

UEC Announcement

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Jan—*The following is the unofficial translation of the announcement issued by the Union Election Commission today.*—Ed

1. With general elections scheduled for late October or early November in 2015, political parties are seen and heard to be engaged in electioneering (although the

Union Election Commission is yet to designate the canvass period). Political parties are entitled to canvass for votes under Section 406 of the Constitution as well as to freedom of expression, peaceful gathering and processing under Section 354. The primary objective of political parties coming into existence is to win elections, which is why they all have the right to woo voters.

2. It is however incumbent on political parties to adhere to the following orders and instructions in their organizational campaigns:

(a) A political party, in carrying out a canvass, is required to respect and abide by Section 407 of the State Constitution and Sections 6 and 12 of the Political Parties Registration Law. (Political parties should either control one another from or inform the Commission of any violation of the rules.)

(b) A political party, in carrying out a canvass, is required not to commit unlawful practices prescribed in Chapters 13 and 14 of the Election Law. (Any political party violating them is liable to a lawsuit at police stations concerned under Section 65 of the Election Law.)

(c) Parliamentary candidates, even after being scrutinized and approved, can be reported in line with paragraphs (a) and (b) for their infringement of the law in the canvass period. In addition, complaints can be submitted to the Union Election Commission in line with Chapter 15 of the Election Law.

3. The Union Election Commission seeks cooperation from political parties, the public, stakeholders, and media in the effort to successfully hold free and fair elections in line with the law.

Union Election Commission

Myanmar and the United States conclude successful second human rights dialogue

1. Myanmar and the United States held the second Myanmar-U.S. Human Rights Dialogue in Nay Pyi Taw January 14-15 to discuss and exchange best practices in the field of human rights of both parties, and also on ongoing efforts to further promote and protect human rights in Myanmar.

2. The two delegations reviewed progress on current human rights challenges. The United States recognized the Myanmar government's positive efforts to date and the two delegations discussed ways in which the United States could further assist Myanmar's efforts to advance democratic transition and further promote and protect human rights.

3. Myanmar committed to continue its work on reviewing political prisoner cases, through the Political Prisoner Scrutinizing Committee. The United States expressed the need to adopt consensus definitions of "prisoner of conscience" and "political prisoner" as a basis to review cases. Both countries acknowledged the positive role that can be played by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the promotion and protection of human rights. The United States welcomed Myanmar's ongoing cooperation with the OHCHR in the field of human rights and its continued negotiation for a mutually acceptable agreement with the OHCHR that would allow to open an office in Myanmar. The United States encouraged Myanmar to allow the opening of such an office as soon as possible.

4. The United States recognized the efforts of the Myanmar Government to hold public consultations on the National Land Use Policy and allow for more time for feedback. Both sides discussed the need for inclusive consultation with all stakeholders to inform the development of the final policy and a national land law. The United States expressed its readiness to continue to

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Lower fuel prices should benefit consumers

Byline: Khin Yadana;
Photo: Tin Soe
(Myanma Alinn)

Some economists believe that although a decline in domestic fuel prices while world crude oil prices fall day by day benefits customers, it may cause a disadvantage for the state income in the longer run.

The price of oil on the world market reached its peak in June 2014.

But due to rising oil production of U.S. shale and lower demand for oil in Asia and Europe, the price of oil has declined to about 60 per cent of the high. Crude oil stayed at above \$100 a barrel until June last year, but six months after, the crude price was less than \$50.

Private fuel stations in Yangon reduced about K100 from the daily price



Myat Myitta Mon fuel station in Tamway Township.

in sales of gasoline as of 15 January. As a result, the prices for fuel are on the decrease in district areas, a representative of a fuel station in Mandalay told the media.

An official at Myat Myitta Mon fuel station in Tamway Township said: "Reducing (gasoline's) price depends on the buying price. So, other fuel

stations may follow me in reducing prices. At present, our station sells fuel to the customers as usual."

In the past, most of vehicles in Yangon used "octane 92" for fuel, which was cheap but disqualified, sources said.

Secretary of Myanmar Fuel Entrepreneurs Association Dr Win Myint said, "We submitted a report to

the ministry concerned to be able to import quality fuel. Lesser quality fuel may cause some machinery errors in vehicles. So, the price of "octane 92" can decline in the market at first."

Now, customers expect declines in prices of diesel, "octane 95" and "premium."

(See page 2)

MS The World with 155 tourists arrives Thilawa Port

YANGON, 16 Jan—MS The World, the type of floating residences cruises, with 155 tourists and 281 crew members, moored at Thilawa Port, here, on Friday afternoon.

The cruise liner arrived at Kawthoung via Phuket Port of Thailand on 12 January.

Tourists from the vessel visited Makyon Kalet and Lampi islands on 12 January and Pearl Island on 14 January.

They have programmes to tour Bago, Bagan and Mandalay in addition to sightseeing downtown Yangon. On 21

January, they will proceed to Trincomalee Port in Sri Lanka.

MS The World had arrived in Myanmar twice in 2005 and 2010. Film star Academy Lwin Moe held a floating photo exhibition on board from Langkawi Island to Yangon Port on the first trip to Myanmar, managing director U Thet Lwin Toe of Myanmar Voyages International Tourism Co., Ltd told media.

The 43188-ton cruise liner is 196.35 metres long and 29.8 metres wide with 6.9 metres deep draught.

Khin Cho Win



MS The World, cruise liner, arrives at Thilawa Port.—MNA

FERD, JBIC sign Joint Venture Agreement for Project Promoting Vehicle



The signing ceremony of Joint Venture Agreement on establishment of Project Promoting Vehicle in progress.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Jan— Foreign Economic Relations Department under Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) of Japan signed a Joint Venture Agreement for Project Pro-

moting Vehicle (PPV), here, on Thursday.

The Director-General of FERD and Chief Representative in Representative Office in Bangkok, JBIC Mr Shinya Miyazaki signed the agreement.

The agreement will contribute to promoting economic cooperation between Myanmar and JBIC and smooth flow of investment of Japanese companies and foreign companies in Myanmar.

It was also attended by Union Ministers U Soe Thane, Dr Kan Zaw, U Win Shein and U Kyaw Lwin, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe, deputy ministers, Director of Board of Directors Mr Tadashi Maeda of JBIC and officials.—MNA

VPower signs power supply agreement with Myanmar Government

YANGON, 16 Jan— Power solutions provider VPower Holdings (Singapore) Pte Ltd just signed a 45 MW agreement to supply electricity in the Kyaukphyu Region, marking its first key power investment project in Myanmar.

VPower Group just entered its first Gas for Hire agreement with state owned electricity company Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise (MEPE) to build and operate a fleet of gas-fired power plants close to the special economic zone of Kyaukphyu in Rakhine State.

“Bringing immediate supply of power along with our medium term to-

tal solutions to developing regions fast is what we do best. Building a power plant is not rocket science, but building a win-win cost effective public-private partnership with the government is the science of our business model and expertise,” said VPower CEO Rorce Au-Yeung.

“We’re committed to invest in the future of Myanmar, and we’re excited to take a role in contributing to the country’s rapid growth.”

It is forecasted that the Myanmar economy will grow by 7.8% in 2015, reported The Economist.

Myanmar’s economic development will ride on solid yet flexible electrici-

ty generating capacity and foreign investment on adaptable power generation will address the country’s need for fast electrification.

MEPE managing director, U Htein Lwin said, “Easily adaptable electricity supply structures will be a key to answering consumer and industrial rapidly rising demand for power. VPower’s ap-

proach to short to medium term power supply offers flexibility and is our ideal immediate and potentially a longer term power solution.”

“We’re confident in VPower’s power business model in growing our economic zones and to deliver power capabilities to the more isolated parts of the country. We can foresee working with VPower in building up the economic power Myanmar as a country is capable of.”—GNLM

Myanmar-US human rights dialogue fruitful: US assistance secretary

YANGON, 16 Jan— A press conference on the second Myanmar-US human rights dialogue was held at the US Embassy in Yangon on Friday morning, with the attendance of US Assistant Secretary Tom Malinowski and delegation, Ambassador of the US to Myanmar Derek Mitchell and the media.

At the press conference, the assistant secretary said that the second Myanmar-US human rights dialogue was successful, fruitful and transparent thanks to obvious outcomes of the reform process of the country.

The discussions focused on national races’ affairs, promotion and protection of human rights, creating an environment



Officials meet media at press conference on the second Myanmar-US human rights dialogue.—MNA

for free and fair elections and a safe environment for humanitarian workers, more efforts for humanitarian aids, the state consti-

Biography of Dr. Chung Ui-hwa, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea



Dr. Chung Ui-hwa, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, joined the Young Scout Association in 1960 while attending secondary school. He passed his high school education from Busan High School in 1967. In 1973, he got the Medical Degree M.D from Busan National University. In 1978, he got M.Sc in Medicine from Yonsei University College of Medicine. In addition, he got Ph.D in Medicine from Inje University College of Medicine in 1995, Ph.D (Hon.) in Business Management from Korea Maritime and Ocean University in 2002, Ph.D (Hon.) in Political Science from Chosun University in 2009, and

Ph.D (Hon.) in Education from Kongju National University in 2011.

Dr. Chung Ui-hwa carried out his tasks as a Neurosurgeon, a Fellow of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, and the President of Bong Seng Memorial Hospital.

Dr. Chung Ui-hwa performed his tasks in higher positions at various committees of the Grand National Party from 1998 to 2011.

Dr. Chung Ui-hwa was elected as an MP for five years successively from the two districts of Jung-gu and Dong-gu in Busan starting from the 15th National Assembly and he was appointed as the Speaker for the second term of the 19th National Assembly.

From 2010 to 2013, Dr. Chung Ui-hwa performed his tasks as the President of the World Scout Parliamentary Union. As the honorary Chairman of the World Scout Parliamentary Union, he has been carrying out his tasks on the world scout activities and supporting projects.

Lower fuel prices should . . .

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Professor Dr Aung Tun Thet expressed his view: “Falls in the world crude oil price are interrelated with price of natural gas. As Myanmar relies on earning foreign exchange from the energy sector, a decline in the fuel price more than K100 may cause much loss to the nation-building task. Actually, it needs to import quality fuel for domestic use. Entrepreneurs should import cheaper fuel, but not low quality.”

Market researcher Dr

Philip Charlie of Dr Business Clinic said a slight change in the price for fuel is a good prospect in Myanmar. However, if fuel prices fall more, importers may face losses.

An official of Max Fuel Station remarked, “We reduced price of fuel as of 15 January, but we can sell fuel as usual. Most vehicles use octane 95 fuel. Now, we sell fuel at K590 per litre, which is reduced from K700 per litre. Some stations still sell fuel at more than K600 per litre.”

tution, citizenship criteria, the peace process, building trust among communities.

Outcomes of the dialogue were announced in

the evening.

Queries raised by the media were replied at the press conference.

MNA

NATIONAL

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Jan—The government is striving for ensuring peace, stability and development of all part of the nation in the democratization process, Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun delivered an address at the Naga New Year Festival 2015 in Leshi, Sagaing Region, on 15 January.

He said that the government is carrying out free basic education for the youths in order to develop human resources and spending funds on free health care services to the needy persons. Everybody knows development of Naga region with construction of hill roads for better transport of ethnics residing on Naga hilly region, he said.

The union minister noted that township de-

velopment supportive committees and township development affairs committees were formed in respective townships so as to fulfill requirements of the people. As such, he said remarkable progress can be seen year after year. He urged national brethren to join hands for perpetration of the Union.

Chief Minister of Sagaing Region U Tha Aye and Sports, Culture and Public Relations Development Committee Chairman Thura U Aye Myint extended greetings.

After presenting assistance for regional development, Union Minister U Hla Tun and party awarded outstanding students.

The union ministers met officials at Leshi Township General Administration Department and discussed construction of

Union ministers enjoy Naga New Year Festival 2015 in Leshi



Union Ministers pose for documentary photo with Naga ethnics at the Naga New Year Festival 2015 in Leshi, Sagaing Region.—MNA

Leshi-Htamanthi road and Leshi-Summara road.

