

President meets delegation of World Leadership Alliance Madrid

PAGE 3



Buried Buddha images discovered in Natogyi

PAGE 4

ANALYSIS

Only our own people can train our true leaders

PAGE 8

US OPENS DOOR TO TRADE

Trade sanctions lifted for 6 month window to aid gov changeover

THE United States is temporarily easing trade restrictions on Myanmar by allowing all shipments to go through its ports and airports for six months, an effort to boost the Southeast Asian country's opposition party after its landmark election win in November, US officials said on Monday.

The policy change, coming after Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory last month in Myanmar's first nationwide free elections in 25 years, applies even to ports and airports controlled by entities on the US sanctions blacklist, the officials said.

To bolster Myanmar's transition to democracy after decades of military rule, US officials began lifting sanctions against the country after a civilian government was formed in 2011. But officials acknowledged on Monday that remaining US sanctions against those with ties to Myanmar's military have had the unintended consequence of halting "many, many dozens" of shipments.

Reuters reported last month that major US banks, such as Citigroup, Bank of America and PNC Financial were shying away from backing Myanmar trade after discovering that the Asia World port — one of the country's most important shipping terminals — is controlled by a businessman on America's sanctions blacklist.

Exporters use trade finance from banks to ensure they get paid after shipments arrive, and the banks' withdrawal has led to a sharp decline in US shipments into Myanmar.



Asia World port terminal seen in Yangon in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS/SOE ZEYA TUN

"It was beginning to escalate," said a senior US official. "Not only US banks but also third country exporters and third country financial institutions were beginning to hold up trade going into and out of Burma," the official said, using another name for the country of 51 million people.

Officials cautioned that while the policy shift allows financing of shipments through blacklisted

trade hubs, banks are still barred from doing business directly with the banned firms.

A second senior administration official said Monday's move would lend a boost to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's party, and was "potentially the single most important thing that we can do on the economic front immediately to give the NLD some breathing space over the next several months as it

forms its government."

The official said the banks' freeze on much of Myanmar's trade with the West was most punishing on regular Myanmar citizens.

"You can think of the Burmese rice farmer who is trying to get some rice out" of the Asia World port, the official said.

"The trade transaction is held up and the rice ends up rotting

in the docks."

Years after the US began to lift its near-total ban on trade with Myanmar, more than a hundred people and companies remain on the US sanctions blacklist, some of them the country's biggest economic players, creating a minefield for Western businesses seeking to profit from the new openings.

See page 2 >>

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

NCA approved by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

THE incoming government would be able to implement the peace process more successfully, participants of the meeting of non-signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement announced in a statement.

The fact that they would cooperate with the new government emerged following the general election and the new government's participation in the nationwide political dialogue, Union Minister U Aung Min told the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on Tuesday.

He noted that representatives had pointed out that it was necessary to abide by the terms and conditions of the agreement.

He said that the ceasefire agreement is aimed at national reconciliation, solidarity and the people's interests.

He added that the government held talks with 16 armed groups first and then the number of armed groups increased from 16 to 21 but the government has further opened the way for the remaining armed groups to join. The session approved the truce agreement.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw session continues in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Pyithu Hluttaw session on Tuesday submitted two reports, approved two reports, submitted 4 bills and agreed to discuss 3 bills.

The reports of the Pyithu Hluttaw Judicial and Legal Complaints and Appeals Committee were submitted to the session and representatives were invited to discuss what was presented.

Another report submitted for discussion at the session was from the Pyithu Hluttaw Committee for Promotion of Ethnic Affairs, Socioeconomic Lives of Rural People and Internal Peace. Representative discussed

the reports of the Pyithu Hluttaw Management of Public Affairs Committee.

Afterwards, the session approved the report of the management committee and the report of the transportation, communication and construction committee.

The session discussed the second amendment of the Union Election Commission Law, the third amendment of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law, the Third Amendment of the Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law and the third amendment of the State/Region Hluttaw Election Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Mandalay Region Hluttaw

Mandalay region Hluttaw convened

THE 14th regular session of the Mandalay Region Hluttaw was held in Mandalay on 7 December.

It was attended by Speaker of the region Hluttaw U Win Maung, Deputy Speaker U Aung Htay Kyaw, members of the re-

gion government and other representatives.

Region Finance Minister Dr Myint Kyu responded to questions on the regional budget put forward by representatives.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Correction

Please read "Daw Khin Waing Kyi" on Page-2 of 8 December, 2015 issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. Ed

Japan Funds-In-Trust assists in cultural heritage conservation in Bagan



Union Minister U Aye Myint Kyu poses for photo together with dignitaries after receiving books and equipment donated by Japan Funds-In-Trust. PHOTO: MNA

AS part of a technical assistance for the conservation of build heritage in Bagan, Japan Funds-In-Trust donated books and equipment to Ministry of Culture yesterday through the UNESCO.

At the ceremony in Bagan,

Mr Umar Alam of UNECSO clarified conservation of cultural heritage in Bagan and Mr Kuni-hiko Yasuda, the first Secretary of Japanese Embassy, handed over the books and equipment donated by Japan Funds-In-

Trust to Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu.

Pro Masahiko Tomoda and U Soe Soe Lin, a deputy director of the Ministry of Culture, clarified current conservation works in Bagan.—*Myanmar News Agency*

US opens door ...

>> From page 1

"The US has been very much a proponent of US businesses entering and increasing trade and economic ties," said Peter Kucik, a former senior sanctions advisor at the US Treasury Department. "Impedi-

ments like this really need to be dealt with quickly and efficiently to make sure they don't undermine that very intention."

US officials said they would likely consider an extension of the sanctions relief in several months.

"There's no question businesses would like a longer li-

cense ... but while this window is not ideal from a business perspective, for now it substantially addresses the challenge," said Peter Harrell, who advises businesses on entering markets under sanction. "Now you know you will be able to ship into the country for at least six months."—*Reuters*

President meets delegation of World Leadership Alliance Madrid



President U Thein Sein welcomes H.E. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ex-President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein received the delegation of the World Leadership Alliance Madrid led by H.E. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ex-President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, at the Presidential

Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. At the meeting they discussed the Free and Fair election in Myanmar and the efforts of the Government to maintain stability in the country during the post election period. Also present at the occa-

sion was the Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Minister for the President Office's U Soe Thein and Minister for Information U Ye Htut as well as other lesser officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Thura U Shwe Mann meets delegations



Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann shakes hands with H.E. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ex-President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. PHOTO: MNA

THURA U Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw, met with the delegation of the World Leadership Alliance Madrid led by H.E. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ex-President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and the delegation of IDEA at the Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Together with the Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw attendees included the Chairman of the International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, member of the Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission U Ko Ko Naing, and officials from the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw officers.—*Myanmar News Agency*

UEC Chairman meets Club de Madrid

CHAIRMAN of the Union Election Commission U Tin Aye met with the delegation of the World Leadership Alliance Club de Madrid led by H.E. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga, Ex-President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, at the Union

Election Commission Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting between the two focused on the election of members of parliament for the three Hluttaws, MPs representing ethnic peoples and the announcement of the election results.

U Tin Aye clarified the UEC's plan for settling issues of objection to the election results in an open court. Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga recounted Sri Lanka's experience of putting the country on the road to democracy.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr. Staffan Herrstrom as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Sweden to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Bangkok.

Mr. Staffan Herrstrom was born on 28 January 1955 in Strangnas, Sweden. He passed High School in 1973 at Uppsala. In 1980, he received a Bachelor's Degree in Arts (Russian, Eastern European Studies, and Political Science) from the University of Uppsala. He served as the Secretary of the Swedish Liberal and Radical Youth in Uppsala from 1973 to 1975 and as the Secretary General of the Swedish Liberal and Radical Youth from 1976 to 1978. He also served as a political adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Ola Ullsten from 1981 to 1982, an editorial journalist for the Goteborgs-Posten from 1983 to 1986, and the Head of Office of the Parliament Group for the Liberal Party from 1986 to 1991. Afterwards, he served as the State Secretary at the Prime Minister's Office from 1991 to 1994, Director of the Department for Europe, and Deputy Director General and acting Director-General of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) from 1995 to 2004. Then, he served as the Director of the Department of Policy and Methodology and Deputy Director-General of Sida from 2004 to 2007. Since 2007, he has been serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Sweden to Tanzania, Vietnam and Poland. He is married, and has two daughters.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr. BRENDAN ROGERS as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ireland to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with residence in Bangkok.

Mr. BRENDAN ROGERS was born on 9 May 1954. He received a Bachelor's Degree in English, History and Geography from Trinity College, Dublin in 1975. He obtained a Master's Degree in Political Science from the Boston University in 1986. He joined the Department of Foreign Affairs of Ireland as Third Secretary in May 1979 and served in the Economic Division, Anglo-Irish Division, Consulate of Ireland, Boston, Department of Protocol, and Political Division from 1979 to 1990. Afterwards, he served as the First Secretary of Political Division, Embassy of Ireland to Lusaka and Kampala from 1990 to 1998. From 2000 to 2014, he served at the Development Cooperation Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland as Counsellor, Assistant Secretary, and Deputy Secretary. Since November 2014, he has been serving as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ireland to Thailand.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Appointment of ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr. João Freitas de Camara as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in succession to His Excellency Mr. Jose Antonio Amorin Dias.

Mr. João Freitas de Camara was born on 24 June 1955 in Lepo, Zumalai subdistrict, Timor-Leste. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Law from Atma Jaya Catholic University in Jakarta, Indonesia and a Master's degree in Management and Organization Development (MMOD) from Thailand.

From 2006 – 2008, he served as Secretary General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. He was accredited to the Kingdom of Thailand as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste from 2008-2012. From 2012-2014, he served as Director-General for the External Relations Department, and currently, he is serving as Director-General for Asia and Pacific Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste.

Mr. João Freitas de Camara is married, and has five children.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Buried Buddha images discovered in Natogyi

INWA era Buddha images have been unearthed by volunteers while building a road in Natogyi Township, Mandalay Region in September, said local authorities yesterday.

The villagers, who were volunteering to build the road to the Sakka Mountain, discovered a cave under 3 feet of ground and later discovered 90 Buddha statues carved from sandstone in a total of 16 caves.

U Kyin, the local administration officer, quoted a historian who visited the site, saying that

the statues are believed to be from Inwa Era and more than 230 years old.

“Some statues, including two guardian lions outside the cave, have been damaged. But we conserved the findings and have not moved any of the statues from their original places,” he added.

