

Time for all national brethren to draw lessons from bitter experiences and strive to terminate all forms of conflict

NAY PYI TAW, 10 Jan—*The following is the message sent by President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein on the occasion of the 67th Anniversary Kachin State Day.*

I would like to extend my heartiest greetings to all the national brethren in Kachin State. It is a great pleasure that I am privileged to send a message on the occasion of the 67th anniversary of Kachin State Day, which falls on 10 January.

The Kachin State Council had its first conference on 10 January 1948, six days after independence, and formed its local government. And the day has since been honoured as “Kachin State Day” without missing a single year. Now it turns 67.

We have undergone armed conflicts resulting from political flux following independence. The time has come for all national brethren to draw lessons from these bitter experiences and strive together to bring an

end to all forms of conflict and live in harmony.

Only when stability and peace prevail will Kachin State develop on all fronts. The Union Peace-making Central Committee (UPCC) and the Union Peace-making Working Committee (UPWC) have been formed to ensure peace all over the country, including Kachin State. In 2013 and 2014 in Myitkyina, the Union Peace-making Working Committee held talks with a delegation of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and signed agreements. As a direct consequence of the talks, KIO could open its liaison office in Myitkyina. In addition, a negotiation team comprising representatives of both sides was formed with a view to preventing further fighting.

What’s more, the UPWC and ethnic armed groups had a meeting in Myitkyina in a bid to sign a nationwide ceasefire agreement, and they could issue a joint communiqué. Efforts are under way to sign Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA with ethnic armed groups, including the KIO.

It is imperative that all national brethren in Kachin State, hand in hand with the local government, should lend themselves to accomplishing the peace process being undertaken by the Union Government. Furthermore, all Kachin national brethren are encouraged to entertain Union Spirit, a genuine patriotism, with their resolve to turn the Republic of the Union of Myanmar into a prosperous country with flourishing democracy.

Buddhist Art of Myanmar on view in New York February 10 through May 10, 2015



Plaque with image of seated Buddha. Bagan period, 11th-13th century. Gilded metal with polychrome. 7 x 6.14 x 0.25 in. (17.8 x 15.9 x 0.6 cm). Bagan Archaeological Museum.—PHOTO: SEAN DUNGAN.

YANGON, 9 Jan—Asia Society Museum presents a landmark exhibition of spectacular works of art from collections in Myanmar and the United States. Buddhist Art of Myanmar comprises approximately 70 works from the fifth through the early twentieth century and includes stone, bronze, and lacquered wood sculptures as well as textiles, paintings, and ritual implements. The majority of works in the exhibition on loan from Myanmar have never been seen in the West.

On view in New York from February 10 through May 10, 2015, the exhibition showcases Buddhist objects created for temples, monasteries, and personal devotion, presented in their historical and ritual contexts. Exhibition artworks highlight the long and continuous presence of Buddhism in Myanmar since the early first millennium, as well as the unique combination of style, technique, and religious deities that appeared in the arts of Buddhist Myanmar. Buddhist Art of Myanmar includes loans from the National Museums in Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw, the Bagan Archaeological Museum, Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum, and the Kaba Aye Buddhist Art Museum, as well as works from public and private collections in the United States. The exhibition is organized by guest curators Sylvia Fraser-Lu and Donald M. Stadtner in conjunction with Adriana Proser, Asia Society’s John H. Foster Senior Curator for Traditional Asian Art.

Asia Society Museum

Gov’t officials, civil societies take steps to bring National Land Use bill to parliament

By Aye Min Soe

YANGON, 9 Jan— The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry and civil societies started to take steps for legislating the National Land Use Policy bill as the bill was put to a referendum in November last year.

The law would guarantee justice and fairness between people and investors, said a ministry official who participated in drafting the bill.

During the referendum, suggestions and objections came from farmers in 17 townships and amendments were made to the bill, he said. The bill sets out a system for confiscating land for government projects

that gives compensation to land owners and allows for relocation, according to the ministry.

The bill was drafted by officials of the ministry and the Office of the Attorney-General of the Union and they are working together with civil societies to put it forward to parliament.

When drafting the bill, the officials deleted sections not in conformity with current situations and included provisions that would benefit the people, a ministry official said.

Private law experts, giving their own views on the bill, say the legislation focuses on the investment sector and fails to give guarantees of traditional land ownership rights.

The National Land Use Policy bill contains 19 chapters and clauses to systematically manage and use land in the country in the interest of the country and the people, to promote socio economy of the people and to conserve the national environment, according to the ministry.—GNLM

Myanma Posts and Telecommunications introduces communication services to the people to be on a par with local and foreign communication companies.—TIN SOE (MYANMA ALINN)

MPT to introduce better services at lower charges on 12 January

By Khin Yadana

YANGON, 9 Jan — Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications is introducing a new service called “Swethaha” to its subscribers, starting from 12 January, lowering its call and message charges to K 35 per minute and K 15 per message and substituting its minute-based system of for data charges with megabyte-based system of K 15 per Mb, according to Mr Nagashima, Chief Executive Officer of MPT-KD-

DI-Sumitomo.

Under the new service, MPT subscribers are not required to apply for the data connection as before and will be able to enjoy 50 Mb of data free of charge between 12 January and 31 March.

Prepaid MPT customers who would like to use the new service are to subscribe it by sending a message “SWE” to 1332 and postpaid customers are to send message “POSTSWE” to the same number.

(See page 3)



Basic education students join aerobic contest



MUSE, 9 Jan — Muse Township Inter-Basic Education School Aerobic Contest was held at No 1 Basic Education High School in Muse, northern Shan State on 6 January.

Chairman of Muse District Women's Affairs Organization Daw Htar Htar Win, Chairman of District Sports and Physical Education Committee Daw Win Thiri Hlaing and officials supervised the contest.

The chairperson of the District WAO presented K100,000 to first prize winning team BEHS No 1, K75,000 to second prize winning team BEHS No 2 (A) and K50,000 to third BEHS No 2(B).

She also donated K50,000 to the fund of BEHS No 1.

L Soe (IPRD)

Dry Zone Greening Department gives A-1 stoves to locals



MYINGYAN, 9 Jan — Myint Sein of the DZGD Dry Zone Greening Department of Mandalay Region explained use of A1 stoves for saving firewood, minimizing cost for firewood and preventing deforestation.

He presented stoves to Myingyan District's deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Assistant Director U

Nay Pyi Taw MCWSC turns out tailors



NAY PYI TAW, 9 Jan — Under the supervision of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Zabuthiri Township MCWA conducted the advanced tailoring course 1/2014 at its hall.

On Friday, the training course concluded at the hall of Township MCWA, attended by Patron of Nay Pyi Taw Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Daw Kyin Khaing. Secretary-2 of the MMCWA Daw Ahmar made a concluding speech.

Patron Daw Kyin Khaing presented the first prize to Ma Khaing Khaing Lwin; Secretary-2 Daw Ahmar, second to Ma May Zin Htoo; and Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw MCWSC Daw Aye Aye San, third to Ma Thein Thein Nwe.

Chairperson Daw Thida Kyaing of District MCWSC presented gifts to a trainer.

The patron of the association and party viewed clothes made by trainees in their practical exercises.

Tun Tun Win (Pynmana)

Plan to conduct polling household cost for designation of minimum wage



MANDALAY, 9 Jan — A training course for polling household costs to designate minimum wage, conducted by Ministry

of Labour, Employment and Social Security, was opened at Myoma House in Aungmyethazan Township on 8 January.

Mandalay Region Minister for Forestry and Mining and Region Minimum Wage designation committee chairman U Than Soe

Myint made a speech. Director-General of Labour Department U Myo Aung explained implementation of the work process.

The polling household costs will be conducted in 108 townships including 13 in Mandalay Region, eight in Magway Region and three in Kachin State.

The polling team will comprise seven members from Township General Administration Department, Planning Department, Labour Department, social organizations, representatives from employee and employers.

A total of 168 trainees attended the two-day course.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Mohnyin Township to get detour for better transport

MOHNYIN, 9 Jan — Local authorities are constructing a detour of Mohnyin.

Kachin State government allotted K5.86 billion on construction of an eight-mile and six-furlong long and 12-foot wide asphalt road. An aim has been set to complete construction of the road in 2014-15 fiscal year.

Local people demanded construction of a detour of Mohnyin because heavy machinery, fuel bowsers and trucks with logs going to jade mines in Phakant Township caused damag-

es to Shwebo-Myitkyina road and local roads in Mohnyin.

The detour will lie along the foot of a hill, east of Mohnyin. It will have a

300 feet long and 30 feet wide RC bridge identified Nantyin Creek Bridge.

Thein Than Htay, Swan Ah Pyae, Mann Pyi Tadun, Kaung Kin Lwin

and En Khun Mai construction companies are building the road sections, Engineer of Township Public Works U Aye Lwin told media.—GNLM-001



Plan to vaccinate over 1 million of children against measles, German measles in Mandalay



MANDALAY, 9 Jan — A press conference on mass immunization campaign of measles and German measles for under 15 children was held at Swan Hotel, here, on 8 January.

The vaccination will be jointly conducted by Ministry of Health, World

Health Organization, UNICEF and GAVI.

At the press conference, Head of Mandalay Region Health Department Dr Than Win said that vaccination will be given to students under 15 at the school for the first programme and to children

under 15 in the community for the second programme.

Assistant Director Dr Htar Htar Lin of Health Department said that measles is a quick infectious disease. People need to receive vaccination for measles two times at 9 months old and 18 years. German

measles vaccination will be given to the youths in 2015 programme.

Assistant Director Dr Thiha explained the purpose of providing vaccination to the people and infection of these two diseases.

Information officer U Ye Lwin of UNICEF (Myanmar) said, "UNICEF and WHO will provide vaccination equipment and technology to the Ministry of Health. GAVI will donate vaccination for the programme. The group estimated to donate over 17 million ampoules for Myanmar."

The mass immunization of measles and German measles will be carried out twice in Myanmar from 19 to 27 January and from 19 to 28 February.

Officials estimated vaccination will be given to over 1 million children in Mandalay Region.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



Firefighters participate in fire drill at Kyaunggon Myoma market



KYAUNGKON, 9 Jan — Township authorities organized the fire drill at Myoma market in Kyaunggon, Ayeyawady Region, on 3 January.

Personnel of Township Fire Services Department, members of auxiliary fire brigade and police participated in the fire drill.

The fire drill was su-

pervised by Township Administrator U Kyaw Aung Hsan, Head of Township Fire Services Department U Tin Win and officials.

David (Kyaunggon)

Township officials checks fuel stations in Myingyan



Carrot marketable in Nay Pyi Taw

NAY PYI TAW, 9 Jan — Local farmers cultivate carrot plants in Thahtaygon, Nweyit and Kyathay-aing villages in Tatkon Township.

The farmers now earn income from carrot grown in early November. Likewise, farming workers also earn daily wage for their families from weeding and nurturing the plants.

In the cold season, vegetables are marketable in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area. The 45-day carrot plants can be sold at the market.

Shwe Ye Yint

MYINGYAN, 9 Jan — Myingyan District's deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung and officials of District Police Force, Development Affairs Committee, Fire Services Department, Internal Revenue Department and Trade Promotion Department inspected fuel stations, fuel tanks and warehouses in Myingyan, Mandalay Region, on 7 January.

They checked permits for fuel distribution, installation of fire extinguishers, service of security personnel, quality of fuel, and systematic keeping of accounts.

Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)



REGIONAL

Indonesia official says 'pings' detected in search for AirAsia flight recorders

JAKARTA, 9 Jan — Indonesia search and rescue teams hunting for the wreck of an AirAsia passenger jet detected pings in their efforts to find the black box flight recorders on Friday, an official said, 12 days after the plane went missing with 162 people on board.

Indonesia AirAsia Flight QZ8501 vanished from radar screens on 28 December, less than half way into a two-hour flight from Indonesia's second-biggest city of Surabaya to Singapore. There were no survivors.

Forty-eight bodies, including at least two still strapped to their seats, have been found in waters off Borneo, but strong winds and high waves have hampered efforts to reach larger

pieces of suspected wreckage detected by sonar on the sea floor.

The Airbus (AIR.PA) A320-200 carries the cockpit voice and flight data recorders near the tail section. Officials had warned, however, that they could have become separated from the tail.

Santoso Sayogo, an investigator at the National Transportation Safety Committee, said it appeared that the flight recorders were no longer in the tail.

"We received an update from the field that the pinger locator already detected pings," he told Reuters.

"We have our fingers crossed it is the black box. Divers need to confirm. Unfortunately it seems it's off from the tail. But the divers need to confirm the posi-



Indonesian navy divers prepare operations to lift the tail of AirAsia flight QZ8501 from the Java sea on 9 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

tion."

The tail was found on Wednesday, upturned on the sea bed about 30 km (20 miles) from the plane's last known location at a depth of around 30 metres.

Indonesian search

teams loaded lifting balloons on to helicopters on Friday ahead of an operation to raise the tail.

The head of the search and rescue agency, Fransiskus Bambang Soelistyo, said he assumed the flight

recorders were still in the tail and that reports they had separated had yet to be confirmed.

"The divers are tying the tail with straps and then we will try (to lift it) two ways — floating balloons combined with cranes, so that the tail sector wouldn't be damaged," he told reporters. "Because we assume the black box is in the tail sector."

He said two bodies had been found still attached to their seats, with local television reporting that one of the recovered seats was from the cockpit.

"Looking for victims is still our main priority besides the black box," he said.

Relatives of the victims have urged authorities to make finding the remains of

their loved ones the priority.

Indonesia AirAsia, 49 percent owned by the Malaysia-based AirAsia (AIRA.KL) budget group, has come under pressure from the authorities in Jakarta since the crash.

The transport ministry has suspended the carrier's Surabaya-Singapore licence, saying it only had permission to fly the route on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Flight QZ8501 took off on a Sunday, though the ministry said this had no bearing on the accident.

While the cause of the crash is not known, the national weather bureau has said seasonal tropical storms common in the area were likely to be a factor.

Reuters

Japan, China to discuss maritime crisis management Monday

TOKYO, 9 Jan — Japan and China have agreed to hold a working-level meeting in Tokyo next Monday to launch a maritime crisis management mechanism in 2015, defence sources said on Friday.

The two countries will resume talks to avert unwanted clashes around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea — uninhabited islets controlled by Japan but claimed by China.

During their first summit talks in November, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Xi Jinping agreed to ease tensions over the sovereignty of the islands and establish the crisis management mechanism.

Chinese patrol ships and airplanes have been repeatedly spotted around the islets, which Beijing calls Diaoyu, keeping Japanese authorities on alert.

Attending the upcoming meeting are officials from Japan's Defence Ministry and Maritime Self-Defence Force, and China's Defence Ministry.

In 2012, Japanese and Chinese defense authorities reached a basic agreement to set up a hotline, and use a common radio frequency for their ships and planes around the Senkakus.—Kyodo News

Japan adopts new space policy focusing on security

TOKYO, 9 Jan — The Japanese government approved on Friday a new space development policy focusing on security, with an aim to boost the total value of the country's space industry to 5 trillion yen over the next decade.

Under the 10-year Basic Plan on Space Policy, the government said it will enhance cooperation with the United States in the area of security.

To reduce danger of space debris, Japan will work to establish systems

and develop technology to monitor them by sharing information with the United States.

Japan also plans to have a network of seven "quasi-zenith satellites" over the next 10 years to complement the global-positioning system operated by the United States.

The country aims to launch the first version of the next-generation flagship rocket in fiscal 2020 that will replace the H2-A rocket, while planning to finish enhancing

the launch capability of its solid-fuel rocket Epsilon as early as the end of fiscal 2015.

For space exploration, it plans to launch three midsize satellites and five small satellites.

Regarding the US-proposed plan to extend the operation of the International Space Station through 2024, an international project involving Japan, Tokyo will make a decision by the end of fiscal 2016.

Kyodo News



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from R), next to Shunichi Yamaguchi (3rd from R), minister of state for space policy, addresses a meeting at Strategic Headquarters for Space Policy at his office in Tokyo on 9 Jan 2015.—KYODO NEWS

Thai assembly begins impeachment hearing against former PM Yingluck



Ousted former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra speaks to the media as she arrives at Parliament before the National Legislative Assembly meeting in Bangkok on 9 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

BANGKOK, 9 Jan — Thailand's parliament began an impeachment hearing against former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra on Friday that could lead to her being banned from politics for five years and stoke tension in the divided country.

Yingluck, Thailand's

first woman prime minister, was removed from office for abuse of power in May and days later her government was ousted in a military coup that ended months of street protests against her by her rivals.

Yingluck remains popular among the rural poor

who elected her in a 2011 landslide, as does her brother, ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra, and the impeachment hearing could test a fragile calm under military rule.

In her opening statement to the military-appointed National Legislative Assembly, Yingluck said the proceedings were futile as she no longer held any political post.

"I was removed from my position as prime minister. I have no position left to be removed from," Yingluck told the assembly.

About 20 of Yingluck's supporters gathered outside parliament despite government warnings to stay away. Some held red roses and tried to raise pictures of Yingluck until police told them to put them away.

Thailand is under martial law and public gather-

ings are banned.

The case concerns Yingluck's role in a rice subsidy programme which critics denounced as a wasteful hand-out to the Shinawatras' supporters and which incurred billions of dollars in losses.

A day after she was ordered to step down in May, the National Anti-Corruption Commission indicted her for dereliction of duty in relation to the rice scheme.

The impeachment is the latest chapter in a divisive 10-year struggle for power between the Shinawatras and the royalist-military establishment which Thaksin, a populist former telecommunications tycoon, as a threat.

A guilty verdict would see Yingluck banned from politics.

Her supporters say the case is aimed at barring her from an election the military

has promised to hold early next year and ending the influence of the Shinawatra family.

Thaksin was ousted in a 2006 coup and lives in self-exile to avoid a 2008 graft conviction but remains hugely influential.

The National Legislative Assembly has said a decision could come by the end of the month.

Under the subsidy scheme, Yingluck's government bought rice from farmers at prices much higher than on the open market leading to huge stockpiles.

Yingluck defended the scheme in her opening statement.

"Please look at the benefits of the scheme and not just the financial cost," she said.

The hearing resumes on 16 January.

Reuters

Kishida to visit India, Europe, French police seal off town as they close in on newspaper killing suspects

TOKYO, 9 Jan — Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said on Friday he plans to discuss the fight against terrorism with his French counterpart Laurent Fabius in Paris as part of a week-long trip to India, France, Belgium and Britain starting next week.

Condemning a deadly shooting incident at a French satirical newspaper in an apparent terrorist attack, Kishida said, “We must never tolerate vicious terrorism and challenges against the freedom of speech and the press.”

“Sharing this view with the international community, we must face up to the fight against terrorism,” he said.

Referring to the purpose of the four-nation tour starting Thursday, Kishida said, “I would like to take this opportunity to send a message to the world as to how our country will contribute to the stability and prosperity of the international community and the

region, and how we will try to address global challenges” in partnership with the four countries plus the European Union.

The minister said such proactive diplomacy is important, especially when this year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Kishida plans to hold a strategic dialogue with Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in New Delhi, and to hold talks with Federica Mogherini, the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, in Brussels.

In London, Kishida, together with Defence Minister Gen Nakatani, is scheduled to attend the first security meeting involving the foreign and defence ministers of Japan and Britain. Speaking at a separate news conference, Nakatani said he will make a three-nation trip to Djibouti, South Sudan and Britain from 17 to 22 January.

Kyodo News

DAMMARTIN-EN-GOELE, (France), 9 Jan — French anti-terrorist police surrounded a small northern town and helicopters hovered overhead after at least one person was taken hostage in a print works by two men believed to have carried out an attack on a Paris satirical journal.

Earlier, police had chased a vehicle at high speed along the nearby A2 motorway towards Paris as authorities appeared to be closing in on the two brothers. Gunshots rang out and police trucks, ambulances and armoured vehicles descended on the area close to Paris’s Charles de Gaulle airport.

Police and anti-terrorist forces blocked all entries to the town of about 8,000, clearly seeking to limit the scale of any siege.

“All residents are requested to remain at home. Children are to be kept safe in school,” the municipal website said.



Helicopters with French intervention forces hover above the scene of a hostage taking at an industrial zone in Dammartin-en-Goele, northeast of Paris on 9 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

The danger of hostage taking or of a second attack has been a central concern of security services since the gunmen stormed the Paris offices of the satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo on Wednesday, killing ten journalists and two police officers.

Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet told iTELE television he was fairly sure the two suspects were in

the building currently surrounded.

“We are almost certain it is those two individuals holed up in that building.”

Yohann Bardoux, a plumber whose office is two doors down from the printing shop where the hostage drama is taking place stayed away from work after hearing gunfire. But he said his mother was in the building next door to the printing shop.

“Of course I’m worried about her, I hope it all comes down soon, and turns out well,” Bardoux said.

“They are everywhere. It’s really jumping. They’ve blocked the whole zones, we’ve got helicopters overhead, the police presence is impressive.”

A senior Yemeni intelligence source told Reuters one of the two suspects, French-born sons of Algerian-born parents, was in Yemen for several months in 2011 for religious studies; but there was no confirmed information whether he was trained by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

The gunmen shouted “Allahu Akbar” (God is greatest) as they carried out the attack, which has been described by President Francois Holland and other world leaders as an attack on the fundamentals of democracy.

Reuters

Cuba releases three prisoners in sign of meeting US agreement

HAVANA, 9 Jan — Cuba released three detainees on Wednesday in a sign it was fulfilling an agreement to free a list of 53 people the United States regards as political prisoners as part of a thaw in relations between the two nations.

The government freed 19-year-old twin brothers Diango Vargas Martin and Bianco Vargas Martin on Wednesday afternoon, opposition activists said. The pair were arrested in December 2012 and sentenced to 30 months in jail for disorderly conduct and threatening a state official.

Dissidents said a third man, Enrique Figuerola Miranda, was also freed. All three were members of the opposition Patriotic Union of Cuba (UNPACU).

The move followed a report on Wednesday by *Reuters* citing a congressional aide who said that Cuba was resisting the release of “several” of the prisoners on the list.

A White House official had denied the *Reuters* report, saying “we have not heard any such thing from the Cubans, we fully expect all 53 to be released.”

The prisoner release was part of an historic deal last month to renew diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba and end more than five decades of hostility.

However, three weeks after the bid for US-Cuba détente became public, President Barack Obama’s administration has done little to dispel questions about what might be holding up full implementation of the prisoner agreement.

The Cuban government had no immediate comment Wednesday on the status of the prisoner release.

The twins were released in the eastern



Raul Borges, 74, holds a picture of his son Ernesto Borges in his house in Havana on 2 Jan, 2015. Ernesto Borges, a KGB-trained counter intelligence officer, has been in a Cuban prison for 16 years for attempting to hand over secrets to a US diplomat in Cuba.

