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THE WRITING IS ON THE WALL U BA GYAN EXHIBITION REFLECTS NEW POLITICAL FREEDOM



Enthusiasts enjoying excellent works of cartoonists at U Ba Gyan cartoon exhibition on 13th street in Lanmadaw Township. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Aye Min Soe

MORE than 300 cartoons have been exhibited in an annual showing on 13th Street in Lanmadaw Township, Yangon, marking the centenary of the birth of U Ba

Gyan, the late pioneering cartoonist widely celebrated in Myanmar.

Yangon's 13th street, known as U Ba Gyan Street when the cartoonist was living there, will be flanked by 318 cartoons from 24 to 26 November.

As spectators throng to the exhibition at night, the organisers of the exhibition are distributing ballots to cartoon enthusiasts to vote for the event's best cartoons.

"The cartoons this year show more freedom and really reflect the

feelings of the people, more so than the exhibition in 2013 that I visited," said U Aung Thet Oo, 50.

The subject matter of many of the exhibited cartoons touches on politics and the election, while others highlight chaos in the daily

life of the people.

"My favourite cartoon is the one where someone cries out 'No one is above the law. But, his voice comes out above the law book'," he added.

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Ethnic ceasefire signatories eye all-inclusive political dialogue

Ye Myint

ETHNIC ceasefire signatories hope to see the upcoming political dialogue include non-signatory groups, according to an ethnic armed organisation representative of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC).

As a compromise, the government and ethnic organisations reached a tentative agreement to invite non-signatories of the National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)

to meetings during the framework-drafting process as well as political dialogue, granting them the status of special invitees, said UPDJC ethnic minority representative Khun Myint Tun.

The government previously approved of non-signatories taking part in the future peace process as observers, but ceasefire signatories wanted them to be granted equal status, added Khun Myint Tun, who is also the chairman of the Pa-O National Liberation Organi-

sation, an NCA signatory.

Despite being described by the Myanmar government as "all-inclusive", several ethnic groups including the Shan State Progressive Party, Kachin Independence Organisation, New Mon State Party and Karenni National Progressive Party refused to sign the NCA, said the chairman.

"Some believe the term 'all-inclusive' refers to the inking of the ceasefire, while others believe it refers to political dialogue,"

he said. According to the Pa-O leader, special invitees will be allowed to have the right to speak at the meetings, but they will not have decision-making privileges.

Whether or not the non-signatories receiving special invitee status participate in the future peace process, the two sides' decisions will be submitted for approval by the next Joint Implementation Coordination meeting, slated for next month in Nay Pyi Taw, said U Hla Maung Shwe, senior adviser to the

Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC).

Prior to seeking the approval at the Nay Pyi Taw meeting, the framework should be drafted, added U Hla Maung Shwe, who is also a government representative in the UPDJC. According to the senior adviser, there has been no conflict with five of the seven ethnic armed groups that did not sign the NCA, though there are still pockets of conflict with two groups—the SSPP and KIA.

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Pathana treatises recitation completed in Ottarathiri

RECITATIONS of the Pathana treatises were completed at the Maha Thakyananthi Buddha Image in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, early Tuesday morning. The recitations were a pre-event to the enshrinement and consecration ceremonies for the revered Image.

The completion ceremony was attended by Sayadaw Abbot Bhaddanta Kavisara of Mahaw-

ithutayama Zaykon Monastery in Nay Pyi Taw's Pinyin Township and members of the Sangha. The Sangha members were paid respects and given gifts by attendees. The ceremony was also attended by Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Than Htay and Col Min Naung, Nay Pyi Taw Vice Mayor U Than Kyaw Htoo, and other senior officials.—*Ottara District IPRD*

Model paddy plot harvested in Monglon



Staff of Agriculture Department measure model plot of monsoon paddy in Monglon, Shan State. PHOTO: MYINT AUNG

MONSOON paddy model plot No 1 in Monglon town, Shan State was harvested on Sunday. The harvesting was observed by local officials of the Agricultural Land Management and Statistics Department, the Agriculture Department, township authorities and local farmers.

The model field is owned by farmer U Ba Lwin. Officials checked the yield for records and confirmation.

The field grows Khaukshan paddy strain and provided a yield of 115.35 baskets per acre, according to an agriculture official. (1 basket = 33.33 kg)
Myint Aung

Shwepaukkan Bridge at 45 percent completion

THE Shwepaukkan Bridge, currently being built by the Ministry of Construction at the Shwepaukkan new settlement in the North Okkalapa Township in Yangon is 45 percent complete, according to a construction site official.

The crucial bridge will connect Bagan Road in the Shwepaukkan new settlement with Kyansittha Road in East Dagon

Myothit Township in Yangon.

The four-lane bridge, which crosses the Ngamoeyeik creek, will be 242 metres in length and 40 metres wide. It will have pedestrian lanes on both sides.

After the completion of the bridge, locals will be able to take direct buses between North Okkalapa and East Dagon Myothit townships.—*Tun Win (IPRD)*

Mathoe robes weaving contests held at famous pagodas



Local people attend Mathoe robe weaving contest with participation of religious associations at Kaba Aye Pagoda on 25 November. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

The 31st Mathoe robe weaving contest took place at Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday, with participation of nine religious associations.

The robes will be offered to

Buddha images at the pagoda tomorrow morning.

Similar contests were held at Botahtaung Pagoda in Botahtaung Township, Shwephonepint Pagoda in Pazu-

ndaung Township and Kaba Aye Pagoda in Mayangon Township.

Officials viewed participation of weaving teams at the looms yesterday evening.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Examination results announced at Yadanabon University, Mandalay

RESULTS of the first and second semester final examinations for second-, third- and fourth-year and honours classes were announced at Yadanabon University in Mandalay on 5, 18 and 19 November respectively.

Announcements also came

from Myingyan Degree College, an affiliate of Yadanabon University.

The examinations were a part of the current 2014-2015 academic year. The 2015-2016 academic year begins on 10 December.

Yadanabon University has announced that first-year students can enrol from 3 December until no later than 30 December, as they must attain 75 percent attendance to be able to sit for the final examination.—*Thiha Ko Ko*



Students searching their names at examination results of Yadanabon University. PHOTO: THIHA KO KO

Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends ASEAN army chiefs meeting

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win attended the 16th ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting (ACAMM-16) at the Siam Kempinski Hotel Chandra Hall in Bangkok, Thailand, on Monday.

The Commander-in-Chief (Army) of the Royal Thai Armed Forces gave the event's opening remarks. The meeting was also attended by the army chiefs of nine ASEAN countries.

During the meeting, the

group discussed the readiness of ASEAN armies to respond to various possible challenges over the next five years.

Vice-Senior General Soe Win and his wife attended the dinner hosted by the Commander-in-Chief (Army) of the Royal Thai Armed Forces and his wife on Monday.

The Philippines will host the 17th ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting (ACAMM-17) and 26th ASEAN Armies Rifle Meet (26th AARM) in 2016.—*Myawady*



Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends 16th ASEAN Chiefs of Army Multilateral Meeting (ACAMM-16). PHOTO: MYAWADY

Union minister hails managed floated exchange rate as government achievement

A MANAGED floated exchange rate is one of the achievements of the government, and bottom-up plans are measures that can benefit the people, Union Minister for Dr Kan Zaw said at the Py-



Union Minister for Dr Kan Zaw. PHOTO: MNA

idaungsu Hluttaw session on Tuesday.

Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw was responding to questions concerning a report on the implementation of national planning in the second half of the 2014-15 fiscal year.

The union minister explained the inflation rate used in the report, saying a representative had pointed out that the inflation rate stands at 5.9 percent.

The union minister said this is an estimated inflation rate for the period from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015 based on the calculations of the Central Statistical Organisation and a team led by a deputy governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar.

He added that the inflation

rate is calculated not based on gold prices or the US dollar exchange rate but on the prices of over 120 commodities using 2006 as the base year.

However, the inflation rate may vary according to the method of calculation, the union minister said.

Outside sources reported that inflation in Myanmar was at over 10 percent in July and August 2015, he said.

Reforms in the financial sector and the central bank have been carried out in accordance with the 10 points of the Framework for Economic and Social Reforms, and one of the achievements of Myanmar's reforms was the managed float system for the exchange rate, which had

been set for over four decades, according to the union minister.

Another step taken after the managed float system was the central bank's reform push to make it independent within 36 months, the union minister said.

It has been over one year since reforms for the central bank began, and those measures are still being implemented, he said.

The union minister said the government has adopted bottom-up plans according to the instructions of officials.

"Plans are developed to cover the needs of local people, up to and including Hluttaw representatives from townships, development supporting committees and development affairs committees.

The government has been adopting bottom-up plans for a number of years," he said.

In response to another question, the union minister said Myanmar is one of the least-developed nations in the region but is not the poorest.

Myanmar, officially informing the UN that it wants to graduate from its Least-Developed Country status, has fulfilled two out of the three relevant requirements, and efforts are also being made to graduate from LDC status by the two vice presidents.

"Myanmar can graduate from LDC status in the 2020-21 fiscal year, according to the requirements of the graduation process, the union minister said.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Collision with bird suspends Dragonair flight

A DRAGONAIR flight bound for Hong Kong was forced to land as it was struck by a bird shortly after takeoff yesterday, according to an official from Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Limited.

The Airbus B-HTF A-321 returned to Yangon Airport at about 1:40 pm after the bird hit the windshield and caused a

crack 15 minutes after takeoff.

"We arranged hotel accommodations for passengers and [gave] some passengers with an alternate flight, with further arrangements for ensuring convenience of remaining passengers," an airline representative told the *Myanmar News Agency*.

The flight was carrying 131

passengers—30 Myanmar citizens and 101 foreigners. The passengers were accommodated at the Sule Shangri-La Hotel.

Repairs to the damage caused by the bird are underway at Yangon Airport. The status of the bird that collided with the aircraft could not be confirmed.—*Zawgyi (Panita)*



An airplane of Dragonair. PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)

The writing is on the wall

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Sint Sint Pyone, 27, who has attended the exhibition for the last three years, said she loves the satirisation of the ministers. One cartoon recounted a government minister's suggestion to farmers to eat fewer meals per day in order to hasten their ability to pay back loans from the government.

U Ba Gyan was born in 1902

and passed away in 1953.

Ba Gyan's cartoons covered a wide variety of topics and events, ridiculed human frailties such as discourtesy, dishonesty, snobbery, arrogance, inefficiency, sloth and aspects of the human condition.

The annual exhibition was suspended for several years after the 1988 crisis and revived in 2002.

Ethnic ceasefire signatories eye all-inclusive political dialogue

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He expressed his optimism about the ongoing talks between the government and SSPP that good things will happen for both sides.

