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SEZ MOVES TO NEXT STAGE

CITIC wins lion's share of Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone development

Aye Min Soe

CITIC Consortium-I and II won the tenders for the development of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone, according to the announcement of the Kyaukphyu SEZ Bid Evaluation and Awarding Committee yesterday.

The statement of the committee said CITIC Consortium-I won the tender for the development of the deep-sea port component of the SEZ, while CITIC Consortium-II won the development of the industrial zone.

Meanwhile, a tender for the development of a high-class housing project was rejected as bids for the project did not meet the requirements, said the statement.

The committee said the winners were selected from among three finalist companies for the deep-sea port project, three for the industrial zone project and one for the high-class housing project – a total of 10 bidders.

The announcement came a day after the Pyithu Hluttaw approved the establishment of the SEZ on more than 4,280 acres of land.

MPs supported the Kyaukphyu SEZ in a parliamentary meeting on 29 December, saying that it would be very beneficial for the growth of the country's economy, particularly that of Rakhine State.

They also stressed need for transparency as the project is



Workers at a special economic zone construction site in Rakhine state. PHOTO: REUTERS

huge one, stressing importance of the relaxation of agreements in the interest of the people and the country.

Speaker Thura U Shwe

Mann acknowledged the majority of MPs' nod to the project, urging the next government to ensure transparency in implementing the remaining tasks of the project.

President U Thein Sein, who serves as the chairman of the Myanmar Special Economic Zone Central Working Body, previously called on the body to speed up

efforts to announce the results of the tender for the development of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone during the term of the current government.

Myanmar's peace requires inclusion of all in ceasefire signing, political dialogue: UNA says

Ye Myint

THE United Nationalities Alliance, a coalition of eight ethnic political parties, concluded its two-day summit yesterday with member parties approving of their presence at the Union Peace Conference set for 12 January next year and calling for the continuation of the political dialogue process by the next government.

"Representatives from eight political parties formed in the UNA will attend the UPC", said

U Aye Tha Aung, member of the panel chairs of the ethnic parties alliance.

He added that UNA sees there is uncertainty as to whether the next government will continue to work towards the inclusion of all parties in political dialogue, self-determination and a lasting peace for the country's minorities.

"We are in a wait-and-see mode on the peace conference as the ceasefire agreement signed by only eight ethnic armed groups which is not enough for achieving

a durable peace and uncertainty still lingers over the inclusion of non-signatories in political dialogue." The first session of the country's first Union Peace Conference is set to run from 12 to 22 January in Nay Pyi Taw involving 700 representatives from the current government, Tatmadaw, Parliament, ethnic ceasefire signatory groups, political parties and other invitees.

A lasting peace needs all ethnic armed groups to sign up to the ceasefire agreement, and political

dialogue must include all stakeholders to solve political problems through political means, said the UNA chair, adding that bringing an immediate end to internal armed conflicts is a must for the country which is locked in a struggle for peace and prosperity.

"We would like to call on the National League for Democracy to continue the peace process through further discussions with the ethnic political parties and armed groups."

The United Nationalities Al-

liance is composed of eight ethnic political parties, namely Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, Arakan National Party, Mon National Party, Zomi Democracy Federation Party, Kayin National Party, Kachin Nationalities Democracy Congress, Karen National Party and the Shan State Kokang Democratic Party.

According to sources, four of the eight UNA member political parties won seats in regional and national parliaments in the country's 2015 polls.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw calls for discussion on three bills



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

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday passed a bill and discussed three reports on three other bills.

MPs agreed on the tariff bill

submitted by the Union Government after discussing it clause by clause.

The Joint Bill Committee presented their findings from the Un-

ion tax bill, the banks and financial institutions bill and the Penal Code amendment bill, with the speaker calling for discussion on the reports. —Myanmar News Agency

Amyotha Hluttaw

Amyotha Hluttaw acknowledges condolences from Kuwaiti parliament



U Tin Yu. PHOTO: MNA

THE speaker of the Amyotha Hluttaw received a message of condolence from his Kuwaiti counterpart over the casualties and injuries in the recent landslides in Kachin State, with MPs agreeing to put it on the record.

The Bill Committee presented their findings from the third amendment bill of the



U Myo Myint. PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw Election Law, the third amendment bill of the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law and the third amendment bill of the Region/State Hluttaw Election Law.

The parliament's Scrutiny Committee for Government's Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings presented a progress re-



U Manar Naing. PHOTO: MNA

port, which came under discussion and then won parliamentary approval.

The Committee for Citizens Rights, Democratic Rights and Human Rights also presented its progress report, with the speaker calling for their discussion during the next session. —Myanmar News Agency

Yunnan judiciary delegation visits Mandalay

A JUDICIARY delegation from the Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China, led by Senior Judge Mr Zhang Xuequn, met Mandalay Region Chief Justice U Soe Thein on 29 December at the latter's office in Mandalay. After the meeting, the delegation observed the pro-

ceedings of a lawsuit at a local courthouse.

The Chinese delegation, along with Chief Justice U Soe Thein and other judges, discussed legal concepts and visited the Mahamuni Buddha Image.

The delegation arrived on 28 December. That same day, the

guests visited the Wayyawsana Jade Pagoda in Amarapura Township and the Sutaungpyae Pagoda on Mandalay Hill. In the evening, the Mandalay Regional Chief Justice hosted a dinner for the Chinese delegation at the Yupar Mandala Hotel. —Thiha Ko Ko

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw passes three bills

THE Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday approved the amendment bill of Factories Act 1951, the shops and worksites bill of 2015 and the payment of wages bill as remarked by the Amyotha Hluttaw.

The amendment proposal relating to the promulgation of the electricity rules and regula-

tions also received parliamentary approval.

In response to a query of whether a trade zone could be established in Hpahsawng township, Kayah State, Deputy Minister for Commerce Dr Pwint Hsan explained that the township still lacks economic vibrancy. —Myanmar News Agency



Daw Mi Myint Than. Photo: MNA



U Aung Kyaw Khin. Photo: MNA

KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities opens office

KBZ Stirling Coleman Securities, an underwriting company that recently received a business permit has opened an office at the Strand Square in Yangon yesterday.

KBZ SC Securities is the first official underwriting company in Myanmar's stock share market, its purpose is to boost the capital of listed companies and to sell securities in an effort to help people do business and to aid investment, said U Nyo Myint, Senior Executive Director of KBZ SC Securities, at the ceremony to open the office.

KBZ SC Securities will provide brokerage services, deal consultancy and Merger and Acquisition M&A service, he added.

The ceremony was also attended by Yangon Region

Finance Minister Daw San San Nwe, Chairman of Kanbawza Group of Companies Ltd U Aung Ko Win and guests.

KBZ Bank has been chosen as Authorised Fund Settlement Bank of the Yangon Stock Exchange by the SECM.

Following the debut of the Yangon Stock Exchange on 9 December, KBZ SC Securities announced that it is planning to sell securities from six listed companies to the public.

KBZ SC Securities is a joint-venture between the Kanbawza Co Ltd from Myanmar and Stirling Coleman Securities Co Ltd from Singapore.

The Yangon Stock Exchange was inaugurated with on 9 December with plans for six companies to start trading in March. —GNLM



KBZ SC Securities Co Lt opens its office at Strand Square. Photo: KBZ

Woman army cadets graduate from officer training



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing greets woman army cadets at the Officers' Training School (Army) in Hmawbi township. Photo: Myawady

THE second graduation of female army cadets took place at the Officers' Training School (Army) in Hmawbi township, Yangon Region, yesterday, with a speech by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

In his speech, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing praised My-

anmar women for their professional integrity and strong sense of nationalism.

The world has seen woman military officers of different ranks carry out operations on battle fronts, with the commander-in-chief saying that developed countries have trained woman fighter pilots.

He urged the graduating officers to continue to hone their military skills and organisational skills on the whet stone, pointing out the need for the defence services to protect and respect the Constitution and pay priority to the socioeconomic interests of the national races without discrimination. —Myawady

Myanmar, Ethiopia establish diplomatic relations

THE Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in an effort to establish friendly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of International Law in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations,

established diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level, with effect from 28 December 2015.

The Joint Communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations was signed in New Delhi on 28 December 2015 by the Ambassador of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of India and the Ambassador of the Federal Demo-

cratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Republic of India.

Myanmar is expanding its diplomatic relations with countries around the world.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is the 114th country with which Myanmar has established diplomatic relations.—Myanmar News Agency

MYANMAR GAZETTE

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

Name	Appointment
(a) U Kyaw Zeya Deputy Director-General Political Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General Political Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(b) U Htin Lynn Deputy Director-General International Organizations and Economic Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Director-General International Organizations and Economic Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(c) U Min Lwin Deputy Director-General Department of Civil Aviation Ministry of Transport	Director-General Department of Civil Aviation Ministry of Transport

Commemorative stamp of 68th Independence Day to be issued



THE Myanmar Postal Services of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology will issue commemorative stamps on the occasion of the 68th anniversary Independence Day on 4 January, 2016.

The special stamps are available for K200 and K100 at general post offices in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay as of Independence Day which falls on 4th January. — Myanmar News Agency



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De Ville
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Available at: Swiss Time Square • No.99, KaBarAye Pagoda Road • Yangon

China, Taiwan open first hotline in tension reducing measure

BEIJING/TAIPEI — China and Taiwan began operating the first telephone hotline between the two nations yesterday, set up as a confidence building and tension reducing measure, with senior officials exchanging New Year's greetings.

The step was agreed during a historic meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou in Singapore last month.

Ma Xiaoguang, spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said the first call was between Zhang Zhijun, director of the Taiwan Affairs Office, and Andrew Hsia, head of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, who wished each other happy New Year.

Zhang and Hsia also talked about the important achievements both sides had made in the past year in promoting the peaceful development of relations, spokesman Ma said. Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council confirmed the call took place, but did not immediately provide any other details.



Chinese President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou during a summit in Singapore in November 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Defeated Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan after losing a civil war with the Communists in 1949. Beijing has never renounced the use of force to bring what it deems a renegade province under its control.

Relations have improved rapidly since Ma Ying-jeou became Taiwan president in 2008, and the two have signed a series of landmark trade and tourism deals.

Still, deep suspicions remain. China reacted angrily earlier this month at the latest US plans to sell Taiwan weapons.

China is also looking warily at January's presidential elections in Taiwan, which are likely to return the independence-leaning opposition Democratic Progressive Party to power. China says it will never countenance an independent Taiwan.—Reuters

Modi wants to revamp cabinet, but can't find the people

NEW DELHI — After a drubbing in a state poll in November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to overhaul his cabinet to weed out underperformers and improve his government's image.