REUTERS

city of Santiago and returned home to their mother, according to Elizardo Sanchez, president of the Cuban Commission for Human Rights and National Reconciliation. The brothers were included on an informal list drawn up by Sanchez, but it is not known officially if they were on the list of 53 names.

“It appears that the big release has begun,” said Sanchez, whose opposition group monitors the arrests of Cuban government critics. “We hope dozens more will be freed in the coming days.”

Amnesty International had described the twins — an older brother, Alexei Vargas Martin, who remains in custody — as “prisoners of conscience” whom it says were detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Reuters

Sri Lanka’s strongman president voted out after decade in power

COLOMBO, 9 Jan — Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa lost his bid for a third term on Friday, ending a decade of rule that critics say had become increasingly authoritarian and marred by nepotism and corruption.

As results rolled in overnight from Thursday’s election, it became clear that Rajapaksa had been beaten by opposition candidate Mithripala Sirisena, a one-time ally who defected overnight in November and derailed what the president thought would be an easy win.

Celebratory firecrackers could be heard exploding in the capital, Colombo, after Rajapaksa’s office said he had accepted the victory of Sirisena, who has vowed to root out corruption and bring constitutional reforms to weaken the power of the presidency.

Sirisena, a soft-spoken 63-year-old from the rice-growing hinterlands of this Indian Ocean island state, is expected to be sworn in at Colombo’s Independence Square at 6:00 pm local time.

His allies say he will rebalance the country’s foreign policy, which tilted heavily towards China in re-



Presidential candidate Mithripala Sirisena waves at his supporters as he leaves after casting his vote for the presidential election in Polonnaruwa on 8 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

cent years as Rajapaksa fell out with the West over human rights and allegations of war crimes committed at the end of a drawn-out conflict with Tamil separatists in 2009.

US Secretary of State John Kerry was quick to welcome the successful election and commended Rajapaksa for accepting the verdict of the nation’s 15 million voters.

“I look forward to working with President-elect Mithripala Sirisena as his new government works to implement its campaign platform of a Sri Lanka that is peaceful, inclusive, democratic, and

prosperous,” he said in a statement.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called Sirisena to congratulate the new leader of “a close friend and neighbour”.

Rajapaksa had cold-shouldered New Delhi in recent years, but Sirisena told an Indian newspaper this week that “we will revert to the old, non-aligned policy”.

“India is our first, main concern. But we are not against Chinese investment either. We will maintain good relations with China too,” he told the *Hindustan Times*.

Reuters

Poland to seek NATO response to Russia's Baltic exercises



Poland's Defence Minister
Tomasz Siemoniak

WARSAW, 9 Jan — Poland expects the NATO alliance to step up its military exercises around the Baltic Sea after a flurry of activity by Russian warships and jet fighters in the area last month, Defence Minis-

ter Tomasz Siemoniak told *Reuters* in an interview.

"What happened in December was indeed rather unprecedented," Siemoniak said. "We will definitely want the Baltic Sea to be taken into account to a greater extent, and I think that in terms of military exercises planned by NATO, there will be such a reaction," he said. The interview was conducted on Monday but authorised for release by the ministry on Thursday.

The Atlantic alliance has already increased the frequency of air patrols in the region, part of a revival of Cold War tensions sparked by Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and its support for Ukraine's pro-Russian rebels.

Siemoniak said Moscow did not have

an exit strategy, and that NATO and the European Union, which has imposed sanctions on Russia together with the United States, should brace themselves for years of conflict.

"We shouldn't talk about lifting the sanctions too soon," he said, adding that they were the most effective tool at the West's disposal.

The French government in November put on hold a contract to supply Mistral warships to Russia after coming under pressure from NATO allies.

Asked if French-based companies such as Airbus and the Thales could suffer as they bid for contracts in Poland's \$41 billion army modernisation programme, Siemoniak said: "I'm counting on France's

decision (not to deliver) being permanent, so the problem has been solved. It seems that Russia has also accepted that."

Siemoniak also denied that a US Senate report, which in December made clear by implication that Poland had allowed the CIA to run secret detention facilities on its soil, had damaged the relationship between the two allies.

Polish officials have expressed disappointment that the published version of the report contained enough detail to implicate Poland, putting it at risk of reprisal attacks.

"I think that, at the moment, the cooperation between our intelligence agencies is the best in history," Siemoniak said, "so the publication of the report has not made it more difficult." —*Reuters*

More than one million flee, Ukraine close to 'humanitarian catastrophe'

LONDON, 9 Jan — More than one million people have been driven from their homes by the conflict in Ukraine, hampering aid efforts and leaving the country on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe, aid agencies said on Thursday. The number of people uprooted within Ukraine, 610,000, and of refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries, 594,000, has more than tripled since August, figures from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) show.

The UN said an estimated 5.2 million people in Ukraine were living in conflict zones, of whom 1.4 million were highly

vulnerable and in need of assistance as they face financial problems, a lack of services and aid, and harsh winter conditions.

The conflict between Ukraine and pro-Russia separatists, killed more than 4,700 people last year and provoked the worst crisis in relations between Russia and the West since the Cold War.

Denis Krivosheev, deputy director of Europe and Central Asia at Amnesty International, said residents in separatist-controlled Luhansk and Donetsk could barely afford food and medicines, especially vulnerable people such as pensioners.

"While it may be too early to call this a human-

itarian catastrophe, it's clearly progressing in that direction," Krivosheev told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by email.

The provision of humanitarian aid was being hampered by pro-Kiev volunteer battalions that were increasingly preventing food and medicine from reaching those in need in eastern Ukraine, he said.

"Attempting to create unbearable conditions of life is a whole new ballgame... using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is a war crime."

The battalions often act like "renegade gangs" and urgently need to be brought under control, Krivosheev added.

Reuters

US to cut European military bases to save cost, Pentagon says

WASHINGTON, 9 Jan — The US military will divest an air base in Britain and return it and 14 other facilities in Europe back to their home nations, the Pentagon said on Thursday, in a bid to save the US government about 500 million US dollars annually.

The restructuring will pull thousands of US military and civilian personnel out of the 15 sites mostly in the United Kingdom and Germany over several years, the Pentagon said in a statement. The Pentagon would divest RAF Mildenhall, northeast of London, and withdraw 3,200 US personnel from the base home to tanker, reconnaissance and special operations aircraft over the next several years, it said.

The Pentagon also has selected RAF Lakenheath in

the UK to be the first permanent European base for the *F-35 Joint Strike Fighter*. The first aircraft are scheduled to arrive in the UK in 2020 to replace *F-15* fighter jets, it said. "The decision reflects the closeness of the US-UK defence relationship and the military value of the basing in the UK," added said. The reduction in RAF Mildenhall would be partially offset as about 1,200 US military personnel would be permanently stationed at RAF Lakenheath along with two squadrons of *F-35* fighters, the Pentagon said, adding that the net loss of US troops in Britain would be about 2,000.

About nine facilities in Germany would be closed or partially closed, but overall US troop numbers in the country were expected to

increase a few hundred, according to the statement. In Portugal, some 500 US military and civilian personnel would be withdrawn from Lajes Field in the Azores.

"These actions will result in a slight decrease in our force levels, but will also ensure they are most effectively positioned to enable the US and our NATO allies to respond quickly to crises worldwide," the statement said.

"Additionally, these actions will result in the greater efficiency and effectiveness of our presence in Europe by reducing the US footprint while ensuring that the infrastructure in place will continue — now and into the future — to sustain US interests and support our partners in the region," it said.

Xinhua

EU's Tusk to push for airline data sharing after attack

RIGA, 9 Jan — European Council President Donald Tusk will press EU lawmakers next week to drop their objections to states sharing airline passenger data as part of efforts to tighten security after the attack on Paris newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*.

Speaking in Latvia on Friday, the former Polish prime minister who now chairs meetings of EU leaders, said he had discussed the response to the attack with French President Francois Hollande and would put the matter on the agenda of the next scheduled summit in Brussels on 12 February. "Next week in Strasbourg I will appeal to the European Parliament to speed up work on the EU Passenger Name Record system, which can help in detecting the travel of dan-



European Council President Donald Tusk listens during a news conference in Riga on 9 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

gerous people," Tusk said.

Lawmakers have resisted endorsing the system for sharing data known as PNR on the grounds it will infringe on privacy.

Tusk said of the killing of 12 people in Paris on Wednesday: "Such dramatic events demonstrate

the vulnerability of nations in today's world. The European Union cannot do everything -- but it can contribute to strengthening our security. In reaction to 9/11, the EU developed the European Arrest Warrant.

"But we need to do more." —*Reuters*

E-waste poses risk to Vietnam's environment: survey

HO CHI MINH CITY, 9 Jan — The exponential growth of the information technology (IT) industry in recent years is posing a significant risk to Vietnam's environment as the disposal of electrical and electronic equipment waste rapidly expands, local media reported on Friday.

Over the past five years, Vietnam's IT industry has grown an average of 45.5 percent annually. Total revenue exceeded 25.5 billion US dollars in 2012 alone, over 94 percent of which came from electronic equipment and hardware, state-run Radio the Voice of Vietnam quoted figures from the General Statistics Office as saying.

The number of personal computers (PCs) adopted by each household nationwide reached 0.17 between 2004 and 2010 while the usage rate of washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioners and television sets jumped by 183 percent, 139 percent, 32 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

Capital Hanoi is forecast to discard 161,000 TVs, 97,000 PCs, 178,000 refrigerators, 136,000 washing machines and 97,000 air conditioners by 2020. Meanwhile, similar waste from southern metropolis Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City are predicted at higher numbers. A recent survey conducted in Hanoi and HCM City by an Asia-Pacific

consortium of IT corporations and its Vietnamese counterpart showed that between 81 and 100 percent of respondents would rather sell their second-hand electronic items to scrap-iron dealers or private electronic repair shops than donate them to e-waste treatment companies.

Only three out of 15 e-waste treatment facilities are performing at their designed capacity, handling an average of 9,000-11,000 tons per year, far from the estimated 61,000-113,000 tons in need of treatment. High recycling costs and a lack of support from relevant agencies are attributed to this gap, said the survey.

Xinhua

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 10 January, 2015

Are all people ready?

By Myint Win Thein

With more people paying taxes on their incomes or on the goods and services they buy, they are more tax-conscious than ever, often wondering where their taxes go. Some of them sometimes even complain that the taxes they pay at a restaurant or a shop never reach the hands of tax authorities because restaurants they eat out at collect taxes on their bills but fail to give them tax stickers or proper

tax stickers. Some of them complain that they have to pay taxes twice, first for their salary and then for goods and services they buy with their after-tax salaries.

It is a good thing for people to be interested in the taxes they pay. In the past, they did not pay taxes and did not wonder what tax collectors are doing and how the government is appropriating revenues. Now, they have become interested in the taxes they have to pay and where the taxes go. They are starting to wonder whether the taxes they pay go to where the nation needs or are waste on unprofitable projects or end up in the hands of corrupt people. Some even began to ask questions whether the taxes being levied on them are fair or not or whether there are some successful businessmen who avoid taxes.

While people have become tax-conscious due

to the economic reform of the government, it is the greatest responsibility of tax collectors and budget planners to collect taxes properly and to allocate revenues in the interests of the country and the people. The public has changed its mindset. Are tax collectors and budget planners ready to accept this?

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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.

