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DEVELOPMENT ON DAWEI

Myanmar, Thailand, Japan sign agreements to share SEZ



Representatives of Myanmar, Thailand and Japan signed the agreements on the Dawei SEZ in Bangkok, Thailand. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR, Thailand and Japan signed a shareholder agreement and a framework agreement yesterday for the development of the Dawei Special Economic Zone.

In his speech at the 5th Myanmar-Thailand high-level joint committee meeting on the implementation of the Dawei SEZ in Thailand yesterday, Vice President U Nyan Tun hailed Japan's participation in the project, hinting that the project

would speed up thanks to the inclusion of Japan.

The development of the Dawei SEZ is expected to benefit not only Myanmar and Thailand but also other countries in the region, as the special economic zone would become a link to the corridor between the Greater Mekong Sub-region and India.

Japan, Thailand and Myanmar recently signed a Memorandum

of Intent (MoI) to build the Dawei Special Economic Zone in Myanmar as part of the "New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation," adopted during the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit on July 4.

Japan agreed to participate in the project on 30 January 2015. It was revealed that they will hold equal partnership to Thailand and Myanmar in the Dawei Special

Economic Zone Development Co. and provide technical and financial support for the project.

The Dawei Special Economic Zone will include a deep-sea port surrounded by an economic zone covering some 200 square kilometres, an expressway and heavy industry facilities.

Following the signing ceremony, Myanmar, Thailand and Japan held the 5th meeting on co-

operation in implementation of the Dawei SEZ and related projects.

Vice President U Nyan Tun held talks with Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Dr Somkid Jaturitak yesterday morning to discuss the timely completion of the Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge No. 2, promoting bilateral trade, investment and SMEs, stock shares and the electricity and energy sectors.—*Myanmar News Agency*

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Civil servant housing goes up in Mandalay

AFFORDABLE housing is being built on land owned by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing, while housing complexes for government agencies are being upgraded across the country to meet rising demand.

The Mandalay Region government has been building hous-

ing complexes for government employees and affordable housing since the 2012-13 fiscal year.

One of the housing projects, Sitramahi Advanced Housing, located in Chanayethazan Township was completed by five companies within three months, and the apartments were sold using a

lottery system.

The housing project was developed at the former site of a rental housing complex for government employees built in 1951 that had since fallen into disrepair.

The housing complex was redeveloped with the aim of con-

tributing to urban development.

A total of 132 apartments have been reserved for government employees from 23 ministries.

Amenities for the housing complex have also been provided.—*Min Htet Aung/Aung Ye Thwin*

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw endorses Special Commodity Tax Bill

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discussed three reports, including a report on the Union Budget, at its latest session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also, the Joint Bill Committee also discussed the Special Commodity Tax Bill, which was submitted by the Ministry of Finance last Wednesday.

The bill committee agreed with the proposal of the ministry, saying indirect tax should be promoted in Myanmar as it is in other developing countries. The committee also recommended that special commodities should

be managed only under this law.

The Hluttaw invited MPs to sign up in order to discuss the bill at the next session.

During the Monday session, Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Daw Le Le Thein clarified tasks undertaken in the first six months of the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein also clarified a report on the Union Government's budget for the first six months of this fiscal year.—*Myanmar News Agency*



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

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw continues



U Khaing Maung Yee. PHOTO: MNA

THE Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) agreed to again discuss the bill amending the Veterinary Council Law, which was sent back by the Amyotha Hluttaw.



Thura U Aung Ko. PHOTO: MNA

The bill was submitted by the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development on 20 November.

Furthermore, three MPs dis-



U Tin Maung Oo. PHOTO: MNA

cussed the activities of the Pyithu Hluttaw Committee on Ethnic Affairs, Rural Development and Peacemaking.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development U Ohn Myint and his wife are welcomed by Qatari Ambassador H.E. Mr Hassan Bin Mohammed Rafei Al Emadi upon their arrival at a reception commemorating Qatar's National Day. PHOTO: MYANMA NEWS AGENCY

Myanmar young entrepreneurs attend forum in Vietnam



The general secretary of the Myanmar Youth Entrepreneurs' Association Daw Khin Thet Maw, central executive committee member Mi May Aye Aye Thant and association member U Phone Su Soe attended the ASEAN+3 Young Entrepreneurs' Forum, which started on 11 December and ended yesterday in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEW AGENCY

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw discuss People's Debt Management Bill



U Khin Maung Yi. PHOTO: MNA

THE Amyotha Hluttaw bill committee read out findings on the People's Debt Management Bill, which was sent back by the Pyithu Hluttaw.

Te Amyotha Hluttaw asked



Dr Khin Shwe. PHOTO: MNA

MPs to sign up for a discussion of the bill in future sessions.

The parliament also approved the bill amending the Comprehensive Transportation Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Philippines contributes to rehabilitation of flooded areas

THE Philippine Government donated US\$97,750 (K126,206,362) for the rehabilitation of areas in Myanmar that were flooded by heavy rains in July and August.

The donation was transferred to the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank on 8 December, according to the bank.—*Myanmar News Agency*

President sends message on 41st Anniversary of Rakhine State Day

The following is an unofficial translation of the message sent by President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 41st Anniversary of Rakhine State Day.



It is a great honour to extend my warmest greetings and send a congratulatory message to the national brethren of Rakhine State on the 41st anniversary of Rakhine State Day, which falls on 15 December.

Rakhine was granted statehood in line with the State Constitution of 1974, which the Rakhine State People's Council approved in a referendum on 15 December. The date has been observed as Rakhine State Day since 1975 without missing a single year.

Due to its geographical location, Rakhine State possesses a beautiful stretch of coast and mountain ranges. Apart from fertile farmland, the region boasts a repository of invaluable

cultural heritage.

The government is making strenuous efforts to bring all-round development to the region. Tangible improvements have been made in areas including transportation, electricity, education and health.

The government mounted emergency responses and recovery measures in some areas of Rakhine State that were hit by torrential rains and floods in July and August this year. The government took effective measures to put the disaster-hit areas on the road to recovery. Achievements have been made in putting flood-affected farmlands under cultivation. Now, the crops are being harvested. I would like to honour the resi-

dents of Rakhine State for their great resilience to the natural disasters.

The government's commitment to putting an end to the 60 years of armed conflict through negotiations and peace culminated in a nationwide ceasefire agreement with eight armed ethnic groups on 15 October this year. Stability and the rule of law being critical to national development, the entire population of the country are to join hands in preserving stability and peace so as to ensure further development across the country.

Thus, I would like to urge the people of Rakhine State to render collective cooperation in the march to a new, prosperous democracy.

UPDJC discusses framework draft at third meeting

THE Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee held its 3rd meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to discuss the political dialogue framework drafted by the Framework for Political Dialogue Drafting Committee.

In his opening remarks, U Aung Min, vice chairman of the UPDJC and a representative of the Union government, expressed his delight at the unanimous approval by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, saying the approval by the Union Parliament can be considered a first step toward ensuring the success of political dialogue.

He also said the achievement of designing a draft framework within three days, referring the draft framework for political dialogue that was approved on 3 December, would be helpful for promoting cooperation and coordination among stakeholders in future meetings. It is expected that a consensus on the ratio of representatives to participate in the political dialogue will be reached in upcoming meetings, he added.

Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, vice chairman of the UPDJC, a representative of the ethnic armed



Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee meeting convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

groups and general secretary of the Karen National Union (KNU), acknowledged the unanimous approval of the NCA by members of parliament.

The Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee was formed with a total of 48 members—16 each

from the government, ethnic armed groups and political parties—to conduct the political dialogue between the government and ethnic armed organisations.

According to the timeline of the ceasefire terms, political dialogue is expected to start before 14

January, as it must begin within 90 days of the signing of the political framework by the joint committee.

The Myanmar government and eight ethnic armed groups agreed at the first committee meeting on 31 October that both sides would meet certain requirements

within the 30 days after the signing of the NCA on 15 October.

The two sides were set to draw up a political framework within 60 days of the formal signing of the NCA and start a political dialogue within 90 days.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Yangon Region prepares for Independence Day

A COORDINATION meeting to organise Myanmar's 68th Independence Day in Yangon Region was held at the Yangon Region Government Office on Monday.

Patron of the organising committee Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe delivered a

speech at the meeting.

The chairmen of the organising committee and working committees reported to the chief minister about arrangements for the event. The meeting ended with concluding remarks by the chief minister.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Authorities in Yangon discuss holding Independence Day which falls on 4th January. PHOTO: MNA

Singapore court rules North Korea-linked shipper guilty in illegal arms case

SINGAPORE — A district court in Singapore yesterday found Chinpo Shipping, a company implicated in an illegal shipment of arms on a North Korean container ship, guilty of two criminal charges.

Singapore-based Chinpo Shipping Company (Private) Ltd had been charged by the city-state for transferring financial assets or resources that could have been used to contribute to North Korea's weapon programmes, which are subject to UN sanctions.

Chinpo Shipping was named by a UN report as helping arrange the shipment of Cuban fighter jets and missile parts that were bound for North Korea when they were seized in Panama in 2013. The firm was also charged with carrying out a remittance business without a licence between 2009 and 2013.

The court is expected to hand down the sentence in late January. Edmond Pereira, a lawyer representing Chinpo Shipping, said the verdict was "disappointing".—Reuters

For China, climate deal is imperfect but huge step forward



An electric screen showing the Shanghai Pudong financial area on a clear day is seen amid heavy smog in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, China, on 9 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

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PARIS — For China, the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter, the global climate accord reached in Paris marked a huge step toward greener growth that safeguards its sovereignty while falling short on funding for cleaner energy.

Xie Zhenhua, Beijing's senior climate change envoy, said he welcomed what he described as a flawed agreement, echoing a similar summation from US President Barack Obama.

On Saturday, the global climate summit in Paris produced a landmark accord that set the course for an historic transformation of the world's fossil fuel-driven economy within decades in a bid to arrest global warming.

"This accord isn't perfect," Xie told reporters late on Satur-

day following the talks. "There are parts of it that need to be improved. But this doesn't affect the fact that history has taken a huge step forward, and so we are satisfied.

"It should provide a lot of impetus for China's own green, low-carbon development and as we implement it, it will promote our own domestic sustainable development," he added.

Throughout the negotiations, Chinese delegates repeated the mantra of "differentiation, transparency and ambition" as the key interlocking elements of any deal, and also sought to ensure that China's sovereignty remained intact.

China, in the midst of a painful economic restructuring program that has slowed growth, sought to maintain as much poli-

cy flexibility at home as it could, particularly on the thorny issue of five-year reviews, arguing that any adjustments to its 2020-2030 climate goals should be voluntary.

Beijing helped secure an exception to the five-year review with a multi-track system that said "developing countries shall be provided flexibility" and could make the reviews optional, though Chinese officials said they were still assessing the details. Details such as how national emissions-reduction efforts will be measured and verified, another issue that put the United States and China at odds, are yet to be worked out.

