

We must all be committed to undertaking reforms desired by the public

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb—*The following is the full text of the monthly radio message delivered by President U Thein Sein.*

My Fellow Citizens,

As I have done previously, I would like to give you the monthly update on the work of my government, and the developments that have taken place in our country.

This February is an important historical milestone for ethnic unity. The tasks we are currently undertaking are a continuation of the Pinlon-initiated processes of ethnic unity and national reconciliation. Although the current peace process has encountered challenges, there is steady progress and preparations are clearly being made to hold political dialogue to solve armed conflict through political means.

I urge all national political forces involved with the peace process to understand that they each have a role to play for the success of the peace process the whole nation desires.

It is now apparent to all that since my government took office, political liberalization and nurturing of a new political culture are not merely words, but tangi-

ble achievements. To progress further, political guarantees must be secured by political agreements at each stage. With this message, I begin this month's radio address.

I spoke of 2015 being an important year in my New Year address, and we saw important political developments in January. Just as there were positive developments, we also faced challenges. I have previously said that these challenges are faced by every reforming country, and are a product of the current political system and prevailing situation. We must accept that since this is an election year, there will be challenges due to heightened expectations of the public and political forces.

The success of the democratic reforms, strengthening of democracy, and the emergence of a developed and open society are goals our society has set. To achieve these goals will require overcoming difficulties and challenges. There are many examples of countries that had to overcome these obstacles as they reformed. Indeed, these difficulties and challenges must be overcome, no matter

what. I urge members of the government, political parties, political forces, civil organizations and the public to pledge to work for a smooth and peaceful reform process based on mutual understanding, trust, and patience.

Independence Day, which symbolizes Myanmar people's struggle against colonialism, falls during the first week of January. This year's ceremonies were noteworthy in many ways. Although the occasion has been celebrated in various formats over the years, this year's ceremony included a Grand Parade, showcasing our nation's national unity, for the first time in many years. After these events, I hosted meetings with political leaders and leaders of ethnic armed groups to discuss national reconciliation and internal peace.

I have frequently stressed that dialogue between political forces is the correct way to resolving issues. To further facilitate this dialogue, representatives of the government, Parliament, political parties, political

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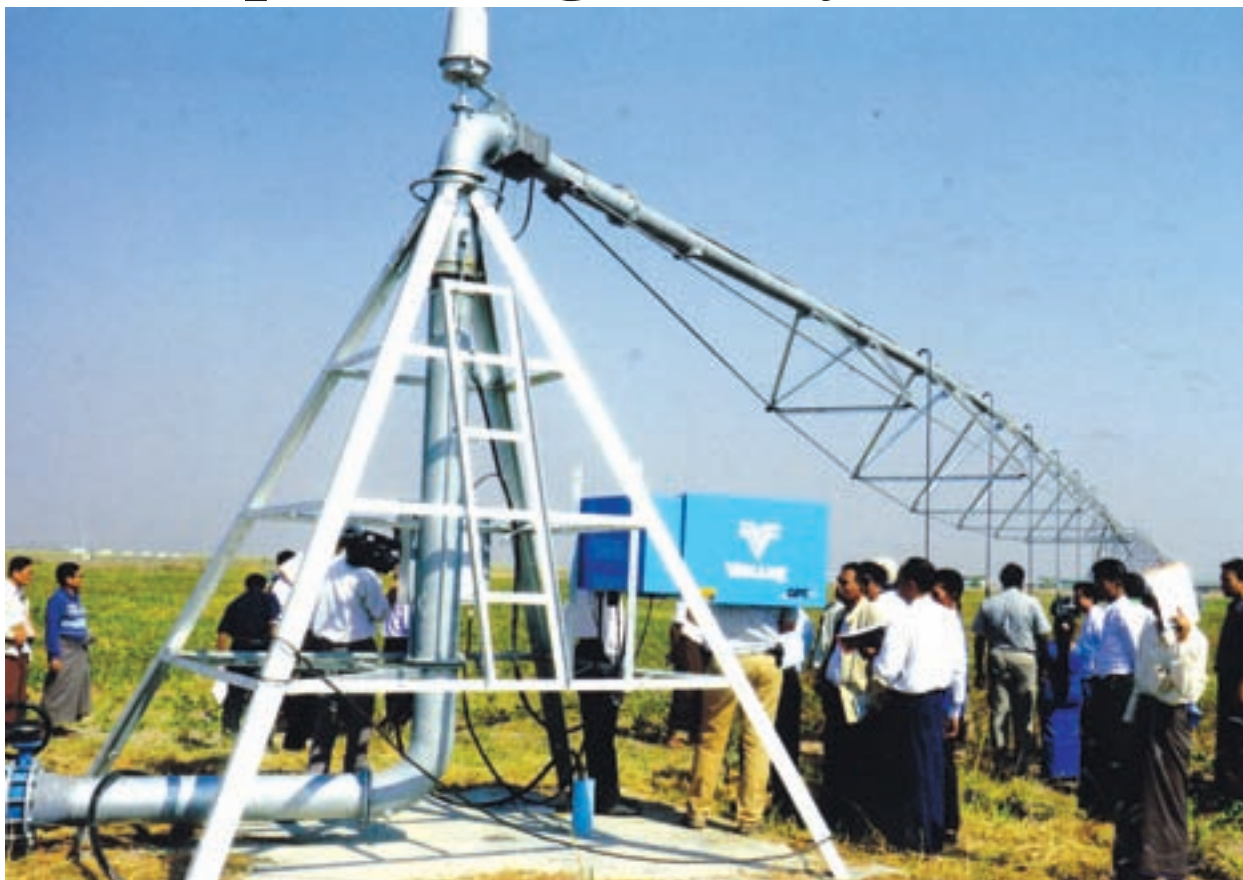
Parliament of Poland to help develop Hluttaw staff capacity

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb — Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House) U Khin Aung Myint received Mr Zenon Kuchciak, Ambassador of Poland, at his hall in Hluttaw Complex, here, on

Monday afternoon. They discussed exchange of MPs for further strengthening parliamentary relations between the two countries and assistance of

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Agricultural company demonstrates pivot irrigation system



Technicians use modern pivot irrigation system in growing crops in farmlands in Wethigan Station, Pyay Township.

**Byline: Ko Myo (Shwepaukkan)
Photo: Min Lwin (Pyay)**

PYAY 2 Feb— Shwe Pyay Myay agricultural company showed pivot irrigation system in Weth-

igan station, Pyay Township, Monday. U Nyo Oo, spokesperson of the joint-venture company, said the water spray system using irrigation is introduced for effective use of water from irrigation channels

by March this year.

He noted the pivot irrigation system is like spraying artificial rain and 30 gallons of water is enough for 100 acres of farm, reducing the loss of water.

He also sought assess-

ment of farmers on the suitability for of this system for industrialized agricultural system, adding that the establishment of their joint-venture company is aimed to gain access to

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Petrified wood on display in Natogyi

By GNLM-018

NATOGYI, 2 Feb — Petrified sal trees and their pieces also known as fossilized shorearobusta are mainly mined in Natogyi of Upper Myanmar and exported to China in the past. However, as businessmen in China are trying to buy the rare natural resources at lower prices, local people in Natogyi are now beginning find new markets for their local products.

An exhibition of art works of fossilized sal trees is being opened at the compound of Tree Jade Company of U Min Shwe in Htanzin Village in Ward-8 in Natogyi.

Millions of years ago, the region was teemed with sal tree forests which later were trapped under ground and turned into petrified trees.

However, it has been only a few years since a market for fossilized sal tree emerged in 2000. Then, fossilized sal trees were mainly exported to China for decorative use.

Sal tree rocks are of five colours including green, red, blue, white and transparent yellow. Green fossilized sal trees are of highest prices among them and exported to China. Transparent yellow fossilized sal trees are exported to the UAE, Europe and India.

Major mines of fossilized sal trees are found in Phayagyi, Tarpel, Htanzin, Daukmoe, Ottwin and Ywathaye villages and the residents of the villages are of living standards than nearby villages as the rare natural resource can be mined there. There are over 20 companies trading fossilized sal trees in the area.

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We must all be committed to . . .

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groups and Tatmadaw met on January 12th, 2015. This discussion followed an agreement during the October 30th, 2014 meeting to hold further talks. On this occasion, the meeting also included twenty-nine elected ethnic-affairs ministers to provide an ethnic voice, and for more inclusive discussions.

Although the participants may have different opinions and perspectives, there was consensus for the success of democratic reforms, the peace process, and the smooth holding of the 2015 elections. Participants were able to offer their viewpoints on these topics. There was also agreement to hold further meetings.

On a related note, I would like to comment on the Union Parliament's proposal for six-party talks. I officially welcome the Union Parliament's proposal because it reflects the new political culture of addressing issues through dialogue that my government is helping to nurture. The first of two points proposed by Parliament, relates to amending the constitution in line with the current system and norms. This is consistent with my statements that the constitution will be amended under the right conditions and at the appropriate time for the benefit of the nation. I have also said that some of the

proposed amendments may require the electorate to decide in referendums, and the amendment process should follow the procedures set forth in the Constitution.

The second point of the proposal relating to creating the groundwork for successful present and future nation-building will require the participation of the government, parliament, Tatmadaw and other stakeholders. For this reason, ethnic affairs ministers were invited to the January 12th meeting. Discussions about our country's future are likely to involve many issues, and will need to be inclusive. Enough time must be given. This is not a rejection of Parliament's proposal, but rather a viewpoint that discussions will need to be flexible in structure, broad-based and inclusive. As conditions dictate, further discussions with flexible formats will be held.

Students are currently voicing their opinions about the national education bill. To discuss amendments to the bill, a delegation headed by a Union Minister, and including government officials and members of parliament held an introductory meeting with students on January 28th. Agreement was reached to hold further talks to resolve issues. Parents are concerned that since this is exam season, exams will be postponed, schools closed or there will be other school disruptions. Protests need to cease, and serious discussions started. Dialogue is the only practical way ahead. Consultative meetings are

currently under way in order to fulfill the wishes of the students. Moreover, as examinations are drawing near, I would like to urge that a discussion on finding a solution to revise the National Education Act – the measure demanded by student protestors- be undertaken in a speedy manner.

Years of deteriorating practices and failure to adopt a culture of dialogue and negotiation are the sad narrative of our country. We have all seen that because of this, there was a great deal of difficulty overcoming certain challenges. It was only through patience, tolerance and restraint that we were able to prevail. Dialogue and negotiations are attributes of democracy that must be nurtured, and we must strive to increase participation, representation, and achieve results through these processes. Everyone must firmly grasp the political opportunities that are present today.

Clearly, we have had to cope with developments, challenges, and uncertainty due to the prevailing situation. My point is that instead of arguing over differences, we should seek common ground. By accepting patience as a political virtue, we must all be committed to undertaking reforms desired by the public.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my commitment to achieving peace, promoting economic development and building a better future for future generations.

MPs debate referendum bill and suffrage of white card holders



Representatives of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw focus on discussion of referendum bill, suffrage of white card holders.

MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw

There is no way to return confiscated lands, says defence deputy minister

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— Tenth-day meeting of Pyithu Hluttaw session Monday questioned and answered land seizures of Tatmataw, naming of towns and villages and sexual abuses on women.

In response to the question of Daw Khin Saw Wai, parliamentarian of Yathedaung Township constituency, Major General Kyaw Nyunt, deputy minister for Defence, said military confiscated some lands in Zedipyin Village in this constituency for headquarters of Border Area Immigration Control Com-

mand before the lands and buildings were transferred to police battalion under Ministry of Home Affairs.

He added it is not possible to return the lands to original owners as all the lands are occupied with the buildings of security forces.

Question of Daw Khin San Hlaing, an MP of Pale Township constituency, was answered by Brigadier General Kyaw Zan Myint, deputy minister of Home Affairs, saying that the names of villages and towns are officially recognized as have been regis-

tered by the ministry.