(1) POWER OF MIND FOR WORLD PEACE

(2) The Religious Roots of Social Harmony

(3) Buddhism and its relevance to the world situation

The following is the full text of speech delivered by Venerable Dr. Ashin Ñyānissara (D.Litt., Ph.D.) at the Multilateral Dialogue between Islam and Buddhism held in Teheran, Iran, on 30 December.

Your Venerable,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Good morning,

Today, I'm very much pleased and honoured to be invited to this multilateral dialogue between Islam and Buddhism organized by the International Islamic Culture and Relations Organization of Iran. I really appreciate the organizers for organizing this important seminar with the objective of exchanging views and exploring opportunities on joint scientific and religious cooperation between Islam and Buddhism for world peace. It is also a great honour for me to meet with Muslim and Buddhist brothers and friends including the Minister for Culture of Iran and Islamic Leaders, Chancellor, Professors and Lectures of the Inter-faith University of Iran and Venerable monks from Thailand and Sri Lanka here at this august seminar and that I wish you all peace and happiness. I'm happy to share a piece of Buddha's teaching with you which says holding frequent meetings and discussions is beneficial to all as it further consolidates mutual friendship and understanding among them. I'm, thus, confident that frank discussion at this seminar would bring about mutual friendship and understanding between us, through which misunderstanding that might have arisen between

the two sides would be removed, and peaceful co-existence between the two major religions would be built.

As you are all aware, the world today is facing various conflicts and tragedies almost everywhere. At this critical juncture, we need to find out the cause of problem as a matter of priority so that we will reach the right solution to the problem. In other words, it is an urgent need for us to find ways in order that peace and stability would prevail in the whole world.

The current situation of the world is a great challenge for political, spiritual and religious leaders. It is my firm conviction that we all religious leaders, on our part, are responsible to help mitigate tensions and conflicts by disseminating the noble teachings of our respective religions to our followers.

Every religion calls upon their followers to live a moral way of life, to attain mastery over the mind and to cultivate purity of heart. Whether it is the Bible or the Koran, or the Veda, or the Ti-Pitaka, all scriptures call for peace, amity and harmony. From Jina to Jesus, all great founders of all religions have emphasized it with virtues of tolerance and non-violence. But the world we live in is often driven by religious conflicts and sectarian strife, or

even the war of brutal fighting. Because we usually attach importance only to the outer shell of religions and we overlook the universal truth or the inner core of religions. The result is a lack of love, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness and self-understanding in the mind.

When there is no peace in individuals, then there cannot be peace in the world. Violence and peace never can coexist. The **only way to achieve inner peace is insight meditation.** This is non-sectarianism but scientific result-oriented technique of self-observation and self-realization of the truth.

Practice of Insight Meditation brings some unprecedented result — that is — experiential understanding of how mind and body are interacting.

Whenever negative emotion arises in human mind, such as craving, jealousy, hatred, anger, ignorance and so on, these negative spirits trigger unpleasant sensations within the body. On the other hand, sometimes, positive states arise in the mind such as tolerance, love, compassion, sympathetic joy and wisdom, etc. At that time, mental actions create happiness and pleasant sensations within the body.

Every moment to moment, the mind generates hate or love, compassion or

cruelty, sympathy or jealousy, positivity or negativity, pleasantness or unpleasantness and selfishness or selflessness. So the entire



Venerable Dr. Ashin Ñyānissara (D.Litt., Ph.D.)
Shihid Rahimi Conference Hall,
Islamic Culture and Relations Organization
Teheran
Islamic Republic of Iran
30 December, 2014

mind is flooded with pleasant sensation or unpleasant sensation all the time. Insight meditation reveals that mental action precedes every physical and vocal action, determining whether that action would be wholesome or unwholesome. That is why we must find practical methods to create pure and peaceful mind.

The practice of insight meditation can be used for keeping the balanced mind and sound health. By exercising insight meditation, everyone can remove mental disease of negativities and can

achieve balance of mind. The balanced mind will make unbalanced world balanced, stable mind will make unstable world stable and peaceful mind will make the violent world peaceful.

The people of any faiths can practice such insight meditation without discrimination of caste, colour or creed. At the same time, they may follow their own religions and traditions in peace and harmony. There is no need for conversion of religion. A common source of tension and conflicts create negativity only.

Therefore, conversion is only for changing the negative mind to the positive mind. As an observer, one will find a society living in peace and harmony in its natural setting.

Today in the world, we see clearly various degrees of spiritual pollution like discontentment, dissatisfaction, disagreement, argument, demonstration, strikes, violence, invasion, aggression, and tension, etc. These spiritual pollutions are always creating bad consequences to human societies and human environment.

(See page 9)

OPINION

(1) POWER OF MIND FOR...

(from page 8)

This is the manifestation of unbalanced and untrained mind. They are motivated by negativities latent within human mind. We all understand that we need to protect our environment and society, stop polluting them and remove such mental pollutions.

People are searching for a place of peace and tranquility. However, they cannot find such a place of paradise in this materialistic world. So, let us change our mind from negativity to positivity. Removing such pollutants of negativities will promote peace and harmony as well as balanced mind and healthy relationship between human societies and its natural environment. This is how Buddhism can foster environmental protection.

Now, we the religious leaders of Islam and Buddhist are gathered here at this Dialogue. The International Islamic Culture and Relations Organization of Iran, Buddhist leaders from Thailand and Sri Lanka in cooperation with the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy aim to find out the religious roots of social harmony and also to ex-

plore the development of teaching materials highlighting social harmony in Buddhist, Muslim and Christian faiths, as well as a grass-roots education program.

So, I'm confident that we should put our joint effort to abstain from conflicts and violence. We strongly condemn any forms of violence and conflicts. We also urge all political leaders, national leaders and spiritual leaders to join in this declaration. We all leaders must make a vow here and now. We declare that we unconditionally condemn such brutality, cruelty, and any violence. We must try to seek forbearance, forgiveness, selflessness and confession for the establishment of peace, harmony, stability, security and co-existence in the world.

Let us, now, try to formulate a definition of religion. We should try to understand the intrinsic meaning of religion. Then, there would be no greater misfortune for humanity than a failure to define religion as synonymous with peace.

Every religion has its own outer shell and inner

core. The outer shell consists of rites, rituals, ceremonies, beliefs, myths, and doctrines. These outer shells differentiate one religion from another. However, there is an inner core which is common to all religions. This is the universal teaching of morality, charity, mental discipline, pure mind, pure love, compassion, goodwill, tolerance and insight truth. This is a common denominator that all religious leaders ought to emphatically teach their followers to practice. If proper importance is attached to the essence of all religions, the pure love, tolerance, forgiveness and compassion are shown for their surface level, then conflicts and violence could be minimized.

I would here like to share my understanding that Water has unchangeable characteristics of coolness to all, regardless of race, caste and religion. It helps one who drinks it free from thirst and makes one who touches it clean and fresh. Likewise, fire has a constant nature of producing light and heat. People produce drinking water in different shapes of bottles with different labels and lighters in different brand names. However,

their nature is irreversible. My message here is that if we take a superficial look at things, we see them differently. If we use eyes of wisdom, we will see truth and reality.

All human beings should be free to profess and follow their faith. However, they must be careful not to neglect to practise the essence of their own respective religions, not to disturb others by their own religions, and not to condemn other faiths. In this diversity of faiths, when people of different views approached him, the Buddha said, **"Let us set aside our differences, let us give attention to what we can agree on and let us put the common core which we agree upon into practice. Why quarrels?"** Such wise counsel still retains its value until today.

The Buddha said, **"Animosity can be eradicated by its opposite which is pure love, patience, forgiveness and so on. Animosity cannot be eradicated by animosity. Violence is ceased by non-violence. Violence is never ceased by violence. Hatred is never ceased by hatred. Through pure love only, it can be ceased. This is the eternal law."**

This is the Dhamma. What is called Dhamma in the world has nothing to do with Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, Islamism, or any other "ism". Dhamma is a simple truth-

- 1) To understand the Truth is our common core.
- 2) To understand the Truth is our common goal;
- 3) To understand the Truth is our common solution to all problems;
- 4) To avoid extremism and aggressiveness and to follow the Middle Path are our Common Platform.

I would, once again, like to appreciate the organizers of this seminar for their vision and efforts. I would also like to express

my profound thanks to all participants and to the Minister for Culture of Iran and officials and staff of the Ministry, Chancellor and Professors of Interfaith University of Iran, Islamic Leaders and academicians for their all-round support to make this seminar a success. And I wish to repeat my particular thanks to all religious leaders in Iran for giving us this great opportunity of building further mutual friendship and understanding and exchanging views for world peace. I, now, conclude with my earnest hope that Buddhist and Islamic leaders work together for peace and stability of the future world.

May all beings be free from aversion. May all beings be happy.

May Peace and Harmony prevail in every corner of the world.

Thank you.

Venerable Dr. Ashin Ñyānissara (D.Litt., Ph.D.)
Aggamahapadita, Mahadhammakathika Bahujanahitadhara, Aggamaha Saddhammajotikadhara,
Sasanadhaja-dhammacariya Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academies
Principal of Sitagu International Buddhist Missionary Association
Founder of the Board of Directors of Theravada Dhamma Society of America
Honorary Professor of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Chairman of International Association of Theravada Buddhist Universities

Homage Paying Ceremonies

By Myo Myint

The cold season in Myanmar can be regarded as the season of misty eyes and fond memories as homage paying ceremonies are held by former students for their old teachers all over the country at this time of the year. This kind of ceremony can be said to be distinctively Myanmar, as in Myanmar society, one's teacher is accorded the highest reverence together with the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha and one's parents. The majority of Myanmar teachers do deserve this high honour for many reasons. Firstly, they have come into the profession with two main reasons—their love of sharing knowledge and their adoration for their students. Secondly, the teaching profession in Myanmar as in other part of the world is not a very lucrative one, and despite the unattractive salary and the hard work,

teachers stay on till it is time to go on retirement, except for the small minority who either exploit their profession for personal gain, or leave it for good to seek a better paying job. Thirdly, 70 percent of the population of Myanmar still live in rural areas, and this means that the majority of schools are in rural areas, and the majority of teachers may never have the opportunity, or the inclination to serve in a school in a big town or city. Fourthly, teachers have very poor career prospects. There are over 300,000 basic education teachers and out of them only a trickle will become a high school headmaster or headmistress, a job that has some social prestige and authority, but entails a lot of responsibility and a salary scale that is only above that of a high school teacher. Fifthly, they also have very poor financial prospects. Unless they are married to a better earning mate, or

they have other incomes, few can hope to own a house or an apartment upon their retirement, as there is very little extra money to save from their salary. However, interest in this profession, especially among women, never wanes, as the age-old belief still persists that it is a respectable profession very suitable for women.

While attending school, a person may not realize how much effort one's teachers have to put in, to nurture them, and to provide them a sound knowledge base for their future success and well-being, it is only when they become older and more mature that some realize how much they owe to their teachers. This is especially felt among the majority of former students who were brought up in rural areas and had no access to tuitions, or the financial means to attend them, or have expensive guides. The only providers of knowledge

had been their school teachers. Some will remember the extra classes that their high school teachers took after school, so that they will be well-prepared for their matriculation examination. Some will even remember that their teachers provided them with snacks out of their own pocket, so that they will not feel hungry during the extra coaching after school. Some will remember how strict their teachers had been to ensure that they learn. Some will remember how patient their teachers had been with them. Some will remember the admonitions of their teachers that have changed their lives for the better. Some bright students from poor families may remember that on passing the matriculation examination, their school teachers, although not rich themselves, have collectively funded them through university. If they still live in the same place, some will see their former teachers still travelling to their schools, or other destinations, on foot, on buses, or by bicycles look-

ing as impoverished as they were in their student days.

