on Friday. Against a basket of major currencies .DXY, the dollar was a shade firmer at 98.432.—Reuters

UK manufacturing outlook darkens: output, orders hit six-year low

LONDON — The outlook for British manufacturing next year has darkened, with output and new orders deteriorating at rates not seen since 2009, according to an industry survey on Monday that warned of slowing growth both at home and abroad.

Manufacturing organisation EEF said its quarterly balances for new orders and output fell to their lowest levels since the third quarter of 2009, when Britain's economy had just exited its deepest recession in over 70 years. Britain had the fastest-growing major world economy last year and is likely to be at the head of the pack again this year. But it has relied heavily on domestically focused services for growth, frustrating hopes for a more export-led recovery.

The EEF survey, which is sponsored by law firm DLA Piper, raised scant hope of a manufacturing recovery in 2016, after the sector failed to contribute to British economic growth in the first three quarters of this year.

"Concerns about world trade growth and the strength of demand from both developed and emerging markets have become more prominent ... since our last report," said the EEF's chief economist, Lee Hopley.

"Closer to home, the domestic market is also looking considerably less supportive than has been the case in recent years," she said.

Low oil prices have hurt manufacturers that supply and service the sector, the report

said. Official figures for manufacturing are due on Tuesday. They are expected to show output stagnated in October.

The downturn in manufacturing had taken its toll on plans for investment and employment, the EEF said. Balances for both measures dipped below zero for the first time since early 2010.

But elsewhere in the British economy, the pace of hiring remains robust, according to a separate survey from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation.

Permanent staff placements increased at the strongest rate in seven months during November. Starting salaries continued to increase strongly, though by less than in October.

"November saw a further tightening of labour market conditions, with few sectors remaining immune from the effects of ongoing skills shortages," said Bernard Brown, a partner at accountants KPMG, who support the survey.

The REC survey has regularly pointed to stronger wage growth than has shown up in official data. Bank of England policymakers say it is still too low to help raise inflation back to target from its current record low. The policymakers meet this week for their monthly monetary policy decision.

Economists polled by Reuters expect no change this time, but they do expect interest rates to rise around the second quarter of next year.—Reuters

Sri Lanka's \$675 million plan to harness floods

POLLONARUWA — As delegates in Paris search for new ways to mitigate the effects of climate change, an innovative scheme that does exactly that is in the works in Sri Lanka. Struck by a worsening cycle of floods and droughts, the Indian Ocean nation has begun planning for a \$675 million project to capture heavy rainfall that can be used for irrigation in dry periods, as well as generating electricity.

The project will see two new reservoirs built, and 260 kilometres of canals that link existing reservoirs upgraded, across Sri Lanka's "dry zone", which stretches through the north of the country. Some of the extra water will also be funnelled into existing hydropower dams to generate 250 MW of new electricity. The Asian Development Bank is providing \$453 million of the financing, while the Sri Lankan government and other donors will come up with the rest.

Planning began last month and the first stage of construction is scheduled to begin in February, while the government aims to

complete the project by the end of 2024. It will vastly increase the amount of rainfall the country is able to retain. Most of it is now washed out to sea rather than being put to use.

"The problem in Sri Lanka is that it does not have the infrastructure right now to use the rainfall effectively," said Lance Gore, an ADB Water Resources Specialist.

The project will cover an area in which about one third of the country's 20 million people live, and will irrigate 350,000 acres of new agricultural land, according to the ADB. The bank estimates that 70 percent of the population in the region depends on agricultural for their livelihoods, while incomes in the area are 10 percent below the national average.

Unless Sri Lanka adapts to climate change, the country's poorer population will suffer even more, warned the World Bank in a 2013 report. "Disturbances to the monsoon system and rising peak temperatures put water and food resources at severe risk," it said.



Ranbanda Wijesinghe stands in his field in Pollonaruwa, Sri Lanka, during floods in 2011. PHOTO: IRIN

Of all South Asian countries, Sri Lanka and the southern tip of India will be most affected by rising temperatures, with 20 to 30 percent of summer months experiencing "unprecedented heat". Extremely wet monsoons usually occur once every century but are forecast now every decade, the World Bank report said.

Data from the Sri Lanka Meteorological Depart-

ment shows that rainfall has fallen by about seven percent in the last 50 years, while average temperatures have been rising about 0.2 Celsius per decade. In the last five years, the dry zone has suffered at least five major floods and four droughts.