Sometime before the road discovery local people had come across a cave containing Buddha statues and other figures carved into the wall. Paintings were also present.—*Ba Zaw (Myint Nge)*



Buddha Images are seen in one of 90 caves unearthed in Natogyi. PHOTO: BA ZAW (MYINT NGE)

Interpol meeting focused on battling counterfeit drugs kicks off in Yangon

Ko Moe

THE meeting of the storm enforcement network for accelerating rule of law project battling the production counterfeit drugs was held at the Sedona Hotel, in Yangon, on 8 December.

The meeting, sponsored by Interpol, was aimed at combating the production of fake medicines in the Asia-Pacific region and to collectively discuss the provision of assistance to the prevention of the manufacture and sale of counterfeit drugs in developing countries.

“Some counterfeit medicines enter Myanmar via border areas and some are produced in the country,” said the Deputy Head of the Transnational Crimes Department Police Col. Aung Htay Myint of the Myan-

mar Police Force at the meeting. He added that fake medicines mostly come from neighboring China and India.

“The fake drugs have a terrible effect on Myanmar. The counterfeiters even make fake cancer medicines among other medicines. The public who have consumed the fake drugs do not inform the health authorities and they believe they can handle it in their own way.

That is why the public needs to be educated and made to be aware of the dangers,” he noted.

The two-day meeting was attended by about 40 delegates from 13 countries. Present were representatives of the Police Forces, Customs Departments and Food and Drug Administration Departments of the respective countries.

Interpol is currently providing a training course to 30 Myanmar officials on combating counterfeit drugs.

The Rule of Law Network Accelerating Project was implemented in 2012 and its final meeting is held in Myanmar.

The participants of the meeting clarified collection of international criminal news on fake drugs, shared their experiences on combating fake drugs and discussed ways to prevent the online marketing of fake drugs.

Myanmar had been a member of Interpol since 1954. Interpol is an organization based in France that coordinates investigations made by the police forces of member countries into international crimes.

Jade goes on sale in Nay Pyi Taw



Merchants inspect raw jades in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

SALES of raw and cut jade continued into its second day, attracting more than 1,340 gems merchants at the Maniyadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Gems merchants submitted their tender forms for raw and cut jade lots yesterday. 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 at 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.

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

Model cotton fields thriving in Myinmu Township



Farmers harvest cotton in a thriving field in Myinmu. PHOTO: AUNG SOE PE (IPRD)

POST-monsoon Plot No. 308 in Allakapa Village, Myinmu Township, was visited by Township Management Committee chairman U Ko Ko Oo, Sagaing District Agriculture Office heads Daw Myint Myint Oo and Daw Myat Moe Win, local officials and cotton farmers on 2 December. The field is growing model long-staple cotton and is reportedly thriving.

The model cotton field, which grows Shwetaung 8 and Ngweche 9 long-staple cotton hybrids, is owned by farmer U Soe Win.

The agriculture officials explained to observers the crop's

plants per acre, yield, fertiliser usage and pesticide usage.

The per-acre yield for the Shwetaung 8 hybrid is about 1,725 kilos, and the yield for the Ngweche 9 cotton hybrid is about 1,656 kilos. Local cotton farmers have been advised to grow the long-staple cotton hybrids in order to reap higher incomes.

Myinmu Township, Sagaing Region, has grown 20,885 acres of various cotton hybrids during the current 2015-2016 season, said an agriculture official. Cotton is one of Myanmar's major industrial crops.—*Aung Soe Pe (IPRD)*

Many ignore Beijing smog warnings despite first pollution 'red alert'

BEIJING — A blanket of humid, still air resulting in smog that is expected to shroud Beijing for at least three days triggered the capital's first ever pollution "red alert" on Tuesday as many residents ignored warnings to limit their time outdoors.

By early morning, hundreds of people, including toddlers, had

packed Tiananmen Square to watch the flag-raising ceremony, according to photos by state news agency Xinhua.

State radio said some people were ignoring vehicle use restrictions, which on Tuesday banned vehicles with odd numbers at the end of the licence plate getting on the roads, though the roads were

noticeably quieter.

Environment Minister Chen Jining called a special meeting on Monday night to urge more supervision in Beijing and its surrounding cities including Tianjin as he increased the number of environmental inspection teams to 12, according to ThePaper.cn, a state-backed news website.

Although smog has always been a public health concern in Beijing, the government's response system has come under extra scrutiny in the past week because it came under heavy criticism for not issuing a red alert during an episode of heavy smog which exceeded hazardous levels. Chinese researchers have identified pollution as a major source of unrest around the country.

Greenpeace called the red alert "a welcome sign of a different attitude from the Beijing government".

"From repudiating PM2.5 (particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres) to today's issuance of a red alert, in just a few years, this is a near-revolutionary change in thinking", Hu Xijin, the editor-in-chief of the influential state-run Global Times tabloid, wrote on his microblog on Tuesday.

The Beijing City Emergency Office said "still weather, reduced cold temperatures and an increase in humidity" prompted the red alert, according to Xinhua.

A red alert means that 30 percent of vehicles will be taken off the roads, heavy vehicles will be banned, most schools will be advised to cancel classes, businesses

are recommended to implement flexible working hours and all "large-scale, outdoor activities" should be stopped.

Despite this, many residents tried to circumvent the rules. State radio showed a picture on its official microblog of a policeman removing paper stuck to a vehicle's licence plate to obscure its final digit.

By late morning on Tuesday, the US embassy's monitoring station recorded an air quality index of 250, which puts air pollution levels in the "unhealthy" region.

Those who did struggle to the office posted pictures on social media of themselves wearing industrial-strength face masks.

"I feel like I'm engaged in chemical warfare," wrote one commenter.

Still, the ruling Communist Party's official *People's Daily*, without a hint of irony, praised China's contribution to fighting climate change in a commentary on Tuesday, written to coincide with the Paris climate talks.

"People everywhere are looking forward to China's continuous progress on the road to green development, acting as a model for the world to tackle the challenge of climate change."—Reuters



A primary school student wearing a mask walks along a street with his textbooks amid heavy smog after his school was closed due to the first ever 'red alert' for air pollution, in central Beijing, China. PHOTO: REUTERS

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

Overseas study loses allure for South Koreans

SEOUL — After years of heading abroad in droves to study, more young South Koreans are opting for education at home as expensive overseas degrees no longer provide an edge in a tough job market — and are even a liability.

Recruiters and students say the improving quality of domestic education, including in English, means the premium placed on a foreign education is not what it was in a country known for its intense focus on academic achievement.

At the same time, connections cultivated at home through school and university play a factor in landing a job and getting ahead.

"Domestic graduates' capacity has increased, so now businesses no longer blindly prefer overseas graduates," said Lee Young-mi, senior executive director at headhunting firm Careercare.

South Korea trails only China and India when it comes to sending students to the United States, but the number has been

declining for four years, according to the Institute of International Education (IIE).

The overall number of South Koreans studying abroad at college level or above peaked in 2011 at 262,465, accounting for 6.7 percent of those in higher education; it fell last year to 214,696, or 5.8 percent of the total, government figures show.

The drop is especially sharp for younger students: the number of primary- or secondary-school Koreans who went abroad for study was 10,907 last year, a nearly two-thirds decline from the 2006 peak.

Kim Dong-jin, an adjunct professor at Kookmin University in Seoul and the former head of recruiting at LG Electronics Inc, said Korean employers still valued applicants with prestigious foreign MBAs or advanced degrees, but there was less demand for overseas-trained undergraduates.

This was partly because people emerging from the Korean system came with a useful network of connections, he said.

"Domestic students have a lot of support from their school, their seniors, as well as through government programmes," he said.

Overseas-educated Koreans, on the other hand, can have a harder time fitting into a hierarchical South Korean workplace.

"They are individualistic, which makes it hard for them to

adapt to the Korean business culture," he said.

The high cost of studying abroad is another reason more Koreans choose education at home, especially amid a sluggish economy with high youth unemployment and household debt.

Average tuition for the current school year at four-year US private institutions is \$32,405 (21,540 pounds), and \$23,893 at public institutions for out-of-state students, according to the College Board.

That excludes living and travel costs. Average tuition at South Korean universities is 6.67 million won (\$5,812), according to the Korean Council for University Education.

Fiona Mazurenko, marketing manager at the University of Texas at Austin's international office, said the number of Korean students there had fallen since 2010.

Data from its website showed the number of Korean undergraduates fell by 19 percent, from 532 in late 2010 to 430 in late 2014. During the same period, international undergraduates overall increased from 1,732 to 1,906.

South Korean funds remitted overseas to pay for tuition and living costs fell from a peak of \$5 billion in 2007 to \$3.7 billion last year, which was a 14 percent decline from the previous year, according to the Bank of Korea.—Reuters



University students talk as they leave Ewha Campus Complex of Ewha Woman's University in Seoul, South Korea. PHOTO: REUTERS

US agrees spy plane deployment in Singapore



A US Navy Poseidon P8 maritime surveillance aircraft taxis before taking off at Perth International Airport.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The United States has agreed with Singapore on a first deployment of the US P8 Poseidon spy plane in Singapore this month, in a fresh response to China over its pursuit of territorial claims in the South China Sea.

In a joint statement after a meeting in Washington on Monday, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter and Singapore Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen welcomed the inaugural deployment of the aircraft in Singapore from 7 to 14 December.

A US defence official said further deployments in Singapore could be expected. The move comes at a time of heightened tensions in the South China Sea over China's assertive pursuit of territorial claims there.

The US deployment is likely to anger China, which is at odds with Washington over the South China Sea. China claims almost the entire energy-rich sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of maritime trade passes each year.

The United States already operates P8s from Japan and the Philippines, and has also conducted surveillance flights from Singapore's neighbour, Malaysia.

The statement said the P8 deployment in Singapore would "promote greater interoperability with regional militaries through participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises, while providing timely support for regional HADR and maritime security efforts."

HADR is an acronym for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief operations.

The United States and Singapore have long-standing defence ties and the announcement of the P8 deployment was part of an enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement signed by Carter and Ng, which also covers cooperation in fighting transnational terrorism and piracy.

Washington has criticised China's building of artificial islands in the South China Sea's disputed Spratly archipelago, and has conducted sea and air patrols near them recently.

Last month, US President Barack Obama called on countries to stop building artificial islands in the sea and militarising their claims. He said the United

States would continue to assert its freedom-of-navigation rights.

China responded by saying it would continue to build both military and civilian facilities on the islands.

Washington has been working to build up defence relationships with South China Sea rival claimants, which include Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei.