In Beijing, foreign minister spokesman Hong Lei said the Paris agreement was a "new starting point for international

cooperation on climate change".

On financing, regarded as a crucial factor, China was less pleased as the deal in its view did little to meet and extend a previous pledge for the industrialized world to provide at least \$100 billion a year to poorer nations by 2020.

"On funding, we aren't that satisfied, especially when it comes to pre-2020 funding which is relatively weak," said Zou Ji, deputy director of China's National Centre for Climate Change Strategy, a government think tank.

"On post-2020 funding, they have written in the principle that developed countries have to provide support to developing countries but there are a lot of specifics that were impossible to put in the agreement."—Reuters

Australian teenager pleads guilty to a 'terrorism' charge

SYDNEY — A Melbourne teen arrested after police found explosives at his home pleaded guilty yesterday to a terrorism-related charge, highlighting concerns about youth radicalisation following last week's arrest of a 15-year-old Sydney boy in police raids.

The 17-year-old was planning an attack using improvised explosive devices, police said in May when they raided his home in Greenvale, 20 kms (12 miles) north of Australia's second city, Melbourne.

The boy, who could not be identified because of his age,

pleaded guilty to a single charge of "engaging in an act in preparation for, or planning, a terrorist act," the Australian Associated Press reported from the courtroom. Prosecutors dropped two other charges following the guilty plea, the AAP reported. Victoria state County Court officials could not be reached immediately for comment. Australia, a staunch ally of the United States and its battle against Islamist militants in Iraq and Syria, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown radicals since last year.

Last Thursday, police said

they had charged a 20-year-old man and a 15-year-old boy with conspiracy to attack government buildings after they were arrested during early-morning raids by counter-terrorism police in Sydney. Three other men, all of them already in custody on terrorism-related offences, were also charged as part of the same operation.

Police have described as "disturbing" the high number of young Australians charged with or involved in violent actions. The matter has raised concerns about how well the government is dealing with at-risk youth in the

Muslim population. Just weeks before the 17-year-old boy was arrested, five other Melbourne teenagers were arrested over the planning of an unrelated Islamic State-inspired terrorist attack against police on the national ANZAC day holiday. In September 2014, police shot dead a teenager in the southern city of Melbourne after he stabbed two counter-terrorism officers. Three months later, two hostages were killed when police stormed a central Sydney cafe to end a 17-hour siege by a lone gunman, who was also killed.—Reuters

India to push ahead with coal plans after Paris climate deal

NEW DELHI — India still plans to double coal output by 2020 and to rely on the resource for decades afterwards, a senior official said yesterday, days after 190-odd countries agreed to begin reining in rising greenhouse gas emissions this decade.

India, the world's third-largest carbon emitter, is dependant on coal for about two-thirds of its energy needs and has vowed to mine more of the fuel to power its resource-hungry economy while also pledging to raise clean energy generation.

"Our dependence on coal will continue. There are no other alternatives available," Anil Swarup, the top bureaucrat in the coal ministry, told Reuters. "Nothing has changed (following the Paris accord)."

While India has plans to add 30 times more solar-powered generation capacity by 2022, there were limitations to clean energy and coal would remain the most efficient energy source for decades, he said.

Even though many international lenders are turning their backs on financing new coal projects in favour of gas and renewable energy, India should have few difficulties in financing dozens more new mines.

State-owned producer Coal



Smoke billows out from the cooling towers of a coal-fired power plant in Ahmedabad, India, on 20 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

India, for example, has enough internal cash resources to drive more production, he said.

The global United Nations summit in Paris forged an agreement on Saturday to set the course for an historic transformation of the world's fossil fuel-driven economy within decades, including eliminating net manmade greenhouse

gas emissions.

The accord commits poor and rich countries to curbing carbon emissions blamed for warming the planet.

Environmentalists worry that despite India's commitment to renewable energy, its rising use of coal at a time when many Western nations are rejecting the dirty fossil fuel will tip the bal-

ance in the world's fight against climate change.

India is targeting to more than double coal output to 1.5 billion tonnes this decade.

India says its per capita carbon emissions are far below the world average and that coal provides the cheapest energy for rapid industrialisation that would lift millions out of poverty.—Reuters

Typhoon threatens central Philippines, 750,000 evacuated

MANILA — Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated yesterday as a typhoon with winds of up to 150 kph (95 mph) made landfall, dumping heavy rain that could cause flooding, landslides and storm surges, authorities warned. About 40 domestic flights were grounded, while 73 ferries and hundreds of fishing boats were ordered to remain in port as typhoon Melor hit the village of Batag on the northern tip of Samar island.

Known locally as typhoon Nona, it was expected to roll across nearby islands before making landfall later on Monday close to Sorsogon, about 385 km (240 miles) southeast of the capital, Manila, on the heavily populated main island of Luzon.

Melor was plotting a similar path to Haiyan, a category 5 typhoon that struck the central Philippines in 2013. Almost 8,000 people were killed or left missing by Haiyan. Disaster authorities have temporarily closed schools and some offices and evacuated about 750,000 people in three provinces. About 8,000 people were stranded after the coast guard stopped ferries and fishing boats from leaving ports in the central Philippines.—Reuters

Indonesia minister distances government from Freeport extortion allegation

JAKARTA — A senior Indonesian minister yesterday sought to distance the administration from parliament speaker Setya Novanto, who is fighting allegations that he tried to extort shares worth \$1.8 billion in the local unit of Freeport McMoRan Inc.

Novanto is at the centre of a major political scandal, with a parliamentary ethics council investigating allegations he used the name of President Joko Widodo to pressure Freeport's officials for the shares, in return for a contract extension.

Novanto has denied any wrongdoing.

Analysts say the high-profile case could further erode investor confidence in Southeast Asia's largest economy, with Indonesia routinely ranked as one of the world's most corrupt countries.

"We must not politicize this anymore because honestly we're playing with something that can cause financial damage to this nation," Luhut Pandjaitan, chief security minister and key presiden-

tial adviser, told the ethics panel.

Pandjaitan was called to testify after his name came up repeatedly in a secretly recorded meeting between Novanto and the head of Freeport's Indonesian operations.

In the recording, Novanto indicated he had the approval of Pandjaitan, who was then the presidential chief of staff, to negotiate for the 20 percent stake on behalf of Widodo.

An ethics panel member said Pandjaitan's name was mentioned 66 times during the two-hour recording. Pandjaitan, who founded coal and palm oil firm Toba Sejahtera Group in 2004, said he never discussed such an issue with Novanto and had no prior knowledge of the meeting.

"My friendship with Novanto is limited to his work as House speaker and mine as coordinating minister," Pandjaitan told the ethics hearing broadcast live on television.

"Since I have taken public office, I haven't been involved in business."—Reuters

Railway essential for Lao socio-economic development

VIENTIANE — The development of an efficient railway system is essential to boost investment and spur socio-economic development in Laos, a senior Lao official has said.

According to local daily *Vientiane Times* on Monday, Somsavat Lengsavad, Lao deputy prime minister made the remarks when addressing the

National Assembly session on Friday. Lengsavad, who is in charge of production and goods circulation, said investors have been asking him if Laos plans to build a railway network as companies want to cut costs by using cheaper rail transportation.

"The cost of transporting goods by road is high, making it difficult (for businesses) to com-

pete with their (rivals) in other countries in the region," he told lawmakers as he explained why the government had decided to go ahead with a railway project.

On 2 December, Lao and Chinese officials broke ground for the start of construction of Laos-China railway, which will form part of a regional rail link.—Xinhua

Singapore bans emerging tobacco products

SINGAPORE — Emerging tobacco products will be banned in Singapore from Tuesday, according to a statement from the Ministry of Health (MoH) yesterday.

The ban, with effect from 15 December, is adopted to ensure that such products do not gain a foothold or become entrenched in the Singapore market, which could stimulate demand for and increase the prevalence of tobacco consumption, MoH explained.

"This is part of the MoH's ongoing efforts to protect the public against the known and potential harms of emerging tobacco products," it said.

Earlier in June, MOH announced that the ban on emerging tobacco products would be implemented in two phases.

The first phase of the ban targets emerging tobacco products including smokeless cigars, smokeless cigarillos or smokeless cigarettes, dissolvable tobacco or nicotine, any product containing nicotine or tobacco that may be used topically for application, by implant or injected into any parts of the body as well as any solution or substance, of which tobacco or nicotine is a constituent, that is intended to be used with an electronic nicotine delivery system or a vapouriser.

The second phase of the ban, which is on emerging tobacco products existing in the local market, will take effect from August next year. The ban includes nasal snuff, oral snuff, gutkha, khaini and zarda. MoH said that any person who contravenes the ban shall be liable to a fine not exceeding 10,000 Singapore dollars (71,429 US dollars) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both, and in the case of a second or subsequent conviction, a fine not exceeding 20,000 Singapore dollars (14,286 US dollars) or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or both.—Xinhua

French teacher attacked by man claiming Islamic State link



French police and firefighters are seen in front of the nursery school where a hooded man claiming to be acting for the Islamic State attacked a teacher with a knife in Aubervilliers, near Paris, France, on 14 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

PARIS — A hooded man claiming to be acting for Islamic State attacked a nursery school teacher with a knife-like weapon as he prepared for classes in a school north of Paris, French officials said yesterday.

The male teacher was taken to hospital after the attack by a man wielding a knife or box-cutter who fled the scene after the attack at about 0630 GMT, said the official, adding that anti-terrorism officials were investigating.

According to one judiciary official, the assailant slashed at the teacher's neck and said the act was a signal from the Islamic State group, also referred to in France by the name Daesh.

"This is Daesh, it's a warning," the attacker told his victim, the official said, adding the victim's life was apparently not in danger. In a recent French-language publication, the Islamic State group, which claimed responsibility for the deadly Paris attacks of 13 November, denounced France's state school system and urged readers to kill its

teachers because they promoted what it called the evils of secular learning, music and drawing.

France's education minister and a local government prefect visited the premises of the school in Aubervilliers, in the Saint-Denis region just north of the capital. Classes at the school were cancelled.

Prefect Philippe Galli told reporters it was too early to draw conclusions about the character of the attack, noting that the assailant, wearing a balaclava, had apparently found a cutter and a pair of scissors at the school premises.

The incident came a month after gunmen and suicide bombers killed 130 people in Paris in an attack claimed by Islamic State, the militant Islamist group which controls swathes of Syria and Iraq and has vowed to attack France, a member of the coalition of countries conducting air strikes against it. It also came days after a knifing in London's underground urban rail network which police are treating as a terrorist attack.—Reuters

Russia warns Turkey over Aegean warship incident

MOSCOW — Russia on Sunday warned Turkey to stop staging what it called provocations against its forces in or near Syria after one of its warships fired warning shots at a Turkish vessel in the Aegean to avoid a collision.

