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## PRE MEETING IN YANGON

### Stakeholder groups gear up for first session of Union Peace Conference

Ye Myint

THE secretaries of five stakeholder groups for the Union Peace Conference are set to meet in Yangon on 5 January, six days ahead of the planned first session of political dialogue in Nay Pyi Taw, a secretary representing the government side said yesterday.

There will be a total of 15 representatives from the government, the Parliament, Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organizations and political parties, each with three members at the meeting, said U Hla Maung Shwe, a government representative to the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.

The meeting is aimed at coordinating topics for discussion at the UPC, but decisions will be made at the UPDJC meeting in Nay Pyi Taw prior to the country's first political dialogue, the secretary added.

According to U Hla Maung Shwe who is also the senior adviser at the Myanmar Peace Centre, U Sai Kyaw Nyunt from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, U Myint Soe from the Union Solidarity and Development Party and U Ngaing Ngan Lin of the National League for Democracy will be present at the meeting on behalf of their political parties.

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Rear Admiral Myint Nwe and U Hla Maung Shwe are seen together with other attendees to a Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee meeting in Nay Pyi Taw. Both of them will be present at 5 January meeting representing stakeholder groups of the government and Tatmadaw. PHOTO: CREDIT TO MYANMAR PEACE CENTRE

## NLD chairperson, government's chief negotiator exchange peace process



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League for Democracy that won majority in the historic 2015 vote, holds talks on the country's ongoing peace process with Union Minister U Aung Min and Myanmar Peace Centre's officials at her office in Nay Pyi Taw on Wednesday. PHOTO: CREDIT TO NLD CHAIRPERSON FACEBOOK

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League for Democracy, held talks with Union Minister U Aung Min and party on the country's peace process at her office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, NLD Chairperson Facebook posted.

It was the second meeting between the NLD chairperson and the Union minister, the country's chief peace negotiator, following the 8 December meeting.

According to the post by NLD Chairperson's Office, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Aung Min, who is also the head of Myanmar Peace Centre, exchanged views on matters related to ongoing peace process including holding of Union Peace Conference and coordinating meetings ahead

of the political dialogue.

It was attended by NLD's central executive committee members U Win Htein and Dr Zaw Myint Maung, NLD parliamentarians U Ngaing Ngan Lin and U Phyo Zeya Thaw and NLD Chairperson's Office in-charge Dr Tin Mar Aung, added the post.

The Union Peace Conference is due to convene on 12 January in Nay Pyi Taw, involving 700 representatives from stakeholder groups of the current government and Parliament, Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organizations who inked the ceasefire deal and political parties, and other players.

The meeting covered such topics as 'peace process, political dialogue, and future', See page 3 >>



Hluttaw

# Parliament puts on record Public Debt Management Bill, Bill Amending the Myanmar Lighthouse Act

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw continued its last session in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, discussing and putting on record bills including the Public Debt Management Bill.

During the Wednesday meeting the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw put the Public Debt Management Bill and the Bill Amending the Myanmar Lighthouse Act on record.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw also announced that it will carry on the National Planning Bill for FY 2016-2017 and the Union Budget Bill for 2016 in accordance with the rules of the Hluttaw Law.

The meeting will resume on 28 December.— *Myanma News Agency*



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

## Myanmar moves to sign Chemical Weapons Convention



Science and Technology Ministry discuss the Chemical Weapons Convention. PHOTO: MNA

THE Ministry of Science and Technology held a coordination meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to discuss the process of signing the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

Two teams—the Myanmar National Authority and the Representative Team for In-

spection— have been assigned to oversee the procedures, with Deputy Minister Dr Aung Kyaw Myat saying the country sent two declarations—one annual and the other initial—to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The Myanmar National Au-

thority will send its representatives to OPCW-organised training programmes, workshops and seminars.

The MNA and the OPCW will maintain contact through a Secure Information Exchange (SIX) system.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## More than 20 overseas employment agencies penalised

Aye Min Soe

MORE than 20 overseas employment agencies, which place Myanmar migrant workers in positions abroad, have been punished this year for violating ministry rules, said U Myo Aung, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security yesterday.

“We revoked the licences of eight overseas agencies, suspended

six agencies on suspicion of making fraud smart cards and visas, and suspended another eight for violating the rules of their employment contracts,” the permanent secretary told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

Between 14 and 16 overseas employment agencies have been punished, while another six are facing trial after receiving two-year suspensions of their work permits.

Meanwhile, the ministry is in-

vestigating two cases in which the two companies failed to respond quickly to labour issues overseas.

Myanmar people are officially permitted to work in several foreign countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Japan.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security has issued licenses to nearly 250 local and overseas employment agencies.

## Overland tourist visits increasing

MYANMAR has seen a dramatic surge in the number of tourists taking sightseeing around the country trips by car, motorcycle and bicycle, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

On 1 December, 20 Chinese tourists entered the country in five cars through Muse, a border town in Shan State, and toured Mandalay Region, Yangon Region, Mon State and Shan State. They visited ancient cities and famous pagodas and left for Thailand via Myawady on 10 December.

On 5 December, 12 tourists from six countries arrived in Tamu, Sagaing Region, on

nine motorbikes and visited Sagaing Region, Mandalay Region, Shan State, Rakhine State and Mon State.

They left for Thailand via Myawady on 20 December.

On 13 December, two Australians visited Tamu and proceeded to Sagaing and Mandalay regions and Mon State. They left for Thailand on 19 December.

On 16 December, six tourists from India entered the country via Myawady and toured Mon State, Mandalay Region and Sagaing Region.

They returned to India on 18 December.—*Myanma News Agency*



Myanmar has seen an increase in number of tourists taking sightseeing trips by car, motorcycle and bicycle. PHOTO: MNA



# President meets China's CITIC delegation

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein met a Chinese delegation led by CITIC Co Ltd Chairman Mr Chang Zheng Min at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday to seek ways of creating a new level of bilateral cooperation in maritime transport.

The president was accompanied by Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thane and U Zeyar Aung, and the Chinese representative, by the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Hong Liang. — *Myanma News Agency*



President U Thein Sein receives CITIC delegation from China. PHOTO: MNA

## Senior General addresses military nursing and paramedical science graduation



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stresses importance of nursing and paramedical science for the military operations of every country in his speech at graduation of DSINPS. PHOTO: MYAWADY

THERE is an increased demand for effective medical treatment as the use of weapons of mass destruction in modern warfare has claimed many lives and wounded hundreds of thousands, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said yesterday at the graduation of the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science (DSINPS).

The commander-in-chief of defence services described nursing and paramedical science as an essential tool for the military operations of every country. He urged nursing and paramedical graduates to offer their services to residents in the areas of their appointment with utmost diligence.

He also pointed out need

to uphold their code of ethics in contact with patients throughout the stages of diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. He stressed that all military personnel should be mindful of their responsibilities to improve their own capability and the efficiency of the defence services as a whole.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented awards to winners for best cadet, best trainee and best literature.

The Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science began in 2002 but was known as the Defence Services Institute of Nursing in 2000. The institution has now produced four doctorate holders and 297 master's degree holders.

The institution hosted a graduation dinner at its convocation hall. Among the dignitaries present at the dinner together with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla were the commanders-in-chief of the air forces and the navy and other senior military officers.— *Myawady*

## Pre meeting in yangon

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Three members including Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong of the Chin National Front and U Myo Win of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front will represent the EAO side while Deputy Minister for Defence Rear Admiral Myint Nwe, Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo and Brig-Gen Thein Tun Hla are set to attend on behalf of the Tatmadaw.

"I have been chosen to represent the government side but the remaining two will be confirmed later," the senior adviser told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

According to sources, the main topics set to be covered at the Union Peace Conference are politics, security, economic and social issues and land and natural resource policies.

The very first political dialogue of all stakeholders is due to convene on 12 January involving 700 people equally divided among the Tatmadaw, ethnic armed organizations who signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and 92 political parties, with 150 representatives each.

The current government and

parliament are set to hold 75 seats each, with 50 seats each set aside for both other ethnic leaders and other invitees.

The first session of the upcoming peace conference is expected to run until 22 or 23 January will feature the inclusive participation of stakeholders to solve the country's political problems through diplomatic means, said the government representative to the UPDJC.

He noted that while political dialogue must begin within 90 days of the signing of the NCA, no deadline is set beyond that.

According to the terms of the NCA, a code of conduct for ceasefire signatories and guidelines for respective monitoring committees are scheduled to be finalised within 30 days of the NCA signing, while a political framework is to be drawn up within 60 days and political dialogue is to be held within 90 days.

The UPDJC approved the draft framework for political dialogue on 15 December and submitted the approved framework to the President the following day.

## YCDC on track to good governance

THE Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) scored a rare success today in its abortive push to adopt an e-government system, which began more than two years ago.

"It is not easy to transition to an e-government system, especially in our country. We faced challenges in transferring dates on paper from the colonial era to the digital system," said Ko Aung Win Myat, a technical adviser to the YCDC.

Despite its shortcomings, the YCDC reached the goals of the 'Third Wave' of its reform agenda, which aimed to give Yangon residents access to digitalised services.

The online services now available have shortened the wait time for those who apply for per-



U Hla Myint, the chairman of the YCDC. PHOTO: TIN SOE

mits to rebuild their homes from two months to five days.

Before the availability of these online services, procuring services from the YCDC was notoriously difficult, causing many inconveniences to the population of Myanmar's largest city.

The YCDC website was launched in 2012. In its early days, it functioned only to offer information to visitors. The website has since been upgraded, and more than 1,000 staff of the committee have been trained on how to use it. Today, online services are within the reach of residents of 22 townships in Yangon Region.

"We have not yet achieved full success. According to our experiences, when we can make the whole backup system a digital one apart from the online services, we will be ready to provide the people with effective and quick services, putting us on the road to good governance and clean government, as envisaged by the president, said U Hla Myint, the chairman of the YCDC.— *Khin Yadana*

## NLD chairperson, government's chief negotiator exchange peace process

>> From page 1

said U Hla Maung Shwe in response to *The Global New Light of Myanmar* daily's query. Also present at the meeting together with U Aung Min were U Tin Maung Than and U Hla Maung Shwe, MPC senior advisers and

Dr Min Zaw Oo, Dr Kyaw Yin Hlaing and U Aung Naing Oo who are directors at the MPC.

According to sources, yesterday's meeting followed a meeting between the NLD chair and leaders from eight ethnic ceasefire signatories on 17 December.

## National Planning Bill for FY 2016-2017 to be made public

THE National Planning Bill for FY 2016-2017 will be published by the state-run print media in order to solicit opinions from the public.

The bill will be covered in the Myanmar Alin and the Kyemon dailies on 25 and 26 December.— *Myanma News Agency*



# Thai junta reaffirms will hand back power in 2017, entering second phase of reforms

BANGKOK — Thai prime minister and junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha gave a sweeping year-end speech yesterday in which he reiterated that the junta will hand back power in 2017 and that it was entering “phase two” of its reform plan.

The junta, or National Council for Peace and Order, seized control in May 2014 and overthrew an elected government, putting an end to protests in Bangkok led by the middle classes and elites who wanted to get rid of the civilian government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

Since then, it has busied itself with drafting a new constitution and reforms which critics say are designed to limit the powers of political parties and neutralise those seen as loyal to controversial former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Yingluck’s brother who was ousted in 2006.