Problem is, several sources said, he can't find the right replacements.

As New Delhi buzzes with speculation about changes in several ministries, senior members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and a close aide to Modi said some changes could come early next year but the talent pool was too shallow to engineer a major revamp.

Pressure is mounting on Modi to revive his party's fortunes.

Nearly two years after he swept to power on a promise of jobs and growth, the shine is coming off — reforms to revive investment have withered and the economy is stuttering. Rural distress has grown after two successive droughts.

“The challenge is to identify

the right candidates who can deliver fast-paced reforms and policies in their work sphere,” the prime minister's aide said.

Articulate and suave, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has been considered for the defence portfolio, another high-profile role that is crucial to Modi's geopolitical ambitions and plans to boost Indian industry.

But there was no one to take Jaitley's place in finance, the sources said. A spokesman for Modi declined to comment.

An official in Jaitley's office said they didn't have any knowledge of a possible reshuffle.

Modi tends to keep such decisions close to his chest, and the sources said the final decision lay with the prime minister.

They added that he has yet to make up his mind on the changes, and that nothing has been confirmed.

Another close aide to the prime minister dismissed talk of a reshuffle as speculation, saying it had no basis.—Reuters

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South Korean 'comfort women' protest against accord with Japan

SEOUL — Hundreds of South Korean protesters joined two surviving former “comfort women” yesterday to denounce an agreement with Japan to resolve an issue stemming from Japan's wartime past that has long plagued ties between neighbours.

The two “comfort women”, as those who were forced to work at Japan's wartime military brothels are euphemistically known, criticised the government for agreeing with Japan on Monday to “finally and irreversibly” settle the issue.

“The government cannot be trusted,” said one of the women, Lee Yong-su, 88.

She said she and fellow survivors were never consulted by officials at they negotiated the agreement.

“We will continue to fight until the end,” she said.

She and the other protesters, including students, opposition legislators and civic activists, are demanding what they call a sincere apology from Japan and formal compensation for victims.

“We did nothing wrong,” Lee said. “Japan took us to be comfort women and still tries to deny its crime.”

Under the agreement, Japan will establish a fund to help surviving victims and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe renewed an apology.

The United States, keen to see its Asian allies improve ties, wel-



Former South Korean 'comfort women' Lee Yong-soo (R) and Gil Won-ok react as they take part in a weekly anti-Japan rally in front of Japanese Embassy in Seoul, South Korea, on 30 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

comed the accord. The protesters spilled onto the street in front of Japan's embassy in Seoul and milled around a bronze statue of a barefoot teenage girl, symbolizing the women forced to work in the Japanese brothels.

Weekly rallies have been held outside the embassy since 1992 to demand a sincere Japanese government apology and reparations for victims.

For Japan, the statue, erected

in 2011, has become a symbol of South Korea's unwillingness to lay the issue to rest.

Strains between Japan and South Korea have prevented them from signing an agreement to share sensitive military information. A year ago, they signed a three-way pact under which South Korea routes its information to the United States, which then passes it on to Japan, and vice versa.

Scholars debate the question

of how many women were exploited.

South Korean activists say there may have been as many as 200,000 Korean victims, only a few of whom have ever told of the abuse they endured at the hands of Japanese forces before or during the Second World War. Only 46 survivors remain of 238 women in South Korea who came forward in the early 1990s and their average age is 89.—Reuters

DPRK senior party official Kim Yang Gon killed in car accident

PYONGYANG — Kim Yang Gon, a senior party official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), was killed in a car crash Tuesday, the official news agency KCNA reported yesterday morning.

Before his death, Kim Yang Gon, 73, served as director of the United Front Department and secretary of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers Party of Korea (WPK), two important posts. He became a member of the political bureau of the WPK Central Committee since February 2015.

The DPRK state media spoke highly of the life of Kim Yang Gon, hailing him as a "loyal revolutionary warrior" of the DPRK's late leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and the "closest comrade-in-arms" of top leader Kim Jong Un. The KCNA said though Kim has died, his exploits will become a legacy for long.

A state funeral committee has been set up, which is chaired by top leader Kim Jong Un. A state funeral procession will be held Thursday morning. —Xinhua

8 trapped miners still alive 5 days after mine collapse



Rescuers get in touch with the trapped mine workers at a collapsed mine in Pingyi County, east China's Shandong Province, on 30 December.

PHOTO: XINHUA

JINAN— Rescuers have found eight survivors five days after a mine collapse in east China's Shandong Province, rescuers confirmed yesterday.

The gypsum mine accident happened at 8pm Friday in Pingyi

County. At the time, 29 people were working underground. One is confirmed dead, four escaped, and seven have been rescued, so far.

Rescuers found signs of life yesterday morning. They have

contacted the eight miners and are trying to send them provisions.

The rescue has been obstructed by the structural instability of the tunnel and falling debris. Holes have been drilled into the ground so that life detectors

can be lowered into the pit.

The owner of the mine drowned himself when working with the rescue team early Sunday morning.

The cause of the accident is still to be confirmed.—Xinhua

Russia to manufacture Kamov helicopters in India

NEW DELHI — Russia's Rostech State Corporation has signed a deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture Kamov helicopters in India, India's official broadcaster — All India Radio (AIR) said yesterday.

The deal, estimated to be worth 1 billion US dollars, is aimed at manufacturing 200 Kamov 226T light helicopters in India, a move to replace India's ageing fleet of Cheetah

and Chetak.

The broadcaster, quoting CEO of Rostech Sergei Chemezov, said the helicopter manufacturing will be done by Russian-Indian joint venture.

This is the first Russian-Indian high-tech project implemented by the Indian government within the framework of its "Make in India" programme.

The agreement on cooperation in helicopter manufac-

turing was reached during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Moscow.

"According to the deal, Rostech will organise the production of Russian Kamov 226T and its modifications in India," the broadcaster said. "The agreement also provides for maintenance, operation and repair of helicopters."

HAL is India's state-owned aerospace and defence company. —Xinhua

Voting kicks off in Bangladeshi local body polls

DHAKA — Amid tight security, polling stations across Bangladesh opened yesterday morning for the country's first-ever local body polls on party line nomination.

Around 7.1 million voters of 234 municipalities will exercise their franchise to elect around 3,924 public representatives, including 234 mayors from over 12,000 aspirants.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal has vowed

to quell electoral violence in the polls which are being held for the first time in a partisan manner in which political parties directly nominated candidates to test their popularity in such elections.

Thousands of polling stations set in schools and other public buildings opened at 8:00am local time and would last till 4pm yesterday.

Some 20 parties including ex-Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party

(BNP), which sat out the 2014 national polls, have joined the elections.

Long queues of voters have reportedly been seen at many centres, defying the bitter cold morning.

A Xinhua correspondent reported from a centre in Savar on the outskirts of capital Dhaka that a large number of voters including females started coming to exercise their rights amid festive mood there.—Xinhua

26 killed as suicide blast hits gov't building in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — At least 26 people were killed and 52 others injured in a suicide blast which hit a gov't building in Pakistan's northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday.

Provincial information minister, Mushtaq Ghani, told media that at least 26 people lost their lives and 52 others are injured in this suicide attack, while six others were in critical condition.

According to Deputy Inspector General of Police, Sayyad Khan, the incident took place when a suicide bomber exploded his jacket at the main gate of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) at Dosehra Chowk area of Mardan, a district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Khan said the attacker

who is around 20-25 years old wanted to light up the bomb inside the building, but he exploded himself at the security when the guard proceed the body search.

When the blast happens, a number of people were queuing in front of service counters near the main gate for their National Identity Card.

The bomb disposal squad said that an estimated eight kilograms of explosives along with ball bearings was used in the attack.

Soon after the attack, security forces, police and rescue teams arrived the site and shifted the bodies and injured to the District Hospital and Mardan Medical complex.

A splinter group of Pakistani Taliban named "Jamaat-ul-Ahrar" claimed responsibility for the attack.—Xinhua

US spying included Israeli phone calls with US lawmakers

WASHINGTON — The US National Security Agency's foreign eavesdropping included phone conversations between top Israeli officials and US lawmakers and American-Jewish groups, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Tuesday, citing current and former US officials.

White House officials believed the intercepted information could be valuable to counter Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's campaign against the nuclear deal with Iran, according to the unnamed officials, the *Journal* said.

NSA eavesdropping revealed to the White House how Netanyahu and his advisers had leaked details of the US-Iran negotiations, which they learned through Israeli spying operations, the newspaper reported.

The NSA reports allowed

Obama administration officials to peer inside Israeli efforts to turn Congress against the deal, according to the *Journal*.

Israel's ambassador to the United States, Ron Dermer, was described as coaching unnamed Jewish-American groups on lines of argument to use with US lawmakers, and Israeli officials were reported pressing lawmakers to oppose the deal, the newspaper said.

Asked for comment on the *Journal* report, a White House National Security Council spokesman said: "We do not conduct any foreign intelligence surveillance activities unless there is a specific and validated national security purpose. This applies to ordinary citizens and world leaders alike."

Following former NSA contractor Edward Snowden's disclosures of the agency's spy-

ing operations, President Barack Obama announced in January 2014 the United States would curb its eavesdropping of friendly world leaders.

A number of such figures, including French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, were put on a list declared off-limits to US eavesdropping. But Obama maintained the monitoring of Netanyahu on the grounds it served a "compelling national security purpose," the *Journal* reported.

After Israel's lobbying campaign against the Iran nuclear deal went into full swing on Capitol Hill, it did not take long for administration and intelligence officials to realise the NSA was sweeping up the content of conversations with American lawmakers, the newspaper said.—*Reuters*

Austria turns away hundreds of migrants for lying about nationality



Members of the Austrian army observe migrants waiting to access Austria at the border near the village of Spielfeld, Austria, in November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

VIENNA — Austria has sent hundreds of migrants back to neighbouring Slovenia in the past three days for lying about their nationality in an apparent attempt to improve their chances of being granted asylum, a police spokesman said on Tuesday.

Since the summer, hundreds of thousands of migrants have crossed into Austria, the last country on the so-called Balkan route to Germany, the chosen destination for most of the migrants. Many are bussed through Austria straight to the

German border.

In spot checks of the 3,000 daily arrivals in the southern province of Carinthia, police and translators noticed a rise in the number of unregistered people whose language skills did not match their purported nationality, the spokesman said.