The deputy minister also explained the suggestion of Daw Nang Say Awa, an MP of Hpa-an Township constituency, to enact a law to protect women from sexual abuses.

The Brigadier General said headed by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, a body of three committees comprising representatives of government ministries, parliament, political parties, legal experts, civil society organizations and NGOs is drafting the proposed law.

MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

During a debate on voting rights of white card holders, U Shwe Maung, an MP of Buthidaung Township constituency, said if the holders of temporary identification documents are not allowed to vote, a total of 1.5 million people in the country will lose the voting rights.

U Sai Paung Nup, an MP of Shan State, said many mountain tribes in far-flung areas do not have national identification cards, likely to lose voting rights while their citizen scrutinizing process is very difficult. He support the remark of President U Thein Sein that temporary identification documents

are enough for white card holders to vote.

Opposing President's remark, Daw Khin Saw Wai, an MP of Yathedaung Township constituency, said white card holders are not entitled to privileges of citizenship to get voting rights in important matters, especially in sovereignty of the country, saying that the remark is contrary to international citizenship laws.

U Tun Aung Kyaw, representative of Ponnagyun Township constituency, said temporary identification card holders are noncitizens, and cannot get voting rights in national referendum. —MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw

Waingmaw to get retaining wall for prevention of bank erosion

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— At the 10th day session of the Amyotha Hluttaw on Monday, U Gam Sai of Kachin State Constituency No 2 asked whether there is a plan to build a 472 feet long gravel-filled retaining wall for bank erosion of Ayeyawady River at Ward 1 in Waingmaw. Deputy Minister at the President Office U Kyaw Kyaw Win replied that Kachin State Water Resources Utilization Department will be assigned to conduct feasibility study for construction of retaining wall and

to seek approval from the head office of the department. Then, the department will be ordered to demand the funds from the separate budget of the president and the budget from Kachin State government in 2015-16 fiscal year. Depending on the fund, the department will build the retaining wall.

U Thein Hlaing of Sagaing Region Constituency No 8 asked about a plan for construction of Razagyo Dam. Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Khin

Zaw replied that construction of the embankment at Razagyo Dam in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region, has been completed by 96 percent, a spillway by 100 percent, a hydropower station by 65 percent and feeder canals by 27 percent in 2014-15 fiscal year. The budget proposal has been submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for completion of remaining tasks in 2015-16 fiscal year. If the Hluttaw approved the budget proposal, the project will be implemented in 2015-16 FY.—MNA

NATIONAL

Rural people get electricity in Maubin Township

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt attended the ceremony to launch electrification for

Thongwa, Wadaw, Pabesu and Bayingyisu villages in Maubin Township on 1 February. The union minister presented books and publications and a light fire engine to Doh Ywa library in Kyaungywa Model Village. At the electrification



Union Minister U Thein Nyunt switches on transformer to supply electricity to local people in rural areas of Maubin Township.—MNA

ceremony, the union minister switched on the 200-KVA transformer to supply electricity to Thongwa Village. The union minister also attended a similar ceremony in Wadaw, Pabesu and Bayingyisu villages.

The Ayeyawady Region electrical engineer explained electric safety for the people.

The union minister donated one light fire engine each to Thongwa, Kawetkin and Khanaughtaw villages. He presented cash assistance to patients at the station hospital in Kyaungywa Village.

Power lines and three transformers were built for supply of electricity to 500 villages in Thongwa Village-tracts.—MNA



Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint cordially greets Mr Zenon Kuchciak, Ambassador of Poland.—MNA

Myanmar, Japan discuss disbursement of ODA loans

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay held talks with Chairman of Japan-Myanmar Association Mr Hideo Watanabe and party at the ministry, here, on Monday.

Chairman Mr Hideo Watanabe gave suggestions on improvement of Yangon's circular railroad sections, runs of circular trains with air-conditioned carriages, reducing driving hours of trains and welfare tasks. The union minister discussed quick disbursement of ODA loans, prompt availability of RBE coaches provided by Japan for smooth transport, assistance for availability of locomotive, wagons and carriages for Yangon-Thilawa railroad section and he said that partner countries will reflect images of friendly relationship between two countries and peoples.

Public Accounts Committee U Thein Win, Chairman of Government Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee U Hmat Gyi and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—MNA

Parliament of Poland to . . .

(from page 1)
Poland's Parliament for capacity building of staff of the Hluttaw Office.

Also present at the call were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein, Chairman of the

Public Accounts Committee U Thein Win, Chairman of Government Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee U Hmat Gyi and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office.—MNA

247 service personnel sent abroad for scholarship courses in January 2015

YANGON, 2 Feb — According to the Scholarship Scrutiny Committee of the Union Civil Services Board, scholarship awards were shared to ministries and service organizations for capacity enhancement of service personnel and raising their international experiences. Ministries and service organizations sent 36 service personnel to doctor-

ate, MA/MSc, degrees and diploma courses and 211 to training courses, totaling 247 to 16 countries, especially in India, Japan and Thailand in January 2015.—GNLM

Rules of interview for candidates of President's scholarship approved



Union Minister for Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi highlights rules of interviews for candidates of President's scholarship award.—MNA

YANGON, 2 Feb — Union Minister for Education Dr Daw Khin San Yi attended the coordination meeting on holding the interview for candidates of President's scholarship award at the hall of Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar), here, on Monday. A total of 142 candidates who secured the highest points in Aptis test are to join the interview in Yangon at 9 am on 17 February.

The candidates are to send their updated CV to scholarmm2015@gmail.com not later than 5 February. They entered the interviews at Diamond Jubilee Hall, University of Medicine-1, Yangon, Yangon University of Education and Yangon Institute of Economics. The union minister approved the rules for the interview. Officials discussed duty and functions of interview committee and scholarship recommendation committee.—MNA

The union minister approved the rules for the interview. Officials discussed duty and functions of interview committee and scholarship recommendation committee.—MNA

Judicial ethics workshop conducted for judicial officers

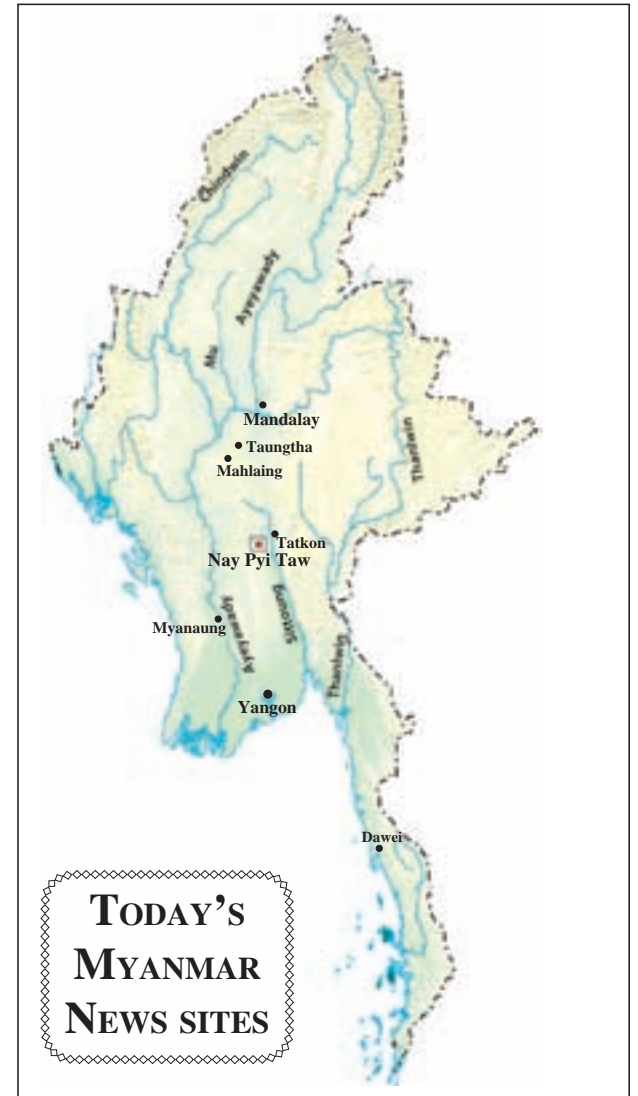
NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— The workshop on judicial ethics, jointly conducted by the Supreme Court of the Union and International Commission of Jurists, was held at Thingaha Hotel, here, on Monday. Asia and Pacific Region Program Director Mr Saman Zia-Zarifi of International Commission of Jurists, Judge of the Supreme Court of the Union U Soe Nyunt and Secretary General of ICJ Mr Wilder Tayler made speeches. The workshop focused on international judicial ethics and practices, and exchanges of experiences among international level jurists and legal experts. A total of 52 judges and law officers of Supreme Court of the Union, region and state high courts, district and township courts are attending the workshop on 2 and 3 February.—MNA

A total of 52 judges and law officers of Supreme Court of the Union, region and state high courts, district and township courts are attending the workshop on 2 and 3 February.—MNA





BUDDHA IMAGE CONVEYED: *Ma Po Textile shop in Mae Sot in Thailand donated a 9-foot Buddha Image to Maha Dhammapala missionary monastery of NanU Taik in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay. Daw San San Aye and party of Shwe Parami free clinic in Ward 1, Myawady, convey the Buddha image from Mae Sot in Thailand to Myawady Town in Kayin State on 2 February.*
TUN TUN Oo
 (MYAWADY TOWN)



Authorities share Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund for development tasks

TAUNGTHA, 2 Feb — A ceremony to present K100 million of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund to development tasks in Taungtha Township in 2014-15 fiscal year was held at the hall of Township General Administration Department in Taungtha, Mandalay Region, on 1 February.

Vice Chairman of the development tasks undertaking committee Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Myo Myint said that development tasks were carried out in the township without any mistake. The development fund benefitted the local people. Priority should be given to necessary tasks in the township, he said.

Secretary of the committee U Aung Kyaw Nyunt explained strong and weak points in undertaking the development tasks, enactment of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw fund law and future plans, opening of bank accounts and tasks to be undertaken in the region.

Vice Chairman U Myo Myint presented K36.205 million for carrying out 21 water supply tasks to the administrator of Taunglulin village-tract and the chairman of village-tract development supporting committee. Joint Secretary U Than Htay Aung gave K17.68 million for 10 road and bridge works to officials of Letpadaw village-tract. Secretary U Aung Kyaw Nyunt presented K9.165 million for seven libraries and water taps for fire prevention to officials of Aye Village.



LaKhaCha market in Myitnge ready to sell various products to customers

MANDALAY, 2 Feb — LaKhaCha market located in Aungchantha Ward, Myitnge, Mandalay Region is crowded with vendors and customers on the pay day of government offices and departments monthly.

The market is opened with the aim of enabling the workers and staff of Carriage and Wagon Shed of Myanmar Railways to conveniently buy goods and products as they like on the pay day only. Vendors and shopkeepers from various regions arrive there to sell their products as they know good sales on the single day. As such, vendors from Mandalay sell their products at the market, said Ko Myo Aung, a vendor from Mandalay, told media.

“I came from Mandalay to sell textile at the market. But I sell the products at regular prices. As the market is opened once a month, the vendors get good sales. I sell products worth over K200,000 on



the pay day, larger than daily sales in Mandalay. Likewise, vendors from Kalay, Aungpan and Taunggyi sell dried tea and those from Madaya, Sagaing and Monywa display their products for sales,” he said.

“This market has been in Myitnge for over 50 years. Gradually, vendors and shopkeepers sell their products at the market on

the pay day. So, the market is crowded with larger vendors and customers. The market is stretching from the entrance of the shed to Sagaing-Myitnge road. It may be a four-furlong long distance,” said a local.

Ma Yi Yi Soe, a customer at the market said, “My husband is a worker from Myanmar Railways. I waited for his salary on

the pay day to buy necessary products at the market. We are convenient as we can buy any products at the market.”