In the evening, they joined the bonfire in com-

memoration of the Naga New Year Festival with

participation of local people and foreigners.—MNA

UN special rapporteur wraps up trip to Myanmar

YANGON, 16 Jan — Myanmar National Human Rights Commission met with Ms Yanghee Lee, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Situation in

Myanmar, at the office of the MNHRC in Yangon on Friday morning.

The commission explained its works on protection and promotion of

human rights in Myanmar, educative measures, preparations for human rights reports to be submitted by Myanmar, its handling of human rights complaints

and investigations into and reports on death of Ko Pa Gyi and Daw Khin Win, according to the MNHRC.

Commission Chairman U Win Mra said the discussions with the UN special rapporteur led to mutual understanding and their recommendations will contribute to our work.

Present at the meeting were nine members of the MHRC including the chairman and the vice chairman.

Ms Yanghee Lee arrived in Myanmar on 6 January for the second time to compile the human rights report to be submitted to the 28th Human Rights Council Meeting.

In the afternoon, the special rapporteur held a press conference on her ten-day trip to Myanmar at the Sedona Hotel in

Yangon. At the press conference, she said that she was satisfied with measures being taken by the government for progress of reform, education, health-care, livelihood and the government's proposal to encourage the engagement of local communities for projects involving land use.

One of the important achievements of the reform process is paving the way for democracy but there are still challenges, she added, saying that the new committee on prisoners of conscience should work effectively and constructively.

She also highlighted the importance of media freedom in a democratic society and pointed out that the government is cooperating with journalists for emergence of independent media but journalists still have difficulty covering

news. It is important for the media to report news independently in 2015 elections, according to the special rapporteur.

Then, she said she recommended the government to enact a law requiring environmental assessments before development projects, to settle land disputes in a transparent manner, to manage development and management projects based on human rights and the will of the public, and preventative measures for communal violence, adding that she had received complaints over land disputes and learnt the progress of the peace process during her trip.

She later replied the queries raised by the media.

The special rapporteur left Yangon in the evening by air.

MNA



Ms Yanghee Lee, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Situation in Myanmar, calls on Chairman U Win Mra and members of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission.—MNA

Myanmar and the United States . . .

(from page 1)

support Myanmar in the development and elaboration of a policy and legal framework that gives increased land access and security of tenure to small holder farmers and recognizes customary land tenure.

5. The two governments continued productive dialogue on labor rights, reinforcing their engagement with each other, as well as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and other governments, under the Initiative to Promote Fundamental Labor Rights and Practices announced in November 2014.

6. The United States recognized the Myanmar government's efforts to work with the Union Parliament to review and amend the constitution and laws. Both governments agreed that such amendments should be in conformity with national interests and international human rights obligations. Both governments agreed on the importance of embracing and promoting Myanmar's cultural and re-

ligious diversity, inter-ethnic and interfaith harmony and understanding.

7. The United States government expressed its willingness to help Myanmar build capacity on early warning and other response systems in order to anticipate and mitigate potential violence.

8. In accordance with international humanitarian principles, the United States and Myanmar governments agreed that humanitarian agencies should have unhindered access to Internally Displaced Persons. Both countries agreed on the need and importance of implementing a comprehensive, transparent, and inclusive process of reconciliation in Rakhine State that prioritizes unfettered humanitarian access to all vulnerable populations, protects human rights, ensures equal protection for all under domestic laws and international standards, and promotes economic and social development.

9. The United States welcomed Myanmar's commitment to hold credible, transparent, and inclusive parliamentary elections in 2015, and Myanmar welcomed United

States elections assistance.

10. Myanmar and the United States discussed and agreed that adherence to international humanitarian law is essential to a strong professional military that maintains the trust of the people.

11. Both governments reaffirmed their obligations under the Geneva Conventions to protect civilian populations at all times and all places. Both governments discussed ways to work together to support security sector cooperation and reform.

12. Myanmar and the United States agreed that respect for human rights, transparent, credible, and inclusive elections, democratic government, and equal protection for all under the law, and broad-based economic development are the bases for strong, stable, peaceful, and prosperous nations. On its part, the United States committed to continue working to end all remaining restrictions on economic, political and military cooperation as Myanmar continues its work to realize this shared vision.

Rural bridge under construction in Thaton Township



THATON, 16 Jan — Mon State Government allotted K14 million of development fund for construction of a creek bridge at the entrance to Danu Village in Thaton Township, Mon State.

Construction tasks be-

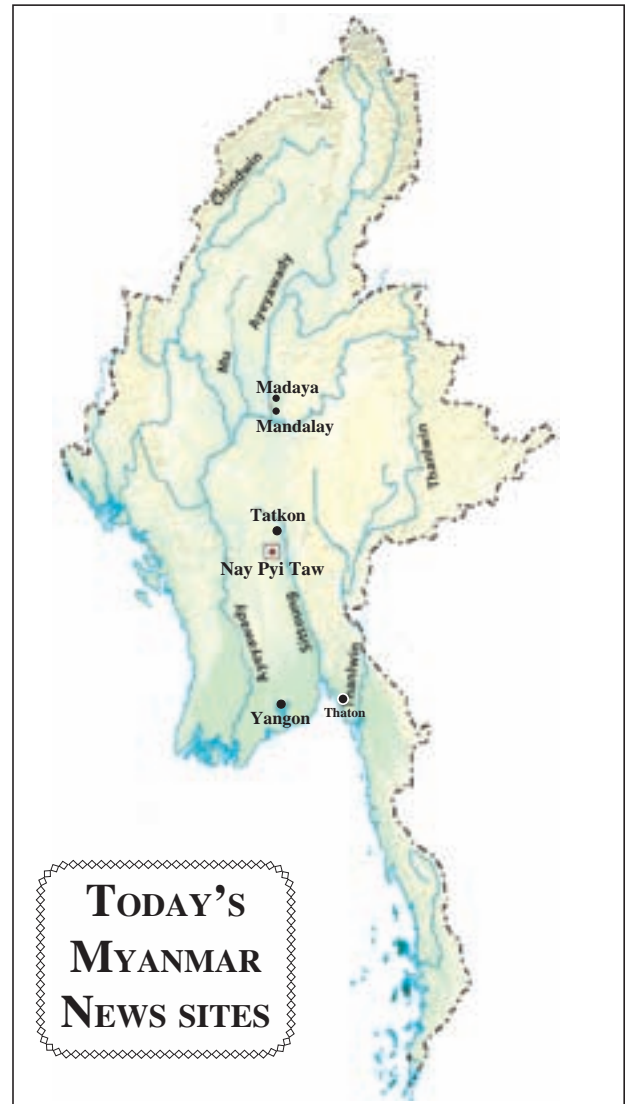
gan at the creek as of 15 January. Village administrator U Than Lwin said, "This is a useful bridge for the village. The old bridge was made of wood but it is now damaged. It could be used for pedestrians and bicycles only. Our villagers

are unaffordable to build a new one. So we thank the authorities for allotment of fund."

Thaton Township Administrator U Tun Tun Naing and officials inspected progress of the bridge and urged officials to ensure

durability of the bridge.

The bridge will be 40 feet long and 12 feet wide reinforced concrete. Its clearance will be 12 feet high. Upon completion, the local people can enjoy smooth transport in the region.—*Thet Oo (Thaton)*



TODAY'S
MYANMAR
NEWS SITES

Firefighters, shopkeepers conduct fire drill practice



NAY PYI TAW, 16 Jan— Officials of Fire Services Department gave talks on fire prevention to families of markets in Thawutti, Lewe Township, on 11 January.

Firefighters joined the skill demonstration of firefighting with the use of fire

trucks and light fire engines at the market, joined by market families.

It was supervised by Head of Lewe Township Development Affairs Committee U Win Naing Oo and Head of Township FSD U Myint San.

Shwe Kokko

Yezin University of Forestry welcomes freshers for 2014-15 academic year

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Jan — A ceremony to welcome fresher students was held at the convocation hall of the Yezin University of Forestry for 2014-15 in Zeyathiri Township, here, on 15 January afternoon.

Students of the university sang a song.

Rector Dr Myint Oo of the university and Pro-Rector Dr San Win extended greetings.

A first year student spoke words of thanks. Then, students of the fine arts association of the university performed music and song entertainment.

Shwe Ye Yint



Madaya Township gets rural health branch

MANDALAY, 16 Jan — A rural health branch was commissioned into service in Mogyo model village in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region, on 15 January.

Mandalay Region Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Chairperson Daw Su Su Lwin, the head of Township Health Department and well-wisher cut the ribbon to open the rural health branch.

Speaker of Region Hluttaw U Win Maung and Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing visited the rural health branch.

Patron of Region MCWSC and WAO

Daw Myat Ngwe donated K4 million to the medical fund of the branch. Agga Maha Thiri Thudamma Theingi Daw San Kyu of Donbyan Flour Factory and Diamond Star Co Ltd donated K1.5 million and U Yan Aung and wife Thudamma Theingi Daw Yin Shwin, K3.3 million to the branch.

The rural health branch building is 35 feet long and 25 feet wide facility.

After the opening ceremony, Region MCWSC and Region Health Department jointly performed free eye examination at 480 patients and gave glasses to 350 patients.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

REGIONAL

Indonesian president's anti-corruption stance tested upon police chief candidacy

JAKARTA, 16 Jan — The anti-corruption commitment of Indonesian President Joko Widodo was tested by his appointment on General Budi Gunawan, a senior police officer declared as a corruption suspect by the nation's powerful anti-graft commission.

Despite the suspect status slapped against Budi, the Indonesian parliament approved his nomination on Thursday to become the nation's police chief to replace General Soetarmanto.

The approval came at the parliament's plenary session following a "fit and proper" test conducted by

legislators from the Commission III on Wednesday.

With the parliament's consent, President Widodo can immediately inaugurate Budi as the new police chief.

Budi, the only candidate to head the nation's police, was named on Tuesday by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) as a corruption suspect after an investigation since July last year.

"Commissioner General Budi is a suspect in a corruption crime case when he served as the head of career development section in police headquarters," KPK Chairman Abraham Samad

told a press conference.

He added that KPK officials have investigated suspicious transactions carried out by the three-star general.

The KPK issued a travel ban on Wednesday against Budi and three other people involved in the corruption case, including his son, pending a further investigation.

President Widodo said an internal police investigation has cleared Budi of any wrongdoing, but his choice still drew criticism.

Hundreds of people, who helped Widodo to win the presidential election in July on a platform of re-



Indonesia's President Joko Widodo walks after Friday prayers at the Presidential palace in Jakarta, on 24 Oct, 2014.—REUTERS

form and anti-corruption, urged him to revoke the nomination of Budi. They pledged full support for the KPK to continue its investigation against Budi.

"The option on Budi Gunawan was wrong choice because he is already declared suspect by the KPK," Olga Lidya, who was a staunch support-

er of President Widodo, said in the KPK building on Wednesday.

"We have the responsibility from the supports that we have provided for. The supports that we gave come with the expectation to see a corruption-free Indonesia," Olga added.

Budi was accused of amassing wealth during his service in the 2000s. According to the KPK, his assets rose to more than 22 billion rupiah (about 1.7 million US dollars) in 2013 despite his monthly salary plus allowances that stood at 20 million rupiah (about 1,600 US dollars).

Xinhua

Massive chicken cull begins after bird flu confirmed

OKAYAMA, (Japan), 16 Jan — Public health workers began a cull of roughly 200,000 chickens on Friday morning at a farm in Okayama Prefecture, western Japan, following confirmation that some had been infected with a highly pathogenic H5 strain of bird flu virus.

According to the prefectural government, the cull is expected to take four days, with roughly 50,000 birds killed each day. The

dead birds will be incinerated in the operation that also involves Self-Defence Forces personnel and local government staff.

The prefectural government has imposed a ban on the movement of chickens and eggs at six farms within a 3-kilometre radius of the farm in Kasaoka, and 15 other farms in a 10-km radius have been ordered not to ship their products.