"We assume that some are trying to take advantage of the situation, knowing very well that they have little chance of being granted asylum in Austria and Germany," he said, adding that hundreds of such migrants had been sent straight back to

Slovenia since 26 December.

In 2014, migrants from Syria and Afghanistan were granted asylum in more cases than people from any other countries. The spokesman for the police in Carinthia declined to say where the migrants who were sent back to Slovenia were from.

The flow of migrants into Austria from Slovenia has been shifted to Carinthia while new infrastructure including barriers to control crowds is put in place at the main crossing between the two countries, further the east in the province of Styria.—*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish Airlines cancels Istanbul flights as snow storms loom

ANKARA — Turkish Airlines cancelled 142 flights to and from Istanbul and warned of further disruption in coming days as the city braced yesterday for heavy snow.

Many of the cancelled flights were domestic, but routes to European and Middle Eastern airports including Hamburg, Munich, Milan and Tehran were also hit.

"The light snow that has been forecast around Istanbul on 30 December is expected to increase in severity on 31 December," a statement on the company's website read.

"For this reason, some journeys from Istanbul Ataturk and Sabiha Gokcen airports are cancelled and it is likely that there will be more weather-related problems on the same days."

Snow warnings were also issued by the Istanbul Governor's Office, warning residents against going outside unless necessary, *Hurriyet Daily News* reported. Snowfall is expected to begin on Wednesday and continue until 2 January.

More than 1,000 snow-clearing vehicles and other heavy machinery were on standby to try to keep the city's easily clogged road networks open, the Governor's office added.—*Reuters*

Lebanon seizes 5 tonnes of drugs at Beirut airport

BEIRUT — Lebanese customs seized five tonnes of Captagon amphetamine pills and hashish at Beirut airport on Tuesday, concealed in primary school desks that were to be shipped to Egypt, a security source said.

Meanwhile, security forces in northern Lebanon found two workshops producing Captagon and other drugs during a series of raids, the source said.

Both events came after a number of drug seizures at Beirut airport in recent months, including one that led to the arrest on charges of smuggling of a Saudi prince.

Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil said Tuesday's operation at the airport was one of the biggest of its kind, and that the drugs could have been smuggled onto other countries after Egypt, without elaborating. "We will not allow Lebanon to be a transit point for drugs," he said, quoted by Lebanon's National News Agency. The NNA said that the quantity seized was three tonnes. There were no immediate reports of arrests.—*Reuters*

Swiss police find no explosives at shopping centre after bomb threat

ZURICH — No explosives were found at a Swiss shopping centre near the northern city of Basel after a bomb threat, police said on Tuesday evening.

The centre in Pratteln, Basel-Landschaft, was evacuated after an anonymous caller threatened to detonate a bomb in an underground garage. The caller sounded male and spoke broken German, police official Roland Walter said. Much of Europe has been on heightened alert since the 13 November attacks in Paris that killed more than 100 people.—*Reuters*

One killed, 11 injured in gun attack at fortress in southern Russia

MOSCOW — A gunman opened fire on a group of tourists visiting a historic fortress in Dagestan in southern Russia on Tuesday evening, killing one and injuring eleven, an official in the region's health ministry said yesterday.

"As a result of a gun attack 12 people were hurt, one of whom died," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted the official as saying. The wounded, four of whom were in a serious condition, were getting medical treatment, the official said.

The Interfax news agency reported that the tourists were local residents who were visiting a viewing platform at the fortress in Derbent when an unidentified gunman opened fire from a nearby forest. The visitors included two border guards, one of whom was killed in the attack, Interfax reported.

A search for the attacker is now underway. Local police declined to comment to Reuters. Gun and bomb attacks are common in Dagestan, a mostly-Muslim internal republic in Russia's troubled North Caucasus region, where Moscow has been fighting Islamist insurgents for years. However, attacks targeting tourists in the region are unusual.—*Reuters*

Islamic State suffers double blow as Ramadi falls, leaders killed

BAGHDAD — US-led forces have killed 10 Islamic State leaders in air strikes, including individuals linked to the Paris attacks, a US spokesman said, dealing a double blow to the militant group after Iraqi forces ousted it from the city of Ramadi.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi planted the national flag in Ramadi after the army retook the city centre from Islamic State, a victory that could help vindicate his strategy for rebuilding the military after stunning defeats.

“Over the past month, we’ve killed 10 ISIL leadership figures with targeted air strikes, including several external attack planners, some of whom are linked to the Paris attacks,” said US Army Colonel Steve Warren, a spokesman for the US-led campaign against the Islamist group also known by the acronym ISIL.

“Others had designs on further attacking the West.”

One of those killed was Abdul Qader Hakim, who facilitated the militants’ external operations and had links to the Paris attack network, Warren said. He was killed in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on 26 December.

Two days earlier, a coalition air strike in Syria killed Charaffe al Mouadan, a Syria-based Islamic State member with a direct link to Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the suspected ringleader of the coor-



A member of the Iraqi security forces holds an Iraqi flag at a government complex in the city of Ramadi, on 28 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

minated bombings and shootings in Paris on 13 November which killed 130 people, Warren said.

Mouadan was planning further attacks against the West, he added.

Air strikes on Islamic State’s leadership helped explain recent battlefield successes against the group, which also lost control of a dam on a strategic supply route near its de facto capital of Raqqa in Syria on Saturday.

“Part of those successes is

attributable to the fact that the organisation is losing its leadership,” Warren said.

He warned, however: “It’s still got fangs.”

The Iraqi army’s seizure of the centre of Ramadi on Sunday is its first major victory against the hardline Sunni Islamists that swept through a third of Iraq in 2014, and came after months of cautious advances backed by coalition air strikes.

Three mortar rounds land-

ed about 500 metres (0.3 miles) from Prime Minister Abadi’s location during his visit, security sources said. The prime minister was not in danger but was forced to leave the area, they said.

Arriving by helicopter in the shattered city west of Baghdad, Abadi travelled in a convoy of Humvees and met soldiers at the main government complex captured by counter-terrorism forces on Monday, where he planted the tri-colour Iraqi flag.

He had announced the visit to Ramadi himself on Twitter and declared Thursday a national holiday in celebration, even though security forces must still remove explosives planted throughout the city and clear out fighters in some densely built-up areas.

Ramadi was the only city to have fallen under Islamic State control since Abadi took office in September 2014.

“He is excited about this victory, because he managed to remove this blot from his historical record as commander-in-chief of the armed forces,” said Hisham al-Hashimi, a Baghdad-based analyst who has worked with the Iraqi government.

The retaking of Ramadi suggested Abadi’s strategy of heavy US air support while sidelining the Shi’ite militias could be effective. The militias have served as a bulwark against Islamic State but drawn objections from Washington.

“Ramadi is an example that the regular army wishes to promote for upcoming battles of liberation,” Hashimi said.

Coalition spokesman Warren said casualties to Iraqi forces during the battle for Ramadi were in the low double digits. He and Iraqi officials put Islamic State casualties in the hundreds.

Reuters could not independently confirm those estimates.—Reuters

France calls for EU crackdown on fake Syrian passports

PARIS — France has asked the European Union to improve the detection of fake Syrian passports used by people trying to get into Europe after two of the suicide bombers in the 13 November Paris attacks were found carrying such passports.

In a letter to the European Commission, French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve called on the EU to tighten security by improving the quality of equipment used to check travel documents at external borders, notably in Greece and Italy.

Blank passports were in circulation that had been stolen from administrative facilities in places run by the Islamic State. Once an identity had been added to them they were very hard to detect, he said in his letter, text of which was seen by Reuters.

“The checks of travel documents presented by refugees at the external borders of the EU are an extremely significant and worrying issue,” he wrote. Two of the suicide bombers who detonated explosives outside the Stade de France stadium in the November

attacks, which killed 130 people, were carrying false Syrian passports they had shown in Greece when entering the EU on 3 October, Cazeneuve said.

The attacks “unfortunately showed that some terrorists intend to get into our countries and commit criminal acts by joining the flow of migrants and refugees,” he added.

A French interior ministry source said it was hoped Cazeneuve’s proposals could be discussed by EU justice and interior ministers next month.—Reuters

British couple convicted of preparing London attack

LONDON — A British couple were convicted on Tuesday after plotting an attack in London after the husband sent out tweets asking for advice on which targets he should hit, alerting police to a stockpile of chemicals at their home.

Mohammed Rehman, 25, and Sana Ahmed Khan, 24, were found guilty by a jury at the Central Criminal Court of engaging in the preparation of terrorist acts, with a view to hitting either a large shopping centre in the capital or the London underground network.

“Westfield shopping centre or London underground? Any advice would be appreciated greatly,” Rehman said on Twitter, under the name “Silent Bomber”.

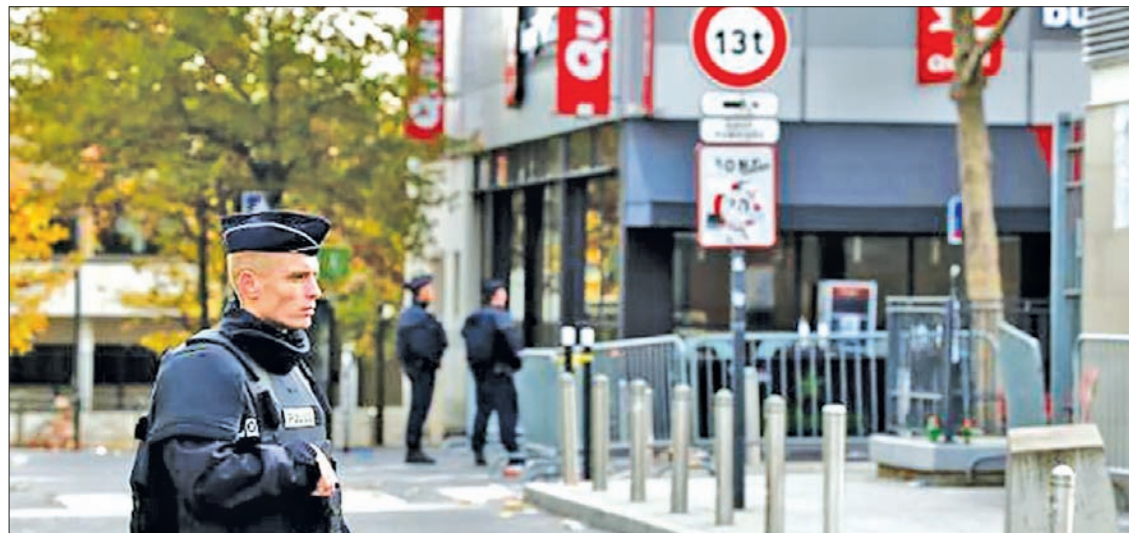
The couple, who denied the charges, are to be sentenced at a later date. The British prosecutor said on Tuesday the two Britons had carried out detailed research into militant attacks, including searching the Internet for videos related to the London transport bombings which killed 52 people a decade ago. Those attacks were carried out on 7 July, 2005 when four young British Muslims travelled from northern England to the capital to detonate homemade bombs hidden in rucksacks on three un-

derground trains and a bus during the morning rush-hour. British media reports said Rehman and Ahmed Khan had planned to carry out an attack to coincide with the 10-year anniversary of those earlier bombings. Rehman, who was also found guilty of possessing an article for terrorist purposes, had carried out test bombs in his garden which he filmed and sent to his wife, and she had also helped to purchase the chemicals, the prosecutor said.