More than 52,000 people are currently affected by flooding in the Northern Province's Jaffna District, while more than 320 are

displaced due to the high risk of landslides in Badulla District, according to the UN's emergency coordination body, OCHA.

The drier regions of the country usually receive around 1,500 millimeters of rain annually, said Lalith Chandrapala, director general of the Meteorological Department. But over the last few years, the overall volume of rainfall has decreased while the in-

tensity has risen.

"Take this year," Chandrapala told IRIN. "We had about four months between June and October where there was hardly any rain in these parts, then in November third week, some parts got 350 millimeters of rains."

Experts like Chandrapala say that Sri Lanka needs to upgrade its reservoir system, mostly constructed in the 1980s, so it can adapt to changing rain patterns.

"Now that the reservoirs are filled, we would not be able to hold the monsoon waters due later this month," he said. "But when the drier months come, we need all the rain water we can get."

According to information provided to OCHA by the Department of Irrigation, 17 of the country's 72 major reservoirs are currently overflowing. The reservoir system is expected to come under further strain as the monsoon hits the northeastern region this month, and local disaster management authorities are on high alert, OCHA said.—IRIN

Britain calls crisis meeting as floods hit northern England, one killed



A local man wades through flood water on a residential street in Carlisle, Britain on 6 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Britain's emergency response committee met on Sunday after prolonged heavy rain caused widespread flooding in northwest England and forced emergency services to evacuate residents from their homes.

The meeting was called after storms battered the country overnight, killing one man and leaving hundreds of homes flooded and without power. Po-

lice declared a major incident and coastguards were called in to rescue stranded residents.

Environment Secretary Elizabeth Truss said the government committee had been called to "urgently assess the scale of the floods and ensure the response remains coordinated, effective and gets help to those affected as quickly as possible."

Police said they be-

lieved one man was killed in London, which also experienced high winds, after he was blown into the side of a moving bus. There were no other reports of deaths or injuries.

Britain has suffered several heavy floods in recent years. In 2014 thousands of acres of farmland in the south of the country were submerged for weeks and the northwest region was badly flooded in both

2009 and 2005.

Prime Minister David Cameron said on Twitter that the army had been mobilised to help those affected.

"Looking down the main street where I am now I can't tell where the river starts and where it ends ... it's dirty brown water. It's a real mess," Mark Walker, a local teacher, told Reuters by telephone from the badly-affected city of Carlisle.—Reuters

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

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Obama hails conductor Ozawa for bridging cultures



Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa speaks to the press after receiving the 2015 Kennedy Centre Honours at a White House reception in Washington on 6 December. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS



The 2015 Kennedy Centre Honouree Carole King (L) arrives at a reception at the White House in Washington on 6 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — US President Barack Obama on Sunday hailed Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa for bridging cultures at a White House reception for recipients of this year's Kennedy Centre Honors for lifetime contributions to American culture.

"Seiji has dedicated his life to bridging East and West with classical music," Obama said of Ozawa, the first Japanese recipient of the award, at the event.

Ozawa, 80, was greeted with applause as Obama introduced a quote from the conductor: "Music is easier to understand than language. It can be understood right away. Just like the sunset, which is beautiful wherever you watch it."

The other recipients were Star Wars filmmaker George Lucas, singer-songwriter Carole King, actress and singer Rita Moreno and actress Cicely Tyson. "Each of them found a way to enrich our lives with their lives' work," Obama said.

"It's fantastic. I'm honored," Ozawa told Kyodo News ahead of a gala dinner at The Kennedy Center.

Ozawa said he feels the award should be shared with every member of the orchestras he has led, including those in Boston, Vienna, Berlin and San Francisco as well as the Saito Kinen Orchestra based in Japan's Matsumoto.

Ozawa and the four others received the medals during an event

at the State Department on Saturday. Ozawa was music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, one of the leading American orchestras, for 29 years until 2002. He also served as vice conductor at the New York Philharmonic in 1961. He has been suffering health problems particularly after he underwent surgery for esophageal cancer in January 2010, which sometimes forces him to cancel or shorten stage performances.