Kyodo News



Photo taken from a Kyodo News helicopter shows public workers beginning to cull roughly 200,000 chickens on 16 Jan, 2015, at a farm in the western Japan city of Kasaoka, where a highly pathogenic H5 strain of bird flu virus was confirmed. The cull is expected to take four days.—KYODO NEWS

Ousted Thai PM a no-show at second round of impeachment hearings

BANGKOK, 16 Jan — Former Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra failed to appear at her second impeachment hearing on Friday, sending ministers involved in a controversial rice subsidy programme to answer questions from parliamentarians critical of her absence.

Thailand's National Legislative Assembly (NLA) will hold a third and final hearing next week and then vote on 23 January whether it finds Yingluck guilty of dereliction of duty. A guilty verdict that could see her banned from political office for five years.

Yingluck, Thailand's first female prime minister, was removed from office for abuse of power in May, days before the army seized power in a coup saying it needed to restore order after months of unrest.

The hearings against Yingluck concern her role in a costly rice-subsidy scheme that aimed to boost the incomes of poor farmers and contributed to her landslide win in a 2011 election.

The scheme paid farmers well above market rates

for their crops and caused losses of more than \$15 billion to the state, according to the latest Finance Ministry estimate.

Yingluck appeared in parliament last week and, in an impassioned opening statement, defended the scheme. She said proceedings against her were futile as she no longer had a position left to be removed from. On Friday, NLA members questioned why she could not attend the second impeachment hearing.

"Can I have the reason? Is she ill? Why didn't she come?" said Somchai Sawaengkarn, an NLA member.

Phichit Chuenba, a legal adviser to Yingluck, said she had already "answered every question" during the first hearing.

"She already explained and answered every question last week so she has sent ministers who were involved in the (rice) scheme to answer today instead."

The NLA will hold a third hearing on 22 January before voting on the charges against Yingluck on 23 January. A decision to ban her



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

from office would require three-fifths of the vote.

A guilty verdict could upset the delicate calm that has prevailed in Thailand since the coup.

The impeachment is the latest chapter in 10 years of turbulent politics that has pitted Yingluck and her brother, ousted former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, against the royalist-military establishment which sees Thaksin, a populist former telecommunications tycoon, as a threat.

"If Yingluck is impeached this could easily spark snowballing sym-

pathy for Yingluck and a resurrection of pro-Thaksin and pro-democracy sentiment that could give way to the potential beginning of demonstrations," Paul Chambers, director of research at the Institute of South East Asian Affairs affiliated with Chiang Mai University, told Reuters.

"Military repression of these demonstrations could increase sympathy for them, and the longer the military remains in power, the less likely it can sustain societal approval for doing so."

All protests are banned under martial law.—Reuters

Mekong River Commission Council calls for assistance from development partners

HANOI, 16 Jan — The 21st meeting of the Council for Mekong River Commission (MRC) opened here on Thursday, calling for assistance from its development partners for

activities of the MRC during 2016-2020 period.

The meeting drew participation of water and environment ministers of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam as well as over 20 delegations of

MRC's strategic partners including upstream countries, donors, international organizations and observers.

At the two-day meeting, MRC Council discusses management and

financial matters, internal rules governing the MRC governing bodies and the progress to study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River including impacts by mainstream

hydropower projects, reported Vietnam's state-run news agency VNA.

Every year, MRC Council convenes for mutual conclusion on the management and development of water and re-

lated resources of the Lower Mekong Basin within the framework of the 1995 Mekong Agreement, according to the MRC on its website.

Xinhua

Fifteen detained after Belgian police kill Islamist gunmen

BRUSSELS/VERVIERS, 16 Jan — Belgian police were questioning 13 suspects on Friday detained during raids against an Islamist group they feared planned to attack police and two other people were held in France, state prosecutors said.

A spokesman told a news conference there was still no apparent link to last week's Islamist attacks in Paris and the identities of two gunmen killed during one of the raids on Thursday, in the eastern town of Verviers, had yet to be confirmed.

As well as guns, including four AK-47 assault rifles, and explosives, police uniforms were found in the apartment at Verviers, spokesman Eric Van Der Sypt said, adding: "This group was on the point of carrying out terrorist attacks



Belgian police inspect an apartment in central Verviers, a town between Liege and the German border, in the east of Belgium on 15 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

aiming to kill police officers in the streets and in police stations."

Asked about a report of a plan to behead a police-

man — an echo of Islamist violence elsewhere, including an attack on an off-duty soldier in London in 2013 — he declined comment. He

said there had been plans for attacks across Belgium.

He would not say where in France the two suspects there were detained at the

request of the Belgian authorities.

Some of the suspects had recently returned from Syria. In separate operations that officials said were unrelated, German and French counter-terrorism police also made arrests.

Belgian security forces were on high alert, with extra armed security in evidence at some public buildings, notably police stations. Public broadcaster RTBF said officers were told not to be on the streets alone while in uniform. Some Jewish schools in Belgium and the Netherlands were closed, reflecting the heightening of an atmosphere of caution that has prevailed across Europe since Islamist gunmen killed 17 people in Paris last week at a Jewish grocery and the offices of the

satirical French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*.

Belgian officials were expected to give more details of their investigation on Friday but have said they had no grounds to see a link to the French attacks for now. A separate inquiry is probing whether the Paris gunmen obtained arms in Belgium.

A third man in Verviers was under arrest and being questioned as were several people held in a number of raids in and around the Belgian capital Brussels. A former Belgian counter-terrorism chief told public broadcaster RTBF that the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks could have prompted Belgian police, who say they already had the suspects under surveillance, to bring forward the arrests.

Reuters

Hollande reassures Muslims, Islamists hack French websites

PARIS, 16 Jan — French President Francois Hollande reassured Muslims on Thursday that his country respected them and their religion but said France would not compromise on its commitment to freedom and democracy.

Speaking a week after Islamist militant violence that killed 17 people in Paris, he told a meeting at the Institute of the Arab World in Paris that Muslims were "the first victims of fanaticism, fundamentalism and intolerance".

Hollande's speech struck a balance between France's commitment to protect its 5 million-strong Muslim minority and to defend free speech even if Muslims find it offensive.

"Islam is compatible with democracy and we should refuse any confusion (about this)," Hollande said at the Institute, where "We

are all Charlie" was written in French and Arabic on the building's facade. Hollande also addressed the Arab world: "France is a friend, but it is a country that has rules, principles and values. One of them is not negotiable - freedom and democracy."

Hours after Hollande spoke, Belgian police killed two men who opened fire on them during one of about a dozen raids on Thursday against an Islamist group that prosecutors said was about to launch "terrorist attacks on a grand scale".

As the French government prepares legal changes to boost security in the country and armed police guard media offices, Jewish schools and other sites, French Muslims have reported dozens of attacks on mosques since Islamist gunmen targeted satirical

journal *Charlie Hebdo* last week. But Muslim Malian immigrant Lassana Bathily was hailed as a hero after he concealed shoppers at a ko-

sher grocery last Friday to save them from an Islamist gunman who killed four hostages before police shot him dead. The Interior Min-

istry said it would grant him French citizenship.

In the Middle East, authorities in several countries have denounced



French President Francois Hollande (R) and the President of the Institut du Monde Arabe (Arab institute), Jack Lang pose in front of the Arab Institute building bearing the message 'We are Charlie', in Paris, on 15 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Charlie Hebdo's decision to print more cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad in its latest edition on Wednesday. Freshly printed copies of *Charlie Hebdo's* "survivors' edition" quickly sold out on Thursday morning, as they did on Wednesday when it first hit the newsstands.

The dispute over *Charlie Hebdo's* caricatures of Prophet Mohammad escalated in Turkey where a judicial investigation was launched against the daily Cumhuriyet for publishing excerpts of the cartoons from the French weekly.

In France, the military's cyber defence specialist reported a surge of hacking against some 19,000 French websites in the past four days, with Islamist messages appearing on some and denials of service blocking others.

Reuters

G-7 split over Russia, US urges EU, Japan to continue sanctions

TOKYO, 16 Jan — The Group of Seven industrialized nations were at odds over sanctions on Russia in relation to the crisis in Ukraine, with the United States calling for continuation of sanctions but Japan and Germany stressing dialogue with Moscow, G-7 sources said on Thursday.

The gap in views surfaced at a meeting of "sherpas" personal representatives of the leaders from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United

States in early December in Berlin, the sources said.

The Ukraine crisis is expected to be a major item on the agenda at a G-7 summit slated for June in Germany.

At focus is whether the G-7 will take concerted action against Russia, especially at a time when part of sanctions the European Union imposes on Moscow is set to expire in March. Japan has underscored G-7 unity in dealing with Russia's annexation of Crimea and in-

stability in eastern Ukraine but stressed dialogue with Moscow.

If Japan moves closer to the US position, a planned visit to Japan by Russian President Vladimir Putin this year and negotiations between Tokyo and Moscow over four Russian-held, Japanese-claimed islands off Hokkaido may be affected.

G-7 sherpas plan to hold their next meeting in March to advance discussions on Ukraine and other issues.

According to the sources, the United States told the Berlin session that the G-7 must ensure coordination to prepare for a possible invocation of new sanctions, calling for continued EU and G-7 sanctions on Russia.

A US representative was quoted as saying Putin is good at taking advantage of differing views among G-7 members, indicating that unless G-7 members act in unity, Moscow would drive a wedge within the group.

Britain also called for

continued G-7 sanctions on Russia, saying the current situation does not warrant a lifting of sanctions. In contrast, Japan, which is eager to advance territorial talks with Russia, and Germany, a major importer of natural gas from Moscow, expressed a softer stance.

A German representative was quoted as saying there are sanctions that need to be maintained and those which do not need to continue, and that there is a possibility that Putin may

show a flexible stance in the event of an easing of sanctions. Japan was quoted as saying the G-7 needs to continue dialogue with Russia, in addition to the imposition of sanctions.

Along with Ukraine, the G-7 is expected to take up other pressing challenges such as international terrorism, the Islamic State militancy in Iraq and Syria, and the Ebola virus in West Africa at the June summit, according to the sources.

Kyodo News

Obama measures on Cuba trade, travel poke new holes in embargo

WASHINGTON, 16 Jan — The United States announced sweeping new rules on Thursday that will significantly ease sanctions on Cuba, opening up the communist-ruled island to expanded US travel, trade and financial activities.

Defying hardline critics in Congress, President Barack Obama made good on his commitment last month to loosen restrictions on dealings with Cuba as part of a historic effort to end decades of hostility.

The 54-year-old US embargo on Cuba will remain in place — only Congress can lift it.

But the package of

regulations issued by the Treasury and Commerce Departments, which will take effect on Friday, will allow US exports of telecommunications, agricultural and construction equipment, permit expanded travel by Americans to the island and open banking relations.

It was the first tangible US step to implement economic changes Obama pledged on 17 December when he and Cuban President Raul Castro announced plans to restore diplomatic relations between the old Cold War foes.

“Today’s announcement takes us one step closer

to replacing out-of-date policies that were not working and puts in place a policy that helps promote political and economic freedom for the Cuban people,” said US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew.

While Castro has welcomed last month’s deal, he has made clear that Havana does not intend to abandon single-party rule or the state-controlled economy. Congressional critics of Obama’s shift say that Washington should not be rewarding Cuba.

The new regulations will allow Americans to travel to Cuba for any of a dozen specific reasons, in-

cluding family visits, education and religion, without first obtaining a special license from the US government as was previously the case. But general tourism will still be banned.

John McAuliff, executive Director of the Fund for Reconciliation and Development, which has organized trips to Cuba, said that apart from Cuban-Americans visiting relatives, most other Americans would still be corralled into escorted group tours.

Still, US travellers will be allowed to bring home small numbers of the Cuban cigars that are highly rated by aficionados.

It will also be easier for US companies to export mobile phone devices and software as well as to provide Internet services in Cuba. US airlines will be permitted to expand flights to the Caribbean island. Delta Air Lines and JetBlue Airways said they would look into adding services. In an expansion of remittances allowed, Americans will now be able to send up to \$8,000 to Cuba a year, up from \$2,000 previously, and bring \$10,000 with them when they travel to the country. They will also be able to use credit and debit cards.