Last month, US B-52 bombers flew near some of China's artificial islands and at the end of October a US guided-missile destroyer sailed within 12 nautical miles of one of them. In May, the Chinese navy issued eight warnings to the crew of a US P8 that flew near the islands, according to CNN, which was aboard the US aircraft.—Reuters

India set to agree on bullet train import from Japan in summit talks

TOKYO — India is making final arrangements to adopt Japanese bullet train technology for a high-speed railway project, with the leaders of the two countries set to unveil the agreement in a joint statement this week, a Japanese government source said yesterday.

The statement following talks between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday is expected to incorporate this accord, which would mark India's first high-speed railway project, the source said.

Abe's meeting with Modi during his three-day visit to India from Friday will come at a time Japan hopes to regain lost ground after losing out to China in its bid to secure a key high-speed railway contract in Indonesia.

The proposed railway of about 500 kilometres will link Mumbai in western India and Ahmadabad, north of Mumbai, in roughly two hours, the source said.

Construction of the project, which is estimated to cost 980 billion rupee (about \$14.68 billion), will begin in 2017, with the aim of starting railway operations in 2023.

Tokyo has sounded New Delhi out about a plan for Japan to provide yen loans on the premise that the railway contract will be given to a consortium of Japanese firms, the source said.

The Japanese side has also been considering offering a package which includes rail cars and railway operation systems, as the Indian government has been cautious given its financial circumstances. Some have called for a competitive international tender.

Should India agree to adopt the Japanese shinkansen train technology, Japan is expected to take advantage of a policy of relaxing conditions for extending yen loans announced by Abe during an international conference in Kuala Lumpur last month, the source said.

Abe said his country will ease conditions in carrying out its yen loan scheme for emerging countries in Asia, as Japan seeks to spur its economy through infrastructure exports to the fast-growing region.

Tokyo's move to review its yen loan scheme to make it more acceptable to potential partner countries is seen as a countermeasure to Beijing, which has tapped into the huge infrastructure development needs of Asia.—Kyodo News

'Conscience clear' as party tensions mount: Malaysia's Najib

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said he had done nothing wrong in receiving hundreds of millions of dollars into his personal bank accounts, as a senior party rival called on him to step aside over a festering funding scandal.

Najib has so far weathered calls for him to quit over allegations of graft at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and his receipt of 2.6 billion ringgit (\$610.8 million) in what he says was a political donation.

But pressure mounted on Najib as his United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) gathered yesterday for its annual meeting, after UMNO's deputy leader called on members to remove a

"cancer" from the long-ruling party that looks increasingly at risk of losing the next election in 2018.

In his most detailed explanation since the scandal erupted in July, Najib said his conscience was "absolutely clear".

Malaysia's Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) questioned Najib over the deposits at the weekend and said on Monday that it had also interviewed the unidentified donor in the Middle East.

"Firstly, the 2.6 billion ringgit is neither public funds nor 1MDB's money. This was confirmed by the MACC," Najib said in an interview with state television TV3. "It's a donation, a gift. A donation is not illegal under any legal provision."

Malaysia's Central Bank was aware of the accounts' existence, he said, adding the donor did not see it as a bribe and expected nothing in return.

The Wall Street Journal said in July that the funds had been discovered in Najib's accounts by investigators probing accusations of financial irregularities at 1MDB.

Najib, who chairs 1MDB's advisory board, has denied the money came from 1MDB, which is being investigated by several foreign agencies, including the FBI.

The scandals have shaken investors in Southeast Asia's third-biggest economy and rocked public confidence in the coalition led by Najib's UMNO, which has held power since in-

dependence in 1957. Backing for the government among the ethnic Malay majority that forms the bedrock of UMNO's support sank to new lows in October, according to a poll from research firm Merdeka Centre.

In a speech to his supporters on Monday night, UMNO's Deputy President Muhyiddin Yassin called on the prime minister to step aside until the investigations were completed. "I would like to suggest that the prime minister take a rest for now," he said. "Allow the investigations to proceed freely, transparently and fairly... go on leave until the case is over."

Muhyiddin was ousted as deputy prime minister earlier this year for his criticisms of Najib over the 1MDB affair.—Reuters

Survivors mark 74th anniversary of attack on Pearl Harbour



US Navy EN2 Jason Sargeant and Pearl Harbour survivor Joe Bailey pose for a 'selfie' before ceremonies commemorating the 74th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbour at Kilo Pier on Joint Base Pearl Harbour, Hickam in Honolulu, Hawaii on 7 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

HONOLULU — A handful of aging US military veterans who survived the surprise Japanese bombing raid that drew the United States into World War II marked the 74th anniversary of the attack in a sombre wreath-presentation ceremony on Monday at Pearl Harbour.

The survivors, who wore Hawaiian leis around their necks, watched as a bugler played "Taps" and onlookers placed their hands on their hearts.

The Japanese air and naval assault on 7 December, 1941, a date that US President Franklin Roosevelt said "will live in infamy," took 2,390 American lives. The United States declared war on Japan the next day.

Nearly half of those who perished at Pearl Harbour were sailors aboard the battleship USS Arizona, which Japanese torpedo bombers sank early in the attack, sending 1,177 of its 1,400-member crew to their deaths.

US Navy officials said about two dozen veterans who were on the island of Oahu the morning of the attack were well enough to attend commemoration ceremonies on Monday. The number of aging survivors able to attend the ceremony has been dwindling steadily over the years.

Participants in the ceremony on Monday gathered at Kilo Pier, looking out over the USS Arizona Memorial built over

the remains of the ship.

Three of the survivors took a small boat from the pier to the USS Arizona Memorial where they participated in a wreath-presentation ceremony. Wreaths from all branches of the US military and the states of Hawaii and Arizona were propped up on wooden stands for the commemoration.

A whistle blast from the USS Preble in the water beyond the pier marked the beginning of a moment of silence at the ceremony, which was broken by a flyover of F-22 fighter jets.

Later, the crew of the USS Preble stood on the bow of the ship and saluted as the Navy ship passed by. —Reuters

Ukraine 'in process' of resuming power supplies to Crimea: Ukrenergo

KIEV — Ukraine is resuming electricity supplies to Russian-annexed Crimea, a state energy official said on Monday, more than two weeks after unknown saboteurs blew up power lines to the peninsula causing widespread blackouts.

The power cuts have left some 2 million Crimeans reliant upon emergency generators and caused severe disruption, exposing how dependent the peninsula remains on Ukraine a year and a half after it broke away to join Russia.

"We are in the process of resuming energy supplies," said Igor Boska, regional head of

Ukrainian energy utility Ukrenergo.

Russia's annexation of Crimea plunged Kiev's relations with Moscow into a crisis further inflamed by a war between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian troops in eastern Ukraine.

Crimea depends on Ukraine for at least 70 percent of its electricity and the first phase of Moscow's planned energy bridge between the peninsula and the Russian mainland is not due to be completed until later this month.

Following the power lines' sabotage, pro-Ukrainian activists

— including many ethnic Tartars who opposed Crimea's annexation — prevented repairs by blocking access for engineers to pylons in Kherson, a southern region of the Ukrainian mainland. Tartar leader Lenur Islamov said the engineers had been permitted to continue their work.

"We have allowed (them) to switch the line on," he told the 112 television channel.

Islamov said the Tatars, a Turkish-speaking Muslim community with a long history in Crimea, would petition lawmakers to approve a special law banning all energy supplies to the peninsula. —Reuters

UN Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime

9 December 2015

TODAY, we observe the first-ever International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime. This occasion also coincides with the anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948.

This is an ideal time to reaffirm our commitment to prevent this serious international crime, honour the memory of the victims, and reaffirm the right to remedies and reparation, as recognized in international law.

Preventing genocide means paying more attention to the warning signs, and being prepared to take immediate action to address them. This is the spirit of my Human Rights up Front initiative.

After all, genocide does not just happen; it unfolds over time. It is not part of the accidental "fallout" of conflict; most often, it is systematic, planned, with precise targets, and it can also take place outside of conflict situations.

Across the world today, intolerance and xenophobia are on the rise. A dangerous "us versus them" dynamic is often being exploited to justify the exclusion of communities based on different forms of identity such as religion, ethnicity or other, and to deny assistance, restrict human rights and perpetrate atrocious acts of violence.

The prevention of genocide is a specific obligation under international law. The International Court of Justice and other judicial bodies have made that very clear. Governments must act on this imperative by investing in prevention and taking preventive action. On this new international observance, let us recognize the need to work together more concertedly to protect individuals from gross human rights violations and uphold our common humanity. — UNIC/Yangon

Iran tested missile, breaching UN council resolutions



Iranian-made missiles at Holy Defence Museum in Tehran on 23 September. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Iran tested a new medium-range ballistic missile last month in a breach of two UN Security Council resolutions, two US officials said on Monday.

The officials, both speaking on condition of anonymity, said the test was held on 21 November. One of them said the missile travelled within Iranian territory.

A Western diplomatic source said last week on condition of anonymity that the test was held near Chabahar, a port city near Iran's border with Pakistan. He said it was a liquid-fuelled missile with a 1,900 km (1,180 mile) range and was capable of carrying a nuclear warhead. All ballistic missile tests by Iran are banned under a 2010 Security Council resolution that remains valid until a nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers is implemented.

Under that deal, reached on

14 July, most sanctions on Iran will be lifted in exchange for curbs on its nuclear programme. According to a 20 July resolution endorsing that deal, Iran is still "called upon" to refrain from work on ballistic missiles designed to deliver nuclear weapons for up to eight years.

In October, the United States, Britain, France and Germany called for the Security Council's Iran sanctions committee to take action over a missile test by Tehran that month that they said violated UN sanctions. So far, no action has been taken by the committee. Several Security Council diplomats said on Monday they had received no official notification of a new alleged violation of the UN missile sanctions against Iran since the October notification. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity. —Reuters

OPINION

Only our own people can train our true leaders

Myint Win Thein

WHEN a country is in a crisis, many people leave it to find a greener pasture. As a result, some people left their own country. Some of them were able to grasp a chance to study at world famous universities. However, when the country undergoes the reform process, it has to invite its diaspora to help in the national reconstruction. Some of those who left are now internationally educated

and will be of invaluable help in the process of national development as many of them now hold important degrees and distinctions.

Although they have completed PhDs or masters at world famous universities, no one has become a leader via this process. Almost all of those with advanced education simply become technical advisors to someone. This is because they have lost contact with the people. They no longer think about the people and can no longer understand what the people are suffering.

Many former citizens came back home to Myanmar when the government announced the reform process. So do many PhD holders, seeing their chance to help with the reform. However, none has become leaders of the people or taken up the torch of national improvement outside of their own specialised area. They do not have a long term strategy for the future.