The Russian Defence Ministry said one of its warships, the destroyer *Smetlivy*, had been forced to fire the warning shots on Sunday morning and that it had summoned the Turkish military attaché over the incident.

"The Turkish military diplomat was given a tough explanation about the potentially disastrous consequences from Ankara's reckless actions towards Russia's military contingent fighting against international terrorism in Syria," the Defence Minis-

try said in a statement.

"In particular, our deep concerns about more Turkish provocations towards the Russian destroyer *Smetlivy* were conveyed."

Earlier on Sunday, the ministry said that the Turkish fishing vessel failed to respond to *Smetlivy*'s warnings and changed course sharply only after shots were fired before passing within just over 500 metres of the warship.

"Only by luck was tragedy avoided," the ministry said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, who was in Rome for talks on Libya, said Ankara was investigating the matter and would make a statement once it had more information.

He also reiterated Turkey's

position that it wanted to resolve its difficulties with Russia. "We want to solve the tension with dialogue," he said, in comments broadcast by TRT Turk.

The incident is likely to heighten tensions between the two nations who are seriously at odds over Syria and the Turkish shooting down of a Russian military jet last month.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, who called the downing of the plane a "stab in the back", has since imposed economic sanctions on Turkey as a retaliatory measure.

Earlier this month, Turkey complained to Russia over an incident in which a Russian sailor was pictured brandishing a rocket launcher on the deck of a naval ship passing through Istanbul.—Reuters



Russian destroyer *Smetlivy* leaves the harbour at the Crimean port of Sevastopol in 2013.

PHOTO: REUTERS

How the world learned its lesson and got a climate deal

PARIS — It was an agreement born from a fear of failure, delivered by the smoothness of French diplomacy.

Six years earlier, countries had bitterly walked away from global climate talks in Copenhagen without a deal. The decision to reassemble in Paris to try again at getting almost 200 countries to sign a pact on cutting carbon emissions was a gamble: another collapse could end the world's ability to forge a common approach to dealing with climate change.

And no political leader wanted his reputation stained by a repeat of the debacle in Copenhagen.

So there was no detail of hospitality too small for the French hosts this time, no country negotiator who would go unflattered by Laurent Fabius, the French foreign minister who presided over the conference.

Fabius had been the youngest

French prime minister in history in the 1980s; now he was an elder statesman looking to carve a bigger place in it. Over two weeks under the global spotlight, his sonorous voice and relentless optimism would come to define the public tone of the proceedings.

But behind the scenes, the talks witnessed the confrontations and five-past-midnight compromises to be expected when sleep-deprived negotiators from almost every country in the world are supposed to come to a consensus. They ultimately found it, remarkably only one day later than planned. But the path to the standing ovations at the end was strewn with disputes over money, the emergence of an effective new climate coalition of states, and hours of wrangling over what "should" or "shall" be done.

For the survivors of Copenhagen, the key to success in Paris

would be preparation.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon complained that the political leaders had not been well-prepared for the Copenhagen meeting, and this time he and the French conducted extensive advance work to get other leaders personally engaged. They also decided that, if leaders were to come to Paris, they would do so at the beginning to lend the talks some political oxygen, rather than arriving for a scramble at the end.

So on 30 November, the sprawling conference hall near the Le Bourget airfield on the outskirts of Paris hosted world leaders, who were supposed to deliver three minutes of encouragement. Fabius wandered the conference center before they arrived, tapping microphones and checking the video monitors under a podium made of recycled wood.

"Ah, we have Prince Charles,"

he said to an aide, consulting the speakers' list.

The opening day speeches were seen as a success. UN officials were relieved at the relatively cooperative tone from Russian President Vladimir Putin who was among several leaders who assured Ban privately before the outset that Russia would not block a deal, UN officials said later.

Fabius pulled together a team of officials and diplomats from across the French civil service to facilitate the talks. "He treated it less like a climate negotiation and more like a trade deal," said one UN veteran of past climate talks.

He also constantly praised delegates for their hard work and insights, before telling them exactly what schedule of debate they had to follow to finish by their self-imposed deadline of Friday, 11 December.

He gave the job of writing the

accord's preamble to Venezuela's minister Claudia Salerno, whose country had been perhaps the harshest critic of the Copenhagen process that was seen as a collusion of big powers dictating to small countries, making her personally vested in finding compromises. Not all developing countries were easily won over, however. A central sticking point throughout the talks was the degree to which the agreement would be legally binding on countries, especially the rich ones who are expected to provide the hundreds of billions of dollars in funding to cover the transition to a low carbon future.

The differences were expressed in wrangles over wording. Hard, legally binding commitments were proceeded in the text as items that countries "shall" do.

Those items that were simply good intentions fell into the "should" do category.—Reuters

Powers back unity government in Libya to deter Islamic State

ROME — Global powers on Sunday backed the formation of a national unity government in Libya, pledging economic and security support to help stabilise the chaotic North African country where Islamic State militants have a foothold.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Italian counterpart Paolo Gentiloni, joined by UN envoy Martin Kobler, were optimistic that the majority of the representatives of Libya's two rival governments would sign a unity deal on 16 December.

Representatives from 17 countries including Egypt, Germany, Russia, Turkey, and China signed a joint statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and promising to cut off contacts with factions that do not sign the deal.

Fifteen Libyans from different groups also attended the meeting. Past deadlines have slipped amid internal disagreements in the sprawling, oil-producing country rife with armed groups.

"We stand ready to support



US Secretary of State John Kerry takes part in an international conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome 13 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

the implementation of the political agreement and underline our firm commitment to providing the Government of National Accord with full political backing

and technical, economic, security and counter-terrorism assistance, as requested," the statement said.

Both Kerry and Gentiloni,

who co-chaired the meeting, appeared confident a deal was around the corner, and stressed that a unity government was needed also to fight the growing

threat from Islamic State militants.

"The message of today's meeting is clear," Gentiloni said. "What matters is the stabilisation of Libya because this too can contribute to the fight against terrorism."

Libya has sunk deeper and deeper into chaos since a Western-backed rebellion toppled Muammar Gaddafi four years ago.

The OPEC member now has two rival governments and two parliaments each backed by competing armed factions. Divisions over the UN deal are raising questions about how opponents will react to any new government in the capital Tripoli.

Former colonial power Italy has sought to focus international attention on the OPEC country's drift towards anarchy, particularly since last month's deadly Islamic State attacks in Paris. Libya is less than 300 km (190 miles) across the Mediterranean Sea from the Italian island of Lampedusa.—Reuters

Dozens die in strikes on Syrian school district, other areas



Men search for belongings at a site hit by missiles in the Douma neighborhood of Damascus, Syria, 13 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIRUT — Intense air and missile strikes on a school district and other areas in insurgent-held Damascus suburbs killed dozens of people on Sunday, including children, a monitoring group and local rescue workers said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said unidentified war planes hit the town of Douma, 10 miles (15 km) northeast of the capital, and surface-to-surface missiles fired by the Syrian army also hit the surrounding areas, including Eastern Ghouta.

The strikes killed at least two children and a school principal, it said.

Syrian Civil Defence, a humanitarian rescue group that operates in rebel-held areas, put the death toll at 35 and said many others were wounded. It posted a photo of a dead baby with a severe wound to its head.

Issam al-Rayyes, spokesman for the Southern Front of the insurgent Free Syrian Army, said as many as 60 people had been killed in strikes on the Douma area which started early on Sunday.

Many of Douma's residents have fled the nearly five-year conflict, moving to nearby rural areas. Syria's civil war, which

began as an uprising against President Bashar al-Assad, has killed more than 250,000 people and driven more than 10 million from their homes.

The areas have been under heavy bombardment in recent months. The Syrian army has said its strikes target insurgents that have launched attacks on government-held areas.

The Observatory, which has gathered information from a network of contacts on the ground since the start of the conflict in 2011, said at least 40 mortar bombs fired by insurgents in the eastern suburbs hit Damascus on Sunday, killing at least one child and wounding several.

State news agency SANA said three civilians had been killed and at least 30 wounded in mortar attacks targeting residential neighbourhoods of Damascus. Most of the victims were school students, it said, citing its reporter in the area.

Assad said on Friday he would not negotiate with armed groups, appearing to scupper peace talks that Russia and the United States hope to bring about next month.

Washington helped broker an agreement reached on Thursday by more than 100 members of Syria's opposition parties and more than a dozen rebel fighting groups - to send a joint team to meet the government under UN auspices next month.—Reuters

Turkish troops leave Iraqi camp after Baghdad orders them out

ANKARA — Some Turkish troops started leaving their camp in Iraq and moving north yesterday, a Turkish military source and a senior official said, days after Baghdad protested to the United Nations and ordered them out.

Any move northwards would take them back closer to Iraq's border with Turkey, but the officials did not say where they were going and it was unclear how far Ankara was bowing to pressure to bring its

soldiers home.

Iraq said in early December hundreds of Turkish troops had arrived in its territory without its knowledge, calling it a hostile act.

Turkey said at the time the troops were meant to guard an international mission training and equipping Iraqi forces who are preparing for an offensive to retake the Iraqi city of Mosul, seized by Islamic State militants more than a year ago.—Reuters

Two senior Gulf commanders killed in Yemen

DUBAI — Two senior army commanders from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were killed along with two Saudi soldiers in Yemen as fighting with the Houthi militia flared before Tuesday's expected peace talks, state media reported yesterday. Sultan Mohammed Ali al-Kitbi, an Emirati officer, was killed near Taiz, state news agency WAM reported yesterday. Photographs of Abdullah

al-Sahian, a top Saudi officer, were displayed by Saudi-owned al-Arabiya al-Hadath channel on Monday alongside Muslim verses of mourning.

The Houthi militia said via its own media outlet that the two had been killed in a rocket attack on the Red Sea coast. The militia, alongside forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, has been battling fighters backed by Gulf states.—Reuters

Egypt says nothing indicating terrorist action on Russian plane crash in Sinai

CAIRO — Egypt said yesterday it has completed a preliminary investigation into the 31 October Russian plane crash in Sinai, which found nothing indicating "any illegal intervention or terrorist action" in the tragedy that

killed all 224 people aboard.

"The technical investigative committee has so far not found anything indicating any illegal intervention or terrorist action," the civil aviation ministry said in the statement.—Xinhua

OPINION

The true meaning of globalisation

Myint Win Thein

World leaders have just agreed to fight global warming at the climate change conference in Paris. It is good news for everyone on earth. All of us need to cooperate for the survival of the world. If we cannot cooperate to save our planet, we will meet the same fate as the species whose fossilised remains

are the only evidence of their existence. It is time we preserved ourselves—alive rather than extinct.

Some people are proud of globalisation and say the world, which took millennia to connect, has become just a village thanks to globalisation. In fact, they are talking about the world in terms of business and communication because the world has become so only for an elite class of people.