In July, the centre announced the award would also go to the American rock band the Eagles but decided to postpone the presentation to next year due to a health problem affecting guitarist and vocalist Glenn Frey.—Kyodo News

Satyaji Ray's son to bring Feluda stories in one film

KOLKATA — Satyajit Ray's iconic fictional sleuth Feluda will re-appear on the silver screen towards 2016 end as the maestro's son Sandip is set to bring together two stories of the detective in a single feature film.

The film will be produced by Eros International Media, a Mumbai-based production house.

Sandip, whose first Feluda feature film for the big screen was "Bombaier Bombete", said that he planned to show one Feluda story in each half.

"Abir, who was accepted by the audience in the role of the famous fictional detective in 'Badshahi Angti', will be in the same role. He will be my sleuth from now on," Sandip said.

"Abir fits the bill as a star with his young age, athletic build, height and intelligent face — all essential prereq-

uisites which my father had visualised," he said.

Sandip said that he had thought about Abir long before he debuted as an actor in the role of another popular Bengali fictional detective (Byomkesh) in a film by a fellow director.

A spokesman of Eros, which made a string of box office hits in Hindi, including "Tanu Weds Manu Returns" and "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara", said, "We are happy to produce film on Feluda, who is a popular Bengali character immortalised in books and celluloid."

The production house will be debuting in its first Bengali movie "Monchora" that has also been directed by Sandip and set to release this Christmas. "Monchora", a romantic drama, is an adaptation of a story by Bengali author Saradindu Bandyopadhyay, Sandip said.—PTI



Satyaji Ray. PHOTO: PTI

U2 pay tribute to Paris victims but no Eagles of Death Metal



Bono (C), the Edge (L) and Adam Clayton of Irish band U2 perform during their concert at the AccorHotels Arena in Paris, France, on 6 December, 2015, on their INNOCENCE + eXPERIENCE Tour. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — Irish rock band U2 paid tribute to the victims of the Paris attacks on their return on Sunday to France, where two

concerts had been canceled following the shootings.

But Eagles of Death Metal did not make a rumored appear-

ance with U2.

The U2 Paris concerts were originally scheduled for 14 and 15 November, and were post-

poned after coordinated Islamic State attacks on the French capital killed 130 on 13 November.

The deadliest attack occurred at the Bataclan concert hall, where garage rock band Eagles of Death Metal had been playing, and it was rumored that the Californians would show up at the AccorHotels Arena with U2.

"Vive La France", "Tonight we are all Parisians, ce soir nous sommes tous Parisiens", U2 frontman Bono told the crowd.

"If you love liberty then Paris is your hometown. We have a few words to speak on the loss you are feeling tonight, I guess grief is like a wound that never closes."

The names of the victims appeared in blue, white and red on the giant screen at the end of the concert.

Earlier, U2 had said on their website: "We're back in Paris and it's great to be here.

Some people have been saying that Eagles of Death Metal will appear on stage with U2 tonight. This is not the case.

We have another surprise guest planned for tonight's show."

Patti Smith briefly shared the stage with U2 singing "People Have the Power" in front of an ecstatic crowd at the end of the two-hour gig.

U2 has a second date in Paris on Monday, and Eagles of Death Metal could appear then.

Many fans commented that showing up at the concert was symbolic and an important way for Paris to move on from what happened just over three weeks ago while others said they were not scared. With France in a state of emergency, there was a military presence on the streets walking around carrying machine guns and wearing uniforms, and police were also armed. But no incidents were reported.—Reuters

Heartfelt Condolences

Daw Hla Hla
79 years

It was with great sadness to learn about the passing of Daw Hla Hla, beloved mother of U Hla Maung Shwe. Please accept my heartfelt condolences and my thoughts are with you and your family in these trying times.

Ms. Claudine Haenni

mitv Myanmar International

(8-12-2015 07:00 am~ 9-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:24	Am	The World's Largest Book
07:49	Am	Safari World
08:03	Am	News
08:25	Am	Sai Ye Kwan
08:34	Am	Five-Star Ocean Liners in Myanmar Waters
08:49	Am	Welcome to the Southern most part of Myanmar
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Choral Dance By Female Dancers
09:34	Am	Lively Group Folk Dance of Kayin Nationals
09:38	Am	Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Tin Moe Lwin"
09:48	Am	Today Myanmar: Soap for Hope
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Crab Business (Part-II) Soft Shell Crab
10:39	Am	Pyin Oo Lwin Sweater
10:48	Am	Kyaikkale pagoda