It is little wonder that some former students remember the gratitude they owe to their teachers for the success they are now enjoying, and get together annually to pay homage to their former teachers in cash and kind. Some former students might not realize what impact the annual monetary gifts they present to their former teachers, who have fallen on hard times after retirement, have on their lives. Some former students may not realize that although some retired teachers may not be in financial difficulty, it brings them unparalleled happiness to be remembered and appreciated by their former students. Some former students may also not know that the homage paying ceremony may be the only occasion when their old teachers have the chance to meet old friends and colleagues.

Some former students with a successful career have the means to donate to the homage paying ceremony for teachers, and do so

very generously. Some do not have the means, but contribute as much as they can afford. Some give a lot of time to raise the necessary funds for the ceremony despite their many commitments, and some make the effort to attend the ceremony without fail.

There are also probably many who do not realize, or care to remember, what they owe to their teachers, just as there are many retired teachers whose contributions and dedications have been unrecognized. To the teachers who have been unappreciated, let me say that for those who have been true to their profession, their lives have been spotless, that every day of their career has been spent on doing meritorious deeds, that the personal sacrifices they have made have not been in vain, and that a higher plane awaits them. To those who have forgotten their teachers, let me request them to remember them, even if it is just once, before they depart this world.

US forces 'building pressure' on Islamic State — military chief

WASHINGTON, 9 Jan — US efforts against Islamic State militants in Iraq are “a drumbeat, a steady building pressure” on several fronts that will ultimately enable Iraqi forces to launch a counteroffensive at a time of their choosing, the top US military officer said on Thursday.

General Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said US forces were not sitting idly in the key Iraqi cities of Baghdad or Arbil waiting until spring to launch an offensive but were actively

working to weaken Islamic State in several areas.

“When you ask me what are the prospects for a spring offensive, we’re working with Iraqis, military and civilian leaders, to determine the pace at which we will encourage them and enable them to do a counteroffensive,” Dempsey said. “But I want to make sure I also highlight the fact that this isn’t about ... waiting till the spring to do anything.”

“This is a drumbeat, a steady building pressure on ISIL along eight or nine

lines of effort: counter-financing, counter-foreign fighters, counter-message as well as the military operations,” he added, using an acronym for the Islamic State group.

Dempsey’s spoke to reporters after meeting with his Israeli counterpart, Lieutenant General Benjamin Gantz, to discuss regional security and military cooperation as Gantz winds up his tenure as the chief of the Israel Defence Forces general staff.

Dempsey said Iraq would initiate a counter-of-

fensive against Islamic State when Baghdad felt it was ready to conduct the necessary military operations to recapture territory and follow it with humanitarian and reconstruction efforts.

“In the meantime we’re keeping steady pressure on and we’re building their capacity,” Dempsey said.

He said several hundred Sunni tribesmen had been incorporated into Iraqi Security Force, a sign the mainly Shi’ite government was trying to become more inclusive. He also said sev-

eral thousand troops had been newly trained.

The chairman said US forces were looking for ways to help Iraqis cope with improvised explosive devices, roadside bombs and houses rigged with explosives.

“There’s some things that we can do to help the Iraqi Security Forces reduce their casualties as they go forward and we’re discussing that with them,” he said. The Pentagon said this week that US forces have hit or damaged some 3,222 Islamic State targets



Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, US Army General Martin Dempsey

in Iraq and Syria since August. US military officials also said the department is looking into complaints that civilians may have been killed in US air strikes.

Reuters

Yemeni police arrest six suspects in police college bombing

SANAA, 9 Jan — Police in Yemen have arrested six people suspected of involvement in Wednesday’s bombing of a police college in Sanaa, the capital’s police chief told Yemeni television on Thursday.

The car bomb, which exploded in the street outside the college, killed 40 people and wounded another 71, according to the latest casualty toll provided by state news agency Saba on Thursday. The authorities have blamed al-Qaeda militants.

More fugitive suspects were still being pursued, police chief Abdelrazaq al-Muayyid told al-Masirah television, which is owned by members of the powerful Houthi northern rebel clan. Muayyid gave no further details. Earlier on Thursday, al-Masirah

reported that the suspects had been caught by police in collaboration with the Popular Committees, which are Houthi-led groups of fighters. The militias have themselves been the target of suspected al-Qaeda attacks in recent weeks.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Wednesday’s bombing but an official source in Yemen’s Supreme Security Committee, cited by Saba, blamed “al-Qaeda terrorist elements” for the attack.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), is one of the Sunni militant group’s most active wings.

Wednesday’s attack was the second to cause multiple casualties in a week. A suicide bomb last Thursday killed 26 people at a cultural centre in Ibb city.—Reuters

BAGHDAD, 9 Jan — Car bombs exploded at three checkpoints on the western outskirts of Iraq’s holy city of Samarra on Thursday, killing three people and wounding 41 others, a security official and locals said.

Samarra in central Iraq, 125 km (80 miles) north of Baghdad, is home to a significant Shi’ite shrine and has been under attack since Islamic State militants swept through most Sunni areas north of the capital in June.

The three bombs before sunrise on Thursday killed a civilian and two policemen as well as wounding dozens of others, and were followed by a hail of rocket and mortar fire, the official said.

Then, after several hours of fighting with security forces, gunmen re-



Troops of the Interior Ministry take part in a parade during a ceremony marking the Iraqi Police day’s 93rd anniversary at police academy in Baghdad on 8 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

treated under fire from Iraqi warplanes, he said.

The blowing up of the ninth century al-Askari shrine in Sunni-majority Samarra in February 2006 by Sunni jihadists triggered revenge attacks by Shi’ite militias, tipping Iraq into

years of sectarian violence.

Islamic State adopts a puritanical interpretation of Sunni Islam and considers tombs sacrilegious. It has also destroyed shrines in areas of eastern and northern Syria that it controls.

On Thursday, al-Qa-

eda-linked Nusra Front militants blew up the 13th century tomb of a revered Islamic scholar in southern Syria, Syrian state news agency SANA and monitoring group, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, reported.—Reuters

Nigerian president Jonathan defends record in campaign launch

LAGOS, 9 Jan — President Goodluck Jonathan opened his campaign to win a second elected term as Nigeria’s leader on Thursday, defending his record on the Boko Haram insurgency and corruption to a rally of thousands in the opposition stronghold of Lagos.

Jonathan faces opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari, a former military ruler who was seen as tough on crime, militancy and graft, in a 14 February election that is too close to call.

Buhari’s campaign has drawn support from critics who say Jonathan is weak, that he has failed to deal

with the Boko Haram insurgency which has killed thousands, and that corruption in the oil-rich nation has flourished under his watch.

Speaking to thousands of supporters waving Nigerian flags and posters of him, Jonathan blasted his opposition critics.

“They talk about insecurity, that they will fight insecurity...ask him when he was head of government did he buy one rifle for Nigerian soldiers? No. These people did not buy anything for the military,” Jonathan said to loud cheers.

“They say the government is corrupt, that we are not fighting corruption,”

he continued. “We have arrested more people, we have done more convictions, but they tell us these lies.”

Flanked by Vice President Namadi Sambo and Senate President David Mark, Jonathan wore a white robe and floppy traditional hat of the Yoruba people who dominate Lagos and the southwest, which comprises the main swing states.

Buhari is likely to win across the north, while Jonathan is expected to clean up in his home southern Niger Delta region and in the east.

Jonathan first took power in Nigeria, Africa’s



A man walks past a portrait of Nigeria’s President Goodluck Jonathan, who began his campaign on Wednesday for a second-term in office in Lagos on 8 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

most populous country, after his predecessor Umaru Yar’Adua died in office in 2009. He started his first

elected term in 2011, when the southwest overwhelmingly voted for him over Buhari in 2011.

This time its political elites are firmly behind Buhari and some voters are disappointed with Jonathan.

His administration has been dogged by several corruption scandals in the oil sector, some of which it has promised to investigate and others it has denied.

The Boko Haram Islamist insurgency meanwhile has dramatically worsened since he was last elected in 2011. Lack of equipment is one of the major problems faced by Nigerian troops in the northeast, which Jonathan blamed on Buhari. “No country equips armed forces overnight,” he said.

Reuters

Apple wins dismissal of lawsuit over MacBook logic boards



A customer is silhouetted while entering the Fifth Avenue Apple store in Manhattan, New York on 19 Sept, 2014.—REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO, 9 Jan — Apple Inc (AAPL.O) won the dismissal on Thursday of a lawsuit accusing it of defrauding consumers by selling MacBook laptop computers that contained “logic boards” it knew were defective, and which routinely failed within two years.

US District Judge William Alsup in San Francisco said the plaintiffs, Uriel Marcus and Benedict Verceles, failed to show that Apple made “affirmative misrepresentations,” despite citing online complaints and Apple marketing statements calling the laptops “state of the art” or the “most advanced” on the market.

“Plaintiffs have failed to allege that Apple’s logic boards were unfit for their ordinary purposes or lacked a minimal level of quality,” Alsup wrote. “Both plaintiffs were able to adequately use their computers for approximately 18 months and two years, respectively.” Alsup gave the plaintiffs until Jan. 22 to amend their lawsuit, which sought class-action status, against the Cupertino, Califor-

nia-based company.

Omar Rosales, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Apple did not immediately respond to a similar request.

The plaintiffs claimed that Apple’s sale of MacBooks since 20 May, 2010, violated consumer protection laws in California and Texas, where the lawsuit began last May before being moved.

They also contended that Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook was told about the defective logic boards in 2011, but did nothing.

Logic boards contain computer circuitry and are sometimes known as motherboards. A separate and still pending lawsuit in California accuses Apple of defrauding consumers by selling MacBook Pro laptops in 2011 that contained defective graphic cards, causing screen distortions and system failures.

MacBooks are part of Apple’s Mac line of desktop and laptop computers. The company reported unit sales in that business of 18.91 million in its latest fiscal year.—Reuters



A Facebook logo reflected in the eye of a woman is seen in this picture illustration taken in Skopje on 6 Nov, 2014. REUTERS

Facebook buys video startup QuickFire

SAN FRANCISCO, 9 Jan — Social network operator Facebook Inc (FB.O) said it bought QuickFire Networks, a startup that helps view high-quality video with low bandwidth. QuickFire announced the acquisition on its blog on Thursday. Facebook and QuickFire did not disclose the terms of the deal. Facebook’s acquisition of the video technology company comes a day after it said in a blog it averaged more than 1 billion video views every day since June 2014.—Reuters

Researchers develop “pop-up” 3D fabrication technique

WASHINGTON, 9 Jan — An international team of researchers said on Thursday they have developed a simple new fabrication technique mimicking the action of a children’s pop-up book to transform two-dimensional micro- and nanostructures into more complex 3D shapes. Using a variety of advanced materials, including silicon, the researchers produced more than 40 different geometric designs, including shapes resembling a peacock, flower, starburst, table, basket, tent and starfish. “In just one shot you get your structure,” co-corresponding author Huang Yonggang, professor of the Northwestern University, said in a statement. “We first fabricate a two-dimensional structure on a stretched elastic material. Then we release the tension, and up pops a 3D structure. The 2D structure must have some place to go, so it pops up.”

