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## A FLEXIBLE, FRESH DRAFT

### Political dialogue joint committee agrees on key points

Ye Myint

THE political dialogue framework drafting committee met yesterday, laying out basic concepts in drafting the framework, which is expected to be set up in the second week of December.

It was the first round of meetings held by the committee, which comprises a group of eight representatives from political parties, the government and ethnic ceasefire signatories.

During a press conference held afterwards, spokespersons from the three groups elaborated on the progress achieved.

“We agreed on the need for drafting the framework based on the national ceasefire agreement, making it flexible to cater for coming changes in representation of the government and the parliament and completing the process in a 60-day timeline as stipulated by the truce deal,” said Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong, one of the ethnic representatives on the committee.

The ethnic side proposed at the meeting that a drafting team should be formed with the membership of two each from three groups in order to complete the



A committee comprising three groups of eight representatives from political parties, the government and ethnic ceasefire signatories held its first meeting to discuss the drafting of a framework for political dialogue at Myanmar Peace Centre yesterday. PHOTO: YE MYINT

process in a timely manner, he added.

“Before the nationwide ceasefire agreement was signed, each of the various stakeholders had drawn up their own frameworks. As it would be very complicated to

amalgamate the contents of each framework, we should afresh on drafting a framework collaboratively.”

Informal discussions on 10 points including the framework’s basic principles, representation

and participation of stakeholders in political dialogue and a decision-making method set to be involved in the framework were discussed, said U Aung Naing Oo, a programme director at Myanmar Peace Centre.

“We can say how long it will take to complete discussions on the points and set up the draft framework after the next round of meeting, which is set to continue tomorrow.”

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## Celebrations planned for a century of Myanmar cartoons

200 works by local cartoonists will be on sale during the festival

Khaing Thanda Lwin

A FESTIVAL to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of cartoon publishing in Myanmar will be celebrated at the end of December with a variety of events, according to an organiser.

The Myanmar Cartoon Century Festival will take place on 30 and 31 December at the Myanmar Convention Centre on Mindhamma Road in Yangon. The event has been crowd-funded by local patrons of the arts.

“The organising committee planned to hold a five-day event but

now it will only celebrate two-days as the committee faced some difficulties in finding more funds,” Cartoonist Moe Htet Moe said.

Myanmar cartoonists from home and abroad are invited to showcase one cartoon each during the event, with the organiser planning to feature around 200 works by local cartoonists that will be on sale.

The committee will support accommodation fees for artists who are coming from remote areas, said Moe Htet Moe who plans to stage a work featured around peace.

Works may cover a wide range of subjects, but the cartoonists are prohibited from creating satirical cartoons.

A cartoon competition will also be held during the event. The content is open to all members of the public.

Original and copied works of by-gone cartoonists and comic writers including the late U Ba Gyan will be exhibited at the festival.

Cartoons have been published in the country since 1915. U Shwe Ta Lay, who is also known as U Ba Galay, is recognised as the country’s first local cartoonist.



A work of cartoonist Moe Htet Moe.



# China donates police cars to Myanmar

THE People's Republic of China donated police patrol cars to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with Union Minister for Home Affairs and for Immigration and Population Lt-Gen Ko Ko in attendance.

Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win and Chinese Ambassador Mr Hong Liang signed the agree-

ment on the handover of the cars.

During Chinese Premier Mr Li Keqiang's visit to Myanmar in 2014 he pledged to provide police patrol cars at a future date. So far China has donated over 245 pickups, 135 trucks, 120 saloon cars and five dump trucks, totaling 505 vehicles altogether worth 99 million yuan (US\$ 15.483 million).—*Myanmar News Agency*



Union Minister Lt-Gen Ko Ko views police patrol cars donated by China. PHOTO: MNA

## Myanmar can maintain external debt sustainability: finance permanent secretary



Permanent Secretary U Maung Maung Win of Ministry of Finance. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR can still maintain external debt sustainability at present, said the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Finance in an interview with the Myanmar News Agency recently.

The government has been criticised for its external and internal debts, but the permanent secretary said many governments have to borrow money for their development projects.

"Myanmar has adopted debt management measures in

accordance with the international norms with the technical assistance of the ADB," the permanent secretary said.

In addition, the bill for the Public Debt Management Law has been submitted to the parliament, he added.

Internal debts are not a cause of concern as they result from government deficits and can be settled when there is a surplus of spending in the future, he said.