In addition, a changed

definition of “cash in advance” payments required by Cuban buyers could help businesses, most notably US agriculture, gain greater access to Cuban markets. The largest US meat processor, Tyson Foods Inc, which already does some business with Cuba, hailed the changes.

The announcement came after the Obama administration said Cuba had fulfilled its promise to free 53 political prisoners and a week before high-level US-Cuba talks in Havana aimed at normalizing ties, including discussions on when to reopen embassies.

Reuters

Russia says Ukraine troop rotation won't help peace

MOSCOW, 16 Jan — Russian is concerned that a rotation by Kiev of front-line forces in eastern Ukraine could undermine peace efforts, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday.

“Any action related to military preparations does not help the process,” Lavrov told a news conference. “We will hope that all this... does not lead to a renewed military confrontation.”

Ukraine’s parliament voted on Thursday to refresh its front-line forces and resume partial conscription after a security official said Russian forces backing separatist rebels had sharply increased military activity in the east of the country.

Lavrov voiced hope that “common sense will prevail” and that Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko would not yield to the “party of war” — the politicians whom Moscow says seek a military solution to the conflict.

The former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan hopes to arrange a summit of the Russian,

Ukrainian servicemen sit atop armoured personnel carriers (APC) during a ceremony to hand over weapons, military equipment and aircrafts to the army at a firing range outside Zhytomyr on 5 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS



Ukrainian, French and German leaders on the conflict in east Ukraine later this month.

Lavrov said President Vladimir Putin had discussed the situation in Ukraine on Thursday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel but gave no details of the discussions.

Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the president had met members of his advisory Security Council on Friday to discuss “escalating tensions” in east Ukraine and progress on arranging the four-way summit, Interfax reported. He gave no details.

Efforts are also under way to arrange a meeting in the Belarusian capital Minsk of the so-called Contact Group on Ukraine which brings together Russia, Ukraine, separatist leaders from east Ukraine and the OSCE security watchdog.

Reuters

Six Ukrainian soldiers killed, fighting rages at airport — Kiev officials

KIEV, 16 Jan — Six Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in attacks by separatists in the past 24 hours, the Kiev military said on Friday as fighting raged at the international airport in the big eastern city of Donetsk.

“Six of our servicemen have been killed as a result of combat activity and another 18 have been wounded in the past 24 hours,” military spokesman Andriy Lysenko told journalists.

A presidential adviser, Yuri Biryukov, said separatists had launched a full-scale attack on the airport at Donetsk to try to dislodge government forces who have tenuous control on the complex.

“They (the separatists) launched a full storm from this morning. We have wounded on our side. There is hot combat going on there and the tension and the situation there is the worst I have seen,” Biryukov wrote on his Facebook page.—Reuters

Canada’s new rules of installing computer programmes come into force

OTTAWA, 16 Jan — Canada’s new rules for installing computer programmes came into force on Thursday, making it now illegal for a website to automatically install software on a visitor’s computer or for an app on the phone to be updated without first obtaining consent. The new rules are part of Canada’s anti-spam legislation that came into effect on 1 July, 2014. They are designed to protect Canadian consumers from the most damaging and deceptive forms of spam and

online threats while ensuring that businesses can continue to compete in the global marketplace. “We have been actively informing Canadian businesses about the new requirements for installing computer programs and our goal is to ensure they comply with these new rules,” said Manon Bombardier, Chief Compliance and Enforcement Officer of Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), on Thursday. Under the legislation, the CRTC has the primary

enforcement responsibility and is able to investigate, take action against and set administrative monetary penalties against those who are not in compliance.

Canadians are encouraged to report suspected violations of Canada’s anti-spam legislation to the Spam Reporting Centre. The information sent to the center is used by the CRTC, the Competition Bureau, and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner to enforce Canada’s anti-spam legislation.—Xinhua



A man makes rice crackers during Thailand Tourism Festival 2015 at Lumpini Park in Bangkok, Thailand, on 15 Jan 2015. Thailand Tourism Festival 2015 was held here from 14 to 18 January. — XINHUA

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 17 January, 2015

Every cent and effort matter

By Myint Win Thein

With economic reform, Myanmar has been enjoying relatively more assistance than ever before from the international community in every sector. As history has shown us, a country cannot enjoy international assistance all the time. Therefore, it is important for Myanmar to make best use of it for the national interest instead of wasting it for personal gain or unnecessary measures.

In Afghanistan and Haiti the international

community has poured in billions of dollars into reconstruction assistance, but the two countries are still at the status quo, struggling with the same problems at the same extent, including internal conflicts, corruption, poverty, drugs, crime, and so on. In Afghanistan, the international community has trained and provided salaries for members of the Afghan National Police, but those responsible for salary payments are abusing the money, costing donors billions of dollars. Similarly in Haiti, through five years after one of the world's most devastating earthquakes, tens of thousands of victims are still living in temporary camps amid ongoing political stalemate between the government and the opposition. They have wasted their opportunities despite the avid willingness of international donors to help with reconstruction.

Although Myanmar has not received as much

assistance from the international community as those two countries, Myanmar should use the assistance it has received more responsibly. If the country wastes the assistance, it is also wasting its efforts to build a democratic country at the same time. Learning lessons from the history of other countries, Myanmar should not repeat the same mistakes and must make most out of international assistance.

Write for us

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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.

Significant features of "Singapore Expo" and "John Little Mega Expo Sale" in Singapore: January 2015

By Sayar Mya

It was a mild cool winter Monday morning of 12 January 2015.

Myanmar Airways International flight number 8M 231 left Yangon International Airport at 8:00 a.m. Myanmar Standard Time and arrived at Singapore's Changi International Airport at 11:30 a.m. local time.

Myanmar Airways International Co., Ltd. is the international flag carrier of Myanmar, headquartered in Yangon. It operates scheduled international services to destinations mainly in Southeast Asia. It is founded in 1993.

Singapore Changi Airport Group was formed on 1 July 2009. It is the operator of Singapore Changi Airport and Singapore Seletar Airport. Its role was previously undertaken by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore.

I and my better-half flew to Singapore to see our grand kids who are coming to Singapore from Campbelltown of New South Wales in Australia during their school holidays in January 2015. We stayed at our daughter's condominium at Taman Serasi adjacent to the Singapore Botanic Gardens. It is a 74-hectare botanical garden in Singapore. It is the only botanic garden in the world that opens from 5 a.m. to 12 midnight every single day of the year.

We took two full-day rest at home as we are no younger to involve in active

and rapid sightseeing in Singapore.

On Tuesday evening, our daughter took us to Singapore Expo ground, where John Little Mega Expo Sale is in progress from 8 to 18 January 2015.

The moment we arrived at the Singapore Expo Fair Ground at around 7:00 p.m., my mind rushed back to the images and events to the motley assortment of fairs exhibited over the years at Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall on U Wisara Road in Yangon.

I have read about the upcoming events at Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall for the early part of 2015.

Livestock Myanmar Expo is going to be held in Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall, Yangon, Myanmar for three days; 29-31 January 2015.

International Plastics Exhibition is a three-day event to be held from 3 April to the 5 April 2015.

Myanmar Medi-Pharm Expo is a 3 days event which is earmarked to be held from 14 May to the 16 May 2015.

Taking the opportunity to be in Singapore for a short stay, the author of this article would like to present two themes namely the Singapore Expo Venue and the John Little Mega Expo Sale, just to share the notable features and characteristics of the Singapore venue and the expo sale taking place in our neighboring country.

When I stepped on the grounds of Expo Venue, my instinct urged me to

concentrate and observe on the venue instead of the sales items displayed inside the exhibition hall. Therefore, I took my small notebook out and jotted down the salient first hand information that I could gather at the venue.

The writer has noticed that the responsible executives of the Expo Venue developers had thought from the start what their goal was; what they were trying to achieve; implementing and building in time; measure and monitor success; and thought in advance how the methodology could be changed and evolves under various circumstances.

The Singapore Expo Venue is located on the Number (1) Expo Drive in Changi Airport Area and the owner is the PSA International. PSA International Pte Ltd is formerly Port of Singapore Authority and it is one of the world's largest port operators.

The operator is the Temasek Holdings Singex Venues Private Limited. It was opened on 4 March 1999 at a cost of Singapore dollar 220 million. The venue has a total space of (1,320,000 sq ft). The exhibition hall floor has the area of (340,000 sq ft). It has a very large parking area. It has a public transit access of MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) Station. People from all walks of life from every nook and corner of Singapore could comfortably and easily come to Singapore Expo.

The Singapore Expo



Exterior of the Singapore Expo Venue

Venue is the largest convention and exhibition venue in Singapore with over 100,000 square meters of column-free, indoor space spread over 10 halls. Built and managed by PSA International, and funded by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the S\$220 million building was built in the eastern part of Singapore. Currently managed by Temasek Holdings, Singex Venues Private Limited, the government-owned building was designed by Cox Richardson Rayner. It is a very big architectural firm with personnel in cities around Australasia. The design was perfect to fit the original aim and goal of the expo venue.

Additionally, it is served by the Expo MRT Station on the Changi Airport Branch Line of the

East-West Line. Therefore, it is easily accessible to the public.

Facilities of the venue Singapore Expo is the largest meetings, incentives, conferencing, exhibitions venue in Singapore. Moreover, it is one of the largest and most completely equipped centre in the whole of Asia. There are ten large multipurpose halls, each being 10,000 square meters in size, giving a total floor space of over 100,000 square meters. All available space are interconnected and on ground level and column free.

Ten conference halls are also available, ranging in size from 89 to 844 square meters, suitable for 150 to 1,000 people. In addition, there are meeting rooms which can seat 15 to 125 members and

participants.

The original Singapore Expo building comprised six interconnected halls of 10,000 square meters each, with column free-spaces and ceiling heights of up to 16 meters. Each hall is self-contained and is linked to the other halls by air-conditioned walkways. An additional 40,000 square meters were completed in September 2005 and linked to the original building across Expo Drive via a sheltered walkway. Therefore, the participants can comfortably walk through the sheltered walkway.

A very large car parking lot for 2,200 vehicles is also available. When it is enquired, it can be converted into 25,000 square meters of outdoor exhibition space.

(To be continued)

Madaya Township opens upgraded BEHS branch in Mogyo Village



MADAYA, 16 Jan—A ceremony to open the upgraded Basic Education High School Branch was held in conjunction with the handing over of a science school building to education department in Mogyo model village in Madaya Township, Mandalay Region, on 13 January.

Mandalay Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing, Region Hluttaw representative U Ko Lay, Deputy Director U Soe Myint Aung of Mandalay Region Education Office and U Aung Myo Min of Adventure Myanmar formally opened the school.

Speaker of the region Hluttaw U Win Maung unveiled the signboard of the school. Township Education officer U Maung Maung Latt, Township Adminis-

trator U Aung Swe Myint and wellwisher Daw Saw Mya formally opened the new school building.

The wellwisher family handed over documents related to the school building to Township Education Officer U Maung Maung Latt.

Wellwishers also donated cash and computer sets to the school.

After the ceremony, the patron of Region Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee and Women's Affairs Organization and party donated health educative books to the library.

The science school building is 40 feet long and 26 feet wide two-storey building constructed at a cost of K15 million.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)

Tatkon Township MCWA turns out tailors

TATKON, 16 Jan — Organized by Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the advanced tailoring course 2/2014, conducted by Tatkon Township MCWA, concluded at the hall of Township General Administration Department on Friday.

Joint Secretary-2 Daw Ahmar of the association made a speech. Officials awarded outstanding trainees.

The joint secretary-2 and party viewed tailoring works of trainees.

Under the supervision of Township MCWA Chairperson Daw Khin Hlaing Wai, trainers Daw Zargyi Lin and Daw Zin Mar Phyto gave training of making coats, Shan coats, female suits, skirts and various designs of clothes to the trainees.

Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon IPRD)



Japan's Mitsubishi Company get green light to provide services at Mandalay International Airport

MANDALAY, 16 Jan — Passenger transport service of Mandalay International Airport will be provided by Mitsubishi Company of Japan in April, according to the Department of Civil Aviation (Mandalay).