The pop-up assembly technique trumps 3D printing on many levels, Huang said. The method is fast, inexpensive and can utilize

many different materials, including silicon, to produce a wide range of structures down to a thickness of 100 nanometers, he said.

Moreover, it can be used to build many different structures at one time and incorporate different materials into one hybrid structure. 3D printing, on the other hand, manufactured objects layer by layer slowly. It is difficult for 3D printing to integrate more than one material in a structure, and it is almost impossible to print semiconductors or single crystalline metals. The researchers said their pop-up technique has great potential for use in a wide variety of man-made systems, including biomedical devices, sensors and electronics. “A key, unique feature of these approaches to 3-D microarchitectures is that they work equally well with a very wide variety of materials, including the highest performance semiconductors, such as device-grade silicon,” said co-corresponding author John Rogers, professor of the University of Illinois.—Xinhua

Bosnia leads global search for missing with expertise on bones

TUZLA, (Bosnia) 9 Jan — Bosnia was still digging up the bones of its own when those of others began arriving in boxes from the tsunami-struck shores of Southeast Asia a decade ago. It coincided with Kathyne Bomberger’s rise to head of the Bosnian-based International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), created in 1996 on the initiative of Bill Clinton to unearth the secrets of gruesome death pits strewn across the Bosnian countryside following its 1992-95 war.

The ICMP sent a handful of staff to Thailand to set up a laboratory to collect blood samples from relatives of some of the 230,000 people who perished when a giant wave struck in December 2004, matching them with DNA from bone samples of the victims sent to Bosnia. It helped identify some 800.

“That was really a huge learning experience for us,” Bomberger told Reuters in an interview.

A decade later, what started as an ad hoc body devoted to the former Yu-

goslavia has become the world’s leading authority on missing people, a status enshrined last month in a treaty signed by five European governments — Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden — that will see the organization move its headquarters this year from Sarajevo to The Hague and become a permanent global body. The move is recognition of the ICMP’s success not just in the ex-Yugoslavia, but in Thailand, the Philippines, Chile, South Africa, the United States, Iraq, Libya, Colombia and others, where its unique DNA-identification techniques have helped identify victims of natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, of political repression, drug crime, apartheid and war.

Mexico is next, Bomberger says, while Syria — with tens of thousands missing — represents a looming challenge. The ICMP says it has proposed working with Syrian refugees to collect data on missing relatives, and has met with opposition figures.—Reuters



Forensic experts of the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) work on trying to identify the remains of a victim of the Srebrenica massacre, in the ICMP centre near Tuzla in this 1 June, 2011 file photo. REUTERS

Google to start selling auto insurance in the US, analyst says



People are silhouetted as they pose with laptops in front of a screen projected with a Google logo, in this picture illustration taken in Zenica on 29 Oct, 2014.—REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO, 9 Jan — Google Inc may be moving into the US auto insurance market with a shopping site for people to compare and buy policies, an analyst said on Thursday, as it continues to shift its attention to the automotive industry.

The search giant is planning soon to pilot its new Google Compare auto insurance comparison shopping site, wrote Forrester analyst Ellen Carney in a note. According to

Carney, the company has been pitching the service to insurance providers for more than two years.

Google, which currently offers a service in the UK for users to compare over 125 auto insurance options, takes a cut when a user buys insurance online or by phone.

Industry experts say the Mountain View-based company has increasingly been exploring online searches tailored toward specific industries or mar-

kets. Google already offers its users a site to compare travel destinations and find the cheapest flight fares, for instance.

Google in past years has begun to expand beyond its home turf of Internet search and advertising, seeking to extend its technological dominance to fields as diverse as self-driving cars and robotics.

Carney expects the California pilot for the new service to begin in the first

quarter of 2015. Google is already licensed to sell auto insurance in 26 states and is working with a handful of insurers including Dairyland, MetLife and others, she said.

In addition, a Google employee is licensed to sell insurance on behalf of CoverHound, a San Francisco-based company that pulls insurance options from the largest carriers.

Google said it does not comment on speculation.

Reuters

Three dead after tourist boat sinks off Costa Rica



A tourist who survived a shipwreck off the Central Pacific coast of Costa Rica boards a bus at the Coast Guard station in Caldera, Puntarenas on 8 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

SAN JOSE, 9 Jan — Three people died after a tourist catamaran carrying around 100 passengers sank off Costa Rica's Pacific Coast on Thursday morning, the government said.

The catamaran sank off the Punta Leona beach resort after emitting a distress signal, public security

ministry spokesman Jesus Urena said. The cause of the accident was not yet known.

Costa Rica has been experiencing exceptionally strong winds this week, according to the National Meteorological Institute.

Costa Rican Vice President Ana Helena Chacon identified the dead as a

68-year-old woman from the United States, a Canadian woman aged 70 and an 80-year-old British man.

Four passengers who had been missing were found and the other 106 people on the boat, including the crew of 10, all survived and were in good health, Chacon added.

Reuters

False alarm causes chaos in Madrid after suspect package found at station

MADRID, 9 Jan — A false alarm over a possible terrorist bomb brought the center of Madrid to a halt on Thursday evening. The alarm was given after the discovery of a suspect package at the Nuevos Ministerios station shortly after 17:30 local time. Police immediately closed the station and evacuated everyone inside after the package, a shoebox, approximately 20 cm by 10 cm and with the logo "Storm" written on it, was found placed on top of a rubbish bin in the entry hall to the station.

Nuevos Ministerios, which is in the heart of the

capital serves three lines of the Madrid metro, as well as regional and local trains and both metro and train services through the station were suspended while explosives experts worked to determine whether the threat was genuine. Police dogs are reported to have initially reacted as if the box did indeed contain explosives but it was confirmed as a false alarm at 18:45 local time and it is thought that chewing gum stuck around the parcel provoked the reaction from the animals. Meanwhile the Paseo del la Castellana, which is the main road running from north to south though

the Spanish capital and passes next to the station, was also closed to traffic, just as the evening rush hour was beginning. This happens a day after the Spanish government raised its security level from 2 to 3 in the wake of the attack on the offices of French Magazine Charlie Hebdo which left 12 people dead. Wednesday also saw the offices of several Spanish newspapers evacuated after receiving suspect packages, although this was finally confirmed to be a false alarm and police confirmed the man responsible had been arrested on Thursday.

Xinhua

No deaths reported in Syria as storm quells fighting

BEIRUT, 9 Jan — Nobody was reported killed by fighting in Syria on Wednesday, the first day without casualties in three years, after a fierce winter storm quelled violence, a group that monitors the war said on Thursday.

Freezing temperatures brought new hardship for refugees and civilians but "the cold protected the Syrians from bombardment and fighting," said the head

of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, Rami Abdulrahman.

An average of 150 people died every day through December in a conflict that has killed around 207,000 people since it erupted in 2011, according to Observatory figures.

But the UK-based organisation, which uses sources across Syria to track the conflict, did not register any deaths on any



A man holds an umbrella as he makes his way through a road covered with snow in the Duma neighbourhood of Damascus on 7 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

Japan textbook publisher to delete depictions of "comfort women"

TOKYO, 9 Jan — A Tokyo-based textbook publisher has obtained government approval to delete depictions of so-called "comfort women" and references to foreign workers brought to Japan against their will in its civics textbooks for senior high schools, sources familiar with the matter said on Friday.

Following a request by the publisher in November, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology gave the permission last month for Suken Shuppan to delete such references in three

social study textbooks — two on modern social studies and one on politics and economics.

Suken Shuppan, which was established in Kyoto in 1923 and moved to Tokyo in 1954, plans to delete these references from its textbooks to be used from April this year.

Its previous politics and economics textbook said discussions have been held on the issue of compensation for foreign workers brought to Japan against their will and the sending of foreign women to war-front brothels.

But the new version

says merely that some South Korean individuals have filed lawsuits in Japanese courts seeking apologies and compensation from Japan. Suken Shuppan refused to comment on why it has chosen to cut these references, with an official saying the publisher cannot answer at this point. In January 2014, the education ministry revised its textbook-screening standards for social studies, asking publishers to state the government's official views or the Japanese Supreme Court's decisions in contentious cases.

Kyodo News

Peru's Fujimori, already jailed, slapped with another prison term

LIMA, 9 Jan — Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, in jail for human rights abuses, was handed a new eight-year prison sentence on Thursday for siphoning public funds to help finance his re-election in 2000.

A panel of judges in Lima ruled that Fujimori, 76, diverted funds from the military to pay for favourable coverage in tabloid newspapers to promote his bid for a second presi-

dential term. Fujimori has been imprisoned since 2007 for crimes committed during his 1990-2000 term. In 2009, he was sentenced to 25 years for ordering death squads to carry out massacres that killed 25 people during a crackdown on leftist insurgents.

The new sentence, however, will not prolong the time Fujimori spends behind bars because jail terms in the Andean country are served concurrently and

not consecutively. Fujimori had denied the accusation that he embezzled funds.

But it will be a blow to his political party and the political ambitions of his eldest daughter, Keiko, who is widely viewed as a likely candidate in next year's presidential election.

"Today is not a good day for us," said Keiko Fujimori who attended the trial.

Prosecutors had alleged the former president gave permission for 122 million Peruvian soles (\$41 million) from the military's budget to be diverted to the secret intelligence service.

Vladimiro Montesinos, the intelligence agency's then chief and Fujimori's former right-hand man, paid the tabloids \$2,000 to \$3,000 for every headline that attacked the opposition, prosecutors said.

Fujimori, who is serving his sentence at a police base in Lima, has repeatedly said that his incarceration is tantamount to a slow death behind bars.

Reuters



Peru's former President Alberto Fujimori waves to the media as he arrives in court for the sentencing in his trial on charges of embezzling state funds to manipulate the media during his tenure as president, in Lima on 8 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

side as a result of fighting on Wednesday, Abdulrahman said.

One Islamist fighter died in Darraya near Damascus as a result of wounds sustained earlier, he added.

Blizzards, rain and strong winds have buffeted the Middle East this week, raising concerns for refugees who are facing the winter in flimsy shelters.

Reuters

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (039N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PANJA BHUM VOY NO (039N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.1.2015 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 Claims 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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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 Claims 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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**INVITATION TO OPEN
PREQUALIFICATION OF BIDDING**

The Irrigation Department (ID), Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, announces the PREQUALIFICATION of International Competitive Bidding for "Procurement of Construction Machineries for ID" under the Irrigation Development Project in Western Bago Region based on the Loan Agreement (Loan No.: MY-P7) signed on 5th September, 2014 between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ministry.

The procurement works shall consist of equipment supply, site assembling, test-run, training and commissioning for the construction machineries, Please note that Joint Ventures are acceptable.

Sr.No.	Bidding No.	Description	Qty;	Remarks
1.	ITP-ID-01	Procurement of Construction Machineries for ID	1 lot	

A complete set of prequalification documents is available in Myanmar kyat (50,000/-) from 10:00 to 12:00 and 14:00 to 16:00 in the working days from 13th to 19th, January, 2015 at Procurement Director Office of Irrigation Department, Building No. (43), Nay Pyi Taw and closing date will be 27th, January, 2015 during office hours. Submission of the Documents later than closing date will not be considered.