About 1,400 workers and staff are discharging duty at the Carriage and Wagon Shed in the workers’ city Myitnge.

Min Htet Aung
 (Mandalay Sub-printing House)

Outstanding students from Yaw region get stipends

MANDALAY, 2 Feb— The stipend presentation of Yaw education as-

sistance committee was held at Memory Hotel in Chanayethazan Township,

Mandalay, on 1 February.

Chairman of the committee U Khin Maung

Tint made a speech and wellwishers donated cash to the fund.

Rec-tor U Yin Win Maung (Rtd), Yaw U Aung Thein and Head of Mandalay Region Information and Pub-

lic Relations Department U Kyaw Than Tun spoke words of thanks.

Officials shared stipends to 17 outstanding students from University of Medicine, University of Agriculture, University of Nursing and University of Veterinary Science.

The committee grants stipends to outstanding university students from Saw, Htilin, Gangaw and Pale townships from Pachi Hill to Gangaw township.

Tin Maung
 (Mandalay)



LOCAL NEWS

Military medics give health care services to rural people

MYANAUNG, 2 Feb — A mobile medical team from naval vessel Shwe Pazun arrived at Shwegyin Village in Myanaung Township, Ayeyawady Region, on 1 February to provide health care services to the local people.

A specialist team led by Major Myo Min from the floating hospital gave healthcare and surgical treatment to about 1,000 lo-

cal people from Shwegyin, Yite, Kyudaw and Daungka villages.

Commanding Officer Lt-Col Aung Kyaw Lwin of local battalion, Township Administrator U Min Min Tun and Ayeyawady Region Hluttaw MP U Aung Win Swe and local authorities provided assistance to the medical team.

Win Bo (Myanaung Township IPRD)

Tourists from MV Silver Wind visit Myanmar

YANGON, 2 Feb—With the assistance of the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and under the arrangement of Myanmar Voyages International Tourism Co Ltd, MV Silver Wind moored at Yangon Port on 31 January. Tourists from the vessel went sightseeing in Yangon on 31 January. They left for Bagan and Mandalay by flight on 1 February and went back to Yangon to pay visits to Bago and Kyauktan. After visiting Yangon downtown, they left for Phuket Port in Thailand by MV Silver Wind.

The 72-tourist-capacity vessel visited Yangon Port in 1995 for the first time.—*Aung Thura*



Literary talks mark Sarsodaw Day in Tatkon

TATKON, 2 Feb — Tatkon Township Writers Association organized a literary talk at Aung San Hall in Tatkon Township on 31 January.

Writers U Phone (Chemistry), Khin Khin Htoo, Kyaw Yin Myint and Nyi Min Nyo gave talks on literary affairs.

It was attended by over 1,000 enthusiasts and local authorities.—*Tin Soe Lwin (Township IPRD)*



International tennis tournament awards winners

MANDALAY, 2 Feb—The final match of the 7th invitational tennis tournament, organized by Horizon International School, was held at the gymnasium of the school in Chanayethazan Township on 1 February afternoon.

A total of 214 student athletes from basic education schools, universities, international schools, clubs and sports plus edu-

cation school in Mandalay participated in the tournament.

The tournament was classified as U-12, U-15, U-45, open and amateur men's and women's events on 31 January and 1 February.

Patron and chairman of Mandalay Region table tennis subcommittee, the principal of Horizon International School and of-

ficials were in attendance.

Deputy Director U Wai Zin of Sports and Physical Education Department, deputy principal of Sports and Physical Education Institute (Mandalay) U Myint Khaing, Principal of Horizon International School Mr Ahmet and officials presented prizes to the winners.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Winners pose for documentary photo in group at invitational tennis tournament organized by Horizon International School.

Farmers get compensation for loss of farmlands in construction of Chaungzon Dam

MAHLAING, 2 Feb — A ceremony to present compensation for the land plots located in the axis of embankment for Chaungzon Dam and wetland areas of the dam in Nyaungbintha Village, Mahlaing Township, was held at the hall of the dam in Mahlaing Township on 31 January.

Mahlaing Township Land Utilization Management Committee scrutinized the loss of land plots from farmers in the township. Township Administrator U Aung Thein Hlaing

and in-charge of the dam U Cho Oo presented K180 million for 290 acres of farmland in wetlands and 80 acres of tenant farmland to 115 farmers.

The Irrigation Department delivered K600,000 per acre of farmland, K120,000 per acre of cropland and K80,000 for crops to farmers.

Chaungzon Dam was built as a supporting dam for Alaungsithu Dam in Wundwin Township in 2013. The construction was completed in January 2015.

Chaungzon Dam can store 5,730 acre-feet of water at full brim. This rainy season, the dam could store 2,700 acre-feet of water and supplied water to Alaungsithu Dam for irrigating 1,200 acres of monsoon paddy in the region.

Thanks to Chaungzon Dam, local people in Nyaungbintha, Myindwin, Bandasoe and Ywangan village in Mahlaing Township can grow crops with efficient use of irrigated water.

GNLM-018

Wellwishers offer dry rations to Buddhist monks

DAWEI, 2 Feb — A ceremony to donate dry rations to 131 members of the Sangha was held on Mingala Street in Dawei, Taninthayi Region, on 1

February. Zayit ward administrator U Ko Ko Lwin and wellwishers donated rice and dry rations to the Buddhist monks.

In the evening, Kan-

yon Monastery Abbot Ashin Pandita from Maungmagan Village of Launglon Township administered Desana to the disciples.

Po Shwe Thun

Thai PM tightens security after mall bombs rattle Bangkok



Police forensic experts work at the site of a blast on an elevated walkway linking the overhead rail line to the mall in central Bangkok on 2 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

BANGKOK, 2 Feb — Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha ordered security to be tightened in Bangkok on Monday after two small bombs rattled a luxury shopping mall and stoked tension in a city under martial law since a coup in May.

Two people were slightly hurt but the blasts caused little damage on Sunday evening. They were the first to shake the capital since the military seized power to end months of sometimes deadly street protests.

"I have ordered security to be tightened because this case involves

the well-being of the people," Prayuth told reporters.

"This case shows that we still need martial law ... there are still bad people disrupting the peace. We must find ways to severely punish them."

There was no claim of responsibility.

CCTV footage showed two possible suspects near where the pipe bombs exploded in the heart of one of Bangkok's busiest shopping districts but the images were unclear and they had not been identified, police said.

Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said

such violence "inflicts loss of confidence" in the country. Tourism accounts for about 10 percent of Thailand's economy.

Political tension has been high since last month when a national assembly hand-picked by the junta banned former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra from politics for five years.

The decision angered supporters of Yingluck and her self-exiled brother, Thaksin Shinawatra, although there has been little sign of a return to the protests that have dogged Thailand for years. The military has been tough on dissent since the coup.

Thailand has weathered turbulent politics for a decade as former telecommunications tycoon Thaksin and his allies have vied for power with the Bangkok-based royalist-military establishment that sees the Shinawatras as a threat and reviles their populist policies.

The bombs were just a few hundred metres away from the site of a military crackdown on "red shirt" supporters of the Shinawatras in 2010.

Occasional crude bombs similar to those used on Sunday kept the capital on edge for months after the 2010 crackdown.

The motive for the Sunday blasts appeared to be to create panic, said junta spokesman Winthai Suvaree. The bombs were behind power transformers on a walkway linking an overhead rail line to the Siam Paragon mall, police said.

Sporadic violence during the six months of protests that preceded the 22 May coup claimed almost 30 lives. Thailand's Muslim-dominated south has for years been racked by insurgency that has claimed thousands of lives. There was no indication the Sunday explosions were linked to the south.

Reuters



Cambodia's ruling Cambodian People's Party's spokesman and Cambodian information minister Khieu Kanharith speaks at a Press conference in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 1 Feb, 2015. The Cambodian People's Party has added 306 new members to its central committee during a three-day congress, which ended on Sunday.—XINHUA

Nut rage: Korean Air boss's daughter treated crew 'like slaves'



Cho Hyun-ah, also known as Heather Cho

SEOUL, 2 Feb — The daughter of the boss of Korean Air, on trial in a case popularly known as "nut rage", treated flight crew like "feudal slaves", a chief steward said in court on Monday.

Heather Cho, daughter of Korean Air Lines chairman Cho Yang-ho and the former head of in-flight service, is on trial for breaking aviation laws and conspiring with other company executives to force crew members lie about the 5 December incident.

Cho had demanded the chief steward, Park Chang-jin, be removed from a flight at New York's John F Kennedy airport after a first class flight attendant served her macadamia nuts in a bag, not on a dish.

The plane, already taxiing towards the runway, returned to the gate.

Park said Cho "was like a beast that found its prey gritting its teeth as she became abusive, not listening to what I had to say at all".

"I don't think Cho showed an ounce of conscience, treating powerless people like myself like feudal slaves, forcing us to sacrifice and treating it as if it was the natural thing to do," Park said, fighting back tears.

Cho resigned from her posts at the airline, including vice-president, in the face of public anger and ridicule over her behaviour, which raised questions about the power of the country's "chaebol" conglomerates.

Park appeared in court in his uniform after returning to work over the weekend after a leave of absence.

Cho's father apologized in court on Friday to Park and promised he would not face any reprimand.

Cho's lawyers previously told the court that she was sorry for her actions, but that they did not merit punishment. They also denied that she used violence.

Park and prosecutors had said he was forced to kneel down and Cho poked his palm several times with a folder.

Heather is the oldest of Cho Yang-ho's three children. Her siblings are also executives with the airline.

Reuters

Communist Party of Vietnam celebrates 85th anniversary of founding

HANOI, 2 Feb — The establishment of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) 85 years ago marked a turning point in the country's revolution, said Vietnamese party chief on Monday.

Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the CPV made the remarks at a ceremony held in capital Hanoi on Monday to observe the 85th anniversary of the party building.

"The 85-year journey

has proved that the proper and wise leadership of CPV is the leading factor of every victory in Vietnam's revolutionary career," Trong said.

"In Vietnam, there is no other political force but the Communist Party of Vietnam that has enough wisdom, experience and ability to lead the country to overcome difficulties and challenges," the party chief emphasized.

The year 2015 also

marks nearly 30 years of the country's opening up and reform with significant achievements, said Trong, adding that the country has transformed from a poor country to a middle-income one.

Over the past years, the CPV has made great efforts in party building, preventing the negatives and enhancing its leadership, Trong added.

Currently, the party, nation and army are striv-

ing to boost the industrialization and modernization process, develop the socialist-oriented market economy and promote international integration, he said.

The CPV was established on 3 February, 1930. There are currently around 4.4 million party members across Vietnam, according to information released by CPV's Central Organizing Committee at a meeting last month.

Xinhua

Philippine customs collects over 8 bln USD in 2014

MANILA, 2 Feb — The Philippine Bureau of Customs' (BOC) revenue collections rose by 21 percent to 369.044 billion Philippine pesos (8.37 billion US Dollars) in 2014, a senior

government official said on Monday. Customs Commissioner John Sevilla said this was based on the preliminary reports that his office collected.

He attributed the in-

crease to the effort of BOC to curb smuggling, but acknowledged that much has to be done to improve the performance of BOC.

Sevilla said that processing of documents by the im-

porters and exporters should be accelerated to maximum of four hours by the end of this year. In 2013, the BOC collected 304.926 billion Philippine pesos (6.92 billion US Dollars).—Xinhua



Photo shows the beautiful scenery of the Phoenix (Fenghuang) ancient city, in central China's Hunan Province. The Phoenix city, located in Xiangxi Tujia-Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hunan, enjoys a growing reputation among tourists for its picturesque landscape, exotic customs and historical sites.