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

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Day Out With Sarah (EP-7)
07:52	Pm	Coin Collectors
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Enchanting Rakhine Land
08:45	Pm	Entrepreneur "Nan Ei Ei Zar"

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

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

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

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

Soccer schools and boardroom deals: China's play for World Cup glory



Students warm up before a training session at Evergrande soccer academy in Qingyuan, southern China, on 4 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONG KONG — Wang Shijie, 11, is a rising star among the nearly 3,000 students at Guangzhou Evergrande's huge soccer academy in south China. He wants to join the national team and help achieve President Xi Jinping's dream of winning the World Cup.

In schools like this around the country, China is training an army of young players it hopes will help the nation shake off its lowly place in the world's football ladder: 84th out of 209 countries, just above Qatar and below teams like Jordan, Montenegro and Gabon. "When I join the national team, I will do my best to

help China become World Cup champions," Wang, wearing golden-colored boots and a yellow jersey, told Reuters during a break in training at the school that has 50 full-size pitches and coaches flown in from European giant Real Madrid.

Led by Xi, an avid fan, China has clearly made it a goal to become a soccer superpower. A consortium led by state-backed China Media Capital took a \$400 million stake last week in the owner of English Premier League champions Manchester City — Beijing's biggest investment in the sport overseas. The tie-up will help Abu Dhabi-owned City tap the fast-growing sports and entertainment market in the world's most populous nation, and at the same time give China international soccer knowhow, on the field and off.

"The Chinese government wanted to make a statement," said Alexander Jarvis, chairman of Blackbridge Cross Borders, which brokers deals between Chinese investors and European teams.

Jarvis said he was currently working on six deals with Chinese firms looking to buy into clubs in Europe — including in England, Germany and Spain — and that there would be even bigger Chinese investment in 2016, usually with a China-based soccer school or training base thrown in.

"Pretty much every football club which has some type of deal with the Chinese will have an acad-

emy. It's very much Xi's long-term dream of World Cup glory, and building the infrastructure on the ground is exactly what they want."

Guangzhou Evergrande, coached by World Cup-winning Brazilian Luiz Felipe Scolari, are current Asian club champions but China's national team has a long way to go to World Cup glory. Even in Asia, fierce rivals Japan and South Korea have a far stronger reputation in the game.

The only time China qualified for the finals of the World Cup was in 2002, when the tournament was jointly hosted by South Korea and Japan. China was dismissed at the group stage without scoring a goal and conceding nine.

Its hopes of qualifying for the 2018 finals have been dealt a blow after a goalless draw with tiny Hong Kong last month.

There is no evidence that investing in football clubs overseas has contributed to any Asian soccer team's prowess. Businessmen from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, India and China all have stakes in European clubs.

But if the investments help improve China's soccer infrastructure, it could lead the way to a successful bid to host the World Cup finals, sports executives say. The home nation automatically qualifies for the tournament.

For the clubs, China is a huge, still untapped market for fans, merchandise sales and TV audiences.

The country aims to grow its sports market to 5 trillion yuan (\$782 billion) by 2025, around a five-fold leap from its current size, and football will play a big part.

That's good news for franchises tapping into local media distribution rights, sponsorship and merchandising. It's also a boon for sports-focused companies such as adidas AG and Nike Inc.

"The willingness to pay for sports isn't limited to watching them; membership at sports clubs is up, as is the amount people are willing to spend on sporting equipment," said Liu Yue, a former national football player and now a commentator.

Increasingly, the way into China's football market is made easier by promoting the local game.

Germany's adidas and former Brazil star Ronaldo have launched football academies and England's David Beckham is an "ambassador" for Chinese football.

Premier League and other European clubs regularly visit China in their summer off-season, drawing huge crowds.

Chinese authorities are squarely behind the drive to develop local football, providing the vital political support to the move. Local governments have helped subsidize television license fees to support local teams, while the recent Manchester City deal was led by a state-backed firm.

Xi himself visited City's academy last month during a trip to Britain, where he posed for a selfie with Argentinian striker Sergio Aguero and British Prime Minister David Cameron.

However, corruption and player quality remain serious hurdles in Chinese football. A crackdown to clean up the game has seen at least nine officials, four judges, 13 footballers or coaches and 17 club workers jailed or punished since 2009.