Following tripartite talks between representatives of political parties, the government and ethnic ceasefire signatories, a framework for political dialogue is expected

to be set up by 14 December, with the first round of political dialogue is slated to be held no later than 13 January.

According to the terms of the ceasefire agreement between the government and eight ethnic armed groups, both sides are required to draw up the framework within 60 days of the signing and to hold political dialogue within 90 days.

Thai constitution could give free rein to military abuse, says rights group

BANGKOK — A proposal by Thailand's junta for a provision in the constitution exempting the military from prosecution would allow the armed forces to commit abuses with impunity, a rights group said yesterday.

The junta, known as the National Council for Peace and Order, has suggested the inclusion of a section that says if military force is "carried out with honest intention" in the interest of national security then military personnel should be exempt from prosecution. "A blanket immunity clause in Thailand's new constitution would allow the military to commit abuses without fear of prosecution," said Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"Given the Thai military's long record of human rights abuses, this would effectively be giving soldiers a licence to kill."

The junta took power in a May 2014 military coup and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution after the previous one was torn up. But the draft was re-

jected in September because of contentious points including a proposal for a national reform committee dominated by the military that allows security forces to intervene in a crisis. A new committee is working on another draft.

Since taking power, the junta has issued directives that have

"A blanket immunity clause in Thailand's new constitution would allow the military to commit abuses without fear of prosecution."

Brad Adams
Asia director at
Human Rights Watch

largely stifled dissent including barring political discussions and debate. The military has been accused by rights groups of abuses including the detention of opposi-

tion politicians, activists and some journalists in the weeks following the 2014 coup at secret military facilities. They were later released. It has also set up military courts to handle national security cases. The military has defended its actions as necessary to re-establish order.

The coup was the latest episode in a decade of conflict which has broadly pitted the Bangkok-based middle class and traditional establishment, dominated by the royalist military, against supporters of ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his sister, former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The army toppled Thaksin in 2006. Yingluck was removed from power in May 2014 after a court found her guilty of abuse of power. Days later, the army staged a coup after months of sometimes violent street protests in Bangkok aimed at ousting her government.

Scores were killed in a bloody 2010 crackdown by the army on thousands of pro-Shinawatra "red shirt" protesters.—*Reuters*

European firms most interested in Singapore-Malaysia high-speed rail

SINGAPORE — Singapore and Malaysia jointly said yesterday that 98 companies and consortiums, more than half of them from Europe, responded to the two government's request for feedback on a proposed project to link the city-state and Kuala Lumpur by high-speed railway.

Of the total, 56 were from Europe and 31 from East Asia, including 13 from Malaysia and four from Singapore, while the rest were from North America, Oceania and the Middle East.

The "request for information exercise," launched on 7 October, was aimed gauging market interest and getting industry opinion on the commercial and technical aspects the project in order to facilitate bilateral talks on it and the subse-

quent tender process.

In their joint news release, Singapore's Land Transport Authority and Malaysia's Land Public Transport Commission said they will "study the responses thoroughly and consider how the project's commercial model and procurement approach can be further improved."

They said they "expect to finalise the commercial model and procurement approach of the project by next year."

As envisaged, the 350-kilometre-long railway would cut travelling time between the two cities from the current several hours to about 90 minutes.

Japan has shown strong interest in promoting its Shinkansen bullet train technology for the project.—*Kyodo News*

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Japan seeks calm response to Turkey's downing of Russian warplane



Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga attends a press conference in Tokyo on 25 November 2015. Touching on the shooting down of a Russian aircraft by Turkey, Suga called on the both parties to respond to the incident calmly while indicating his hope that the international community will address the issue of terrorism in a united manner.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

TOKYO — The Japanese government on Wednesday called on Russia and Turkey to react calmly to disputes over the latter's downing of a Russian fighter jet that had reportedly entered Turkish airspace from Syria the previous day.

"We would like the countries concerned to respond calmly based on the facts," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said at a press conference. "We expect the international community to remain united against terrorism."

The top government spokes-

man declined to comment further in the absence of details about the incident. "We will closely monitor the situation," he said.

The incident could undermine international efforts to defeat Islamic State militants operating in Syria and Iraq, observers said, due to the confrontation between Russia and the key North Atlantic Treaty Organisation member fighting separately in the war in Syria. On Tuesday, Turkey's military said two Turkish F-16 fighters shot down the Russian warplane after it crossed into Turkish

airspace and ignored 10 warnings in five minutes to return to Syrian airspace.

However, Russian President Vladimir Putin was quoted by Russian media as saying that the Su-24 frontline bomber posed no threat to Turkey as it was on a mission to bomb Islamic State targets. Putin denied air intrusion and condemned the Turkish action as being "a stab in the back." He warned the attack would have "serious consequences" for Russian-Turkish relations.

In Washington, US President Barack Obama had telephone talks Tuesday with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and affirmed the need to de-escalate tensions with Russia.

Obama expressed "US and NATO support for Turkey's right to defend its sovereignty," the White House said in a statement, referring to the 28-member military alliance that includes Turkey and the United States as well as European countries.

"The leaders agreed on the importance of de-escalating the situation and pursuing arrangements to ensure that such incidents do not happen again," the statement said.—*Kyodo News*

Singapore slashes publication bans, but not for Jehovah's Witnesses

SINGAPORE — Strait-laced Singapore has slashed the number of publications it bans to 17 from a previous 257, allowing some communist and adult topics, but kept a prohibition on Jehovah's Witnesses publications. Newly permitted books include "Fanny Hill", a British novel published in 1748 said to be the first erotic novel in English, and "The Long March", a Chinese communist history.

A number of the de-gazetted publications were out of print or were permissible under today's content standards, the Media Development Authority said in an emailed statement explaining the changes.

Adult magazines such as Playboy, Penthouse and Hustler remain banned, as are publications by the Jehovah's Witnesses Church produced by its Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and the International Bible Students Association.

The church's publications sit in the banned list alongside "hardcore pornographic publications" that "depict female models in sexually suggestive poses and their genitals", the government agency said.—*Reuters*

Bangladesh detains 2 political activists for IS propaganda

DHAKA — Police have detained two members of Bangladesh's biggest religion-based party on suspicion they were involved in Islamic State propaganda, including one who called himself "Jihadi John", a police commissioner said yesterday.

The two members of the Jamaat-e-Islami Party who were paraded before reporters are being investigated for links with Islamic State which has claimed responsibility for a series of attacks in Bangladesh including the killing of two foreigners.

Nahid Hasan was picked up from Dhaka overnight on suspicion that he was spreading hate and violence on behalf of Islamic State using the pseudonym Jihadi John on a Facebook page, police joint commissioner Monirul Islam said.

"We are verifying whether he actually had contacts with the

radical group," Islam said.

The government has consistently denied that Islamic State has a presence in the country and instead blamed religious groups such as the Jamaat for instigating violence in the Muslim but secular nation of 160 million people.

Police said the second man arrested in the overnight raid was believed to be behind text messages threatening writers and university teachers who have been targeted by unknown assailants this year.

Tensions have been rising in Bangladesh over the trials of Islamists for war crimes during its struggle for independence in 1971 and some leaders of the Jamaat as well as its ally, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, have been executed.

Critics say the government is using the war trials to settle political scores.—Reuters



Police officers in Dhaka detain Nahid Hasan, a member of Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh's biggest religion-based party, on suspicion he was involved in Islamic State propaganda, on 25 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

China set to pledge more aid to Africa ahead of Xi's trip

BEIJING — China is set to announce new aid to African nations when President Xi Jinping visits Zimbabwe and South Africa next month, a senior Chinese official said yesterday.

The trip is likely to boost China's relations with Africa, which supplies oil and raw materials such as copper and uranium to the world's second-largest economy.

China is Africa's largest trading partner and the trade volume between them amounted to \$220 billion in 2014, according to China state news agency Xinhua.

Zhang Ming, one of China's vice foreign minister, said President Xi will provide further details in his keynote speech on 4 December.

"As for whether China will continue to provide support and aid, there will be no doubt about it," Zhang said, declining to provide further details on the aid amount and its purpose.

Xi is scheduled to meet Zimbabwe's 91-year-old President Robert Mugabe on December 1-2, Zhang said. He will also meet South Africa's President Jacob

Zuma on 2-3 December and co-chair a two-day summit between China and African countries in Johannesburg after the meeting. The summit in December will be the second such high-level forum following one held in Beijing in 2006, Zhang said.

"This African trip by President Xi Jinping will be the most important, comprehensive and valuable visit in recent years," Zhang said.

Xi visited Africa in 2013 shortly after he took office as president. Mugabe reciprocated with a visit to China in 2014 in an

attempt to seek loans and investments to lift Zimbabwe's struggling economy.

Beijing's focus on growing trade and aid in Africa leaves it open to charges by the West of turning a blind eye to conflicts and rights abuses in the continent.

Trade with resource-rich Africa has exploded in the last decade as China feeds its industrial machine amid African demand for cheap Chinese products.

The EU has rejected what they call China's "cheque book" approach to doing business with Africa, saying it would continue

to demand good governance and the transparent use of funds from its trading partners.

Chinese firms in Africa also face criticism for using imported labour to build government-financed projects like roads and hospitals, while pumping out raw resources and processing them in China, leaving little for local economies.

China's friendship with Africa dates back to the 1950s, when Beijing backed liberation movements in the continent fighting to throw off Western colonial rule.—Reuters

3 arrest warrants issued in widening royal insult probe

BANGKOK — A Thai military court issued arrest warrants for three people yesterday as part of a sweeping royal defamation investigation which has seen seven people charged so far, including two who died in custody.

The deaths have raised serious questions about the investigation and prompted the United Nations on Tuesday to call for the immediate closure of a Bangkok military detention facility where the two men died.

All seven people have been charged under Thailand's lese majeste law which is the harshest such law in the world and states that "whoever defames, insults or threatens the king, queen, heir-apparent or regent shall be punished with imprisonment of three to 15 years". They have been accused of

a range of offences including using the monarchy's name for personal gain in relation to two nationwide cycling events aimed at honouring the king and queen.

The three charged yesterday include two former policemen and a former military officer, a senior police officer involved in the investigation told Reuters.

The two men who died in custody were Prakrom Warunprapa, who authorities said hanged himself in his cell last month, and Suriyan Sucharitpalawong, a famous soothsayer, who died from a blood infection, according to the corrections department.

Since taking power in a coup last year, the ruling junta under Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha has made hunting down and prosecuting people deemed to be critical

of the monarchy a national priority.

But rights groups have criticized the fervour with which the junta has gone after perceived royal critics saying the law is being used as a tool to crush political opponents of the junta.

