

## President U Thein Sein sends messages of felicitations to Estonian President, PM

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Feb — U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, President of the Republic of Estonia, and His Excellency Mr Taavi Rõivas, Prime Minister of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, which falls on 24 February 2015.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — A military funeral was held to bury the urns of bone ash of officers and other tanks who lost their lives while discharging national defence duties in Laukkai area was held at the Memorial for Fallen Heros in Lashio on Monday afternoon.

Present were Lt-Gen Aung Than Htut of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Aung Soe, senior officers from the command, officers and other ranks from battalions, family members, members of Myanmar Veterans' Organization and departmental officials.

First, the Guard of Honour saluted the fallen soldiers while the military band playing military bugles.

Then, Lt-Gen Aung Than Htut, the commander and officers laid the wreaths for fallen soldiers and buried the urns of bone ash of them.

In the morning, mili-

tary helicopters transported food, medicines and other necessary household goods for officers and other ranks, their families, government employees and local people in Laukkai and two Japanese nationals who were stranded during fighting and rescued to a military camp in Kongyan, Dr Minoru Yashida and Mr Akio Takahashi of JICA, to Lashio where Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Aung Soe handed over them to the Ministry of Border Affairs.

Military columns of the Tatmadaw captured the strategic hills of Kokang insurgent groups near 18-mile junction on Laukkai-Kongyan road on 22 February and combed the area for insurgents on Monday, leading to the seizure of one M-21, 7 M-22s, one Winchester, 14 M-22 magazines, 508 rounds of M-22, two plastic landmines, one landmine, 25 grenades, three uniforms, 2 four-wheel vehicles and 7 motorcycles.

(See page 9)

## Urns of bone ash from fallen officers and other ranks buried at Memorial for Fallen Heroes



The Guard of Honour and people salutes the Tatmadawmen fallen in Lauklai region. MYAWADY

## With our ride for women's rights, we hope to raise as much awareness as possible for women's rights: R4WR (Ride 4 Women's Rights)

By Aye Min Soe

R4WR (Ride 4 Women's Rights) from the Netherlands has raised awareness for women's rights worldwide and the four women of the foundation have been on the road now for about five months as part of their 400-day journey of 14,000 km from Jakarta to Amsterdam. During their journey, they visit local women's projects and collect stories of

inspiring women.

They started last September and cycled through Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, southern Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, northern Thailand and are now cycling in Myanmar for three weeks. On 2 February they entered Myanmar via Mae Sot on the border with Thailand. They will leave Myanmar on 28 February after crossing the country on their bikes.

(See page 2)



Four women of R4WR (Ride 4 Women's Rights) foundation from the Netherlands on bike during their journey in Thailand before entering Myanmar. —PHOTO: R4WR

## Labour Ministry, authorities announces to negotiate labour disputes, warn striking workers of legal action if they break the law

YANGON, 23 Feb — Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security will continue to sponsor negotiations to solve disputes between the striking workers and employers and will take action against those who break the law and instigate for disturbing the rule of law. The statement released by the ministry Monday also mentioned that employers have demanded the government to provide protection of law to their

(See page 3)

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## Pyithu Hluttaw

## Ministries of forest conservation, cooperatives, NPED deal with Amyotha Hluttaw queries

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Deputy Ministers of union government answered the queries of representatives at Amyotha Hluttaw's 20<sup>th</sup> day session Monday.

In reply to the query of U Bo Ni, an MP of Yame-thin Township constituency, Deputy Minister U Aye Myint Maung for Environmental Conservation and Forestry said the country has adopted a 30-year plan from 2000-2001 to 2030-2031 fiscal years for forest conservation, with updating every decade and reviewing every five years and development of reserved forest to 30 percent of the country's total area and 10 percent for natural habitats.



Deputy Minister U Aye Myint Maung.

MNA

He also explained afforestation and growing of firewood plants with the contribution of people.

Regarding query of Dr Than Aung, an MP of Shwebo Township constituency, the Deputy Minister said the ministry has not

planned to extend the period for farmers to settle agricultural loans, as the loans from EXIM Bank of China will have to be paid back in eight years.

Thura U Aung Ko, an MP of Kanpetlet constituency, asked the plans on proper use of international grants and loans. Deputy Minister Daw Lei Lei Thein for National Planning and Economic Development said the ministry has formed two committees to scrutinize foreign grants in cooperation with union-level ministries, governments of states and regions, foreign aid agencies for prevent misuse of international supports.

MNA

## Myanmar, ROK focus on development of infrastructure, fishery sector



Officials of Korea Transport Institute and ministerial officials pose for documentary photo after international conference on building a knowledge network.—PHOTO: KHAING THANDA LWIN

### With our ride for women's rights, ...

(from page 1)

The Global New Light of Myanmar talked to Carlijn Bettink, 24, founder of R4WR, in Yangon recently.

**GNLM:** What is the main goal of your foundation?

**Bettink:** The main goal of our foundation is to raise awareness for women's rights and we do this by cycling on two tandem bikes from Jakarta back to Amsterdam.

**GNLM:** Why did you

choose this route which passes through Myanmar?

**Bettink:** We are now five months on the road and cycled through Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, south Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, the northern part of Thailand and now in Myanmar. All of us are big fans of Asia, one of the reasons we choose this particular route. We were interested to find out more about women's rights in the different countries and because we cycle we visit places outside

the touristic areas.

**GNLM:** Who did you talk to in Myanmar and what did you discuss with them?

**Bettink:** During this ride we visit local women empowerment projects and collect stories of all sorts of women.

We had two project visits in Myanmar of the organization CARE. The first one took place in Mon and we visited the CARE office where we had a table conversation with several women who are infected with HIV.

The second project visit was in Yangon where we met

## Amyotha Hluttaw

## School libraries in operation, says education deputy minister

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Deputy Minister for Education U Thant Shin discussed on the suggestion of U Salai Khwe Yan of Chin State's No 12 constituency for development of school libraries across the country.

In reply to the ethnic MP at Amyotha Hluttaw on Monday, U Thant Shin said that libraries in the state-run schools are now operating as a 'learning environment' to support both children and teachers.

He also said Ministry of Education is persuading the school children to develop reading habit, and setting up mobile libraries in cooperation with Ministry of Information.

Defence Services Personnel representative Major Kyaw Nu Maw also said that libraries are knowledge banks for all people and an-



Deputy Minister U Thant Shin.

MNA

nual fund will be needed to set up school libraries traditionally or digitally.

U Thein Hlaing, an MP of Sagaing Region constituency 8, said slow development of libraries in the country is due to the lack of skills by librarians and of reading habit among the people, especially in rural areas.

Another military representative said education

sector must be promoted to become a modernized country, and both the government and communities should support for the emergence of libraries in more than 40,000 state-run schools.

U Bo Rei, an MP of Kayah State constituency 3, said books and libraries are true friends of children as knowledge banks.

Daw Khin Waing Kyi, an MP of Yangon Region constituency 1, said, a wide knowledge could help someone in making right decision.

U Aung Cho Oo, an MP of Bago Region constituency 11, also suggested libraries should be developed through modern technologies.

Amyotha Hluttaw then decided to keep records of these discussion.—MNA

### By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 24 Feb—The Korea Transport Institute (KOTI) on Monday organized an international conference here on building a knowledge network between Myanmar and Korea, with the aim of promoting their relations and seeking new business opportunities in Myanmar.

"Cooperation on development of economic and infrastructure, land and fishery sectors is a major topic of the conference," KOTI said.

At the seminar, Korea shared its knowledge and experience in the development of transport infrastructure including new approaches in transport policy and the role of public-private partnerships (PPP) in

this sector.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), Myanmar, also elaborated on its infrastructure and land use plan during the meeting.

Their discussions also focused on the development of the Korea-Myanmar economic corporation industrial complex through a knowledge sharing program, national transport development strategies and implementation in Myanmar, cooperation in improving the land and fishery sectors, and investment for development of a fisheries complex in Myanmar.

Local officials from over five ministries including the Ministry of Trans-

port and the Ministry of Construction, other governmental bodies and the Myanmar Fisheries Federation (MFF), a private organization, actively participated in the discussions.

"As part of Myanmar's reforms, the government revised the Foreign Direct Investment Law which will create more economic opportunities and a business-friendly environment," Daw Wah Wah Maung, deputy director-general of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, said in her presentation.

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Myanmar's economy is on track to grow by 7.8% in both fiscal year 2014 and in FY2015.—GNLM

with the founder Ma Thu Zar Win of the SWiM network, which stands for Sex Worker in Myanmar Network. The network's mission is to promote the access to information, knowledge, capacity, rights and empowerment of female sex workers and to reduce discrimination and stigmatization.

Besides these project visits, we also talk with women in Myanmar and share their personal stories with our followers. For instance we talked with Wai Wai Nu, a woman who was a political prisoner but is

now fighting for peace and the rights of women. She told us her story and the work she does for her beliefs was very inspiring to hear. These kind of stories need to be told and that is why we share this with our followers.

**GNLM:** What is your impression of women's rights in Myanmar?

**Bettink:** We were very excited to visit Myanmar because it has only recently opened its borders for foreigners. In the conversation we had with Wai Wai Nu, we understood there are still many acts and laws which

restrict women's rights. She formed the Women's Peace Network with which she, among other things, campaigns for women's rights in Myanmar. We noticed that here in Myanmar are a lot of initiatives going on from women to fight for women's rights and help others by sharing their own experiences.

Furthermore, we really like to travel and explore Myanmar. The friendliness of the people we come across is unique and we have never eaten such a good tomato salad as here.

NATIONAL

## Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) sports competition 2015 kicks off

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing opened Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) Sports Competition 2015 with inauguration of Zeyathiri Tatmataw Stadium here Monday.

In his opening speech, the commander-in-chief said success in sports reflects the development status of a state and the dignity of the people, as well

as the strength, capacity, solidarity and unity of Tatmadaw.

Together with senior general and his wife, the opening event was attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife, union ministers and wives, senior military officers, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and his wife, township members

of the War Veteran Organization and athletes.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing said while Myanmar won Merdeka Cup, eight athletes in the football team are soldiers. The Merdeka football tournament is one of the oldest football competition in Southeast Asia, participating mainly by national teams form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region.

He also urged the athletes to try their best in sports competitions for the dignity of Tatmadaw. Myanmar was Merdeka Cup Champion in 1964, 1967, 1971 and 2006.

The athletes from 17 sports teams marched and saluted the Senior General in columns.

Myawady



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing delivers speech at opening of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) Sports Competition 2015.—MYAWADY

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker receives Norwegian delegation



Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with Mr Geir Pollestad, Chairman of Standing Committee on Business and Industry of Norwegian Parliament.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received a delegation led by Mr Geir Pollestad,

Chairman of Standing Committee on Business and Industry of Norwegian Parliament, at the Hluttaw building, here, on Monday.

Also present at the call

were chairmen, secretaries and members of Hluttaw committees and the Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar.

MNA



## Labour Ministry, authorities . . .

(from page 1)

factories so that they can continue to run their businesses at peace as blocking businessmen, staff and sales agents in the factories and blocking the entrance of the factories by striking workers reached above the existing law.

Some factories in Shwepyitha Industrial Zone and Hlinethaya Industrial Zone are facing to be blacklisted as their production has stopped for about two weeks due to labour strikes as from 28 January, the statement said.

Meanwhile, majority of workers are also facing difficulties for their livelihood as they cannot do their jobs due to strikes, it added.