With the aim of creating an aviation and logistic hub at the airport, Department of Civil Aviation invited tenders for private public partnership programme. The department and Mitsubishi-JALUX-SPA Consortium signed an agreement on 16 November 2014, an official of DAC (Mandalay) told media.

He said that all services at the airport will be handed over to the Japanese company. Now, they observe the airport. Thanks to cooperation with the Japanese company, it is expected the in-



ternational airport to have a firm market and an exit of larger volume of export and import."

Mandalay International Airport can handle three million passengers per year while Yangon International Airport gives services to 2.7 million.

The largest number of tourists from China entered Mandalay International Airport in 2011 and

2012 and Thais were at the top of the arrival list in 2013 and 2014.

International airlines fly from Mandalay International Airport to Thailand, China, Singapore and Korea through direct flights. Seven international airlines and eight domestic airlines join the airport.

Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Mandalay Mayor looks into development undertakings in the city

MANDALAY, 16 Jan — Mandalay Region Minister for Development Affairs Mayor U Aung Mung inspected development undertakings in Mandalay City on

14 January.

Water and Sanitation Department under Mandalay City Development Committee is sinking a 12-inch diameter tube-well in

Chanmyawady park, east of Sagaing-Mandalay road in Chanmyathazi Township.

Officials reported on sinking the tube-well to the mayor.

Arrangements are being made to install water pipelines for supply of water from the tube-well to local areas in Chanmyathazi Township through No 7

water pump station.

The station supplies 1.6 million gallons of water from tube-wells No 35 and 36 to local people. Upon completion of new well, local people will get 800,000 gallons of water daily. As such, the station will supply 2.4 million gallons of water to the wards in the township.

The mayor and party inspected the nursery at Chanmyawady park and dredging of silt from Mandalay Kandawgyi Lake.

The head of Factories and Vehicles Department reported on working capaci-

ty of Kobeleo dredger in the lake. The mayor instructed officials to make efforts for more storage of water at the lake upon completion of dredging and to supply water to the agricultural areas.

The mayor looked into preparations for holding the 13th Mandalay Mayor's Trophy vegetables and fruits show and contest at the park of the Kandawgyi Lake. He viewed progress in building a culvert across Kolanbo Drain at the junction of Yangon-Mandalay Highway and Myawady Mingyi Road.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Israeli market reformer launches wild-card election bid

JERUSALEM, 16 Jan — An ex-Israeli cabinet minister known for spurring market reform launched a new party on Thursday to run in the 17 March election, a wild-card bid seen as potentially helping Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu return to power.

Moshe Kahlon, 54, the son of hardscrabble Libyan immigrants, hopes to revitalise his political career based on the popularity he enjoyed as a communications minister who promoted competition and thereby slashed mobile telephone prices. He broke ranks with Netanyahu's right-wing Likud party over economic policy, an issue that has dogged Israeli politics since unprecedented social protests in 2011, and opted to sit out the last election in 2013.

Kahlon is closer to Netanyahu on security issues — they both blame Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for the breakdown in peace diplomacy last year — and calls himself a "Likudnik" in speeches, hinting at how he and Netanyahu could easily partner in any future coalition government.

Polls forecast Kahlon's party winning between nine and 12 seats on 17 March, enough to put it in a kingmaker position to decide whether Netanyahu wins a fourth term against liberal Labour party leader Isaac Herzog.



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu waves after his speech during the launch of his Likud party election campaign in Tel Aviv on 5 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

The centre-left Labour party has a slight edge over Likud in the polls but neither — as in previous elections — can garner a governable majority, while Netanyahu is seen as mustering more potential political allies to build a viable coalition.

Kahlon's main rival in the smaller party category, jostling for economic policy-minded voters, is the centrist Yesh Atid party headed by former finance minister Yair Lapid. Netanyahu dismissed Lapid two months ago, triggering a coalition crisis that brought about the snap election.

Kahlon has named his party "Koolanu", which is Hebrew for "all of us." It aims to slash skyrocketing housing costs and take other steps to help disadvantaged Israelis, many of whom are immigrants from Arab and Asian lands long

under-represented in the Jewish state's upper echelons.

An attorney by profession, Kahlon grew up as one of seven siblings whose father was a construction worker, a past he often cites as underscoring his preoccupation with economic issues.

"Insufferable economic gaps put Israel at risk. A country that is weak from within will also be weak from without. Therefore our role is to strengthen Israel from within," Kahlon said earlier this month.

His leading party candidates presented on Thursday at a televised gathering on a kibbutz (collective farm) included retired army general Yoav Galant and Michael Oren, a former ambassador to Washington under an earlier Netanyahu-led government.

Reuters

Pentagon to deploy 400 troops to train Syrian rebels

WASHINGTON, 16 Jan — The US military is planning to deploy more than 400 troops to help train Syrian rebels to fight the Islamic State, along with hundreds of US support personnel, a Pentagon spokesman told Reuters on Thursday.

The US military has not yet identified where it will draw its forces from for the training mission, expected to begin in the spring at sites outside Syria, Colonel Steve Warren said. Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have offered to host the training.

Warren did not offer additional details on the troop figures, first reported by Defence One website.

The training programme is a part of President Barack Obama's multi-year plan to field local

forces in Syria to halt and eventually roll back Islamic State fighters, while pounding them with US-led airstrikes.

The Pentagon has estimated that it can train more than 5,000 recruits in the first year and that up to 15,000 will be needed to retake areas of eastern Syria controlled by Islamic State.

Critics in Congress have said the Pentagon programme won't aid Syrian opposition forces fast enough, however, and question whether it is too small to influence the course of Syria's multi-pronged civil war between President Bashar al-Assad and his opponents.

Across the border in Iraq, Obama has authorized more than 3,000 US troops

to advise and train Iraqi and Kurdish forces.

The disclosure of the planned troop deployments for the Syria training mission came just days after senior US officials met Syrian opposition and civil society leaders in Istanbul to discuss the programme.

US Major General Michael Nagata, Combined Joint Interagency Task Force — Syria Director, and US Special Envoy for Syria Daniel Rubinstein led the meeting on the US side.

"These introductory meetings were an important step as we prepare to launch the train-and-equip programme later this spring with our international partners," said Pentagon spokeswoman Commander Elissa Smith.

Reuters



Rebel fighters take positions behind sand barricades at al-Breij frontline, after what they said was an advance by them in al-Manasher and al-Majbal areas, where forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad were stationed, in Aleppo on 5 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

Two Italian female hostages in Syria freed

ROME, 16 Jan — Sources from the Italian government on Thursday confirmed media reports that two Italian hostages kept in Syria since last July have been freed.

"They are free and will come back home soon," the sources said in a few words posted on the government's official account on a social network. Greta Ramelli and Vanessa Marzullo, two girls from northern Italy aged 20 and 21, were working in humanitarian aid projects when they were abducted near the northern city of Aleppo on 31 July. Earlier this month the two girls appeared in a dramatic video wearing long dark tunics, in which they asked the Italian government to bring them back home as they were "in extreme danger and could be killed." The al-Qaeda-linked Nusra Front claimed responsibility for the abduction, which Italian intelligence source described as "extremely delicate." "Greta and

Vanessa free. The result of Italy's intensive teamwork," the Italian foreign ministry said on a social network on Thursday commenting on the liberation. The pair was expected to arrive in Rome late on Thursday, according to ANSA news agency.

"We are so happy about this news ... we cannot wait to hug our daughter again," Ramelli's mother reportedly told Silvana Alberio, the mayor of Gavirate, the town near Milan where the girl's family lives. Media rumours said the Italian centre-left government of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has paid as much as 12 million US dollars, which triggered angry reactions among members of opposition right wing party Northern League. "If the government has really paid 12 million US dollars, it would be a shame," the Northern League head Matteo Salvini was quoted by ANSA as saying.—Xinhua

France arrests 12 connected with Paris shooter, bomb threat triggers train station evacuation

PARIS, 16 Jan — French police on Thursday night arrested 12 people suspected of helping a gunman in last week's shootings in Paris, local media reported on Friday.

Meanwhile, a main train station in Paris was closed and evacuated Friday due to a bomb threat before it was reopened shortly afterwards.

The 12 suspects — nine men and three women — were arrested on charges of providing "logistical support" for Amedy Coulibaly, who shot dead a policewoman and four hostages at two locations last week, the BFMTV news channel said, citing judicial sources.

According to the report, eight of them were placed into custody. The arrests were made in

southern Paris suburbs, including the Montrouge area, where Coulibaly, who claimed links with the Islamic State (IS), killed the police officer.

In three days of violence beginning 7 January, 17 people were killed in three separate attacks, the worst terror attack in France in decades. Police shot dead three murderous extremists, including Coulibaly.

French police are still searching for Hayat Boumeddine, wife and an alleged accomplice of Coulibaly. The 26-year-old woman is now believed to be in Syria.

Also on Friday, the Gare de l'Est train station in Paris was evacuated at 8:00 am (0700 GMT), but re-opened to travelers about one and a half hours

later.

The SNCF state railway did not offer details, but local media reported that the evacuation was prompted by a suspicious package.

The scare came as US Secretary of State John Kerry was in the French capital for a visit in the wake of the terrorist attack on satirical French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* last week, which was followed by a series of dramatic episodes, including Coulibaly's killings. France has been on high alert since the *Charlie Hebdo* series of attacks. The government is keeping the Vigipirate security system at the highest level and has deployed 10,000 soldiers across the country to ensure security, mainly of sensitive places such religious centres.—Xinhua

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Brent holds above \$48, few analysts see quick recovery

SINGAPORE, 16 Jan — Brent futures edged higher on Friday, holding above \$48 a barrel on positive technical price momentum, although few analysts expect a strong rebound anytime soon as global output continues to outweigh demand.

Still, crude markets may be bottoming out, analysts said, as prices were receiving support around current levels.

“Our forecast seems to point towards a consolidation stage in the weeks to come,” Phillip Futures said in a note. “Therefore, we expect crude prices to trade range bound between \$44.75-\$50.69 for WTI Mar’15 and \$46.4-\$52.89 for Brent Mar’15.”

Benchmark Brent crude futures were trading at \$48.59 per barrel at 0435 GMT, up 32 cents since their last settlement. US crude CLC1 was trading at \$46.59 a barrel, up 34 cents.

Despite the slight price gains, oil opened up into a wobbly market after Switzerland jolted markets already roiled by plunging commodities prices by abandoning its currency cap on Thursday. The move

triggered the euro’s biggest one-day drop fall against the Swiss franc in history and an 11-year low against the US dollar.

Investors took this as a sign that the European Central Bank would launch large-scale bond buying next week, which points to further euro falls against the dollar.

“The potential dollar strength into 2015 may be another factor at play in pressuring oil prices lower. The weakness in the crude space is likely to keep sentiment jittery,” Singapore’s OCBC bank said on Friday.

Oil markets remain dominated by oversupply — created by soaring US shale output and high production from OPEC members and Russia — amid slowing demand.

Crude oil prices have been pulled lower by multiple factors, OCBC said, starting back in July 2014, when oversupply from major oil producers spooked the market.

“In contrast, demand stayed tame, with European and Indian demand trending in the contraction zone,” it said.—Reuters



An offshore oil platform is seen in Huntington Beach, California on 28 Sep, 2014.—REUTERS

South Korean court rules in favour of Hyundai Motor in wage dispute

SEOUL, 16 Jan — A South Korean court on Friday ruled broadly in favour of Hyundai Motor Co (005380.KS) in a wage dispute with workers that could have exposed the automaker to \$1 billion (0.65 billion pounds) in additional pay annually.

The dispute came as Hyundai, the world’s fifth-biggest automaker together with Kia Motors (000270.KS), is trying to boost production in China and Mexico to avoid higher wages and regular labour strikes in Korea.

The court ruled that Hyundai Motor did not have to include regular bonuses in base wages for over 90 percent of its workers, a decision welcomed by the company and employer groups who feared a rise in benchmark pay rates.