The investigation comes at a time of heightened anxiety over the health of 87-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who is convalescing at a Bangkok hospital after being treated by doctors for "water on the brain", which has added to the political uncertainty shrouding Thailand since the coup.

The military on Wednesday arrested a further three men over alleged computer crimes and for defaming the monarchy. It did not say whether the three were involved in the wider royal defamation probe.—Reuters

UN chief hopes to visit N Korea at 'earliest possible date'

NEW YORK — UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said he hoped to visit North Korea as soon as possible in a statement released by his office on Tuesday.

"I will say that we will make the effort to do so at the earliest possible date," Ban told South Korean reporters when asked when his visit to North Korea might take place.

He encountered a group of reporters on Monday when he offered condolences at the South Korean mission following the death of former South Korean President Kim Young Sam.

There was wide specula-

tion last week that the UN chief might make his first visit to North Korea since taking the top UN post in 2007.

In May, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as North Korea is officially known, cancelled a planned trip by the secretary general to an industrial park in the country at the last minute.

Referring to discussions about a possible visit, Ban said, "Recently, on this, there has been a bit of a positive signal from the DPRK, and we are at the moment coordinating when would be the best time to visit the DPRK, but so far nothing has been decided."—Kyodo News

Russia to bolster Syria base, eyes economic retaliation against Turkey

MOSCOW — Russia is to send an advanced air defence system to reinforce its air base in Syria and is considering cancelling a raft of joint business projects with Ankara after Turkey shot down one of its warplanes, top government officials said.

The incident, which resulted in the killing of one of the SU-24 plane's two pilots and a Russian marine, has thrown Russo-Turkish relations into crisis and cooled Kremlin hopes of rapprochement with the West.

On Wednesday, the Kremlin said Moscow would dispatch an S-400 air defence system to bolster its Khmeimim air base in Syria's Latakia province, an advanced weapons system that can be used to shoot down planes at long distance.

"I hope that this, along with other measures that we are taking, will be enough to ensure (the

safety) of our flights," Putin told reporters.

The announcement is likely to be viewed as a stark warning to Turkey not to try to shoot down any more Russian planes, which have been bombing Islamist militants and rebels since 30 September.

There was initial confusion about which weapons system Putin was referring to. In comments broadcast on state television, Putin spoke about an S-300 missile system.

However his defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, and a Kremlin spokesman were later quoted as saying that the even more advanced S-400 system would be dispatched to Syria.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said Ankara could also expect to be on the receiving end of economic and business sanctions.

Speaking in the city of Yekaterinburg, Medvedev said the Kremlin may now move to cancel important joint projects with Turkey, saying Turkish firms — who are active in everything from construction to retailing — could see their market share in Russia shrink.



Alpaslan Celik, a deputy commander in a Syrian Turkmen brigade, holds handles believed to be parts of a parachute of the downed Russian warplane near the northern Syrian village of Yamadi, near the Turkish-Syrian border on 24 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Medvedev reiterated Putin's accusation that unnamed Turkish officials were benefiting from Islamic State oil sales.

The result, he said, was that long-running neighbourly ties between Russia and Turkey had been ruptured.

"The direct consequences could lead to our refusal to take part in a whole raft of important joint projects and Turkish compa-

nies losing their positions on the Russian market," Medvedev said in a statement.

Russia and Turkey have important trade and economic ties. Putin also stepped up his criticism of Turkey's leadership, saying they had steadily been encouraging what he called the "Islamisation" of Turkish society, something he said was a problem.—Reuters

Turkey's Erdogan says he does not want escalation after Russian jet downed

ISTANBUL — President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday Turkey did not want any escalation after it shot down a Russian fighter jet, saying it had acted simply to defend its own security and the "rights of our brothers" in Syria.

Speaking at a business event in Istanbul, Erdogan said the jet had been fired at while in Turkish air space but had

crashed inside Syria, although some parts of the plane landed in Turkey and injured two Turkish citizens.

"We have no intention of escalating this incident. We are only defending our own security and the rights of our brothers," Erdogan said, adding Turkey's policy in Syria would not change.

"We will continue our humanitarian efforts on both sides of the (Syrian) border. We are determined to take all necessary measures to prevent a new wave of immigration."

The shooting down of the Russian warplane near the Syrian border on Tuesday was one of the most serious publicly acknowledged clashes between a NATO member country and Russia for half a century.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the plane had been attacked when it was 1 km (0.62 mile) inside Syria and warned of "serious consequences" for what he termed a stab in the back administered by "the accomplices of terrorists".

A US official told Reuters on Tuesday that Washington believed the jet was hit inside Syrian air space after a brief incursion into Turkey, an assessment based on detection of the heat signature of the aircraft.

But Turkey, in a letter to the UN Security Council, said it shot down the jet in its air space. Along with a second plane, the aircraft flew more than a mile into Turkey for 17 seconds despite being warned 10 times while approaching to change direction, the letter said.—Reuters

French PM says Europe can't take in more refugees: Sueddeutsche Zeitung



Stranded migrants charge their phones on a field with electricity provided by a generator at the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni on 24 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BERLIN — European countries are stretched to their limits in the refugee crisis and cannot take in any more new arrivals, French Prime Minister Manuel Valls was quoted as saying in a German newspaper yesterday.

Europe is grappling with its worst refugee crisis since World War II. Germany so far has taken in the bulk of some 1 million people expected to arrive this year.

"We cannot accommodate any more refugees in Europe, that's not possible," Valls told the Sueddeutsche Zeitung, adding that tighter control of Europe's external borders would determine the fate of the European Union.

"If we don't do that, the people will say: Enough of Europe," Valls warned.

The comments were published only hours before German

Chancellor Angela Merkel was scheduled to meet French President Francois Hollande in Paris.

Merkel was initially celebrated at home and abroad for her welcoming approach to the refugees, many of whom are fleeing conflict in the Middle East. But as the flow has continued the chancellor has come under increasing criticism.

Some conservatives say Merkel's decision to open up Germany's borders to Syrian refugees in September has spurred more migrants to come.

The refugee debate has become more politically charged after the deadly attacks in Paris that stoked fears Islamic State militants could exploit the migrant crisis to send extremists to Europe.

Valls avoided criticising

Merkel directly for having suspended European asylum rules to allow in Syrian refugees stranded in Hungary. "Germany has made an honourable choice there," he said.

But he signalled that Paris was taken by surprise by Merkel's decision: "It was not France that said: Come!"

French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron and his German counterpart, Sigmar Gabriel, have proposed setting up a 10 billion euro (\$10.7 billion) fund to pay for tighter security, external border controls and caring for refugees.

The United Nations on Tuesday condemned new restrictions on refugees that have left around 1,000 migrants stuck at the main border crossing into Macedonia from Greece.—Reuters

Bangladesh leader Hasina's gains from shock hangings seem short-lived

DHAKA — The execution of two Bangladeshi opposition leaders for war crimes appears to have cowed rivals of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, but critics said her success comes at the cost of free discourse and the calm is likely to be short-lived.

Political analysts and opposition leaders warned that the executions sent a signal that violence is the only political tool that works. The shock felt by an opposition which has already suffered mass arrests may be replaced by further bloodshed.

Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury were hanged on Sunday for crimes against humanity during the 1971 war to break away from Pakistan.

Protests against the hangings were muted. A general strike was called on Monday by Mujahid's Jamaat-e-Islami party, but there were no processions in Dhaka to back the strike and the day was largely peaceful in a country when strikes often turn violent. Chowdhury was a legislator in former premier Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"Hasina's popularity has soared because of the overwhelming support of the people in favour of trials and execution of war criminals," said H.T. Imam, Hasina's political adviser. "The policy of the government is zero tolerance against terrorism or vi-



Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. PHOTO REUTERS

olence, be it Islamist or any other kind."

Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of rights group Citizens for Good Governance, said Hasina had been getting stronger because she did not have any visible opposition.

"The absence of democracy only creates room for extremism," he said.

Muslim-majority Bangla-

desh has seen a rise in Islamist violence in recent months, with two foreigners and four secular writers and a publisher killed this year.

Just a few hours before the Supreme Court rejections of the opposition leaders' appeals on Wednesday last week, an Italian priest and medic was shot and wounded in the latest attack on foreigners in Bangladesh.

The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attacks on the foreigners, but the government has blamed the rising violence on political opponents.

Tensions are high in Dhaka. Foreigners avoid walking in the streets, even in the relatively more secure Gulshan diplomatic area.

The crucial \$25 billion garment export sector has been nervous. Last month, executives from

global clothing giants H&M, Inditex and Gap cancelled trips to Dhaka after the killings of foreigners.

Last week, some writers due to attend the Dhaka literature festival skipped the event. Foreigners who came drove in and out of the venue, where security was beefed up.

Some Bangladeshis feel that the executions of people convicted of war crimes provides some sense of justice, but they said the uncertainty of what fundamentalist groups might do in retaliation was scary.

"The fears of public intellectuals, opposition political leaders and ordinary people will increase," said Aatur Rahman, chairman of the Centre for Governance Studies in Dhaka.

Islamists have denounced the trials as a politically motivated campaign. Abul Barkat, an economics professor at Dhaka University, said backlash from such groups had become more likely after the executions.

Muhammad Osman Farruk, a BNP leader, called the increase in violence "ominous".

"This has further heightened the need for the government of the day to rise above all partisan and sectarian considerations and reach out to all sections of the people to forge national unity and reconciliation," Farruk said.—Reuters

Tunisia says suicide bomber behind bus attack that killed 13

TUNIS — Tunisian security officials said yesterday a suicide bomber carried out the attack on a presidential guard bus, killing at least 13 and forcing the government to impose a nationwide state of emergency.

Tuesday's blast on a main boulevard in the capital underscored Tunisia's vulnerability to Islamist militancy following the gun assaults on a Sousse hotel in June and the Bardo Museum in Tunis in March, both claimed by

Islamic State.

No group claimed responsibility for Tuesday's attack. But Tunisia has increasingly become a target for militants after being hailed as an example of democratic change since its 2011 uprising ousted autocrat Zine Abidine Ben Ali.

"This is an evolution in the behaviour of the terrorists, this time they attacked a symbol of the state and in the heart of the capital," Prime Minister Habib Essid

told reporters after an emergency security meeting.

It was also the first suicide bombing in the capital. In October 2013 a bomber blew himself up on a beach in Sousse, and previously an al Qaeda suicide bomber attacked the synagogue in Djerba, killing 21 people.

Troops and armed police patrolled the city streets and set up checkpoints searching vehicles and pedestrians. At Tunis international airport security forces were allowing in only passengers travelling.