As the world has grown more interconnected, its people have also become more interdependent. In other words, all have to depend on each other for their survival. Therefore, it is anachronistic to think that one would survive the scourge of climate change thanks to advanced technologies or wealth.

Greater efforts must be made to foster the dependence of human beings on one another. It is

time we cooperated with all living and non-living things on earth. It is time we stopped fighting each other over differences in race and religion and focussed on saving all the earth's people.

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.

Memory of the happy-go-lucky days at Rangoon University

U Win Sein

THE name Rangoon came from the British pronunciation of Yangon during the heyday of colonial period that Myanmar came under the rule of British Empire. Yangon was founded as Dagon in the early 11th century [1028-1043] by the Mon people , who dominated lower Burma at the time Dagon was a small fishing village situated in the vicinity around Shwedagon pagoda in 1755. Later on, King Alungphaya had made a conquest of Dagon and renamed it as Yangon and added a few settlements nearby it. The British captured Yangon in the first Anglo-Burmese War in [1824-1828], but for some unclosed reason had returned the city to the Burmese Administration after the war ended. The city was almost totally destroyed by a big fire in 1841. The British had again seized Yangon and all of Lower Burma in the second Anglo-Burmese War of 1882, and subsequently transformed Yangon into a commercial and political hub of British Burma. The army engineer Lt. Alexander Fraser had designed a new city plan with a grid network design in the delta land which bounded to the East by the Pazundaung Creek and to the South and West by the Yangon River, with 10-feet width sidewalks and the wide open high roads and streets, the motor vehicle traffic in those days was negligible. In addition the drainage system was in excellent condition to accommodate a tiny population of Rangoon City. In 1885, the British captured the whole of Burma in the third Anglo-Burmese War making Yangon the capital of whole of British Burma. By 1890 with an increasing population had brought about an expansion of a prosperous suburban residential area with hospitals and universities including Rangoon General Hospital and Rangoon University

near Inya Lake.

By early 20th century though Burma was under colonial rule of the British Empire, with strict disciplinarian manner keeping all the subjects of colonial period in highly good order and brought into Burma the hardworking Indians and Chinese, which comprising 55% of the total population of 500,000 of Yangon .The rest were Burmese, Karens, Anglo-Burmen, Portuguese and others. Indians are the largest of this population. It had a saying in those days, without knowing the Indian language in Yangon ,you were at a loss and landed you with difficulty in mixing up with commercial communities. As we know all the British people had a traditional habit of doing things in accordance with prior plan, perhaps they might have a scheme to first having developed Rangoon and then to administer their colonial matters regarding India, Burma and Southeast Asia from this strategic place which was then had has public services and infrastructural capacity comparable to London and also known as "The Garden City of the East "

During 1954 and the years following, we young men have had a wonderful time in pursuing higher education at Rangoon University. At this time our higher education system was so good that we acquired the standard qualification that foreign countries had high esteem specially at Rangoon University. We even had foreign students from India and Japan to study at Rangoon University. So that the famous Ford Foundation of America had sent certain visiting professors to Burma to give a helping hand to the Economics Department of our university to teach Economics. We were free to express our desire and had no restraints to choose the university courses as we like, There were so many social and cultural groups, like the Literatures Association, Sports clubs and Classical Music and



Convocation Hall of Yangon University. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Dance groups, so that we young people could join any one of them. There we were looking for new ideas, searching for new knowledge and new aspirations. So much so that some of us got stuck so deep and had spilled our overflowing energy in tasting politics like our predecessors of 1920s, 1936s and Ko Aung San and Ko Nu of 1938s, often making strikes against the British Rule. There was time when we did follow the footsteps of our elders in a matured manner, taking part in the election of qualified students to take up responsibilities for the executive posts in Rangoon University Students Union. There were different student parties encouraging fellow-students to vote for the candidates from their parties, some party's member was even making speeches on the campus to lure and attract fellow-students to cast votes for their party. On election day, these student parties' members were ushering fellow-students by sending them by jeeps to the short distance where polling stations were designated for casting of votes. The political fever,

activities and commotions from there were just exactly like a real election of new candidates for the Government election that had taken place outside in downtown Yangon City

We also had the lighter side of the university life of the hostel students, so like on some weekends Saturday and Sunday, We gathered some closed friends and started proceeding to the lady hostels at 10 or 11 pm and positioned us all at the gates of these hostels , singing and dancing at the top of our voices of popular love songs as if we were the heart-throbs of the lady students in the upper floor of the hostels. There was sometimes one or two rough and tough fellows from us would put up a show with somersaults of leap or roll in which the head was placed on the ground and the trunk and legs were turned over it. This was going on until deep into the night at 1 or 2 pm then we all dismissed ourselves and returned back to our hostels feeling tired and happy after all. Another unforgettable event in my university life, the flying of my Burmese kite in the

university football ground, where the wind speed was just right for flying kites. The Burmese kites could spin, dive down and climb up as they all having these abilities making them capable to fight with other kites , that was to cut the strings of other kites ,Whenever I had cut down othe---r kite, it had given me a feeling of a winner in triumph. Sometimes not with my close friends. I've flew my kite alone ,just looking at my kite flying high and mighty in the lonely blue sky, that made my heart filled with satisfaction ,peace and joyfulness with a hypnotic trance of contentment.

Now, our country has been waking up from almost 50 years of isolation and just starting to taste the fruits of democracy. The necessary changes will be taking place in all the ministries under the new Government and in which would surely include targets for improvement of education in the Ministry of education. We hope the new education system should contain open and free guidances with a wholesome attitude for the future generation of youths.

Phoe Kyar Elephant Camp to be leased under tender system



Phoe Kyar Elephant Camp has seen an increase in visitors year by year. PHOTO: KO LWIN (SWAR)

THE Phoe Kyar Elephant Camp, a tourist attraction in central Myanmar, will be leased to a private company under a tender system.

U Ye Myint, the head of the forest resort near Toungoo, confirmed the plan, saying the Ministry of Forestry, which owns the resort, is planning to contract

the eco-tourism spot to a private company.

The resort is located in the foothills of the Bago Mountain Range. It was established in 2005.

The resort is known among tourists for the ability of its mahout and elephants to communi-

cate with each other.

The resort has seven bungalows comprising 14 standard double rooms equipped with hot and cold water, electric power, 24-hour room service, restaurants, laundry service, traditional massage on request, a cafeteria and a bar.— *Ko Lwin (Swar)*

Second year of People-Centered Project commences in Laymyethna

THE second year of the People-Centered Project, which is being implemented by Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development and the World Bank, commenced in Laymyethna Township, Ayeyawaddy Region, on 10 December.

The project was introduced at Thonsat village. The event

was attended by Township Management Committee chairman and township administrator U Aung Moe, local officials and villagers.

The township's Rural Development Office head U Than Zaw Soe explained the development project in detail to the residents of the village.—*IPRD*

Election expenses investigated in Pyay

THE Pyay District Election Sub-Commission on Monday inspected the campaign expenses of 97 candidates who competed in the 8 November multi-party general election.

According to the investigations of the chairman and members of the sub-commission, no candidates were found to have spent more than K10 million (US\$7,715) on election expenses.—*Shwe Win*



Stimulant tablets, marijuana seized in Shan State, Yangon Region



Aung Ko Ko (a) Aye Pu (a) Thamine and Wunna (a) Wunna Kyaw.

THE Kwamlone anti-drug unit seized heroin weighing 0.0035 kilo and 40 stimulant tablets from a man named Wu Htone in the Mainpanlwal Ward of Hopan, Shan State, on 11 December.

After investigating the case, police arrested Hla Kyaw, who sold the tablets. He was found to be in possession of 0.015 kilos of heroin and 400 stimulant tablets at Pan Long Ward, Hopan Township. Police also arrested Maung Aik with 180 stimulant tablets in a restaurant beside the Muse-Nankham Road in Shan State on 11 December.

Similarly, on 12 December, police discovered six stimulant tablets from Aung Ko Ko alias Aye Pu alias Thamine) in Htaukkyaint Ywama Ward, Mingaladon Township. They also arrested Wunna alias Wunna Kyaw with 230 stimulant tablets and 0.002 kilos of marijuana. The two men had sold stimulant tablets on Gandama Street in the Htaukkyaint Ywama Ward of Mingaladon Township.

The police are taking action against the munder the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Stringer*

Three people killed in traffic accident in Thegone

THREE men have died on the spot and eight more were injured in a traffic accident that occurred in Inma, Thegone Township in Bago Region on Thursday.

The collision occurred between a 22 wheeled transport vehicle carrying rice to Pyay from Yangon and a passenger bus near mile post (157/3-4) on Yangon-Pyay Road.

Upon collision the transport vehicle turned over and crash into another car being driven by Nyein Chan Ko Ko, 29, of Nattalin Township.

The accident killed driver Moe Naing and Kyaw Myo Naing of the transport vehicle and Soe Tint, driver of the passenger bus, while eight passengers were injured.—*Police*



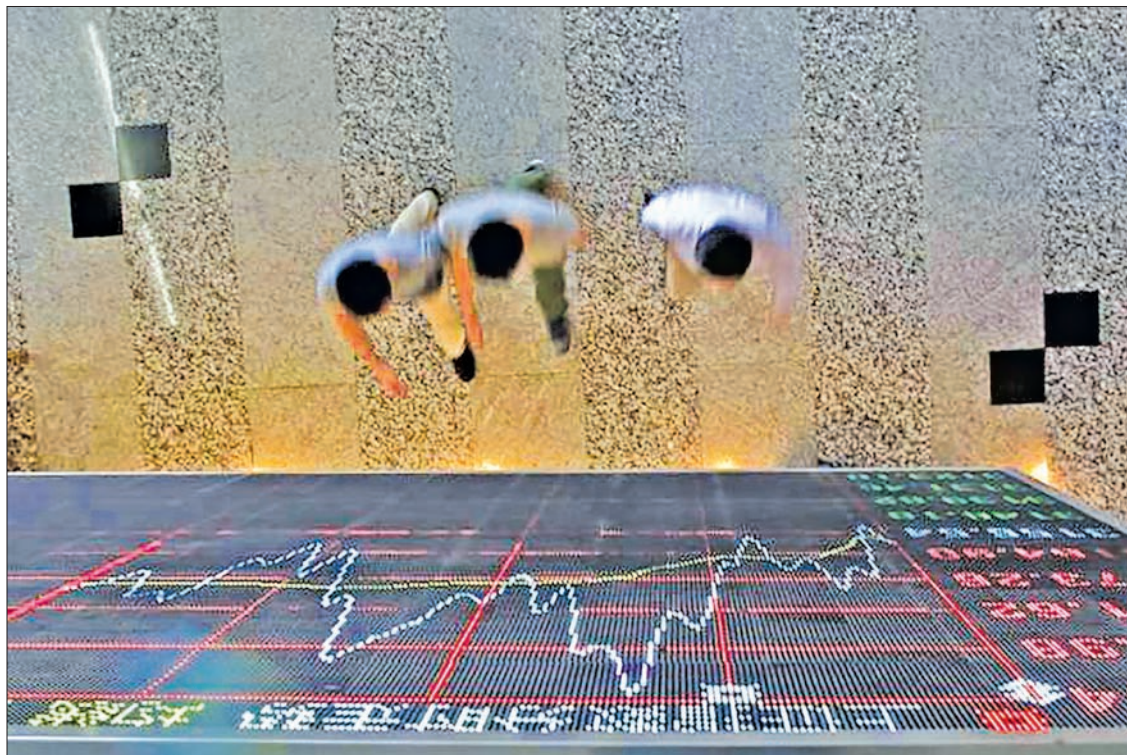
Maung Aik. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY POLICE



Wu Htone and Hla Kyaw (alias) Thura Kyaw. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY POLICE

Crime News

Asia stocks drop as oil rout deepens, yuan extends slide



People walk under an electronic board showing stock information at the Shanghai Stock Exchange in the Lujiazui Financial Area before the visit of Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne in Shanghai, China, on 22 September. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — Asian stocks fell yesterday and China's yuan hit fresh 4-1/2 year lows as plunging oil prices added to investors' nervousness about riskier assets ahead of an expected US rate rise by the Federal Reserve later in the week.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC) yesterday continued guiding the currency lower, setting the yuan/dollar official midpoint at its weakest since July 2011.