The junta has repeatedly delayed planned elections, claiming the country is not yet stable enough to hold a poll.

Prayuth said the junta was sticking to its plan to hand back power in 2017.

“We have one year and six months left starting January 2016 to July 2017 and the government will lay the foundations for the things it did not do and if it cannot complete them they will be put in the reform plan,” he said in a televised speech.

“We are entering phase two now.”

The military government, led by coup-maker Prayuth, has stifled dissent and has gone hard after critics of the monarchy by using a harsh royal insult law to detain dozens of people, prompting stern criticism from rights groups, the United Nations and Western governments.

Nineteen months after the



Thailand's Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha addresses the nation and summarises the junta's annual report in Bangkok, Thailand, on 23 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

coup it is struggling to revive Thailand's export-dependent economy.

Despite announcing big-spending on large road and

railway projects, domestic demand remains weak and record-high household debt is hurting Southeast Asia's second-largest economy.

The junta continues to wield wide-ranging powers under a special security measure that allows security forces to make arrests without court warrants and detain people without charge.

Prayuth addressed accusations of rights abuses in his speech saying it was not his fault if dissenters violate the security order.

“The law says you can't do this and they still do it,” said a visibly angry Prayuth. “Then they say I violate human rights.”

Despite an order that bans public gatherings, open opposition to the junta has increased over the past year.

The coup was the latest chapter in more than a decade of conflict in Thailand with the country bitterly divided between supporters of Yingluck and Thaksin and the country's traditional royalist-military establishment.—Reuters

## THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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## Rescue work continues after survivor pulled from Shenzhen landslide

SHENZHEN — A man was rescued early yesterday morning, more than 60 hours after being buried by a landslide on Sunday at an industrial park in the southern city of Shenzhen.

Tian Zeming, 21, a native of the southwestern municipality of Chongqing, was pulled from the debris around 6:30am and rushed to Guangming New District Central Hospital. Previous reports said that Tian was 19 years old.

Following surgery yesterday morning Tian is conscious and in a stable condition, said hospital president Wang Guangming. However, he is extremely weak, dehydrated and has sustained several soft tissue injuries and multiple fractures, Wang added.

The fallen debris seriously crushed Tian's right lower leg, but the hospital is doing as much as it can to save his lower limb, Wang added.

Tian was one of 76 people reported missing following the incident, which occurred just before midday on Sunday after a huge pile of construction waste on a hill collapsed, destroying much in its path.

Rescuers identified Tian's location at 1 am on Wednesday and pulled him from a collapsed factory building at 3:30am.

Tian was able to tell rescuers his name and said that there was another survivor near him.

Firefighters had to squeeze into the narrow room in which



A survivor is found at the site of landslide at an industrial park in Shenzhen, south China's Guangdong Province, on 23 December. PHOTO: XINHUA

he was trapped, and remove most of the debris by hand, said Zhang Yabin, a police officer participating in the rescue.

Before he was pulled out, Tian had been given oxygen and received an intravenous infusion, Zhang said.

Wu Wenwei, a firefighter on the scene, said they put a hard hat on Tian to protect him from stones and debris loosened by the rescue mission.

The other trapped person that Tian spoke of, however, was unresponsive, and was later pronounced dead, according to rescuers. Heavy machinery con-

tinues to rake through the thousands of tonnes of soil and rubble that has swollen up factories and residential buildings, and even though the 72-hour golden period for saving lives has ended, rescuers have not lost hope.

“The rescue work won't slow,” said Yue Xi, another police officer at the scene, told Xinhua.

Wang Guoshe, head of Guangdong fire department, said locating the tops of buried buildings was the main task currently, so that signs of life could be found more accurately.

On Wednesday morning,

the State Council, China's cabinet, initiated an investigation into the incident.

Minister of Land and Resources Jiang Daming will lead the investigation team, which includes members from the Ministry of Public Security; Ministry of Supervision; Ministry of Environmental Protection; Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development; State Administration of Work Safety; All-China Federation of Trade Unions; Guangdong Provincial Government; and Shenzhen Municipal Government.—Xinhua



# India lowers crime trial age to 16 after Delhi gang rape furore

NEW DELHI — India passed legislation lowering the age at which someone can be tried for rape and other crimes to 16, spurred into action by an uproar over the release of a minor convicted in a 2012 fatal gang rape of a 23-year-old woman on a Delhi bus.

Parents of the victim had led demand for amendments to the law after their daughter was repeatedly raped and beaten by the 17-year-old minor as well as five adult companions. The woman died of her injuries two weeks later at a Singapore hospital.

Four adults in the case, which drew worldwide condemnation, were sentenced to death while the fifth hanged himself in prison. The death penalties have yet to be carried out.

Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said on Tuesday the legislation aimed to strike a balance between the rights of a child and the need to deter heinous juvenile crimes, especially against women.

“Juvenile crime is the fastest rising segment in the country and the bill will help to stop (this),” she said. “The new law will decide whether a child committed the crime in a childish or adult frame of mind.”

The Rajya Sabha passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill by a voice vote, paving the way for lowering the minimum age for a criminal trial to 16 from 18, depending on



Police detain demonstrators during a protest against the release of a juvenile rape convict, in New Delhi, India, on 20 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

the gravity of the offence.

The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill. It will become law once President Pranab Mukherjee signs it, likely a formality.

Current law defines a person under 18 as a juvenile and caps punishment at three years in a correctional home. Under the new law, 16- and 17-year-olds can be tried as adults, with corresponding sentences of up to life in prison or even the death penalty, depending on the severity of the crime.

The release last Sunday of the teenager involved in the 2012 gang rape sparked street protests by students and the victim's mother, Asha Devi. Police had accused the teenager of gory violence, including pulling out a part of the woman's intestines with his hands. “I understand that a change in law will not affect my daughter's case, but a serious crime even if it is committed by a minor should not be overlooked,” Devi said before the legislation was adopted.

India's National Crime Records Bureau data shows that 16- to 18-year-olds account for a majority of minors arrested for crimes but activists said the latest amendment violated child rights and would not stem sex crimes.

“Lawmakers have committed a blunder by changing the law,” said Shahbaz Khan, programme coordinator at Haq, a centre for child rights in New Delhi. “They have taken an emotional decision and only children will suffer the most.”—Reuters

## Sri Lanka hopes to have EU fishing ban lifted by mid next year

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka is expecting a fishing ban imposed by the European Parliament to be lifted by mid next year, local media reported on Tuesday.

“During the coming months, the proposal to lift the fishing ban will be presented to the European Parliament,” Fisheries Minister Mahinda Amaraweera was quoted as saying.

“We are losing over 100 million US dollars per year because of this ban. So we are expecting a favourable response from them before the Sinhala and Tamil New Year (local new year) in 2016.”

Amaraweera added that they have installed Vessel Monitoring Systems on the vessels operating in international waters in order to stop fishing in prohibited areas.

The European Union Council last month encouraged Sri Lanka to take further measures necessary to address the shortcomings established in the context of the EU legislation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The council added that the ban on fishery exports to the EU could be lifted if further necessary steps are taken.

Sri Lanka's fish exports to the European Union make up 68 percent of its total fish exports, which brings in 23 billion rupees (160 million US dollars) annually.—Xinhua

# Japanese emperor turns 82, recalls tragedy of WWII

TOKYO — Emperor Akihito, on the occasion of his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday Wednesday, recalled the victims of World War II, saying it is extremely important for the future of Japan that people have a fuller understanding of the war that ended 70 years before.

Speaking at a press conference ahead of his birthday, the emperor said, “Looking back over the past year, I feel that it was a year in which I spent much time thinking about the war in various ways.”

“With each passing year, we will have more and more Japanese who have never experienced war, but I believe having thorough knowledge about the last war and reflecting deeply on it is most important for the future of Japan,” he said.

The emperor also said he is “beginning to feel my age,” acknowledging that “there were times when I made some mistakes at events,” and he expressed his intention “to minimize such incidents by continuing to do the best



Japanese Emperor Akihito addresses general well-wishers from the balcony at the Chowaden Reception Hall of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on 23 December 2014, as he turns 82. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

I can” during his official duties.

In consideration of his age, the number of questions at the press conference was limited to only one for the first time.

The emperor and Empress

Michiko, 81, have continued to commemorate the war dead by visiting World War II battle sites and meeting with people who experienced the war both at home and abroad. Last April, the couple visited the Pacific island nation of Palau, the site of a major battle during the war.

The emperor said that “it pains me deeply to think of the many who lost their lives” during the war, as they “could have led meaningful lives in various areas of society” had peace prevailed.

Recalling his trip to Palau, the emperor said the country, when seen from the air, “is made up of beautiful islands surrounded by coral reefs,” but countless unexploded bombs remain submerged in the sea. He urged that it never be forgotten that the war “has imposed a heavy burden on the people living on those islands.”

He spoke in a quivering voice about the sinking of many civilian vessels that transported military supplies and personnel,

noting that the war took many lives, including nonmilitary people like merchant sailors on the ships.

“In those days, Japan lacked command of the air and no battleships were available to escort the transport vessels. It gives me great pain to think of the feelings of the sailors who had to engage in transport operations under such conditions,” he said.

The emperor also expressed sympathy for those affected by natural disasters this year, such as a volcanic eruption on Kuchinoerabu Island in Kagoshima Prefecture and heavy rain that pounded the Japanese archipelago in September, praising volunteers' efforts to support the victims.

Looking back on the year, the emperor expressed pleasure that two Japanese scientists won Nobel Prizes in medicine and physics, and that the test flight of the Mitsubishi Regional Jet, Japan's first domestically produced commercial passenger jet,

was successful. In an address to general well-wishers who visited the Imperial Palace for the celebration on Wednesday, the emperor said, “There have been natural disasters such as torrential rain again this year and my heart aches for the people who have experienced danger and have suffered.”

“I feel extremely happy to have your congratulations. I sincerely hope the coming year will be a bright one,” he said on the balcony of the palace's Chowaden wing where he appeared along with Empress Michiko, Crown Prince Naruhito, Crown Princess Masako and other members of the imperial family.

About 27,000 well-wishers visited the palace for his three appearances during the morning, according to the agency.

A series of birthday events were scheduled throughout the day, including meetings with the heads of parliament, government and the judiciary and foreign diplomats.—Kyodo News



# EU gets 1m migrants in 2015, smugglers seen making \$1bn

GENEVA — More than 1 million refugees and migrants came to the European Union this year, while almost 3,700 died or went missing in perilous journeys which reaped huge profit for smugglers, the International Organisation for Migration said on Tuesday.

“This is three to four times as many migrants and refugees coming north as we had in 2014, and the deaths have already far surpassed the deaths last year,” IOM chief William Lacy Swing told Reuters.

Almost all those arriving came across the Mediterranean or the Aegean Seas, and half were Syrians fleeing the war. Another 20 per cent were Afghans, and 7 per cent were Iraqis, IOM and the UN refugee agency UNHCR said in a joint statement.

People smuggling operations probably accounted for the majority of journeys and likely earned at least \$1 billion, Swing said, taking “anywhere from \$2,000 to maybe \$6,000 depending on how many members of the family and depending on which smuggling ring it is”. IOM estimates people smugglers in Europe have made \$10 billion or more since 2000, maybe much more. “They are certainly getting very well paid for their services,” Swing said.