As for inflation, the

secretary said it is difficult to determine the rate of inflation exactly, but some outside sources have said Myanmar is experiencing a two-digit inflation rate.

Inflation can be addressed through financial, fiscal, monetary, tax and expenditure policies, the secretary said.

Inflation, he said, goes hand in hand with development, but the fluctuation of inflation rates is not good for a country.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Online complaint centre resolves traffic issues

Ko Moe

TRAFFIC police have taken action against 3,548 vehicles due to official complaints made through the online complaint centre, according to Police Lt-Col Aung Ko Oo of No 2 Traffic Police Branch in Yangon Region.

These vehicles included 1,332 private cars, 1,332 taxis, 188 trucks and 696 buses.

The traffic police branch took action against 258 vehicles in August, 1,052 in October and 746 this month, up to 18 November.

The owners of 168 vehicles have paid fines to the department.

Police opened the online complaint centre on 12 August 2015 to aid in enforcing traffic rules and alleviating traffic problems for Yangon residents.

## Missionary vehicles donated to monks

USA Tun and Thirithudhama Theingi Daw Nwet Nwet of the Golden Dragon Shopping Centre in Shwebo donated a missionary vehicle and Kathina robes to Leti New Padaytha Monastery in Nat-

pohtaung Village in Kanni on Thursday.

Another missionary vehicle will be donated to the abbot of Shwebo Sitagu Monastery by the shopping centre.—*Shwe Lin Pyae Sone*

## Book fair held to commemorate Lu Du Daw Amar

A BOOK fair was held to commemorate the centennial birth of the late writer Lu Du Daw Amar in Mandalay on Thursday.

Poet Ko Lay Innwa Gon Ye and writer Nyi Pu Lay spoke on

the occasion.

Books written by Lu Du Daw Amar are displayed at the book fair from 9 am to 5 pm.

The event ends on Sunday.—*Shwe Lin Pyae Sone*

## KOICA had Volunteer Activity at the Child Care Center in Taunggyi

KOREA International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) through its World Friend Korea volunteers' programme on 27 November has supported a project for voluntary activity which costs US\$5,000 including the donation of KOICA, Korean community and Taunggyi community people to improve children care system.

Through KOICA WFK-Volunteer who dispatched to Taunggyi Education College, Mr. Kim Jin Sung's request, the KOICA Volunteer Activity took place at Daw-gyi Daw-nge Child Care Center in Taunggyi from 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Daw-gyi Daw-nge Child Care Center was established by the grandmoth-

er of the present principal, Daw Mya Shwe in 1905. At first, the center was begun with eight children who lost their parents in a forest fire in Kayah State and five children from delta region. At the present time, 83 children from different regions are well being taken care of and built up their living in the center.

It is expected that KOICA WFK-Volunteers and people around Taunggyi district will build up a better relationship through these activities. The purpose of this activity is to enhance the health of the children in the Care Center, to promote water sanitation and hygiene education, rehabilitation of roof and walls in the center and to exchange Myanmar-Korean culture by car-

rying out activities such as playing Korean Traditional Games, Face Painting and Taekwondo and so on.

Donation Ceremony was held at 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 on the presence of, Mr. Nam Kwon Hyoung, Chief resident representative KOICA Office in Myanmar, KOICA WFK-Volunteers and many other related people including teachers, officials and community people, etc. KOICA, through its World Friends Korea volunteers program has been supporting various projects to facilitate the activities of the volunteers and contribute to capacity building of host organizations. Currently there are around 100 World Friends Korea volunteers serving in Myanmar in various fields.—*KOICA*



KOICA Myanmar's Chief Resident Representative, Mr Nam Kwon Hyoung was taking photos with the children from Daw-gyi Daw-nge Child Care Center. PHOTO IS SUPPLIED BY KOICA



## President sends messages of felicitations to Albania

U THEIN SEIN, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Bujar Nishani, President of the Republic of Albania, and His Excellency Mr. Edi Rama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Albania, on the occasion of the Liberation Day of the Republic of Albania, which falls on 28 November 2015.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## UN special adviser holds high level talks in capital



Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann holds talks with Special Adviser to UNSG on Myanmar Mr. Vijay Nambiar. PHOTO: MNA

SPEAKER of the Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received Mr Vijay Nambiar, Special Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Myanmar at the Pyithu Hluttaw hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the meeting were U Ko Ko Naing and Daw Aye Aye Mu of the Pyithu Hluttaw Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission.