China decision to loosen its grip on the yuan and allow slow but steady depreciation in recent weeks had added to concerns that the world's second-biggest econ-

omy may be more fragile than expected.

The PBOC said late Friday it has begun publishing a yuan index rate against a basket of currencies, seen by some as a greenlight for more devaluation which could in turn pressure other emerging Asian currencies.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan .MIAPJ0000PUS hit a 2-1/2-month low and was last down 1.4 percent.

Japan's Nikkei .N225 slumped more than 3 percent in early trade and was down 2.4 percent by late morning as falling commodity prices hit shares of

energy companies and trading houses.

South Korea's Kospi .KS11 retreated 1 percent. Australian shares dropped 1 percent and Shanghai stocks .SSEC dipped 0.2 percent.

For now, investors looked past better-than-expected Chinese indicators released over the weekend.

Data on Saturday showed factory output growth in China accelerated to a 5-month high in November, while retail sales rose at an annual 11.2 percent pace - the strongest this year.

On Friday, the Dow .DJI sank 1.8 percent and the S&P

500 .SPX lost 1.9 percent as plunging crude prices added to fears of a possible spike in volatility if the Federal Reserve raises interest rates on Wednesday for the first time in nearly a decade, as widely expected.

"It's fair to say that equities are going to be truly tested over the coming four days, and the Fed will be a catalyst for volatility in the lead up to Thursday," wrote Evan Lucas, market strategist at IG in Melbourne.

A US rate hike would be a first step towards normalising monetary conditions after an extended period of loose policy, which had helped shore up riskier assets.

Oil prices continued their freefall after the International Energy Agency (IEA) warned that global oversupply of crude could worsen next year.

US crude CLC1 was down 0.8 percent at \$35.32 a barrel after touching \$35.16 on Friday, the lowest since February 2009. Brent crude LCOc1 fell below \$38 a barrel for the first time in seven years Friday and was last down 0.5 percent at \$37.75.

In currencies, the dollar was little changed at 120.97 yen JPY= after shedding 0.5 percent on Friday, when it stooped to a near 6-week low of 120.585. The euro was steady at \$1.0972 EUR= after gaining about 0.4 percent on Friday.

The greenback was hurt as long-dated US Treasury yields slumped to multi-week lows on Friday as the continuing decline in crude prices and weak equities drove investors to safe-haven government debt.—Reuters

Japan, China, S Korea hold trilateral free trade talks

TOKYO — Senior officials of Japan, China and South Korea have started talks yesterday in Japan on a three-way free trade pact following their leaders' agreement to seek an early conclusion of a deal.

At the five-day, director-general-level talks, the three neighbouring countries will try to set a framework of negotiations and plans on how to proceed with their discussions before they deal with sensitive issues such as tariffs on agricultural products.

The ninth round of discussions in Hakone, Kanagawa Prefecture, west of Tokyo, comes after the three nations' leaders vowed in early November to speed up negotiations over a free trade agreement encompassing 20 percent of the global economy.

China and South Korea have already agreed on a bilateral free trade deal, while Japan along with 11 other countries recently concluded a Pacific Rim trade initiative called the Trans-Pacific Partnership treaty.

South Korea and some other Asian nations have shown interest in joining the TPP, while China is more cautious about taking part in the Pacific Rim accord, which calls for the reform of state-owned companies.

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and India have also been negotiating for a broader trade pact known as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

A Japanese government source said Tokyo aims for higher-standard rules for the trilateral trade accord than those of the deal reached between China and South Korea.—Kyodo News

Twitter warns some users of possible state-sponsored cyber attack

SAN FRANCISCO — Twitter Inc issued an alert to some users warning them that state-sponsored hackers may have tried to obtain sensitive data from their accounts, the company said, the first such warning by the micro blogging site.

The notice said there was no indication the hackers obtained sensitive information from what it said were a "small group of accounts" targeted.

It did not provide additional information about the attack or possible suspects in its investigation.

Twitter's notice is the latest amid concern about cyber attacks by state-sponsored organisations. Government agencies, businesses and media have all been hacked.

Motherboard, a tech news site, and the *Financial Times* earlier reported on Twitter's

warning. One organisation that said it received the notice, a Winnipeg-based nonprofit called Coldhak, said the warning from Twitter came on Friday. The notice said the attackers may have been trying to obtain information such as "email addresses, IP addresses, and/or phone numbers".

Coldhak's Twitter account, @coldhakca, retweeted reports from a number of other users

who said they received the notice. Coldhak and the other users did not indicate why they may have been singled out.

Colin Childs, one of the founding directors of Coldhak, told Reuters his organization has seen "no noticeable impact of this attack".

Google and Facebook have also started issuing warnings to users possibly targeted by state-sponsored attacks.—Reuters

Seattle lawmakers set to vote on allowing Uber, other drivers to unionise

SEATTLE — Lawmakers in Seattle were set yesterday to vote on a new law that would allow drivers for services such as Uber and Lyft the right to unionise.

Seattle City Council member Mike O'Brien's proposal would provide the drivers with a path to collective bargaining.

It was believed that the Seattle bill, if passed, would be the first in the United States that would allow collective bargaining

rights for drivers of such services.

The legislation would also apply to taxi drivers and other for-hire transportation providers.

The council was to vote on the legislation after testimony from drivers for the services and other interested parties.

"All workers deserve the basic rights to organise and to bargain collectively," the Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council said in a letter posted on

the city council's website.

"This is an opportunity for Seattle to once again play a leading national role in promoting workers' rights," it said, in a reference to the northwest US city's progressive history.

Uber operates in more than 300 cities in 67 countries and has raised \$7.4 billion from investors. Its war chest has helped fund legal and regulatory battles across the world, and lobbying efforts at the

state and national levels.

The Seattle bill is just one of several legal battles being fought by the ride service across the United States.

State legislators in Ohio and Florida are moving ahead with regulations governing Uber and other ride services that would designate all drivers as independent contractors, bolstering a critical but much-disputed aspect of Uber's business model.

Uber has built its business on the contractor model, arguing that its smartphone app simply connects riders and drivers, who own their cars and pay their own expenses. Last week, a US judge ruled that many more Uber drivers in California could participate in a class action against the ride service over their employment status, even if they did not opt out of an arbitration clause in their contracts.—Reuters

Planned Parenthood files federal lawsuit against Ohio health department

CLEVELAND — Attorneys for Planned Parenthood sued Ohio on Sunday, asking a judge to block what it argues is an attempt by the state's top attorney to stop the organisation from providing abortion services, court filings showed.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Cincinnati on behalf of three Planned Parenthood locations where abortions are performed, is seeking a restraining order and a preliminary injunction against the state of Ohio.

It comes two days after Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, a Republican, said he would file his own injunction to block those facilities from sending fetal remains to companies that then disposed of them in landfills. DeWine said doing so violated state administrative rules.

"The state is now claiming that Planned Parenthood is in violation of this regulation, despite the fact that for decades, Planned Parenthood has followed these regulations and has never been cited by the state for violation," Ohio Planned Parenthood President Stephanie Kight said on Sunday.

Kight said her group disposed of fetal tissue the same way as other healthcare providers and that DeWine's proposed action was discriminatory and violated the organisation's right



to due process and equal protection under the law.

She added that the Ohio Department of Health had inspected Planned Parenthood's health centers annually for the past decade, and at no time raised concerns about the disposal practices.

The attorney general's office began an investigation five months ago after an anti-abortion group released videos it said

showed Planned Parenthood officials negotiating prices for fetal tissue.

Planned Parenthood, which provides health services to millions of women and says abortions make up just 3 percent of its work, has denied wrongdoing.

DeWine said the investigation found no evidence that Ohio Planned Parenthood sold fetal tissue but that his office discovered that some "fetuses" were

disposed of in landfills while other remains were incinerated.

"I don't think most Ohioans believe this is a proper disposal, a humane disposal," DeWine told reporters on Friday.

Planned Parenthood said one of its vendors in Ohio canceled its contract with the organization after DeWine's comments, but another licensed medical removal company took over the contract.—Reuters

US hogs fed pig remains, manure to fend off deadly virus return

OKLAHOMA — Animal-nutritionist John Goihl knows Minnesota farmers who feed the remains of dead baby pigs to hogs used for breeding in attempts to ward off infections of a deadly virus in offspring.

In Oklahoma, farm workers are mixing manure from swine sick with the disease, known as Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea virus (PEDv), into the food of healthy animals to build their immunity.

In Kansas, farmers are spraying a mixture of hog manure containing the virus and water on the noses of pigs to create a "natural vaccine."

Across the Farm Belt, US pork producers are doing whatever they can to shore up their herds' defenses against the virus that killed up to 8 million pigs, a tenth of the nation's herd, two years ago, and that farmers fear could return this winter.

The virus, which causes severe diarrhea that kills baby pigs,

thrives in cold weather, and declining immunity in the U.S. herd has raised the risk of another outbreak to the highest level since 2013, when pork prices soared to record highs, veterinarians said. A resurgence could drive up prices again and hurt profits for processors including Tyson Foods and JBS USA [JBS.UL], which have benefited from low hog prices.

Farmers are better prepared to fight the disease than they were two years ago after implementing procedures to prevent the spread of the virus via farm vehicles, workers' shoes and animal feed. Veterinarians said that attempts to deliberately expose hogs to the virus also help reduce the risk of an outbreak as big as the one that began in 2013, although it is not clear how many farmers are taking such precautions.