It can be said that leaders of a country cannot be produced by a university in wealthy foreign land. The future leaders of Myanmar need to be on the ground and in contact with the uneducated, poverty-stricken and the oppressed. It is for these people that change is most desperately needed. They are the true mentors of our leaders.

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.

Aficionados, Hero-worshippers and Personality Cult

Tommy Pauk

IT is natural that man admires and likes the brave heroes, ideal persons, famous politicians, popular activities, celebrities, sport stars and brilliant persons. We humans are delightfully fascinated by their outstanding abilities or performance or behaviors and interesting activities. People love them irrespective of their race, culture, religion and societies. Aficionados are addicted to music, movies, plays sports and activities. They have passions for certain celebrities, playwrights, movie stars and sport stars. Actually, aficionados are enthusiastic admirers or followers or fans of singers, authors, movie stars and sport stars. Especially youngsters like to be as popular as their favorite celebrities. Aficionados are enthusiastic or crazy about the famous celebrities, artists and sportsmen around the world. For example, The Spanish are crazy about bull fighting, a traditional event in Spain. They could be called aficionados of bull fighting. Some people who like a particular sport, activity or subject very much and know a lot about it could be called aficionados. e.g. aficionados of ballet or wrestling etc. Some people like and appreciate a particular interest in music. E.g. Jazz aficionados, pop aficionados etc. The ardent devotees of soccer or soccer fans are called aficionados of soccer. Other types of people are enthusiastic about pastime e.g. crossword aficionados, chess aficionados etc. Those who like to hoard or collect high quality scent or perfume are called scent aficionados or

perfume aficionados. Here we find individual differences in enthusiasm, interests, fondness and hobbies in life. The sensation, appreciation and enthusiasm lead humans to happy life meaningfully indeed. Apart from struggling life, we humans ought to spare some time for pleasure and enjoyment essentially.

The heroes in world history are honored by global people. Normally, the ordinary people hero-worship the persons who sacrificed for the sake of country or mankind on earth. Naturally, the persons who do heroic deeds for a certain nations or for some achievement of mankind are admired by the people.

The relationship between the public and the political leader should be harmonious all the time.

Hero-worshippers are inspired by the act or adventures of heroes to imitate or practice like them. In other words, the fans have the feeling of wanting to be in the same situations as the heroes. Besides, movies stars, vocalists, authors and some famous artistes are hero-worshipped by their fans. The hero-worshippers are touched deeply by the talent or brilliant acting or performance of their favorite movie stars or pop-stars or artistes. The fans do not care about the real life of the stars but they are obsessed with the work of art or art of creation or acting or performance or playing or art of writing of the respective professions or career indeed. The hero-worshippers pay respect and honor their heroes for their distinctive quali-

ties, abilities, talent and skills which contribute to the public or human beings in the world. For example, the famous author named Leo Tolstoy, who wrote the novel 'War and Peace', is hero-worshipped by his fans or readers around the world. Myanmar people venerate or hero-worship Alaung-Pha-yar U Aung Ze Ya, the Myanmar king and national hero General Aung San forever. Some persons are regarded as the heroes in the hearts of the hero-worshippers in human society. The persons who are hero-worshipped may be different nationalities in the world. Their fame and popularity overwhelm all people from different communities across

the world. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi of India is hero-worshipped by global people. Hero-worshippers may vary individual hero-worshippers and common hero-worshippers in the world. There is no gender based criterion to select the persons who are to be venerated or adored in human society on earth e.g. the world famous philanthropists such as Florence Nightingale and Mother Teresa. The individuals choose the person who has adorable or admirable characteristics in their society or in their communities. People pay hearty tribute to the Martyrs, heroes, heroines, philanthropists, innovators and inventors. The names, fame and glory of those persons will never fade away. The landmark of their

conduct will be everlasting on the pages of history. The hero-worshippers can attain motivation and encouragement for the welfare of humanity when they hero-worship the certain ideal persons or brilliant people who contribute to the achievement for mankind.

Personality cult is a situation in which people are encouraged to show extreme love and admiration for a famous person, especially a political leader. It could be also defined or deciphered that the excessive public admiration or devotion to a famous person, especially a political leader. Therefore, personality cult should be permissible in any independent country whenever the people need to choose a good leader for prosperity and progressions. We might wonder why public show extreme love for a certain political leader. There must have been a concrete reason. Probably, that political leader must be well-educated person or smart person or sharp person or public figure or an icon of some political system or an ideal person. We should emphasize that public are politically not naïve so they love and admire a particular political leader heartily due to his or her acceptable characters and trustworthy qualities. Some people think personality cult is considered a disapproving factor. Nevertheless, a society must have a genuine political leader so as to lead his or her people for political engagement and socio-economic development efficiently. There are many mealy-mouthed politicians in every country and they cheat the general public. Thus, people explore the ideal person in political arena for

choosing the right one and create personality cult. They do have intense devotion to a particular person who is well-versed or adept in political field. In fact, this is a cult which promotes adulation of a living national leader or public figure. Public are convinced that the person they devote must be capable of serving in the leadership role for the interests and benefits of the people and nation. The pessimistic perspective on personality cult will be agreeable to some extent if a cult figure is unreliable. Public have rights to judge or assess the caliber of individual politicians. Ultimately, a political leader must attain love, trust and respect of the general public. Reciprocally, a political leader must love, respect and help the general public as well. The relationship between the public and the political leader should be harmonious all the time.

In conclusion, humans should have moderate pleasure, conviction and strong political conscience in any society. However, we humans must avoid practicing extremism on any attempts.!!!

About the author

Tommy Pauk is the pseudonym of U Thein Swe, who is B.A (English) and (Registered Law) R.L.I. degrees holder. He has English Teaching experience at Yangon University English Department and Workers' College in Yangon, and now is working as freelance writer and English Teacher cum Translator/Interpreter for foreign firms.

Simple regulations, introducing basic training are ways to unlock Myanmar's potential for tourism

Ye Myint

MYANMAR'S potential for community involved tourism projects can be unlocked by having simple, 'light touch' regulations and basic training, according to Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business yesterday.

These main conclusions emerged following a Multi-stakeholder Workshop on Community Involvement in Tourism held in Nay Pyi Taw last week, said the Yangon-based research centre that organised the workshop with the support of the Hanns Seidel Foundation.

Those initiatives will not meet with success without communities being mobilised and supported over a long period of time to help them understand and access the market, the Centre said.

Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung reiterated the government's commitment to developing the 2013 Community Involved Tourism policy at the workshop.

According to the MCRB, six CIT projects are being under-



Photo of stairways leading to a religious edifice in Rakhine State, western part of Myanmar that has huge potential for community involved tourism projects. A handful have already started. PHOTO: YE MYINT

taken in Myanmar, ranging from natural tourism in Indawgyi of Kachin State, the watching of Ayayawady dolphins in the north of Mandalay, rural tourism in the

Pa-O self-administered zone and Tada-Ungyi in Kayah State, village visits in Myaing of Magway Region and Dimawhso of Kayah State.

Permits for 'bed' n 'Breakfast accommodation venues to allow overnight stays in CIT locations have been issued in Pa-O and Thandaunggyi areas. This,

among other factors washlighted at the workshop.

The project needs to be simple and facilitated by local authorities for communities to start up their own local operations, said the Centre, stressing the need to ensure the safety, quality and service that tourists expect from community tourism.

"If the government makes it easier for CIT projects to do business, this will support the

National Export Strategy, of which tourism is one of eight priorities", said Vicky Bowman, Director of Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business.

Achim Munz, the Hanns Seidel Foundation's resident representative in Myanmar said that support for communities involved in micro-businesses should come from those in the country's tourism industry including four/five start hotels and tour operators, not just from international development partners.

"Successful CIT projects enrich Myanmar's tourism ecosystem, support the Myanmar brand, and make a more attractive, diversified product."

Crime News

Drug cache worth more than K305 million seized in Indaw

POLICE seized a cache of drugs with a street value of K 305.9 million over two days in Katha District, Sagaing Region, according to Katha District Police Force.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising members of the local police and the anti-narcotic drug squad searched a motorcycle driven by Aye Min Aung (a) Agne Lay, 32, and Aung Kyaw Moe, (a) Moe Gyi, 27. The raid was made in Pain-Inn Village in Indaw Township on 6 December. Police discovered 324g of heroin in 27 soap boxes with a street value of K 32.4 million and 4,500 stimulant tablets with a street value of K22.5 million.

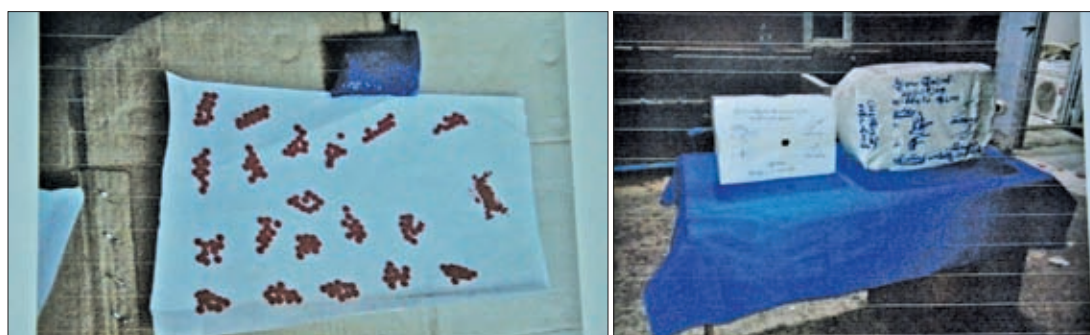
In addition, a combined team comprising members of the Pinebu Township Police Station and an anti-narcotic drug squad made their own discovery, intercepting two motorcycles on 5 December near Paygon Village around 10 pm seizing a total of 2,420g of heroin in 220 soap boxes with a street value of K242 million and 1,800 stimulant tablets with a street value of K 9 million.

The suspects in this case are Ma Aye Mon, 30, and Ma Aye Nuan, 27, from Mangtong Township, Shan State North, Zaw Naing (a) Anaing, 19, and Nyo Hlaing, 34, from Naungpat Village, Bamauk township.— *Chit Lin (Indaw)*



Drugs seized from accused traffickers. PHOTO: CHIT LIN (INDAW)

Police seizes more than 220,000 stimulant pills



Stimulant tablets seized by police on 5 December in the Hline river. PHOTO: YANGON REGION POLICE FORCE

POLICE seized more than 220,000 stimulant tablets with an estimated street value of more than K 1.1 billion in a river recently, according to the Yangon Region Police Force.