“The pair had been very close to carrying out an attack, all they required was to purchase the chemicals to make a detonator,” said Susan Hemming, Head of Counter Terrorism Division at the Crown Prosecution Service.

She added that the couple had already acquired 10 kg (22 pounds) of Urea Nitrate. “There is little doubt that, had Rehman and Ahmed Khan not been stopped when they were, they would have attempted to carry out an act of terrorism in London.”

Britain is on its second highest alert level of “severe”, meaning an attack by militants is considered highly likely. The designation remained the same after the 13 November Islamist attacks in Paris that killed 130 people.—Reuters



Police take up position near the Stade de France stadium the morning after a series of deadly attacks in Paris, in November, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

OPINION

To enable equal access of education

Myint Win Thein

EVERY human being needs equal access to education at the primary and secondary levels as well as at tertiary level. Equal access to education means everyone can afford it. However, only a few people can afford it while the majority of people are struggling and many are denied access even to a primary level of education around the world.

The best way to make education accessible to all is to adopt a free compulsory education system. However, some people think it is impossible or impractical even to adopt a free and compulsory secondary education system, given the economic and political conditions of a society as a whole. It means that some young people will continue to be early dropouts that will continue to place a burden on the society. If free and compulsory secondary education was impossible, it would be impractical to fundamentally change a society.

Some people are afraid of using the word revolution as they think a revolution is a process of changing a society through bloodshed and violence. However, not a single shot was fired during one of the greatest revolutions of mankind, the industrial revolution, although much power was handed over from feudal landlords to industrial-

ists and economic liberals (that is to say capitalists). It is just a phase of historical progress.

Let's make education a drastic change for the younger generations across the world for the future of our mankind by adopting a free and compulsory education system for all. It would require neither bloodshed nor violence.

Write for us

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

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

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community 2015: Where Are We

Daw Shwe Shwe
(Ministry of Culture)

This year 2015 is significant for us as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will establish the ASEAN Community (that covers all its three pillars – the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community) on 31 December 2015, and it reaches a significant milestone in its history.

Background History of ASCC

The ASEAN Leaders adopted the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in Bali, Indonesia on 7 October 2003 to establish an ASEAN Community by 2020. It covers three pillars, namely political and security community, economic community, and socio-cultural community that are closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing for the purpose of ensuring durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region.

At the 12th ASEAN Summit on 13th January 2007 in Cebu, the Philippines the Leaders, affirming their strong committed by 2015, signed the Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of an ASEAN Community by 2015.

The 13th ASEAN Summit held in Singapore on 20th November 2007, agreed to develop an ASCC Blueprint to ensure that concrete actions are undertaken to promote the establishment of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC).

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community aims to contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-oriented and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the peoples and Member States of ASEAN. It seeks to forge a common identity and build a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and where the well-being, livelihood, and

welfare of the peoples are enhanced.

ASCC is focused on nurturing the human, cultural and natural resources for sustained development in a harmonious and people-oriented ASEAN.

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint (2009-2015)

The ASCC Blueprint (2009-2015) was adopted by the ASEAN Leaders at the 14th ASEAN Summit on 1 March 2009 in Cham/Hua Hin, Thailand.

The ASCC Blueprint represents the human dimension of ASEAN cooperation and upholds ASEAN commitment to address the region's aspiration to lift the quality of life of its peoples. The goals of the ASCC are envisaged to be achieved by implementing concrete and productive actions that are people-centred and socially responsible. This set of cooperative activities has been developed based on the assumption that the three pillars of the ASEAN Community are interdependent and interrelated and that linkages are imperative to ensure complementarity and unity of purpose.

With the aim of ASCC, we are trying to moving forward to be peaceful and prosperous ASEAN Community with the cooperation and coordination of other two pillars of APSC and AEC. Also within our ASCC Community, we are trying to moving to be people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN with the cooperation of among ourselves / AMS.

We are committed to build the ASEAN Community by 2015 and ASEAN is driven to be people centered community. In accordance with this aim/goal, we identify the priority areas to be discussed in every year agenda that focus on contributing to the realization of a people-centered and people-oriented ASEAN Community.

We all have witnessed how ASEAN has endured and over-



Leaders of ASEAN nations pose for photo in ASEAN way at 25th ASEAN Summit in Nay Pyi Taw.

FILE PHOTO/AYE MIN SOE

come the regional issues and try its resilience and sustain its "One Vision, One Identity and One Community" in its establishment of 48 years. That is why through its individual and collective efforts, ASEAN has become more united in striving for the establishment of an economically dynamic, politically peaceful, prosperous and stable, and socially caring community.

The challenges of ASEAN today are more complex, multifaceted and transnational in nature which calls for more coordinated and comprehensive solutions and we believe socio-cultural pillar is the one which can deviate and minimize the regional issues and promote more ASEAN identity among all member states. Nurturing the human, cultural and natural resources for sustained devel-

opment in a harmonious and people-oriented ASEAN is which ASEAN Socio Cultural Pillar is focusing. Moreover, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community aims to contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-oriented and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity.

We all ASEAN Member states are trying to promote cooperation in culture to help build an ASEAN identity. To promote ASEAN awareness and a sense of community, preserve and promote ASEAN cultural heritage, promote cultural creativity and industry, and engage with the community are the essence of ASCC Pillar. Since ASEAN Leaders envision ASEAN as a community of caring societies, conscious of its ties of history, aware of its cultural

heritage and bound by a common regional identity, the ASCC Community is to strive its objectives by strategies been mentioned in the ASCC Blueprint.

We also recognize that the long-term goal of ASCC is a people-centred and socially-responsible ASEAN Community that achieves enduring solidarity and unity among all nations and people in Southeast Asia since ASEAN is a region of immense and colourful cultural diversity, one that shares common historical threads.

Another achievement ASCC Pillar can make is the significance of the Mid-Term Review of the implementation of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint. ASEAN sectoral bodies and ASCC national

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Lake Reed sees increase in visitors

LAKE Reed in Chin State has become a popular destination for recreational holidaying, attracting local and foreign visitors.

The majority of foreign visitors to the heart-shape lake, which is 2,966 feet above sea level in Chin State, are students

from Mizoram, India, while ethnic people from Myanmar have visited the lake in groups especially on holiday for recreation.

The significant feature of the lake is its turning a reddish colour in December each year, according to local residents.

“I had never been to Chin state and had only heard of Lake Reed. So this year, I came to visit and it is so amazing for me to see the heart shape lake at the top of the hill. The weather is so nice and I am really happy to be here.” said a visitor.—Nay Su (*Chin Yoma*)



Reed Lake in Chin State becomes popular for holiday makers from local and Mizoram from India.

PHOTO: NAY SU

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Thanks for the disturbing report ‘Golden deer population is falling at Chatthin sanctuary’ (GNLM, Dec 28). I want to thank the editor for kindly considering this as an important national news; and is highly appreciated for placing the item on the first page for his sincere conservation concerns. Different sub species of the Eld’s deer or Brow antlered deer found in south China, NE India and small pockets of SE Asia including Myanmar are seriously endangered because of habitat fragmentation, over exploitation on account of poaching and poor conservation practices in protecting this majestic species. The major sub species are 1. *Cervus eldi eldi* (Manipuri brow-antlered deer or Thamin deer in the state of Manipur, NE India bordering Myanmar); 2. *Cervus eldi thamin* (Golden deer or Burmese brow-antlered deer found in Myanmar and western Thailand); 3. *Cervus eldi siamensis* (distributed in small pockets across south China, Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos). Another sub species reported from the Chinese island of Hainan is debated for being considered as a separate species altogether. But what connects all the sub species is the fact that all of them have been dangerously pushed towards virtual extinction in all the countries of their distribution. The species is endemic to SE Asia and was first reported from the state of Manipur in NE India in 1839. Recently, the Indian sub species has shown some recovery thanks few decades of dedicated captive breeding approaches, and captive breed species have been successfully reintroduced back to their natural habitat in Manipur. The Alipore Zoological Garden at Kolkata, West Bengal, India is credited for the first successful captive breeding of the Brow-antlered deer. The Golden deer sub species in Myanmar also needs the same captive breeding approach for recovery; or else this majestic species may be lost to anthropogenic pressures over the next few decades unless serious steps of conservation are effectively applied for protecting the species.

Thanking you
Sincerely yours
Saikat Kumar Basu

ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community 2015: Where Are We

>> from page 8

focal points can work closely collaborate in the mid-term evaluation exercise and also submitted its Mid Term Review Report to the 24th ASEAN Summit. As we are aware, ASCC continues to focus on contributing to the realization of a people-centered community with almost 90% being addressed through the implementation of various activities of Science and Technology, Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, Health, Environment, Culture and Information, Education, Youth and Sports, Labour and Migrant Workers, Women and Children, Poverty Eradication and Rural Development and Civil Service Matters.

With our consensus, mutual respect and assistance, focusing on harmonizing, we can also sustain the : “*Unity in Diversity*” and revive the “*ASEAN Way*”. We all have convinced these earned contributions and dedications made strong moves to strengthen cooperation and integration within ASEAN.

The ASEAN Community that we will launch on 31 December 2015 is a community of opportunities, under three community pillars: Political-Security Community, Economic Community, and Socio-Cultural Community. It identifies ASEAN as a community that aims to instil a sense of belonging and identity among its citizens, and

that brings new opportunities to the people of ASEAN and the broader global community. The launch of the ASEAN Community is very significant as it signals to the rest of the world how far and how well the ASEAN Member States have achieved in coming together as one community. It is a historic milestone for the region, and a culmination of ASEAN’s resilience and dynamism throughout a journey that spans nearly half a century. The ASEAN Community also brings a common identity for the people of ASEAN. This helps to build a caring and sharing society which is inclusive and where the well-being, livelihood, and welfare of the peoples are enhanced.