Michael Blackwell, chief veterinarian officer for the Hu-

mane Society of the United States, said feeding baby pigs to other hogs "seems to be pretty barbaric," but that he understands why farmers are doing it. "It is not as inhumane as having millions of piglets killed in an outbreak," he said.

Veterinarians said commercial vaccines available from Zoetis Inc and Merck & Co-owned Harrisvaccines offer limited help preventing outbreaks. They do not specifically target the gut and are mainly effective on hogs that have already been exposed to the virus.

Harrisvaccines said that vaccines are not a "silver bullet," and Zoetis said there was not enough data that prove that vaccines effectively protect herds that have not previously been infected. Such limitations, along with concerns that immunity levels have waned, make farmers turn to methods such as "feedback," where intestines of piglets

killed by the virus are fed to female pigs used for breeding. Immunity has declined because a growing number of hogs have never been infected, meaning they lack natural immunity they could pass on to their babies, veterinarians say. Also, immunity wears off over time in hogs that were previously infected.

Feedback allows female hogs to become infected and pass on immunity to piglets, which are more likely to die from the disease than older hogs. Those fed infected food or otherwise exposed to the virus usually become sick for a few days, but then get well again.

Purposefully exposing hogs to the virus is "really important because that's one way we can have local establishment and local building of immunity," said Lisa Becton, director of swine health information and research for the National Pork Board, an industry group.—Reuters

Space race worth 18bn USD to British economy

LONDON — Britain published Sunday its first ever National Space Policy, with a government minister quoting Star Trek's Mr Spock to support space exploration.

The new policy has been devised as Britain's first European Space Agency astronaut prepares for his historic launch to the International Space Station (ISS) on 15 December.

Britain's journey into space will be worth 18 billion US dollars to the nation's economy, said Secretary of State for Business Innovation and Skills, Sajid Javid.

"Historically we haven't been a major player in space programs. This policy will change that because, in the words of my hero Mr Spock, to do anything else would be highly illogical," said Javid in a statement Sunday.

He said the policy will firmly place Britain on the global stage for future space programmes. A spokesman for his department said with Britain aiming to become the European hub for commercial spaceflight and related space sector technologies, the new policy sets out the government's vision to capture a greater share of the world's thriving space market. "Working across Britain in partnership with the rapidly growing sector, the country's 'One Nation policy' will ensure the UK seizes opportunities to deliver new business opportunities, create jobs and push the boundaries of our understanding of space," said the spokesman.

Secretary Javid added: "For decades mankind has dreamt of space travel and the final frontier, and from today the UK will trigger the next scientific and innovation revolution to turn science fiction into science fact. Not only are we celebrating the launch of the first UK Government-backed astronaut, but our first ever space policy will build on the inspiration he provides to grow our burgeoning space industry and bring space back down to Earth." He said space industry involvement will support numerous vital services like disaster relief, defense and transport. The government, he added, is committed to growing British commercial space sector — with an ambition to capture 10 percent of the global market supporting 100,000 new jobs and generating over 60 billion US dollars for the British economy by 2030.—Xinhua

Brazilians take to streets to demand Rousseff's impeachment

SAO PAULO — Tens of thousands of Brazilians took to the streets on Sunday to demand President Dilma Rousseff's ouster, but the first nationwide protests since formal impeachment proceedings began were smaller than similar events earlier this year.

Pollster Datafolha said 40,000 people turned out in Brazil's largest city of Sao Paulo, down from 135,000 in an August protest and 210,000 in March. Smaller demonstrations occurred across Brazil from the Amazonian city of Belem to smaller towns in the interior.

"This is just a warm-up, there will be a huge mobilization in January," said Paloma Morena, a 35-year-old scientist on Sao Paulo's most famous street, Avenida Paulista, where protesters carried blow-up caricatures of Rousseff and her predecessor, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, dressed

in prison uniforms.

A large-scale mobilization could increase pressure on lawmakers to vote for Rousseff's impeachment.

Lower House Speaker Eduardo Cunha opened impeachment proceedings on 2 December, agreeing Congress should consider opposition allegations that Rousseff violated budget laws to increase spending during her 2014 re-election campaign.

But many Brazilians are more upset about the worst economic recession in at least 25 years and a corruption scandal at state-run oil firm Petrobras that has ensnared many of Rousseff's allies. Rousseff is not under investigation, but many question how she could not have known about the corruption as she was chairwoman of the company from 2003 to 2010.

"Inflation is through the roof, unemployment is shockingly high and we get



Demonstrators attend a protest calling for the impeachment of Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff near the National Congress in Brasilia, Brazil, on 13 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

nothing for the amount of taxes we pay," said Andre Patrao, 47, an economist demonstrating in Rio's posh Copacabana neighbourhood.

Currently the opposition is not thought to have the votes to impeach Rousseff, who denies mishandling public accounts

and has pledged to fight impeachment in order to finish her second term.

If a house committee decides in favor of impeachment, the process will go to a full vote on the house floor, where the opposition needs two-thirds of the votes to begin a 180-day impeachment trial

in the Senate. During that trial, Rousseff would be suspended and replaced by Vice President Michel Temer.

The Supreme Court has suspended impeachment proceedings until it rules on the validity of a secret ballot vote that selected the members of the

house committee. Meanwhile, Speaker Cunha, a former ally who broke with Rousseff, is facing formal charges in the Petrobras investigation over allegations he took bribes.

Brazil's largest umbrella union CUT has called a protest to support Rousseff on Wednesday.—Reuters

Ecuador signs deal with Sweden for Assange questioning

QUITO — Ecuador and Sweden have signed a pact that would allow WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to be questioned at Ecuador's embassy in London where he has been for more than three years, the Quito government said.

The legal agreement was signed in the Ecuadorian capital after half a year of negotiations. "It is, without doubt, an instrument that strengthens bilateral

relations and will facilitate, for example, the fulfilment of judicial matters such as the questioning of Mr Assange," the foreign ministry said in a weekend statement. Assange, 44, took refuge in the embassy building in June 2012 to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he is wanted for questioning over allegations of sexual assault and rape against two women in 2010. The Australian denies the accusations. Assange

says he fears Sweden will extradite him to the United States where he could be put on trial over WikiLeaks' publication of classified military and diplomatic documents five years ago, one of the largest information leaks in US history. Britain has accused Ecuador of preventing the course of justice by allowing Assange to remain in its embassy in the upmarket central London area of Knightsbridge.—Reuters

Thousands rally to support Polish government after opposition protest

WARSAW — Tens of thousands of people marched through Warsaw on Sunday to express support for the ruling conservatives, as Poland remained locked in a constitutional crisis over the appointment of judges who could help the government pass its legislative programme.

The march took place a day after a large anti-government protest, highlighting the depth of divisions, which have become more prominent since the euro-sceptic Law and Justice (PiS) won an outright majority in October's election.

PiS say the centre-right Civic Platform (PO) party, which ruled Poland between 2007 and 2015, are refusing the accept the result and trying to stop it from executing its mandate.

The conflict between the two parties has defined Poland's political stage for nearly a decade, but the temperature rose after the new government appointed five out of 15 judges to the constitutional court, a move the opposition says was illegal.

PiS says the judges needed to be replaced to ensure the balance of

power, and that it was the previous government that broke the law when they made the original appointments.

Gaining control of the court is vital for the party. It may determine whether PiS is able to implement its flagship policy plans, such as overhauling the retirement system.

Waving Polish flags and PiS party banners, the demonstrators chanted the names of PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski and PiS-backed President Andrzej Duda, who also took office this year.

"We won the election, but we have no right to set

laws and remodel Poland," Kaczynski told the crowds before they marched towards the constitutional court building.

"This court is supposed to be the stronghold ... defending the system, defending all that has been bad and disgraceful in the last 26 years," Kaczynski then said outside the court, referring to the time since Poland's transition from communism.

The long-planned rally took place on the anniversary of the imposition of the 1981 martial law, the communist crackdown on the pro-democracy Solidarity trade union.—Reuters



Supporters of Law and Justice party walk with a picture of Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo during pro-government demonstration in Warsaw, Poland, on 13 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

ADVERTISEMENT FOR AD-7 IEE REPORT

Woodside Energy (Myanmar) Pte Ltd (Woodside) proposes to undertake the drilling of an exploration well in Block AD-7 located in the Rakhine Basin, Myanmar. This is scheduled to commence in early 2016 using the drillship *Deepwater Millennium*. An Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) has been prepared by Woodside (the deepwater drilling Operator on behalf of Daewoo the Operator of the Block), ERM and E Guard Environmental Services for the proposed activity. The report can be viewed at:

- Woodside's webpage: woodside.com.au/myanmar-consultation;
- Woodside's office in Yangon: 70/LA-2, Golden Valley Road, Bahan Township, Yangon;
- E Guard's office in Yangon: No. 99, MyaKanThar Lane, NyeinChanYay Street, 10 Miles, Pyay Road, Saw BwarGyi Gone, Insein Township, Yangon;
- Sittwe District General Administrative Department (GAD) Office, Chin Pyan Street, Ball-Lone Kwin Quarter; and
- Department of Fisheries, Tha-Ta Htar Na Street, Pyi-Taw-Thar Quarter, Rakhine Regional Office.

Feedback on the report can be provided in writing to feedback@woodside.com.au, info@eguardservices.com or directly to staff at Woodside's and E Guard's offices in Yangon by 24 December 2015.

Keiko Fujimori clear favourite in Peru election poll



Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori's daughter Keiko and son Kenji. PHOTO: REUTERS

LIMA — Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of disgraced ex-president Alberto Fujimori, remains the clear favorite to win presidential elections in Peru next year, an Ipsos poll showed on Sunday. Some 33 percent of those surveyed on their intention to vote chose Fujimori, the leader of right-wing populist party Fuerza Popular, who formally launched her bid earlier this month.

She has pledged public investment in infrastructure to kick-start the Peruvian economy, an important met-

als exporter which like its Latin American neighbours has struggled against the backdrop of global weakness in commodities.

Although Fujimori's support had fallen slightly since the last poll, it was still more than twice the 16 percent obtained by second-place Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, a right-wing economist and former prime minister. Alberto Fujimori ran Peru between 1990 and 2000 and is currently in jail for human rights abuses and corruption. The only woman in a field packed with polit-

ical old-timers, Keiko Fujimori has said she would not hesitate to issue new debt if needed, as well as dipping into a \$10 billion emergency fund to finance infrastructure projects. Businessman Cesar Acuna polled 13 percent, while ex-president Alan Garcia was on 8 percent.

The election is slated to take place in April 2016. If no candidate obtains 50 percent in the first round, the election goes to a run-off in June. The poll suggests the election is likely to go a second round, which Fujimori would then win. Approval ratings for current centre-left president Ollanta Humala, who beat Keiko Fujimori in the 2011 election but cannot constitutionally run in 2016, remain low at around 16 percent, according to the Ipsos poll. His popularity has been impacted by corruption allegations against his wife, as well as worries about crime. The Ipsos poll of 1,846 people was carried out Dec. 5-11. It has a margin of error of plus/minus 2.3 percentage points.—Reuters

Merkel wants to 'drastically reduce' refugee arrivals in Germany

KARLSRUHE — Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Sunday she wanted to "drastically decrease" the number of refugees coming to Germany, signalling a compromise to critics of her open-door policy from within her conservatives on the eve of a party congress.