“Hyundai Motor avoided the worst case scenario. This is good news for Hyundai Motor,” said Suh Sung-moon, an analyst at Korea Invest-

ment & Securities.

Twenty three Hyundai Motor workers filed the suit in March 2013 saying Hyundai had miscalculated base wages and seeking unpaid overtime, allowances and severance pay.

The Seoul Central District Court ruled against 21 of the 23 claimants, representing all of Hyundai Motor’s domestic employees.

Hyundai said in a statement the ruling “put an early end to the controversy over base wages”.

A union spokesman said workers were considering whether to appeal. South Korea’s umbrella labour union slammed the ruling as “lopsided” and “political” because it favoured powerful family-owned businesses.

Hyundai Motor shares ended down 2 percent, broadly in line with the wider market’s .KS11 1.36 percent fall.

The base wage issue was the main issue of contention in talks between



The Hyundai logo is seen outside a Hyundai car dealer in Golden, Colorado, on 3 Nov, 2014.—REUTERS

the automaker and its domestic labour union last year and sparked a partial strike in September.

The two sides had earlier agreed to discuss the issue by the end of March this year, regardless of any court ruling. Business lobby group the Federation of Korean Industries said the ruling left open the possibility of further wage disputes in future.

“We are concerned that new conflict will emerge as the court recognized the bonuses of a very small number of workers as part of base wages,” it said in a statement.

Hyundai’s annual wages for workers more than doubled to 5.97 trillion won in 2013 from a decade ago, according to regulatory filings.

Reuters

Dengue fever kills 21 Cambodian kids last year, down 64 pct

PHNOM PENH, 16 Jan — At least 21 Cambodian children had been killed by dengue fever last year, a decrease of 64 percent from 59 deaths in 2013, local newspaper reported on Wednesday.

Some 3,724 dengue fever cases had been reported last year, down 79 percent from 17,533 cases in a year earlier, *Khmer*

Times reported, citing figures from the National Centre for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control.

The center’s director Huy Rekol said the number of epidemic and fatal cases of dengue fever was at its lowest level over the past 10 years. “Cambodian people receive more education in the community,

while children get educated at school about protection and prevention from dengue fever,” he said.

Despite the remarkable decrease of reported cases last year, the centre would continue its efforts to prevent the disease, he added.

Dengue fever is a viral disease transmitted by *Aedes* mosquitoes. The

disease causes an acute illness of sudden onset that usually follows symptoms such as headache, fever, exhaustion, severe muscle and joint pain, swollen glands, vomiting and rash.

In Cambodia, the outbreak of dengue fever usually begins at the beginning of the rainy season in May and lasts until October.—Xinhua

Ebola outbreak in West Africa appears to be slowing down

UNITED NATIONS, 16 Jan — An outbreak of Ebola that has claimed more than 8,400 lives in West Africa appears to be slowing down, though the battle to contain the disease is not over, the UN special envoy on Ebola said on Thursday.

“The change in behaviour that we’ve been hoping for, working for, anticipating, is now happening everywhere,” Dr David Nabarro told Reuters in an interview.

“The facilities to treat people are available everywhere,” he said. “Safe burial teams are providing safe and dignified burial services everywhere and the result is that we’re seeing the beginnings of the outbreak slow-

ing down.”

Nabarro declined to predict when the outbreak of the virus could be definitively over.

The hemorrhagic fever is spread through contact with bodily fluids of infected people or the highly contagious body of someone who has died of the virus. Nabarro said burial practices that involved people touching and cleaning bodies of Ebola victims had helped fuel the outbreak.

The worst Ebola outbreak on record infected about 21,200 people in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea since it was detected in March, according to the World Health Organization.

The government of Liberia said earlier on Thursday that it could be free of the virus by the end of next month after success in curbing transmission. It said the country had only 10 confirmed Ebola cases as of on 12 January. “It’s an incredible drop,” Nabarro said, adding that he believed the Liberian figures were “absolutely correct.” Nabarro described “a remarkable collective change in patterns of behavior” and said Liberia had “come to terms with the reality that the outbreak of Ebola is being driven by the way in which people behave.”

More than 3,500 of the 8,400 dead were from Liberia.

Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea now have capacity to quickly set up mobile centers to handle localized outbreaks.

“Those who are involved in the response have worked out that they can organize rapid mobile responses in case there’s a flare up anywhere, so they can set up small temporary treatment facilities wherever they are needed,” Nabarro said.

He said the US, British and French military, which built treatment centres, had played a crucial role.

“This external help was absolutely vital in bolstering and supporting the capacity of the people in the country to make the changes,”



A health worker checks the temperature of a man arriving at Bata Airport, on 14 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

Nabarro said, adding that “much of the external help came from within Africa.”

Asked about lessons to be taken and suggestions that the WHO had been slow in sounding an alarm about

Ebola, Nabarro said: “I hope that the result of this epidemic and the investigations done ... will better enable us to work out the way in which to predict” an outbreak.

Reuters

Pope tells Philippines leaders to end corruption, hear cries of the poor

MANILA, 16 Jan — Pope Francis called on the Philippine government on Friday to tackle corruption and hear the cries of the poor suffering from “scandalous social inequalities” in Asia’s most Catholic country. The pope went to the Malacanang presidential palace for an official welcoming ceremony led by President Benigno Aquino as tens of thousands of ecstatic Filipinos lined the streets. Francis, a champion of the poor, pulled no punches in calling for a more just and caring society in the Philippines, which is about 80 percent Catholic. “It is now, more than ever, necessary that political leaders be outstanding for honesty,



Pope Francis waves to well-wishers aboard the popemobile near the Manila Cathedral on 16 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

integrity and commitment to the common good,” he said. After meeting Aquino, Francis later celebrated a Mass in Manila’s colonial-style cathedral. He made a surprise detour from his schedule

after the Mass when he went across the street for a brief visit a Church-run home that cares for former street children, many of whom were once child prostitutes and members of youth gangs.

Aquino, the only son of democracy champion and former president Corazon Aquino, took office in 2010 on the promise of transparency, good governance and battling corruption to lift the Philippines from poverty.

But he has struggled to shed the country’s image as one of the most corrupt in Asia as he continues to defend his allies, while at the same time chasing down politicians, bureaucrats and generals associated with the past administration.

Francis was driven to the palace from his residence at the Vatican embassy in a small blue Volkswagen Touran, in keeping with his simple, no-frills style.

Enthusiastic crowds had started gathering four hours before he arrived. The Philippines has laid on the largest security operation in its history, with about 50,000 police and soldiers on hand. Francis’ car was flanked by police vehicles, which sometimes made it difficult for people to see him. “It has been somewhat of a security nightmare for us,” Aquino told the pope in his address. Francis was saluted by presidential guards at the Spanish colonial palace and greeted by hundreds of people waving Vatican and Philippine flags. Children rushed up to embrace him as he walked along a red carpet on the palace grounds.—Reuters

Japan, S Korea officials to meet Monday, seek ways for summit

TOKYO, 16 Jan — Senior officials from Japan and South Korea will hold talks next week in Tokyo to improve bilateral relations, with this year marking the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic ties, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said on Friday.

The officials are expected to seek ways to realize a summit between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-hye. Park has refused to hold talks with Abe due to the issue of former South Korean “comfort women” who worked in wartime Japanese military brothels. Monday’s talks will involve Junichi Ihara, director general of the ministry’s Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and Lee Sang Deok, director general of the North-east Asian Affairs Bureau of South Korea’s Foreign Ministry. It remains to be seen how Seoul will respond to Abe’s statement that the door for dialogue is always open. Abe and Park have not held formal talks since they came to power in December 2012 and February 2013, respectively.

Along with the comfort women issue, Ihara and Lee are expected to discuss the travel ban imposed on a Japanese journalist indicted in Seoul without arrest for defaming Park in an article published online in August.

In a meeting on Thursday in Tokyo with former Finance Minister Fukushihiro Nukaga, who heads a Japan-South Korea parliamentary group, a South Korean parliamentary delegation conveyed a message from Park to Abe that South Korea wants to mark a new beginning for its relations with Japan and will try to improve ties.

Ihara and Lee have held five rounds of talks since April last year without progress on the comfort women issue. South Korea has repeatedly demanded that Japan settle the issue in a way that is acceptable to the surviving victims, with means such as an apology and compensation.

Japan has maintained that all compensation issues were settled under a 1965 bilateral treaty that normalized diplomatic ties.

Japan ruled the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945.—Kyodo News

Three rescued, 22 missing after boat sinks in China’s Yangtze River



Rescuers salvage the wreck after a tug boat sank in the Yangtze River in east China’s Jiangsu Province on 16 Jan, 2015. Rescuers have rescued three passengers on board a tug boat that sank while testing water in Fubei Channel on the Yangtze River at about 3 pm on Thursday, and are still searching for more than 20 missing.

Seven or eight foreigners including Singaporean, Japanese nationals and a Frenchman, are believed to be among the missing.—XINHUA

NANJING, 16 Jan — Rescuers have saved three people after a tug boat sank on the Yangtze River in east China’s Jiangsu Prov-

ince on Thursday, said local rescue headquarters.

Twenty-five people aboard the boat fell into the water, including eight

foreigners — four Singaporeans, an Indonesian, a Malaysian, an Indian and a Japanese national — when it sank while conducting

tests in Fubei Channel, near Jingjiang City, on the Yangtze River at about 3 pm on Thursday, according to the provincial maritime rescue centre.

About 30 professional vessels, including patrol boats and tug boats, have been dispatched to search for the 22 missing people near the spot where the boat sank.

Rescuers are trying to stabilize the capsized boat and lift it out of the water by crane. However, rescue work has been difficult due to the swift current and cold water.

Wang Zhenkai, one of the three rescued, told Xinhua reporters that he was the interpreter for a 60-year-old Japanese engineer. “Only the two of us were in the cockpit. We had just finished the load test of the boat’s main engine when the vessel suddenly turned on its side. Water immediately flooded in,” he said.

Wang, from Yantai City, Shandong Province, was saved at 5:36 am after rescuers cut through the bottom of the boat. He has been hospitalized and is in stable condition.

He survived by clinging to a hydraulic pump. Wang said he grabbed the Japanese engineer, but later the current broke their grasp as the boat started to sink.

Zhang Lei, vice governor of Jiangsu, and Li Shixin, vice director of the National Maritime Bureau, are overseeing the on-site rescue work. Diplomatic staff have arrived to help verify the identities of the foreign nationals on board the vessel. The 30-metre-long boat, with a weight of 368 tonnes, was manufactured by Anhui Bengbu Shenzhou Machinery Co Ltd. in October. The company did not report the vessel’s route or testing plans to port authorities.

Xinhua

Labour pledges ban on unhealthy children’s food

LONDON, 16 Jan — The opposition Labour party said on Thursday it would ban unhealthy children’s food if they win a national election in May, setting out a hands-on approach to improving public health and reducing the burden on the stretched healthcare system.

Ahead of what is set to be a close election, Labour promised to introduce a range of measures such as introducing plain cigarette packaging, tackling alcohol abuse and regulating what goes into children’s food.

“We are setting our clear intention to take ro-

bust action to protect children from harm where voluntary measures have failed,” Labour’s public health spokeswoman Luciana Berger said. The party said it would set maximum limits on levels of fat, salt and sugar in food marketed substantially to children.

An official survey published in December showed that one in three 10 to 11-year-olds in England were overweight or obese, and the percentage of those classified as obese was rising.

The announcement chimes with Labour’s central election strategy to

campaign against Prime Minister David Cameron on the future of the country’s state-funded and much-cherished health system. Polls show Labour is more trusted on the health-care system than Cameron’s Conservatives.

A Conservative spokesman said the Labour plan was “naive” and defended the government’s track record on public health. Labour have already pushed for the government to introduce a minimum price for alcohol and to ban branding on cigarette packaging. They said that without action, the



People eat chips whilst walking along the promenade at the British holiday resort of Scarborough, England on 16 July, 2009.—REUTERS

cost to the health system of treating diabetes will rise to 17 billion pounds (\$25.9

billion) per year by 2035 from 10 billion pounds.