The community that creates new opportunities that continues to benefit its people, and bring them closer to each other. It is a historic achievement for the region throughout a journey that spans nearly half a century. Regarding to ASCC, these opportunities include better health for our children and women; more educational opportunities for young people; and a more sustainable environment that can provide the needs of our present and future generations, among others. These socio-cultural areas of work cover education, human rights, disaster relief, women and children, health and environmental sustainability. ASEAN collective actions have

contributed to the promotion and protection of human rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, older persons, migrant workers, the poor and other vulnerable groups.

Through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre), the region has provided quick and tangible humanitarian assistance during times of disasters in a Member State as shown in the experiences of typhoon Nargis in Myanmar, the tsunami in Indonesia and Thailand, and typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The AHA Centre is at the forefront of ASEAN’s strategy to put resilience at the centre of its key institutions and thereby meet the challenges faced by a region prone to natural disasters and highly vulnerable to climate change. Such institutions actively collaborate to address the region’s exposure and vulnerability to the risks.

As it is mentioned in above, the year 2015 is a watershed in building the ASEAN Community; it will mark the realization of the ASEAN Community and a demonstration of our commitment, and it is also an important time for us to shape the future of ASEAN to be people-centered and socially responsible with a view to achieving enduring solidarity and unity among the nations and peoples of ASEAN. Likewise, it is also a starting point / first step to run for

the Post-2015.

First priority of our target is building the ASEAN Community by 2015 and after that second priority is we need to consider and take action for Post-2015. So, it calls for cooperation and intensified efforts among ASEAN Member States to collaborate across sector on cross-cutting issues.

Regarding to the ASEAN Post-2015, we have already identified the central elements and action lines with the consultation with different ASCC sectoral bodies to be implemented for after 2015, and it is also assigned to all of us. ASCC sectoral bodies play a key role in implementation of ASCC action lines in accord with their respective timeline/work schedule. So, it calls for cooperation and intensified efforts among ASEAN Member States to collaborate across sector on cross-cutting issues.

Our vision of ASEAN for 2025 is that of a truly people-oriented, people-centred community that is responsive to and inclusive of our peoples and all relevant stakeholders. By being people-oriented, we see our citizens not just as beneficiaries but active partners in development. Therefore, we listen to our people and engage them in planning and implementing our development programmes. By being people-centred, we put our people’s needs and aspirations at the centre of our communi-

ty-building efforts. Bringing peace, prosperity, and happiness to our people is what inspires our goals and actions.

The ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community envisions enhancing the commitment, participation and social responsibility of ASEAN people; promoting equal access and opportunity for all, as well as promoting and protecting human rights; promoting balanced social development and sustainable environment that meet the current and future needs of the people; enhancing capacity and capability to collectively respond and adapt to emerging trends and challenges; and strengthening ability to continuously innovate and be a proactive member of the global community.

ASEAN Community Vision 2025 will continue to promote Southeast Asia as a region of peace, stability and prosperity, as well as an inter-connected, and a caring and sharing community with unity in diversity.

Therefore, here, we would like to draw your attention that we all must continue ASEAN to build up on capacity to promote regional peace, stability, prosperity and social harmony. We must continue to be outward looking by exerting greater efforts for more consolidated external relations and improved efficiency of ASEAN led processes and jointly work together for the Post 2015.

Insurers face bumper payouts as Britain braces for more floods

LONDON—Insurers are facing some of the costliest British floods on record as large parts of northern England, already inundated, brace for more heavy rain.

Accountants estimate that insurers are currently facing a bill of up to 1.5 billion pounds after towns, cities and countryside were deluged in recent days in the worst floods in Britain since 2007.

However the damage looks set to rise with a storm forecast for Tuesday evening and Wednesday.

“With more storms on the way it could get towards as large as anything that we’ve had in recent history, certainly in terms of insured loss,” said Simon Waller, managing director at JBA Risk Management, which assesses flood risk for companies and governments globally.

Around 6,700 properties have been damaged so far according to the Environment Agency, with accountancy firm KPMG estimating the total economic impact of the floods will be more than 5 billion pounds.

Typical flood insurance



A resident cleans up after flood waters receded on Huntington Road in York, Britain on 29 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

claims tend to be around 30,000 pounds though can often run as high as 130,000 pounds, JBA said.

But the outlook for more

rain, along with difficulties accessing some of the affected areas, mean most insurers say they cannot yet provide detailed estimates on the scale of the claims

they are facing. Aviva (AV.L), RSA (RSA.L), AXA (AXAF.PA) and Direct Line (DLGD.L), among the insurers facing payouts, said it was still too early to

give an idea of the cost given the current weather forecasts.

NFU Mutual, which insures more than 75 per cent of UK farmers, said on Tuesday that its initial estimate for claims from the weekend’s flooding was between 5 million and 10 million pounds, but that this figure would likely rise.

“The threat of severe flooding this month, particularly in the North and North West, has been continual and shows no signs of abating in the short term,” said Amanda Blanc, chief executive of AXA & Ireland General Insurance in a statement.

Floods and storms in 2007, which hit north-east, central and southern England and Wales, cost insurers a total of 3 billion pounds according to the Association of British Insurers.

There are nine severe flood warnings in place in northern England, meaning there is a danger to life, while there are lesser warnings in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales due to the forecasts of further rain.—*Reuters*

Facebook must face shareholder class actions over IPO

NEW YORK—A federal judge has certified two shareholder class actions accusing Facebook Inc (FB.O) of hiding concerns about its growth forecasts prior to the social media company’s May 2012 initial public offering.

US District Judge Robert Sweet in Manhattan said retail and institutional investors who claimed to lose money from buying Facebook shares at inflated prices in connection with the \$16 billion IPO may pursue their respective claims as groups.

The decision is dated 11 December but had been kept under seal, which Sweet lifted in an order made public on Tuesday.

Other Facebook defendants include Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg, Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg and other

officials. Facebook is appealing the class certifications, which the Menlo Park, California-based company said are “without merit” and conflict with “well-settled” precedent.

Shareholders accused Facebook of concealing internal projections prior to its IPO of how growth in mobile devices, an area in which it generated little ad revenue, might hurt its prospects, even as it quietly warned underwriters to cut their forecasts.

Facebook made its market debut on 18 May, 2012 at \$38 per share. Its share price fell to \$17.55 on 4 September, 2012 and stayed below the IPO price for more than a year. The stock ultimately rebounded, and closed on Tuesday up \$1.33 at \$107.26 on Nasdaq. That gave Facebook a

roughly \$303 billion market value, Reuters data show.

In his 55-page decision, Sweet said Facebook “marshalled an impressive amount of evidence” to suggest that shareholders knew how mobile usage would affect revenue.

But he rejected Facebook’s argument that shareholders should pursue their claims individually, which might prove costly and reduce recoveries, because of wide variations in how much they knew.

Sweet wrote that “given the extraordinary size of this case,” allowing two subclasses “in fact adds more weight to the predominance of common questions and answers, practically negating the individualised question raised.”—*Reuters*

Sidecar to stop ride, delivery services at end of year

SAN FRANCISCO —Sidecar, the ride-hailing and delivery company that has long struggled to keep up with competitors Uber and Lyft, said on Tuesday it would cease operations at the end of the month.

Co-founders Sunil Paul and Jahan Khanna wrote in a post on Medium that Sidecar would end service at 2pm PST on Thursday.

The founders called the startup’s end “a bittersweet victory” and said they planned to “lay the groundwork for the next big thing.”

Sidecar spokeswoman Margaret Ryan declined to comment on what the “next big thing” would entail or if any Sidecar employees would be a part of it.

Founded in 2012, San Francisco-based Sidecar launched the original model of the ride marketplace, through which passengers could use a smartphone app to hail a ride at a fraction of the cost of a taxi. It was the first test of what would eventually lead to UberX and Lyft.

Sidecar was the only app to show passengers the cost of the ride and allow them to choose a driver based on price. This month, Lyft began offering passengers a fare estimate in its redesigned app.

Sidecar also did not raise fares during peak demand, a practice known as surge pricing that is used by Lyft and Uber.

The company was unable to catch up with Uber and Lyft, which raised and spent more money and embarked on fierce marketing campaigns while Sidecar spent its cash on technology.

Unlike its competitors, Sidecar did not aggressively seek a high valuation, but that left it with less cash to grow.

“For most companies, the problem they have now is they raised too much money and the valuations are too high and they don’t grow into them,” said Michael Romano, vice president of investor relations for Lightspeed Venture Partners, an early Sidecar investor. “Sidecar was always very disciplined. Uber just spent more money than them and spent it faster.”

Sidecar raised about \$35 million from investors that also included Union Square Ventures and Avalon Ventures.

Lyft has raised \$1.3 billion and Uber has raised \$7.4 billion, with another \$1 billion round in the works.

Facing mounting competition, Sidecar earlier this year launched same-day deliveries of everything from groceries to flowers, and it partnered with startup Meadow to deliver medical marijuana.

In August, the company became primarily a delivery service for businesses and it struck an agreement to deliver from 7-Eleven.—*Reuters*

LG Display, Samsung Display to supply OLED screens for iPhones

SEOUL — South Korea’s LG Display Co Ltd and the panel-making unit of Samsung Electronics Co Ltd will supply organic light emitting diode (OLED) screens for Apple Inc’s iPhones, the Electronic Times reported yesterday citing unnamed sources.

The report comes after years of speculation that Apple will start using the next-generation technology in its phones. OLED screens are thinner and offer better picture quality than the main-

stay liquid crystal display screens.

Japan’s Nikkei newspaper reported last month that Apple plans to start using OLED screens for iPhones starting in 2018.

LG and Samsung Display are close to a final agreement with Apple for the screens, the Electronic Times report said, adding the two Korean firms plan a combined 15 trillion won (\$12.8 billion) in capital expenditure to build up OLED production capacity over the next two to three years. Apple will like-

ly provide some funding to both firms to help with the investments, the paper added.

LG Display and Samsung Display declined to comment, while Apple could not be immediately reached for comment.