XINHUA

US nuclear-powered submarine arrives in S Korea for joint drill

SEOUL, 2 Feb — A nuclear-powered US submarine has arrived in South Korea to participate in an annual joint military drill this week, a South Korean Defence Ministry spokesman said on Monday.

“The submarine has arrived on a regular visit to hold an annual South Korea-US military drill,” Nah Seung Yong said during a press briefing. He declined to provide specifics on the drill.

Earlier Monday, *Yonhap* News Agency reported that the USS Olympia, a Los Angeles-class submarine carrying some 120 sailors, arrived on Friday in the southern port city of Jinhae, 410 kilometres south of Seoul.

The submarine is scheduled to take part in the three-day naval drill starting on Thursday, an unidentified naval officer was cited in the report.

“The submarine will join a South Korean fleet to launch the drill focusing on detecting enemies’ submarines and surface vessels in waters near the Korean Peninsula in order to boost interoperability between the two nations and to check joint readiness,” the officer was quoted as saying.

The 7,000-ton Olympia, equipped with Tomahawk land attack missiles and without any nuclear missiles, was forward deployed from Pearl Harbor at the invitation of the South Korean Navy, *Yonhap* said.

Kyodo News

Japan, Russia to hold talks next week to discuss Putin’s visit

TOKYO, 2 Feb — Senior officials from Japan and Russia will meet on 12 February in Moscow to lay the groundwork for a planned visit to Japan by Russian President Vladimir Putin this year, the Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Deputy Foreign Minister Shinsuke Sugiyama and his Russian counterpart Igor Morgulov are also expected to discuss the crisis in Ukraine and a territorial dispute involving four Russian-held, Japanese-claimed islands off Hokkaido.

The vice minister-level meeting, initially set for August last year, was postponed after Japan imposed additional sanctions on Russia following Moscow’s annexation of Crimea in March. Sugiyama and Morgulov last held such talks in January last year.

The territorial dispute has prevented Tokyo and Moscow from concluding a post-World War II peace treaty.—*Kyodo News*

Chinese media blames hostage’s death on Japanese foreign policy

BEIJING, 2 Feb — Chinese media on Monday took aim at Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s foreign policy in the wake of the weekend announcement by the militant group Islamic State that it had killed its second Japanese hostage.

“The Abe government lacks the ability to cope with the perplexities in the Middle East,” nationalist newspaper the *Global Times* wrote in an editorial titled “Abe lacks experience of Mideast strategy.”

The purported beheading of journalist Kenji Goto, the paper argued, occurred because Japan’s “foreign policies are closely tied to the US,” adding that Tokyo’s support for American policies in the region will lead to “a loss of interests of its own.”

The perspective was echoed in reporting by Communist Party mouthpiece the *People’s Daily*, which quoted Chinese foreign policy experts attributing blame for the tragedy to Abe’s January

announcement that Japan would provide \$200 million to Middle Eastern countries opposed to the militant group.

The group initially claimed that the decision had motivated it to take Goto and a second Japanese man Haruna Yukawa hostage.

Chinese media also questioned how the incident would affect Japan’s defence policy.

Abe’s willingness to become involved in the Middle East, the *Global Times* said, “is very likely out of consideration to sending Japanese troops abroad.”

Since taking office in 2012, Abe has pushed to loosen constitutional restrictions on Japan’s Self-Defence Forces’ ability to participate in “collective self defence” — defending an ally under attack.

China has strongly opposed the efforts, which it claims point towards a resurgent Japanese militarism.

Kyodo News

Australia PM drops parental leave plan, says no intention to quit



Australia’s Prime Minister Tony Abbott

SYDNEY, 2 Feb — Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Monday dropped a signature plan for paid parental leave and promised a more consultative approach on economic and security problems, seeking to stave off mounting criticism of his leadership.

Abbott, 16 months in the top job, has faced a series of challenges including an economy battered by a plunge in commodity prices as well as broken election promises, policy back flips and perceived gaffes.

Pressure on him soared after last week’s decision to award a top honour to Prince Philip, the Queen’s husband.

More questions about his leadership were raised after a disastrous state election on the weekend, when the Queensland Liberal-National Party, closely aligned with Abbott’s Liberal-National coalition, surrendered the largest political majority in Australia’s history after just one term in of-

fice. In a speech dubbed by some commentators as the most important of his political career, Abbott outlined his priorities including job creation, helping families and small business, building roads and strengthening national security.

He said he had not considered stepping down.

“This will be a test of character,” Abbott said in response to a question about his leadership at Canberra’s National Press Club.

“Politicians pass the test when they do what is best for the long-term, not when they give in to short-term fear and make a difficult situation worse.”

Abbott’s tough stance on asylum seekers, his pressure on Russia over the downing of a Malaysian Airlines jet in Ukraine and success on trade deals have won approval but been over-shadowed by anger over proposed cuts to health, education and other services. Abbott said he believed he had the full support of his depu-

ty party leader, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, who along with former Liberal Party leader Malcolm Turnbull, has been touted as a potential replacement.

In an effort to shore up support from both his party and the public, Abbott announced he was scrapping his A\$5.5 billion (2.9 billion pounds) paid parental-leave scheme that had been criticised for being too expensive and made without consultation with colleagues.

He said he took responsibility for his decisions.

“I accept that the paid parental leave scheme was a captain’s call,” Abbott said. “I accept that the restoration of Knighthoods was a captain’s call. They are the two captain’s calls which I have made but I have listened, I have learned and I have acted.”

Haydon Manning, associate professor at Flinders University’s school of social and policy studies, said Abbott’s cabinet colleagues were unlikely to seek to replace him for now.

“You feel that he will be given through until about mid-year, through the budget process, the selling of the budget, then the litmus test of what the public and party polling are saying,” Manning said. “If it’s then clear that Australians have tuned out from this prime minister, then you’d think he would be removed.” A poll on Monday showed approval for Abbott’s performance had plumbed fresh lows at 29 percent, versus 67 percent disapproval. Less than a third expected Abbott to lead into the next election, due in about 18 months.—*Reuters*

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 3 February, 2015

Be an active and responsible member of society

By Myint Win Thein

Human beings have been living in societies for thousands of years as the combination of individual forces can make a society safer and better. As a result, every member of a society

has to assume his or her responsibilities to the society that all members of it are making better.

Furthermore, it is also responsibility that makes a person a member of the society. If one does not take one's responsibility, one would no longer be a member of the society and would just become only a part of it which is consuming the fruit of others' performance of their responsibilities.

It cannot be denied that there is no such thing as stupid as saying one will not be held responsible if something goes wrong in society. As no one can shirk off his or her responsibility and escape from the consequences of performing his or her due responsibilities or irresponsible negligence, everyone is responsible for what one did in the past, what one is doing at present and what one

will do in the future.

If something good for the society is happening, all is responsible for making it better and if something bad is going to happen to it, all must prevent it from taking place. Be an active and responsible member of society.

Write for us

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

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

Two among many!

by Myo Myint

In the evenings, the over one mile-long Inya lake bund near Pyay road with its beautiful view of the Inya lake, clean air and a backdrop consisting of a few islets with clumps of trees and tall buildings with their bright light attracts people of all ages from the nearby townships of Kamayut, Mayangon and beyond. Older people come there to take a walk; stylishly clad young couples, who monopolize the few available benches facing the lake, come to the lover's paradise to enjoy each other's company undisturbed, or to have a lovers' tiff; groups of male and female teenagers come there to celebrate their birthdays; groups of females come there to pose for photographs; males come in groups to gather there to play the guitar and sing songs, or to have snacks and get drunk; lonely young males and females come there to sit by the lake and stare at their mobile phones, or the lake as if the answers to their problems can be found there; local tourists come there to find out what the Inya lake bund's fame is all about; families with young children come there to let loose their kids so that they can enjoy the spacious grounds, and stray dogs come to feast on the discarded leftover food. Sometimes, there are also groups of foreigners, some young, and some old, talking in their native languages and a few foreign lasses with their local beaux, who keep remind-

ing the lads that the relationships are just to have some fun in halting English.

Mingling among the motley crowd are persons, ranging from age eight to fifty, mostly girls and mostly in their early teens, holding heavy plastic baskets. They are not there to enjoy each other's company, or the view, or the breeze, or to sing, or to play games. They are there with more serious intent. They are on the bund to earn their daily bread, or to be more precise, their daily rice. They sell purified water, cigarettes, potato chips, fish crackers, sunflower seeds, also sour stuff, and tissues. Older vendors are bold enough to sell bottled and canned beer and hard liquor. The vendors walk from one end of the bund to the other end tirelessly, announcing their wares incessantly and competing with each to make a sale. They make their way home only when the number of those who have come for rest and recreation dwindles. Some lucky ones manage to sell all that they have brought and the unfortunate ones only manage to make small profit.

Among the vendors, a small thin boy with a huge basket stands out. It is after ten p.m. when I am able to talk to him while he is sitting on one side of the concrete path after walking up and down the bund for the umpteenth time. Next to him sat an unhappy looking girl vendor slightly older than the

boy, without slippers and dressed in old clothes. He is reluctant to talk to me until I buy a packet of sunflower seeds for 300 kyats from him. I am particularly interested in his age as he is rather small made, and because it is surprising to find a child of his age out at this time of the night selling snacks. He tells me that his name is Kyaw Zeyar and is eight years old. He lives in Hlinethaya, one of the satellite industrial towns about one and a half hour's ride by bus from where the bund is. I also learnt how he happens to be selling things so late at night. He is together with his father, mother, and eleven year old elder sister who are all vendors like him. His youngest sister who is nearly five comes along with them. It relieves me a bit to learn that he is attending school and is in the fourth grade, his eleven year old elder sister is in the seventh grade, and his eldest sister has given up vending to concentrate on her matriculation examination. Tonight, he has earned a little over five thousand kyats and is hoping to earn a bit more, before he goes back home with his family. He is not very happy with the amount of money he earns. Older persons, he says, earn as much as twenty thousand kyats. He looks drowsy and when I ask him whether he is feeling sleepy, he says, "Yes," but, he says he gets home at round about twelve midnight and his parents do not let him sleep unless he has learnt his lessons. I next turn to the grubby barefooted girl next to him. She isn't particularly interested in my questions.

As she has finished selling everything she brought, I cannot buy anything from her. As incentive to talk, I give her three hundred kyats as pocket money. Htet Htet Hlaing takes the money and becomes more willing to share with me a bit about her life. She also lives with her family and has five siblings. Her stepfather is an unskilled labourer and her mother does not work. She is eleven years old and has only attended grade one. Htet Htet Hlaing is waiting to go home with Kyaw Zeyar and his family because they live in the same area. Probably because she is fed up with answering my questions, she says she wants to look for her friends and leaves. After she leaves, Kyaw Zeyar comments that her stepfather never buys her slippers. Kyaw Zeyar too leaves saying he has to try to sell some more before it is time to go home.

Their departure left me wondering how many children like them there are in the country. It might not be possible to say exactly how many child workers there are in Yangon, or the country, but gauging from the number of children working in the area where I live, the number does not seem to be small. There are children vending flowers, drinking water bottles, magazines and snacks at traffic lights. There are children serving as waiters in restaurants and helpers in food stalls nearby. There are boys working in workshops and both boys and girls working in cottage industries. There are many girls working as domestic helps. All of them seem to have to work long hours.

Those who work at tea-shops and restaurants seem to be well-fed and appear to be quite happy. From the stories I hear, I do not think many of the children working as domestic helps fare as well as those working in restaurants, especially those working for big families. Most of those vending things at traffic lights live with their families or relatives in outlying townships. Most of those serving as waiters ranging from about age eleven to late teens live at the restaurants where they work sleeping on the floor or on tables at night. Many of the children working in Yangon come from villages in the delta region and they come from families of agriculture workers and tend to have many siblings. In general, child workers are either orphans, or come from poor broken families, or from poor families with many children. Some lucky ones have completed their primary education, while others have only attended grade one and can barely read and write.