A man from a nearby concrete factory found a suspicious package in the Hline River around 2.45 pm on 5 December and informed the police.

An anti-drug squad inspect-

ed the site and discovered 22 packs containing 10,000 stimulant tablets each stamped with a WY, two packs containing 2,000 tablets each, five packs containing 200 tablets each and one pack containing 160 stimulant tablets. All in all the haul weighed more than 22 kg. Police are investigating the case, asking citizens to inform them when they come across any in-

formation related to the drug haul. "The drugs we seized might be dropped off by someone from a ship," an officer of the No. 40 Anti-Drug Squad.

The case is being investigated from the Hlinethaya Myoma Police Station.

Police are in pursuit of a number of suspects in connection with the case.—*Zaw Gyi (Panita)*

Illegal jade seized in Moekaung

LOCAL police in Moekaung Township seized illegal jade stones from a vehicle on 5 December.

While performing security checks at a gate for the inspection of heavy loads, po-

lice stopped and searched the vehicle en-route from Hpakant to Moekaung on suspicion of smuggling jade.

Police discovered several jade stones weighing about 71 viss in total hidden in the car.

The local police station in Moekaung will take action against Kyaw Ye Aung, 24, the driver of the car, under the section 42(a) of the Myanmar Gems Law.— *Stringer*

Over 10 million Ethiopians will need food aid next year: charity

ADDIS ABABA — More than 10 million Ethiopians will need food aid in 2016, up from 8.2 million this year, due to the worst drought in decades, the charity Save the Children has said.

Although it has one of the highest growth rates in Africa, Ethiopia's economy still depends heavily on farming, which employs three quarters of the workforce in the nation of over 90 million people. Caused by failed spring and summer rains and worsened by the El Nino weather phenomenon, the drought has led to food and water shortages.

About 8.2 million people are expected to have received aid this year, according to the government and the United Nations. The figure could spike to 15 million next year, the UN has warned. John Graham, Ethiopia country director for Save the Children, said the charity estimated that 10.1 million Ethiopians would face critical food shortages in 2016.

More than half of those were children, of whom 400,000 would be at risk of developing severe acute malnutrition.

"The worst drought in Ethiopia for 50 years is happening right now," said Graham, adding that the estimated cost of the overall emergency response was \$1.4 billion.

"We simply cannot sit back



Displaced people wait to receive for non-food items from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at the Kabasa transit centre for the internally displaced people in Dollow town, along the Somalia-Ethiopia border, in 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

and wait until the situation has reached crisis point this time," he said in a statement.

Addis Ababa has so far spent 3 billion birr (95.27 million pound) from its own coffers on relief efforts as only a portion of the aid money pledged by donors has been made available, Mitiku Kassa, head of Ethiopia's National Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee, said on Monday. The El Nino weather

pattern, marked by warming sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, causes extremes such as scorching weather in some regions of the globe and heavy rains and flooding in others.

Meteorologists expect El Nino to peak between October and January and to be one of the strongest on record.

Last month, the United Nations Office for the Coordination

of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said floods caused by the weather anomaly were set to affect over 210,000 people and displace more than 100,000 people in Ethiopia.

Officials have dismissed concerns that the drought will have devastating consequences for the economy, saying growth was on course to meet forecasts of 10 percent in the 2015/16 fiscal year.—Reuters

Iraq PM says Turkey main conduit for Islamic State oil-smuggling



Iraqi security forces stand guard in a Baiji oil refinery, north of Baghdad, on 16 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said on Monday that most of the oil produced in Islamic State-held territory in Iraq and Syria was being smuggled through Turkey.

Turkey has repeatedly strongly denied any state involvement in smuggling oil from Islamic State-controlled parts of Syria or Iraq and says it has made progress in combating fuel smuggling networks that

have operated on its borders for decades.

In a meeting with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Monday, Abadi "stressed the importance of stopping oil smuggling by the terrorist gangs of Daesh, most of which is smuggled through Turkey", according to a statement posted on his website.

Daesh is another name for Islamic State.

The Iraqi accusation comes at a time of heightened tension between Baghdad and Ankara, which deployed a heavily armed contingent of forces to a camp near the front line in northern Iraq last week.

Iraq says the deployment is a violation of its sovereignty and has threatened to refer the case to the United Nations Security Council unless Turkey withdraws its forces.

Abadi's remark also echoes recent accusations made by Russia that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan and his family were personally benefiting from smuggling oil from Islamic State-held territory. Erdogan denies the charges and has said he would stand down if such allegations were proven true.

The accusations about Turkey's role in smuggling oil came to the fore after Turkish jets downed a Russian bomber on the Syrian border, in the most serious incident between Russia and a NATO state in half a century.

A senior US State Department official played down the Russian allegations and said the amount of oil being smuggled into Turkey from Syria was not enough for anyone to profit from it significantly.

US officials say coalition air strikes have destroyed hundreds of IS oil trucks, depriving the insurgents of a key source of income. British, French and US jets recently targeted Islamic State-controlled oil fields in eastern Syria as part of a campaign to cut the financial lifeline of the militant group.—Reuters

UN calls for rapid Libya accord after lawmakers propose rival deal

ALGIERS — The United Nations urged Libyan lawmakers who signed a separate peace proposal to back a UN-sponsored deal between the country's warring factions, saying remaining differences could be worked out after the accord.

After a year of negotiations, the United Nations has proposed a national unity deal between Libya's two rival governments and their parliaments, one based in Tripoli, and the internationally recognised one in the east.

Western powers have backed the UN proposal as the only solution to a conflict that is allowing Islamic State militants to gain a foothold in the North African oil producer.

Moderates in both camps have accepted the UN agreement, but hardliners are resisting any deal to end the conflict four years after a NATO-backed rebellion ousted Muammar Gaddafi.

A group of lawmakers from Tripoli's General National Congress (GNC) and the House of Representatives over the weekend announced in Tunisia a separate deal without UN involvement and said they would put that to the vote in each parliament.

"I encourage those who still oppose to join the majority; the remaining questions can be addressed after forming the new government," UN envoy Martin Kobler said in a statement late on Monday.

"I have met today the two delegations of HOR and GNC, who signed a declaration in Tunis yesterday. I urged them to join the process; Libyan people cannot tolerate any more delay."

Western governments and Libyan leaders plan to meet in Rome next week to push the factions to agree to the UN proposal that calls for a presidential committee of representatives to name a government.

But splits within each faction have delayed the signing of any deal with each camp demanding more concessions. Opponents say the agreement does not address key points on balance of power and security arrangements such as the new Libyan army.

A group of lawmakers from the House of Representatives said on Monday they still backed the UN deal rejecting any separate negotiations.

After the fall of Gaddafi, rival brigades of former rebels who once fought together turned against one another, fighting for control of the country and its resources.

Tripoli has been controlled since last year by a faction called Libya Dawn that drove with rivals inside the capital, set up its own government and reinstated the old parliament. The internationally recognised government and the elected House of Representatives now operates in the east backed by another coalition of former rebels and a former Gaddafi ally Gen. Khalifa Haftar who they named armed forces commander.—Reuters

Low inflation to give biggest global pay boost in three years

LONDON — The slowing world economy looks set to get a boost from stronger consumer demand next year, as low inflation boosts the real value of workers' pay rises to a three-year high, a survey said yesterday.

A plunge in oil prices has pushed inflation sharply lower, and means real wages are predicted to rise by an average of 2.5 percent globally in 2016, the study by human resources firm Korn Ferry Hay Group showed.

Nominal wage growth of 4.9 percent across a range of 24,000 firms and organisations around the world was in line with recent years. But the fall in inflation was putting more money into the pockets of consumers globally, Benjamin Frost, a con-

sultant with Hay Group who oversees its salary databases, said.

"A lot of what they seem to be doing is spending that money and companies are generally not doing badly either," Frost said. "They are sharing the love with pay increases and hopefully that will come back around into their tills again."

US workers were on course for a 3.0 percent increase in wages at the start of 2016, resulting in a 2.7 percent increase in real pay when taking in account projected annual inflation of about 0.3 percent at the same time, the study showed.

In Britain, wage growth of 2.5 percent and projected inflation of just 0.2 percent meant British workers were on course

for stronger real wage growth than the 2 percent average expected for employees in Western Europe.

Central banks, such as the Bank of England, are watching to see if the fall in inflation results in lower pay rises in cash terms, which would push down on future inflation and reduce the need for raising interest rates from their rock-bottom lows.

The study was drawn from data from companies and organisations in 110 countries.

The biggest gain in real wages by region was expected in Asia where workers in China were likely to see a 6.3 percent increase in 2016 as demand grew for skilled workers despite the economy's economic slowdown, it said.—Reuters



Smiling Union Jack piggy banks are lined up for sale in the window of a souvenir store on Oxford Street in central London. PHOTO: REUTERS

Social media terrorist activity bill returning to Senate



A picture illustration shows a Facebook logo reflected in a person's eye. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Senator Dianne Feinstein will reintroduce legislation as soon as Monday that would force social media operators such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to notify federal authorities of online terrorist activity, a spokesman said.

Feinstein, a California senator and the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, had included the legislation as an amendment into an intelligence authorisation bill, but it was not included in the version voted on by the full Senate.

Deadly attacks in Paris last month and in San Bernardino, California, last week

have fueled concern among US lawmakers about how potential terrorists might be using social media to communicate and plan more such assaults.

"This is essentially the largest attack since 9/11," Feinstein told the San Francisco Chronicle, referring to the attack in her home state. "We are in a different age."

Reuters reported on Saturday that Facebook, Google and Twitter were stepping up efforts to combat online propaganda and recruiting by Islamic militants, but doing it quietly to avoid the perception that they are helping authorities police the Internet.—Reuters

Chinese researchers unveil brain powered car

TIANJIN — China's first mind-controlled car has been developed by researchers in the north-east port city of Tianjin.

Chinese researchers have developed what they say is the country's first car that uses nothing but brain power to drive.

The research team from Nankai University, in the north-eastern Chinese port city of Tianjin, has spent two years bringing the mind-controlled vehicle to reality.

By wearing brain signal-reading equipment a driver can control the car to go forward, backwards, come to a stop, and both lock and unlock the vehicle, all without moving their hands or feet.

Researcher Zhang Zhao told Reuters the equipment comprises 16 sensors that capture EEG (electroencephalogram) signals from the driver's brain. They developed a computer programme that selects the relevant signals

and translates them, enabling control of the car.