Out of a total of 1,005,504 arrivals to Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Spain, Malta and Cyprus by 21 December, the vast majority



A migrant woman holds a girl after arriving on a boat on the Greek island of Lesbos, in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

—816,752— arrived by sea in Greece, IOM said.

IOM spokesman Joel Millman said it was impossible to forecast how the flow of migrants would evolve in 2016.

**“They are certainly getting very well paid for their services.”**

**William Lacy Swing**  
Chief of IOM

“So much is in the balance, the resolution of the Syrian war, and the disposition of the European border protection moves that are being contemplated,” he said.

“We never thought it would reach this level. We just hope

people are treated with dignity.” The record movement of people into Europe is a symptom of a record level of disruption around the globe, with numbers of refugees and internally displaced people far surpassing 60 million, UNHCR said last week. Swing said the war in Syria was only one among many causes, including Ebola and Boko Haram in West Africa, an earthquake in Nepal, conflicts in Libya, Yemen, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Afghanistan and Iraq.

“No wonder you have such a large flux coming north. This is an unprecedented scale of simultaneous complex protracted disasters from the western bulge of Africa to the Himalayas, with very few stable, peaceful spots in between.”—Reuters

## Democrat Clinton announces plan to battle Alzheimer’s disease

NEW YORK — Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton on Tuesday announced a slate of proposals to battle Alzheimer’s disease and seek a cure by 2025, including an increase in funding for research on the disease and related disorders.

Clinton called for a decade-long investment of \$2 billion per year for research, which her campaign called a fourfold increase over last year’s \$586 mil-

lion. The proposal could help boost research into an illness that has not only pressured the middle class families Clinton has made a centerpiece of her campaign, but is expected to weigh substantially on public spending as the US population ages.

“We owe it to the millions of families who stay up at night worrying about their loved ones afflicted by this terrible disease and facing the hard reality of the long

goodbye to make research investments that will prevent, effectively treat and make a cure possible by 2025,” Clinton said in a statement.

Alzheimer’s is an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that eventually destroys the ability to carry out the simplest tasks. More than 5 million Americans are estimated to have the disease, which the National Institute on Aging said is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. On a conference call with reporters, the Clinton campaign pointed to the expected growth in spending on Alzheimer’s by government health insurance programmes Medicare and Medicaid.

A researcher on the call, Rudolph Tanzi of Harvard Medical School, also detailed the recent progress in medical research that has improved the chances for finding treatment or even a cure. “Our single bottleneck has been funding,” he said, calling his area of research a “budget-constrained, not a knowledge-constrained field.”—Reuters



Democratic US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. PHOTO: REUTERS

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Putin, Netanyahu agree to coordinate efforts to fight terrorism

MOSCOW— Russian President Vladimir Putin and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed in a phone call on Tuesday to coordinate their two countries’ actions to fight terrorism in the Middle East, the Kremlin said in a statement.

The two leaders discussed the Syrian crisis during their conversation. “Vladimir Putin stressed that there is no alternative to the launch of intra-Syrian negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations, as well as to the continued and uncompromising fight against Islamic State and other extremist groups acting in Syria,” the Kremlin was quoted as saying.—Reuters

#### HK customs makes record cocaine bust

HONG KONG—Hong Kong Customs said Tuesday they have seized a record 62 kilograms of liquid cocaine hidden inside an industrial machine.

The haul, worth HK\$65 million (about \$8.4 million), arrived from Columbia via the United States and was intercepted Thursday at the airport. Customs Drug Investigation Bureau chief Lee Kwok-keung said the stash was found hidden inside an industrial mixer. “There is a rising trend of cocaine smuggling to Hong Kong. We also see that for heroine, there is a decrease. So we believe in the coming future, cocaine smuggling may be a trend,” Lee said.

In 2014, customs officers detected 53 cocaine cases in Hong Kong. In the first 11 months of this year, there were 96 cases, the *South China Morning Post* reported.—Kyodo News

#### Ten migrants drowned off Greek island, coastguard rescues 13

ATHENS — Five children, one woman and four men drowned when their boat sank off the small Greek island of Farmakonisi, Greek coastguard officials said early yesterday.

Another 13 people, 11 men and two women, were rescued and two were still missing according to witnesses, the officials said adding that a helicopter, a patrol boat and private vessels assisted the search-and-rescue operation.

“The vessel, a 6-metre (20-foot) speed boat, sank under unknown circumstances,” one of the officials told Reuters. “They were in the water when they were spotted by a rescue boat.”

The incident took place east of Farmakonisi, close to Turkey’s coast. Tens of thousands of mainly Syrian refugees have braved rough seas this year to make the short but precarious journey from Turkey to Greece’s islands.—Reuters

#### Two wounded in blast at Istanbul airport, cause unknown

ISTANBUL— An explosion at Istanbul’s Sabiha Gokcen airport wounded two cleaning staff on a plane, but the cause of the blast was not clear, Pegasus airline said yesterday.

Pegasus said the blast occurred at 2:05 am (0005 GMT) when no passengers were in the area and that operations were continuing normally.

Police armed with rifles and protective vests imposed tight security at entrances to the airport after the blast, searching vehicles in the area while a police helicopter circled overhead, state-run Anadolu Agency said.

It said one of the cleaners was seriously hurt, suffering a wound to the head, while one was wounded in the hand, and they were both being treated in hospital.—Reuters

#### Driver who plowed into Las Vegas crowd charged with murder

LAS VEGAS — An Oregon woman accused of plowing her car into a crowd on the Las Vegas Strip, killing one person and injuring dozens, was charged with murder on Tuesday as investigators sought clues to what motivated the rampage.

Lakeisha N. Holloway, 24, who was arrested after the incident on Sunday, has been charged with one count of murder through use of a deadly weapon in the death of a 32-year-old Arizona woman who was in the crowd. Holloway, due for her first court appearance on Wednesday, was being held in a “medically restricted” jail unit set aside for inmates requiring increased supervision, including those on suicide watch, according to Las Vegas police spokesman Michael Rodriguez.—Reuters



## Malala calls for end to Syrian war, welcomes Syrian campaigner to Britain

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE — Nearly two years after they met in a refugee camp in Jordan, Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai on Tuesday welcomed the Syrian schoolgirl activist Muzoon Almellehan to her new home in northern England.

Malala, who moved to Britain in 2012 after being shot in the head in Pakistan by the Taliban for refusing to quit school, won acclaim for her advocacy of women's right to education. She became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Meeting with families in tow at a gleaming public library in the northeast English city of Newcastle, 18-year-old Malala and Muzoon, 17, pledged to campaign together for access to education for Syrian refugee children.

"I hope world leaders promise the future generation that they will not deprive them of their basic human right, which is education," Malala told Reuters

in an interview.

The setting for their reunion was a far cry from the sprawling lines of tents comprising the Zaatari camp for Syrian refugees in the Jordanian desert, where the pair first met in early 2014.

Malala now lives in England's second city, Birmingham, where she was treated after being shot, and Muzoon is among the first Syrians from refugee camps in the Middle East to have come to Britain.

Since the two first met, the number of registered Syrian refugees has doubled to almost 4.4 million people, according to the United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees (UNHCR).

More than 250,000 people have been killed since the Syrian civil war began in 2011.

"I hope 2016 becomes a year when this war ends and world leaders must try," Malala said.

Appeals for funding from the world's governments have

fallen far short of targets. With only days before the end of the year, the UNHCR's \$4.3 billion appeal for Syria in 2015 has raised just \$2.2 billion.

UN children's agency UNICEF estimates 2.6 million Syrian children are no longer in school. Muzoon, often dubbed the "Malala of Syria", made her name encouraging girls to stay in school, rather than being married off at a young age.

"We need to speak about education and how to help children, especially in Syria, because there are more children in Syria without education," Muzoon said.

Malala and Muzoon met again in July this year to open a school for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and have kept in touch through Skype and email.

"(World leaders) need to listen to Muzoon — she has a dream, she wants to become a journalist, she has been away from her home for three or four



Malala Yousafzai (L) poses with 17 year old Syrian refugee Muzoon Almellehan at the City Library in Newcastle Upon Tyne, Britain on 22 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

years, and she wants to go back to her country one day," Malala said. Despite being occupied by school exams and plans to attend university in the next couple of years, the pair will be keeping a close eye on an international summit due to be held in Brit-

ain in early February, focused on Syria's humanitarian crisis. "This coming generation of Syrians are going to be deprived of their right and it means that country is going to face more problems if its children are uneducated," Malala said.—Reuters

## Battle to dislodge IS from Iraq's Ramadi will take days



Iraqi security forces cross a bridge built by corps of engineers over the Euphrates in Ramadi, on 22 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

BAGHDAD — Government forces expect to dislodge Islamic State militants from the western Iraqi city of Ramadi within days, state TV said yesterday, citing army chief of staff Lt General Othman al-Ghanemi.

If Ramadi is captured, it will be the second major city after Tikrit to be retaken from Islamic State in Iraq. It would provide a major psychological boost to Iraqi security forces after the militant group seized a third of Iraq,

a major OPEC oil producer and US ally, last year." In the coming days will be announced the good news of the complete liberation of Ramadi," Iraqia TV cited the officer as saying. Iraq's armed forces began advancing on Tuesday on the last district held by the militants in the centre of Ramadi, a Sunni Muslim city on the river Euphrates some 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad that they captured in May.

Progress has been slow be-

cause the government wants to rely entirely on its own troops and not use Shi'ite militias in order to avoid rights abuses such as occurred after the recapture of the city of Tikrit from the militants in April.

Islamic State also controls Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, and Falluja, which lies between Ramadi and Baghdad, as well as large areas of Syria — the core of what it has declared to be a caliphate.—Reuters

## Egypt hires consultancy to check airport security after Russia crash

CAIRO — Egypt has hired global consultancy Control Risks to review security at its airports after the crash of a plane carrying Russian holidaymakers that killed all 224 aboard and damaged the country's tourism industry.

Egypt said this month it had found no evidence so far of terrorism or other illegal action linked to the October crash, but Russia said in November that the jet was brought down by a bomb.

Islamic State, the militant group that has seized swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria, claimed responsibility and said it had smuggled a bomb on board hidden in a soft drink can.

The crash in the Sinai Peninsula hit Egypt's tourism sector hard, with some airlines suspending flights to Sharm al-Sheikh, the Red Sea resort from which the flight departed, pending security assurances.

The security review, announced at a news conference by Tourism Minister Hisham Zaazou, Civil Aviation Minister Hossam Kamal and Control Risks regional chief executive Andreas Carleton-Smith, aims to help restore confidence and revive tourism, a key foreign currency earner for cash-strapped Egypt.

"Today is a demonstration of the messages we are sending the whole world that we are taking very bold steps to ensure the

welfare, safety, and security of both Egyptians and our guests," Zaazou later told Reuters in an interview.

He added that London-based Control Risks would begin with assessments of security at Cairo and Sharm al-Sheikh, which receive high numbers of foreign travellers, but would also review security at other Egyptian airports.

The disaster has cost Egypt about 2.2 billion Egyptian pounds (189 million pounds) a month in direct losses and Zaazou told Reuters this month he sees this year's tourism receipts falling 10 per cent on last year as a result.

Egypt earned about \$7.2 billion in tourism revenues last year, still a far cry from around \$12.5 billion before the 2011 uprising, which ushered in a period of political turmoil that scared away tourists and foreign investors.