Security officials said the bomber blew himself up as presidential guards were boarding a bus on the main Mohamed V Avenue to travel to the presidential palace for duty.

"According to the preliminary details, the attacker was wearing a bag on his back. He had on a coat and was wearing headphones. He blew himself up just getting into the door of the bus with military explosives," Hichem Gharbi, a presidential security official, told local Shems FM radio.

One of the most secular countries in the Arab World, Tu-

nisia has enjoyed relative stability since its 2011 uprising compared with its North African neighbours Libya and Egypt. It has a new constitution, free elections and a compromise politics between secular and Islamist parties that has allowed progress.

But fighting Islamist militants has become a major challenge for a country heavily reliant on tourism for its revenues.

In the early chaotic days after its revolution, ultra-conservative Islamists gained ground and recruited among young Tunisians and took over mosques.

More than 3,000 Tunisians are now fighting for Islamic State or other militant groups in Iraq, Syria and neighbouring Libya. Some have threatened to return to carry out attacks in Tunisia. The gunmen in the Sousse and Bardo attacks were all trained in jihadist camps in Libya.

The government has cracked down on hardline preachers and taken back mosques. It is also building a security wall along the border with Libya to try to stop militants crossing over into its territory.—Reuters

Militants fight their way into army base in Indian Kashmir

SRINAGAR — Three militants attacked an Indian army base in the disputed Kashmir region yesterday and holed up in the officers mess as a gunbattle raged, a senior army officer said.

The attackers cut a perimeter fence and penetrated the battalion headquarters in Tangdhar in northern Kashmir, a Himalayan region at the heart of a long-standing dispute between nuclear armed India and Pakistan.

"We heard three blasts initially and a gun battle is on," said the army officer, who asked not to be identified because he is not authorised to speak on the record.

He said the attackers had taken up positions in the officers' mess and blown up a kerosene tank, wounding one person.

India accuses Pakistan of training and arming such rebels, and infiltrating them into the part of Muslim-majority Kashmir that it controls, a claim its neighbour denies.—Reuters



Tunisian policemen stand near a damaged presidential guard bus at the scene of a suicide bomb attack in Tunis, Tunisia, on 25 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

OPINION

Praise the peasant farmer

Myint Win Thein

MYANMAR peasant farmers have survived many disasters and exploitations throughout the history of the country. They have survived all of these hardships. All of us should pay tribute to their invincible spirit because they toil each and every day to feed the whole nation.

They have endured several droughts. They never surrendered. They continued to irrigate their crops and strive to feed the rest of us.

They have faced many floods. They never surrendered. They waited for the water to recede and grew crops again. They survived to feed their fellow countrymen.

They were forced to sell a large portion of their produce at low prices. They never surrendered. They survived with what still remained for them and still fed the people.

Flames of war engulfed their villages and farmland. They left their property behind and waited for the fighting to end. They survived to feed our country.

They survived all these disasters and exploitations because they could still grow crops on their farmland. They love their land as well as their jobs.

Eventually, their farmland was confiscated. They could not make up their losses as they had before. They now have nowhere to grow their crops. Yet, they still survive. And they await

the time to farm again.

The farmers of Myanmar have, in a sense, planted themselves in their fields where they continue to grow, thrive and feed the masses. These unsung heroes are the salt of the earth, weathering the worst conditions so the people might enjoy their fruits. Let us give thanks.

Write for us

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

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

The significant and noble fullmoon day of Tazaungmon, the Samaññaphala Sutta Day

Ba Sein
(Religious Affairs)

THE significant and noble Fullmoon Day of Tazaungmon (The Samaññaphala Sutta Day) falls on 26th November 2015. The Month Tazaungmon, meaning carrying the light to dispel the darkness of ignorance, comprises both worldly and spiritual features.

It is associated with the *Kattika* planet or its guardian spirit called *Dahani*. Traditionally, it was the festival of lights to honour the planetary deity. However, as the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is a predominantly Theravada Buddhist country, such kind of workshop is transformed into a Buddhist type. Instead of honouring the *Kattika* planet and its deity, the Myanmar Buddhists pay respect with lights to the Compassionate Buddha and the Culamani Ceti in Tavatimsa Abode.

It is believed that all medicinal spirits came forth to the king

of guardian spirits who dwells in the *mesali* plant and paid homage to him on this fullmoon night of Tazaungmon. Myanmar people, therefore, use to eat a kind of dish prepared with *mezali* buds to dispel various kinds of diseases, and offer it to their friends, relatives and neighbours.

With reference to the Buddha-vaggiya Brothers, the Buddha proclaimed the *Kathina* celebration of robe-offering for needy Bhikkhus, and traditionally it is held in every part of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in this auspicious month. *Matho-robe* offering ceremony, weaving of the robes before dawn, and offering them to the Images of the Buddha, also occur in various religious centres on this fullmoon night of Tazaungmon.

It is also remarkable that the right-hand disciple of the Buddha, the Venerable Sariputta attained *Parinibbana* in his native village on this fullmoon day of Tazaungmon and the left-hand disciple of the Buddha, the Venerable Maha Moggallana on the full waning day

of this month.

Even in the fullmoon light of Tazaungmon, King Ajatasattu and his royal physician, Jivaka, together with their followers, went forth to see and pay obeisance to the Buddha and 1250 Bhikkhus in Jivaka's mango grove. They had a great chance to hear Samaññaphala Sutta, the benefits of entering the Sangha Order. Being pure and peaceful in his mind, king Ajatasattu became endowed with the Threefold Refuges of Buddhism. Because of killing his own father, Bimbisara, he could not obtain the higher Paths and Fruitions. Thus, one can also meditate on the virtues of the Sangha Order during this sacred month.

These supernormal themes, if properly meditated upon, will give noble joy and inspiration for the attainment of Final Bliss, Nibbana. And supreme peace and genuine happiness will surely prevail all over the world as long as we perform good deeds, say good words and entertain good thoughts in this very suspicious month.

POEM

How to Make Yourself Happy?

Htun Tin Htun

Have Targets and Goals
One should first establish oneself in what is proper
"Wish to do" makes the impossible possible
Think big, start small
One for all, all for one
Man matters most, don't be a money grabber
Always work in a team
Keep calm when surprise comes
Enjoy the family gathering time
You are what you think
One truly is the protector of oneself; who else could the protector be?
Understand how to share the happiness with others
Respect the weak
Speak the truth; yield not to anger
Enduring patience is the highest austerity
Learn while you earn, earn while you learn
Forgive others
Have some really good friends
Arise! Do not be heedless.
Practise always how to smile
Profit is not for minority but for the majority of the People and for the Planet
You yourselves must strive on with diligence

FAO releases 51,200 fish fingerlings into Delta to support fishing livelihoods

THE Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has released more than 51,000 fish fingerlings in Ayeyawady region as part of efforts to help ensure a sustainable future for fishing in the Delta.

The release of fish stocks is one activity under the FAO project 'Sustainable small-scale fisheries and aquaculture livelihoods in coastal mangrove ecosystems', designed to promote sustainable management of fisheries in the region.

Through the project, funded by the Government of Italy, FAO has been working with the re-

gional government and fishing communities to plan and co-manage these activities within mangrove ecosystems.

The striped catfish fingerlings were released last week into the Set Su Creek, Bogale River, in front of Kant Ma Lar Chaung village in Bogale Township.

Staff from the Bogale Township Fisheries Office participated in the fish restocking, along with members of the Village Fisheries Management Committees and Village Fisheries Societies and FAO staff.

Children from local primary schools helped to release the fin-

gerlings and were taught about the importance of sustainable management of fisheries resources to provide long-term food security.

The fingerlings are expected to grow to around 1kg in about six months.

Once caught, the fish will be used for home consumption and sold to local traders as fresh or processed (salted) fish.

FAO chief technical advisor, Mr Giuseppe Romalli, said the benefits of FAO's project included more income for fishers, stronger fishing rights, reduced pressure on natural resources and

more equal fishing opportunities for local communities.

"FAO works with local communities to build resilient fishing livelihoods that provide food, nutrition and money for families and ensure communities are better able to withstand natural disasters and other shocks," Mr Romalli said.

"A key to the success of this project is that it brings fishers, governments and other partners together to jointly manage fisheries resources using local or traditional practices."

There has been a decline in the volume and size of fish caught

in the Delta due over-fishing and the destruction of mangroves, which provide breeding and nursery groups for fish.

The FAO fisheries project is a pilot and is expected to lead to a set of guidelines for fisheries co-management. The successful model is also likely to be expanded to other fishing communities in Myanmar.

Around 3,000 fishing households in around 20 villages are involved in the project. Nearly one in four people in these villages are full-time fishers and 41 per cent are involved in casual labour connected to the fishing sector.

Bridge completed on Mawlamyinegyun-Bogale-Pyapon-Dala road

CONSTRUCTION on the Kywechan Bridge on the Mawlamyinegyun-Bogale-Pyapon-Dala (Yangon) road was completed on Sunday. The bridge is located in Mawlamyinegyun Township.

The bridge will offer locals from Mawlamyinegyun Township smooth access to Dala Township in Yangon Region via the Mawlamyinegyun-Bogale-Pyapon highway, along with Kadonkani village in Bogale Township and villages adjacent to the sea. The bridge is intended to aid seaside business and transport.

Previously, residents of Mawlamyinegyun Township relied on the Mawlamyinegyun-Maubin-Yangon road. —*Mawgyun Myint Aung*

Book Corner hung at Zabuthiri Nursing and Midwifery School

THE Information and Public Relations Department of Zabuthiri Township placed a Mini Book Corner at the township's Nursing and Midwifery School on Tuesday.

The small book stand comprises 13 subjects of books on the topics of religion, society, economics, politics, education, health, agriculture, biographies, sports, culture, science and technology, youth affairs and moral philosophy.

The small books are intended to offer short reading opportunities to students studying midwifery and nursing. —*Thant Maung*



Chorus dance troupes performing dances for paying homage to a sacred tooth relic of Lord Buddha which was being conveyed for public obeisance by members of the Shwehsandaw Pagoda Board of Trustees around Pyay, Bago Region, on 24 November. PHOTO: GNLM-017

Undeclared jade stones confiscated at Muse toll gate

JADE stones, which were undeclared and had no proof of customs duties, were found and seized on two occasions 21 November. The stones were confiscated from two cars at the Asia Wall toll gate of the 105th-Mile Trade Zone in northern Shan State's Muse District. The saloon cars carrying the jade were confiscated by the district mobile investigation team.

The 117 kilos of jade was estimated to be worth K11.7 million (US\$8,994). The two unregistered cars were priced at K15.2 million (\$11,685). The jade and the cars were handed over to the Customs Department the following day.