"The tester's EEG signals are picked up by this (brain signal-reading) equipment and transmitted wirelessly to the computer. The computer processes the signals to categorise and recognise people's intention, then translates them into control command to the car. The core of the whole flow is to process the EEG signals, which is done on the computer," said Zhang.

Associate Professor Duan Feng, from the university's College of Computer and Control Engineering, led the project. He emphasized that the technology is aimed at better serving human beings, and that it might soon be possible to combine brain controlled technology and driverless cars, such as the Google Self Driving Car (SDC).

"Driverless cars' further development can bring more benefits to us, since we can better real-

ise functions relating to brain controlling with the help of the driverless cars' platform," said Duan. "In the end, cars, whether driverless or not, and machines are serving for people. Under such circumstances, people's in-

tentions must be recognised. In our project, it makes the cars better serve human beings."

Duan said worries about potential road accidents caused by the driver being distracted while their brain was in control of his

team's car were unfounded, because concentration was needed only when changing the vehicle's moving status, i.e. changing lanes or turning. Whether such an application would be enough to persuade drivers to get behind the wheel and control a car with their mind is far from certain, though.

The researchers say their initial idea was inspired by helping disabled people who are physically unable to steer cars.

"There are two starting points of this project. The first one is to provide a driving method without using hands or feet for the disabled who are unable to move freely; and secondly, to provide healthy people with a new and more intellectualized driving mode," Zhang said.

At present the vehicle, in collaboration with Chinese car manufacturer Great Wall Motor, can only drive in a straight direction, and there are no plans to put it into production.—Reuters



A part of devices of a brain-controlled vehicle system is seen connected to a car during a demonstration at Nankai University in Tianjin, China, on 17 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Russia beefs up its Armenia base with attack, transport helicopters

MOSCOW — Russia has deployed attack and transport helicopters to reinforce its military base in Armenia, RIA news agency quoted Russian Defence Ministry as saying yesterday.

A total of seven helicopters MI-24 and Mi-8 have been deployed at the base near the capital city of Yerevan, and one more batch would be delivered

to the base before the year end, the ministry was quoted as saying.

The air base was set up in 1995 and since 1998 Russia has been stationing there fighter jets MIG-29.

Russia also has a military base in Gyumri, the second largest city in Armenia in the northwestern part of the country close to the Armenian-Turkish border.—Reuters

S Korea deports 3 Indonesians for following terror group

SEOUL — South Korean authorities have deported three Indonesian illegal immigrants for allegedly following a terrorist group affiliated with Al-Qaeda, Yonhap News Agency reported yesterday, citing South Korea's state intelligence organisation.

One man, a 32-year-old, was deported last Tuesday for violating the country's immigration

control act, the National Intelligence Service said, according to the report. The man, suspected of supporting the al-Nusra Front, a Syrian group which has pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda, had written on his Facebook page that he would carry out a suicide bombing attack and expressed his willingness to get involved with jihad.—Kyodo News

Six migrant children die after boat sinks off western Turkey

ISTANBUL — At least six children died and eight other people rescued yesterday after a boat carrying migrants bound for Greece capsized off Turkey's western coast near the city of Izmir, local media reported.

Responding to a distress signal sent at midnight on Monday, the Turkish coastguard extended a search operation into Tuesday's daylight hours, Dogan News Agency reported. State-run Anadolu Agency said the coastguard

found the bodies of six children including a baby, adding that the migrants on the boat were Afghans. It was not immediately clear how many people in all were on board. A record 500,000 refugees from a four-year-old civil war in Syria have travelled through Turkey then risked their lives in rickety boats to reach nearby Greek islands this year, their first stop in the European Union before continuing to wealthier countries in the north and west of the EU.—Reuters

Triumphant Venezuela opposition looks to boost economy, free prisoners



Lilian Tintori (centre L), wife of jailed Venezuelan opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, celebrates next to candidates of the Venezuelan coalition of opposition parties (MUD) during a news conference on the election in Caracas on 7 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

CARACAS — Venezuela's opposition vowed on Monday to revive the OPEC nation's troubled economy and free jailed political activists after winning control of the legislature for the first time in 16 years of Socialist rule.

By Monday evening, some results from Sunday's election were not yet in, but the Democratic Unity coalition had already won a commanding majority in the 167-member National Assembly, opening a new chapter in the polarised country's politics.

Opposition leaders said final tallies showed they won a two-thirds majority, or at least 112 seats. That

would let them flex their muscles against President Nicolas Maduro by shaking up institutions such as the courts and election board, widely viewed as pro-government.

There was no confirmation of that from the election board, which had yet to announce the results of 22 legislative contests.

Maduro, 53, quickly accepted defeat in a speech early on Monday that calmed fears of violence in a country long riven by political strife.

The government was mostly quiet on Monday after voters punished its candidates for an economic crisis that includes shortages

of antibiotics to shampoo and steep inflation that is ravaging salaries.

"It's a great opportunity for us, this protest vote," opposition leader Henrique Capriles said following the win. After securing control of the National Assembly from the "Chavismo" movement, named for late former socialist President Hugo Chavez, opposition leaders quickly set out their priorities.

Coalition head Jesus Torrealba said its lawmakers would seek to modify the Central Bank law in an effort to cut back on the amount of money being printed, a key factor in Venezuela having the world's

highest inflation rate.

Although it will not have the power to radically change the economy from the legislature, the opposition is promising new laws to stimulate the private sector and to roll back nationalisations.

It also wants to pass an amnesty law for detained opponents of Maduro when the new assembly begins work on 5 January. Venezuela's best-known jailed politician is Leopoldo Lopez, who was sentenced to nearly 14 years on charges of promoting political violence in 2014 that killed 43 people. But the opposition has a list of what it says are more than 70 other political prisoners.—Reuters

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- 1. Marshall Testing Machine 50kN Capacity and Accessories for Asphalt Concrete (BS 598-107, ASTM D.1559)
2. Rapid Method by Speedy Moisture Tester (BS 812; ASTM.D4944; AASHTO T217)
3. 20kg Heavy duty balance
4. Los Angeles Abrasion Machine (ASTM C 131, C 535) (For 220-240V AC.50Hz)
5. Sieve (ASTM) 8" (230mm) diameter & 2" (50mm) full depth stainless steel Mesh
6. Automatic Mechanical Compactor (220-240V AC) (ASTM D 558.D 560)

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Russia asks for UN council talks on Turkey action in Syria, Iraq

UNITED NATIONS — Russia has asked the United Nations Security Council to hold closed-door discussions on Turkish military action in Syria and Iraq, diplomats said on Monday, in the latest sign of increasing tensions between Moscow and Ankara.

Russia's UN mission had no immediate comment. But council diplomats said they expected a 24 November incident in which Turkey shot down a Russian plane near the Syrian-Turkish border would come up. Relations between Russia and Turkey have nosedived since that incident.

"We don't have details but Russia has asked to dis-

cuss the issue of Turkish action in Iraq and Syria," a diplomat told Reuters. Other council diplomats echoed his remarks.

The discussion was expected to follow a closed-door meeting of the 15-nation council on unrelated issues beginning at 3 pm ET (1900 GMT) on Tuesday, the diplomats said.

The United States, president of the Security Council this month, will chair the discussions.

Turkish officials have said the Russian plane it shot down violated Turkish airspace and had been warned repeatedly. Moscow says the aircraft was over Syria, where Russia is carrying

out an air campaign to support the forces of President Bashar al-Assad in a nearly five-year-old civil war. Russia says it is targeting Islamic State militants, who have taken over large swaths of Syria and Iraq and made inroads in Libya and Yemen. Western officials say very few of Russia's airstrikes were aimed at Islamic State, with most of them hitting Western-backed Syrian rebel groups.

Separately, Iraq has accused Turkey of violating its sovereignty by deploying a heavily armed contingent of forces to a camp near the front line in northern Iraq last week. It threatened to refer the case to the Security

Council unless Turkey withdraws its forces.

It was not clear if Russia intended to raise the specific Iraqi complaints, nor was it clear if the Russian delegation wanted the council to take action.

Turkey said on Monday it would not withdraw hundreds of soldiers who arrived last week at a base in northern Iraq, despite being ordered by Baghdad to pull them out within 48 hours.

Ankara says the troops are there as part of an international mission to train and equip Iraqi forces to fight against Islamic State. The Iraqi government says it never invited such a force.—Reuters

Cameroon says no missing girls among freed Boko Haram hostages

YAOUNDE — Cameroon said on Monday that schoolgirls kidnapped by Islamist militant group Boko Haram last year were not among a group of 900 hostages liberated by the West African country's army.

Last week's hostage release raised hopes that some of the girls might be among the group. The army also said it killed at least 100 Boko Haram fighters in the operation as it seeks to strike back after a series of attacks, not least in its Far North region.

"The people that were freed are just villagers. The schoolgirls who are missing are not amongst the group," Information Minister Issa Tchiroma Bakari told Reuters by telephone.

The freed hostages were driven in crowded open-topped trucks to the town of Maroua in the Far North at the weekend and given food aid and water by regional officials, Reuters television pictures showed.

Boko Haram seized around 200 schoolgirls in April 2014 from their dormitories in the town of Chibok, northeastern Nige-



A Cameroonian soldier walks in front of former Nigerian hostages held by Boko Haram who were freed by the Cameroonian military in Maroua, Cameroon, on 5 December 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

ria, about 50 km (30 miles) west of the border with Cameroon. The kidnapping stirred international outrage.

Efforts to track them down have proved fruitless, in part because they have probably been split up into small groups and settled with families in vil-

lages across a wider area of terrain, according to analysts.

Cameroon is part of an 8,700-strong task force including troops from Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Benin that has pledged to destroy Boko Haram, which though based mainly in Nigeria has become a ma-

ajor threat to wider regional security.

Suicide bombings, often carried out by young women recruited by the militant group, are becoming almost daily occurrences in the Far North. The government denies that Boko Haram holds any territory in Cameroon.—Reuters

French parties scramble to halt rise of far-right National Front

PARIS — France's mainstream political parties were scrambling for a way to stop the rise of the far-right National Front (FN) on Monday after its historic first-round lead in regional elections.

Boosted by fears over the Islamic State militant attacks that killed 130 people in Paris on 13 November, Marine Le Pen's party secured 27.7 percent of the vote nationally.

The National Front came first in six of 13 regions in Sunday's vote, its best showing ever. The anti-Europe, anti-immigration party has been gaining ground for years among voters frustrated by the government's failure to tackle unemployment, fearful of immigration and disillusioned by mainstream politics.