Reuters

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MV ROYAL 16 VOY NO (-)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ROYAL 16 VOY No (-) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (3) 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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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV E.R TURKU VOY NO (063W)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MVE.R TURKU VOY NO (063W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.1.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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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MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (947N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (947N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17.1.2015 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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AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES**

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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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

**INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER
(Tender No. 2(T)MPE/HSD(1)/2015-2016)**

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, the Ministry of Energy for the supply of High Speed Diesel (470,000 Bbl±10%).
2. Tender Closing Date : 26 - 1- 2015 at (12:00) noon.
3. Tender Opening Date : 26 - 1- 2015 at (13:00) hrs.
4. Delivery Time : February 2015 to March 2015
5. Tender Documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing 15-1-2015 on payment of the Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyat 100,000) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director

Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise

Contact Phone no. 067-411108/411193

WEATHER REPORT

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 17th January, 2015: Rain are likely to be scattered in Mandalay and Magway Regions, Shan, Chin and Rakhine States, isolated in Sagaing, Bago and Yangon Regions, Kachin, Kayah and Kayin States and weather will be partly cloudy in remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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Visitors watch boats during the 57th Toronto International Boat Show at Exhibition Place in Toronto, Canada on 15 Jan, 2015. As one of the largest annual consumer boat shows in North America, the nine-day event showcases hundreds of the newest models of boats and draws tens of thousands visitors from 10 to 18 January.—XINHUA

Three major fires break out in England, police declare no links to terrorism

LONDON, 16 Jan — A 47-year-old local man was arrested on suspicion of arson after what were called three “major” fires broke out in south Oxfordshire of England early on Thursday morning, local police said on Thursday.

Britain’s Thames Valley Police said the fires were believed to be linked with each other, but denied their possible linkage to “any terrorist activity.”

“We believe the arson was not random and would like to reassure the public that they are not

terrorist-related,” Thames Valley Police announced on its Twitter account.

The structures of the buildings affected were searched and examined for safety. The suspect was put in custody, and nobody was reported injured as a result of the fires.

Oxfordshire’s Fire and Rescue Service was called overnight to attend three fires reported at a thatched property, a funeral parlour, and a district council office in the county.

A number of roads were closed and the public was advised to avoid the area until further notice and to make travel plans accordingly, allowing for extra travel time.

Superintendent Andy Boyd of Thames Valley Police said it was believed that a vehicle collided with the district council building prior to the fire.

“This is being investigated as a criminal act. It is not thought to be linked to any terrorist activity,”

he confirmed in a statement.

David Etheridge, chief fire officer for Oxfordshire County Council’s Fire and Rescue Service, said bomb disposal teams had assisted in the investigation and cylinders were believed to be used at all of the incidents.

“Cylinders, coupled with strong winds, made firefighting operations hazardous. However I am pleased to report there have been no injuries to the public, other agencies or fire personnel,” he said.

The South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council, whose office building was ablaze at around 0320 GMT, said most of its services would be affected.

“The councils are putting their business continuity plan into place to make sure the effect on the most important front line services is kept to a minimum,” the council said in a statement.

Xinhua

Hong Kong, Thailand commerce officials talk on trade

HONG KONG, 16 Jan — Hong Kong’s Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Gregory So met with Minister of Commerce of Thailand Chatchai Sarikalya on Friday to exchange views on trade and economic ties, the government news website said here.

During the meeting, So expressed his gratitude to Thailand for rendering support in the Hong Kong-ASE-

AN Free Trade Agreement (HK- ASEAN FTA) negotiation.

He expressed wishes that Thailand, as the ASEAN co-ordinator country for the FTA, would continue to be the champion for the smooth progress and successful conclusion of the negotiation.

The HK-ASEAN FTA will facilitate the flow of goods, services and investment, bring more business

opportunities and stimulate further growth in the region, he said. “We will endeavor to conclude the negotiation by 2016 so that businessmen and investors of Hong Kong and the ASEAN can reap the benefits of this important FTA,” So said.

On general trade and economic relations, So said Hong Kong and Thailand were close partners, noting that trade between the two

sides has grown at an average annual rate of 10 per cent from 2009 to 2013.

So also took the opportunity to exchange views with Chatchai Sarikalya on the importation of rice from Thailand, Hong Kong’s largest rice supplier.

He wishes that the Thai government would continue to ensure a stable supply of rice to Hong Kong.

Xinhua

'Grand Budapest...', 'Birdman' lead Oscars race with 9 nods

LOS ANGELES, 16 Jan — Satirical drama 'Birdman' and whimsical crime caper 'The Grand Budapest Hotel' lead this year's Oscar race winning nine nods each, including best picture and director, at the 87th Academy Award nominations announced today.

'The Imitation Game', the Benedict Cumberbatch-starrer British World War II drama about code-breaker Alan Turing, closely followed with eight nominations.

'Boyhood', Richard Linklater's coming-of-age tale about childhood, which took 12-years to complete, was predicted to score big, but managed to garner just six nominations.

Its chances on 22 February, however, remain bright as the film is competing in key categories like best picture, director, original screenplay and supporting actors.

'Boyhood' matched its score with the Clint Eastwood's Iraq war drama 'American Sniper', which was a surprise entrant and won nominations for best picture, best actor for Bradley Cooper and adapted screenplay though Eastwood was omitted.

The biggest surprise in the nominations list was the love given to 'The Grand Budapest Hotel' as the Academy generally favours more recent releases while the film released last March.

It was one of the nominees in the best picture category along with 'Birdman', 'The Imitation Game', 'American Sniper', 'Boyhood', 'Selma', 'The Theory of Everything' and 'Whiplash'.

'Budapest', a whimsical tale about a colourful hotel concierge, also fetched Wes Anderson a best director and original screenplay nominations.

'Birdman', by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu, too spread its wings by getting nominated in a number of categories. Inarritu is nominated as the best director with Richard Linklater 'Boyhood', Bennett Miller of 'Foxcatcher', Anderson for 'Budapest' and Morten Tyldum of 'The Imitation Game'.

PTI

'Boyhood', Michael Keaton, Julianne Moore win top Critics Choice awards

LOS ANGELES, 16 Jan — "Boyhood," Michael Keaton and Julianne Moore were among the top winners at the 20th annual Critics Choice Movie Awards on Thursday, winning best picture and director, actor and actress.

"Boyhood," which earlier in the day received six Oscar nominations including best picture, was named the year's best film by the more-than 250 members of the Broadcast Film Critics Association, the largest US and Canadian film critics' group.

The critics honoured "Boyhood" director Richard Linklater, who in a virtually unprecedented move made the film over 12 years with the same actors, and awarded Patricia Arquette the best supporting actress prize.

The critics twice awarded Michael Keaton for his acclaimed performance in "Birdman," in which he plays a fading action film actor trying to make a go of it on Broadway, with both its best actor in a comedy and best actor awards. The film also won for best ensemble among a total of seven awards.

"I'll take anything, to be



Actress Julianne Moore poses backstage with her Best Actress award for "Still Alice" during the 20th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards in Los Angeles, California on 15 Jan, 2015.

REUTERS

honest with you," quipped Keaton, who has already won many awards, including the Golden Globe, and is considered a favourite for the best actor Oscar when Hollywood's top honours are handed out on 22 February.

Moore, another Oscar nominee and favourite to win, won best actress for "Still Alice," in

which she plays a professor with Alzheimer's disease.

"The Grand Budapest Hotel" was named best comedy film, also winning for art direction and costume design, while best comedy actress went to Jenny Slate for "Obvious Child."

Supporting actor Oscar nominee JK Simmons won the critics

Meryl Streep gets record 19th Academy Award nomination

LOS ANGELES, 16 Jan — Meryl Streep, a three-time Oscar winner, extended her record of being the most nominated artist in the Oscar history by getting her 19th Academy Awards nomination for best supporting actress in 'Into The Woods'.

Streep's previous Oscar wins include the best supporting Oscar award for 'Kramer vs Kramer' in 1980, best actress award for 'So-

phie's Choice' in 1983 and 'The Iron Lady' in 2012.

In the fantasy musical 'Into The Woods', Streep, 65, plays the role of a witch, who places a curse of a baker couple and sends them on a quest to find four key ingredients for a potion that she is making.

'Woods' other two nominations were for costume and production design.—PTI



Michael Jackson salsa album finally set for release

LOS ANGELES, 16 Jan — An album of Latin music versions of the King of Pop's Michael Jackson's hits has finally come to fruition almost four years after he initially came up with the idea.

'Unity: The Latin Tribute to Michael Jackson' started as a Kickstarter.com campaign by Peruvian-American Tony Succar, following the positive response he received after recording a salsa version of Thriller, reported *Billboard* magazine.

The crowd funding initiative was a success and Succar raised the \$10,000 (£6,700) he needed to make the album back in 2011.



Almost four years of struggles later, he is ready to release the finished product in April.

Tracks include 'Billie Jean', 'I Want You Back' and 'Man in the Mirror' recorded by the likes

of Tito Nieves and Obie Bermudez are there in the album. The album's first single is Puerto Rican singer Jean Rodriguez's rendition of 'Smooth Criminal'.

PTI

award for his turn as a hard-driving music teacher in "Whiplash," while Ellar Coltrane was named best young actor or actress for "Boyhood."

"A year ago I really didn't think anyone was going to care about this movie," he said.

Best action film went to the box office hit "Guardians of the Galaxy," while Bradley Cooper won best actor in an action film for the true-life war film, "American Sniper." Emily Blunt won best actress in an action movie for "Edge of Tomorrow."

The award for best animated film was won by "The Lego Movie," which was snubbed in the Oscar nominations.

Screenplay awards went to "Gone Girl" and "Birdman." Best foreign language film was "Force Majeure," while "Life Itself" won the best documentary prize.

Among honorary awards, Kevin Costner received a lifetime achievement award, Jessica Chastain was presented with the group's first MVP, or most valuable player, honor, and director Ron Howard received the Louis XIII Genius Award.—Reuters

AR Rahman misses out on Oscar nomination

MUMBAI, 16 Jan — India's music maestro AR Rahman, who has won two Oscars, failed to score a nod in the best original score category at the 87th Academy Awards nominations, which were announced.

The 48-year-old composer, had made it to the list of 114 probables for three of his films including Hollywood movies 'The Hundred-Foot Journey' and 'Million Dollar Arm' and Rajinikanth-starrer Tamil film 'Kochadaiiyaan'.

Alexandre Desplat for 'The Grand Budapest Hotel', Alexandre Desplat for 'The Imitation Game', Hans Zimmer for 'Interstellar', Gary Yershon for 'Mr Turner' and Johann Johannsson for 'The Theory of Everything' have been nominated in the best original score category at this year's Oscar. "I don't have any expectations from it. I think God has been kind to me and this is just a stop in my long journey," Rahman told *PTI* ahead of the announcements when asked about his chance at winning a nomination.—PTI

Nigerians made homeless by Boko Haram seen losing vote too

MALKOHI, (Nigeria), 16 Jan— Nigerians fleeing a wave of killings by the Islamist group Boko Haram have already lost loved ones, livelihoods and most of their possessions. Now they seem likely to lose their vote.

A closely fought presidential election is to be held in a month's time and the law states people must go home if they want to participate, posing a risk to the credibility of the poll in Africa's biggest economy.

The electoral commission says it is rushing to distribute voter ID cards to the 1.5 million people who have been displaced, according to an Oxfam estimate, by the insurgents fighting for an Islamic state in religiously mixed Nigeria.

But for many voters the idea of going back to their home constituencies, as they legally must in order to cast their ballots, is too harrowing to contemplate.

President Goodluck



The Red Cross in Kano distributes relief materials to displaced victims of the Boko Haram violence, at a relief camp in Dawaki, a local government area in Kano, on 16 Dec, 2014. — REUTERS

Jonathan faces ex-military ruler Muhammadu Buhari in the 14 February election, and there are grave doubts over whether voting can happen in swathes of the northeast overrun by rebels. As they are mostly opposition strongholds, Buhari

stands to lose out the most.