The lives of many of the child workers are undoubtedly tough and filled with misery and hopelessness. Some are working to feed themselves. Some are working to earn money to help their families. Some people may feel that the deprivations children from poverty stricken families suffer are part of the inequalities in life they see every day and they are not interested in the plight of child workers. However, many people do feel anguish for these children as they cannot enjoy the freedom and joy of childhood and the benefits of educa-

tion like their peers from better-off families. Many people would also like to see an end to the use of child labour. But for those children from a poverty-stricken background who need to fend for themselves, or help feed their siblings, leaving school and serving as child workers is their only choice. In order to ensure that all children enjoy the rights to a carefree, happy and secure childhood, it is important that the poverty alleviation programmes in the country meet with success swiftly so that everyone enjoys a certain standard of living and parents can send their children to school and do not need to make them work to supplement the family income, so that no child, whether from rural or urban area, is left behind because of abject poverty. But for the poverty alleviation programmes to succeed, it is vital for those who have the authority, vast financial means, the expertise, and the goodwill, to be fully committed to and work together for its success and make it a national as well as a personal priority. Let us remember that there is no pleasure greater than seeing the face of a happy child, that there is no deed better than ensuring a secure and promising future for a child, and that there is no investment more profitable for a nation than investing in the holistic education for children to ensure national prosperity as well as individual prosperity, and join in to help in whatever way we can to creatively improve the lives of the many children in need.

Union minister explains measures of government to staff in Bago

BAGO, 2 Feb— Union Minister at the President Office U Hla Tun, together with deputy ministers U Maung Maung Thein, Daw Thein Thein Htay, and Daw Win Maw Tun, met with over 600 government employees in Bago Region at the city hall in Bago on Monday and explained the measures taken by the government.

the government is placing an emphasis on increasing salaries of government employees while taking other measures to provide housing and healthcare for them when they retire. In addition, the government has planned to set up a provident fund so that government employees can enjoy benefits from the measures

taken by the government, according to the union minister.

Then, the union minister said the government has arranged to provide free high school education to students starting from 2015-16 fiscal year.

Afterwards, the deputy ministers explained the arrangement for a stock share

market, increases in health spending, and social security benefits to the government employees.

The meeting concluded with remarks by the union minister.

Also present at the meeting were Chief Minister of Bago Region U Nyan Win and officials.

MNA

Deputy Culture Minister welcomes cultural troupes from regions and states



Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sanda Khin cordially welcomes members of cultural troupes from regions and states.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Feb— Delegates of cultural troupes from regions and states arrived at No 7 Transit Centre in Nay Pyi Taw on Monday.

Chairperson of Dinner

Entertainment Subcommittee Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sanda Khin and officials welcomed the cultural delegates.

Cultural troupes from Chin State, Bago Region,

Kayah, Shan and Kayin States arrived at the centre, and those from Mon and Rakhine states will arrive in the evening.

Tin Tun Aung (MNA)

Agricultural company demonstrates pivot irrigation...

(from page 1)

modern agricultural technologies through the partnership with foreign company.

UNyo Oo then pledged

to provide the local farmers with technical supports in using this system.

New Zealander agriculturalist Mr. Murray James Linton answered the

questions of farmers on this system.

The demonstration was also witnessed by U Kyaw Kyaw Linn, Pyithu Hluttaw MP of Bago region, officials concerned, and agricultural experts.

Ko Myo (Shwepaukkan)

Petrified wood on display in Natogyi

(from page 1)

On display at the exhibition are four fifty-foot tall petrified wood each of which worth billions of kyat and bracelet, beads, neck-

laces, statues and decorative tile made of petrified wood.

Manufacturing of products from petrified wood is also on display at the exhibition which aims to attract

foreign tourists who wish to buy petrified wood instead of exporting them to China, where businessmen buy them at lower prices. U Win Shwe, owner of the exhibition with patriotism, even brought petrified wood trees back from China.



Petrified wood seen in Natogyi Township.

68th Anniversary Mon National Day celebration to come in February



Chairman of Organizing Committee for 68th Anniversary Mon National Day Nai Maung Toe and party at press conference.

PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 2 Feb —The 68th Anniversary of Mon National Day will be celebrated on a grand scale at the People's Square and People's Park here on 3 and 4 February, according to the Mon National Day Executive Committee.

"The celebration aims to show unity and solidarity among Mon people," said Nai Soe Kyi, secretary of the organizing committee.

The special day for the Mon people is marked on the date of the establishment of Hanthawady, the first Mon dynasty, by two Mon princes Samala and Vimala on 1st Waning Day of Tabodwe, 1116 of the

Sasana Era, according to the Mon history. Since 1947, Mon National Day has been observed on that day.

The committee has invited all ethnic nationalities to enjoy a popular Mon drama troupe, which will entertain visitors with traditional songs, dances and cultural shows.

To mark the day, sports competitions have now been held in the town of Ye in Mon State for a week, with committee's secretary saying that they include bullock-cart race, boat race, football, and track and field events.

Nai Maung Toe, chairman of the committee, said,

"They have received messages of felicitations from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi."

The annual event formally sweeps Mon State, Yangon Region and some foreign countries, with the committee saying that nearly K40 million will be spent on this ceremony.

Mon nationalities are commonly spread all over such regions as Taninthayi, Yangon, Bago and Ayeyawady as well as along the southern border of Thailand and Myanmar.

According to a survey in 2014, Myanmar has a population of five million Mon nationalities, with over 40,000 in Yangon.

GNLM

NATO sees resilience as key issue in AWACS replacement

WASHINGTON, 2 Feb — Resilience, innovation and advances in technology will be key factors as NATO maps out a multibillion-dollar effort to replace its aging fleet of 17 Boeing Co E-3 Sentry Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, a top NATO official told *Reuters*.

French General Jean-Paul Palomeros, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, said NATO was starting to map out its requirements for the next-generation of weapons to detect air and surface threats, which will be needed between 2030 and 2035.

Growing threats and greater ability to share information pointed to a so-called “system of systems” approach, rather than a straight one-for-one replacement of a few, highly visible aircraft that would be vulnerable to attack.

“This a very crucial project for NATO for the next two decades,” Palomeros told *Reuters* last week at a conference in Washington hosted by the Centre for a New American Security.

Rapid weapons development by Russia and other potential foes meant the next-generation weapons system would have to be more resilient to attacks, Palomeros said. Officials were also looking potential other uses for the aircraft, and whether intelligence analysts would be stationed on board, he said.

Boeing, Europe’s Airbus, and other big weapons makers are keeping a close eye on NATO’s emerging plans to buy new early-warning capabilities, one of the few larger acquisition programmes in sight.

Palomeros said the programme would be a test case for many NATO pri-



An AWACS aircraft is seen on the tarmac during a visit of new NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg of Norway (not pictured) at Lask air base on 6 Oct, 2014.

REUTERS

orities, including a push for more innovation, expanded partnerships among members, and a drive to better balance spending among NATO members.

“The replacement for AWACS is a perfect project for trans-Atlantic cooperation. It opens a lot of doors,” he said, adding officials had begun early con-

ceptual work to shape the requirements for the new programme.

France, Britain, the United States and other countries have their own

early-warning systems, which could translate into more demand for the new weapons system in the future.

He said it would be crucial for NATO to carefully define what was expected from the new system, or it could result in a “very complex, unaffordable system” that would carry risk in development, production and even operations.

Palomeros acknowledged problems with some past multinational weapons development programmes, like the Airbus A400M military transport plane.

But he said the success of the NATO Air Command and Control System, developed by a joint venture of France’s Thales and US weapons maker Raytheon Co, had proven that cooperative development programmes could work.

Reuters

Brazil’s Congress elects Rousseff critic as speaker

BRASILIA, 2 Feb — Brazil’s Congress elected a conservative as speaker of the Chamber of Deputies on Sunday in a setback for the ruling Workers’ Party that split President Dilma Rousseff’s coalition and will complicate her legislative agenda.

Eduardo Cunha belongs to Brazil’s largest party, the PMDB, Rousseff’s main ally in the governing coalition, but he defeated a Workers’ Party candidate by advocating for a legislature that was less subservient to the government.

Cunha backs a bill that would make it harder for the federal government to block spending proposed by lawmakers, which would counter Rousseff’s efforts to eliminate Brazil’s fiscal deficit with austerity measures as she begins her second term.

“We seek the independence of Congress. We will not become opponents of the government, but we won’t be submissive either,” he said. Rousseff still enjoys a majority that ensures her government’s stability, he added.

Rousseff, however, will not be able to count

on Cunha to shield her administration from renewed congressional inquiries into a corruption scandal at state-run oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA that threatens to implicate members of her party. Rousseff has denied any knowledge of the scheme though she was chairwoman of the company’s board when much of the alleged graft took place.

Cunha also opposes a controversial plan by the

Worker’s Party to regulate Brazilian media.

The new speaker, a 56-year-old economist who follows the Evangelical faith, is known for doggedly representing the interests of lobby groups in negotiating legislative proposals, which has often put him at odds with Rousseff’s policies.

His critics have dubbed him Brazil’s Frank Underwood, in reference to the ruthless politician in the American television series “House of Cards.”

Earlier on Sunday, the

Senate re-elected a loyal Rousseff ally, Renan Calheiros of the PMDB party, as president of the upper chamber.

The heads of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are third and fourth in the line of presidential succession.

They will preside over a more fractious Congress with 28 parties, fewer members representing labour and environmental interests, and more Christian conservatives and farm lobby representatives.

Reuters

US taking new look at giving arms to Ukraine forces: NYT

WASHINGTON, 2 Feb — President Barack Obama’s administration is taking a new look at providing Ukrainian forces with defensive weapons and equipment in the face of a rebel offensive that shattered a five-month truce, the *New York Times* reported on Sunday.

The newspaper quoted US officials as saying Secretary of State John Kerry and US Joint Chiefs Chairman Martin Dempsey were open to discussions of the idea and that NATO military commander General Philip Breedlove now supported providing such lethal aid. One official was quoted as saying that US national security adviser Susan Rice was also prepared to reconsider her previous resistance to providing such assistance.

Kerry will visit Kiev on Thursday for talks with President Petro Poroshenko and other Ukrainian officials. Obama voiced concern last week about renewed fighting between Russian-backed separatist and government forces in eastern Ukraine and said the United States was considering all options short of military action to isolate Russia. *The Times* said eight former senior US officials would issue an independent report on Monday urging Washington to send



US Secretary of State John Kerry addresses the media in Boston, Massachusetts on 31 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

\$3 billion in defensive arms and equipment to Ukraine, including anti-armour missiles and reconnaissance drones.

Fighting raged in eastern Ukraine on Sunday as pro-Russian separatists used artillery fire to try to dislodge government forces from a strategic rail hub after peace talks collapsed.

NATO and Kiev accuse Russia of sending thousands of troops to support the rebel advance with heavy weapons and tanks. Moscow denies it is directly involved in fighting over territory that the Kremlin refers to as “New Russia.”

European Union foreign ministers agreed on Thursday to extend for another six months economic sanctions against Russia that had been due to expire soon. Washington has promised to tighten its own sanctions, which have helped feed an economic crisis in Russia.—Reuters



Deputy Eduardo Cunha (C) reacts after being elected as the President of the Chamber of Deputies during a session in the plenary of the House of Representatives in Brasilia on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

WORLD

At least 10 killed in attacks led by Yemen's Ansar al-Sharia

SANAA, 2 Feb — At least 10 people have been killed in Yemen over the past four days in attacks led by an al-Qaeda's affiliate against Shi'ite Houthi fighters and the Yemeni army, local officials and the group said.

Yemen has been in limbo since its president and prime minister resigned less than two weeks ago after the Houthis seized the presidential palace and confined the head of state to his residence in a struggle to tighten control over Yemen.