Riding a wave of euroscepticism and anti-immigrant feeling which has brought far-right parties to prominence across Europe, the breakthrough bolsters Le Pen's position as a serious



Marion Marechal-Le Pen, French National Front political party member and candidate for National Front in the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur (PACA) region is surrounded by media after the announcement of the results during the first round of the regional elections on 6 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

contender for the 2017 presidential election.

Some 16 percent of those who voted for the FN said they had changed their voting intentions after the 13 November attacks, an exit poll published on Monday said. Sixty-eight percent said their aim had been to punish the unpopular Socialist government of President Francois Hollande, the poll by Ifop and Fiducial for iTELE, Paris Match and Sud Radio said.

The outcome also ex-

posed fault lines within both the country's main traditional political groupings over the right tactics to confront the National Front in the decisive second round of the regional elections next Sunday. To try to make sure Le Pen does not win in the final round, France's ruling Socialist Party decided to pull its candidates out of three regions where it came third, telling supporters there to back Nicolas Sarkozy's conservative Republicans.

But many in President

Francois Hollande's party are unhappy about giving up all regional representation across swathes of the country, and on Monday, Jean-Pierre Masseret, who leads the Socialists in the eastern region, resisted calls from his party chief to pull out.

"We are standing fast. We think the best way to oppose the National Front is by taking our seats in the regional assembly. That is where we can best push back the National Front, by being the opposition," he said on BFMTV.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls, who had not spoken publicly since the results announcements, said on Monday evening Masseret should withdraw his list.

"There is no point in holding to it," he said in an interview with private national French television channel TF1.

"We must live up to what is at stake and that is to strengthen the Republic," he added.—Reuters

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MV MOUNT BOKOR VOY NO (006N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOUNT BOKOR VOY NO (006N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINGAPORE BRIDGE VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE**

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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VOY NO (121N)

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No spoilers! New 'Star Wars' plot cloaked in unprecedented secrecy

LOS ANGELES — When actress Lupita Nyong'o showed up on the set of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," many of her co-stars did not know what role she was playing.

Newcomer Daisy Ridley was sworn to secrecy for three months that she had even been cast in the film. And with a week to go before the world premiere on 14 December, some of the actors have not yet seen "The Force Awakens."

"I was in scenes in which some of the characters I was working with did not know who I was," Nyong'o, who it is now known plays pirate Maz Kanata, told Reuters. "That's how secretive it was."

Aside from broad character outlines, details are being kept tightly under wraps, prompting endless online speculation by fans eager to see the saga's first film installment in a decade.

Walt Disney Co, which took over "Star Wars" with its 2012 purchase of Lucasfilm, scrapped the typical Hollywood practice of screening the movie for reporters before they speak with the cast. The stars revealed little in interviews, declining to an-

swer even basic questions.

Does Rey, the central character played by Ridley, ever pick up a lightsaber? "We'll have to wait and see," Ridley said. Adam Driver claimed he could not remember if his character, the Darth Vader-like Kylo Ren, had his own theme song.

Stars Oscar Isaac and Gwendoline Christie said they have not seen the film yet.

Nyong'o clammed up when asked why her character appeared smaller than diminutive droid R2-D2 in film posters. "I can't say anything about my size," she said with a laugh, but perhaps added a clue: "You know, posters are not really up to scale."

The cast and Abrams said they wanted to preserve the element of surprise for filmgoers.

"I would like them to sit down, relax in their seat and just let the story begin," said Harrison Ford, who returns as Han Solo. "I'm not going to ruin it for them by talking about what happens."

Producer Kathleen Kennedy did divulge something fans will not see. "Jar Jar is definitely not in the movie," Kennedy told re-

porters, referring to the unpopular character from "The Phantom Menace."

What is known is that "Force Awakens" is set 30 years after "Return of the Jedi."

A stormtrooper named Finn (John Boyega) encounters Rey and droid BB-8, and the three embark on a journey. Glimpses of them on Rey's home planet, Jakku, have been seen in trailers released by Disney.

Rey's last name is unknown, leading fans to guess she may be Luke Skywalker's daughter. Or Han and Princess Leia's. All three classic characters return, but Luke's role is unclear. He is absent from "Force Awakens" posters and trailers, prompting theories that the character dies or joins the dark side. Why such mystery surrounding Luke? "Just 'cause," Ford said coyly.



PHOTO: REUTERS

According to Boyega, audiences will be glad they did not know more in advance. "I don't want to spoil it for anyone," he said. "You'll thank me later." — Reuters

Singer-songwriter Fish bids farewell to 'Misplaced Childhood'

LONDON — Thirty years after the release of Marillion's platinum-rated "Misplaced Childhood" album, Scottish lead singer Fish is on the road performing the work in its entirety for the last time before retiring.

In an iTunes age of schizophrenic track hopping, a 40-minute concept rock album seems an outdated curiosity. But the loyal sell-out London crowd on Saturday night lapped up every minute, as the songs blended seamlessly one into another.

"It was an album that touched a lot of people back in 1985. The concept of re-discovery, someone rebuilding and finding themselves is an eternal story," lyricist Fish, who fronted Marillion between 1981 and 1988, told Reuters in an interview.

"It has such strong songs, such a lot of drama. When I'm performing it on stage, there's been a couple of moments when I've choked (up)," Fish, less well known as Derek William Dick, said. "It was a very personal album for me, very autobiographical."

Back in London, haunting keyboards signaled the beginning of the performance of "Misplaced Childhood", segueing into "Kayeleigh", the band's biggest hit and credited with boosting the popularity of the girls name for a generation. It then gave way to "Lavender", a resplendent take on the traditional children's lullaby.

Over complex musical arrangements, Fish, whose voice has been described as a "conflation of Roger Daltrey and Peter Gabriel", gave an impassioned performance, at times making you think that some of the demons which haunted the tracks of "Misplaced Childhood" at its inception, were not really that far away.

In the audience, it was the third time Steve Lynch had seen Fish this year. "Bearing in mind this is (Fish's) last rendition of 'Misplaced Childhood' and the fact that he's giving up touring, we felt we had to come up all the way to London to see him," said the 63-year-old from Worthing, on England's south coast.

The audience, word perfect from first to last, at times threatened to drown out the band as familiar lyrics were retrieved from deep in the memory. —Reuters

Eagles of Death Metal make powerful return to Paris after attacks

PARIS — Eagles of Death Metal, the band which was performing when the deadliest of the Islamic State attacks took place in Paris on 13 November, made an emotional, powerful appearance at a U2 concert in the city on Monday. Led by frontman Jesse Hughes dressed in a white suit at a packed AccorHotels Arena, the Californian rock band gave a rendition of Patti Smith's "People have the Power" before performing their own "I Love You All The Time."

"Nothing left except to introduce you to some people whose lives will be forever part of Paris. These are our brothers, they were robbed of their stage three weeks ago," U2 frontman Bono said at the end of the last gig of their Innocence and Experience tour after the American band's remaining European shows were canceled in the wake of the attacks.

The coordinated attacks in the French capital killed 130 people, most of them at the Bataclan concert hall where Eagles of Death Metal, also known as EODM, were performing. —Reuters

Hip-hop's Kendrick Lamar storms Grammy nominations, Taylor Swift trails



PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — California hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar led the Grammy nominations on Monday, scoring 11 nods including album of the year for "To Pimp a Butterfly."

The 28 year-old from Compton, the heart of the Los Angeles rap scene, left country-pop superstar Taylor Swift trailing with seven nominations for the biggest awards in the music industry.

Canadian rapper The Weeknd also got seven nominations after a break-out year for his album "Beauty Behind the Madness" and best-selling single "Can't Feel My Face."

Lamar, who won two

Grammys last year in the specialist rap category, broke into the mainstream this year with nominations for the top prize, album of the year. He will also compete for song of the year for "Alright," best pop duo with Swift for her hit "Bad Blood" and music video for the same single.

"To Pimp a Butterfly," his third studio album, has topped the US and UK music charts with its fusion of funk, jazz and poetry.

Lamar will compete in the best album category with Swift's "1989," The Weeknd's "Beauty Behind the Madness," country singer Chris Staple-

ton's "Traveller" and rock band Alabama Shakes' "Sand & Colour."

Seven-time Grammy winner Swift's other nominations this year include record, song of the year and best pop solo performance for "Blank Space."

Erotic drama "Fifty Shades of Grey" powered The Weeknd to three of his Grammy nods for single "Earned It" which was featured on the movie's soundtrack. The 25 year-old Canadian has never won a Grammy in his five year-long career.

Competing for best new artist are "All About the Bass" singer Meghan Trainor, country artist Sam Hunt, British singer-songwriter James Bay, American Tori Kelly, and Australian Courtney Barnett.

Britain's Adele, who won six Grammys for her 2011 album "21," was not eligible this year because her record-breaking new release "25," was issued too late for consideration.

The Grammy Awards, chosen by members of the Recording Academy, will be handed out at a ceremony in Los Angeles on 15 February. —Reuters

Japan meets goal of 1m foreigners arriving by cruise ship in year



Japan holds a ceremony at the port of Fukuoka on 8 December 2015, as it achieved a goal of having one million cruise ship visitors from abroad in a year. A weaker yen and relaxed visa requirements helped Japan reach the mark earlier than its initial target year of 2020.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

FUKUOKA — The number of foreign travellers arriving in Japan on cruise ships reached the annual goal of 1 million yesterday, a target originally set for 2020, the transport ministry said, attributing the swift achievement to the weak yen and the easing of visa regulations.

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism held a commemorative ceremony at Hakata port in Fukuoka city,

southwestern Japan, where the year's 1 millionth passenger was presented with flowers and a Japanese doll as gifts from Kiyoshi Ejima, the ministry's parliamentary secretary.

"We will aim even higher from here," Ejima said at the ceremony. He called the southwestern main island of Kyushu, where the port is located, a maritime gateway to Japan, and said the area is serving as the driving

force in pushing up the number of foreign visitors.

At a press conference, land minister Keiichi Ishii reiterated Japan's policy of continuing to work to realize a tourism-oriented country and revitalise local regions.

The number of foreign travellers arriving in Japan on cruise ships in 2014 was some 416,000, a large leap from 174,000 in 2013. The ministry attributed the gain mainly to increasing cruise ship services from China.

By destination, Hakata marked the highest number of dockings of foreign cruise ships with 99 in 2014, followed by Nagasaki, also in Kyushu, at 70 and Ishigaki in Okinawa Prefecture at 69, the ministry said.

The government plans to renovate ports across Japan that can accept large-scale ships, with a view to boosting foreign travellers by cruise ship by 2020, when the Tokyo Olympic Games are scheduled to be held.