Merkel has resisted pressure from allies within her Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to put a cap on the number of refugees entering Germany, which is expected to top 1 million this year.

"At the same time we took on board the concerns of the people, who are worried about the future, and this means we want to reduce, we want to drastically decrease the number of people coming to us," Merkel told broadcaster ARD.

Merkel, whose popularity has fallen over her handling of the refugee crisis, said the word "limit" did not feature in the CDU's main resolution

which will be debated at the two-day party congress starting on Monday in the southern city of Karlsruhe.

The chancellor added there was broad support in the CDU for her strategy to reduce the numbers.

This included working with Turkey to fight traffickers, improving the situation at Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, and strengthening control of the European Union's outer borders.

Merkel's conservative critics want her to get the number of arrivals down be-

fore three state elections in March and say her hopes of running for a fourth term in 2017 would be in danger.

Her strategy also includes finding a solution to the migration crisis on the EU level, where she is meeting resistance from member states opposed to a quota system to distribute refugees. Her critics say her decision in late August to allow Syrian asylum seekers to remain in Germany regardless which EU country they had first entered had accelerated the influx of migrants.—Reuters



Migrants wait at the Austrian-German border in Achleiten, Austria, across from Passau, Germany on 29 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Apple Music wins exclusive video deal with Taylor Swift

NEW YORK — Apple Inc won a deal with pop star Taylor Swift to exclusively release a concert video of her recent world tour through its music streaming service, Apple Music, the company and singer said on Sunday.

Swift, who celebrated her 26th birthday on Sunday, tweeted a trailer for the “1989 World Tour Live” concert video and said: “Thank you so much for all the birthday wishes. I have a little surprise for you.” The video will air on 20 December.

The singer also tweeted that an interview discussing the video would be broadcast at 9 am PST (1700 GMT) on Monday on Beats 1, Apple’s radio station. Apple officials were not immediately available for comment.

“It sounds like a very, very

significant win for Apple,” said John Jackson, an analyst at market research firm IDC in Boston. “It’s on the order of a coup for Apple inasmuch as we all know that Apple is late to this party and the competition is fierce, the market is heavily subscribed with services.”

Jackson cited music streaming services Spotify and Songza as examples of such competitors.

Launched in June, Apple Music is Apple’s attempt to carry its dominance of digital music through its iTunes store into the era of music streaming.

Chief Executive Tim Cook said in October the music streaming service had netted more than 6.5 million paid users, and that an additional 8.5 million people were participating in a free trial.

Analysts have predicted

that Apple’s service will find a strong following because of the vast installed base of iTunes users. But few think the iPhone maker will eclipse other music streaming companies. Spotify, founded in 2006, has over 20 million subscribers and over 75 million active users, according to its website.

Swift said in June she would put her hit album “1989” on Apple Music, days after the tech giant bowed to pressure from Swift and some independent music groups and labels and agreed to pay artists during the free trial period for its music service.—Reuters



Taylor Swift:
PHOTO: REUTERS

Anoushka Shankar’s next album focuses on refugee crisis



Sitarist Anoushka Shankar

NEW DELHI — Sitarist Anoushka Shankar is currently working on her ninth album “Land of Gold”, which talks about the ongoing refugee crisis in the world.

The 34-year-old sitarist, who is on a month long tour in India, said through the record she aims to bring peace in the society.

“My current album, which I am working on now, is very focused on the refugee crisis. That is something which has been influencing me a lot... It’s impor-

tant to remember that what happened in Paris is a tragedy, Syria is also a tragedy.

There are so many tragedies all over,” Anoushka told PTI.

Unlike her classical base of her latest album “Home”, which has earned the musician her fifth Grammy nomination, her upcoming project will be a crossover.

“‘Land of Gold’ means everyone is searching their land of gold that means a place for safety and security for children.

It won’t be based on classical music.”

Anoushka, who is back in India after a gap of two years, is amazed to see that people here are more vocal in voicing their concerns.

“It’s great that people are debating. It’s fantastic. If people don’t speak up then it becomes a little dangerous. I think people should protest and argue when they don’t like something... If they are arguing that’s a big point in democracy,” she said.

The sitarist, who performed in the Capital last night as part of her four-city tour,

“Home” pays tribute to her father Ravi Shankar and Anoushka said revisiting the times spent with the legendary sitarist has been nostalgic.

“It was nostalgic and very fresh too. There is something magical about our music, which is ancient and at the same time improvised. You have to go really deep within yourself to play.

“It’s not like just sitting and connecting with the past.

So, it felt very bitter and sweet.

It really felt amazing that I felt connected with my father through music.”

“Indian classical music has amazing musicians. Classical music always has audience but it has been niche. But that doesn’t worry me. It is developing and changing the way it has been performed and that makes our music last,” she said.—PTI

‘American Horror Story’ actress Rose Siggins dies



Rose Siggins. PHOTO: REUTERS

LOS ANGELES — “American Horror Story” actress Rose Siggins, known as the “woman with a half a body” who lost her legs to a rare genetic disorder early in life, has died at age 43, her agent said on Sunday.

James Mullen said in an email the actress died in Denver on Saturday and that he had no more details to release about the circumstances of her death.

Siggins played the character Legless Suzi on “American Horror Story: Freak Show,” a program on the FX network and was featured in “The Woman with Half a Body,” a 2005 documentary about her life.

Mullen described Siggins, who traveled around on a skateboard, as “an infinitely strong woman” on a Gofundme.com page he set up to help pay for her medical expenses and support her two children. Siggins was born with a rare genetic disorder, known as Sacral Agenesis, that severely deformed her legs, she said on her website. Siggins said her parents had her legs amputated when she was 2 years old and that their “insightful decision” allowed “her to lead a fairly normal childhood.”—Reuters

‘Ranveer is emotionally vulnerable’

NEW DELHI — Fans might swoon over Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh’s cheeky, flirtatious nature but “Bajirao Mastani” co-star Deepika Padukone says the actor’s emotional side is what she connects with more.

Deepika, who has also worked with Ranveer in “Ram Leela”, said she finds his hidden side more relatable.

“From the little bit I know him, he is a different person when he is with his family and friends than what he is out there in public. I feel the public does not get to see a certain side of him. “I have accepted him for both his very contrasting sides but I think I relate to the more emotional side of him, the vulnerability is probably what I connect to more,” Deepika told PTI.

Besides her co-star, the 29-year-old actress shares a special equation with director Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

Deepika said while working on “Ram Leela” she felt intimidated by the filmmaker but the duo reached a comfort level during “Bajirao Mastani”.

“I didn’t feel intimidated by him. I felt that during ‘Ram Leela’ because I took time to understand him as a person but we found our comfort while working on ‘Bajirao...’ Now, I understand and have adapted to his way of working.

“We have found a beautiful equation with this film where we did not say much to each other but we understood what the other person is trying to communicate.” Being at the peak of her career, a historical film seems a risk. Though this is not the first time she has ventured into the genre as she did Ashutosh Gowariker’s “Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey” in 2010, the grandeur and the hype around “Bajirao Mastani” is bigger.

“The success of ‘Bajirao...’ is of course important for me but then that is regarding every film, be it big or small.

It would be incorrect for me to say that ‘Bajirao’ is more important than my other films.

“My hardwork and hope from every movie is same. The only thing that change with every film is I try keep bettering myself. That has been my only aim as an actress.”

She was last seen in Imtiaz Ali’s “Tamasha” opposite Ranbir Kapoor, and while the performances have received unanimous praise, there has been a divided opinion on the movie. Many fans, who went to see the movie hoping to see Ranbir and Deepika recreate their breezy love story from “Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani”, were disappointed by the movie.—PTI

Acknowledgement

**Dr KoKo Oo, Union Minister for Science and Technology
Aged (54) years**

We would like to thank the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, vice-Presidents, union ministers, chief ministers of states/regions, deputy ministers, members of state/region governments, Hluttaw representatives, senior officers of the Tatmadaw, ambassadors of foreign missions to Myanmar, international organisations, heads of departments and employees of Ministry of Science and Technology, teachers and students of Universities of Technology and Universities of Computer Science, local and international organisations, friends and relatives, those who sent wreaths, showed their sympathy personally or via newspapers, journals and emails, friends, relatives and colleagues from departments, especially those who took care of him at hospitals under the guidance of the union minister, deputy ministers, the permanent secretary including superintends of hospital, specialists, assistant doctors and nurses from New General Hospital (Yangon) and 500-beds Specialist Hospital (Yangon) of the Ministry of Health for their sympathy to the beloved husband Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr Ko Ko Oo, who passed away on (9.12.2015), of Dr. Theingi Kyaw (Director, Technical Development and Cooperation Department, Ministry of Science and Technology) and beloved father of Ma Theingi Ko Ko alias Yuki.

Bereaved family

Online holiday package tsunami swamping US apartment buildings

WASHINGTON — As the holiday shopping season peaks, US apartment complexes are being flooded with packages, from HD televisions to children's scooters, inundating lobbies and forcing building managers to take measures to extremes. With online shopping expected to reach a record this year, overwhelmed property managers are starting to put a cap on the size of the boxes they will accept, installing storage lockers or banning deliveries outright. Online purchases have spiked during this holiday season,

with Americans buying \$3.07 billion of goods on "Cyber Monday," the first workday after the Thanksgiving holiday, a 16 percent increase year on year, according to the Adobe Digital Index Report.

The Boston House, a 1950s-era apartment building in Washington that saw package deliveries grow from a couple of dozen to hundreds a week in a few years, has limited the size of boxes, said Liz Cullison, the building's general manager. "The packages got larger and larger and larger," Cullison said. "That all overflowed out into the lobby. Now the lobby is overrun with packages." Apartment buildings and complexes, home to about one in eight Americans, are being buffeted by the surge in online US retail sales, which rose on an adjusted basis to \$87.5 billion

in the third quarter, up 15 percent from a year earlier, according to the Commerce Department.

Apartment managers "are looking at the future, and they are only seeing more packages," said Rick Haughey, vice president of industry technology initiatives at the National Multifamily Housing Council, an industry group.

"You've got old systems in place that don't really reflect the structural changes that we've seen in retail," he said.

The number of US packages shipped is soaring in tandem with online sales. United Parcel Service Inc, FedEx Corp and the US Postal Service all estimate an increase in the low double digits this year, in part because of one extra day in the holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas.—Reuters

Ainu, indigenous people of Japan, have high hopes for national centre



Kazunobu Kawanano, 81, catches a salmon with traditional Ainu fishing gear during a ceremony to receive new salmon in the town of Biratori on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido on 17 October. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

SAPPORO — While Japan has been receiving a record number of tourists from abroad, not many of them know about the Ainu, the indigenous people living on the northernmost main island of Hokkaido.