"A short-term goal for China is to gain a leading role in Asia," said Fernando Sanchez Cipitria, technical director at the academy in Guangdong and a former midfielder for Spain. "For China to win the World Cup it could be a long journey." —Reuters

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(8-12-2015, Tuesday)

6:00 am • Pritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	3:35 am • Socio Economic Scenes
7:35 am • Socio Economic Scenes	4:15 am • Documentary
9:35 am • MRTV's Youth Programme	4:45 am • Documentary
10:35 am • Science and Technology Programme	5:35 pm • Money Talk Myanmar
11:35 am • Documentary	6:35 pm • People's Talks
12:50 am • TV Drama Series	7:15 pm • TV Drama Series
1:30 am • TV Drama Series	8:35 pm • Documentary
	9:00 pm • News
	9:45 pm • TV Drama Series
	10:15 pm • Pyi Thu Ni Ti

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(8-12-2015, Tuesday)

6:00 am • Nice And Sweet Song
6:10 am • Pyi Thu Ni Ti
6:25 am • Musical Programme
6:40 am • Kyae Pwint Myaye Yih Khone Than
7:00 am • TV Drama Series
7:55 am • TV Drama Series
8:40 am • Myanmar Video
9:45 am • Radio Drama
10:10 am • Myanmar Video

Liverpool beaten by lowly Newcastle

LONDON — Liverpool missed the chance to close in on the Premier League's top four when they suffered a shock 2-0 defeat to lowly Newcastle United at St James' Park on Sunday.

Dutchman Georginio Wijnaldum, signed from PSV Eindhoven in the close-season, forced Martin Skrtel into an own goal in the 69th minute and then added a second himself in added time.

That gave Newcastle only a second home win of the season and took them above neighbours and relegation rivals Sunderland in the bottom three.

All that Liverpool could point to after a disappointing display was a wrongly-disallowed goal by full-back Alberto Moreno that would have brought them an equaliser 10 minutes from the end.

Juergen Klopp's side remain seventh, six points behind the Champions League places, after only their second defeat in the 12 games since the German over from Brendan Rodgers in October.

"We were not good enough today," Klopp told Sky Sports.

"I don't know why. We could do better. We should play



Newcastle United's Georginio Wijnaldum celebrates after Liverpool's Martin Skrtel scores an own goal and the first for Newcastle during Barclays Premier League in St James' Park. PHOTO: REUTERS

much more football, our pressing was not good. We were not compact, there was a lot of things we did not do well."

Newcastle's manager Steve McClaren, in contrast, was delighted with what he claimed was a victory for hard work — a quality the club's supporters have accused their players of lacking recently.

"They do care, there is desire there but they're young players, and they've got to learn," he said.

"That's what you've got

to do to win a game in the Premier League, work really hard, and crawl back into the dressing-room.

"Now we've got to maintain that. They've just proved that the harder you work, the luckier you get."

McClaren wanted his team to "get back to the basics of work-rate and organisation" and they did so to good effect in matching Liverpool's pressing game.

With the home side content to sit back and Liverpool unable

to break them down, the game took a long while to warm up and threatened to become the first goalless draw between the sides for 41 years.

The visitors made nothing of a crop of early corners and until Jordan Ibe swung one over in the 22nd minute there was not a sniff of a scoring chance.

Centre-half Dejan Lovren headed it down invitingly but Christian Benteke lifted the bouncing ball over the bar from barely three metres out.

Newcastle took the lead after 69 minutes when Moussa Sissoko's cross was slightly mis-controlled by Wijnaldum but he still managed to fire in a shot that Skrtel deflected in.

Klopp had been dissatisfied enough to make a double change with an hour played, sending on Daniel Sturridge and fellow England international Adam Lallana for Benteke and the equally ineffective Roberto Firmino.

The two substitutes were involved in a rare scoring opportunity but Sturridge pulled his shot carelessly wide. And Wijnaldum made sure of the points he he clipped Sissoko's perfect through ball over keeper Simon Mignolet.—Reuters

PSV can end long Dutch wait in Champions League

EINDHOVEN — PSV Eindhoven will advance to the knockout stage of the Champions League if they finish their Group B campaign with home success over CSKA Moscow on Tuesday. More than that, they can end a long spell of disappointing returns for Dutch football.