Egypt, home of the Giza Pyramids and other Pharaonic wonders and pristine beaches, had been working to restore confidence, and was about to launch a new tourism marketing campaign when the Russian plane crash took place. The campaign will now launch in the second half of January, Zaazou told Reuters.

Kamal said the aviation sector alone contributes to 1.2 per cent of gross domestic product.—Reuters



## OPINION

### What will be your legacy?

Myint Win Thein

**H**UMANS seem to have an innate desire to leave something in the world after they die to remind the living that they existed. This is one reason why people leave legacies to their offspring. Some people leave legacies to their own offspring,

while others contribute their legacies to all members of younger generations.

Legacies come in the form of power, wealth and knowledge.

Generally speaking, most people usually leave power or wealth to their offspring. This has been practiced for centuries by older generations. Rarely have legacies taken the form of knowledge.

However, it is no longer acceptable to leave power to one's offspring. It is no longer socially acceptable for rulers to leave the duties and privileges of governance to their offspring. The spread of democracy across the globe sought to end this tradition.

Therefore, people today usually leave wealth to their offspring. However, inherited wealth does not often last very long, and its impact on society rarely per-

meates beyond the family. The only thing that the future generations can truly benefit from is knowledge. Legacies of knowledge can lead a society to progress and can be shared by all its members.

What will you leave for future generations?

### 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](mailto: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.

# The Most Generous Donor of 21<sup>st</sup> Century

San Shwe Aung

**C**O-FOUNDER and Chief Executive Officer of internet based Facebook social media network Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan have announced the birth of their first child, a baby girl, on 1st December 2015. Actually their baby was born a week earlier during last week of November. The world media was enchanted with so called "two birth announcements", meaning a baby girl and to one of the world's biggest charities in 21st century. The baby girl Max (full name is Maxima Chan Zuckerberg) arrival to the world is actually blessed with auspicious light of hope for millions of newborn babies as well as children under 5, under 10 and even adolescent all over the world. The reason is that the couple have pledged to give away 99% of their Facebook shares in their lifetime, currently worth \$45 Billion! The donation is almost all he owns. Mark Zuckerberg personal wealth is estimated to be \$46.8 Billion as of 1st December 2015 and he is ranked by Forbes as the 7th richest American. It is however mind boggling the fact that Zuckerberg receives \$1 (one dollar) salary as Chief Executive Officer of Facebook. His charities of \$45 Billion will be donated to Chan Zuckerberg Initiative because they want to make the world a better place for his daughter Max to grow up in. Actually Mr. Zuckerberg wrote a letter to his newborn daughter on 1st December 2015 saying that Chan Zuckerberg Initiative is "to advance human potential and promote equality for all children in the next generation". After revealing his wife, Priscilla Chan, had given birth to their first child, Max, Zuckerberg announced the creation of a charity organization called the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. The charity, which has "the mission of advancing human potential and promoting equality", will be administered by the Facebook CEO himself and is already on track to be worth a potential \$3 Billion by 2018. Zuckerberg announced the move on Facebook in the form of a letter to his baby:

Dear Max,

Your mother and I don't yet have the words to describe the hope you give us for the future. Your new life is full of promise, and

*we hope you will be happy and healthy so you can explore it fully. You've already given us a reason to reflect on the world we hope you live in. Like all parents, we want you to grow up in a world better than ours today. While headlines often focus on what's wrong, in many ways the world is getting better. Health is improving. Poverty is shrinking. Knowledge is growing. People are connecting. Technological progress in every field means your life should be dramatically better than ours today. We will do our part to make this happen, not only because we love you, but also because we have a moral responsibility to all children in the next generation. We believe all lives have equal value, and that includes the many more people who will live in future generations than live today. Our society has an obligation to invest now to improve the lives of all those coming into this world, not just those already here.*

Zuckerberg plans to finance the endeavor using his stock options. Some 99% of his shares will go to the charity – the tech tycoon owns 4m shares of class A common stock and 419m shares of class B, which have the majority of voting rights. "During his lifetime, he will gift or otherwise direct substantially all of his shares of Facebook stock, or the net after-tax proceeds from sales of such shares, to further the mission of advancing human potential and promoting equality by means of philanthropic, public advocacy, and other activities for the public good," the company said in the filing. But it's not the executive's first foray into charity. Recently, Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Richard Branson and others announced an initiative to invest in new energy sources to stem the rising tide of climate change. Perhaps it will be of interest for the readers to look back at the brief history of Zuckerberg, who was born on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1984, White Plains, New York, US. He is the son of dentist Edward Zuckerberg and psychiatrist Karen Kempner. He and his three sisters, were brought up in Dobbs Ferry, New York, a small Westchester County village about 21 miles (34 km) north of Midtown Manhattan. Zuckerberg began using computers and writing software in middle school. His father taught him Atari BASIC Programming in the 1990s, and later hired

software developer David Newman to tutor him privately. Newman calls him a "prodigy", adding that it was "tough to stay ahead of him". Zuckerberg took a graduate course in the subject at Mercy College near his home while still in high school. He enjoyed developing computer programs, especially communication tools and games. In one such program, since his father's dental practice was operated from their home, he built a software program he called "ZuckNet" that allowed all the computers between the house and dental office to communicate with each other. By the time he began classes at Harvard, Zuckerberg had already achieved a "reputation as a programming prodigy. He introduced a website which went up over a weekend; but after few days, the college shut it down because its popularity had overwhelmed one of Harvard's network switches and prevented students from accessing the Internet. In addition, many students complained that their photos were being used without permission. Zuckerberg apologized publicly, and the student paper ran articles stating that his site was "completely improper". In January 2004, Zuckerberg began writing code for a new website. On February 4, 2004, Zuckerberg launched "Thefacebook", originally located at [thefacebook.com](http://thefacebook.com). Six days after the site launched, three Harvard seniors, Cameron inklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss, and Divya Narendra, accused Zuckerberg of intentionally misleading them into believing he would help them build a social network called HarvardConnection.com, while he was instead using their ideas to build a competing product. The three complained to the Harvard Crimson and the newspaper began an investigation in response. Following the official launch of the Facebook social media platform, the three filed a lawsuit against Zuckerberg that resulted in a settlement. The agreed settlement was for 1.2 million Facebook shares that were worth US\$300 million. Zuckerberg dropped out of Harvard in his second year to complete his project. He recalled that "I remember really vividly, you know, having pizza with my friends a day or two after—I opened up the first version of Facebook at the time I thought, you know, someone needs to build

a service like this for the world. But I just never thought that we'd be the ones to help do it. And I think a lot of what it comes down to is we just cared more". Zuckerberg launched Facebook from his Harvard dormitory room on February 4, 2004. An earlier inspiration for Facebook may have come from the preparation school from which Zuckerberg graduated in 2002. Once at college, Zuckerberg's Facebook started off as just a "Harvard thing" until Zuckerberg decided to spread it to other schools, enlisting the help of roommate Dustin Moskovitz. After Zuckerberg moved to Palo Alto, California with Moskovitz and some friends, they leased a small house that served as an office. Over the summer, Zuckerberg met Peter Thiel who invested in the company. They got their first office in mid-2004. According to Zuckerberg, the group planned to return to Harvard but eventually decided to remain in California. They had already turned down offers by major corporations to buy the company. In an interview in 2007, Zuckerberg explained his reasoning: "It's not because of the amount of money. For me and my colleagues, the most important thing is that we create an open information flow for people. Having media corporations owned by conglomerates is just not an attractive idea to me." He restated these goals to *Wired* magazine in 2010: "The thing I really care about is the mission, making the world open." Earlier, in April 2009, Zuckerberg sought the advice of former Netscape CEO Peter Currie about financing strategies for Facebook. On July 21, 2010, Zuckerberg reported that the company reached the 500 million-user mark. When asked whether Facebook could earn more income from advertising as a result of its phenomenal growth, he explained: "I guess we could.... If you look at how much of our page is taken up with ads compared to the average search query. The average for us is a little less than 10 percent of the pages and the average for search is about 20 percent taken up with ads.... That's the simplest thing we could do. But we aren't like that. We make enough money. Right, I mean, we are keeping things running; we are growing at the rate we want to". In 2010, Zuckerberg was chosen as number 16 in *New Statesman's* an-

nual survey of the world's 50 most influential figures. In a 2011 interview with PBS after the death of Steve Jobs, Apple Co. co-founder, Zuckerberg said that Jobs had advised him on how to create a management team at Facebook that was "focused on building as high quality and good things as you are". Alongside other American technology figures like Jeff Bezos and Tim Cook, Zuckerberg hosted visiting Chinese politician Lu Wei, known as the "Internet czar" for his influence in the enforcement of China's online policy, at Facebook's headquarters on December 8, 2014. Zuckerberg met fellow student Priscilla Chan at a fraternity party during his sophomore year at Harvard. They began dating in 2003. Chan is the daughter of Chinese-Vietnamese refugees, who arrived in the U.S. after the Fall of Saigon in 1975. She was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, and is a 2003 graduate of Quincy High School. In September 2010, Zuckerberg invited Chan, by then a medical student at the University of California, to move into his rented Palo Alto house. Zuckerberg studied Mandarin in preparation for the couple's visit to the People's Republic of China in December 2010. On May 19, 2012, Zuckerberg and Chan married in Zuckerberg's backyard in an event that also celebrated her graduation from medical school. On July 31, 2015, Zuckerberg announced that he and Chan were expecting a baby girl. He said he felt confident that the risk of miscarrying was low so far into the pregnancy, after Chan had already suffered three miscarriages. On December 1, 2015 at 21:08 BST, Zuckerberg announced the birth of his first child, Max Zuckerberg and Chan also announced that they would give away 99% of their shares in Facebook to good causes. Mark Zuckerberg is the founder and CEO of Facebook, which he started in his college dormitory room in 2004 with roommates Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. More than 1 billion people now use Facebook each day, on average, viewing videos more than 8 billion times daily.

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# Maintaining Myanmar's carbon-sink status discussed at workshop

Myanmar has been ranked second in the world among countries most exposed and vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change

**Khaing Thanda Lwin**

A KNOWLEDGE sharing workshop on the outcome of COP-21 and its implications in Myanmar took place in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The meeting focused on exchanging the latest information on the challenges of climate change.

The main purpose of the workshop is to share the outcomes of the recently-conducted 21st session of the conference of the parties to UNFCCC (COP 21) on 7 and 8 December in Paris, and to discuss possibilities for Myanmar to deliver the provisions of the Paris Agreement.

The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry, the United Nations Development Programmes and relevant organisations participated in the discussions.

The activities of the Myanmar delegates during the COP-21 and an overview of COP-21 and the 11th session of the con-

ference of parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP11) were among the topics discussed at the meeting.

The long-term temperature goal agreed to in Paris was a key point in the discussion. Participants also discussed highlights of some side events on financing climate change plans.

"Adaptation is important to the country and building climate resilience remains our absolute priority," said Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, Deputy Minister for Environmental Conservation and Forestry Ministry.

The forestry and energy sectors play an important role in maintaining the country's carbon-sink status included in the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution, which was submitted to the United Nations in September this year.

"Climate change represents a major challenge for Myanmar as it is frequently affected by climate-included disasters such as



Dignitaries pose for photo at knowledge sharing workshop on the outcome of COP-21 and its implications. PHOTO: MNA

droughts, floods and cyclones. It is also rated as one of the most vulnerable countries affected by extreme weather events," said

Mr Toily Kurbanov, Country Director of UNDP.