Due to assimilation forced on them during and after the Meiji period (1868-1912), their culture, including their language, is endangered.

The Japanese government is set to build a national centre — including a museum, park and memorial house — aimed at reviving Ainu culture in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The center, which will be located on the side of Lake Poroto in the town of Shiraoi,

southwestern Hokkaido, aims to attract 1 million visitors annually.

Masahiro Nomoto, head of the existing Ainu Museum on the lakeside, said he wants to be well prepared by the time the new centre is built. "In five years' time, I would like to receive guests with 'iran-karapte'," the 52-year-old museum chief said, using the Ainu greeting meaning "hello." He believes the establishment of the national center will provide the Ainu people — Ainu means "human" in their language — with a great opportunity to tell the world about their culture centered on living in harmony with nature and cherishing life.—Kyodo News



Entertainment Channel

(15-12-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6:00 am
• Nice And Sweet Song | 9:35 am
• Musical Programme |
| 6:25 am
• Fashion Show | 9:50 am
• Radio Drama |
| 6:40 am
• Kyae Pwint Myaye
Yin Khone Than | 10:25 am
• ASEAN Japan
Cultural Show |
| 7:00 am
• TV Drama Series | 10:35 am
• Myanmar Video |
| 7:55 am
• TV Drama Series | 12:00 noon
• Close Down |
| 8:40 am
• Myanmar Video | |



News Channel in Brief

(15-12-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6:00 am
• Pritta By Hilly Region
Missionary Sayadaw | 3:35 pm
• Socio Economic Scenes |
| 7:35 am
• Socio Economic Scenes | 4:15 pm
• Documentary |
| 8:35 am
• Documentary | 5:15 pm
• Documentary |
| 9:35 am
• MRTV's Youth
Programme | 5:35 pm
• Money Talk Myanmar |
| 10:35 am
• Science and Technology
Programme | 6:35 pm
• People's Talks |
| 11:35 am
• Documentary | 7:15 pm
• TV Drama Series |
| 12:50 pm
• TV Drama Series | 8:00 pm
• News/ International
News/ Weather Report |
| 1:30 pm
• TV Drama Series | 9:00 pm
• News |
| 2:15 pm
• Sing & Enjoy | 9:00 pm
• TV Drama Series |
| | 9:00 pm
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti |

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Myanmar International

(15-12-2015 07:00 am~ 16-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 07:03 Am | News |
| 07:25 Am | Kambawzathardi Golden Palace - A
Treasured Legacy Of Golden Days |
| 07:40 Am | The Iron Rider |
| 07:53 Am | Young Talents "Animator Swan Thura
Htun" |
| 08:03 Am | News |
| 08:24 Am | Kyaikhteeyoe: My Father The Porter |
| 08:31 Am | Sayit-wyne Girls |
| 08:54 Am | Paper Flower |
| 09:03 Am | News |
| 09:26 Am | The Strokes of Myanmar |
| 09:51 Am | Today Myanmar: Private Teak Plantation |

- | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 10:03 Am | News |
| 10:26 Am | Natural Lake: Fish Breeding Business |
| 10:38 Am | Ywar Thit's Monhinkhar |
| 10:51 Am | Art Students: Theatrical Art |

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

Prime Time

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 07:03 Pm | News |
| 07:26 Pm | A Day Out With Sarah (Ep-3) |
| 07:51 Pm | Graffiti: Portraiture |
| 08:03 Pm | News |
| 08:26 Pm | Discovering Tribes "Lisu: Their Life and
Customs" (Part- I) |
| 08:48 Pm | Kayin Child Boxer |

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

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

Atletico draw level with leaders Barca, Real lose

MADRID — Atletico Madrid turned up the heat on champions Barcelona when they fought back to secure a 2-1 win at home to Athletic Bilbao in La Liga on Sunday as Real Madrid slipped off the pace with a 1-0 loss at Villarreal.

Atletico's battling victory put them level at the top on 35 points with Barca, who surrendered a 2-0 advantage and were held 2-2 at home by Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday, their second consecutive draw after last weekend's 1-1 stalemate at Valencia.

Barca are ahead on goal difference, while Real are five points adrift in third after Roberto Soldado scored against his former club to give Villarreal, who are a point off fourth spot with 27, the spoils at the Madrigal.

Real fielded their famous attacking trident of Cristiano Ronaldo, Gareth Bale and Karim Benzema but could not make a host of chances count and the defeat heaps more pressure on under-fire coach Rafa Benitez. Bilbao took a 27th-minute lead at a typically boisterous Calderon stadium when defender Aymeric Laporte



Atletico Madrid's Saul Niguez celebrates his first goal during their Spanish Liga BBVA at Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid, Spain on 13 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

netted at a corner before Atletico midfielder Saul Niguez levelled with a header from a corner at the other end on the stroke of half-

time. A closely-fought encounter appeared destined for a draw until the ball broke kindly for Antoine Griezmann in the 67th minute and

the France forward curled a superb shot into the corner of the net from just outside the penalty area.

At Villarreal, midfielder Jon-

athan Dos Santos had already hit a post before Soldado, a graduate of Real's youth academy, struck to put the home side ahead in the eighth minute.

Real laid siege to the Villarreal goal in the second half but despite a string of efforts they only managed one on target and slipped to a third league defeat of the season. They were a shadow of the side that demolished Malmö 8-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday, with Ronaldo and Benzema particularly wayward.

"We were not switched on at the start," Real centre back Pepe told Spanish television.

"We are still in the fight but it's true that we have to start games differently and better," added the Portugal international.

Former England defender Gary Neville is still without a win in two games since taking over as Valencia coach after his new club had a man sent off and needed an Eibar own goal to rescue a 1-1 draw at the modest Basque side. Valencia, Eibar and Bilbao each have 21 points in eighth, ninth and 10th respectively.—Reuters

Barcelona face Arsenal, Chelsea play PSG again

NYON — Holders and Spanish league leaders Barcelona will play Premier League leaders Arsenal in the last 16 of the Champions League, 10 years after the sides faced each other in the final, following Monday's draw for the first knockout stage.

Spanish league leaders Barcelona, chasing a sixth title, prevailed 2-1 in the 2006 final at the Stade de France in Paris and also triumphed in the knockout phase in 2010 and 2011.

Chelsea, who are enduring a torrid time in the Premier League, will face French league leaders Paris St Germain in the knockout stages for the third year in succession after the French champions triumphed at the same stage last season and the London club had the upper hand in the quarter-finals the previous year.

Another clash between big guns will feature former winners Juventus and Bayern Munich, while 10-times champions Real Madrid were drawn against AS Roma. It is the game between the pacesetters in Spain and Arsenal which most catches the eye, however.

"We are certain to see a sporting spectacular," said Barca

director Albert Soler.

"Arsenal and Barcelona have a similar style of play. The fans will enjoy themselves, we're two sides with a similar understanding of the game. They will be two great matches. We must have maximum respect for Arsenal."

"Barca are used to playing under pressure in every sense. But we are the reigning champions and that gives you an edge."

Arsenal club secretary David Miles said: "It is not easy and the one to avoid at this stage, but it is up to us and we will give them a game."

"Messi, Neymar, Suarez... you could go on, but we have our own world class players and I am sure they will be fantastic games in London and in Barcelona."

There is also a familiar feel about the Chelsea v PSG tie.

"There is not much we don't know about Paris," said Chelsea general secretary David Barnard.

"You only know if it's a good draw after the tie. We are ambitious, we have two-and-a-half months to prepare," PSG sports director Olivier Letang said.

Real Madrid and Roma have also seen a lot of each other in the competition, though not since

2008 when the Italians won 201 home and away in the last 16.

"You have to be very much on your guard. If we see ourselves as favourites things won't go well for us," said Real director Emilio Butragueno.

"We know what can happen if you have 10 poor minutes on a European night."

Juventus could come to regret having blown their finale in the group stage, leaving Manchester City, who will take on Dynamo Kiev, with the better draw on paper.

"Everybody wanted to avoid Barca and Bayern so we are not so lucky but Bayern will not be glad they drew Juve," said Juventus ambassador Pavel Nedved.

Manchester City director of football Txiki Begiristain said: "They have a good side (Kiev) and it will be difficult for us. They are growing in the competition and it will be a big challenge but we hope to be ready."

"They are a strong side, but they like to play football and it is just 11 v 11. We are improving and gaining experience in the competition so we hope to do well."

PSV Eindhoven will take on Atletico Madrid and Benfica will be against Zenit St Petersburg.

Gent, in their first participation in the competition, will take on Germany's VfL Wolfsburg.

The first legs of the ties are spread over four days in February, with the returns on 8, 9 and 15 March, when there are two matches.—Reuters

Serena Williams named Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year

NEW YORK — Serena Williams, who held all four of tennis's grand slam titles for the second time in her career and won 53 of 56 matches in 2015, was named Sportsperson of the Year by Sports Illustrated magazine yesterday.

The 34-year-old accomplished her second 'Serena Slam' while battling a string of injuries, producing one of the greatest late-career runs in the history of any sport, the magazine said, hailing her a "global icon".

"Serena has made a very strong case as not only the greatest tennis player of her generation but of all time, and after the string of performances she put together in 2015, she is one of the most dominant athletes playing today," said Sports Illustrated (SI) Group Editor Paul Fichtenbaum.

Williams was ranked number one every week for the second consecutive year, and her three successive grand slam wins to start 2015 lifted her within one of Steffi Graf's record 22 singles titles in the professional era.

"This year was spectacular," Williams said in a statement. "For Sports Illustrated to recognize my hard work, dedication and sheer determination with this award gives me hope to continue on and do better."

Williams is the first woman to be recognized with the hon-

our as an individual since Mary Decker in 1983, and the magazine took the opportunity to rename its award from Sportsman of the Year to Sportsperson of the Year.

The magazine also cited Williams as a force off the court, using her broad platform to advocate for racial justice, gender equality and equal access to education around the world.

It noted that Williams made a powerful statement by returning to play a tournament at Indian Wells for the first time since 2001 when she was jeered by the crowd and, according to her family, suffered racist slurs. Williams called her decision to play her "greatest moment in tennis."

"Everyone always asked, 'What was your greatest moment in tennis?' and I always said it hasn't happened."

"But I think it has happened now, and that was going back to Indian Wells and playing. It released a lot of feelings that I didn't even know I had. I was really surprised at how emotional I got — and how relieved I felt after everything was said and done."

Williams joins an elite group to have won the award, including Muhammad Ali (1974), Arthur Ashe (1992), LeBron James (2012), Michael Jordan (1991), Billie Jean King (1972), Joe Montana (1990) and Jack Nicklaus (1978).—Reuters

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Pavel Nedved
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