As striking workers blocked the entrance to their factories and dis-

turbing other workers, demanding better payment, officials of the ministry conducted negotiation between the workers and employers to solve the issues.

The statement mentioned that majority of striking workers reached agreement with their employers during the negotiation and have gone back to their jobs, however, it is found that some workers are still conducting sit-in protests out E-Land Myanmar garment factory.

Meanwhile, Yangon Region Government has also released a statement on Monday that it will continue negotiation with the striking workers of the remaining factory and has warned those who violate the law will face legal action.

GNLM

## NNER holds press conference on amendment bill for national education law

YANGON, 23 Feb — National Network for Education Reform held a press conference in Yangon on 22 February.

At the press conference, Dr Thein Lwin of NNER said that the amendment bill published in state-run newspapers on 19 February should be headlined as the amendment bill on the National Education Law to be submitted to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw as agreed at the four-party-talks instead of amendment bill drafted and signed by Dr Thein Lwin, Dr Nyo Nyo Thin and U Aung Hmine San on behalf of representatives of the NNER and students of the Action Committee for Democracy Education.

As only monastic education schools are covered by the National Education Law and education schools established by other religious faiths are excluded, representatives of the NNER and students held consultation sessions after receiving complaints from education schools established by churches after the approval of the National Education Law, according to Dr Thein Lwin.

In addition, he also explained that three medium of teaching which include mother tongues, Myanmar language and English language is adopted under Section 22 (E) as the mother tongue used in the family of a child is the best way for

children to start studying school subjects and it is easy for children to understand Myanmar language and English language as well as other school subjects like mathematics, science and geography when they have understood the structure of their mother tongue.

The amendment bill on the National Education Law is drafted based on the 11-point demand of students that were derived from seminars held NNER in 25 areas since 2012 October and provisions that are against the demand were excluded from the bill, according to Dr Thein Lwin.

In addition, Dr Thein Lwin said that they would sent a letter to the union



Dr Thein Lwin of National Network for Education Reform. CHO CHO THAN

minister who is the leader of four-party talks representing the government for points that are against the agreement of the four-party talks and can be misunderstood when it was published in newspapers.

Khin Cho Win

## Tenders invited for construction of rural road in Myingyan Tsp



MYINGYAN, 23 Feb — The union government is striving for narrowing development gap between rural and urban areas across the nation. At present, Department of Rural Development is implementing the rural development and poverty alleviation. Myingyan District's deputy commissioner U Myint Thin Aung, Township Administrator U Tun

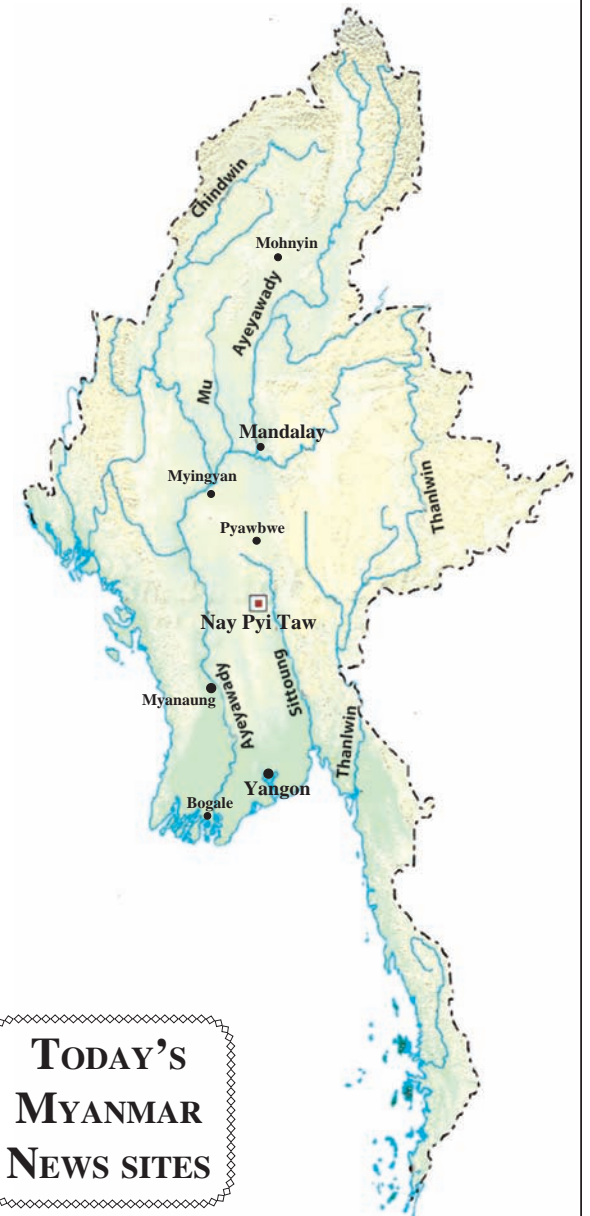
Thein Aung and Head of Township Department of Rural Development U Kan Chun inspected progress in placing asphalt on the road linking Thapaung and alok villages in Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region.

They instructed officials to use quality materials for construction of an asphalt road to be able to meet set standards.

The inter-village road is three miles and four furlongs long.

Department of Rural Development invited tenders for construction of the road. The department funded K175 million for construction tasks.

Zaw Min Naing  
(Myingyan)



TODAY'S  
MYANMAR  
NEWS SITES

## Local authorities, wellwishers give transport service to people coming back from Laukkai region

MANDALAY, 23 Feb — A total of 5,732 people who arrived in Chanmya Shwepyi bus terminal in Mandalay from Laukkai region were sent to their home with the use of 269 vehicles from 12 to 21 February evening.

They were transported by vehicle from Transport Planning Department and wellwishers under the arrangements of Mandalay Region government. Well-wishers also gave meals to them.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)



## Mohnyin authorities supply water to rural people from natural spring

MOHNYIN, 23 Feb — Water supply tasks are being carried out in Mohnyin Township with spending K 9 million allotted by Kachin State government. Water that flows down from forests on hills is being supplied to Ywathitgon, Kandawgon and Nyaungkantha village in the township.



“Water from a natural stream that flows from the forest eastern part of Mohnyin is being collected at a 4,800-gallon-capacity water tank in Ywathitgon Village through water pipelines. After that, water is being supplied sufficiently to the local people of over 500 houses,” said a village administrator.

GNLM-001

## Racer Engineering College students pay respects to faculty members

MANDALAY, 23 Feb — The 6<sup>th</sup> respect paying ceremony to faculty members of Racer Engineering College was held at Oriental House in Chanayethazan Township on 22 February.

Principal U Maung Maung Aye made a speech and Daw Nyein Pa Pa San

gave words of advice. Mrs Jill Sutcliffe of Scottish Qualifications Authority explained conferring of engineering diploma. Officials of the college presented certificates to students. Later, the students paid respects to faculty members.

Tin Maung (Mandalay)



Under the instructions of deputy commander of No 6 Traffic Police Company, Police Captain Ye Kyi and party of No 67 Traffic Police Platoon made surprised checks at vehicles at the junction of Yangon-Mandalay Expressway and Yangon-Bago Road on 20 February.

KHIN ZAW (MINGALA)

LOCAL NEWS

## Religious activities mark centenary of Gangaw Tahtaung Buddha images in Bogale



BOGALE, 23 Feb — Under the auspices of Gangaw Tahtaung Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Kelasa, the consecration of Gangaw Tahtaung Buddha images in commemoration of its centennial celebration will be held in Paychaunggyi Village in Bogale Township, Ayeyawady Region, from 18 February to 4 March.

The recitation of Maha Pathana treatise will be held at the same venue from 18 to 20 February, the talks on Dhamma

from 21 to 25 February, the meals donation for the people from four corners on 26 February, respect paying ceremony to older persons on 27 and 28 February, and ceremony to pay homage to 28-Buddha images on 1 March, ordination and novitiation of men and boys on 2 and 3 March and re-ordination of 10 monks on 4 March.

At present, people from various regions visit Gangaw Tahtaung Buddha images.

*Maung Maung Thant (Kyemon)*

## Mandalay Mayor's Maha Thingyan pandal under construction on 26<sup>th</sup> street



MANDALAY, 23 Feb — Pandal of Maha Thingyan festival in 1376 Myanmar Era will be held on a grand scale around moats of Royal Mandalay City, at downtown Mandalay and Kandawgyi Park in line with the tradition of Mandalay City.

The Revenue Department of the Mandalay City Development Committee invites applications for construction of water throwing pandals and decorated pandals of departments, companies and associations during the period from 23

February to 6 March. The department will allot plots for pandals on 26<sup>th</sup>, 66<sup>th</sup>, 80<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> streets.

As for 20 February, the Mandalay City Mayor's Maha Thingyan pandal is under construction on 26<sup>th</sup> street between 71<sup>st</sup> and 72<sup>nd</sup> streets in Chanayethazan Township with the use of heavy machinery.

Arrangements are being made to perform entertainments of famous artistes to the people in the Maha Thingyan period.

*Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay)*

## Sandbank dredging to prevent landslides in Madaya Township

MANDALAY, 23 Feb — Mandalay Region Minister for Transport U Kyaw Hsan together with MPs of Mandalay Region Hluttaw U Hla Win and U Ko Lay inspected prevention of landslides and dredging of silt in Madaya



Township on 21 February. They viewed preventive measures at landslides near Thahtaygon Village where officials of Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems reported on

change of water course in January to erode the bank of Thahtaygon Village.

In meeting with local people, the minister said, "Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems is tak-

ing preventive measures of landslides as the water course is changing day by day. Mandalay Region government will fulfill the requirements of locals as much as it can."

At present, the de-

partment dredges sandbanks and silt with the use of dredgers and carries out construction of retaining walls at the banks.

*Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)*

## Rural people get library for raising reading skills

PYAWBWE, 23 Feb — The opening ceremony of "Po Pyae Sone Life University" library took place in Kontha Village in Pyaw-

bwe Township, Mandalay Region, on 22 February.

Mandalay Region Hluttaw representative U Tin Soe, local authorities and wellwisher U Po Htaung formally opened the new library.

The MP donated books, Head of Township Information and Public Relations Department U Phone Naing 110 books, Sayadaw Ashin Candajoti one chest drawer worth K200,000, Patron of Anadagonyi Monastery in Insein Township Bhaddanta Ghosita and administrator Bhaddanta Cakkinda one set of books on tri-Pitakat treatises worth



K300,000 and U Aung Soe-Daw Myint Myint Zaw and family of Ingon Tractor Station in Kyaukse Township books worth K300,000 to the library officials.

The library is 18 feet long, 12 feet

wide and 12 feet high ones-storey building.

U Po Htaung-Daw Myint Myint Htay of Phayangahsu Village in Thazi Township donated K3 million for construction of the building.—*Min Min Htwe (Pyawbwe)*



**Health staff vaccinate children under 15 against measles and rubella diseases at Wunna Theikdi ward administrative office in Zabuthiri Township on 22 February. KO PAUK (OKKAR MYAY)**

## S Korea summons Japanese diplomat to protest claim over islets



Protesters hold a demonstration in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on 23 Feb, 2015, against Japan's claim to a pair of South Korean-administered islets. Seoul and Tokyo are at odds over the sovereignty of the islets, which are called Dokdo in South Korea and Takeshima in Japan.—KYODO NEWS

SEOUL, 23 Feb — South Korea's Foreign Ministry on Monday summoned a senior diplomat from the Japanese Embassy to lodge a protest against the Japanese government's sending of a high-level official to represent it at an annual

ceremony held in western Japan during the weekend to press Tokyo's claim to a pair of South Korean-administered islets.