"With 25.6 % of the population living below the pov-

erty line, the effects of climate change are felt disproportionately by the poorest and most vulnerable people of Myanmar."

## Ta'ang community celebrates New Year

THE Ta'ang community – an ethnic minority group in Myanmar – celebrated its tradition-

al New Year in Namsan, Shan State, on 19 December.

The New Year festival was

the first of its kind in the town for the community, attracting residents of villages in the surrounding hills.

During the two-day festival, Ta'ang youths performed traditional dances.

At the festival, U Maung Kyaw, the chairman of the Central Committee of the Palaung Self-Administered Zone, gave the opening speech, and U Saw Lwin explained the history of the Ta'ang people and their traditional culture. U Shwe Kye-in explained the meaning of the Ta'ang New Year.

The Ta'ang National flag was flown at the festival, a traditional orchestra performed at midnight.—Myint Aung



Ta'ang ethnic ladies perform dances at New Year festival. PHOTO: AUNG MOE

## Foreign investment creates over 300,000 jobs

FOREIGN investment has created more than 300,000 jobs over the past four and a half years, according to the Directorate of Investment Company Administration, with its director general expecting more to come after this year.

U Aung Naing Oo said the inflow of foreign investment

brings about employment opportunities, encouraging new lines of products, boosting exports and introducing production technology and management.

Singapore tops the list of foreign investors in Myanmar, followed by South Korea, Hong Kong and other Asian countries investing in the oil, gas and elec-

tricity sectors.

The government has set up special economic zones in Thilawa in Yangon Region, Kyaukphyu in Rakhine State and Dawei in Taninthayi Region.

The Thilawa SEZ alone has attracted over US\$500 million from 48 companies in 12 countries.—Myanma News Agency

## Myanma Apex Bank opened new branch in Dawei

MYANMA Apex Bank (MAB) opened its branch in Dawei yesterday.

The bank's branch is located on Bogyoke Street, Dawei, Taninthayi Region. Banking services of

MAB include deposits, loans and cash management services between banks and different branches in Myanmar.

The opening ceremony was attended by the Speaker of the

Taninthayi Region Hluttaw U Htin Aung Kyaw, members of the Taninthayi Region government, chairman of MAB bank U Chit Khaing, and departmental officials.—U Sein Win (Dawei)

### Crime News

## Arrests made for possession of yabba pills in Magway

MAGWAY Authorities seized marijuana, yabba pills and other items at the house of one Ma Cho, 35 in Myothit township, Magway on 18 December.

The police discovered around 1.2 grams of marijuana, 22 yabba tablets, a 10 inch knife and K105550 from one U Soe Tint, 55 who was searched at the home of one Ma Cho. A third suspect managed to escape police after fleeing the scene.

The Myothit police station is filing charges against them under anti-Narcotic Act.—Kyaw Zay Ya

## Heroin and pills seized in Maisat

LOCAL Maisat authorities seized yabba pills and heroin at a house in Mae Kyant village, Maisat Township on Monday. Acting on a tip-off, members of the police searched a house

owned by one Saw Dar, 33 and found 380 yabba tablets in plastic bottles and 0.15 kilograms of heroin. Charges have been filed under the anti-Narcotic law.



Saw Dar, 33, is seen together with seizure. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE



# Google, Ford in talks on self-driving car partnership

WASHINGTON — Google and Ford Motor Co are in talks about forming a partnership to develop autonomous car technology, a person briefed on the matter said yesterday.

The extent of a partnership between the second-largest US automaker and search engine giant Alphabet Inc remains under discussion and the precise framework of any effort is unclear but it could include jointly building and developing cars.

The two sides have been talking for months, the source said.

A partnership between a major automaker and Google could speed the introduction of self-driving vehicles by giving the car company access to Google's wealth of software development while Google would benefit from the industrial and automotive know-how of a firm such as Ford.

Fully autonomous cars could eventually prevent thousands of crashes, deaths and injuries, reduce oil use through better traffic management and extend personal mobility to people unable to drive.

Ford Chief Executive Mark

Fields met with Google co-founder Sergey Brin earlier this month in California to discuss the status of the talks, the source, who was briefed on the matter, said.

Google says it is in talks with many automakers. It is not clear if the talks with Ford have progressed beyond discussions with other automakers.

"We're not going to comment on rumour or speculation about specific conversations," Google said in a statement.

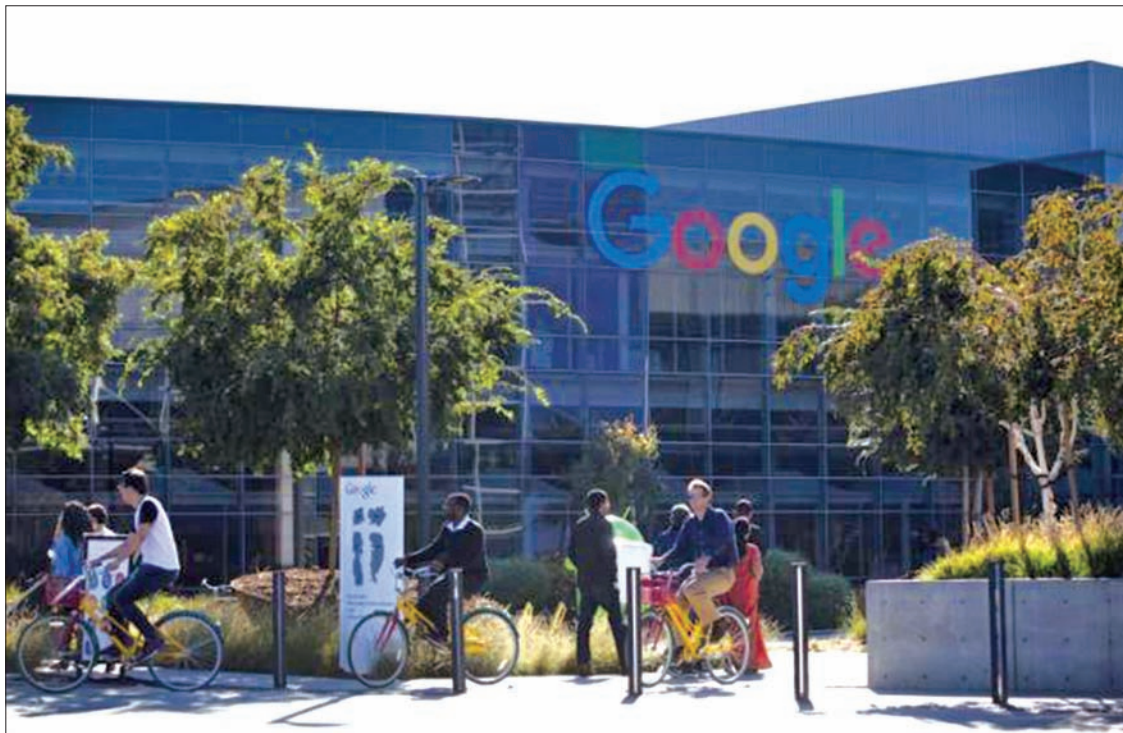
Ford declined to confirm or deny talks with Google.

"We have been, and will continue working with many companies and discussing a variety of subjects," Ford spokesman Alan Hall said.

Google has logged more than 1.3 million miles of autonomous driving. It has developed a prototype pod-like self-driving car that could be driven without a steering wheel and pedals.

Automotive News reported Monday the companies are in talks to have the automaker build Google's next-generation autonomous cars.

Yahoo Autos reported the two firms will create a joint venture to build self-driving vehicles



The new Google logo is seen at the Google headquarters in Mountain View, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

with Google's technology. Both said an announcement on the partnership could be made at the Consumer Electronics Show in early January.

Ford shares were up 3.4 per cent, or \$0.47 a share, to \$14.20 on news of the potential partner-

ship. Google rose 0.3 per cent, or \$2.23, to \$750 a share.

Karl Brauer, senior analyst at Kelley Blue Book, said both partners could benefit. "An alliance between the two industries could make everything happen much quicker," Brauer said.

Ford's former CEO, Alan Mulally, is a director at Google, while Google named John Krafcik as chief executive of its self-driving car project in September. Krafcik worked at Ford for 14 years in a number of positions.—Reuters

## In China's jewellery hub, gold loses sparkle for wary buyers

SHENZHEN — As Chinese consumers cut back on gold purchases for a second year in a row, nowhere is the slowdown being felt more than in the country's once-bustling jewellery manufacturing and retail hub of Shuibei.

Gold demand has taken a hit from a slowing economy and Beijing's anti-corruption drive, which has cut demand for luxury products, but there are fears of a more protracted loss of confidence among buyers in the world's top consumer of the precious metal.

With buying in No.2 consumer India also soft, another year of weak Chinese demand would help pile more pressure on global gold prices languishing near six-year lows.

The hundreds of jewellery stores in Shuibei, a district of Shenzhen only a short hop over the border from Hong Kong, have seen business take a downturn since a buying boom peaked in 2013 as once-voracious Chinese consumers turn cautious.

"They don't have confidence in gold now given the weak prices, so demand won't pick up anytime soon," said Wang Zhichang, regional manager of the Glory Gold store, adding revenue was likely to fall a further 10 per cent next year on top of a drop of 10-20 per cent this year.

Wang, who was among 30 staff in the store at a time when there were no customers, said that a number of jewellery factories had closed in the past



Staff wait for customers inside an empty gold and jewellery store in Shenzhen's Shuibei District, one of China's biggest jewellery retail and production hubs, in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen on 17 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

year in the area.

Big retail chains, including Chow Tai Fook, the top jewellery by market value, are also closing branches and cutting back store openings in the mainland and Hong Kong.

Chow Tai Fook last month reported a 42 per cent drop in net profit in the April-September period and said it would open only a net of 60 stores in China in its current financial year ending March, from a previous target of 150.

"Customers have become more rational with their purchases," a company spokesperson said by email.

Illustrating the strains in the industry, Chinese banks have begun to see loan defaults by jewellery manufacturers, hurt by weak

sales, Reuters reported last month.

From just 200 tonnes in 2003, Chinese demand for gold jewellery, bars and coins hit an all-time high of more than 1,000 tonnes in 2013, when prices of the metal snapped a 12-year rally.

Demand has since fallen back and with prices now down by more than a third since 2012 Chinese confidence has weakened in gold as an investment.

One of the biggest blows to China's gold consumption has been the pullback of "dama" buying, a Chinese term for middle-aged women known for their love of hunting out a bargain.

They were at the forefront of the 2013 gold rush but many have had their fingers burnt as gold has repeatedly hit multi-year lows.

"The golden period of China's dama demand has passed," said Shu Jiang, chief analyst at Shandong Gold Group, the parent of Shandong Gold Mining Co Ltd.

Shu said unless there was a drastic price drop over a short period of time, the dama were unlikely to return, though others argued that what is really required is a rebound in prices.

"Ironically, what you actually need to see for physical demand to pick up is for prices to rally," said Victor Tianpiriya, commodity strategist at ANZ, who expects Chinese demand to decline next year.

"The confidence in gold as a supposed safe haven or as an investment has been battered over the last few years," said Tianpiriya.

Indian demand has also taken a hit and in the December quarter is likely to fall to the lowest in eight years, hurt by poor investment demand and droughts that have slashed earnings for millions of farmers.