Muse is a busy border trade town near Myanmar's border with Yunnan Province, China. —*L Soe*



Photo shows confiscated jade stones from Muse toll gate. PHOTO: L SOE



Firefighters demonstrate skills at refresher course in Muse. PHOTO: L SOE

Refresher course hosted for auxiliary firefighters in Muse

A REFRESHER training course for local auxiliary firefighters in Muse, Shan State, commenced on Tuesday. The course is being given to reinforce the reserve firefighters' efficiency and training.

The course was also attended by the township's standing fire brigade and includes some basic military training. Firemen take on security duties for the township when needed.

Township Administrator U Ko Ko Zaw said the four main duties of the Fire Services De-

partment are fire protection, response to natural disasters, search and rescue and miscellaneous local services when called for.

Township Fire Brigade assistant director U Ko Ko Gyi explained to trainees that the course runs under the motto 'Train to become efficient—efficiency brings confidence, confidence fosters bravery and bravery earns victory'.

The 20-day course is being attended by 100 auxiliary firefighters. —*L Soe*

US delays 'quiet car' rules for hybrids, electric cars

WASHINGTON — US regulators are delaying rules that would require electric and hybrid cars to alert sight-impaired pedestrians and bicyclists until at least mid-March, according to a recent government filing.

The decision is the latest setback for a government plan that has been in the works since 2013 to require "quiet cars" — vehicles that operate at low speeds without an internal combustion engine running — to add new audio alerts at low speeds.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates the odds of a hybrid vehicle being involved in a pedestrian crash are 19 percent higher compared with a traditional gas-powered vehicle.

The auto safety regulator has said that if the proposal were implemented, there would be 2,800 fewer pedestrian and bicyclist injuries annually. About 125,000 pedestrians and bicyclists are injured each year.

The proposed rules would



A hybrid Toyota Prius is electrically charged at a municipal charging station near City Hall in San Francisco, California. PHOTO: REUTERS

force automakers like Tesla Motors Inc, General Motors Co, Ford Motor Co and Toyota Motor Corp to add automatic audio alerts to electric and hybrid vehicles traveling at 18 miles per hour or less.

The rules would apply to hybrid and electric cars, SUVs,

trucks, buses and motorcycles, and are aimed at preventing crashes at intersections or when electric vehicles are backing up. Advocates for the blind have pushed for the rules.

Automakers have raised concerns about the alerts, saying they

are too loud and too complicated. They also want them required only at lower speeds.

Under a 2010 law passed by Congress, the NHTSA was supposed to finalise the regulations by January 2014. Automakers will get a minimum of 18 months from the time the rules are finalised before they must begin adding the alerts.

NHTSA Administrator Mark Rosekind said in July the regulation would be finalised by November — a timetable the agency says in a new government document it will not be able to meet.

The Transportation Department, in explaining the latest delay, said in a document posted on its website that "additional coordination is necessary." NHTSA declined to elaborate on Tuesday.

NHTSA in 2013 said it expected the rules would cost the auto industry about \$23 million in the first year, because automakers will need to add an external waterproof speaker to comply.—*Reuters*

Smartphones may have role in rise of US traffic deaths

WASHINGTON — The number of deaths from traffic accidents in the United States jumped 8.1 percent in the first half of 2015, suggesting smartphones and other driving distractions could be making America's roadways more dangerous, officials said on Tuesday.

Preliminary government statistics, released during a Thanksgiving holiday week known for heavy traffic congestion, showed deaths rising to 16,225 in the January-June period at a rate more than double an increase in overall driving spawned by falling gasoline prices and a growing economy.

"The increase in smartphones in our hands is so significant, there's no question that has to play some role. But we don't have enough information yet to determine how big a role," said Mark Rosekind, who heads the National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration, the federal government's auto safety watchdog.

The jump in 2015 fatalities follows a decline in annual traffic deaths to 32,675 last year, for a record low of 1.07 deaths per million vehicle miles travelled, according to NHTSA statistics. The 2014 data included 21,022 passenger vehicle deaths, the lowest since record-keeping began in 1975.

The increase in the first half of 2015 was the biggest six-month jump in traffic deaths reported since 1977, according to statistics. But officials cautioned that semi-annual results can be subject to major revisions and noted that a comparable 7.9 percent increase in early 2012 led to a 4 percent rise for that year as a whole.

Officials said it was too early to identify contributing factors. But Rosekind told reporters that officials are looking at likely



A man uses a smartphone in New York City. PHOTO: REUTERS

causes including distracted driving and the possibility lower gas prices have encouraged more driving among "risky drivers" such as teen-agers.

Rosekind also criticised an absence of effective state laws that prohibit hand-held smartphones by drivers or require the

use of seatbelts and motorcycle helmets.

The auto safety agency expects to unveil a programme next year to target \$500 million in federal safety grants at human factors that are responsible for 94 percent of motor vehicle crashes.—*Reuters*

Bright market prospect for China's service robotics

BEIJING — Shi Zhongzheng, 5, excitedly gripped his badminton racquet as he delivered a serve to his opponent — a small black robot making measured moves across a demonstration court. As the shuttlecock descended, the machine deftly slid across the court, dexterously flicking its racquet to return the serve.

"So cool!" Shi exclaimed.

The robot played tirelessly for most of the day as passers-by at the World Robotics Conference in Beijing stepped on the court to test their meddle.

"It's so wonderful that it responds so swiftly. It can even play doubles!" Shi said.

The three-day event is filled with wonders of modern technology — from robots that can handle daily necessities such as taking care of children or delivering food to highly precise models capable of conducting surgery.

Currently, the global market is dominated by industrial robots, which account for 80 percent of the market share. However, in the long term service robots will become a huge industry, Chinese vice president Li Yuanchao said at the opening of the conference on Monday.

During the Singles' Day online shopping holiday last month, sales of a vacuuming robot was

listed as one of the top ten online home appliances purchased during the event, Li said.

Facing the dual problems of an ageing population and shrinking labor pool, China is seen as a promising potential market for service robotics.

Machines capable of making life easier for seniors were of particular interest to Mr. Xiong, 82, and his wife, who requires a wheelchair.

"Hopefully scientists will develop more robots able to work as care takers for elderly. We will certainly consider buying one if it is small enough and with an acceptable price."

Sun Ye, president of Shanghai Kuailu Investment Group, said that the company has recently invested in a robotics programme in anticipation that service robotics will become a mainstay for Chinese families in the future.

"Currently, our investment is still focused on the development of industrial robotics. However, the application of robotics is gradually extending from such industries of automobiles and electronics to the service sector such as medicine," he said, "the market of service robotics will surpass that of industrial robotics in the future."—*Xinhua*

Shell Canada fined C\$825,000 for 2013 refinery odour leak

CALGARY — The Ontario government on Tuesday ordered Shell Canada, a wholly owned subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell (RDSa.L), to pay C\$825,000 (£546,727) in fines for discharging a contaminating odour from its Sarnia refinery in 2013.

In a statement, the Ontario Ministry for Environment and Climate Change said Shell had pleaded guilty to one offence of permitting a discharge of an odour containing mercaptan, a foul-smelling gas.

The Shell Sarnia Manufacturing Centre is located in Corunna, Ontario, and on 11 January, 2013, employees discovered a leak from a line containing mercaptan, which flowed into an on-site ditch that empties into the refinery's storm sewer system. The odour affected a number of people in the nearby Aamjiwnaang First Nation, with several complaining of sore eyes and throats, headaches, nausea and vomiting. Shell was fined C\$500,000 for the offence, plus a victim surcharge of C\$125,000 and ordered to donate C\$200,000 to the Aamjiwnaang First Nation.—*Reuters*

Toyota to recall 1.61m vehicles with Takata-made air bags

TOKYO — Toyota Motor Corp. said yesterday it has decided to recall 1.61 million vehicles sold in Japan after the first case of injury in the country caused by an abnormal rupture of an air bag inflator made by Takata Corp. was reported in October.

The vehicles are those that were recalled earlier in the year for inspection of their Takata-made air bag inflators but judged to have no immediate need of inflator replacement amid a supply shortage.

The latest recall comes after an air bag inflator in Nissan Motor Co.'s sport utility vehicle ruptured and injured a passenger even though an inflator inspection by a dealer in August did not find any problem that could lead to a rupture. Toyota said it reported to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism that 1,612,670 vehicles manufactured between 2004 and 2008 including the Vitz and the Corolla passenger cars will be recalled.—*Kyodo News*

CDC says at least 19 E. coli infections linked to Costco chicken salad

LOS ANGELES — At least 19 people in seven states may have been infected by E. coli after eating rotisserie chicken salad sold at Costco Wholesale Corp's (COST.O) stores, the US Centres



Shoppers are pictured outside a Costco Wholesale store in Los Angeles, California 6 March, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

for Disease Control and Prevention said on Tuesday.

Five people have been hospitalised. No deaths have been reported, but two individuals developed hemolytic uremic syndrome, or HUS, a type of kidney failure that can lead to permanent organ damage.

The infections have been reported in Montana, Utah, Colorado, California, Missouri, Virginia and Washington, CDC said.

The current number of HUS cases is twice what is normally seen with E. coli O157:H7, the pathogen identified in the outbreak, said Bill Marler, a Seattle food safety attorney who represents people sickened by tainted food.

"This tells me that the number

of ill is likely going to go up because the HUS cases are easier to track," Marler said.

Fourteen of 16 people bought or ate rotisserie chicken salad from Costco in the week before the illness started, but the ingredient linked to the infection has not been identified, the CDC said.

Costco said it stopped selling the chicken salad on 20 November, the same day it was notified by federal health officials that it was linked to cases of E. coli, said Craig Wilson, vice president of food safety at Costco.

E. coli O157:H7 can cause serious illness and is perhaps most often associated with a 1993 outbreak that killed four children who ate undercooked hamburgers at

Jack in the Box restaurants.

Costco last year was linked to a salmonella outbreak caused by chicken products it sold in at least nine states. The contaminated chicken was supplied to Costco by California-based Foster Poultry Farms.

The current E. coli outbreak at Costco comes days after health officials linked burrito chain Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc (CMG.N) to more than 40 cases of E. coli O26 food poisoning in six states. No HUS nor deaths have been reported in that case.

Costco's shares closed down 1.3 percent at \$162.19 after heavy trading on Tuesday and were down slightly more in extended trading.—Reuters

Taiwan confirms 16 new deaths caused by dengue fever

TAIPEI — Taiwan's disease control agency confirmed another 16 deaths were caused by dengue fever, bringing the death toll since May to 174 across the island. The new death cases were reported from Kaohsiung city in south Taiwan. The victims were aged between 35 and 88, the agency said in a press release.