The first time Boko Haram attacked Daniel Dunya's village, dozens of heavily armed men stole all the cattle and kidnapped several women. The second time they burned down churches and many houses.

By the time they came back for a third go, abducting girls and killing the men, he was ready to leave.

"Most of my documents have been lost, including my voter's card, because I was running away," he told Reuters at Makholi displaced

persons camp in Adamawa state, where chickens, goats and lizards darted among piles of trash.

Dunya's home lies near the town of Gwoza, in mountains controlled by Boko Haram near the Cameroon border, an area over which the militants have declared an Islamic state.

"As a Christian, they will kill me if I go back to my local government area. Boko Haram are still running around there," he said. He remains optimistic that somehow he will be able to vote. "I'd vote for someone who will bring back peace," he says, perhaps unsurprisingly, when asked which candidate he prefers.

As he spoke, a boy also called Daniel ran around in the dirt, between rubbish and animal faeces, the large open wound on his right foot a testimony to his trauma: the motor-bike he and his mother used to escape Boko Haram crashed before they got here.—Reuters

Electric car chargers installed on Beijing-Shanghai expressway

BEIJING, 16 Jan —The construction of electric vehicle charging stations along the 1,262-km expressway that links Beijing and Shanghai finished on Thursday.

State Grid, one of China's two grid corporations, built 50 quick-charging stations along the route, making it the country's first cross-city charging network. Each of the stations has eight charging poles capable of fully charging an electric car in 30 minutes. All electric cars that meet Chinese standards can use the charging facilities.

State Grid built 133 quick-charging stations with 532 charging poles along three major expressways with total length of 2,900 km in 2014. The company aims to build charging station networks along eight major expressways with total length of 19,000 km in China by 2020.

Electric vehicles are gaining popularity in China amid its "green" drive, but buyers are hesitant as they worry about a lack of charging stations. — Xinhua

Cristiano Ronaldo elected Portugal's best player of century

LISBON, 16 Jan — Football star Cristiano Ronaldo was elected Portugal's best player of the century on Wednesday night as Portugal's Football Federation celebrated its 100th anniversary. The Real Madrid star and triple Ballon d'or winner came ahead of Portugal football legend Eusebio and Luis Figo, at a gala in Estoril casino, around 10 km northwest of capital Lisbon.

Ronaldo has scored 52 goals in 118 matches, breaking Eusebio's record of 41 goals in 64 appearances. Figo managed 32 in 127 games.

The 29-year-old was absent due to a commitment with his club, Real Madrid, which play Atletico Madrid on Thursday and was represented by his agent Jorge Mendes. "We are standing before the best player in

world history, the best athlete in history. I am very proud, as a Portuguese national, for having a player of this level. He is an example for young athletes," Mendes said. Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho was also awarded a prize on Wednesday, for best coach of the century.

"When something beautiful happens in my career, I dedicate it to my people," Mourinho said. "So I dedicate

this to everyone who made Portugal's football history in the past 100 years. We are privileged people here, but history is so much more than that." Ronaldo, who broke a record in last season's Champions League scoring 17 goals and helped his club Real Madrid clinch its 10 title, was awarded a third Ballon d'or on Monday. He was given the same prize in 2008 and 2013. — Xinhua

Smooth draw for Djokovic at Australian Open



Serbia's Novak Djokovic (R) walks past Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka after they had a practice session together on Margaret Court Arena at Melbourne Park on 15 Jan, 2015. The Australian Open tennis tournament begins on 19 January. — REUTERS

MELBOURNE, 16 Jan — Novak Djokovic's chances of winning a fifth Australian Open title have been boosted by a kind draw in the opening week, while

women's top seed Serena Williams kicks off her campaign against 106th-ranked Belgian Alison Van Uytvanck.

World number one

Djokovic faces a qualifier first up and will avoid the top 10 seeds until at least the quarter-finals, where he could meet big-serving Milos Raonic, one of the highly-fancied crop of young players tipped to challenge the dominance of the 'Big Four'.

Reigning champion Stan Wawrinka, seeded fourth, faces a tougher route if he is to defend his crown.

The Swiss takes on 99th-ranked Marsel Ilhan of Turkey before a possible fourth round matchup with 16th seeded Italian Fabio Fognini and a likely quarter-final against US Open finalist Kei Nishikori.

On the comeback trail from injury and illness, third seed Rafa Nadal has also been given few favours with a dangerous opening round

tie against Russian Mikhail Youzhny, a former top-10 player.

"Youzhny is not that easy to beat," said 83-year-old Hall of Fame coach Nick Bollettieri at the draw ceremony at Melbourne Park on Friday. "I'm sure a lot of people will be looking at that first round to see how healthy Nadal is."

Following that, the 2009 champion has a possible third round against Czech bogey-man Lukas Rosol, who upset him in the second round of Wimbledon in 2012.

Second seed Roger Federer starts his Australian Open against Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun, a former Wimbledon quarter-finalist, and could face 15th seed Tommy Robredo in the fourth round.—Reuters

MRTV
Entertainment
Channel

(17-1-2015, Saturday)

6:00 am

- Travelogue Programme

6:25 am

- Honour Song of Alinka Kyaw Swar Myoma Nyein

6:45 am

- Myanmar Series

7:00 am

- Teleplay

7:50 am

- Teleplay

8:45 am

- Dramatic Arts

10:00 am

- Myanmar Video

12:00 am

- Close Down

MITV
MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(17-1-15 07:00 am~
18-1-15 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * The Ten Traditional Arts & Crafts
- * World News
- * Will you feed the pigeons
- * Local News
- * The Long-Lasting Royal Tradition
- * World News
- * TECH School
- * Local News
- * ID Show
- * "Gas and Oil"
- * World News
- * Myanmar Movie Review
- * Local News
- * Myanmar Entrepreneur: Soe Nyi Nyi
- * World News
- * In the Studio: Ki Ma
- * Local News
- * A Dream A Destination (Hpa An)
- * World News
- * Goldsmith
- * Local News
- * U Kyaw Thu: From Artist to Philanthropist (II)
- * World News
- * Dengue Fever
- * Local News
- * Traditional Matrimony of Khamti Shans
- * World News
- * The Iron Rider
- * Local News
- * Power Ring
- * World News
- * Kid's Home

Asian Cup: Honda-driven Japan see off Iraq for 2nd win

BRISBANE, (Australia), 16 Jan — AC Milan midfielder Keisuke Honda converted his second penalty in as many matches on Friday as defending champions Japan took a big step towards reaching the knockout phase of the Asian Cup with a 1-0 win over Iraq.

Honda, who also hit the woodwork twice, swept home the decider midway through the first half at Brisbane Stadium to send Japan top of Group D with

six points from two games, three clear of 2007 champions Iraq and Jordan.

“It’s good that I could score early at such a crucial juncture,” said Honda, who commented on his near-misses. “But you have to score when you have the chance or you’re not going to win big games.”

Jordan thrashed tournament debutants Palestine 5-1 in Melbourne, Hamza Al Dardour netting four times to keep alive Ray

Wilkins’ side’s hopes of reaching the quarterfinals.

“Our opponents were very dangerous,” said Japan coach Javier Aguirre. “Fortunately, we were able to find a rhythm early on. The players did well, but there was some fatigue towards the end.”

Aguirre, feeling the heat after a Spanish court on Wednesday accepted a match-fixing complaint he is allegedly involved in, stuck with the same starting lineup that walloped Palestine 4-0 in Newcastle on Monday, with long-serving midfielder Yasuhito Endo winning a record 150th cap.

The Japanese had the lion’s share of the chances in the first half, with Honda, Shinji Kagawa and Yuto Nagatomo causing the Iraqis plenty of problems.

Kagawa fired wide on the turn in the 11th minute after racing onto Honda’s ball into the box and Honda then went close in the 17th, heading against the post after Nagatomo had capitalized on sloppy defending by Amjed Kalaf Al Muntafik to get his cross in.

The Blue Samurai finally made the breakthrough in the 23rd minute. Takashi Inui set up Kagawa to force a superb save out of Jalal Hassan Hachim from point-blank range, and Iranian referee Alireza Faghani awarded a penalty after Honda, chasing down the loose ball was sandwiched by Ali Adnan Kadhim and Saad Abdulameer.

Honda dusted himself off to send Hachim the wrong way from the spot, but Japan should have extended their lead through

Shinji Okazaki, who could only direct a free header straight at the Iraq goalkeeper.

Iraq, meanwhile, had to wait until two minutes before halftime to create their first clear chance, but captain Younus Mahmood’s shot lacked enough purchase to trouble Japan goalkeeper Eiji Kawashima.

Honda crashed a shot against the crossbar from the edge of the box just after the restart and after nearly 20 minutes of Iraq pressure that followed, he somehow contrived to hit the post in front of an open goal after a flowing move involving Kagawa and Nagatomo.

Kagawa, yet to score under Aguirre, stung Hassan’s palms in the 72nd minute, but Honda’s penalty proved to be enough.

Kyodo News



Japan’s Keisuke Honda scores the opening goal from the penalty spot during the first half of a Group D match against Iraq at the AFC Asian Cup at Brisbane Stadium in Brisbane, Australia on 16 Jan, 2015.—KYODO NEWS



Asian Cup Australia 2015

 Australia	15:30 MST (17.1.2015)	 Korea Republic
 Oman	15:30 MST (17.1.2015)	 Kuwait

Asian Cup Australia 2015 Result

Palestine	1 - 5	Jordan
Iraq	0 - 1	Japan

Two-goal Torres fires Atletico into Cup quarters

MADRID, 16 Jan — Fernando Torres stole the show with a dramatic double as Atletico Madrid secured a battling 2-2 draw at Real Madrid on Thursday that dumped the holders out of the King’s Cup 4-2 on aggregate.

Back at his boyhood club after seven years of mixed fortunes in England and Italy, Torres stunned the Bernabeu with a goal in the first minute of each half of the last 16, second leg. It was the first time he has scored against Real at their giant arena in the Spanish capital.

Sergio Ramos and Cristiano Ronaldo twice headed the home side level but Atletico, who won last week’s last-16 first leg at the Calderon 2-0, comfortably held out to set up a quarter-final clash against record winners Barcelona.

A second-string Barca were far too strong for La Liga rivals Elche and a 4-0 victory wrapped up a thumping 9-0 aggregate success for Luis Enrique’s side.

“The fact that we scored so early meant we could play the game we wanted,” Torres, who was substituted just before the hour, said in an interview with Spanish television broadcaster Canal Plus.

“We never felt the tie was in danger and we weren’t under

stress,” added the former Liverpool and Chelsea forward.

“I was smiling when I came off because of the win and for scoring my first two goals (since I returned to Spain) and also for

doing it in a stadium where I hadn’t managed it before.”

Real fans had evoked cherished memories of previous cup fightbacks in the run-up to their latest derby against Atletico

but their chances of turning the tie around were dealt a stinging blow after 46 seconds.

Atletico’s France forward Antoine Griezmann sped down the left and sent over a perfect

cross for Torres to lash a left-foot shot high into the net past goalkeeper Keylor Navas.

Real came storming back and Ramos, the hero of last season’s Champions League final victory over Atletico, made it 1-1 when he headed in a Toni Kroos free kick in the 20th minute.

Ronaldo, who presented the FIFA Ballon d’Or award he won this week to fans before kickoff, and Marcelo each had chances before the break but Torres struck again moments into the second period.

The 30-year-old Spain international, in the starting lineup in place of ailing Croatia striker Mario Mandzukic, picked up another pass from Griezmann on the left of the penalty area and turned inside Pepe before sending a low shot into the net off Navas.

Gareth Bale crossed for Ronaldo to head home eight minutes later but that was as good as it got for Real and their talismanic Portugal forward.

The other quarter-finals feature Malaga against Athletic Bilbao, Espanyol against Sevilla and Villarreal against Getafe. The first legs are next week and the return games the following week.

Reuters



Real Madrid’s Gareth Bale (C) heads the ball challenged by Atletico Madrid’s Mario Suarez during their King’s Cup round of 16 second leg soccer match in Madrid on 15 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

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