A slump in demand in the two biggest consumers could further pressure miners, such as Barrick Gold Corp, which has been forced to sell assets and cut costs to trim debt amid a slide in profits from three years of falling global gold prices.

Though a fall in the value of local currencies in big producers such as Australia and South Africa has partly shielded miners' exposure to weaker demand.—Reuters

## Swiss watch exports have worst November in five years

ZURICH — Watch exports from Switzerland, home to Richemont (CFR.VX), Swatch Group (UHR.VX) and LVMH's (LVMH.PA) Tag Heuer and Hublot brands, recorded their worst November in five years as sales to top market Hong Kong plunged more than a quarter.

In November 2014, exports had already started to fall as the biggest market for timepieces, Hong Kong, and neighbouring China slumped. This November, exports to Hong Kong dropped 27.1 per cent, while in China they were up compared with a weak figure in the previous year.

This was the first November since 2010 in which watch exports fell below 2 billion Swiss francs (£1.3 billion).

"Watch exports remained depressed during the month of November despite a more favourable base effect and one additional working day," the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry said. "The situation clearly illustrates the difficult international context facing the Swiss watch industry."

Vontobel analyst Rene Weber saw flat or falling exports to China and further troubles in Hong Kong as retailers decrease inventory, but expected the overall market to pick up by the end of next year.—Reuters



## Fitness more protective among normal-weight people

WASHINGTON — Aerobic fitness is generally tied to a longer life, but the same can't be said for obese people, according to new research.

In a study of nearly 1.3 million young Swedish men, the least fit normal-weight men were still less likely to die over the next few decades than the most fit of the obese men.

The new findings suggest it's more important to be a normal weight at a young age than it is to be fit, said senior author Peter Nordstrom, of Umea University in Sweden.

He and his colleagues write in the *International Journal of Epidemiology* that the concept of fitness compensating for obesity has emerged in recent years. Evaluation of the "fat but fit" concept could have implications for public health.

About 40 per cent of the world's adults were overweight in

2014, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Of those, 13 per cent were obese, which is defined as a body mass index (BMI) — a measure of weight in relation to height — of 30 or more.

As BMI increases, so does the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal problems and some cancers, the WHO says.

The new study started tracking the men at age 18 and followed them for an average of 29 years. In addition to weight and height, the researchers measured the men's fitness by seeing how long they could pedal on a bicycle before getting tired.

During the follow-up period, 44,301 participants died.

The researchers found that men who originally placed in the top-fifth of fitness at the beginning of the study in 1969 were about half as likely to die as those



PHOTO: REUTERS

who placed in the bottom-fifth of fitness. When the researchers separated the participants based on BMI, they found a decreasing benefit of fitness on risk of death as BMI increased.

For example, among normal-weight men, those in the top half of fitness at the start of the study were about 34 per cent less likely to die during follow up than those in the bottom half. That benefit shrunk to 28 per cent

among overweight individuals and 26 per cent for obese people with a BMI between 30 and 34.

The benefit of fitness on death risk disappeared for severely obese people with a BMI above 35.

Nordstrom told Reuters Health by email that the results argue against the so-called obesity paradox, which suggests being heavier may be somewhat protective against poor health.

However, he can't explain why fitness wasn't associated with the risk of death among obese people in the new study.

Nordstrom said the new findings "do not mean that obese people should not exercise."

He said the next step would be to experiment with interventions to determine the effects of exercise instead of relying on observational data, which can't prove cause and effect.—Reuters

## NASA cancels launch of next Mars probe due to instrument leak

CAPE CANAVERAL — A US science satellite slated to launch to Mars in March has been grounded due to a leak in a key research instrument, NASA said yesterday, creating uncertainty about the future of a widely anticipated effort to study the interior of the planet.

The spacecraft, known as InSight, was designed to help scientists learn more about the formation of rocky planets, including Earth.

The cancellation raises questions about the future of the research effort, as it will be another 26 months before Earth and Mars are favourably aligned for a launch.

Over the next couple of months, NASA will assess options for repairing the faulty instrument, a sensitive seismometer that was provided by the French space agency, CNES.

Budgetary limits may factor into a pending decision on whether NASA will proceed with the programme.

After landing on Mars, InSight was designed to detect quakes and other seismic activities, as well as measure how much heat is being released from the planet's subsurface and monitor Mars' wobble — or variations in its orbit — as it circles

the sun.

The troubled seismometer, which detects minute vibrations, features sensors encased in a nine-inch (23-cm) wide vacuum sphere, which has been plagued by a series of leaks since August.

Engineers believed they had fixed the problems, but another leak surfaced on Monday during testing.

"We just don't have enough time to find the leak, fix it and still make it to the launch pad in March," John Grunsfeld, NASA associate administrator for science, said during a phone call with reporters.

InSight arrived last week at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California to begin preparations ahead of a launch targeted for 18 March.

The costs for the InSight mission, including launch and data analysis, are capped at \$675 million, up from an initial \$425 million, NASA Planetary Sciences Division Director Jim Green told reporters.

So far, the US space agency has spent \$525 million on the program, including buying an Atlas 5 rocket from United Launch Alliance, a partnership of Lockheed Martin and Boeing.—Reuters

## S Korea's full recovery rate of cancer reaches 70 per cent

SEOUL — More than two out of three cancer patients in South Korea made a full recovery from the fatal disease thanks to developed medical science and advanced screening system, a government report said on Tuesday.

The rate of cancer patients surviving for more than five years, which means a de-facto complete recovery, reached 69.4 per cent during the five-year period from 2009 to 2013, according to the Ministry of Health and Welfare.

It was up a whopping 15.6 percentage points from 53.8 per cent tallied during the 2001-2005 period.

The higher survival rate was attributed to advanced medical science and early diagnosis through regular checkups as well as behaviour to live a healthy life. A rising number of South Korean men quits smoking, contributing to the higher survival rate.

The highest rate of surviving for more than five years was thyroid cancer with 100.2 per cent. It means that thyroid cancer patients even had a higher rate of survival than non-cancer patients.

More than 90 per cent of patients diagnosed with prostate and breast cancers were completely healed during the cited five-year period, while more than 70 per

cent of colorectal and gastric cancer patients won a permanent cure. However, the survival rates for patients diagnosed with pancreatic, lung and liver cancers were relatively low at 9.4 per cent, 23.5 per cent and 31.4 per cent respectively.

The number of new cancer patients reached 225,343 in 2013, down from 226,216 a year earlier. It marked the first reduction since the related data began to be compiled in 1999.

The cancer incidence rate, which gauges the number of new cancer patient per 100,000 people, was 311.6 in 2013, down from 322.3 in 2012.—Xinhua

## White House releases plan to fight multidrug-resistant tuberculosis

WASHINGTON — The White House on Tuesday released a plan to combat what it called a "global rise" of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB).

The National Action Plan identified actions the US government will take in the next three or five years, including ensuring that all patients with TB are promptly detected and treated and that people in close contact with such patients are identified, monitored, and if necessary, treated.

"Although any transmission of TB is of public health importance, an outbreak sparked by an individual with undiagnosed MDR-TB or XDR-TB (extensively drug-resistant TB) could have serious consequences due to the difficulty and costs associated with treating patients infected with these resistant strains," according to a statement released by the White House. The plan also included a goal of improving international capacity and collabora-

tion to combat the disease, which will be done through "strategic investments" to broaden access to diagnosis and treatment in the most affected communities.

In addition, the White House called for accelerating research to combat MDR-TB, including developing rapid tests to diagnose TB, novel therapies and drug regimens to cure TB and MDR-TB within weeks, and new vaccines with the potential to prevent all forms of TB.—Xinhua



## US lifted Uzbekistan's rights ranking as cotton field abuses continued

SAMARKAND — The news reached Dmitry Tihonov in Uzbekistan's rural heartland as the labour activist quietly recorded the arrival of thousands of teachers, nurses, labourers, students and other conscripts sent to the fields to pick cotton.

A fire had destroyed Tihonov's home office. When he returned to search the debris on 29 October, his reports for international monitors documenting the annual mobilization had vanished.

Human rights groups say Tihonov is a victim of Uzbekistan's efforts to conceal a massive, state-orchestrated forced labour system that underpins its position as the world's fifth-largest cotton exporter. They cite regular arrests, intimidation and harassment of activists.

The activist from Angren, a town about 62 miles (100 km) east of the capital Tashkent, says he's under constant surveillance by local authorities to remind people "it's better to keep away from me" — an allegation that Reuters could not independently confirm.

Persecution of activists is among many abuses cited by witnesses and



A cotton picker is at work during this year's harvest in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan in October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

human rights groups that fueled discord in the Obama administration this year over how much criticism Central Asia's most populous nation deserved in the US State Department's annual report on modern slavery.

In a previously undisclosed memo, analysts in the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons called forced labour "endemic" during the cotton harvest and said

Uzbekistan had "failed to make significant and sustained efforts" to improve its record. The early 2015 memo, reviewed by Reuters, recommended keeping Uzbekistan in the lowest tier of the report's rankings, raising the specter of economic sanctions on a country whose cotton is used in yarn and fabric that play a significant role in the global supply chain.

But senior US diplomats rejected the recommendation, downplaying

concerns about human rights in a strategically important country.

The landlocked nation of deserts, mountains and steppes was a transit point for US troops and supplies during the war in neighbouring Afghanistan. Washington now wants its help preventing the spread of Islamic militants, stabilizing Afghanistan and offsetting Russian influence in the region.

When the State Department issued its 2015

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report in July, Uzbekistan was elevated from the bottom tier of violators. Uzbekistan doesn't meet "minimum standards" to end trafficking, the report said, but it is "making significant efforts" — a caveat absent from the analysts' assessment.

Uzbekistan's government makes an estimated \$1 billion a year from cotton sales, and the harvest mobilizations of roughly a million people that date to Soviet times are characterized as a patriotic duty. Uzbek officials did not answer repeated requests for comment but generally argue that citizens pick cotton voluntarily.

A Reuters examination — based on interviews with local officials, activists and workers in the fields — found that while the country has made progress ending child labor in the harvest, it has intensified recruitment of adults and older teenagers using the same coercive approach.

The State Department's decision to rebuff its experts' recommendation and upgrade Uzbekistan's rating in the trafficking report reinforces a Reuters article in August that said

senior diplomats inflated assessments of 14 strategically important countries in the annual review, including the central Asian country. The yearly review is meant to independently grade countries on trafficking and forced labour.

Despite Uzbekistan's progress barring children from the fields, "I don't see any evidence that this very fundamental form of coercive labour has changed," says former US ambassador-at-large Mark Lagon, who headed the State Department's anti-trafficking office from 2007-2009. Uzbekistan still has a "miserable human rights profile."

Asked for comment, a State Department official defended Uzbekistan's upgrade, saying the department stands by "the integrity of the process" for determining country rankings.

"Are they still mobilizing workers? Yes," said a senior official who accompanied Secretary of State John Kerry on a 1 November visit to Uzbekistan. But "if you don't show recognition of improved behavior (on child labor), you risk them deciding it's not worth the effort and then doing nothing." —Reuters

## Venezuela opposition says Socialists seek to challenge 22 new lawmakers

CARACAS — Venezuela's opposition on Tuesday accused the ruling Socialist Party of seeking to block 22 lawmakers from taking office in January in what it described as an effort to undermine the opposition's commanding victory in this month's legislative election.

However, Venezuela's Supreme Court put out a statement late Tuesday

evening saying that no judicial action had been received with the objective of challenging election results.