Among them was the youngest victim so far this year, a 35-year-old woman. All of the deceased had suffered chronic diseases such as tumours, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

The health authorities are still investigating 14 suspected cases, the agency said.—Xinhua

More than 18 million women severely undernourished in developing countries

WASHINGTON — More than 18 million women in the developing countries, including India, Senegal and Sierra Leone, are severely undernourished, according to a study published Tuesday by the US journal JAMA.

These women tend to be the poorest and least educated members of society and comprise a "left behind" population of adults with severe undernutrition whose needs have not been met by economic gains and progress, said the study from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Canada-based St. Michael's Hospital.

"What surprised us was the number of women suffering from severe undernutrition despite the fact that the prevalence of being overweight or obese has risen in most of the countries we looked at," lead author Fahad Razak of the Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute of St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto said in a statement. "What was also striking was that there was no decline in the prevalence of severe adult undernutrition in the past two decades in the majority of countries." Razak is also a visiting scientist at the Harvard

Center for Population and Development Studies.

Severe chronic adult undernutrition is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) less than 16 in the study.

Researchers analysed data from more than 700,000 women aged 20 to 49 from 60 developing countries, who participated from 1993 through 2012 in the Demographic and Health Surveys Programme, which has conducted surveys in more than 85 countries since 1984.

They found the highest prevalence of undernutrition was in India (6.2 percent), followed by Bangladesh (3.9 percent), Madagascar (3.4 percent), Timor Leste (2.9 percent), Senegal (2.5 percent), and Sierra Leone (2.2 percent).

Poor women with little education were much more likely to be undernourished than their wealthier, better educated counterparts and were also more likely to live in rural areas, they said.

The results also showed that, in a subset of 40 countries where repeated surveys were conducted, most countries did not have a decline in the prevalence of BMI lower than 16 during the study period.—Xinhua

Amazon founder Bezos' rocket company passes landing test



Amazon and Blue Origin founder Jeff Bezos (L) announces plans to build a rocket manufacturing plant and launch site at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida on 15 September 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

CAPE CANAVERAL — Amazon founder Jeff Bezos said on Tuesday his space transportation company, Blue Origin, plans about two more years of test flights before it will offer rides to passengers.

On Monday, Blue Origin successfully landed a suborbital rocket back at its launch site, a key step in its drive to make reusable rockets, the company said.

"This flight retired a lot of risk and validated a lot of the elements of the design," Bezos, who founded Amazon.com Inc and owns the Washington Post newspaper, said in an interview.

Being able to reflly a rocket will slash launch costs, a game-changer for the space industry, Bezos said.

"When you lower the cost of access to space very significantly you will change the markets, you will change what's possible," he said.

About two more years of test flights are planned before people will ride on the New Shepard spacecraft, Bezos said.

The vehicles are designed to carry six passengers about 62 miles (100 km) above Earth, breaching the boundary between the atmosphere and space. "We'll enter into commercial operations when we're ready. In my view, if you can think of another test to do, you do it," Bezos said.

A New Shepard rocket blasted off from Blue Origin's West Texas launch site at 12:21 pm CST (1821 GMT) on Monday, reached a suborbital altitude of 62 miles (100 km) and landed back at the launch site eight minutes later.

In suborbital spaceflight, rockets are not travelling fast enough to reach the speed required to counter the pull of Earth's gravity, so they re-enter the atmosphere like a ballistic missile.

Another New Shepard rocket failed its first landing attempt in April due to a hydraulic system problem. The redesigned system now includes a backup second pump.

Attempts by fellow billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk's rival rocket company, Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX), to return the first stage of a Falcon 9 rocket have been unsuccessful so far.

Blue Origin also is developing a rocket engine in partnership with United Launch Alliance (ULA), a joint venture of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co, to replace Russian-made RD-180 engines used on ULA's Atlas 5 boosters.

Congress last year banned the use of the RD-180 engines for military missions to punish Russia for its annexation of the Crimea region of Ukraine.—Reuters

Thousands of Cubans stuck after Nicaragua declines to open border

SAN SALVADOR — Thousands of Cubans remain stuck on the Costa Rican side of the border with Nicaragua after Managua refused at a regional summit on Tuesday to open its doors to a wave of migrants heading for the United States.

Fearing the recent rapprochement between Havana and Washington could end preferential US policies for Cuban migrants, thousands of people from the Communist-ruled island have been crossing into South America and traveling through Central America hoping to reach US soil.

More than 3,000 Cubans have been stopped for days at the Costa Rican

border after the Nicaraguan government shut its borders, denying them passage north through the country. At least 150 Cubans are arriving every day, exacerbating the problem.

During a regional summit in El Salvador, which included representatives from the governments of Cuba, Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico, Nicaragua rejected Costa Rica's suggestion of creating a "humanitarian corridor" for the migrants to pass through and said its border would remain closed.

"Nicaragua demands that the government of Costa Rica ... remove all migrants from our border areas," said Nicaraguan first lady and government



Cuban migrants rest at a temporary shelter in a school in the town of La Cruz near the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua on 16 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

spokeswoman Rosario Murillo.

Led by former Marxist guerrilla Daniel Ortega, Nicaragua is a close ally of Cuba, and his administration has complained that by issuing the Cubans with transit visas, Costa Rica has violated its national sovereignty.

Costa Rican Foreign Minister Manuel Gonzalez told reporters he thought Nicaragua had blocked a reasonable policy suggestion for resolving the crisis.

"It's unacceptable to kid around with people's suffering," he said.

Since US-Cuban ties began to thaw in Decem-

ber, the number of Cubans heading through Central America has climbed.

According to US Customs and Border Patrol data published by the Pew Research Centre, 27,296 Cubans entered the United States in the first nine months of the 2015 fiscal year, up 78 percent from

2014. Under arrangements stemming from the Cold War era, Cuban migrants receive special treatment on reaching the United States. The "wet-foot, dry-foot" policy allows Cubans who set foot on US soil to stay, while those captured at sea are sent back. —Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (671)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (671) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (315)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TENAGA VOY NO (315) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

Phone No: 2301185

Chicago charges officer in black teen's death, releases video of shooting

CHICAGO — A white Chicago policeman was charged with murdering a black teenager on Tuesday, hours before authorities released a graphic video showing the youth walking away from officers as he is shot 16 times.

The footage of last year's shooting, taken from a camera mounted on the dashboard of a police car and made public under orders from a judge, prompted mostly peaceful street demonstrations in Chicago.

The clip showed 17-year-old Laquan McDonald, who authorities said was carrying a pocket knife and had the hallucinogenic drug PCP in his system, as he was gunned down in

the middle of a street on 20 October, 2014. McDonald is seen jogging away from patrol vehicles pursuing him from behind, and then veering off diagonally at a walk as two more officers pull up in a squad car ahead of him.

Two policemen are shown jumping out of their vehicle in the centre of the road, and drawing their weapons while advancing toward McDonald, who continues to move away. Within seconds he is struck by bullets, spins and crumples to the ground, his body jerking as he is hit by additional rounds of gunfire.

McDonald's death came at a time of intense national debate over police use of deadly force, espe-

cially against minorities.

Officer Jason Van Dyke is the first Chicago police officer charged with murder for an on-duty incident in decades.

Cook County's chief prosecutor, Anita Alvarez, acknowledged that she timed the filing of the first-degree murder charge against Van Dyke to precede the video's disclosure in a bid to mute harsh public reaction to the footage. "With release of this video it's really important for public safety that the citizens of Chicago know that this officer is being held responsible for his actions," she said. The video originally was expected to be released a day later, in compliance with the Wednesday deadline set by a judge. However, police said they made the clip public Tuesday evening after it was leaked to a local television station. Technical issues were blamed for a lack of audio with the tape.

Authorities, including Mayor Rahm Emanuel, appealed for calm as the city hoped to avert the turmoil over race and the use of lethal police force that has shaken much of the United

States for more than a year.

Hundreds of protesters gathered after dark a few miles east of the site of the shooting. They marched through the streets chanting: "You don't get to kill us and tell us how to feel. You don't get to shoot us and tell us how to heal."

Police said two protesters were arrested after a scuffle on Michigan Avenue. "It's a good start that they have charged the police officer, but we've clearly reached the point where something needs to change," said protester Monique Wineward, 33.

Demonstrators had assembled outside a police precinct by 9 pm CST (0300 GMT), demanding the release of the two people arrested. Protesters later surrounded a police vehicle in a brief standoff. The crowd began to wane as the night wore on, and the late-autumn air grew colder, although a core group of at least 200 continued to march from block to block in what were essentially large circles enclosed by police lines. Some protesters briefly blocked an expressway entrance ramp. —Reuters



Demonstrators block the street during protests in Chicago on 24 November, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

2015 set to be hottest on record, 2016 even hotter due to El Niño: UN

GENEVA — This year is set to be the hottest on record and 2016 could be even hotter due to the current El Niño weather pattern, the UN weather agency said yesterday.

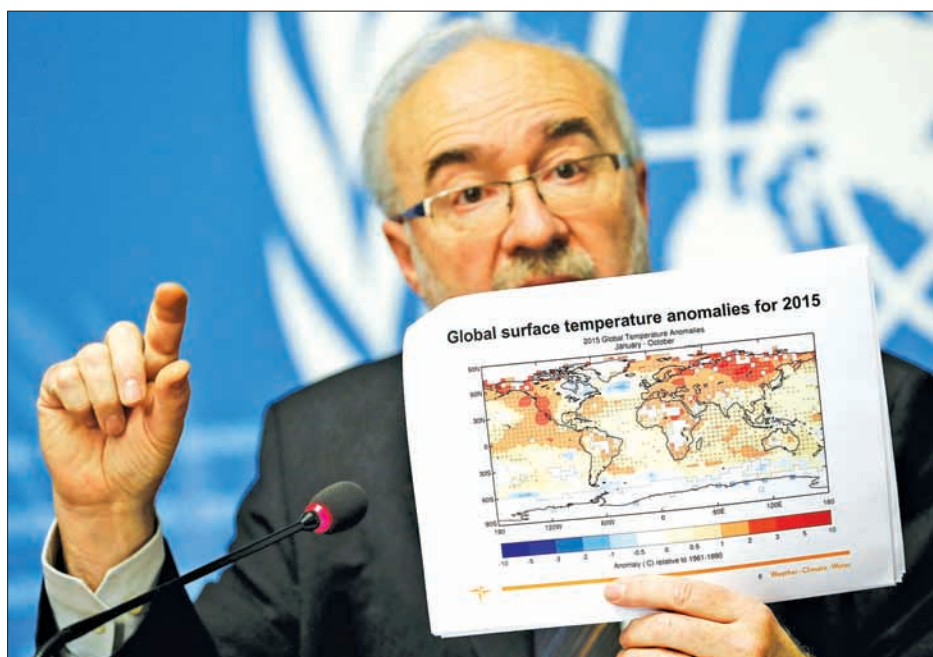
The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said global average surface temperatures in 2015 were likely to reach what it called the “symbolic and significant milestone” of 1° Celsius above the pre-industrial era.