The rise of the Houthis has antagonized Sunni tribesmen and Sunni al-Qaeda militants, who regard them as heretics.

On Sunday, Ansar al-Sharia said its members targeted and killed Abu Abdullah al-Ayadi, a Houthi commander in Yemen's central city of Ibb, according to the group's Twitter account.

Local officials in the city confirmed the death

of the commander without giving further details.

The militants targeted Yemeni soldiers on Saturday and said it had killed two at a checkpoint in the southern city of Abyan and wounded two others, according to a post on its Twitter account.

Local officials in the region said that clashes between the army and the militants had also led to the death of at least three Ansar al-Sharia members.

The group also said on Twitter it shot an army officer in the southern province of Lahj on Friday and killed three other Houthi fighters in the central province of al-Bayda on Thursday.

Yemen has been in turmoil since 2011, to the dismay of neighbouring Saudi Arabia and Western powers, who want to prevent instability in the Arabian peninsula threatening their oil supplies or giving al-Qaeda a base for overseas attacks.—Reuters

Working with global community only way to fight terrorism — Japan PM

TOKYO, 2 Feb — The only way to fight terrorism is by working with the international community and boosting mechanisms to ensure the safety of Japanese people, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday.

Abe made the comments a day after Islamic State militants said they had beheaded a second Japanese hostage, journalist Kenji Goto, after the failure of international efforts to secure his release through a prisoner swap.

Abe reiterated his denunciation of the militants and said Japan was firmly committed to fulfilling its responsibility as a member of the global community in fighting terrorism.

"If we don't move together because we're scared of terrorists it will be just as the despicable terrorists want," Abe told

reporters before a meeting of ruling coalition officials.

In a show of defiance on Sunday, he vowed to boost Japan's food, medicine and humanitarian aid for the Middle East.

The hardline Islamist group, which controls large parts of Syria and Iraq, on Sunday released a video purporting to show the beheading of Goto, 47, a veteran war correspondent who was captured by the militants in late October.

The video was released a week after footage was issued appearing to show the beheaded body of another Japanese hostage, Haruna Yukawa.

The killings are fanning calls to allow Japan's long-constrained military to conduct overseas rescue missions as part of Abe's push for a more muscular security posture.

Abe's government had



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enters his office in Tokyo on 2 Feb, 2015, a day after Islamic State posted online a video purporting to show the killing of a Japanese hostage. KYODO NEWS

put high priority on seeking the release of Goto, who was captured when he went to Syria to try to seek Yukawa's release. Yukawa was seized by militants in August after going to Syria to launch a security company.

Goto's wife, Rinko, who had appealed for his safe release, said she and the family were devastated.

"I remain extremely proud of my husband,

who reported the plight of people in conflict areas like Iraq, Somalia and Syria," she said in a statement posted on the Rory Peck Trust, a London-based organisation supporting freelance journalists.

"It was his passion to highlight the effects on ordinary people, especially through the eyes of children, and to inform the rest of us of the tragedies of war."—Reuters

Netanyahu criticises UN over Lebanon flare-up

JERUSALEM, 2 Feb — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused United Nations peacekeepers on Sunday of failing to enforce a resolution barring Hezbollah guerrillas from smuggling weapons into Lebanon.

In a phone call with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Netanyahu blamed Iran, Hezbollah's main sponsor, for Wednesday's flare-up that killed two Israeli soldiers and a Spanish peacekeeper in the worst fighting along the Israeli, Lebanese frontier since a 2006 war.

He said that a resolution ending that 34-day conflict was "not being implemented," and that the peacekeepers, known as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) "aren't reporting on weapons smuggling into southern Lebanon."

The soldiers and peacekeeper died when guerrillas fired rockets at unmarked Israeli vehicles at the frontier, and Israel responded with artillery shells and an air strike.



Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends the weekly cabinet meeting at his office in Jerusalem, on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Netanyahu "expressed sorrow" for the UN soldier's death and said he had agreed with Spain to jointly investigate the circumstances, a statement for the Israeli leader's office said.

The UN force has policed southern Lebanon since a deal achieved after a 1978 Israeli incursion.

Hezbollah's attack was seen as revenge for a 18 January raid blamed on Israel that killed several Hezbollah members and an Iranian general in southern Syria.

The exchange of fire

triggered concerns the conflict could escalate, with Israel nervous at Hezbollah's deployment not only in Lebanon but now also across the Syrian frontier, where the guerrillas have been helping Syria's embattled President Hafez Assad fight a civil war.

In his remarks to Ban, Netanyahu accused Tehran of trying to widen the conflict against Israel, and complained that "until now the world community has not pointed an accusatory finger at Iran, which was behind the attack on the northern border."

Israel and Hezbollah have signalled that despite the violence, they are not interested in a further escalation, and despite increased vigilance on both sides the border area has been calm for the past four days.

Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech on Friday "we do not want a war" but would remain ready to respond to any Israeli violence.

Reuters

Islamic State was not sincere in hostage swap talks

AMMAN, 2 Feb — A senior Jordanian parliamentarian said on Sunday that Islamic State militants could not be trusted to follow through on a possible hostage swap deal which was seen as tied to the release of Japanese hostage Kenji Goto.

"There was no guarantee that Mr Goto would have been freed even if their demands were met," Bassam Al-Manaseer, chairman of the Arab International Affairs Committee, said in an interview with *Kyodo News* in Amman, after a video purporting to show the killing of 47-year-old journalist Goto was posted online that day.

The militants had demanded the release of the convicted Iraqi terrorist Sajida al-Rishawi from prison in Jordan in exchange for Goto. Al-Manaseer noted that the group was not serious or sincere in negotiating the envisioned swap deal.

After the militants switched from their initial ransom demand for Goto and another Japanese man,

who were taken captive last year, to such a swap, Jordan was regarded as holding the key in the hostage crisis which emerged late last month. The other captive, 42-year-old Haruna Yukawa, was not part of the swap deal as he is believed to have been killed ahead of Goto.

Al-Manaseer said linking al-Rishawi, convicted of an attempted suicide bombing at an Amman hotel in 2005, to the case of Goto, who is unrelated to her, was a tactic to push the Jordanian government into a dilemma.

While helping Japan in efforts to secure the release of Goto, Jordan has faced strong calls from its public to prioritize the release of 1st Lt Muath al-Kasaesbeh, a Jordanian military pilot believed to have been taken hostage by Islamic State militants last year.

With news reports hyping up expectations about the pilot's return, Al-Manaseer said a move to free Goto only in exchange for al-Rishawi, without seeing the release of the pilot, could inflame

public discontent.

He said such a move could have triggered a "revolution that could topple the government."

"I hope the people in Japan will understand" the circumstances preventing Jordan from releasing the Iraqi terrorist, Al-Manaseer said. As to why Jordan could not trust the Islamic State militants, Al-Manaseer said the group did not show proof that the pilot is alive, and also failed to ensure his safety after the release of al-Rishawi.

"The Japanese government shared our opinion," he said.

Describing the pilot's chances of survival as "fifty-fifty," Al-Manaseer said he may already have been killed and the group could seek al-Rishawi's release in exchange only for the pilot's body.

An online audio warning about killing the pilot was released last week prior to the video about Goto's killing on Sunday. The message said that the pilot will be killed unless Jordan is ready to release al-Rishawi.—Kyodo News

Major snowstorm hits Chicago, heads toward New England

KANSAS CITY, 2 Feb — A major winter storm swept through parts of the Midwest on Sunday, dumping more than a foot (30 cm) of snow in the Chicago area before tracking toward New England, closing schools throughout the Midwest and East.

Chicago Public Schools, the third largest public school system in the United States, along with districts in Detroit, Boston and Providence, Rhode Island, canceled classes for Monday as the National Weather Service issued storm warnings and watches continued from western Iowa into upper New England.

“Now we are worried about the winds, with blizzard warnings and near white-out conditions,” said Amy Seeley, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Chicago. “It’s reducing visibilities and will cause problems for people travelling tonight.”

A half-foot (15 cm)

of snow was forecast for Cleveland, Ohio, and even more could pile up in New York City and the Boston area, the National Weather Service said, with winds of up to 40 mph (65 kph).

Across the country, the storm was a factor in about 2,000 flight cancellations and 2,100 flight delays, largely in Chicago, according to the online site FlightStats.

In Champaign, Illinois, 68 homes were evacuated when a tanker truck overturned on Interstate 57, according to a statement from Governor Bruce Rauner’s office. The tanker was found to have no hazardous material but the freeway remained closed late on Sunday afternoon, according to the statement.

The storm knocked out power to nearly 20,000 customers in Illinois, the office said.

The storm path extends from which forecast up to 18 inches (45 cm) of snow in the Chicago area.

Bitter cold weather



A woman carries a shovel through a parking lot during blizzard conditions in Chicago, Illinois on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

is forecast to follow the snow across the country. In Grand Island, Nebraska, the temperature plunged to 7 Fahrenheit (-14 Celsius) by mid-afternoon on Sunday.

Cathy McDonagh, bar manager at Curragh Traditional Irish Pub in northwest Chicago, said the pub was open for Super Bowl

watching, but the snow could put a damper on the festivities.

“Most people will have a house party, and judging from the weather we won’t get much of a crowd,” she added.

Eight inches (20 cm) of snow in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, did not faze Jason Story, 36, who had

plans to watch the big game at home with his family.

“We’re going to stay nice and cozy warm in the house and watch the game,” he said.

In Iowa, the storm forced the cancellation hundreds of church services as 3 to 10 inches (7-25 cm) of snow was falling across the state.

The storm followed a blizzard last week that pummeled parts of the East Coast, especially New England states, where up to three feet (90 cm) of snow piled up. New York City had prepared for a major storm but was spared the brunt.

In Massachusetts, the forecasted snow prompted officials to postpone proceedings scheduled for Monday in the murder trial of ex-New England Patriots star Aaron Hernandez. In Chicago, proceedings at the US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, were canceled for Monday.

Slippery and snowy roads were reported in numerous states and the Ohio Turnpike banned travel on Sunday for some traffic, such as vehicles with trailers. In South Dakota, a woman died on Saturday when her car slid off an icy road, the state Department of Public Safety said on Sunday.

Reuters

Greece starts drive to sell new debt deal to doubting Europe



Tourists stand near the temple of Parthenon atop the ancient site of the Athens Acropolis on a cold and windy day on 30 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS

PARIS/ATHENS, 2 Feb — Greece’s leftist government began its drive to persuade a sceptical Europe to accept a new debt agreement on Sunday while it starts to roll back on austerity measures imposed under its existing bailout agreement.

After a turbulent first week in office, the new government has made clear it wants to end the existing arrangement with the European Union, the European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund “troika” when its aid deadline expires on 28 February.

Instead, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras wants to agree a bridging deal with the troika to gain breathing space while a new deal is ne-

gotiated to reduce Greece’s unmanageable public debt burden of more than 175 percent of its economic output, or 320 billion euros (240 billion pounds).

“For the last five years, Greece has been living for the next loan tranche. We have resembled drug addicts craving the next dose,” Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis said after meeting his French counterpart Michel Sapin in Paris.

“What this government is all about is ending the addiction,” he said, noting that it was time to go “cold turkey”.

He said Greece needed a short space of time to present its reform proposals and expected to be able to

hammer out a new agreement with its partners within about six weeks. He said he wanted to deal directly with European partners, the ECB and IMF rather than go through inspectors from the troika.

Varoufakis goes to London to see British Finance Minister George Osborne on Monday and travels to Rome on Tuesday. A meeting with German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, who has repeatedly demanded that Greece meet all its bailout obligations, would follow in the coming days, he said.

Sapin repeated that Greece could not expect its partners to accept a straight debt write off. But he left the door open to other options that could include giving Athens more time for repayment.

“Anything that can alleviate the Greek debt burden will be welcome ... but of course there is no question of cancelling the Greek debt,” he said.