Since the opposition won a two-thirds majority in the 6 December legislative vote, the government of President Nicolas Maduro has set up a parallel grassroots assembly and said it will tap new Supreme Court judges before the new National Assembly convenes

in January. The head of the opposition coalition, Jesus Torrealba, said the Socialist Party had filed a request to the Supreme Court that they prevent the lawmakers from taking office on 5 January, when the next Congress convenes. "Today they want to win in the halls of bureaucracy what they couldn't win with the votes of the people," said Torrealba during a news conference, flanked by

leading opposition figures, including two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles. "With this attitude, opposing the will of the people, they're losing what little legitimacy they had."

Torrealba did not say which deputies would be prevented from taking office, nor on what grounds the Socialist Party was lodging the legal challenge.

The Socialist Party

were not immediately available for comment.

Contesting election results in Venezuela generally involves making appeals to the National Electoral Council to allege irregularities at polling stations that could have altered results or formally challenging the vote tallies used to determine the winners. Maduro has not announced plans to mount a challenge via the elector-

al authority. He has instead called for an investigation into what he called large numbers of null votes, and one party leader has called on prosecutors to investigate alleged vote buying by opposition activists.

The opposition's 112 lawmakers-elect give it a coveted two-thirds majority, which allows it to shake up institutions and sack cabinet ministers. —Reuters

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (072N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 24.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

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Phone No: 2301185



## Cambodian garment manufacturers say no wage for workers during protests

PHNOM PENH — The Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia (GMAC) said yesterday that factories will not pay wages for the workers during their protests according to law.

Article 332 of the Cambodian Labour Law stipulates that during a strike, the allowance for work is not provided and the salary is not paid.

"GMAC expresses the employers' firm stand in applying the above-mentioned article with regard to the recent violent strike at both Manhattan and Tai Seng Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Bavet city, Svay Rieng Province," the association said in a statement.

"The principle of No-Work-No-Pay is simple

and logic and it provides a fair treatment between employer and employee," it added.

GMAC also renewed its call on the government to uphold the principle of the State of Law by enforcing the law without discrimination and prejudice.

The statement came after thousands of factory workers at the two SEZs staged protests since last Wednesday to demand higher wages.

Some of the protesters had thrown rocks at factories, causing serious damages to factory properties.

On Tuesday, police used water cannon to disperse the protesters after they pelted police with stones, leaving two police officers injured.—Xinhua

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- Open Tender is invited for the Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise, the Ministry of Energy for the Conveyance of Yetagun Condensate 1.05 Million Barrels ( $\pm 5\%$ ) from Yetagun Marine Terminal Offshore to No.(1) Refinery (Thanlyin).
- Tender Closing Date: **28-1-2016** at (12:00) noon.
- Tender Opening Date: **28-1-2016** at (13:00) hrs.
- Delivery Time: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017
- Tender Documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing **30-12-2015** on payment of the Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyat 100,000) per set.
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## British EU exit could lead to UK break-up, warns ex-foreign secretary

LONDON — The United Kingdom could disintegrate if Britons vote to leave the European Union as it would give succor to the cause of Scottish nationalists, former Foreign Secretary William Hague said yesterday.

Hague, a former leader of Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party and considered to be a Euroskeptic, said he would back Britain remaining in the bloc despite his own great misgivings about the EU when an in/out referendum is held before the end of 2017.

"We will have to ask, disliking so many aspects of it as we do, whether we really want to weaken it, and at the same time increase the chances, if the UK left the EU, of Scotland leaving the UK," Hague wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper.

Hague spoke out after Cameron met fellow European leaders in Brussels last week to try to drum up support for his reform of Britain's relationship with the EU.

Critics in his party, which has been deeply divided over Europe for decades, say his negotiations are likely to achieve little of



A poster of the houses of Parliament is displayed alongside Union flag souvenirs for sale in London, Britain, on 17 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

any substance, with former Defence Secretary Liam Fox saying on Sunday it was time to "end the pretence" that Europe would change to accommodate Britain.

Hague said despite the EU's many failings, it provided stability for fragile democracies in central Europe and it would not be in Britain's interests for the

bloc to fall apart with such volatility in the Middle East and the world economies.

He said Scottish nationalists, who strongly support staying in the EU, would use a vote for exit as grounds to hold another referendum on independence, something Scots rejected by 55-45 per cent in September last year.

Hague said a second

vote in such circumstances would be too close to call.

"To end up destroying the United Kingdom and gravely weakening the European Union would not be a very clever day's work," Hague said. "So, even as a longstanding critic of so much of that struggling organization, I am unlikely in 2016 to vote to leave it."—*Reuters*

## UN assembly chief hails significance of tsunami resolution

NEW YORK — The president of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday underscored the significance of a just adopted resolution, led by Japan and Chile, to heighten awareness about tsunami, recognizing its link with a recent climate change deal and hoping survivors of calamities would play a role in disaster preparedness.

The resolution acknowledging tsunami as "a common challenge for many countries" and designating 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day received unanimous approval at a plenary meeting of the assembly Tuesday, following endorsement by the assembly's Economic and Financial Committee on 4 December.

Mogens Lykkesoft, the assembly's president, sees the relevance of the resolution to the landmark Paris agreement on climate change that recognizes the importance of addressing the adverse effects of global warming, noting the need

to implement what was decided in France on 12 December "as quickly as possible."

"But I think every effort you can do to increase the awareness of this kind of natural catastrophe is to avoid the potential big consequences (and) is very important," the former Danish foreign minister explained to Kyodo News in a one-on-one interview. "This is but one single step," he said of the resolution. "I commend the initiative of Japan."

The resolution recognizes "the significance of preparedness and the prompt dissemination of information through early warning systems" and other steps, referred to in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted as an international guideline of action at a UN conference in Sendai, Japan in March.

While the United Nations already designates 13 October as International Day for Disaster Reduction,

5 November is selected to highlight tsunami, coinciding with Iwamura-no-hi, which is mentioned in the resolution. On 5 November, 1854 a Japanese villager through his quick action saved lives when he set fire to sheaves of rice, thus warning them of the imminent danger of a tsunami.

Lykkesoft expressed a hope that tsunami survivors can come to the international body one day to help raise awareness, just as atomic bomb survivors from Japan have added value to global discussions on disarmament at the United Nations by recounting their experiences.

"I think that has been a very strong lesson coming from exactly those persons who survived," he said. "You could use the witnesses from natural disasters in the same way (as atomic bomb survivors) if they are willing to do it, to raise the awareness."

The General Assembly's adoption comes just ahead of the fifth anni-

versary on 11 March of the magnitude-9 offshore earthquake that triggered massive sea waves engulfing northeastern coastal regions of Japan. The disaster has left more than 18,000 people dead including those unaccounted for.

"The tragic impact of disasters would be greatly reduced and many lives and livelihoods would be saved if there was greater public awareness of the threats posed by both man-made and natural hazards, such as tsunamis," UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said through his office in an email welcoming the move.

At a regular press conference Tuesday, Japanese Ambassador Mothohide Yoshikawa expressed Japan's willingness to play a leading role in disaster reduction, saying, "We hope to lead to efforts that will minimize human loss and material damage." The document was drawn up by Japan, which worked with Chile, another disaster-prone country.—*Kyodo News*



## A bear attack sparks revenge quest in Pioneer tale 'The Revenant'

LOS ANGELES — Getting mauled by a grizzly bear usually spells a painful death, but for one man, a savage bear attack is the catalyst for a quest fueled by revenge, in a sweeping saga that uncovers man's willpower to survive against all odds.

"The Revenant," out in limited US theaters on Christmas Day, follows the story of Pioneer-era fur trapper Hugh Glass, who was mauled in a grizzly bear attack and left for dead by his companions.

Glass excruciatingly travels across vast, primitive landscapes in pursuit of retribution against the men who abandoned him, with scenes that do not shy away from the gruesome reality of his circumstances.

"It's a very primal, almost Biblical story of a man surviving in nature, the will to live, the perseverance of the human spirit, what we draw upon to survive against all odds," actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who plays Glass, told Reuters.

Mexican filmmaker Alejandro G. Inarritu, who won the best



Director of the movie Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu poses with cast members Leonardo DiCaprio and Forrest Goodluck at the premiere of "The Revenant" in Hollywood, California, on 16 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

picture Oscar this year for his intricately choreographed showbiz satire "Birdman," said he wanted to explore the cost of revenge in "The Revenant."

"Revenge is hollow — if

even succeeding in revenge brings you back what you lost or what you're looking for and if that's the meaning of life, if you accomplish it, then what is the meaning of life?" he said.

The film is likely to garner DiCaprio his fifth best actor Oscar nomination.

It is a stark difference from his last Oscar-nominated role as the fast-talking Jordan Belfort

in 2013's "The Wolf of Wall Street," as Glass is rendered voiceless for much of the film after his attack.

"(DiCaprio) doesn't need words to be great, he's just very great," said co-star Domhnall Gleeson.

The making of "The Revenant" is fast becoming a story in itself, from Inarritu's quest to shoot only in natural light in real snow-covered landscapes to DiCaprio telling media he had slept in animal carcasses during filming.

"That was at first a little bit of a struggle for some of us, but then it just became a matter of trust in Alejandro's vision," he said of the arduous shoot. "Once we had that, we started making some pretty powerful sequences in this movie."

For Tom Hardy, who plays the ruthless, unhinged John Fitzgerald, the hardest challenge was "enduring focus over a long period of time on very small but complicated beats." "The whole thing was a bit mind-altering," he said.—Reuters

## Reese Witherspoon sells divorce drama to ABC

LONDON — Actress Reese Witherspoon has sold her divorce drama "Please Don't Go" to television network ABC.

"Fear the Walking Dead" writer Meaghan Oppenheimer will pen the script for the show, said The Hollywood Reporter.

"Please Don't Go" follows the personal and professional life of a ruthless divorce attorney in Dallas.

Raised in the trailer parks of Texas, she has left behind a life

of struggle amid squalor, working her way into a corner office and mansion in Dallas' most prestigious neighbourhood. But beneath her facade of togetherness, she is plagued by self-destructive tendencies and long-hidden family secrets that begin to unravel her life.

Oppenheimer will executive produce the ABC Studios entry alongside Witherspoon and her studio-based Pacific Standard topper Bruna Papandrea.—PTI

## Kerry Washington selling 'French Country Compound' in LA

LOS ANGELES — Actress Kerry Washington is selling her Hollywood Hills mini-compound to an unknown buyer for an unknown amount.

The 38-year-old "Scandal" star and her producer husband Nnamdi Asomugha, bought the Cahuenga Pass area property about one and a half years ago for USD 1.865 million from actress and voiceover artist Nicole Sullivan, reported Variety. Originally built in the mid 1920s, the property stretches upto 3,855 square feet with 5 bedrooms and 5.5 bathrooms. Some of the nearby home and estates are owned by comic and television personality Kathy Griffin and Oscar-winning actor Forest Whitaker.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

## Johnny Depp leads Forbes' Most Overpaid Actors list

LOS ANGELES — Superstar Johnny Depp has topped the Forbes' Most Overpaid Actors list, courtesy the box office failure of his films like "Mortdecai", "Transcendence" and "The Lone Ranger".

According to the magazine, Depp, 52, only returned USD 1.20 for every USD 1 he was paid. The "Black Mass" star replaced last year's most overpaid movie actor Adam Sandler to top the list.