Contact: Director, Procurement branch.
Telephone: +95-67-410019

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV FRISIA LAHN VOY NO (1502)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV FRISIA LAHN VOY NO (1502) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims 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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Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**Top science prize
honours computing
research, findings**

BEIJING, 9 Jan — Research on the paradigm shift of computing won one of China's top science prizes at the annual National Science Awards on Friday. The team, led by Zhang Yaoxue — president of Central South University and a professor with Tsinghua University — invented the concept of transparent computing. The term refers to pervasive programming in which users are not "aware" of the software, like operating systems and applications, and can access and accomplish tasks from any type of device, such as personal computers or intelligent appliances. *Xinhua*

**Positive
recovery signs
detected
in S Korea**

SEOUL, 9 Jan — Positive signs emerged in the South Korean economy as recent economic data showed upbeat picture, a government report showed on Friday. "Positive signs spread over domestic demand recovery though not solid," the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic report called Green Book.

The report said economic indicators, including industrial output, retail sales, facility investment and employment, are gradually improving though low headline inflation continued. In December, retail sales were upbeat as auto sales by local carmakers jumped 27.2 percent from a year earlier. Credit card usage grew 8.7 percent last month, and gasoline sales rose 1.6 percent.

Sales at discount outlets and department stores slid 3.6 percent and 0.3 percent each in December. It was down from falls of 4.7 percent and 6.5 percent each in November. Construction investment declined 1.7 percent in November, but facility investment expanded 13.1 percent during the same month. Production in the mining and manufacturing industries grew 1.3 percent in November on solid demand for cars and chips. Job creation was 438,000 in November from a year earlier, but consumer prices rose 0.8 percent in December on lower global oil prices, boosting worries about deflation.

Exports in December increased 3.7 percent on demand for locally-made mobile phones, steels and chips. Trade surplus posted 5.78 billion US dollars last month.—*Xinhua*

**WEATHER
REPORT**

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 10th January, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing and Magway Regions, Chin and Rakhine States, rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions and Kachin State and scattered in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Angelina Jolie meets pope after Vatican screening of her film



VATICAN CITY, 9 Jan — Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie met Pope Francis on Thursday after a screening at the Vatican of her film “Unbroken”, the Vatican said.

The pope was not present at the screening but Jolie, who is a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and two of her children met him briefly afterwards, a spokesman said. Her husband Brad Pitt was not present.

Jolie, 39, directed the film about American Olympian and World War Two hero Louis Zamperini, whose plane was shot down over the Pacific during World War Two.

It tells the story of his survival in a raft for nearly two months and his later ordeal as an inmate in prisoner of war camps.—Reuters

Blunders begone! Golden Globes burnish Hollywood credibility

BEVERLY HILLS, (Calif), 9 Jan — Four years ago Golden Globes host Ricky Gervais turned his sharp tongue on voters of the awards show, ridiculing them for nominating the poorly reviewed Johnny Depp-Angelina Jolie action thriller “The Tourist.”

“I haven’t even seen ‘The Tourist.’ Who has? It must be good because it’s nominated,” he deadpanned at the 2011 awards, his last as host.

Those kinds of missteps may be a thing of the past for the Globes’ organizer, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which has become a more respected arbiter in the Hollywood awards season, which kicks off with Sunday’s Globes and ends with the Academy Awards on 22 February.

“There was a period a few years ago where it seemed like the best thing for a movie in the Oscar race was to lose at the Golden Globes,” said Fandango’s chief correspondent and awards expert, Dave Karger.

Take the Coen Brothers thriller “No Country for Old Men” and Kathryn Bigelow’s war drama “The Hurt Locker,” both of which lost out on the Golden Globes best drama accolade but went on to win the Best Picture Oscar in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

This year, surreal showbiz satire “Birdman” leads the film nominees with seven nods in the comedy/musical film categories while coming-of-age tale “Boyhood” has five nominations in the drama film categories.

Both have been warmly received by critics, who have bestowed numerous

awards on them already, and both are hotly tipped as Oscar front-runners when nominations are announced next week.

For the most part, this year’s Golden Globe nominees have echoed critical favourites, with “Birdman” star Michael Keaton expected to win for best actor in a comedy/musical, JK Simmons tipped for best supporting actor for “Whiplash,” and Patricia Arquette to take best supporting actress for “Boyhood.”

The Golden Globes are voted on by about 90 foreign journalists who are members of the HFPA, with no overlap in the voting bodies of the rest of the major Hollywood awards including the Oscars, which are voted on by members of the film industry.

“The Hollywood Foreign Press is very aware of the fact that they’ve been a punching bag to some highbrow critics over the years and I think they’re conscious of trying to change their perception,” Karger said.

In the last three years, Golden Globe winners appear to be extending their success to the Oscars.

“The Globes are famous for jaw droppers and upsets that redefine the Oscar race,” said Tom O’Neil, founder of awards tracker Gold Derby.

“Boyhood” could be beaten by civil rights drama “Selma” or World War Two biopic “The Imitation Game,” O’Neil said, and Jennifer Aniston could snatch best drama actress for “Cake” from overwhelming favourite Julianne Moore for “Still Alice.”

“The Golden Globe is really your Oscar audition if you’re in the race,” O’Neil



Actress Paula Patton announces the nominations for the 72nd annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, California on 11 Dec, 2014. The awards will be presented on 11 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

said. “If a star gives the performance of their life up there at the podium, that can hand them the Oscar right there.”

Both Matthew McConaughey and Jared Leto delivered stirring speeches when they won best actor and best supporting actor for “Dallas Buyers Club” at the Golden Globes last year that some have said helped lock in their subsequent Oscar wins.

In the television categories, the Golden Globes have earned a reputation as an early taste-maker, this year favouring shows on cable television and online steaming platforms over broadcast stalwarts.

If Netflix’s “House of Cards” wins best TV drama and “Orange is the New Black” or Amazon Studios’ “Transparent” wins best TV comedy, it would be a “watershed moment,” Karger said, defining a new era in television.—Reuters

Country stars sing adieu to Grand Ole Opry’s Little Jimmy Dickens

NASHVILLE, 9 Jan — Country music stars sang a farewell on Thursday to Grand Ole Opry icon Little Jimmy Dickens, who died last week at 94 after decades performing at the landmark Nashville venue.

Brad Paisley, Carrie Underwood, Vince Gill, Steve Wariner, Chris Young and Old Crow Medicine Show took the stage near Dickens’ casket in songful tribute during a two-hour memorial service. When it was over, the curtain was lowered and Dickens left the stage for the last time at the theatre where he brought laughter and toe-tapping to country fans for generations.

Dickens — who sang novelty numbers such as “Out Behind the Barn,” and “May The Bird Of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose” as well as traditional country hits — joined the Opry in 1948.

The comical 4-foot-11-inch performer died on 2 January of cardiac arrest at a Nashville hospital after suffering a stroke on



Singers Vince Gill and Carrie Underwood (R) perform during a remembrance service for country music legend Little Jimmy Dickens during a public memorial service at the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville, Tennessee on 8 Jan, 2015. Dickens, the longest-running cast member of country music’s most venerable venue, died on 2 Jan, 2015 at the age of 94, the Opry said.—REUTERS

Christmas Day.

“We need to remember that smile, that personality and that one-of-a-kind sense of humour,” said Paisley, who was among the younger generation of performers who embraced Dickens, the Opry’s oldest living member.

Underwood broke into tears after telling a story about how her mother

warned her to “watch out for Little Jimmy Dickens, because he likes the pretty girls” before her first Opry appearance. She went on to say her hero kissed her hand every time he saw her.

Underwood and Gill sang the latter’s “Go Rest High On That Mountain,” which has become a staple of country music funerals.

Reuters

Patrick Wilson, Ted Danson join second season of FX’s ‘ Fargo ’

LOS ANGELES, 9 Jan — Actors Patrick Wilson, Ted Danson and Jean Smart will be taking leading roles in the second season of FX’s hit mini-series “Fargo,” the network said on Thursday, joining previously announced cast members Kirsten Dunst and Jesse Plemons.

Wilson, star of “The Conjuring,” will play Lou Solverson, described as a “clean-cut Minnesota state patrolman” and war veteran who tackles a crime case, while “Cheers” actor Danson will play Lou’s father-in-law, Sheriff Hank Larsson, FX said.

Veteran TV actress Smart will play Floyd Gerhardt, the matriarch of a crime family.

“Spider-Man” and “Melancholia” actress Dunst makes her transition to television as small-town beautician Peggy Blomquist in the

show, while Plemons, best known for his role in AMC TV’s “Breaking Bad,” will play her husband Ed, a butcher’s assistant.

The second season of FX’s “Fargo,” adapted from Joel and Ethan Coen’s 1996 Oscar-winning film of the same name, will follow a 1979 crime story across 10 episodes, set in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and Luverne, Minnesota.

Writer and executive producer Noah Hawley will return for the second instalment, scheduled to air in the fall of this year.

The first season, starring Martin Freeman as a cowed small-town insurance salesman and Billy Bob Thornton as a hitman who both become entangled in a murder, earned critical praise and won three Emmy Awards last year.

“Fargo” has five television nominations at Sunday’s Golden Globe Awards.—Reuters



Boston named US bid city for 2024 Olympics

BOSTON, 9 Jan — Boston was selected on Thursday as the American candidate city that will bid to host the 2024 Olympics, taking the first strides in a gruelling marathon to bring the Summer Games back to the United States.

Boston, which has never hosted an Olympics, was unveiled as the surprise pick over two-time host Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington following the United States Olympic Committee's (USOC) board meeting at the Denver International Airport.

"We're excited about our plans to submit a bid for the 2024 Games and feel we have an incredibly strong partner in Boston that will work with us to present a compelling bid," USOC

Chairman Larry Probst said in a statement.

The decision followed more than one round of voting before the Boston bid eventually received the unanimous endorsement of the USOC's board of directors.

The United States has not hosted a Summer Games since the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

As home to the world's most famous marathon, Bostonians are well-acquainted with tests of endurance and are about to enter a punishing race with all manner of hurdles and twists and turns in a bid to land the sporting world's biggest prize.

Boston will be up against Rome and Germany, which has announced that it will bid through Berlin or Hamburg. A string of potential hosts,

including Istanbul, Paris, Doha and a city from Africa, are also considering bids.

Cities have until September to officially put in a bid with a decision on the 2024 host to be made in mid-2017.

"It is an exceptional honour for Boston to be chosen as the US representative in the running for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games," said Boston Mayor Martin Walsh. "Our goal is to host Olympic and Paralympic Games that are innovative, walkable and hospitable to all."

With the IOC having recently overhauled the bidding process to make it more cost-effective, a compact Boston bid that would take advantage of many existing facilities proved attractive.

The Russian city of So-

chi spent a staggering \$51 billion in staging last year's Winter Olympics with the future of many of the purpose-built venues in doubt.

Boston is no stranger to expensive projects given the city's Big Dig project, a state initiative from the 1980s to bury a raised highway that for years had split the city in two that was famous for its huge cost overruns.

But for the most part the USOC's decision was greeted with enthusiasm from athletes, sports officials and politicians, including failed 2012 presidential candidate and former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, who played a key role in organizing the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. "We know Boston is the place to inspire a new generation of athletes to dis-

cover the greatness within," said Romney.

The announcement ends an exhaustive, 22-month evaluation process that began with the USOC reaching out to about 35 US cities to gauge interest in a bid.

After stunning rebukes to New York to host the 2012 Olympics and Chicago's failed bid for the 2016 Games the USOC had taken a cautious and methodical approach and assessing their chances before throwing their hat into the Olympic rings.

The USOC has spent years patching up strained relationships with the IOC over revenue sharing that hampered the last two U.S. bids for the Summer Games and will count on those improved ties when it comes time to vote.