Samsung Display, which currently supplies OLED smartphone panels to parent Samsung Electronics and Chinese vendors, is likely getting bigger volumes from Apple than LG Display, the paper said.—*Reuters*

3D printing process brings art to blind people

NEW YORK — Writer and podcast host Romeo Edmead is using his fingers to unlock a world he has never experienced before. Edmead lost his sight when he was just two-years-old, so he has always had a complicated relationship with art and museums.

While he has heard of classical paintings, he says school trips to museums were uncomfortable.

"I knew that what my friends would experience, because I went to public schools with sighted kids, and knew that what they would experience, I wouldn't necessarily experience because they could use their sense of sight and I didn't have that. Touching was obviously... prohibited. So it was a double edge sword growing up," said Edmead.

He describes running his fingers over a 3D version of Emanuel Leutze's "Washington Crossing the Delaware," at a library for the blind in New York City, as a kind of "freedom."

"All my life we've all heard of famous painters and their works. But to me, that's all they were," he said. "They were like vocabulary words I could write down on the page but I didn't necessarily know how to put a physical picture together. Something like this presents that opportunity, that freedom to get a better understanding. It's one thing to have

something described to you. But if you never could see before and have no memory of seeing like me it's a whole different ball of wax when you actually get to touch it."

The man behind the 3D printed works is John Olson. A former photographer for *LIFE* magazine, Olson co-founded a company called 3D Photoworks that developed and patented their own printing process for works of fine art.

"It's a three step process, in which we in step one take any conventional two dimensional image and convert it to 3D data. Once that data has been converted, we send it to a machine that sculpts the data out of a block of substrate.

"Touching was obviously...prohibited. So it was a double edge sword growing up."

Romeo Edmead
Writer and podcast host

It gives that image length, width, depth and texture. And once that's been sculpted it goes through a printing process where we lay the image back down on top of the relief in perfect registration.

So what you end up with is a three dimensional print that has length, width, depth and texture,"



A visually impaired boy takes part in a lesson in Dhaka in 2010.

PHOTO: REUTERS

said Olson. While Olson met with Edmead to guide him through the works himself, the company has also developed a string of sensors across the artworks, that when touched, give the viewer audio information, to contextualize the painting and help the viewer understand certain key elements.

For Rowana, who lost her sight when she was 28-years-old, being able to touch the paintings was a very different experience than Romeo's. She said having that context is especially important for someone like her, who uses memory when visualizing art. She admits that she was skeptical, but after touching a 3D reproduction

of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa," which she remembered seeing, it all made sense.

"It's nice because now it's attainable. Now I could feel it and judge for myself what I think it looks like. Because even as you look at it I'm sure you see this differently than he would. You know?"

So to be honest it just makes me able to experience it because if I'm in a room and it's just hanging on a wall ... you know I could stay at home and somebody could describe something to me. I don't need to go to a museum to have somebody describe it to me."—Reuters

Slightly elevated blood sugar linked to kidney damage risk

ROME — People whose blood sugar levels are in the borderline range — higher than normal, but not yet diabetic — might still have an increased risk of kidney problems, a Norwegian study suggests.

Compared to individuals with normal blood sugar, people with slightly abnormal glucose levels are more likely to have two problems associated with kidney disease — abnormal blood filtration and more of the protein albumin in the urine, the study found.

The questions, said Dr. Robert Cohen, an endocrinology researcher at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine who wasn't involved in the study, are, "What represents abnormal 'enough' blood sugar to start causing problems in the kidneys that we see with full blown diabetes, and what criteria should we be using if we want to get a head start on preventing the complications of diabetes?" Globally, about one in nine adults have diabetes, which is often linked to obesity and aging and develops when the body can't properly use or make enough of the hormone insulin to convert sugar into energy.

While the link between full-blown diabetes and chronic kidney disease is well known, doctors disagree about how much sugar in the blood might pose a risk to people without the disease. They also disagree on how to diagnose and treat patients with only mildly abnormal blood glucose levels and whether it's reasonable to call this condition "prediabetes." For the current study, Dr. Toralf Melsom of the University of North Norway and colleagues assessed blood sugar and indicators of kidney damage in 1,261 people aged 50 to 62 who didn't have diabetes.

Researchers looked for abnormal blood sugar by measuring blood glucose in fasting patients, and by measuring blood levels of hemoglobin A1c. This second test estimates average blood sugar over several months based on the percentage of hemoglobin — the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen — that is coated with sugar.—Reuters

Russia to rewrite space programme as economic crisis bites

MOSCOW — Russia is to revise its space programme, the national space agency said on Tuesday after a newspaper published a report that billions of dollars of cuts may be afoot including to ambitious Moon exploration plans.

Several Russian government ministries were engaged in revising the space programme up to 2025, Roscosmos said in a written statement to Reuters.

It did not give details. But

the Roscosmos statement and a report in *Izvestia* newspaper suggested Russia's prestigious space programme may also have fallen victim to government cutbacks brought on by hard times.

Buffeted by low oil prices, Western sanctions and a falling rouble, the Russian government is in the process of scaling back its spending plans for everything from the health sector to welfare.

The authoritative *Izvestia* newspaper published details of

what it said was a draft proposal sent by Roscosmos to the government which showed big spending cuts were being proposed to the Moon exploration programme.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin announced in April last year that Moscow planned to build a big base on the Moon which he said would serve as a platform for scientific breakthroughs. *Izvestia* reported Roscosmos was proposing to cut the

manned flights segment of lunar exploration by 88.5 billion roubles (\$1.22 billion) to 329.67 billion roubles, but said funding to build a spaceship to fly to the Moon would not suffer seriously.

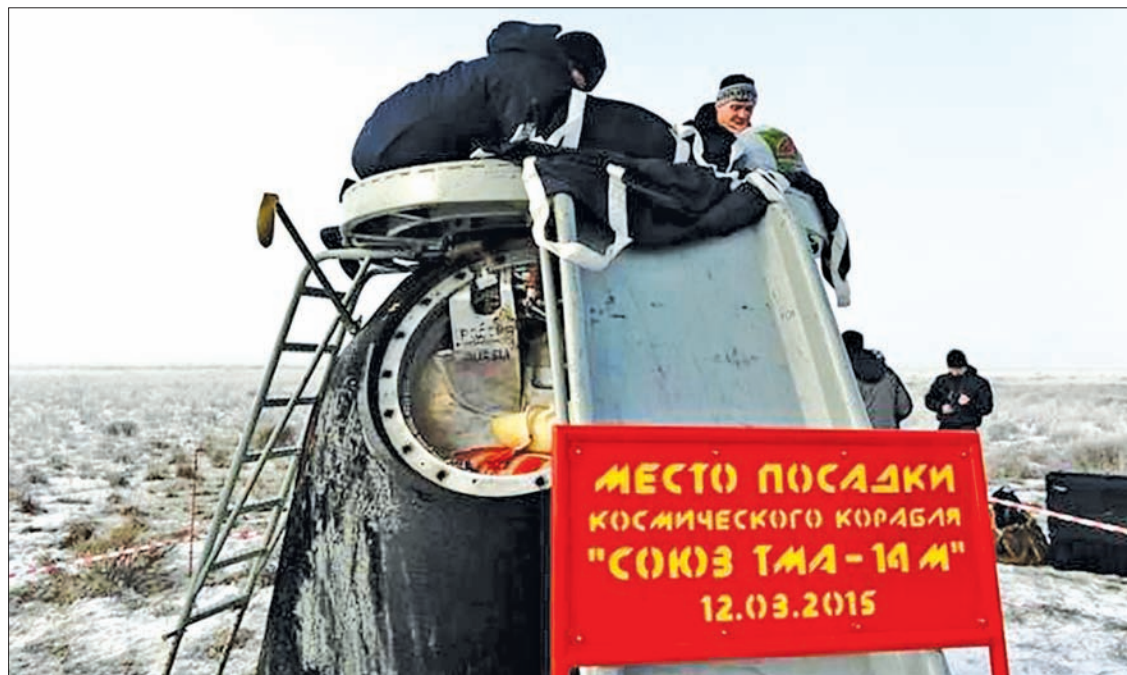
Roscosmos, in its statement, declined to comment on those figures, saying the revised programme was still extensive.

"The revised project of the federal space programme for 2016-25 envisages the study of the Moon by automated orbiters, as well as by building up scientific and technical potential for further studies, including by manned missions," it said.

It declined to say whether Russia's plans for a Moon base were still alive, but said the first manned flight around the Moon would not take place before 2029.

President Vladimir Putin has spoken many times of rekindling Soviet-era space glory. The USSR launched the first artificial "sputnik" satellite in 1957, sent the first man into space in 1961, and conducted the first-ever space walk in 1965.

But Cold War rival the United States made six manned landings on the Moon between 1969 and 1972, while the Soviet-built N-1 heavy rocket, designed to take cosmonauts to the Moon, failed to make a single successful flight.—Reuters



Russia's space agency ground personnel check the Soyuz capsule shortly after it landed in a remote area outside the town of Zhezkazgan in central Kazakhstan, on 12 March 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Venezuela Socialists challenge election of eight lawmakers; opposition cries foul

CARACAS — Members of Venezuela's ruling Socialist Party have filed Supreme Court appeals to challenge the election of eight opposition legislators, spurring accusations the party is trying to undermine the opposition's landslide victory this month.

Losing Socialist Party and allies candidates from six legislative districts also asked the court for injunctions that could block the winners from taking office, potentially stripping the opposition of the two-thirds majority it won on 6 December.

The situation has fuelled concerns of a looming power struggle between President Nicolas Maduro and a legislature controlled by the opposition, which accuses him of seeking to chip away at its ballot-box success. "The defeated leadership has filed six new motions against the will of the people expressed on 6 December," Jesus Torrealba, the head of the opposition's Democratic Unity coalition,



Jesus Torrealba, secretary of Venezuelan coalition of opposition parties (MUD) speaks during a news conference with the new elected deputies from the MUD in Caracas, Venezuela, on 11 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

wrote on Twitter.

The opposition says the move is part of a broader Socialist Party ploy to undermine their new advantage, for instance by setting up a grassroots assembly in the same building as the legislature or naming 13 justices to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court statement dated 28 December did not say on

what grounds the former candidates were appealing the elections. Winning the appeal could lead to the elections being repeated. A court official said nobody was available to comment. The opposition won 112 seats out of 167 for a 67 per cent majority, giving them expanded powers including the ability to sack ministers. If the eight legislators in

question were unable to take office while the court hears a challenge against them, the opposition would not be able to summon a two-thirds majority.