Kenji Kanasugi, minister at the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, was called in to the ministry in the morning. Lee Sang Deok,

director general of the ministry's Northeast Asian affairs bureau, delivered the protest to the Japanese diplomat.

In a related move, South Korea issued a statement on Sunday condemning Japan's such move as a "provocation" and calling

it "extremely deplorable."

Noting that it was the third consecutive year for Japan to send a high-level representative to attend the annual ceremony, held Sunday in Shimane Prefecture, the statement issued by the Foreign Ministry accused Japan of repeating its "regressive behaviour" of denying its history of imperialism and invasion of the Korean Peninsula.

The Japanese government sent Yohei Matsumoto, a Cabinet Office parliamentary secretary, to the 10<sup>th</sup> such event in Matsue, the capital of Shimane, where the prefectural government designated on 22 February as "Takeshima Day" in 2005.

At the ceremony, Matsumoto declared that Takeshima, as the islets are known to Japanese, is "an inherent part of Japan's territory under international law."

The islets, known as Dokdo in South Korea, are under Seoul's effective control and have been claimed by Japan.

Kyodo News

## Cambodia arrests outspoken environmental activist for visa overstay

PHNOM PENH, 23 Feb — A foreign environmental activist critical of the government was arrested on Monday for overstaying his visa, a local rights group and police sources said.

Am Sam Ath, a technical supervisor of rights group Licadho, said Alex Gonzalez-Davidson was arrested around 1 pm at a restaurant in Phnom Penh.

When approached for comment, Kirt Chantharith, spokesman of the national police, confirmed the arrest but could not provide details while other police sources said Gonzalez-Davidson, a Spanish national, was arrested for overstaying.

"He is now being held at the Immigration Police Department, opposite Phnom Penh International Airport, and he will be deported today," one of the police sources said.

The arrest came just hours after Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen

warned that the activist should leave Cambodia at least for a while or be blacklisted from the country.

Gonzalez-Davidson's visa expired on Friday and the government refused to renew it.

He vowed to remain in the country even after the expiration, in defiance of a warning from the authorities that he would face deportation.

Gonzalez-Davidson is legally entitled to stay for up to 30 days after the expiration date, but he has to pay a fine of \$5 per day.

Gonzalez-Davidson is a co-founder of Mother Nature, a nongovernmental organization that is actively protecting Cambodia's forests and conserving its environment. Most recently he was highly critical of a government plan to build a new hydropower station in the country's southwestern province of Koh Kong.

Kyodo News

## Philippine court enters plea of not guilty for US Marine accused of murder

OLONGAPO CITY, (Philippines), 23 Feb — A Philippine trial court on Monday entered a plea of not guilty on behalf of a United States Marine accused of killing of a transgender Filipino, in a case that could test the strength of security ties between the two allies.

The Marine, Joseph Scott Pemberton, who is being held at a US facility at the main Philippine army base, was charged with the murder of Jeffrey Laude, who was found dead on 11 October in a hotel in Olongapo City, outside a former US naval base.

A handcuffed Pemberton appeared in court, and sat quietly, flanked by US security officers. He did not say a word when the murder charges were read by a clerk, and left after signing some court documents.

The court entered a plea of not guilty for him.

Pre-trial hearings were set this week to mark evidence and list the witnesses to be called by each side.

"Finally the trial started," Laude's sister, Marilou, told journalists. "Finally, we can now seek justice for our brother."

The Laude family was not interested in an out-of-court settlement, said Harry Roque, a private prosecution lawyer. Another lawyer, Virgie Suarez, complained the media were not allowed into the courtroom.

"The situation inside was very intimidating," she said, adding that Pemberton was escorted by 16 American security personnel.

The marathon trial is expected to begin next month because the court has only one year to resolve the case, under a 1998 pact between the Philippines and the United States that

sets out the rules for the treatment of erring servicemen.

Pemberton's arraignment in December was postponed after his lawyers appealed to the justice department against the decision to indict him, but that appeal was thrown out.

A few anti-US activists gathered outside the court to demand justice for Laude. Dozens of news cameramen and photographers also waited for Pemberton, who was brought to court in a convoy of heavily-tinted SUVs.

Reuters



Activists display placards of US Marine Private First Class Joseph Scott Pemberton during a protest outside the presidential palace in Manila on 28 Oct, 2014.

REUTERS

## Thailand jails two on royal insult charge over play

Patiwat Saraiyaem (front L), 23, and Pornthip Mankong (R), 26, leave the Bangkok's Criminal Court after being sentenced on charges of lese majeste on 23 Feb, 2015. REUTERS



BANGKOK, 23 Feb — Thailand on Monday sentenced two people to jail terms of 2-1/2 years for insulting royalty in a university play, amid a campaign by the ruling military junta to stamp out perceived insults to the monarchy.

The country is still under martial law following a May coup and the convictions come at a time of heightened anxiety over the health of the revered but ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej, 87, and the issue of royal succession.

Thailand's lese-majeste law is the world's harshest and makes it a crime to defame, insult or threaten the king, queen or heir to the throne or regent.

Patiwat Saraiyaem, 23, and Pornthip Mankong, 26, were convicted on one count each of lese-majeste, which can carry a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison.

"Both suspects did violate the 112 law and receive a five-year prison sentence ... reduced by half," a judge said in delivering the verdict, referring to the specific portion of the Thai penal code.

The term was cut because both admitted to the charges, the judge added.

Patiwat, a university student, appeared in court shackled in leg irons. There was no sign of protest outside the court.

The pair were arrested last August over a satirical

play they put on more than a year earlier at Bangkok's Thammasat University.

The play, called 'The Wolf Bride', marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an October 1973 military crackdown on a pro-democracy student protest at the university. Set in a fictional kingdom, it featured a fictional king and his advisor.

In Thailand, lese-majeste complaints can be filed by anyone, against anyone, and are always investigated by police.

Pornthip, an activist who directed the play, told reporters before the verdict that she was not afraid of prison.

"No, I'm not afraid ... I learned many things (in prison) dancing, playing music and I made many friends," she said.

Political protests are banned under martial law, but that has not stopped some university students from staging public protests.

On Sunday, police arrested three people on the streets of Bangkok after they held a gathering to "exchange views" with the junta.—Reuters

## WORLD

## HSBC says Swiss scandal has brought 'shame' on bank



A HSBC logo is pictured at a Swiss branch of the bank in Geneva on 18 Feb, 2015. —REUTERS

LONDON, 23 Feb — HSBC (HSBA.L) reported a 17 percent fall in annual pre-tax profit and cut its profitability target, saying allegations its Swiss business had helped customers to dodge taxes had brought shame on the bank.

Results from Europe's biggest bank on Monday reflected the cost of past misconduct and of protecting itself against the impact of further scandals. HSBC said allegations about its Geneva-based arm, raided last week by Swiss officials and now the subject of a UK inquiry, had badly damaged its image.

"A number of us, myself included, think the practices of the private bank back in the past are a source of shame and reputational dam-

age to HSBC. I think shame would be reasonable noun to use," Chief Executive Stuart Gulliver told reporters.

Gulliver was himself thrust into the center of the scandal on Sunday when Britain's Guardian newspaper said he had sheltered millions of pounds in HSBC's Swiss private bank via a Panamanian company.

HSBC confirmed that Gulliver has a Swiss bank account and while there is no suggestion he broke any rules, the revelations come at a sensitive time. HSBC's chairman Douglas Flint is due to appear before British lawmakers on Wednesday to answer questions about the bank's alleged complicity in tax evasion. Gulliver is among the highest paid bank executives in Europe

with a pay packet last year amounting to 7.6 million pounds (\$11.7 million). This is down from 8 million in 2013 after his bonus was cut to reflect the bank's failure to stamp out misconduct.

HSBC's pretax profit of \$18.7 billion for 2014 was down from \$22.6 billion the year before and below the average analyst forecast of \$21 billion, after a \$3.7 billion bill for provisions, fines and settlements arising from a range of misdeeds, including attempted manipulation of foreign exchange markets. With the US Department of Justice yet to finish its forex probe, HSBC added an extra \$550 million to cover future forex-related fines and warned it could face a \$500 million bill to compensate US customers sold debt protection products.

Shares in the bank fell nearly 6 percent, their biggest intra-day drop since November 2011, to hit a near 2-1/2 year low. By 5.17 am ET they were down 5.9 percent at 569.4 pence.

"For all the recent media furor around potential conduct issues, it is the 'underlying' performance which, we believe, should be the greatest cause of investor concern, right across revenues, costs and impair-

ments," said Ian Gordon, analyst at Investec, which rates HSBC as a "hold".

Gulliver, appointed CEO in 2011, has sold or closed 77 businesses and axed over 50,000 jobs to try and simplify HSBC's sprawling business and boost earnings after higher capital requirements imposed since the financial crisis make it more difficult for large banks to make a profit.

Gulliver said the job was far from done, but rejected some calls from regulators or investors for breaking up big banks such as itself or JPMorgan (JPM.N).

"We're still on a journey to simplify the firm ... and I don't rule out that we might make more disposals.

"But I don't think the firm is too big to manage. You can see the validity of the business on the revenue side, even if the cost of running (a big bank) has clearly gone up," he said.

HSBC has increased the amount of capital it holds to absorb potential losses by over 60 percent since before the crisis. Gulliver said the bank intended to increase its core capital to between 12-13 percent from 10.9 percent currently, to give it enough reserves to deal with regulators' demands—Reuters

## Aging A-bomb survivors' group in Hiroshima to be disbanded

HIROSHIMA, 23 Feb — One of the largest groups of survivors of the 1945 atomic bombing of Hiroshima and their children will be disbanded at the end of March as it has become difficult for aged members to maintain its operation, group members said on Monday.

The roughly 500-member group of people exposed to radiation from the bombing and living in Fukuyama, Hiroshima Prefecture, as well as the second generation of such "hibakusha," made the decision at an extraordinary board meeting on Sunday by a close vote, with many of the board and members in their 80s and 90s.

The group is one of the largest in the Hiroshima division of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, known as Nihon Hidankyo.

Members have been discussing whether to maintain the association since last November due to the poor health of its board members, and the dissolution was decided by a vote of 12 to 11 at the meeting.

"The very narrow margin is an indication of our feeling," said Toshihiko Sato, 73-year-old secretary general of the group. "We do not want to dissolve but it cannot be helped," he said after efforts to have the second-generation hibakusha take over the running of the group ended in failure.

The group has organized a memorial ceremony for atomic bomb victims every year, kept a list of the dead and maintained the cenotaph in Fukuyama for such victims. It plans to consult with the local city government over the handover of such tasks.

Kyodo News

## Australian PM Abbott announces fresh security crackdown

SYDNEY, 23 Feb — Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott on Monday announced a national security crackdown that could deny welfare payments to people seen as potential threats, strip the passports of those with dual nationality and curb travel overseas.

Abbott, bruised politically and facing pressure for dramatic action after surviving a leadership challenge this month, unveiled the measures in the wake of a hostage siege in a Sydney cafe that left three dead in December.

He said some personal freedoms would have to be curtailed to fight a rapidly growing threat from radical groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

"For too long, we have given those who might be a threat to our country the benefit of the doubt," Abbott said. "We will never sacrifice our freedoms in order to defend them, but we will not let our enemies exploit our decency either."



Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott (front) walks into the Australian Parliament located in the Australian capital city of Canberra on 23 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

He was speaking a day after releasing a report on the siege, in which two hostages and a radical self-styled sheikh who had sought to align himself with Islamic State were killed. The conservative Abbott said new laws would remedy failings on the immigration, welfare, policing and intelligence fronts by clamping down on supporters of radicals, especially welfare recipients.

But one opposition leader called the measures an attempt by a "failing and flailing" leader to regain popularity by stoking community fear.

"It worked for him in opposition, he thinks it's going to work for him in government," Greens Party leader Senator Christine Milne told reporters. "Australians are not going to fall for it."

Although Abbott this

month fended off a leadership challenge from within his ruling Liberal Party, his poll numbers have languished at historic lows since early last year.

The laws will also target so-called "hate preachers", Abbott said, citing as an example the radical but non-violent Islamist group Hizb-ut-Tahrir.

He explicitly linked welfare to terrorism, accusing dozens of Australians fighting in Syria and Iraq of having been on the dole, and adding that payments to "individuals assessed to be a threat to security" could soon be cancelled.

"People who come to this country are free to live as they choose. Provided they don't steal that same freedom from others," he said. Australia, a staunch ally of the United States and its action against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq, has been on heightened alert for attacks by home-grown Islamist radicals since last year.

Reuters

## N Korea bans foreigners' partaking in April marathon amid Ebola woes

BEIJING, 23 Feb — North Korea will not allow foreign tourists to run in the streets of its capital this year for an annual marathon in April, amid continued quarantine measures against Ebola, a travel agency said on Monday.

"We are sorry to announce that we have been informed by our partners in North Korea that no foreign runners — amateur or professional — will be allowed to participate in this year's Pyongyang Marathon," said Koryo Tours, which has been specializing in tours to the isolated country for more than two decades.

Last year, North Korea for the first time invited foreign tourists to compete in the marathon, which has been held every year in mid-April on the occasion of the birth anniversary of North Korea's founder Kim Il Sung.

"At this stage, it is unclear exactly when the bor-

der will reopen for tourism," the Beijing-based travel agency said.

The announcement was made at a time of North Korea's ongoing implementation of strict travel restrictions for an unspecified period of time as part of efforts to block entry of the Ebola virus.

Since October, North Korea has been quarantining all foreigners arriving in the country for 21 days, regardless of their status and point of origin, although no Ebola cases have been confirmed in Asia.

North Korean media have indicated that the outbreak of the virus began as a biological weapon created by the United States.

In 2014, of about 1,000 participants in the Pyongyang marathon, more than 200 were foreign amateur runners, mostly from the United States and Europe.

Kyodo News

## PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 24 February, 2015

## No one can lie one's way out of a problem

By Myint Win Thein

**A** lie literally means a statement made by somebody who knows that it is not true, but lying can also mean poisoning the beliefs of others. Therefore, a lie can sometimes be very dangerous for a society. As members of

a society, people should not live a lie since no one can lie one's way out of a problem in the long run and it will not benefit anyone.

The first reason is concerned with the person who tells a lie. This is because the liar will have to make barefaced lies again and again to cover the first and original lie until he or she will no longer need to lie as there is no one left to believe him or her. If someone lies about his personal affairs, the person will be an outsider to his personal circle. Similarly, if someone lies about a society, he or she will end up as an outsider of the society.

Another reason is that liars will damage the trust of all members of a society. A society is built on trust in one another. Therefore, the trust among the members of a society is as important as the society itself. If a lie damages the trust in

the society and no one trusts one another in a society, the society will eventually collapse.

It can obviously be seen that lying is neither good for individuals nor the society as a whole. It is time that people stopped lying through their teeth about their society.

## Write for us

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

## Aspiration

Kyí Mun

To be or not to be

-William Shakespeare.

**Aspiration means** : A strong desire to have or do something: e.g. I didn't realize you have political aspirations.

**Aspiration to do something** : He has never had any aspiration to earn a lot of money.

**Aspiration for something** : What changes are needed to meet women's aspirations for employment ?

Kindly think about ASPIRATION in the following manner :

- **A** for **Ambition**
- **S** for **Strategy**
- **P** for **Purpose**
- **I** for **Inspiration**
- **R** for **Resources**
- **A** for **Audacity**
- **T** for **Tactics**
- **I** for **Implementation**
- **O** for **Objectives**
- **N** for **Never-Give-Up**

To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

-Poet- Tennyson

## AMBITION

Ambition means :

(1) Something that you want to do or achieve very much : e.g. *It had been her lifelong ambition. Political/Literary/ sporting ambitions.* Ambition of being or doing something; *she never achieved her ambition of becoming a famous writer, Aspiration to be/do something. His burning ambition was to study medicine.*

(2) The desire or determination to be successful, rich, powerful, etc; Motivated by personal ambition. e.g. *She was intelligent but suffered from a lack of ambition.*

-Oxford Dictionary

We have got to be ambitious enough to :

**"Dare to struggle and dare to win;**

**Dare to scale the heights !"**

**"Dare nobly, to will strongly and**

**Never to falter in the path of duty."**

In my opinion, we all should have a tremendous ambition to live and move and have our being in love, laughter and learning. We also should be ambitious enough to have a fierce combination of FAITH, FOCUS AND FIGHTING SPIRIT and, to be of SINCERE SERVICE to the PEOPLE, PLANTET AND PEACE. We all are bound to die sooner or later; so, we should make the most of our rare chance to be a human being of a great heart, a great head, and a great spirit. We should live simply but have high thinking. We should live plainly but struggle hard for a

good cause. We should be able to CONCEIVE, BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE for ourselves as well as for others, and also for posterity.

## STRATEGY

Some great minds have urged us to "BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND". The end means the GOAL. As soon as we have found out what our GOAL IN LIFE is, we should do a great thinking of what the MEANS WE HAVE IN OUR POSSESSION ARE TO EXECUTE OUR PLAN OF ACTION FOR ACHIEVING OUR SET GOAL IN LIFE. The Plan of Action, the means to our end, is nothing but our STRATEGY. So, our strategy is our ways and means of implementing all the requirements to achieve our goal. *In other words, our strategy is :*

- **THE CAUSE FOR THE EFFECT OF OUR GOAL;**
- **THE MEANS FOR THE END OF OUR PLAN, and**
- **THE SEED FOR THE FRUIT of our Total Revolutionary Struggle.**

In other words :

- \* **CAUSE** is **the STRATEGY,**
- \* **EFFECT** is **the OBJECTIVE;**
- \* **MEANS** is **the STRATEGY,**
- \* **END** is **the OBJECTIVE;**
- \* **SEED** is **the STRATEGY,**
- \* **FRUIT** is **the OBJECTIVE;**

## PURPOSE

**Purpose means :**

- (1) The intention, aim or function of something ; the thing that something is supposed to achieve; *Our campaign's main purpose is to raise money. The purpose of the book is to provide a complete guide to the university. A meeting was called for the purpose of appointing a new treasurer. The experiments serve no useful purpose (=are not useful). The building is used for religious purposes.*
- (2) Purposes : what is needed in a particular situation. *These gifts count as income for tax purposes. For the purposes of this study, the three groups have been combined.*
- (3) Meaning that is important and valuable to you. *Volunteer work gives her life (a sense of) purpose.*
- (4) The ability to plan something and work successfully to achieve it. Synonym is determination. *He has enormous confidence and strength of purpose.*

In forming a major definite purpose, we have got to have a burning desire and passionate will to do something or to get something or to achieve something. In thinking about what our purpose should be, we must think in terms of the results we want to get. First, think about what you want, and then formulate your purpose when you want to get it and how you are going to get it. Think in terms of your expectations.

## INSPIRATION

**Inspiration means :**

- (1) The process that takes place when somebody sees or hears something that causes them to have exciting new ideas or makes them want to create something, especially in art, music, or literature.
- (2) A person or thing that is the reason why somebody creates or does something.
- (3) A person or thing that makes you want to be better,

more successful, etc.

(4) A sudden good idea.

I think an aspiration should be fortified by some inspiration and then executed thoroughly and completely with the support of purposeful perspiration. A high aspiration can be achieved tremendously only by having a passionate inspiration practically implemented with immense, undefeatable perspiring work.

## RESOURCES

To translate your aspiration into reality, you have got to have competent skills, knowledge and adequate resources such as human, financial, technological, material and information resources. In other words, you must have adequate, and relevant means to be able to achieve the desired results.

## AUDACITY

An Aspiration must be tempered in the fire of audacity, and audacity means empirical bravery, courage, daring, fearlessness, temerity, valiance, virility and zeal. An aspiration must be executed with the steadfastness of ambition, the sustainable stamina of inspiration and the tremendous staying power of never quitting tenacity of purpose.

## TACTICS

Tactics are the actual moves executed in order to preserve oneself and to annihilate the enemy or the hostile forces. In business parlance, tactics are all about the moves; the moves are all about the customers; and customers are all about the value you deliver. So, tactics are the actions that create value, wealth, victory, success, peace and prosperity, for all the stakeholders.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Do it, fix it, improve it, innovate it, reinvent it. With a resolute determination, do everything that needs to be done to stay afloat, to survive, to succeed and to be sustainable as a strong force to be reckoned with. Alliance and alignment of forces or strengths are essential for a really dynamic execution of the strategic actions that are indispensable to prevail as a winning force and power in the market place. First, have a Plan of Action in place and then implement the plan of action or perish!

## OBJECTIVES

What do you want from life ? Do you have what it takes to get what you want from life ? Get a flaming desire in you heart, first. Then, definitely define your main purpose in life. Form your definite chief purpose in terms of vivid Goal and clear-cut Objectives. Manage your life-purpose by objectives. Firmly install the required milestones along the journey. Never miss the destination of your life-journey or the summit of your achievement mountain that you are climbing. Under any circumstances, go forward with tremendous aspiration, inspiration and perspiration.

## NEVER-GIVE-UP

In going forward, keep on keeping on no matter how hard the going may be. Take one step at a time, and keep on keeping on and on and on!

## CONCLUSION

**Dare to scale the heights !**

Ref: Oxford Dictionary

U Kyí Mun residing in Yangon is a consultant of NAING Group Capital Co.,Ltd.



NATIONAL



Lt-Gen Aung Than Htut lays a wreath to pay tributes to servicemen fallen in Laukkai region.—MYAWADY

Urns of bone ash from fallen . . .

(from page 1)

In the afternoon, fighting erupted between military columns and the insurgents near border post 127 and Tatmadaw personnel captured six bodies of insurgents and 4 M-22s. Three Tatmadaw personnel died and 7 others injured during

the fighting.

Kokang insurgents also attacked the convoy of prisoners from Ceaw prison, displaced locals and government employees leading to Lashio and withdrew when Tatmadaw columns responded with the help of air support. A staff from the correctional department, 44 female prisoners and a

Tatmadaw personnel were injured in the fighting.