Tsipras himself is due this week in Rome and Paris, the two major capitals where his hopes for a sympathetic hearing are highest, given French and Italian calls for an easing in rigid euro zone budget austerity.—Reuters

Britain urged to go ‘beyond aid’ for global impact

LONDON, 2 Feb — Aid handouts alone are not enough to help poor countries and Britain must find ways to move “beyond aid” to have a global impact, a parliamentary watchdog said on Monday.

While aid remains crucial in lifting countries out of poverty, it is not the only answer for fragile states that may need complex interventions, the International Development Committee said in a report.

At the same time, while aid is no longer provided for middle income countries like India, new forms of cooperation should be developed with links to British institutions

in areas such as health, education, law, culture and science.

The International Development Committee monitors the policy, administration and spending of the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID), which manages overseas aid.

“Aid is essential if we are to reduce poverty and reach ambitious development and environmental goals. But it isn’t enough,” the committee’s chairman Malcolm Bruce said in a statement.

The committee praised Britain’s commitment in meeting the 0.7 percent target of aid as a share of

national income, and tackling cross-border issues like female genital mutilation (FGM) and the Ebola outbreak.

However, it said DFID’s record was patchy, with too little emphasis on ensuring its wider policies, such as conflict prevention, were coherent.

As focus moves away from aid, cooperation with other government departments and international partners has to be at the heart of a new approach in order to maximise impact on development and global issues such as climate change and conflict, the report said.

“That is why development in the future will not just be about aid. When the Government puts its mind to it, the results are impressive,” said Bruce.

The Committee said that DFID’s long-term future as a standalone ministry would be at risk unless stronger mechanisms to support cooperation across government on development issues were put in place.—Reuters



Displaced people walk past a war-devastated village in Bakara district, south of Somalia’s capital Mogadishu, in this file photo taken on 18 Aug, 2011.—REUTERS

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (948N)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY NO (948N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2015 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.

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

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA RAJIN VOY NO (RJN-907)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RAJIN VOY NO (RJN-907) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

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**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MALTE RAMBOW VOY NO (1504)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MALTE RAMBOW VOY NO (1504) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2015 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
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Consignees of cargo carried on MV KUO HSIUNG VOY NO (1028) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.2.2015 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CHINA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

**INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER
(TENDER NO. 1(T)MPE/ LBO(1)/2015-2016)**

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, the Ministry of Energy for the supply of Lube Base Oils & Additives (403.73 Metric Tons).
2. Tender Closing Date : 6.3.2015 at (12:00) noon.
3. Tender Opening Date : 6.3.2015 at (13:00) hrs.
4. Delivery Time : Within July 2015
5. Tender Documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing 2.2.2015 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

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 3rd February, 2015: Weather will be partly cloudy in Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Shan, and Mon State and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Strong easterly winds with moderate to rough sea are likely at times off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach (30) m.p.h. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Generally fair in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 3rd February, 2015: Generally fair weather.

Egypt frees Al Jazeera journalist Greste, two others still held

CAIRO, 2 Feb — Al Jazeera journalist Peter Greste was released from a Cairo jail on Sunday and left Egypt after 400 days in prison on charges that included aiding a terrorist group, security officials said. There was no official word on the fate of his two Al Jazeera colleagues — Canadian-Egyptian Mohamed Fahmy and Egyptian national Baher Mohamed — who were also jailed in the case that provoked an international outcry.

The three were sentenced to seven to 10 years on charges including

spreading lies to help a terrorist organisation — a reference to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. One month ago, however, a court ordered their retrial.

A security official said Fahmy was expected to be released from Cairo's Tora prison within days. His fiancée said she hoped he would be free soon and deported to Canada. "His deportation is in its final stages. We are hopeful," Marwa Omara told Reuters. Canada's foreign ministry welcomed what it called positive developments. "We remain very hopeful that Mr Fahmy's



case will be resolved shortly," it said in a statement.

Many Egyptians see Qatar-based Al Jazeera as a force set on destabilising the country, a view that has

been encouraged in the local media which labelled the journalists "The Marriott Cell", because they worked from a hotel of the US-based chain.

Al Jazeera journalist Peter Greste poses for a photograph in Kibati village, near Goma in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo on 7 Aug, 2013. REUTERS

Fattah al-Sisi toppled in 2013 when he was Egypt's army chief. The timing of Greste's release came as a surprise, just days after Egypt suffered one of the bloodiest militant attacks in years. More than 30 members of the security forces were killed on Thursday night in Sinai, and ensuing comments from Sisi suggested he was in no mood for compromise.

The Interior Ministry said on its Facebook page that Sisi released Greste under a decree issued in November authorising the president to approve the deportation of foreign prisoners.—Reuters

Australian farmer grows record 743 kg pumpkin

SYDNEY, 2 Feb — An Australian farmer has set a new national record for the heaviest pumpkin in Australia and New Zealand.

Dale Oliver's winning pumpkin weighed at 743 kg during the Summerland Pumpkin Competition held in northern New South Wales (NSW). Oliver has been the na-

tion's top pumpkin grower for many years and in 2013 broke his 575 kg record with a 619 kg pumpkin.

He told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) on Monday that his record breaking Atlantic Giant pumpkin only took 75 to 80 days to grow.

However, Oliver needs to grow them bigger in or-

der to make a world record.

The Guinness World Record for heaviest pumpkin at 1,054 kg (2,323 pounds) belongs to Switzerland grower Beni Meier.

And he said American farmers were even growing bigger ones.

"Nowadays all them guys over in America, actually all around the world,

keep sourcing the biggest genetics and they just seem to be getting bigger, bigger and bigger," Oliver said.

"Back when they had them at 1,500 pounds they were wondering if they'd get to 2,000, now they're looking to break 2,500 pounds (about 1,134 kilograms)." Xinhua

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Katy Perry brings spectacle to Super Bowl halftime

ARIZONA, 2 Feb — Katy Perry delivered a spectacular halftime show at the Super Bowl on Sunday assisted by special guests Missy Elliott and Lenny Kravitz.

Katy Perry entered the field astride a giant, golden, robotic lion as she sang her hit “Roar” before Kravitz brought some rock guitar to a version of “I Kissed a Girl”.

After Missy Elliott provided the crowd of over 70,000 with her own distinctive brand of hip-hop, including “Get Ur Freak On”, Perry performed on a desert island, singing her hit “Teenage Dream” and “California Gurls”.

The halftime show ended with another surprise as Perry was lifted 50 feet off the ground by a mechanical contraption and as she floated above the field singing “Firework”, sparkling flames emerged from the construction.—Reuters

Katy Perry delivered a spectacular halftime show at the Super Bowl on Sunday assisted by special guests Missy Elliott and Lenny Kravitz.
REUTERS



Ricardo Medina Jr arrested for murder

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — ‘Power Rangers’ star Ricardo Medina Jr is facing murder charges. The 37-year-old actor, who played the Red Ranger in ‘Power Rangers Wild Force’ and returned to the franchise as Dekker in ‘Power Rangers Samurai’ was taken into police custody in Palmdale, California, reported TMZ.

Medina Jr reportedly got involved in an altercation with his roommate named Joshua Sutter. He decided to retreat to his bedroom with his girlfriend, but Sutter forced his way into the room. The retaliated and stabbed Sutter with a sword in the abdomen.

The actor, who is the son of Brazilian boxer Ricardo Medina, called 911 and waited for the cops to arrive. He was ultimately arrested and booked for murder, while Sutter was taken to hospital and pronounced dead. Medina Jr’s bail is set at USD 1 million.

PTI



Medina Jr reportedly got involved in an altercation with his roommate named Joshua Sutter.
PTI

Jay-Z bids USD 56 Million for music streaming services



Jay-Z has reportedly got preliminary approval from the Aspiro board.
PTI

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — Rapper Jay-Z is expanding his empire into music streaming business.

Through Project Panther Bidco Ltd. owned by his company Sean Cart-

er Enterprises (SCE), the rapper has placed a USD 56 million bid for Aspiro, a Swedish company that developed two emerging high-quality music streaming apps, reported Ace Showbiz.

Jay-Z has reportedly got preliminary approval from the Aspiro board. Fredrik Bjorland, who headed a committee recommending the company to take the offer, believed that the rapper would be “a good owner ... to continue its successful international expansion.”

“Aspiro is a media technology company in the forefront of the ongoing redefinition of music consumption,” an SCE repre-

sentative said. “Through the subscription services WiMP and TIDAL, Aspiro offers a complete experience of higher HiFi quality. The platform encompasses audio, video and integrated editorial features... Panther’s strategic ambition revolves around global expansion and up-scaling of Aspiro’s platform, technology and services.”

The Oslo-based developer launched WiMP in Europe, and Tidal in the US and UK. The former has had 512,000 subscribers. The number for the latter hasn’t been revealed, but fans have to pay a monthly fee of USD 20 for the high-quality streams.

PTI

Scarlett Johansson flaunts skinny post-baby figure

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — ‘Avengers’ star Scarlett Johansson flaunted her post-baby body just four months after giving birth to her daughter Rose Dorothy.

The 30-year-old actress showed off her slim and toned body in a figure hugging mini dress when attending the G’Day USA Gala and AAC-TA International Awards, reported Ace Showbiz. Styling her short blonde hair in voluminous updo, the ‘Captain America: The Winter Soldier’ actress completed her look with a pair of black heels and some accessories.

Johansson attended the event to present her ‘Avengers: Age of Ultron’ co-star Chris Hemsworth with the Excellence in Film Award. The actor was joined by his wife Elsa Pataky and his brother Liam Hemsworth.

PTI



Scarlett Johansson

‘Uptown Funk’ holds onto British music chart top spot

LONDON, 2 Feb — “Uptown Funk” by English DJ and producer Mark Ronson secured a seventh week at the top of the British singles chart on Sunday, the Official Charts Company said. The single, which features Hawaii-born singer Bruno Mars, outsold Irish artist Hozier’s song about love and religion “Take me to Church”, which came in second place, and “LA Love” by Fergie in third.

The top five was completed by “Lips are Movin’

by Meghan Trainor in fourth and new entry “Four Five Seconds” by Barbadian star Rhianna, which also features Kanye West and Paul McCartney.

Ronson could not hold on to number one position in the album charts, where Trainor’s new entry “Title” earned her a chart-topping debut studio album. Ed Sheeran’s “X” continued its long spell in the top five, charting in second place ahead of Ronson’s “Uptown Special”.—Reuters



Singer Mark Ronson arrives for the UK premiere of ‘Mortdecai’ at Leicester Square in London on 19 Jan, 2015.
REUTERS

Scott Foley injures foot on ‘Scandal’ set



Scott Foley’s wife Marika Dominczyk shared on Twitter a picture of her husband wearing a cast on his foot.—PTI

LOS ANGELES, 2 Feb — Actor Scott Foley has suffered an injury during the filming of political thriller TV series ‘Scandal’. The 42-year-old actor’s wife Marika Dominczyk shared on Twitter a picture of her husband wearing a cast on his foot, reported Ace Showbiz. “Btw- aftermath of running with no shoes. On the street #Scandal @scottkfoley #dasboot #foleyfangirls.”, she captioned the photo.

He reportedly continued the filming despite his twisted ankle.—PTI

Fresh reports circulate on China's second aircraft carrier

BEIJING, 2 Feb — Fresh reports that China is building a second aircraft carrier circulated over the weekend on a city government microblog and a state-owned newspaper, as the country scrambles to modernise its military.

China wants to develop an ocean-going “blue water” navy capable of defending the growing interests of the world’s second largest economy as it adopts a more assertive stance in territorial disputes with neighbours in the South China and East China seas.

A power cable maker in the eastern city of Changzhou has won a deal to provide equipment for the second aircraft carrier, according to the reports, which appeared on the official microblog of the government of Changzhou and the state-backed Changzhou Evening News, but have since been deleted.