According to the Japan National Tourism Organisation, the number of foreign visitors to Japan this year marked an estimated record of 16.32 million at the end of October, exceeding last year's record by 2.90 million.—*Kyodo News*

'Onigirazu,' sandwich-like rice dish, chosen as dish of 2015

TOKYO — "Onigirazu," an innovative take on the traditional "onigiri" rice ball, was chosen as 2015's dish of the year on Monday after the sandwich-like rice dish became a sensation, more than 20 years after it was first introduced in a manga series.

Gurunavi Research Institute said onigirazu, loosely translated as "not gripping," as opposed to "gripping" for onigiri, best represents the year 2015 because it enables many "creative and innovative" interpretations, thus "broadening the possibilities of rice dishes at a time when people continue to shun them (due to the westernization of Japanese cuisine)."

Tochi Ueyama, author of the long-running "Cooking Papa" manga series, was at a press event held by the Tokyo food research company. He coined the name onigirazu in the comic series in 1991.

"I saw my wife throwing the dish together in a rush when our kid was small, and I drew them in manga and named them onigirazu," said Ueyama.

Onigirazu is easier and faster to make than a rice ball. It is made by spreading layers of rice and fillings over a sheet of seaweed, folding the seaweed into a square to wrap the contents and cutting it with a knife.

In order to make a regular onigiri, one has to stuff fillings into the rice before compressing and shaping it into a ball or a triangle and then wrapping it with seaweed.

Onigirazu came into the spotlight in recent years after it was picked up by Internet users, including those visiting cooking websites in search of recipes.

In addition to being easy to make, people find onigirazu more visually appealing as the colorful fillings, sandwiched by white rice and covered with black seaweed, are all visible as layers.

This year, the popularity of the dish led to many restaurants adding onigirazu to their menus and the publication of recipe books explaining how to make it.—*Kyodo News*

Cambodia's famed Angkor earns US\$53.5m in 11 months

PHNOM PENH — Revenue from ticket sales to foreigners visiting Cambodia's famed Angkor Wat Temple reached 53.5 million US dollars in the first 11 months of 2015, up 1.15 percent year-on-year, according to an official release yesterday.

During the period, the ancient site received 1.87 million foreign

tourists, a 2.2 percent rise from a year earlier, said the release issued by the state-run Apsara Authority, which manages the site.


In November alone, the temple welcomed 200,085 tourists, generating a revenue of 5.87 million US dollars, it said.

China, South Korea and Japan are still the largest sources of

tourists to the temple.

Located in northwestern Siem Reap Province, Angkor Wat Temple is the kingdom's most popular tourist destination.

An entrance fee to the site is 20 dollars per day for a foreigner, 40 dollars for a three-day visit and 60 dollars for a week-long visit.—*Xinhua*



News Channel in Brief

(9-12-2015, Wednesday)

<p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw <p>7:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Talk Myanmar <p>8:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's Talks <p>9:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science and Technology Programme <p>10:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet The Successful <p>11:35 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>1:30 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>2:10 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gita Mahar <p>2:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Traditional Boxing 	<p>3:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money Talk Myanmar <p>4:45 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>5:15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary <p>6:35 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Story Real Movie <p>7:15 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>8:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News/ International News/ Weather Report <p>9:00 pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News • TV Drama Series • Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance
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Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Entertainment Channel

(9-12-2015, Wednesday)

<p>6:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Songs of Yester Years <p>6:20 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyi Thu Ni Ti <p>6:45 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fashion Show <p>8:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV Drama Series <p>8:45 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch Asia News (Part-20) <p>9:00 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical Programme <p>9:10 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teleplay <p>9:55 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Symphony Orchestra <p>10:10 am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar Movie (Black & White)
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(9-12-2015 07:00 am~ 10-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

<p>07:03</p> <p>07:26</p> <p>07:43</p> <p>08:03</p> <p>08:26</p> <p>08:36</p> <p>09:03</p> <p>09:26</p> <p>09:39</p> <p>09:53</p> <p>10:03</p> <p>10:26</p> <p>10:51</p>	<p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p> <p>Am</p>	<p>News</p> <p>Jeyyanandi</p> <p>We'll Leave After 12 Passengers Are On Board</p> <p>News</p> <p>To The Blue Ridge Mountains of Rhododendrons</p> <p>"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar Pottery</p> <p>News</p> <p>Living in Off-Season</p> <p>Myanma Agarwood</p> <p>Ngapali Beach: Fishing Villages</p> <p>News</p> <p>Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (Ep-2) (Jivatadana Hospital)</p> <p>Writer</p>
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(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

<p>07:03</p> <p>07:26</p> <p>07:43</p> <p>07:51</p> <p>08:03</p> <p>08:26</p> <p>08:45</p> <p>08:53</p>	<p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p> <p>Pm</p>	<p>News</p> <p>A Visit To Today's Along-Daw-Katthapha</p> <p>A Star for Great Achievement</p> <p>Maha Muni Pagoda</p> <p>News</p> <p>Myanmar Sculpture-Work of Art</p> <p>A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-1)</p> <p>Snake Dancer</p>
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(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

Messi heads eclectic cast at Club World Cup

TOKYO — Lionel Messi is the most famous of a variety of characters at the Club World Cup which includes Auckland City's part-timers, former Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari and bunny-hopping Congolese goalkeeper Robert Kidiaba.

Messi's Barcelona are runaway favourites to win the somewhat quirky tournament which, as much as anything, serves as reminder of the chasm which separates club football in Europe from the rest of the world.

The Catalans head a field which also includes South American champions River Plate, CONCACAF's America, African champions TP Mazembe, Scolari's Guangzhou Evergrande, the champions of Asia, and Oceania's Auckland City.

Sanfrecce Hiroshima, who qualified as champions of host nation Japan, complete the lineup.

The tournament, successor to the sometimes volatile games in the Intercontinental Cup, is largely unloved and ignored in Europe, yet regarded as the pinnacle for teams in other parts of the world.

South American sides, in par-

ticular, spend months preparing and are invariably followed by thousands of fans who travel half-way around the world.

"My feeling is that even though they're finals, the European teams feel that they're going to end up winning," said River Plate midfielder Lucho Gonzalez.

"When they start out feeling that relaxed they often end up having a tougher test than they expected. For us, though, these kinds of games are like touching the sky."

The dynamics of modern football means that the top South American players will be playing against, rather than for, their region's representatives.

While European champions Barcelona will be fielding Brazilian Neymar, Uruguayan Luis Suarez and Argentine Messi in a dream strikeforce, River Plate will have to make do with mainly journeymen professionals.

River Plate's team is fairly typical of South American club football where, for many players, a career in Russia, Ukraine, the Middle East or Australia can be preferable to staying in the ramshackle domestic game.—Reuters



Barcelona's Lionel Messi shoots from a free kick during Liga BBVA at Santiago Bernabeu on 21 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

United's Schweinsteiger charged with violent conduct

LONDON — Manchester United midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger has been charged with violent conduct by the Football Association (FA) after clashing with West Ham United's Winston Reid.

The German international caught the Hammers centre back in the face with his left arm as they jostled before a free-kick in the 40th minute of Saturday's goalless Premier League draw.

Schweinsteiger will be banned for three games if found guilty and has until 1200 GMT on Thursday to respond to the charge. Referee Mark Clattenburg spoke to both players after the incident but did not include it in his match report.

"Bastian Schweinsteiger has been charged for an alleged act of violent conduct which was not seen by the match officials but caught on video," the FA said in a statement on its website. "The matter was referred to a panel of three former elite referees who each reviewed the video footage independently of one another to determine whether they considered it a sending-off offence.

"For an FA charge to follow the decision by the panel must be unanimous."—Reuters

Proud Arsenal record on the line at Olympiakos

ATHENS — Arsenal will put one of the best Champions League records on the line when they face Olympiakos Piraeus in a showdown for second spot in Group F on Wednesday. As well as competing in the tournament for the 18th season in a row, the London club have qualified for the second stage in each of the past 15 campaigns.

That run is in jeopardy, not

so much due to a 5-1 hammering at group winners Bayern Munich but because Arsenal were beaten in their opening two games including a shock 3-2 defeat at home to Olympiakos.

Now they must reverse that scoreline or improve on it to preserve their proud record under Arsene Wenger who will be missing seven players including Alexis Sanchez, Santi Cazorla,

Mikel Arteta and Jack Wilshere.

Wenger was particularly pleased with Saturday's 3-1 win at home to Sunderland, a victory that lifted Arsenal to second place in the Premier League.

"For our confidence it was vital," the French coach told reporters. "I was very nervous because I knew it was a very important game for our season.

"It is better to prepare for the

(Olympiakos) game knowing we have won. The one positive thing is we know exactly what to do.

"Most of the time when we have been to Olympiakos we have not had a lot to do because we had already qualified. This time it is the opposite," added Wenger.

It is Arsenal's fourth visit in seven seasons and each time the game has come on Matchday Six.—Reuters

Bulgaria hoping Games ban on lifters is overturned



A Bulgarian national team weightlifter practices during a training session in the town of Asenovgrad, some 140 km (87 miles) east of the capital Sofia in 2008. PHOTO: REUTERS

SOFIA — The Bulgarian weightlifting federation's lawyer is optimistic a doping ban will be overturned in time for its lifters to compete at next year's Olympics.

"Bulgaria's chances of participating in the Olympics are very good because this punishment contradicts existing International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) regulations," lawyer Boris Kolev told Reuters on Monday.

Last month the IWF said Bulgaria's lifters would not be eligible for the 2016 Olympics following a string of doping cases.

The Balkan country appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) and Kolev said the final decision from the Swiss organisation was expected in January.

Eight male lifters, including three European champions,

and three female lifters, tested positive for the banned anabolic steroid stanozolol during a training camp in Tbilisi, Georgia in March.

Asen Muradov, Ferdi Nazif, Vladimir Urumov, Stoyan Enev, Deyan Minchev plus female lifters Nadezhda-Mey Tuy Nguen and Maya Ivanova were suspended for nine months.

Former European champion Demir Demirev, 2014 European champion Ivan Markov and Ivaylo Filev, and female lifter Milka Maneva were banned for 18 months as they had already been suspended for doping.

Bulgaria found it tough to find suitable replacements for the banned lifters but still competed at the world championship in Houston last month and finished 21st in the team standings.—Reuters

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 gnmindaily@gmail.com
 www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
 www.facebook.com/globalnewlightofmyanmar
 THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
 Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kye Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00623.