"Nothing will block the swearing-in of the 112 legislators who favour change," tweeted Amelia Belisario, an opposition congresswoman-elect whose seat is being contested.—Reuters

Central African Republic votes in election to restore democracy

BANGUI — Peacekeepers patrolled the streets of Central African Republic as voting began yesterday in a presidential election aimed at restoring democratic rule after years of inter-religious violence in which thousands have died.

Lines formed at polling stations in the capital Bangui and in the mainly Muslim PK-5 neighbourhood. UN peacekeepers staged patrols and positioned armoured personnel carriers at voting stations, witnesses said.

"We came to vote because we want to be free to get back to our professions. We want to put an end to the conflict," said businessman Gradius Vara.

Mainly Muslim rebels from a group called the Seleka seized power in the majority Christian nation in early 2013, provoking reprisals from the Christian anti-balaka militias that triggered a cycle of

religious and inter-communal killings.

Thirty candidates are competing for the presidency but in the absence of opinion polls or an incumbent, it is hard to predict a winner. Leading candidates include former prime ministers Anicet-Georges Dologuele and Martin Ziguele.

Ziguele received a boost on Tuesday when anti-balaka militias who have formed the Central African Party of Unity and Development said they would support his candidacy. Other candidates include former Foreign Minister Karim Meckassoua, and Bilal Desire Nzanga-Kolingba, the son of a former president.

The conflict has forced nearly one-fifth of the country's 5 million people from their homes and left much of the north and east controlled by mainly Muslim groups that do not answer to the government.—Reuters

Iranian Revolutionary Guards fired rockets near US warships in Gulf

WASHINGTON — Iranian Revolutionary Guards launched rockets near the US aircraft-carrier Harry S. Truman and other warships as they were entering the Gulf on Saturday, giving only brief notice in a "highly provocative" act, a US military spokesman said on Tuesday.

NBC News, citing unnamed US military offi-

cers, said the Guards were conducting a live-fire exercise and the Truman came within about 1,500 yards (metres) of a rocket.

"The rockets were not fired at the Truman and other ships, only near them," the network said.

Several Revolutionary Guard vessels fired the rockets "in close proximity" of the warships and nearby

merchant traffic "after providing only 23 minutes of advance notification," said Navy Commander Kyle Raines, spokesman for the US Central Command.

"These actions were highly provocative, unsafe, and unprofessional and call into question Iran's commitment to the security of a waterway vital to international commerce,"

Raines said in an email. The Truman, accompanied by two warships from the US-led coalition supporting air strikes against Islamic State militants in Iraq and Syria, was entering the Gulf through the Hormuz Strait on a routine transit when the incident occurred, he said.

NBC News said the US destroyer Buckley and a French frigate were in the

area where the rockets were fired.

"While most interactions between Iranian forces and the US Navy are professional, safe, and routine, this event was not and runs contrary to efforts to ensure freedom of navigation and maritime safety in the global commons," Raines said.

Iranian and US forces

have clashed in the Gulf in the past, especially during the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Tehran and six world powers including the United States clinched an agreement in July that would curb Iran's nuclear programme in return for lifting economic sanctions.—Reuters

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Dated 31 December 2015

kmma@kcyangon.com

Clinton: Islamic State persecution of Christians, Yazidis, a genocide

NEW HAMPSHIRE — US Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton on Tuesday said that Islamic State violence against Christians, Iraqi Yazidis and other religious minorities in the Middle East was genocide.

"I think I was asked this a couple months ago, and I said that term carries with it legal import, it is a very important concept and label for behavior that deserves that name," Clinton said at a town hall in Berlin, New Hampshire, when asked about the Islamic State's

killing of Christians, Yazidis, Kurdish Muslims and other religious minorities in the region. "I am now sure we have enough evidence, what is happening is genocide deliberately aimed at destroying lives and wiping out the existence of Christians and other religious minorities," Clinton said.

Islamic State has targeted and killed members of the Yazidi religion, one of the oldest in Iraq, along with Christians and other religious minorities in the region it controls in the Middle East.—Reuters

Ship carrying 12,000 liters of oil sinks in Albanian waters

TIRANA — A ship carrying 12,000 liters of oil sank near Albania's northern town of Shengjin Tuesday, polluting the Adriatic Sea close to the port, local media reported yesterday.

The Albanian port authorities have confirmed the accident, and used dispersants to dissipate oil slicks as they tried to check the extent of the pollution, according to the *Albanian Daily News*.

Tonin Uldedaj,

Shengjin's mayor, said Tuesday that local authorities were doing everything to eliminate the consequences of this accident.

Leaders of local fisheries said that they were unsure how much oil had spilled into the sea, or the level of pollution.

The operation to salvage the ship is continuing and big cranes from Vlora, a southern port in Albania, have been sent to the site.—Xinhua

Severe floods hit Missouri as US storms sweep north

KANSAS CITY — Floods in Missouri forced hundreds of residents out of their homes on Tuesday after four days of storms sent rivers to record levels, killing at least 13 people, closing hundreds of roads and halting shipping on the swollen Mississippi river.

A week of chaotic weather continued throughout the United States as a storm system that spawned deadly tornadoes in the Midwest and Southwest pushed north. More than 40 people across the country have died of weather-related causes during the Christmas holidays in the past week.

Missouri has been pounded by downpours since Saturday, and forecasters warned that its major rivers could crest between Wednesday and Saturday at records.

“Flooding on the middle portion of the Mississippi River and its tributaries may reach levels not seen during the winter months since records began during the middle 1800s,” Alex Sosnowski,



A Sun Country Airlines plane's wing is de-iced as a United Airlines plane waits at the de-icing station during a snowstorm at Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, United States on 29 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

senior meteorologist, wrote on AccuWeather.com.

At the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, about 20 miles (32 km) north of St Louis, residents of the towns West Alton and Arnold

were told to evacuate on Tuesday.

“Access to and from town will be lost in a matter of hours,” the local Rivers Pointe Fire District said in an alert. Video from local news helicopters showed

homes in West Alton with water almost at roof levels.

Arnold residents scrambled to find hotels or move to shelters.

Sarah Quinn, 18, said she and her great-grandparents were moving to

a hotel room after police turned off the power at her subdivision. Her sister, grandmother and other relatives decided to brave it out without power because they wanted to stay in their homes and vehicles to look

after their pets.

“I’ve never had this happen before. We’ve had simple flooding in the back of our subdivision and we’ve had to sandbag before, but it wasn’t this severe,” said Quinn, who spoke to Reuters by telephone, from her job in a local restaurant.

The Bourbeuse River crested on Tuesday at an all-time record in Union, Missouri, after flooding about 25 homes, nine businesses and the city’s sewer system, Mayor Mike Livengood said.

“It will take major work to get those businesses up and running again,” Livengood told Reuters. He said no one was injured in the town of about 10,500 people in Franklin County, just southwest of St. Louis.

Missouri Governor Jay Nixon called out the National Guard to direct traffic away from hundreds of closed roads across the state and urged drivers not to drive into flooded areas. Most deaths in flooding occur when cars are swept away.—Reuters

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Consignees of cargo carried on MV MERATUS GORONTALO VOY NO (123) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

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

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AGENT FOR: M/S YANG MING LINE

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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

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Mariss Jansons. PHOTO: XINHUA

Vienna Philharmonic set for diamond anniversary concert

president of the Vienna Philharmonic, in a phone interview with *China Daily*.

After conducting the New Year's Concert in 2006 and 2012, maestro Mariss Jansons will return for the third time.

The Vienna Boys' Choir and soloists of the Vienna State Ballet will also return to the annual gala in Vienna. "The conductor listened to more than 800 pieces to find what's proper for the concert. The show will be emotional as it has always been," Grossbauer says.

Keeping the tradition that the program is made up of a mix of works by the Strauss family and their contemporaries, the conductor has chosen works not previously performed at the New Year's Concert, including Robert Stolz's March of the United Nations and two French polkas by Johann Strauss II.

To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Vienna Philharmonic also announced a partnership with Sony Classical in early December by releasing a jubilee

edition, titled *The New Year's Concert*:

The Complete Works, which comprises 23 CDs featuring the 319 works that have been performed at the New Year's Concert. Among them are 25 previously unreleased recordings from the archives of Austria's national public service broadcaster, the organization that has recorded the concert since 1961.

The tradition of the New Year's Concert dates back to 1939. Its first conductor was Clemens Krauss, who was followed in 1955 by Willi Boskovsky.

The list of conductors who have presided over a New Year's Concert ranges from Zubin Mehta to Seiji Ozawa.

After being first televised live in 1959, the New Year's Concert has generated worldwide interest.

The concerts have been broadcast in more than 90 countries and watched by more than 50 million viewers across the globe.—*Xinhua*

Rob Kardashian hospitalised with diabetes

LOS ANGELES — Reality TV star Kim Kardashian's brother Rob was rushed to a hospital here and diagnosed with diabetes. Rob, 28, has been battling weight issues over the last couple of years and his health took a turn for the worse over the weekend, reported TMZ.

He was admitted to the local hospital, where doctors performed a number of tests and subsequently revealed he was diabetic.

Rob was still under doctors' care and in a stable condition, The reality TV regular began piling on the pounds following his 2012 split from singer Rita Ora, and his ballooning weight has prompted him to take a

step back from appearing on the family reality show "Keeping Up With the Kardashians". —PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Jennifer Lawrence slams Hollywood for focusing on appearance

LONDON — Actress Jennifer Lawrence has slammed Hollywood for concentrating more on appearance of actors rather than their talent.

The 25-year-old "Hunger Games" star says people should not be focused on the weight or size of an actor or actress but their skills as a performer, reported Female First.

"I hate all the focus on weight

and size that you have in our business. I don't think an actress needs to be skinny to be attractive and it sends the wrong message to young women.

"It's important that, as actresses, we need to establish ourselves first and foremost for our talent and not for our physical appearance," she said.

Lawrence also opened up about her criticisms of the gen-

der pay gap in the movie industry saying she finds herself lucky to do what she likes, but wants it to be a fair play. "I'm aware that movie stars earn too much money in relation to the rest of the world. But it's the principle that is important. "I can't stand a lack of fairness. This has nothing to do with ingratitude - I love my job and I know how lucky I am to be able to live off my art.—PTI

Kanye West named GQ's most stylish man of 2015

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Kanye West has been voted GQ's Most Stylish Man of the Year for the second year in a row.

The father of one was up against new male model Lucky Blue Smith, who actually just shot a spread for Elle UK with West's sister-in-law Kylie Jenner.