“This is due to a combination of a strong El Niño and human-induced global warming,” the WMO said in a statement.

Next week world leaders will gather in Paris to discuss plans to curb greenhouse gas emissions and prevent world temperatures rising beyond 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

The El Niño weather pattern, marked by warming sea-surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, causes extremes such as scorching weather and flooding. Meteorologists expect El Niño to peak between October and January and to be one of the strongest on record.

A preliminary estimate based on data from January to October showed that the global average sur-



Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) holds a graphic during the presentation of the five-year report on the climate from 2011-2015 at the United Nations European headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. PHOTO: REUTERS

face temperature for 2015 was around 0.73 °C above the 1961-1990 average of 14.0°C, and approximately 1°C above the pre-industrial 1880-1899 period, the WMO said.

“This is all bad news for the planet,” WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud said in a statement.

The years 2011-2015 have also been the hottest five year period on record, with temperatures about 0.57 °C (1.01 degrees Fahr-

enheit) above the 1961-1990 reference period.

Global ocean temperatures were unprecedented during the period, and several land areas — including the continental United States, Australia, Europe, South America and Russia — broke previous temperature records by large margins.

“The world’s ten warmest years have all occurred since 1998, with eight of them being since

2005,” the WMO said.

Next year may yet be even warmer, since levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have risen to a new record every year for the past 30 years, and the El Niño phenomenon is likely to continue into 2016.

“The year whose annual mean temperature is likely to be most strongly influenced by the current El Niño is 2016 rather than 2015,” the WMO said. —Reuters

Four men accused of slashing inflatable dam in drought-hit California

CALIFORNIA — Four men have been arrested on suspicion of slashing an inflatable dam with knives, letting out nearly 50 million gallons of water in drought-hit California, officials said yesterday.

The men, in their teens and early 20s, were accused of causing about \$1 million damage to the barrier near Fremont, releasing a deluge into Alameda Creek, which flows into the San Francisco Bay.

The loss comes as California endures a devastating drought that has prompted Governor Jerry Brown to impose the state’s first-ever mandatory cutbacks in urban water use.

The water would have been enough to serve 500 homes in Fremont and surrounding communities for one year, police said. —Reuters

US raises military aid to Philippines amid sea tension with China

MANILA — The United States has raised its military aid to the Philippines this year to \$79 million, the US ambassador said yesterday, as tension rises in the region over China’s new assertiveness in the South China Sea.

Since 2002, the United States has provided the Philippines with nearly \$500 million in military assistance as well as various types of military equipment.

“We have upped our foreign military funding for the Philippines,” Ambassador Philip Goldberg told ANC television, without giving a percentage. “It will be somewhere in the range of \$79 million this year. It’s increasing and what has been proposed is something called a maritime security initiative in the region.”

China has overlapping claims with Vietnam,

the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei in the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes every year.

Reclamation work and the building of three airfields and other facilities on some of China’s artificial islands in the Spratly archipelago have alarmed the region and raised concern in Washington that China is extending its military reach deep into maritime Southeast Asia.

Washington announced earlier it had allocated \$50 million in aid to Manila this year. The Philippines remains one of the largest recipients of military aid in the region, focusing on building capability for the navy and air force to guard the South China Sea.

Last week, before attending a regional economic summit, US President

Barack Obama boarded a Hamilton-class cutter converted into a frigate by the Philippines, a display of maritime security support for its closest ally in Southeast Asia.

Goldberg said the third Hamilton-class coast guard cutter would be arriving late next year while an old maritime research ship would be transferred by the middle of 2016.

Philippine defence and military officials said two US Marines C-130 transport planes and about eight amphibious assault vehicles were also due next year.

The Pentagon has announced it is committing \$119 million this year to help develop Southeast Asian maritime capabilities and will provide \$140 million next year to allies, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (086W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R. TURKU VOY NO (086W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S HANJIN SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (78)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV UBC CHILE VOY NO (78) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-3 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDIAN SHIPPING AGENCIES PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (140)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV BANGKACHAI VOY NO (140) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S WONGSAMUT OCEAN SHIPPING CO LTD.

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Clooney, Depp, Efron movies among biggest Hollywood flops of 2015



Actor Johnny Depp and his wife Amber Heard, who is a cast member of the film "The Danish Girl," pose during the premiere of the film in Los Angeles, California, on 21 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — George Clooney, Johnny Depp and Zac Efron may be among the brightest stars in Hollywood, but in 2015 they also appeared in some of its biggest movie flops.

All three joined Bradley Cooper, Sean Penn and Bill Murray in headlining what Forbes called Hollywood's biggest turkeys of the year, based on the percentage of their budgets they earned back at the theater as of 18 November.

Leading the pile was Murray's critically panned October comedy "Rock the Kasbah,"

which grossed \$2.9 million on an estimated \$15 million production, Forbes said.

Penn's \$40 million budget thriller "The Gunman" failed to bring in the crowds in March, collecting \$10.7 million in box office receipts and coming in second.

Clooney couldn't save futuristic summer offering "Tomorrowland." Although the film grossed \$209 million, Forbes noted that the production budget was estimated at \$190 million, not including marketing costs. It was placed 14th on the list.

Despite an all-star line-up in-

cluding Cooper and Emma Stone, Hawaii-based romantic comedy "Aloha" was among the year's most-publicized misfires, with a \$37 million return on an estimated \$26.3 million production budget.

Efron's electronic dance music movie "We Are Your Friends" was listed in 8th place and Depp's quirky action caper "Mortdecai" was placed 10th.

Forbes compiled the list based on box office takings and estimated production budgets for films that were widely released in North America from January-October 2015.—Reuters

Nicole Kidman named best actress in London stage awards



PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Nicole Kidman won the best actress award for her performance as a DNA researcher in the play "Photograph 51" at the London Evening Standard Theatre Awards on Sunday.

James McAvoy won best actor for a revival of "The Ruling Class" while Imelda Staunton took

the award for best performance in a musical for her portrayal of Momma Rose in a revival of the 1959 Broadway musical "Gypsy".

The Oscar-winning Kidman, performing on the London stage for the first time since 1998, has won rave reviews for her portrayal of Rosalind Franklin, whose use

of X-ray diffraction images helped lead to the discovery of DNA's double helix structure.

In other categories, the award for best play went to "The Motherf**ker with the Hat" by Stephen Adly Guirgis and the best director award went to Robert Icke for his revival of Aeschylus's "Oresteia".

The award for best design went to Anna Fleischle for "Hangmen" while Molly Davies received the award for most promising playwright for "God Bless the Child".

The emerging talent award was won by David Moorst, for his role in "Violence and Son" and the newcomer in a musical award went to Gemma Arterton, for her musical theater debut in "Made in Dagenham".

Actors Judi Dench and Ian McKellen served as co-hosts of the event, along with the Evening Standard's publisher Evgeny Lebedev.—Reuters

'Carol' leads indie movie Spirit Awards nominations

LOS ANGELES — The lesbian romance "Carol" led the field for Film Independent's Spirit Awards with six nominations on Tuesday while the Catholic Church sex abuse tale "Spotlight" and the Netflix war thriller "Beasts of No Nation" picked up five each in the opening of the Hollywood awards season.

"Carol," about a young New York woman who falls in love with an older married woman, will contend for best feature, the top Spirit prize, alongside "Spotlight," the stop-motion film "Anomalisa," "Beasts of No Nation," and "Tangerine," which is about transgender sex workers.

The filmmakers for all five films are nominated for best director, as well as David Robert Mitchell for the hit horror film "It Follows."

The Spirit Awards bestow honors on the best achievements in independent movies made for up to \$20 million.

The Spirit Awards often recognise films that become Oscars front-runners. The black comedy "Birdman" and drama "12 Years a Slave" both won a

Spirit in the past two years and went on to win the best picture Oscar.

"Carol" actresses Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara will contend for the best female lead, a rare occurrence for the stars of the same film. They will be up against Brie Larson for "Room," Bel Powley for "The Diary of a Teenage Girl" and transgender actress Kitana Kiki Rodriguez for "Tangerine."

"Spotlight" features an all-star cast including Michael Keaton and Mark Ruffalo and recounts how Boston Globe journalists broke the tale of widespread sex abuse within the Catholic Church.

The movie will receive the Robert Altman award, an annual accolade given to a film's ensemble cast, casting director and director. It also was nominated for best screenplay and editing.

"Beasts of No Nation," Netflix Inc's first original film production, also landed nominations for best cinematography, best male lead for newcomer Abraham Attah and best supporting male for Idris Elba.—Reuters



Rooney Mara and Cate Blanchett. PHOTO: REUTERS

Adele smashes single-week US album sales record in four days

NEW YORK — British singer Adele has broken the single-week US album sales record in just four days with her new release "25," Nielsen Music said on Tuesday.

Total sales for the album, released on Friday, have surpassed 2.43 million copies, smashing a 15-year-old record set by boy band NSync's 2000 album "No Strings Attached," Nielsen said. The NSync album sold 2.41 million copies in its first week.

The huge Adele sales figures come at a time when artists rarely top 1 million in opening week sales because of the rise of online streaming of music.

Taylor Swift's "1989" album was the last record to achieve the milestone when it opened last year with nearly 1.3

million copies for the week.

Like Swift, Adele and her independent record company XL Recordings decided to withhold "25" from streaming platforms such as Apple Inc's Apple Music service, privately owned Spotify and Google Play.

"25" is Adele's first album since her 2011 release "21," which won six Grammy awards and sold more than 30 million copies worldwide.

The first single, "Hello," which debuted last month has sold more than 2.5 million digital copies and has been on top of Billboard's Digital Songs chart for four consecutive weeks.

"25" sales data for the first full week will be released by Nielsen on 30 November.—Reuters

Illuminated Athens prepares for Christmas, sends message of solidarity

ATHENS — The Municipality of Athens kicked off the Christmas season with its annual lighting ceremony in the Greek capital's main square on Tuesday, sending a message of hope and peaceful coexistence.

Mayor of Athens Yiorgos Kaminis gave the signal for the official illumination of the city centre and welcomed the holiday season which will be marked with a series of festivities.