In Yangon on Monday, families of 30 Comrades, Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu and wellwishers donated K 220,751,200, US\$ 2,500, S\$ 300, Baht 1,000 for Tatmadaw personnel discharged duties in Laukkai and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Tun

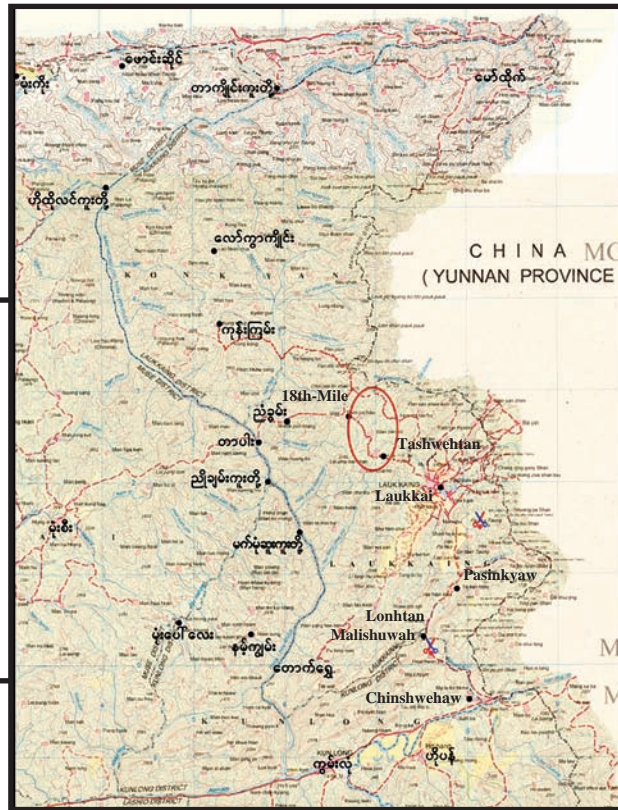
Tun Naung and officers accepted the cash and goods worth K 5,591,920. A total of K 754,655,700, US\$ 5,000, S\$ 300, Baht 1,000 and goods worth K 17,189,120 have been received since 14 February.

As stability has been restored in Laukkai area after Tatmadaw personnel combed the area for insurgents, local people who fled to border and Lashio are beginning to their villages. A total of 796 people including 539 people from 155 families and 257 migrant workers returned to Laukkai up to 22 February. Myawady

A map shows clashes between government troops and Kokang insurgents in Laukkai region

Union FM sends message of felicitations to Estonian counterpart

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Feb — U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to Her Excellency Ms Keit Pentus-Rosimannus, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Estonia, which falls on 24 February 2015.—MNA



Embassy of Switzerland to co-host the Solar Impulse Pre-arrival Press Conference

By Kaw The-ein (MNA)

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — The Embassy of Switzerland will co-host the Solar Impulse Pre-arrival Press Conference at the Ballroom 2 of the Sule Shangri-La Hotel in Yangon at 14:00 to 16:00 hours on 24 February 2015.

It is learnt that the Embassy sent the invitation to the focal Ministry of Transport to give the opening speech, Ministry of Information to attend



as guest of honour, as well as Union Ministers of the Government of the Union of Myanmar, Solar Impulse Global Partners and Host Partners, Diplomatic Corp,

Swiss Business Community, Swiss NGOs and Distinguished Guests and Media. The formal invitation shall be delivered in due time and the Embassy would be

most obliged if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs could render its kind assistance to enable the Solar Impulse 2 Pre-arrival Press Conference a successful event.

Commerce Ministry to abolish fines for export & import registration delay

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Directorate of Trade of the Ministry of Commerce will abolish taking fines for delay of extension of export and import registration.

The recent announcement of the ministry said the ministry's new order will take effect on 1st April, 2015.

The new order is a part of the government's trade policy reforms and is aimed at speeding up trading with overseas.

Under the order which announced in June last year, entrepreneurs faced fines of up to K30,000 for three-month delay.

GNLM

Acrylic paintings by Artist Win Lwin Aung on display at solo show in Yangon

By Khaing Thanda Lwin

YANGON, 23 Feb — A solo art exhibition entitled "Panoramic Dream" by Artist Win Lwin Aung went on display at the River Ayeyawady Gallery on 35th Street here on Saturday. "All paintings are acrylics painted on canvases but they haven't given any title yet. I want the audiences to name each paint-

ing during the exhibition period," said the 41-year-old artist.

"Visitors can see children's lives and dreams in his paintings."

On display at the gallery are twelve paintings, whose prices range from US\$500 in minimum to US\$3,000 in maximum, the exhibitor said. Some of the

proceeds from paintings sold will go to free summer painting course, he told the Global New Light of Myanmar.

Normally he spends K150,000 opening a course. Since 2013, he has been conducting free summer painting courses at Yangon's suburb South Dagon Township, with the aim of nurturing poor children with high passion. His efforts have turned out

around 50 children so far.

The artist is planning to open a training school for children and offer them free painting courses and related knowledge. He described children as the future of a country and painting as a medium that can bind hearts.

Regarding newblood artists, he said, "I am very impressed with their creations which are very expert in technical knowledge".

Graduated from the State School of Fine Arts (Yangon) in 1995, Artist Win Lwin Aung has cre-



ated almost 100 paintings with the use of all types of medium. His first solo show was conducted last

year. "Panoramic Dream" is his second solo show which is scheduled from 21 to 25 February.—GNLM

## Top British lawmakers deny wrongdoing over “cash for access” report

LONDON, 23 Feb — Two former British foreign ministers have been filmed offering their services to a fictitious Chinese company in return for thousands of pounds, re-igniting a damaging 2010 “cash for access” row just months before an election.

Malcolm Rifkind, a senior member of Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservatives who heads a committee scrutinising security policy, and Jack Straw, Labour’s foreign minister when Britain went to war in Iraq, both denied any wrongdoing.

The allegations, made in an investigation by the *Telegraph* newspaper and

Channel 4, echoed the 2010 scandal when three former ministers were filmed saying they could influence government policy for cash.

The Rifkind-Straw report prompted opposition Labour leader Ed Miliband to call on Cameron to ban lawmakers from paid directorship or consultancy work.

It could also further dent the public’s perception of Britain’s main political parties which has given anti-establishment rivals a boost before the May election.

In the footage, Rifkind tells the reporters he has “useful” access to any

ambassador, while Straw talks about how he worked “under the radar” to use his influence to change European Union rules for another company.

Both lawmakers have referred themselves to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and there was no suggestion in the report that they did anything illegal.

Rifkind told the BBC he had not accepted anything from the company and was not at the negotiating stage, but had just gone to the meeting to hear what they had to say.

Potentially compounding a perception that some lawmakers are out of

touch with the public, he also said parliamentarians needed to be able to supplement their income — which is twice the national average wage — if they are to attract the right calibre of person to the job.

“It is quite unrealistic to believe they will go through their parliamentary career being able to simply accept 60,000 pounds (\$92,000),” he said.

Straw, who had already announced he was stepping down in May and who was highly critical of colleagues during the 2010 expose, is shown saying he normally charges around 5,000 pounds a day for external work such



Conservative party leadership contender Malcolm Rifkind. —REUTERS

as speeches.

“I am mortified by the fact that I fell into this trap,” he told the BBC, saying he had made it clear

the discussions were about what he might do after the election and he had stuck to strict parliamentary rules.—Reuters

## France’s National Front seen leading local elections: poll

PARIS, 23 Feb — France’s far-right National Front party is still expected to lead first-round voting in departmental elections next month, despite a recent recovery in Socialist President Francois Hollande’s ratings, an Ifop poll for *Le Figaro* newspaper showed.

Marine Le Pen’s National Front would win 30 percent of the vote, ahead of a combined 28 percent for the conservative UMP and centrist UDI parties, with the ruling Socialist party in third place with 20 percent, according to current voting intentions. No other party would win more than 10 percent if the vote in France’s 101 departments were held now, the poll published on Sunday showed. The Ifop survey also indicated that 53 percent of National Front supporters planned to turn out to vote in the March elections, more than the 45 percent of UMP and 44 percent of Socialist party supporters.

Earlier this month, the Socialists won a hot-

ly contested parliamentary by-election in the Doubs, in eastern France, clinging on ahead of a National Front rival after the UMP candidate was eliminated in a first round. Frustration with parties on the mainstream right and left combined with rising Euroscepticism have bolstered support for the anti-immigrant, anti-EU National Front, which came first in last year’s European Parliament elections in France. A survey by pollster Odoxa in December found the National Front would win 28 percent of the vote, ahead of the UMP on 25 percent and the Socialist party on 17 percent.

An Ifop poll in Sunday’s *Le Journal du Dimanche* newspaper gave Hollande a 24 percent approval rating. While this was down from 29 percent in January, when he was praised for his handling of the Islamist militant attacks in Paris, polls late last year showed his popularity dropping as low as 12 percent.

Reuters



France’s National Front political party head Marine Le Pen arrives to attend a news conference at the party headquarters in Nanterre near Paris on 6 Feb, 2015.

REUTERS

## Ukraine military says cannot withdraw heavy weapons as attacks persist



Members of the Ukrainian armed forces ride military vehicles near Artemivsk, eastern Ukraine on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

KIEV, 23 Feb — Ukraine’s military said on

Monday it could not start withdrawing heavy weapons from the frontline in the east as pro-Russian

separatists had not stopped attacking government positions despite a ceasefire deal.

Over the weekend, rebels and the Ukrainian military said they had reached an agreement to begin the process of withdrawing weapons, as required by the ceasefire deal that came into effect on 15 February.

Violence has lessened significantly in recent days, but rebels twice shelled government troops overnight, spokesman Anatoly Stelmakh said.

“Given that the positions of Ukrainian servicemen continue to be shelled, there can not yet be any talk of pulling back weapons,” spokesman Vladislav Seleznyov said in a televised briefing.

Reuters

## Russian offers Iran latest anti-aircraft missiles: TASS

MOSCOW, 23 Feb — Russia has offered Iran its latest Antey-2500 missiles, the head of Russian state defence conglomerate Rostec said on Monday according to media reports, after a deal to supply less powerful S-300 missiles was dropped under Western pressure.

Sergei Chemezov said Teheran was now considering the offer, TASS news agency reported.

Russia scrapped a contract to supply Iran with S-300 surface-to-air missiles under Western pressure in 2010, and Iran later filed a \$4-billion international arbitration suit

against Russia in Geneva, but the two countries remain allies.

The United States and Israel lobbied Russia to block the missile sale, saying it could be used to shield Iran’s nuclear facilities from possible future air strikes.

There was no immediate response to Chemezov’s comments from Iran, Israel or the United States.

“As far as Iran is concerned, we offered Antey-2500 instead of S-300. They are thinking. No decision has been made yet,” Chemezov was quoted as saying.

Rostec includes state-

owned arms exporting monopoly Rosoboronexport, which has the sole right to export and import arms in Russia. The Antey-2500 was developed from the 1980s-generation S-300V system (SA-12A Gladiator and SA-12B Giant). It can engage missiles traveling at 4,500 metres per second, with a range of 2,500 km (1,500 miles), according to the company that makes it, Almaz-Antey.

The S-300 missiles have a 125-mile range and Russia has stoked tensions with the West by trying to sell them to Syria and other Middle Eastern countries.

Chemezov told report-

ers conflicts in the Middle East had helped boost Russian arm sales, according to TASS.

“I don’t conceal it, and everyone understands this, the more conflicts there are, the more they buy off weapon from us. Volumes are continuing to grow despite sanctions. Mainly, it’s Latin America and the Middle East,” he was quoted as saying.

Last year, Russian foreign arm sales totaled \$13 billion, he added.

Chemezov was sanctioned by the US government in April over Russia’s role in the Ukraine crisis.

Reuters

## Tough choice for US in Afghanistan's Kandahar Province



US Secretary of Defence Ash Carter delivers remarks at a question-and-answer session with US military personnel at Kandahar Airfield in Kandahar on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, (Afghanistan), 23 Feb — A once bustling military hub at the heart of America's war in southern Afghanistan, Kandahar Air Field seemed destined to quietly shut down this year as part

of a US withdrawal that had already thinned its numbers.