Actor Denzel Washington is on the second position, who returned just USD 6.50 for each USD 1 he was paid.

However, Washington's ranking is possibly due to an "inflated paycheck" as none of his last three films appear to have lost money.

The top five also include Will Ferrell, Liam Neeson and Will Smith.

Ferrell's most recent films returned only around USD 6.8 for every dollar the actor was paid.

For Neeson and Smith the amount was USD 6.50 per USD 8.6 respectively.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS



# El Gordo trumps politics as lottery fever grips Spain

MADRID — Lottery fever gripped Spain yesterday as thousands celebrated wins in the El Gordo draw with prizes totaling 2.24 billion euros (\$2.45 billion), offering a welcome distraction from political concerns after an inconclusive election.

Winners from across the country flocked to local retail outlets to toast their good fortune with bottles of sparkling cava in the traditional Christmas lottery, the world's largest.

This year's top prize — the eponymous El Gordo, or The Fat One — went to the coastal tourist town of Roquetas de Mar, in the southern province of Almeria, where a group of residents will share at least 452 million euros (\$496 million).

Every year millions of Spaniards club together with friends, family or co-workers to each buy fractions of the same ticket in the over 200-year-old lottery which, on winning numbers, pays out 400,000 euros for every 20 euros wagered.

This year's draw, like others a huge collective affair, provided a welcome distraction from Sunday's national election, which plunged the country into a political stalemate and ended almost four decades of two-party rule.



Men dressed in costumes attend the draw of Spain's Christmas Lottery "El Gordo" (The Fat One) in Madrid, Spain, on 22 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

Laujar, another Almeria town of 1,600 people, won 320 million euros. "Almost everyone in the town has a share, and even if it's split between everybody, it will go to working people, to those that need the money a lot," its mayor told Europa Press as people danced in the street.

Spaniards spent close to 2.6 billion euros on tickets this year, according to the government agency that runs the draw, with some waiting for hours in queues that snaked around city blocks.

Many then stayed glued to TV screens for hours more as schoolchildren plucked lottery

balls from a rotating drum, singing out the resulting numbers in a chant that filled offices and homes. Ticket sales were higher than last year, suggesting a loosening of the purse strings in a country that is rebounding from an economic crisis that left nearly one in four workers out of a job. —Reuters

# 70 unique colours make Sapporo's beautiful landscape

SAPPORO — Light of snow. Yezo deer. Development commissioner. Believe it or not, these are all names of colours.

The city of Sapporo in the northernmost Japanese prefecture of Hokkaido has its own palette of 70 colours that suit its climate and landscape. Constructors are encouraged to refer to the colours when painting new buildings to maintain the coherence of the scenery.

Hiromi Miyauchi, a native of Sapporo and professor emeritus at Shizuoka University of Art and Culture, chose the 70 colours together with local residents including house painters. In 2000, at the request of the municipal government, the group studied a total of 10 areas in the city to establish a standard for building colours.

According to Miyauchi, each city has different colours that best suits its landscape. In Sapporo, which is located at a high latitude, light is more blue-tinged and the air is more transparent compared with other places at lower latitudes.

After years of research and analysis, Miyauchi found out that under Sapporo conditions, white and other bright colours as well as cold colours are perceived by many as beautiful. The group chose 70 colours based on the research results, and they were designated as the standard colours for the walls of large buildings in 2004.

The group gave each colour a unique name that evokes a visual scene.

For example, "Beer brown" reminds people of the colour of beer just poured into a jug. "Yukigemizu" is a dusky beige colour associated with snow that has just started to melt in the warmth of early spring.

"(The economy of) Sapporo grew rapidly and there was a time when the city's landscape lacked coherence," said Masahiko Ito, 61, senior managing director at a painting company who took part in the process of choosing the 70 colours.

"It will help revitalise the region" if people pay more attention to colours and preserve its landscape, he said.

Miyauchi said, "You can't make the landscape beautiful by controlling the colours of each building. What matters is the balance of colours in the whole city. I believe that we can improve the landscape if everyone takes into account the features peculiar to the region." —Kyodo News

## mitv Myanmar International

(24-12-2015 07:00 am~ 25-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

### Today Fresh

- 07:03 Am News
- 07:26 Am Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax
- 07:45 Am Living Myanmar Glazed Ceramics
- 08:03 Am News
- 08:26 Am Travelogue: A Tour in Korea (Ep-4)
- 08:38 Am Temple Stalls
- 08:44 Am A Visit To Today's Along-Daw-Katthapha
- 09:03 Am News
- 09:26 Am Products Of Myanmar – Velvet Slipper
- 09:39 Am Excavation At Kawhmu
- 09:48 Am Yangon Markets: Da Nyein Gone Market
- 10:03 Am News
- 10:26 Am Daingnak Style
- 10:40 Am International Dances in Myanmar

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

### Prime Time

- 07:03 Pm News
- 07:26 Pm A Journey To Southern Shan State (Ep-2)
- 07:48 Pm Rakhine Traditional Wedding Ceremony
- 08:03 Pm News
- 08:26 Pm Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP-1) The Culture Of Pennant Pillar
- 08:40 Pm Distinguished Myanmar Ladies "Tin Moe Lwin"
- 08:50 Pm Serene and Happy Rural Life in Myanmar

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

(For Detailed Schedule – [www.myanmaritv.com/schedule](http://www.myanmaritv.com/schedule))

## MRTV News Channel in Brief

(24-12-2015, Thursday)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6:00 am</b></li> <li>• Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw</li> <li><b>7:35 am</b></li> <li>• Weekly Entertainment News</li> <li><b>9:35 am</b></li> <li>• Beautiful ASEAN</li> <li><b>9:40 am</b></li> <li>• Documentary (ASEAN)</li> <li><b>10:15 am</b></li> <li>• Towards ASEAN Community</li> <li><b>11:15 am</b></li> <li>• Documentary</li> <li><b>11:35 am</b></li> <li>• Science and Technology Programme</li> <li><b>12:50 pm</b></li> <li>• Super Book (Part-1)</li> <li><b>3:35 pm</b></li> <li>• Real Story Real Movie</li> <li><b>4:15 pm</b></li> <li>• Documentary</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>5:15 pm</b></li> <li>• Weekly Sports Info</li> <li><b>5:35 pm</b></li> <li>• People's Talks</li> <li><b>6:35 pm</b></li> <li>• Current Affairs</li> <li><b>7:15 pm</b></li> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> <li><b>8:00 pm</b></li> <li>• News/ International News/ Weather Report</li> <li><b>8:45 pm</b></li> <li>• Documentary</li> <li><b>8:55 pm</b></li> <li>• Documentary (ASEAN Political Security Community (APSC))</li> <li><b>9:00 pm</b></li> <li>• News</li> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> <li>• Channel Zero (Part-1)</li> <li>• Clever</li> </ul> |
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Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

## MRTV Entertainment Channel

(24-12-2015, Thursday)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>6:00 am</b></li> <li>• The Mirror Images of The Musical Oldies</li> <li><b>6:15 am</b></li> <li>• Pyi Thu Ni Ti</li> <li><b>6:30 am</b></li> <li>• Nay Ma Win Ah Hla Myar</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>7:00 am</b></li> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> <li><b>7:50 am</b></li> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> <li><b>9:30 am</b></li> <li>• Myanmar Video</li> </ul> |
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# Shan United FC recruit three foreign players

SHAN United FC have recruited three foreign players for the upcoming tournament.

English defender Patrick, Brazil midfielder-cum striker Gustavo and midfielder Alika Mara signed a one year agreement with Shan United FC.

Patrick played as a defender in the Queen's Park Rangers FC, Swindon Town FC and Lincoln City FC while midfielder/striker Gustavo played for 5-year in Marcelino FC. Midfielder Alika Mara played in Nonthaburi

FC, Thailand.

Shan United FC will also pick up other foreign players in an attempt to get the championship, said club operator U Aung Paing. The club has a plan to hire an Asian striker, he added.

Shan United FC also signed an agreement with Nay Lin Tun and Hein Thiha Zaw of Ayeawady FC on a three-year contract as well as hired national professional players Hteik Hteik Aung, Hlaing Myo Aung and Thiha Sithu.—*Ko Moe*



Brazil midfielder Gustavo in action with the player of Magway FC in friendly match. PHOTO: KO MOE

# Djokovic and Serena Williams named ITF players of the year



Serena Williams. PHOTO: REUTERS



Novak Djokovic. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams were named men's and women's world champions for 2015 by the International Tennis Federation on Tuesday.

The Serb ended the year as men's world number one for the fourth time after taking three majors — the Australian, Wimbledon and US Open, as well as finishing runner-up to Stan Wawrinka in the French. Williams also narrowly missed a calendar-year grand slam, winning the Australian, French and Wimbledon and

reaching the her home US Open semi-final. Martina Hingis, of Switzerland, and India's Sania Mirza were named women's doubles world champions, with Jean-Julien Rojer, of the Netherlands, and Romania's Horia Tecau taking the men's award.

Hingis thus became an ITF world champion again 15 years after being crowned singles champion. Dalma Galfi, of Hungary, and USA's Taylor Fritz were named ITF junior champions. — *Reuters*

# Liverpool defender Skrtel out for six weeks

LONDON — Liverpool defender Martin Skrtel will be out for six weeks after suffering a hamstring and tendon injury, the Slovakian said on Tuesday.

The centre back limped off in the first half of Liverpool's 3-0 defeat to Watford on Sunday and his absence is likely to cause further headaches for manager Juergen Klopp and his struggling side.

"I will work hard on my recovery and will do everything to come back as soon as possible and

even stronger than before," Skrtel said on Instagram. The 31-year-old has been pivotal for Liverpool this season, appearing in all their Premier League games.

His injury has come at a bad time for Klopp's side. They are in ninth place in the Premier League after taking one point from their last three league games and are already without centre back Dejan Lovren through injury.

France defender Mamadou Sakho returned to the heart of

Liverpool's defence for the clash at Watford after his own lengthy injury break, but looked short of match sharpness.

A six-week absence would rule Skrtel out of league games against Leicester City, Sunderland, West Ham United, Arsenal, Manchester United and Norwich City. He would also miss both legs of the League Cup semi-final against Stoke City and the FA Cup third round tie against Exeter City.—*Reuters*

# Phelps challenges former sponsor Speedo with new brand



Michael Phelps swims in the men's 200-metre breaststroke final during the Phillips 66 National Championships at Northside Swim Centre, San Antonio, TX, USA, on 10 August 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — For the first time in his career, Michael Phelps is preparing for an Olympics without the support of longtime sponsor Speedo, and is instead wearing a suit designed by Aqua Sphere, a virtual unknown in swim racing that is making its Games debut at Rio de Janeiro next year.

Phelps has helped Aqua Sphere design a range of products

in his name, called "MP", with the initials to adorn the suit, goggles and cap he will wear at Rio should he qualify for the US team.

The 30-year-old, who came out of retirement last year having already amassed a record 18 Olympic gold medals at three summer Games, used the Aqua Sphere suit at the US Winter National Championships earlier this month.

"When he announced he was coming back, there wasn't a swimwear company that didn't aggressively court him," said Phelps' agent, Peter Carlisle, who is a managing director at talent agency Octagon, a unit of Interpublic Group.

"The offer that stood out as being the most compelling was launching his own brand with Aqua Sphere."—*Reuters*