The magazine explains that while both fan bases came out to help their celeb claim victory, "in the final moments of this year's show-

down, tweets from Kim, Kourtney, Khloe and even Kris Jenner spiked the number of votes cast in West's direction."

"And in the end, there were

a lot of votes; nearly one million cast in twenty-four hours. The final tally: 520,119 votes for Kanye, 445,073 for Lucky Blue," they added.—PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

Miley Cyrus misses her old self

LOS ANGELES — Miley Cyrus has travelled a long distance from being a sweet Hannah Montana to tongue-wagging sensation, but the former Disney star says she still misses the 'old Miley'.

The 23-year-old songstress took to Instagram to share series of throwback pictures with #imisstheoldmiley, reported E! online.

"I miss the old Miley lol lol lol lol lol, #nofilter #prefilter #posttan.

When haters say they miss the old me (ps some of y'all r cray cray! I look like cousin it a clementine!) #imisstheoldmiley," she captioned a collage of her current and past pictures.—PTI



News Channel

(31-12-2015, Thursday)

6:00 am	Dramatic Performance
• Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	3:35 pm
7:35 am	• Real Story Real Movie
• Weekly Entertainment News	4:10 pm
8:35 am	• Myanmar Changes Image
• Documentary	5:10 pm
9:35 am	• Weekly Sports Info
• Beautiful ASEAN	5:20 pm
9:40 am	• Documentary
• Documentary (ASEAN)	6:15 pm
10:35 am	• Documentary
• Documentary	6:35 pm
11:35 am	• Documentary
• Science and Technology Programme	7:15 pm
12:50 pm	• (23:55)
• TV Drama Series	(Wishes + New Year Music)
1:40 pm	Countdown Live Show (Channel-4 + Skynet channel)
• TV Drama Series	Midnight
2:10 pm	• Countdown + Wishes
• Fine Arts-Bosom of	

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)



Entertainment Channel

(31-12-2015, Thursday)

6:15 am	• The Mirror Images of The Musical Oldies	8:35 am	• Musical Programme
6:15 am	• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	8:50 am	• Myanmar Video
6:30 am	• Nay Ma Win Ah Hla Myar	10:15 am	• ASEAN China Cultural Show
7:00 am	• TV Drama Series	10:20 am	• Myanmar Video
7:50 am	• TV Drama Series	Noon	• Close Down



Myanmar International

(31-12-2015 07:00 am~ 1-1-2016 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	"Myanmar's Beauty and Nature" Beach
07:52	Am	Coin Collectors
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	A Street Vendor "Spreading Knowledge"
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Marketable Goods (Straw painting)
09:45	Am	MONASTERY (Bargayar Kyaung)
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Style of Mro and Thet
10:32	Am	Climate Context: Impact of El Nino in Myanmar

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Wednesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~ 06:30 Pm) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 10:30 Am)

06:30 Pm Live: Coca-Cola Countdown Musicfest & Fireworks Show

(12:30 Am ~ 03:00 Am) - Wednesday Repeat (08:30 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

Woman who won lottery during divorce can keep it all: Dutch court

AMSTERDAM — A woman who won a 2.1 million euro (\$2.3 million) lottery prize during a divorce has no obligation to share it with her ex-husband, according to a Dutch court decision published on Tuesday.

The Amsterdam District Court ruling said the couple had listed the shared assets they wished to divide at the time they filed for divorce on 20 October, 2014, though the divorce was not formally granted until June

2015. The woman won the Post Code Lottery on New Year's Day 2015.

The man had argued that he and his estranged wife always played the lottery using shared household funds during their 30-year marriage, and it should be included in their divorce settlement.

But the judge noted they had separated their finances at least four years earlier when he went to live with his new girlfriend. The

woman paid for the winning ticket from her own bank account.

"The above means that the prize won did not belong to their joint assets and that the court will hold the prize apart in its division of goods," the written decision said. The ruling was made on 23 December and published Tuesday.

The judge divided up the couple's other assets, which amounted to less than 10,000 euros in value.—Reuters

In new habit, Japan's Buddhist temples seek slice of foreign tourism boom



Sanmon gate, or the main gate is pictured at the Eiheiji temple in Eiheiji town, Fukui prefecture. PHOTO: REUTERS

EIHEIJI (Japan) — Deep in a forest near Japan's western shore, a 13th century Buddhist temple where Steve Jobs once dreamed of becoming a Zen monk has teamed up with a Tokyo skyscraper builder to seek the commercial enlightenment of foreign tourist dollars.

As a weak yen fuels record tourism, Eiheiji temple, local authorities and Mori Building Co [MRBLD.UL], behind some of Tokyo's glitziest retail palaces, plan to redevelop the site including an \$11 million hotel nearby. From there, a new path will be built leading visitors to the spartan site that intrigued the Apple Inc guru.

Japan's temples have long been business and tech-savvy, offering lucrative services like funerals while courting domestic tourists — a recent Eiheiji exhibition featured video from a drone operated by a monk. But compared to other parts of the world, religious

sites outside centres like Kyoto have been slow to target mass foreign tourism.

What's changed is a shrinking population using temples less, crimping revenue just as annual overseas tourist numbers surge toward Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's goal of 20 million well ahead of a target date of 2020, when Tokyo hosts the Olympics. Japan's farther-flung regions, long suffering a rural exodus, now want a piece of an influx led by visitors from China, South Korea and Taiwan that is bolstering big-city economies.

"Eiheiji is a monastery that has been isolated from the rest of the world," said the Rev Shodo Kobayashi, a deputy administrator at the temple.

"But we cannot be divorced from our community forever. We need to respond to the needs of local governments to increase tourists."

Eiheiji needs money to support monks in the kind of inten-

sive Zen retreat training that once appealed to Steve Jobs. But visitor numbers have skidded to less than half a million a year, nearly two-thirds below a late-1980s peak when groups tours organized by Japanese companies and neighbourhood associations were at the height of their popularity.

For the temple and local authorities, a new bullet train line that connects Tokyo with neighbouring Kanazawa offers a lifeline.

The picturesque castle town just over 50 miles away is seeing a surge in foreign tourists whisked from Tokyo in just over 2 and a half hours.

The temple aims to spend 1.3 billion yen to build a two-storey hotel offering modern comforts — including alcohol — to 80 guests in the adjacent Eiheiji town, while the surrounding Fukui prefecture's authorities will redevelop the path leading to the temple in a project to be completed by 2020.—Reuters

Manchester City not where they should be at year end, says Hart

LONDON — Manchester City have gone off the boil after a good start to the season and the team should have been placed higher than third in the Premier League table at the end of the year, goalkeeper Joe Hart has said. City began December in first place, ahead of Leicester City on goal

difference, but picked up just seven points from their next five games to slip to third place.

“We are not where we should be right now in the table. We are right in the mix without really playing that well,” Hart told the club’s website (www.mfc.co.uk).

The Sky Blues opened this season’s campaign with five successive league wins till mid-September, scoring 11 goals in those games and conceding none. City have since

failed to win a single league game on the road, with their last away victory coming at Crystal Palace more than three months ago.

“We started the season strongly, but we have not been great over the last 12 games or so. The two teams above us (in the table) deserve to be there,” the England international said.

“Without doubt, (we need) to push on, we need to win all our home games and be hard to beat in our away games as

well.” Hart said City were unfortunate not to have taken more than a point against Leicester.

“It is a game we could and should have won but we did not. Kasper Schmeichel did well and made a few good saves, but we maybe should have done better with the chances we had,” he added.

Manuel Pellegrini’s men travel to take on eighth-placed Watford, who have won four of their last six games, in the league on Saturday.—Reuters



Leicester City’s Leonardo Ulloa and Manchester City’s Nicolas Otamendi in action during Barclays Premier League at King Power Stadium on 29 December 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Leicester City’s Leonardo Ulloa and Manchester City’s Joe Hart in action. PHOTO: REUTERS

Banned Platini could face further trouble over Dubai event

MIAMI — Banned UEFA president Michel Platini could face further investigation from FIFA’s Ethics Committee after attending an awards ceremony and conference in Dubai despite being barred from “all football activity”.

Platini, the head of European soccer body UEFA, was handed an eight year ban from the game by FIFA’s Ethics Committee on 21 December, along with banned FIFA president Sepp Blatter. He is appealing the decision and insists he has done no wrong.

The ban relates to a payment of two million Swiss francs made by Blatter’s FIFA to Platini in 2011, nine years after he finished working as a consultant to Blatter.

On 27 December, Platini at-

tended the Globe Soccer Awards organised by the Dubai Sports Council in Dubai, along with soccer stars such as Argentine Lionel Messi and Italian Andrea Pirlo.

Frenchman Platini was photographed at the event and also made comments regarding his ban to the Italian media while in Dubai.

A spokesman for FIFA’s Ethics Committee declined to comment on the specific case but said: “In general terms: The Investigatory Chamber of the Ethics Committee of FIFA investigates any alleged breach of the Ethics Code of FIFA.”

A spokesman for Platini did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The 21 December ruling

from FIFA Ethics Committee chair Hans-Joachim Eckert stated that Blatter and Platini were banned “for eight years from all football-related activities (administrative, sports or any other) on a national and international level. The bans come into force immediately.”

Platini has said he will fight the ban through the appeals process, which is likely to end up with the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland, and has also been fiercely critical of the decision and the Ethics Committee itself. Blatter has also said he will appeal.

FIFA has been thrown into crisis by investigations from the FBI and Department of Justice in the United States and Swiss authorities.—Reuters

United players also fighting for own futures, says Smalling

LONDON — Manchester United defender Chris Smalling has dismissed suggestions that the squad was not supporting under-fire manager Louis van Gaal and said the players are fighting for their own futures as well.

Despite an improved performance against struggling champions Chelsea, United are winless in eight games and are placed sixth in the Premier League.

Criticism for United’s poor results has been largely aimed at Van Gaal, but Smalling believes no one should feel safe.

“If anything we are all playing for our own futures as well,” the England international told British media. “To say we’re not playing for the manager is silly.

“Every week we want to go out there and show everyone what a good team we are and on our day we can beat anyone.”

Smalling is one of the players whose performances have improved during Van Gaal’s tenure, and he insists that the manager’s demeanour remains unchanged.

“He has been himself from day one that we met him to how he is now,” the 26-year-old defender, who is viewed as a future United captain by the Dutch manager, said.

The Red Devils have been heavily criticised for their rigid possession-based play, but were more positive during the draw against the Blues.

Smalling, however, insisted the manager was not going to change.—Reuters

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