But, now, there appears

to be growing signs that fate might be postponed, if only for a bit, as the United States weighs slowing the pace of the drawdown from Afghanistan.

New US Defence Secretary Ash Carter visited the sprawling complex on Sunday, but kept reporters guessing whether he thought it should remain operational longer — keeping a US toe-hold in an important region of Afghanistan.

“My advice needs to go first to the president,” Carter told reporters during his first trip since swearing-in on Tuesday.

The prospect of exiting Kandahar altogether has sounded alarms in Washington, where Republican lawmakers critical of President Barack Obama's withdrawal strategy note

the region's importance to Taliban militants and the threat they pose.

“Kandahar is just not a spot on the map. That's the spiritual home of the Taliban,” Republican Senator Lindsey Graham declared at a Senate hearing this month.

The Islamic State's rise in Iraq following the US withdrawal is stoking anxiety about potential backsliding in Afghanistan as Obama pursues plans to cut the roughly 10,000 US troops by nearly half this year and then slash them further to an embassy presence at the end of 2016.

Kandahar Air Field is already a shadow of its former self, with just 2,600 coalition forces, down from a peak of 26,000. Still, it offers the United States important capabilities for ad-

vising Afghans and aiding counter-terrorism efforts.

The head of the Afghan National Army's 205th corps in Kandahar told Carter's delegation that America's contributions were vital, according to one US official. Major General Abdullah Hamid said “I need you to be here,” the official recounted, paraphrasing.

Carter praised US forces in Kandahar during his visit.

“We've given so much to create the conditions here that you now see in front of you where the Afghan security forces stand a real shot at making success stick,” Carter said.

“But it's still not done and it won't be done without what you are accomplishing here in Kandahar.”—Reuters

## Egypt court sentences prominent activist to five years in jail

CAIRO, 23 Feb — An Egyptian court sentenced prominent activist Alaa Abdel Fattah to five years in jail on Monday for violating a law that seeks to curtail demonstrations, legislation branded repressive by rights groups. The court erupted into chants of “Down, down with military rule” after the verdict was read out.

Abdel Fattah was a leading secular figure in the 2011 revolt that toppled vet-

eran autocrat Hosni Mubarak. A total of 25 defendants — including Abdel Fattah — had been sentenced to 15 years each in absentia for violating the law and before a retrial.

Earlier, the same court adjourned to 8 March the trial of two Al Jazeera television journalists who are charged with aiding a terrorist organization — a reference to the banned Muslim Brotherhood.—Reuters

## Syrian Kurds attack Islamic State in northeast

BEIRUT, 23 Feb — Syrian Kurdish forces advanced against Islamic State fighters in two separate attacks in northeastern Syria near the Iraqi border on Sunday, an organization tracking the war reported, compounding recent losses for the militant group in Syria.

The Kurdish YPG militia has been one of Islamic State's toughest enemies in Syria and last month flushed the group out of the town of Kobani with the help of US and allied air support and Iraqi Kurd-

ish reinforcements on the ground.

Hasaka Province in the northeastern corner of Syria is strategically important in the fight against Islamic State because it borders areas controlled by the group in Iraq.

In an attack backed by US-led air strikes, the YPG advanced to within 5 km (3 miles) of Tel Hamis, an Islamic State-controlled town 35 km (22 miles) southeast of the city of Qamishli, Kurdish official Nasir Haj Mansour said.

The YPG had decided to launch the attack after Islamic State reinforced its positions in the area with foreign fighters.

It is the latest example of coordination between the US-led alliance and the YPG in the fight against Islamic State, which has seized wide areas of Syria and Iraq and declared them part of a cross-border “caliphate”.

“Twenty-three farms and villages, big and small, have been liberated,” Mansour told Reuters by tele-

phone.

The Kurdish fighters were giving the coordinates of Islamic State targets to the US-led coalition — the same method used to call in air strikes in the battle for Kobani, he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict, said at least 12 Islamic State fighters were killed in the fighting and confirmed the advance by the YPG. Mansour said 20 Islamic State fighters had been killed.

Reuters

## French aircraft carrier begins Iraq operations: French sources

PARIS, 23 Feb — France's Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier has started military operations against Islamic State in Iraq, a French army source said on Monday.

“The carrier and its naval group has officially started missions as part of its Chammal operation in Iraq,” the source told Reuters in a reference to the name of the mission.

A second source said the carrier would be engaged for several weeks.

Le Figaro newspaper, which is accompanying Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian ahead of an official announcement he is set to make on the carrier on Monday, said the first reconnaissance and possible air strikes in Iraq took place in the morning.

France was the first



France's flagship Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier makes its way through the Mediterranean Sea while on mission on 26 March, 2011.

REUTERS

country to join the US-led coalition in air strikes in Iraq against Islamic State insurgents, who have also taken control of large parts of neighbouring Syria during the course of the civil war there. However, it has ruled out striking the group in Syria.

The carrier is accompanied by an attack submarine, several frigates, including a British anti-submarine frigate and a refueling ship. France has nine fighter jets, a maritime patrol aircraft and a refueling plane at its base in the United Arab Emirates as part of its Iraq mission. It also operates six Mirage fighter jets from Jordan.

With the Charles de Gaulle, there are now more than 3,000 French military personnel involved in the operation. — Reuters

## All trapped South Africa miners rescued after fire at Harmony Gold

JOHANNESBURG, 23 Feb — South Africa's Harmony Gold (HAR-J.J.) said on Sunday it had rescued all of the mine workers that were trapped underground following a fire.

Company spokeswoman Charmaine Russell said all 486 mine workers had been brought to the surface and that there would be a full investigation into the fire.

Reuters

## Australia begins training on armed US Reaper drones

SYDNEY, 23 Feb — Australian air force personnel have begun training on armed drones in the United States, Australian defense officials said on Monday, less than a week after Washington said it would begin exporting the controversial weapons system.

The US State Department last week said it would allow exports of lethal military drones under strict conditions, such as sales through government programmes and agreements by recipient nations to provide “end-use assurances.”

The details of the policy are classified. It follows a two-year review amid growing demand from US allies for the new category of weapons that have played a key role in US



A US Air Force MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle assigned to the 174<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, New York Air National Guard, takes off on a training mission at Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield, Fort Drum, NY in this 14 Feb, 2012 USAF handout photo obtained by Reuters on 6 Feb, 2013. — REUTERS

military action in Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen.

An Australian defence

department spokeswoman told Reuters no decision had been taken, but the

decision to send personnel to train on General Atomics MQ-9 Reaper drone is

likely to be seen as a signal it is considering a purchase.

“Unmanned aerial systems are an advancing technology with a proven record of providing ‘eyes in the sky’ in the Middle East region,” Australian Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Defence, Darren Chester, said in a statement.

“It would be remiss of Australia not to continue to develop our knowledge of this technology to ensure we are able to gain the greatest benefit from unmanned aerial systems and the best protection for our troops on future operations.”

Privately held General Atomics, which also makes the Predator drone, Northrop Grumman Corp, Textron Inc and other arms

makers have been urging Washington for years to loosen strict export curbs, which they say have cost them orders to Israel and others in the growing market.

Australia is a close US ally and last year committed to buying the US Navy’s MQ-4C Northrop Grumman-made Triton unmanned aircraft, alongside eight of Boeing Co’s P-8A Poseidon long-range spy planes. Britain is the only country now flying armed US drones, but France and Italy fly Reaper surveillance drones.

Buyers of military drones have to agree to strict conditions, such as sticking to international law and not using them for unlawful surveillance or crackdowns on citizens.

Reuters

## Nepal reassures Everest climbers on safety a year after deadly avalanche

KATHMANDU, 23 Feb — Nepal will arrange regular weather forecasts and tighten safety measures on Mount Everest to reassure climbers, an official said on Monday, after an avalanche killed 16 sherpas last year in the worst disaster in the history of the world’s highest mountain. The country’s climbing season starts in March and runs through May, attracting hundreds of climbers who are expected to ascend the 8,850-metre (29,035-foot) mountain by the normal South East Ridge route. Nepal is developing a system with meteorological officials to provide regular weather forecasts, and is discussing adoption of a GPS tracking system for climbers, tourism official Pushpa Raj Katuwal told reporters.

“All possible measures will be taken to make climbing safe and to minimise the danger of natural disasters like last year’s avalanche,” said Katuwal.

The disaster forced at least 334 climbers from around the world to abandon the climb last year. The measures apply to Everest, but not to a popular trekking route on nearby Annapurna, where an early winter blizzard and avalanches killed at least 29 people last October. The South East Ridge route on Everest passes through the treacherous Khumbu icefall and the South Col, pioneered by New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in their historic 1953 ascent. Ang Dorjee Sherpa, of the Sagarmatha Pollu-

tion Control Committee that is in charge of opening the climbing route, said the Icefall Doctors, a group of seasoned sherpa climbers, would start cracking the route from March. To avoid the spot where the avalanche struck last year, the route will detour about 40 metres (131 feet) right of the trail, Sherpa told Reuters. While less prone to avalanches, the new route lengthens the trip to Camp One by two hours, he added. Last year’s disaster highlighted the risks taken by sherpas who set the route, fixing ropes and placing ladders on the icy slopes and guiding foreign clients. The government has boosted insurance cover for sherpas to \$15,000 from \$10,000, with premiums to be paid by climbers.—Reuters

## Israel’s Jerusalem mayor wrestles Palestinian attacker in street

JERUSALEM, 23 Feb — Israel’s mayor of Jerusalem and his security guard wrestled a Palestinian attacker to the ground near city hall on Sunday after an ultra-Orthodox Jew was stabbed with a knife at a busy intersection.

Security camera footage showed mayor Nir Barkat, in a white shirt, walk towards the suspect together with his bodyguard and lunge at him, pinning him down on a pedestrian crossing before others took charge and detained the man. Before Barkat intervened, the distant but distinct black-and-white footage showed a man waving his arm in a stabbing motion and making contact with one individual and attempting to stab others as they waited to cross the road. When they realized what had happened,

the pedestrians ran clear.

The stab victim was rushed to hospital but was not seriously hurt, medical officials said. Police said the suspect, an 18-year-old Palestinian, did not have authorization to reside in Israel.

“My bodyguard took out his weapon and when he aimed at the terrorist, the terrorist dropped his knife and we immediately tackled him on the ground to make sure that he cannot continue with the terror attack,” Barkat told reporters shortly afterwards.

Barkat, 55, served as an officer in the paratroopers’ brigade. A former high-tech entrepreneur, he was elected as Israel’s mayor of Jerusalem in 2008. Jerusalem has been the scene of many at-

tacks in recent years. Most recently, late last year tensions rose again over access to a holy site in an Israeli-annexed part of the city where al-Aqsa mosque now stands and Biblical Jewish temples once stood. Eleven Israelis have been killed, including four rabbis and a policeman stabbed and shot by Palestinians in a Jerusalem synagogue. Twelve Palestinians have also been killed, including several of those who carried out the attacks.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem, in whose walled Old City the compound is located, as part of its capital. This status is not recognized abroad. Many world powers support the Palestinians’ goal of setting up their own future capital in East Jerusalem.—Reuters



A trekker stands in front of Mount Everest, which is 8,850 metres high (C), at Kala Patthar in Solukhumbu District on 7 May, 2014. —REUTERS

## Major Middle East shipping routes secure despite turmoil: US

ABU DHABI, 23 Feb — Shipping corridors used by Gulf energy exporters are not at risk from violence and political volatility in Yemen and the seizure of swathes of territory in the region by Islamic State militants, a senior US naval officer said on Monday.