Chinese military analysts said the reports were



People look at a replica of Chinese aircraft carrier “Liaoning” made of toy building blocks, on display at a shopping mall in Shenyang, Liaoning Province on 10 Aug, 2014.—REUTERS

a tacit acknowledgement the carrier was being built.

Media reports last year cited the top party official in the northern province of Liaoning as saying that China was building the carrier, and aimed for a future fleet of at least four aircraft carriers.

But the government

has consistently sought to keep news about a second aircraft carrier quiet, and the military has not formally acknowledged its development.

The country’s first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, a Soviet-era ship bought from Ukraine in 1998 and refitted in a Chinese

shipyard, has long been a symbol of China’s naval build-up. Successfully operating the 60,000-tonne Liaoning is the first step in what state media and some military experts believe will be the deployment of domestically-built carriers by 2020.

Reuters

Sri Lanka looks to mend ties with US

COLOMBO, 2 Feb — The newly elected Sri Lankan government on Monday said it is keen to work more closely with the United States on various issues.

Sri Lanka’s newly appointed External Affairs Minister, Mangala Samaraweera, made the remarks after meeting with visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Nisha Biswal, who is currently on a two-day visit in Sri Lanka.

Samaraweera also said that he will be travelling to Washington next week for

talks with US Secretary of State John Kerry and also extend an official invitation for Kerry to visit the island.

Biswal told reporters after her meeting with Samaraweera in Colombo that Kerry is looking forward to his meeting with Samaraweera and is ready to assist Sri Lanka in addressing human rights issues and good governance.

A major diplomatic rift has emerged between the United States and Sri Lanka during the previous government, headed by Mahinda Rajapakse, over the island nation’s human

rights record.

The United States last year sponsored a resolution against Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The resolution mandated a UN-led investigation on the war in Sri Lanka and a report on the investigation is scheduled to be submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in March this year.

The dispute focused on possible war crimes that occurred during the final phase of Sri Lanka’s bloody civil war against the Tamil Tiger rebels, with the United States pressing

for an independent probe into the alleged wartime atrocities. The previous government had denied any wrongdoing and had rejected calls for an international inquiry.

The new Sri Lankan government led by President Maithripala Sirisena, which came to power following the on 8 January presidential elections, is looking at mending ties with the United States by launching a fresh domestic investigation into the war which meets international expectations.

Xinhua

Gas blast kills one, injures nine in southeast Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 2 Feb — At least one person was killed and nine others injured on Sunday in a gas blast in southeastern Mexico, local authorities said.

The blast occurred around 3 am (0900 GMT) at a butcher shop in downtown Xalapa, capital of the southeastern state of Veracruz, the local Attorney General’s Office said.

The butcher shop and

another house were destroyed.

Investigators believed that the blast might have been caused by an accumulation of gas.

On Thursday, a powerful gas explosion in a hospital in Mexico City killed three people and injured more than 70 others, 10 of whom are still in serious condition.

Xinhua

Police bust drug gang in central China

CHANGSHA, 2 Feb — Police in central China’s Hunan Province on Monday announced that they

had apprehended eight suspected members of a drug gang.

Police also seized 50 kilograms of ketamine, a pistol, 8 bullets and 3 knives in the crackdown in Changde City in late January.

It is alleged that the gang hid drugs in the forest or vacant houses, according to Li Li, head of the anti-drug detachment with the municipal public security bureau.—Xinhua

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(3-2-2015 07:00 am~ 4-2-2015 07:00 am)

- | | |
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| * Local News | * Tapestry-A Unique Combination of Painting and Craftsmanship |
| * Insight Myanmar “Responsible Tourism and Economy” | * World News |
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| * Local News | |

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(3-2-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 6:00 am | 4:35 pm |
| • Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw | • University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) — Third Year (Physics) |
| 7:00 am | 4:50 pm |
| • News/ Weather Report | • 68 th Anniversary Union Day Programme |
| 7:35 am | 5:35 pm |
| • Socio Economic Scenes | • People’ Talks |
| 8:30 am | 6:35 pm |
| • Head Line News | • One Vision (Part-1-B) (Part-1) |
| 9:35 am | 7:00 pm |
| • Documentary (ASEAN) | • News |
| 10:00 am | 7:35 pm |
| • News / International News | • Documentary |
| 11:35 am | 8:00 pm |
| • Documentary (Women in Myanmar Society) | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:00 noon | 9:00 pm |
| News / International News / Weather Report | • News / International News / Weather Report |
| 12:35 pm | • Hluttaw Image |
| Hluttaw Image | • TV Drama Series |
| 1:40 pm | • Full Moon Day of Tabodwe |
| • Sing & Enjoy | |
| 2:30 pm | |
| • Head Line News | |
| 4:00 pm | |
| • News | |

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(3-2-2015, Tuesday)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6:00 am | 9:05 am |
| • Travelogue Programme | • Teleplay |
| 6:30 am | 10:00 am |
| • Wut Hmone Music Troupe | • 40 th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship And Corporation (Laos) |
| 6:45 am | 10:05 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Colours of ASEAN (Laos) |
| 7:10 am | 10:10 am |
| • Kyae Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than | • ASEAN Cultural Fair 2014 (Laos PDR Music Show) |
| 7:20 am | 10:15 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Musical Programme |
| 8:00 am | 10:30 am |
| • TV Drama Series | • Myanmar Video |
| 8:35 am | |
| • Musical Programme | |
| 8:50 am | |
| • Pyi Thu Ni Ti | |

Gulf in class as Arsenal hit hapless Villa for five



Arsenal's Theo Walcott celebrates his goal against Aston Villa during their English Premier League soccer match at the Emirates Stadium in London, on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

LONDON, 2 Feb — Arsenal climbed above rivals Tottenham Hotspur into fifth in the Premier League and inflicted more misery on a goal-shy Aston Villa with an emphatic 5-0 victory on Sunday that fuelled their top-four hopes.

Goals from Olivier Giroud, Mesut Ozil, Theo Walcott,

Santi Cazorla and Hector Bellerin helped Arsenal move level on points with fourth-placed Southampton and a step closer to a Champions League qualification spot.

The day got better for Arsene Wenger's side when a stunning Jonjo Shelvey strike gave Swansea City a surprise 1-0

away win at Southampton who had defender Ryan Bertrand sent off late on.

France forward Giroud opened the scoring at the Emirates Stadium in the eighth minute after he was sent clear by Ozil's delightful flick before the German added a second with a low finish.

Walcott added a third after a razor-sharp counter attack, Cazorla scored a fourth from the penalty spot after substitute Chuba Akpom was felled by Brad Guzan and Bellerin completed the rout with a wonderfully-placed fifth.

"You could see that mentally for Aston Villa the second goal was a big blow to them and from then on it became easier," Wenger told Sky Sports. "They are in a difficult position and certainly they saw at 2-0 it would be difficult for them to come back.

"Overall we needed to be a bit patient because Aston Villa tried to stop us going forward

by blocking us very early. You could see with time going on we had the chance to go forward and play through their lines. That made the difference.

"We were more direct because they blocked us very high, but when we passed through we always looked dangerous."

Arsenal have 42 points from 23 games, two clear of Spurs, and trail third-placed Manchester United by a point.

Villa, 16th and without a win since 7 December, have not scored a Premier League goal since 20 December, a run of six games, and are three points above the relegation zone.

After Manchester United leapfrogged them into third with victory on Saturday, Southampton knew a win against out-of-form Swansea would restore them to the top three.

But the hosts failed to make possession count as they dominated the first half but could not fashion a breakthrough.

The game opened up after

the interval, as the visitors started to show some attacking intent against the league's meanest defence with Shelvey driving forward from midfield and striking a powerful drive against the post.

The former Liverpool midfielder then struck from 25 metres past a despairing stretch from keeper Fraser Forster with seven minutes left. Sadio Mane nearly equalized for the hosts when he rounded keeper Lukas Fabianski but he saw his effort headed off the line by Swansea captain Ashley Williams and then the rebound cleared by the defender again to secure the first league win since 26 December for the Welsh club. "We knew we would not have the lion's share of possession but we had a plan to hold our shape and then break when we could. Tactically we got it spot on and the boys thoroughly deserved the three points," Swansea manager Garry Monk said.

Reuters

Swansea glad to see back of miserable January

LONDON, 2 Feb — After a month in which they lost their top goalscorer and suffered two demoralising defeats, Swansea City manager Garry Monk was happy to get back to basics with a surprise 1-0 win at Southampton in the Premier League on Sunday.

A stunning Jonjo Shelvey goal seven minutes from time handed the Welsh club victory at the St Mary's Stadium after they had withstood heavy pressure from fourth-placed Southampton, who dominated large parts of the game.

Swansea captain Ashley Williams' superb double-goalline clearance from two Sadio Mane strikes in the dying moments of the game to maintain their lead epitomised the dogged spirit of the visitors.

It was their first league win since 26 December and came after a tough January in which striker Wilfried Bony joined champions Manchester City, leaders Chelsea thumped them 5-0 at their own Liberty Stadium and they crashed out of the FA Cup with a loss at second tier Blackburn Rovers. Monk

said his team were tactically perfect to overcome high-flying Southampton and ensure a better start to February.

"We frustrated them in the first half, then we went for the three points in the second. And what a goal by Jonjo Shelvey — that's a goal worthy of winning any game," Monk told a news conference.

"I'm happy with the three points after what has been a difficult month for us. We spoke about getting back to basics in the week, and we executed the plan very well.

"We've been in a diffi-

cult moment, especially in the last two games (against Chelsea and Blackburn). We didn't show the commitment we've shown all season. But today was a very committed performance.

"There are periods in a season when you have to adapt. We've played some fantastic football this season, but you have to adapt sometimes, and we did that ever so well today."

Victory moved Swansea to ninth in the table with 33 points. They host Sunderland next in the league on Saturday.

Reuters

Messi hits winner as Barca keep up pressure



Barcelona's Neymar celebrates his goal against Villarreal during their Spanish first division soccer match at Nou Camp stadium in Barcelona on 1 Feb, 2015. REUTERS

BARCELONA, 2 Feb — Lionel Messi struck the winner for Barcelona who twice came from behind to beat Villarreal 3-2 at home and move a point behind leaders Real Madrid in La Liga on Sunday.

Barca dominated possession and Luis Suarez had several early chances but it was Villarreal who took the lead with Denis Cheryshev redirecting a Mario Gaspar shot past keeper Claudio Bravo on the half hour.

The Catalan side have been looking more resilient in recent weeks and in-form Neymar knocked in a rebound before half-time after Rafinha's shot had been saved by keeper Sergio Asenjo.

Luciano Vietto restored the visitors' advantage after being set up well by Giovanni dos Santos but Barca again bounced back.

Rafinha knocked the ball home after Messi's header had been blocked by Victor Ruiz and then

Messi hit a 20-metre shot into the top corner with his weaker right foot after 55 minutes.

Barcelona coach Luis Enrique was pleased with the performance but admitted they lacked concentration for a spell.

"It was a very positive match except for the goals that we conceded," he told reporters.

"At 1-0 we lost our composure for about ten minutes and gave the ball away but up until the first goal we didn't face any danger.

"When the score was at 3-2 we continued to attack as we wanted to finish the match off. We obviously try to keep hold of the ball but if the rival leaves you space then you have to attack it."

Barcelona have 50 points from 21 games while Real, who have also played a game less, beat Real Sociedad 4-1 on Saturday to stay top. Villarreal are sixth on 38 points.

Reuters



Southampton's Maya Yoshida (R) challenges Swansea City's Bafetimbi Gomis during their English Premier League soccer match at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England, on 1 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

Editorial Section — (+95) (01) 8604529
 Advertisement & Circulation — (+95) (01) 8604532
 gnlmtdaily@gmail.com
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