Victory will put the 1988 European champions through to the knockout phase for the first time since the 2006-07 season, when Liverpool eliminated them at the quarter-final stage. No club from the Netherlands has been to the knockout phase since.

Coach Phillip Cocu played for PSV that year and said on Sunday he would be using the experience gained then in his coaching preparations for the visit of Russian side to the Philips Stadium. "What you learned as a player, you certainly take into your coaching. That experience will help in the planning of how we approach this game, how we deal with the pressure and in figuring out what scenarios we might face," Cocu told reporters.

His first priority will be to ensure his side shrug off some inconsistent domestic form. PSV needed a last-gasp winner on Saturday to overcome Vitesse Arnhem and are four points off the pace in defending their Dutch league crown. But he can point to success in PSV's two previous home matches in Group B over Manchester United and VfL Wolfsburg. Their fate is in their own hands even though they start match day six in third place in the group, two points behind Wolfsburg and one behind United. A draw could even be enough to advance as long as Wolfsburg beat United but defeat could see PSV finish last, ruling them out of further European competition this season.

CSKA Moscow's Champions League hopes are over but if they win, they will qualify for the Europa League. CSKA, though, have been in a slump, suffering three defeats in their last four domestic games, with their last win coming at the end of October. "Our run of poor form is continuing, I would say we are in a crisis," CSKA coach Leonid Slutskiy admitted. The Russians will be without a number of key players for the trip to the Netherlands, with Vasili Berezutski, Georgi Shchennikov and Roman Eremenko staying in Moscow.

Goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev will be looking to break an unwanted milestone. The 29-year-old has conceded in his last 36 matches in the Champions League stretching back nine years.—Reuters

Benzema not afraid of possibly missing Euro 2016

PARIS — France international striker Karim Benzema, who is embroiled in a blackmailing scandal, is not afraid of possibly missing the Euro 2016 finals on home soil, the Real Madrid player said on Sunday.

Benzema was put under formal investigation last month in connection with an alleged attempt to blackmail fellow footballer Mathieu Valbuena over a sex video. He has denied any wrongdoing but has been banned from contacting anyone linked to the investigation, starting with Valbuena.

It means that if the investigation drags on, as is possible, coach Didier Deschamps would have to choose between Benzema and the Olympique Lyonnais forward.

"It's my goal (to play again with Valbuena). It's what I want and it's what many people want," Benzema told French TV channel TF1 in the second part of an interview aired on Sunday. "He's a good player, France needs him, and me."

The first part of the interview, in which Benzema said he had done nothing wrong, was aired on Wednesday. Asked if he feared missing out on the June 10-July 10 Euro finals in France, Benzema replied: "I am not afraid."—Reuters

Platini lawyers say document could help prove his innocence

BERNE — European football chief Michel Platini's legal team believes a 23-page memo published by a French newspaper on Sunday could help clear him of wrongdoing and allow him back into the FIFA presidential race.

Platini, until recently seen as the man to lead football's governing body FIFA out of its worst ever graft crisis, has been suspended for 90 days by FIFA's ethics committee while it investigates his conduct.

The final verdict is expected by the end of the month and Platini's lawyers have already said that ethics investigators had recommended a lifelong ban for the Frenchman.

FIFA will hold an election to find a replacement for its president Sepp Blatter, also suspended, on 26 February, and Platini, who has registered as a candidate, cannot run while he is banned, although he might be allowed to take part if he is cleared.

The investigation centres on a 2 million Swiss franc (\$2 million) payment from FIFA to Platini, a former France team captain and coach who has been UEFA president since 2002, in 2011



UEFA President Michel Platini. PHOTO: REUTERS

for work he completed between 1998 and 2002. Blatter has said there was a verbal agreement between the two while Platini says the payment was delayed only because of financial problems at FIFA.

On Sunday, French newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche published a 23-page memo which it said was presented to UEFA executive committee members in November 1998 and mentioned that Platini was being paid 1 million Swiss francs a year for work

he was doing for FIFA.

The newspaper said the memo was presented at a meeting in Stockholm, chaired by Lennart Johansson who was UEFA president at the time.

"From the moment that we have proof of an agreement between FIFA and Mr Platini, and of knowledge of this agreement by officials of UEFA, then this (ethics committee) inquiry falls down," Thomas Clay, one of Platini's lawyers, told Reuters by telephone.—Reuters