"Athens gets illuminated and sends a message of solidarity. A message of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding among people", Kaminis said during his message.

Before pulling the switch to light up the Christmas tree, Kaminis pointed out that democracy and freedom will beat terrorists who invest in fear.

"Athens is a lively and safe European capital. We defend the right to joy, to positive thinking and the right to hope", he added.

Festivities started with a music tour by two groups of the Athens Municipality Philharmonic Orchestra which ended up at Syntagma Square to welcome visitors.

Handing over the baton to the Athens jazz Big Band and a children's choir from a local school, the celebrations con-

tinued. There were songs dedicated to Paris following the terrorist attacks that killed 130 people and wounded hundreds of others.

Though the official illumination of Athens city center was originally scheduled for 19 November, it was postponed due to a protest held by Greece's largest civil service umbrella union ADEDY. Amid the implementation of new austerity measures and a bleak economic outlook, Christmas spending will be reduced for Greek households, which have endured six years of economic depression, job losses, wage and pension cuts.—Xinhua



A luminous Christmas tree at the Syntagma Square official Christmas opening ceremony in Athens, Greece. PHOTO: XINHUA

Mt Sakurajima alert level lowered as volcanic activity diminishes



Sakurajima volcano in southwestern Japan. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

FUKUOKA — Japan's weather agency on Wednesday downgraded its warning level for Mt. Sakurajima in southwestern Japan, citing diminished volcanic activity.

With no major eruptions observed since 17 September, the Japan Meteorological Agency lowered the alert level for the 1,117-metre volcano in Kagoshima Prefecture on a 5-point scale from 3, which warned people not to get close to the volcano, to 2, which advises them not to approach the crater.

The alert level was raised from 2 in October 2010 and had stayed above that level since then. Despite the downgrading,

the city of Kagoshima said it will not change areas requiring caution based on the disaster control law and will continue to restrict access to within a 2-kilometre radius of Sakurajima's Showa and Minamidake summit vents.

The volcano is located just 4 km away from the city centre and some 50 km from the Sendai nuclear power plant that was restarted in August.

With earthquakes originating from the volcano increasing following rapid crustal movements and frequent small eruptions, the agency raised the alert level from 3 to 4 on 15 August, the highest ever for Sakurajima, instructing nearby

residents to prepare to evacuate.

But on 1 September, it downgraded the level to 3 again, saying the risk of a large-scale eruption had diminished.

With no significant eruptions observed since 17 September, the volcano saw the second-longest period without any blasts since the Showa crater became active again in 2006. The local meteorological observatory still warned of a further eruption that could affect areas immediately surrounding the crater.

Sakurajima had a major eruption in August 2013, spewing ash 5,000 metres into the sky.—Kyodo News

Tiffany's 3rd quarter sales in Japan strong on Chinese tourism

NEW YORK — American luxury jewelry retailer Tiffany & Co. said Tuesday total sales in Japan rose 17 percent to \$133 million in its third quarter through October driven by foreign tourists from China as well as a boost in domestic demand.

In addition to the weaker yen enticing foreign tourists to spend more in Japan, the high-

er sales were also lifted by "the Chinese shifting some of their travel this year away from Hong Kong and Macau at least for the moment," Mark Aaron, Tiffany's vice president of investor relations, said on an investor conference call.

The company said the "strong growth" of sales in Japan, which surpass those of

Europe, were helped by higher volumes and higher average prices across all jewelry categories. Tiffany said that if the results were measured in yen, total sales and comparable store sales, or sales at outlets open for at least one year, would have increased 34 percent and 24 percent, respectively.—Kyodo News

mitv Myanmar International

(26-11-2015 07:00 am ~ 27-11-2015 07:00 am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	AmChanges
07:44	Am	Ancient Shwe-San-Taw Pagoda
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The Beautiful Month Of Myanmar, Tazaungmone
08:52	Am	Sagaing: Gold Leaf
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Products Of Myanmar - Pottery Business
09:44	Am	Amazing: May Phoo Han
09:54	Am	Kayah
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Jade Pagoda: Weirawsana
10:44	Am	Farming: Duck Breeder
10:56	Am	Cosplayer

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

(06:00 Pm ~ 08:00 Pm) Transmission (Live: Paper Lantern Festival 2015)

Prime Time

08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations - Gem Stone Painting
08:46	Pm	The Eel Business (Fisherman the eel culture)
09:03	Pm	News
09:25	Pm	Let's Cook (EP-11) Scones and Caramel Custard Pudding
09:53	Pm	Kayah

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

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



Entertainment Channel

(26-11-2015, Thursday)

6:00 am	7:50 am
• The Mirror Images Of The Musical Oldies	• TV Drama Series
6:15 am	8:35 am
• Pyi Thu Ni Ti	• Myanmar Video
6:35 am	9:35 am
• Musical Programme	• Documentary
6:50 am	10:00 am
• TV Drama Series	• Myanmar Video

Beaming Messi back playing like he was never away

BARCELONA — Barcelona kept winning during Lionel Messi's injury absence but the fans were still clearly delighted to have him back on Tuesday and he rewarded their patience with a signature performance against AS Roma.

The Argentina forward, making his first start since he damaged a knee at the end of September, played as if he had never been away in the holders' 6-1 Champions League Group E drubbing of the Italian side at the Nou Camp, netting a double and generally running the show.

The familiar chants of "Messi! Messi! Messi!" rang out around the giant stadium and the beaming smile on his face, which shows he is back enjoying what he does best, is an ominous sign for Barca's rivals.

The victory, which included a brace from Luis Suarez and goals from Gerard Pique and Adriano, ensured Barca went through to the last 16 as section winners and they have negotiated the group stage of Europe's elite club competition for a 12th consecutive season.

The demolition of Roma followed hard on the heels of Saturday's 4-0 thrashing of arch rivals Real Madrid in La Liga, when Messi made his return from injury for the last 30 minutes, and on current form Barca appear unstoppable as they seek to defend the treble of titles they won last season.

They are four points clear of



Barcelona's Lionel Messi scores the second goal against AS Roma during their UEFA Champions League Group Stage Group E at Camp Nou, Barcelona, Spain, on 24 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

second-placed Atletico Madrid in Spain's top flight after 12 matches, with Real a further two points back in third, and will be the overwhelming favourite at next month's Club World Cup in Japan.

Goals from Uruguay striker Suarez and Brazil forward Ney-

mar kept Barca ticking over while Messi was sidelined and the four-times World Player of the Year said they and the rest of the squad had proved they did not rely too heavily on his talents.

"We have never said that ourselves and it has been

proved," Messi said.

"I had a bad time not being on the pitch but I enjoyed watching what my team mates did in each game," added the 28-year-old.

One of the keys to Barca's success was the "very good atmosphere" among the players,

Messi said.

"We try to be professional, to have fun and to get on with each other day to day.

"We are at a very good level but there is still a long way to go before the decisive phase of each competition."—Reuters

Chelsea repeats trouncing of Maccabi to close in on last 16

HAIFA — Chelsea enjoyed their second 4-0 Champions League victory over 10-man Maccabi Tel Aviv this season to move into prime position to reach the knockout stages of the competition from Group G on Tuesday.

With Dynamo Kiev winning 2-0 at Porto, however, the qualifiers for the last 16 will only be determined in the last round of

matches when Chelsea host Porto and Kiev welcome Maccabi.

Goals by Gary Cahill, Willian, Oscar and Kurt Zouma secured the victory for Chelsea whose task was made easier when Maccabi captain Tal Ben Haim, a key player in the heart of the defence, was sent off five minutes before halftime.

After five games, Chelsea, who only need to draw their fi-

nal match to progress, and Porto each have 10 points with Kiev on eight, while Maccabi are bottom without a point.

Cahill had put the visitors on the scoresheet in the 20th minute with a close-range effort after mounting Chelsea pressure as Maccabi's spirited start faded after about 15 minutes.

Maccabi kept up their attempts to penetrate the Chelsea

defence but their cause was undermined when Ben Haim was shown a red card for a wild kick on striker Diego Costa.

The Israelis maintained their efforts after the break but the result was sealed when Willian scored in the 73rd minute with a perfectly-executed curling free kick that beat the Maccabi wall and left goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic stranded.—Reuters

Britain counting on Murrays to bring home Davis Cup

LONDON — Britain will attempt to win the Davis Cup for the first time in 79 years this weekend when they take on Belgium in Ghent, although if they do succeed the Scottish town of Dunblane could argue its name should be encribed on the trophy.

World number two Andy Murray and his brother Jamie, who grew up in Dunblane, have propelled Britain through the draw, with Andy churning out vital singles wins and teaming up with his elder sibling in the doubles.

That is likely to be the scenario again at the Flanders Expo,

beginning on Friday, where despite 13,000 home fans trying to cheer Belgium to their first ever Davis Cup, Britain will start favourites.

Twice grand slam champion Andy Murray is the class act of the final — a repeat of the 1904 match when the British Isles won 5-0 with brothers Laurence and Reggie Doherty starring.

Murray's commitment to the cause this year has been immense.

The 2013 Wimbledon champion is undefeated, winning two singles against the United States in Glasgow in March.

Against France in the quarter-finals at Queen's Club, the Murrays joined forces to win the doubles with Andy winning both his singles in a 3-1 victory — the second against Gilles Simon when he was down on both knees with fatigue.

Then came the semi-final against Australia, again in Glasgow, when the 28-year-old crushed Bernard Tomic, having won a gripping doubles five-setter with Jamie the previous day, to send Britain into the final for the first time since 1978.

He flew into Belgium on Monday — a country on high alert

after the Paris attacks — having lost two of his three matches at the ATP World Tour Finals last week.

How he adapts to the quick switch to indoor clay will be crucial for Britain captain Leon Smith.

"The reality is that if Andy gets injured or ill, then it would be a very difficult match to win," Mark Cox, who played for Britain in the 1978 final, told Reuters.

"Leon has done well to bond the team and get some performances from James Ward, well beyond what realistically would be expected.—Reuters

LOCAL NEWS

Weightlifting trainers to get refresher course

Ko Moe

THE Myanmar Weightlifting Federation will conduct a refresher course for trainers at the sports training centre in Nay Pyi Taw, the federation's secretary U Myint Swe said.

"We will share advancements in techniques with coaches from regions and states so as to provide modern techniques to the athletes," he said.

Coaches from around the country have been informed of the course, which will kick off on 30 November.

Under the arrangements of the federation, 18 tentatively selected weightlifters are receiving training at the Goal Camp in Nay Pyi Taw, and nine youths will receive training at Aung San Gymnasium.

Selected lifters will take part in the 29th SEA Games, to be hosted by Malaysia.