Vice Admiral John Miller, Commander of US Naval Central Command, told a conference in Abu Dhabi that a “robust” US and international maritime presence was helping to

minimize threats to oil-producing countries in the region.

“As dynamic as the region is today, what we have seen over the past years is the maritime atmosphere has been safe, the free flow of commerce has been stable and secure,” said Miller, also Commander of US 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet/Combined Maritime Forces. He was referring to the Bab el Mandab, a narrow channel between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the Suez Canal,

one of the world’s busiest waterways which connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, and the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman, the world’s most important oil export route.

Miller said combined maritime forces — international naval coalitions based in Bahrain that jointly stage security patrols against militancy, piracy and smuggling — which he said operated 65 to 70 vessels on any given day, were sufficient.—Reuters

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

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

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**WEATHER REPORT**

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly 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 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2015:** Light rain are likely to be isolated in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region and Mon State, generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

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**Chinese farm trainee stabbed to death in Ibaraki Pref**

Mito, (Japan), 23 Feb — A Chinese agricultural trainee was stabbed to death in the city of Hokota, Ibaraki Prefecture, on Sunday, police said on Monday.

The technological trainee was identified as Sun Wenjun, 33, a resident of the city, the police said. Another 32-year-old trainee was also stabbed in the shoulder and suffered injuries, but he was able to raise the alarm after rushing to a house near the site of the incident and asking for help. Police officers and firefighters rushed to the scene after receiving a phone call at around 9:45 pm on Sunday from a local resident, who said a man had collapsed in farmland along an agricultural road.

A kitchen knife covered in blood had been found near the site, the police said. The injured man told police investigators that he and Sun were attacked by a group of foreigners who fled from the scene by a car, the police said.—Kyodo News

**Australia cyclone spares coal miners, farmers**

SYDNEY, 23 Feb — Commodities producers were spared the full wrath of a powerful cyclone that smashed into the east coast of Australia packing winds up to 285 kph (175 mph), but thousands of coastal residents on Monday faced a third day without electricity.

"We are doing everything we can to restore power," said Annastacia Palaszczuk, the premier of Queensland state, which bore the brunt of the storm that hit land on Friday with the highest-possible cyclone rating.

There had been concerns that Marcia would wreak havoc on Queensland's A\$25 billion commodity and agriculture sectors, but early assessments as the storm dissipated over land point to minimal disruptions caused by suspension of some ship loading and coal-hauling rail lines.

"I don't think that it's anywhere as severe as in other times of cyclones and rain events, but we are still getting reports in," said a spokesman for the Queensland Resources Council.



*A resident of the coastal town of Yeppoon is pictured on his street full of fallen trees after Cyclone Marcia hit northeastern Australia on 20 Feb, 2015.*

REUTERS

Aurizon Holdings, Australia's biggest coal rail freight company, said that its Blackwater corridor servicing many of Queensland state's Bowen Basin collieries — the world's single-largest source of coal used to make steel — reopened on Sunday.

However, its 228-km Moura corridor that hauls

coal from five mines to the Gladstone coastal industrial hub remained suspended. "Aerial inspections of track have been undertaken. However, on the ground inspections are being hampered because of road closures and inability to access by rail," Aurizon said.

Gladstone Ports Corp (GPC) said ship move-

ments had resumed on Saturday.

"GPC's emergency management planning and preparations have ensured that we have experienced minimal damage," it said.

Marcia's trajectory had indicated the impact on coal mining was expected to be less severe than in 2011, when Queensland missed its annual coal ex-

port target by 40 million tonnes following unusually heavy rains.

Sugar fields in Queensland, a key cane-growing state in the world's No 3 exporter of raw sweetener, were unscathed, an industry group said on Monday.

In fact, growers should benefit from the moisture brought by up to 300 millimetres of rain that accompanied Marcia, said Cane Growers Australia.

Elsewhere, Insurance Australia Group said it had received about 700 claims related to damage from Cyclone Marcia, with more expected as policyholders return to their homes and businesses.

Emergency crews were also cleaning up after a second cyclone last week ripped apart remote coastal communities in the far north coast of the Northern Territory.

Four remote indigenous communities were affected by the category 4 storm, which hit Elcho Island on Thursday night before turning inland.

Reuters

# 'Birdman' soars to Oscar heights on best picture win



Director Alejandro Inarritu accepts the Oscar for best picture for his film "Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)" during the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS

LOS ANGELES, 23 Feb — The dark comedy "Birdman" held up a mirror to Hollywood and its struggling actors and in return received the film industry's highest recognition on Sunday, the Academy Award for best picture.

Director Alejandro G Inarritu's story of a washed-up, former superhero actor attempting an improbable comeback on Broadway won four Oscars in its nine nominations, including best director, the second consecutive win in that category for a Mexican filmmaker.

Acclaimed for looking like one continuous shot through a Broadway theater and mixing reality with fantasy, the movie, Inarritu said, came from learning to be fearless in filmmaking.

"Fear is the condom of life. It doesn't allow you to enjoy things," Inarritu said backstage at the 87th Academy Awards.

The reward for the Fox Searchlight satire hews to an Academy tradition of awarding films that honour the entertainment industry, such as "Argo" and "The Artist" in recent years.

Britain's Eddie Redmayne won best actor with his painstaking portrayal of physicist Stephen Hawking in "The Theory of Everything", robbing "Birdman" lead and former superhero actor Michael Keaton of a big comeback moment.

Each of the eight best picture nominees went home with at least one award, but it was a disappointing night for "Boyhood," Richard Linklater's unprecedented 12-year endeavor to depict the simple story of a boy growing up, using the same actors. It won one Oscar out of its six nods.

Wes Anderson's colorful caper, "The Grand Budapest Hotel" proved popular among



Patricia Arquette speaks after winning the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role in "Boyhood" at the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.



Alexandre Desplat, winner for best original score for the film "The Grand Budapest Hotel," holds his Oscar at the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.

the 6,100 members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences who vote for the Oscars, winning four awards on its nine nominations.

"Whiplash," the independent film about an aspiring jazz drummer and his tough mentor from young director Damien Chazelle, won three Oscars.

The only box office blockbuster among the eight, the Iraq war drama "American Sniper" from director Clint Eastwood, also fell short with one win.

It was a night in which the controversy over the lack of diversity among this year's nominees was front and center. First-time host Neil Patrick Harris opened the telecast with a quip: "Tonight we honor Hollywood's best and whitest, sorry brightest."

But the race theme resonated in a more serious way too, when Common and John Legend got a standing ovation and made many in the audience cry with their performance of "Glory" from the 1960s civil rights drama "Selma."

It won best song, delivering the sole victory to "Selma," the film at the center of the diversity debate sparked by the exclusion of actors of color from the four acting categories. The nominations prompted a backlash on Twitter with the hashtag "#OscarsSoWhite."

"Selma" is now, because the struggle for justice is right now," said Legend in the aftermath of recent racially charged protests in America.

## ACTRESSES MOORE, ARQUETTE PREVAIL

All four acting award winners celebrated their first Oscars.

Redmayne, who won critical acclaim for his depiction of the various stages of disability endured by Hawking, who suffers from the motor neuron disease known as ALS.

"I am fully aware that I am a lucky, lucky man," Redmayne said. "This Oscar belongs to all of those people around the world battling ALS."

Five-time nominee Julianne Moore won best actress, also for her portrayal of an illness, as a middle-aged woman suffering Alzheimer's in "Still Alice."

"I read an article that said that winning an Oscar could lead to living five years longer," said the 54-year-old Moore. "If that's true, I'd really like to thank the Academy because my husband is younger than me."

Patricia Arquette won best supporting actress for her role as a struggling single mother in "Boyhood" and made an appeal for equal pay and rights for women in America in her acceptance speech.

J.K. Simmons, after decades as a character actor, won the best supporting actor as a monstrous music teacher in "Whiplash."

For the biggest televised event outside the sports world, the Academy aimed to attract young viewers who may not care much about the films but who could tune in for



Tom Cross accepts the Oscar for best film editing for the film "Whiplash" at the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.



Actor Eddie Redmayne accepts the Oscar for best actor for his role in "The Theory of Everything" during the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.

the musical acts.

A bridge between the young and old, pop diva Lady Gaga received a standing ovation for her medley of tunes from "The Sound of Music" before introducing that film's star, Julie Andrews.

Harris got laughs with his brave appearance in white underwear, a spoof of Keaton's opening scene in "Birdman." But some of his jokes fell flat and his debut got mixed reviews.

Ratings for the ABC telecast might also suffer because the show ran past midnight on the US East Coast.

Poland's "Ida" clinched best foreign-language film, and direc-



Julianne Moore accepts the Oscar for Best Leading Actress for her role in "Still Alice" at the 87th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 22 Feb, 2015.

tor Pawel Pawlikowski pushed the 45-second acceptance speech boundary to thank "my Polish friends who are in front of the TV, the crew who were in the trenches with us and who are totally drunk now, and you were fantastic."

Best documentary went to "Citizenfour," director Laura Poitras' feature about National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, the former government contractor who detailed the secret mass surveillance programs.

"The subject of 'Citizenfour,' Edward Snowden, could not be here for some treason," joked Harris.

Reuters

GENERAL

# Hakuho breaks silence on critical remarks

SAKAI, (Japan), 23 Feb — Yokozuna Hakuho broke his silence on Monday to explain himself for the first time since criticizing ringside judges for calling a do-over in his bout against ozeki Kisenosato at the New Year Grand Sumo Tournament in January.

Speaking at a press conference that got started about 15 minutes behind schedule at the Miyagino stable's dormitory in Sakai, Osaka Prefecture, Hakuho said he had only been speaking his mind. It was the first time he touched on the subject since making a brief apology in a TV appearance at the end of January.

"I am sure that everyone here has their own thoughts and feelings (about what I said), so I'd just say, think about it. I just spoke my mind," he said.

Pressed by reporters

## Japan's mixed ski jump team 3<sup>rd</sup> at worlds, team combined 6<sup>th</sup>

FALUN, Sweden, 23 Feb — Japan's mixed ski jumping team, led by two-time women's world champion Sara Takanashi and Noriaki Kasai, the oldest winner on the men's World Cup circuit, took bronze on Sunday, the fifth day of the Nordic World Ski Championships.

The Japan team also included Yuki Ito, who won the women's ski jumping silver on Friday, and Taku Takeuchi, who was fifth in Saturday's men's competition. The quartet totaled 888.3 points to finish third behind Germany, who earned 917.9 points for first, while Norway, with 915.6 points, was second.

Ito, who entered the event with Japan's only medal at the worlds, said she held her teammates back.

"We won a medal due to their efforts," Ito said. "I came into this event in better form than the last one, but I'm the reason we didn't get a different colored medal. I'm filled with regret."

In Nordic combined, Japan's team of Taihei Kato, Yoshito Watabe, Hideaki Nagai and Akito Watabe were sixth, 1 minute, 11.5 seconds behind Germany. Germany's Individual Gunderson champion Johannes Rydzek collected his second gold medal of the worlds. Norway was second in the team event and France third.

Kyodo News

about what he meant by the critical remarks, Hakuho said while looking away, "Well, how should I put it? Inside one's heart, there are some things one is unable to say." He made no further apologies.

In the bout in question on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the January meet, ringside judges called for a do-over after ruling that Hakuho and Kisenosato went over the edge at practically the same time. Hakuho beat Kisenosato outright in the rematch to claim the all-time record with his 33<sup>rd</sup> career championship.