"The deliberative and collaborative process that we put in place for selecting a city has resulted in a strong US bid that can truly serve the athletes and the Olympic and Paralympic movements," said Probst.—Reuters



A jogger runs along the Charles River past the Boston skyline on cold winter day in Cambridge, Massachusetts on 8 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

New Palace boss Pardew defends his record at Newcastle

LONDON, 9 Jan — Alan Pardew has defended his record at Newcastle United saying the north east club "pulled above its weight" during his four, often turbulent, years in charge.

Pardew was named as manager of his former playing club Crystal Palace on Saturday after Palace met the terms of a release clause in his Newcastle contract.

While he is busy plotting this weekend's home clash with in-form Tottenham Hotspur, Pardew's Thursday news conference inevitably focussed on his reasons for leaving mid-table Newcastle for a relegation battle.

"It was difficult because it's a big club run on fairly tight financial margins," Pardew, who spent 229 games in charge of Newcastle and took them into the Europa

League in 2012, said.

"Our net spend was one of the lowest, we had to really work hard at transfers because the funds for a club of that size makes it difficult and for the fans to understand that you need slow progress, to build slowly, which we did for four years."

Despite a steady tenure at club desperate for success, Pardew never completely won over the Geordie faithful and a dismal start to this season saw a concerted campaign by fans to get him sacked, with scores of banners held up at home and away matches.

Pardew resisted any temptation to hit back though.

"I've left a good club, I like to think with a good base of young players and some fantastic professionals," the former Crystal Palace mid-

fielder said.

"We've pulled above our weight at times. Of course when you lose games there will be criticism from the stands but never once did I sense that outside of the ground.

"I had tremendous support while I was there and want to thank all Geordies." Pardew, who has also managed Reading, West Ham United and Southampton, said the decision to leave was his alone.

"Personally and professionally it was the right time for me and the right time for Newcastle too if I'm honest," he said.

"It was my decision, (Palace chairman) Steve (Parish) met the clause in my contract and I had to make a decision which I hope was the right one for me and the right



Crystal Palace's new manager Alan Pardew gives a thumbs up after his team beat Dover in their FA Cup third round soccer match at the Crabble Athletic Ground in Dover, southern England, on 4 Jan, 2015. REUTERS

one for Palace."

Palace are third from bottom in the table and this weekend host a Tottenham side buoyant after beating Chelsea.—Reuters

'Game of Thrones: The Exhibition' to visit London

LONDON, 9 Jan — 'Game of Thrones: The Exhibition' has been announced for The O2 in London next month.

Sky TV customers will have exclusive access to the event, which runs from 9 to 12 and 15 to 17 February.

The latest version of HBO's exhibition in London will be the first location of its international tour, and its debut in the city, reported Telegraph online.

Available exclusively to Sky TV users and their guests, the exhibition focuses on the fourth season of 'Game of Thrones', including new installations,



'Game of Thrones: The Exhibition' has been announced for The O2 in London next month. REUTERS

nearly 70 original artefacts from the series, and select pieces from the upcoming fifth season.

Photo stations will also allow fans to interact with

the event, placing them in 'Game of Thrones' scenes and locations.

Fans can also pledge their allegiance to their favourite 'Game of Thrones'

family by joining a House before entering the event.

Meanwhile, the Oculus Rift-powered Ascend the Wall experience can take fans to the top of the 700-foot wall of ice. They will also be able to sit on the Iron Throne elsewhere in the exhibition.

Sky TV users can book up to two tickets for free, while tickets are handed out on a first-come, first-served basis from January 26.

Game of Thrones returns for its fifth season in the spring on Sky Atlantic in the UK and HBO in the US.

Reuters

MRTV
Entertainment Channel

(10-1-2015, Saturday)

6:00 am
• Travelogue Programme

6:30 am
• Myanmar Series

6:45 am
• Musical Programme

7:00 am
• Teleplay

8:10 am
• Teleplay

8:40 am
• Dramatic Arts

10:00 am
• Myanmar Video

MITV
MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(10-1-15 07:00 am~ 11-1-15 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images
- * World News
- * Inspiration
- * Local News
- * Shwe Myanmar (I)
- * World News
- * Shwe Myanmar (II)
- * Local News
- * ID Show "Traffic"
- * World News
- * Tea
- * Local News
- * Winner of Young Entrepreneur Award of ASEAN
- * World News
- * Sagaing: Gold Leaf
- * Local News
- * Thread Charm "A Kayin Threading Ceremony"
- * World News
- * Today Myanmar "Gold Letter"
- * Local News
- * The Most Prominent Resort And Residence — Ngapali
- * World News
- * Orphanage
- * Local News
- * Traditional Matrimony of Ra Wan Nationals
- * World News
- * Parents' Day
- * Local News
- * Pictures Decorated With Seashells And Gemstones
- * World News
- * In The Studio "Swel Lan Phyu"

FA charges Mourinho for verbal attack on referee Taylor



Jose Mourinho

LONDON, 9 Jan — Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho was charged with misconduct by the FA on Thursday following comments he made about referee Anthony Taylor after last month's 1-1 draw at Southampton in the Premier League. The Portuguese was furious with Taylor after he booked Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fabregas for diving in the 28 December match. Mourinho said the referee's failure to award a penalty was a scandal and that he should be ashamed. He added that his team were being unfairly targeted in a campaign waged against them after Fabregas became the fifth Chelsea player to become involved in a row over diving in a matter of weeks. The Spaniard, though, appeared to be tripped by Southampton defender Matt Tarrant in the penalty area. "In other countries where I have worked, tomorrow in the sports papers it would be a front-page scandal because it is a scandal," said Mourinho. "It is not a small penalty, it is a penalty like Big Ben. In this country, and I am happy with that, more than happy with that, we will just say that it was a big mistake with a big influence on the result. "I will go to the referee and wish him a good year and tell him he will be ashamed," added Mourinho. In a statement, the FA said his remarks constituted improper conduct in that they allege and/or imply bias on the part of a referee or referees and/or bring the game into disrepute. Mourinho has until 1800 GMT on 13 January to respond to the charge. The FA will not take any action against him following the comments he made before the game against Stoke City on 19 December but gave him a formal warning as managers and players are banned from making pre-match media comments about officials. Before the game Mourinho said he hoped referee Neil Swarbrick "does his job".

"I like these matches," added the Chelsea manager. "It's no problem with a good referee that can understand what is aggressivity or when aggressivity finishes and when the rules of the game start. "I know it is difficult for every team to play this kind of match but again I'm not worried. The referee is there exactly to judge what is aggressivity. And aggressivity I always welcome, it makes the game much more beautiful and difficult."—Reuters

Australia hammer Kuwait 4-1 in stunning Asian Cup start

MELBOURNE, 9 Jan — Australia shook off a nervous start and an early goal before trampling over Kuwait 4-1 to kick off their home Asian Cup in emphatic style in Melbourne on Friday.

Young midfielder Massimo Luongo shone for the home side, setting up a goal for Socceroos talisman Tim Cahill in the 33rd minute before heading in one of his own two minutes before the break in front of 30,000 spectators at the Rectangular Stadium.

The double strike put Australia 2-1 up at halftime after Kuwait defender Hussain Fadhel had stunned the hosts with a goal in the eighth minute of the Group A encounter.

The second half was far more routine for the hosts as captain Mile Jedinak netted a 62nd penalty before James Troisi iced the match with an injury-time strike that sent the home fans into raptures.

The relief was palpable as thrilled Socceroos players embraced at the final whistle, having come into the match with a solitary win from their 11 previous matches under coach Ange Postecoglou.

Though they dominated possession and terrorised Kuwait goal-keeper Hameed Youssef for much of the second half, Australia's shaky defence will leave Postecoglou with much to ponder. After an opening ceremony fea-

turing hip hop music and indigenous dance, a nervous Australia conceded the first goal with some sloppy set-piece defending.

The 30-year-old Fadhel latched onto a neat deflection from team mate Fahed Al Ebrahim after a low corner had whizzed into the heart of the penalty area.

Australia spent much of the half regaining their composure before Cahill, so long Australia's saviour, cancelled out the early goal in the 33rd minute after a brilliant jinking run by Luongo, who eluded three opponents near

the right corner before crossing low into the path of his team mate.

Luongo then leaped in front of Cahill to head in a cross from defender Ivan Franjic to give Australia a deserved halftime lead.

Australia pushed relentlessly after the break, with Matthew Leckie cannoning a left-foot shot off the crossbar after Cahill had a low shot parried away by the keeper.

The pressure told and forward Robbie Kruse was brought down when charging into the area, allowing captain Jedinak to

coolly slot home the spot kick.

Australia keeper Mathew Ryan was forced to stretch to get a hand on a searing shot from Fahed El Ebrahim that also hit the crossbar.

Substitute Nathan Burns was next to hammer the woodwork before Leckie set up the stunning finish, cutting the Kuwait defence to ribbons in the area before Troisi hammered the final goal home.

South Korea and Oman are the other teams in Group A, with the pair meeting in Canberra on Saturday.—Reuters



Australia's Massimo Luongo (2nd L) scores a goal next to teammate Tim Cahill (2nd R), Kuwait's Mesaed Alenzi (L) and Ali Hussain Fadhel during their Asian Cup Group A soccer match at the Rectangular stadium in Melbourne on 9 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Neymar hits double as Barca put five past Elche

BARCELONA, 9 Jan — Neymar's double helped Barcelona cruise to a 5-0 victory in the first leg of their King's Cup last 16 tie against Elche on Thursday to ease the pressure on coach Luis Enrique.

The Brazilian put the Catalan club ahead after 34 minutes when he fired home following a well worked move and after that the flood gates opened against the bottom side in La Liga.

Six minutes later Luis Suarez slotted past Przemyslaw Tyton after creating the chance with a delightful dummy as he allowed the ball to run through his legs before bearing down on goal.

Lionel Messi, who was the focus of attention following a reported bust-up with Enrique, looked very motivated from the start with some lively runs and converted a penalty just before halftime after Neymar was felled by defender Enzo Roco.

Jordi Alba made it 4-0 with a clinical finish from a Messi pass after 55 minutes and Neymar got his second goal with a deflected drive from distance five minutes later.

Shortly afterwards Neymar was substituted and made it clear he was unhappy as he shook his head when walking off.

It was an important win for Enrique who was criticised for leaving Messi and Neymar on the bench for the defeat by Real Sociedad last Sunday with his team stuttering under him.

The coach put out a first choice strike force against Elche as he could not afford another slip-up and he received a mixed reception from the Camp Nou crowd.

At several times during the

game fans chanted his name but they were then drowned out by whistles.

"The only reflection that I will make is that which interests me, and I value the support of the fans to the players. They are the protagonists in this show and I like it that they are supported," he told a news conference.

"This is basic if we are going to have a good season and it is great if they can back the players." It has been a difficult week with presidential elections brought forward a year to the end of this season due to general dissatisfaction

with the management of the club.

"I think that our supporters have belief in us and in this sense I am in favour of the decision to hold elections by the president (Josep Maria) Bartomeu as a generous gesture" said Luis Enrique. "This is a way of bringing some calm and hopefully we can build on that with some good results." Barca will face either Real Madrid or Atletico Madrid in the King's Cup quarter-finals once they finish off Elche. Atletico hold a 2-0 first-leg lead after the home leg on Wednesday.

Reuters

Asian Cup Australia 2015

	11:30 MST (10.1.2015)	
Korea Republic		Oman
	13:30 MST (10.1.2015)	
Uzbekistan		DPR Korea
	14:30 MST (10.1.2015)	
Saudi Arabia		China PR