But the Mongolian-born grand champion later said, "It was sumo even a child would understand" after reviewing the video footage.

He raised eyebrows further when he remarked that "the color of one's skin doesn't matter. When I am on the dohyo I have the spirit of Japan laced in my topknot. We are



*Yokozuna Hakuho speaks at a press conference in the western Japan city of Sakai on 23 Feb, 2015, on the occasion of the release of rankings for the Spring Grand Sumo Tournament in March. Touching on his criticism for the first time over ringside judges who had called a do-over in his bout against ozeki Kisenosato at the New Year Grand Sumo Tournament in January, Hakuho said he had only been speaking his mind.—KYODO NEWS*

all human beings."

Japan Sumo Association Chairman Kitanoumi later

reprimanded his stable elder Miyagino for the remarks.

Kyodo News

# Sharapova less fixated on top spot but eager to beat Serena

MEXICO CITY, 23 Feb — Regaining the world's top ranking in women's tennis is less important to five-times grand slam winner Maria Sharapova than it was when she was younger, but the Russian is eager to beat dominant player Serena Williams.

Williams beat Sharapova, who is ranked number two, to claim her 19<sup>th</sup> grand slam singles title in the Australian Open final last month.

Sharapova, who first earned the top spot as an 18-year-old in 2005, has not beaten Williams since 2004.

"I wouldn't say it's as much of a priority as when I was younger," Sharapova told Reuters on Sunday in a telephone interview from the resort town of Acapulco ahead

of the annual Mexico Open.

"She is definitely an opponent that I have had a lot of trouble playing against in the last 10 years and someone that I would love to beat," She said.

"I love facing her and I love that challenge. I'm definitely not shy of competing against her."

Sharapova, who will be playing in the Mexico Open for the first time, is the favorite to win against Italian Sara Errani, ranked 16<sup>th</sup> and America's 20<sup>th</sup> ranked Madison Keys in this week's matches in Acapulco.

"It's quite a tough deal. There are a lot of girls that have had big wins, even some that are not seeded, so I look forward to tough



*Maria Sharapova of Russia celebrates after defeating Eugenie Bouchard of Canada in their women's singles quarter-final match at the Australian Open 2015 tennis tournament in Melbourne on 27 Jan, 2015.—REUTERS*

competition and of course being the number one seed," Sharapova said.

Reuters

# Ronaldo's bullet header helps Real beat Elche

BARCELONA, 23 Feb — Cristiano Ronaldo's bullet header helped Real Madrid to

a 2-0 victory over a physical Elche side on Sunday as they extended their lead at the top

of La Liga to four points.

With Barcelona suffering a shock home defeat by Malaga on Saturday, Real had a chance to go four points clear and they grabbed it with second-half goals by Karim Benzema and Ronaldo.

Although the Portugal forward struck a curling shot against the post after four minutes, Real struggled to break down a team that worked hard and were guilty of some aggressive challenges.

Benzema was unlucky to have a spectacular overhead kick ruled out due to a questionable offside call but he did knock a loose ball in from



*Real Madrid's Karim Benzema (C) celebrates with teammates Gareth Bale (L) and Cristiano Ronaldo after he scored a goal against Elche during their Spanish first division soccer match at the Martinez Valero stadium in Elche, on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS*

## mitv Myanmar International

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- \* Inlay Lake: The Challenges
- \* News
- \* Travelogue "Chaug Tha at its peak period"
- \* Today Myanmar "New Comer; Swensen's (Ice Cream)"
- \* News
- \* Taste of Myanmar (Shan - Flat -Rice-Noodle Soup)
- \* A Lucky Boy
- \* News
- \* An Aficionado of Alluring Antiques
- \* News
- \* The Stories of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin)
- \* News
- \* Aesthetic Chinlone
- \* Kayah
- \* News
- \* Young Photographer (Thi Ha Aung)
- \* Next Weekend

## MRTV News Channel in Brief

(24-2-2015, Tuesday)

- |  |   |
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| <p><b>6:00 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw</li> </ul> <p><b>6:25 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Exercise</li> </ul> <p><b>7:00 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ Weather Report</li> </ul> <p><b>7:35 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Sports Games</li> </ul> <p><b>8:30 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Line News</li> </ul> <p><b>9:00 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ International News</li> </ul> <p><b>9:35 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MRTV'S Youth Programme</li> </ul> <p><b>10:35 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science and Technology Programme</li> </ul> <p><b>11:35 am</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary</li> </ul> <p><b>12:00 noon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News / International News / Weather Report</li> </ul> <p><b>12:35 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hluttaw Image</li> </ul> <p><b>1:10 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> </ul> | <p><b>2:00 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing &amp; Enjoy</li> </ul> <p><b>2:30 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Line News</li> </ul> <p><b>3:00 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ International News</li> </ul> <p><b>4:35 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2015 University Entrance Examination (Chemistry)</li> </ul> <p><b>5:35 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary</li> </ul> <p><b>6:00 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ Weather Report</li> </ul> <p><b>6:35 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Vision Part-2 (A) (Part-B)</li> </ul> <p><b>7:45 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People's Talks</li> </ul> <p><b>8:00 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ International News/ Weather Report</li> </ul> <p><b>9:00 pm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News/ International News/ Weather Report</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentary</li> <li>• Hluttaw Image</li> <li>• National Sports Games</li> <li>• TV Drama Series</li> </ul> |
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close range after 56 minutes.

Ronaldo then sealed the victory with a powerful header into the top corner from an Isco cross after 70 minutes.

It was a welcome goal for Ronaldo who has suffered a dip in form since Christmas following an electrifying start to the season and has now moved joint third in Real's all-time list.

The Portuguese now has 290 goals and is level with Carlos Santillana, while Raul is out in front on 323.

"We're trying to redis-

cover our best form and we know that in a short amount of time everything can change," Real goalkeeper Iker Casillas, who celebrated his 500<sup>th</sup> La Liga match, told reporters.

"We received a lot of criticism but now the situation is more relaxed but this situation is normal playing for Real Madrid. "Our attitude has always been right and it is usual that you have ups and downs in form. When you are down it is when you have to be more united and that has been the case.—Reuters

# Track & Field, body-building continue in National Sports Festival

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Feb — Deputy Minister for Sports U Thaung Htaik presented the first prize to Myo Min Paing (Nay Pyi Taw Council Area), second to Soe Min Shwe (Rakhine) and third to Saw Has Shee (Mon) in the men's pole vault event in the National Sports Festival on Monday.

The deputy minister viewed the match between Shan State and Ayeyawady Region in the men's Futsal event at Futsal indoor stadium.

Today, women's basketball was held at basketball court, men's and women's triathlon events at Wunna Theik-di swimming pool, and men's body-building and women's physical culture contests at Paunglaung Gymnasium in Pyinmana Township. Salai Kyaw Min (Yangon) stood first in the above-75 kilo body-building event and Nang Loung Kham (Mandalay) first in women's 5 feet and 3 inches high event.—MNA



*Theingi Tun of Ayeyawady stands first, Panhsai Kha Karant of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area second and Tin Win Kyi of Mandalay third in women's triathlon event.—MNA*



*Vice President of Myanmar Women's Sports Federation Daw L Khun Yi greets winners in women's physical culture contest. MNA*

Medal tally in 4 <sup>th</sup> National Sports Festival 2015 on 23-2-2015		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
	Yangon	70	45	31	146
	Mandalay	36	36	47	119
	Bago	17	19	23	59
	Rakhine	11	13	23	47
	Magway	11	8	10	29
	Kayin	11	7	6	24
	Ayeyawady	10	13	25	48
	Nay Pyi Taw	8	7	13	28
	Mon	7	15	17	39
	Kachin	6	7	11	24
	Taninthayi	5	9	20	34
	Sagaing	5	8	10	23
	Kayah	5	8	8	21
	Shan	3	12	20	35
	Chin	2	1	-	3

# Kane rescues late point for Spurs, Liverpool win

LONDON, 23 Feb — Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane stoked controversy with a goal six minutes into added time to rescue a 2-2 home draw with West Ham United while Liverpool's top-four hopes were boosted by a 2-0 win at Southampton on Sunday.

Kane's status as the Premier League's man-of-the-moment looked fully justified when he burst into the box to win a last-gasp penalty at White Hart Lane and stepped up to convert on the rebound after his initial effort was parried.

As well as sending the home crowd into raptures, it completed a superb comeback for the hosts who had trailed 2-0 to goals from Cheikhou Kouyate and Diafra Sakho, before Danny Rose's scrappy effort heralded a late cavalry charge.

There was no need for late heroics by Liverpool, who took the lead after three minutes at St Mary's through Philippe Coutinho's stunning curler that caught the underside of the crossbar on its way past Southampton keeper Fraser Forster.

The match was dripping with controversy, however, as the hosts had three penalty appeals turned down in the driving south coast rain while Liverpool keeper Simon Mignolet handled outside the area and escaped a red card. The three points that lifted Liverpool into sixth above Tottenham were wrapped up when Raheem Sterling converted from close range with 17 minutes remaining. Liverpool are now a point clear of Tottenham on 45, one behind Southampton and two off fourth-placed Manchester United who occupy the final Champions League qualifying spot. After a bright start at White Hart Lane, Spurs fell behind, as they have done frequently this season, when Kouyate drilled his header past Lloris midway through the first half. The visitors doubled their lead when Sakho arrived at the far post to squeeze Mark Noble's cross back across goal and into the net after 62 minutes.

Spurs, however, have now recovered 16 points from losing positions this

season and the fight back began when Adrian fluffed a punch clear, allowing full-back Rose to send a bouncing effort looping into the net. Spurs were rewarded for their late siege when Alex Song put his arm on Kane as the forward burst into the box, giving him the chance to tumble for a penalty, which he dispatched at the second attempt.

The controversial part of Tottenham's leveller was that it arrived after the allotted five minutes of injury time, leaving West Ham manager Sam Allardyce to fume. When asked if referee Jonathan Moss should have blown for full-time as soon as Kane missed the initial penalty Allardyce told reporters: "The answer to that is yes. But he wouldn't be brave enough to do that."

Dubious penalty decisions were the order of the day at Southampton where Liverpool got the benefit of three contentious calls.

Filip Djuricic was twice felled in the area either side of Coutinho's sublime opener while the sense of injustice among the home fans

intensified when Mignolet appeared to handle outside his box and yet survived unpunished. The game had not needed any extra spice as Liverpool started with former Southampton players Adam Lallana and Dejan Lovren, who both left in acrimony in the close season and whose every touch was loudly booed. A third penalty appeal, this time for handball by Liverpool's Emre Can, was turned down before the break and the

game was wrapped up when Sterling made the most of a Matty Targett slip to drill low into the net, allowing Liverpool boss Brendan Rodgers to heap praise on his players. "To win the game was a giant step," he said on Sky Sports. "We've beaten Southampton home and away, that's a sign of how well we're playing."

Earlier, bottom club Leicester City came painfully close to pulling off a surprise comeback win at

Everton but were pegged back to draw 2-2 when Romelu Lukaku's header was deflected in by Matthew Upson with two minutes remaining.

Steven Naismith had given 12<sup>th</sup>-placed Everton a second-half lead before goals from Leicester's David Nugent and Esteban Cambiasso turned the match around but they could not hold on and are now four points adrift at the foot of the table.—Reuters



*Southampton v Liverpool, Barclays Premier League, St Mary's Stadium, Liverpool's Dejan Lovren in action with Southampton's Eljero Elia on 22 Feb, 2015.—REUTERS*

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