The special adviser called on the Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Tin Aye at the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw.

The UEC Chairman explained the process by which electoral discrepancies will be reviewed. Objections and complaints must be submitted to the

UEC within 45 days after the announcement of election results.

The special adviser said that the UNSG recognised that Myanmar's elections were conducted in a transparent manner.

U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, also received the adviser at the ministry in Nay Pyi Taw.

The union minister and the special adviser discussed the peaceful general elections in Myanmar, the long-term and short-term measures being taken for the peace, security and development of Rakhine State, the issue of boat people being rescued by Myanmar and developing further cooperation between Myanmar and the UN.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Forestry training centre to open in Yangon

A CORNERSTONE laying ceremony for the construction of the ASEAN-Korean Forest Cooperation Regional Education Training Centre was held at the Forest Department, Hmawby Township, Yangon, yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Environment Conservation and Forestry U Aye Myint Maung thanked the ROK Forest Department, the AFoCo Secretariat and member countries for the establishment of the training centre.

The training school will be built in the compound of the seed and sapling unit of Hmaw-

by Township Forest Department which is close to Yedwington Village.

The training centre will admit staff from AFoCo member countries, personnel related to the forestry sector and forestry students.

The ceremony was attended by Director-General of International Affairs Bureau Dr Kim Yongkwan, officials of the Korean Forest Service, Executive Director of AFoCo Secretariat Dr Hadi S. Pasaribu, the Ambassador of Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr Lee Baek Soon and other lesser officials.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Myanmar state media seek freedom, independence

MYANMAR state-run media are cooperating with international organisations and experts to boost the freedom and development of the country's media sector, said U Tint Swe, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Information.

The ministry conducted a high-level dialogue titled "Myanmar's Media Development—Opportunities for Free and Independent Media" in Yangon yesterday in conjunction with DW Akademie, a German broadcast media outlet.

Myanmar's media have been on the path to freedom and independence for three years, and the

government has made efforts to transform its state-run media to be public-service oriented, the secretary added.

The Myanmar government also enacted a new Media Law in order to boost the development of the private media sector, he said.

During the dialogue, Mr Peter Limbour of DW Akademie discussed avenues for cooperation between the DW and the Myanmar government to support free and independent media in Myanmar.

DW Akademie has assisted Myanmar's media sector for more than 30 years.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Vice-Senior General Soe Win attends 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting



Vice-Senior General Soe Win together with ASEAN army chiefs pose for documentary photo at 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting (AARM). PHOTO: MYAWADY

VICE-SENIOR General Soe Win, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army), attended the final match between Indonesia's and Vietnam's shooting teams at the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Armies Rifle Meeting (AARM) in Hua Hin, Thailand,

on Wednesday.

The vice-senior general and other army chiefs of ASEAN countries participated in the Novelty Shoot.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Armed Forces presented prizes to the winning team and handed over

the AARM flag to the Philippine army chief to host the 26<sup>th</sup> AARM in 2016. The vice-senior general and his wife attended a dinner hosted by the Thai commander-in-chief in the evening.

On Thursday, the vice-senior general left Bangkok for Yangon.—*Myawady*

## A flexible, fresh draft

>> From page 1

The list of eight representatives from political parties who were tentatively named in the meeting of Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee two days ago was confirmed during yesterday's session.

The winner of the 2015

general election, the National League for Democracy, officially named U Naing Ngan Lin who is currently Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House) representative as its representative to the drafting committee.

NLD member U Myo Yan Naung Thein, who took part in

the previous meeting, confirmed yesterday that the NLD is willing to take part in the ongoing process.

The NLD will also select one of its central executive committee members to join the Union Political Dialogue Joint Committee in the near future, he said.





Yanaungmyin Pagoda which was called Sant Khaw Pheik Pagoda in the past was built two miles south of Mohnyin, Kachin State by King Mohnyin in early 12 Century. Local ethnics lit 10,000 candle lights on the platform of the pagoda for the fifth time on the fullmoon day of Tazaungmon, 26 November. PHOTO: GNLM-001

## Over 100 foreign companies take part in exhibition

THE 3<sup>rd</sup> International Construction, Power and Mining Exhibition kicked off at the Myanmar Convention Centre on Mindhamma Road in Mayangon Township, Yangon, on Thursday.

Vice Chairman of the Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association U Kyaw Paing and Chairman of Myanmar Mining Entrepreneurs Association U Khin Maung Han spoke at the event.

The event was also attended by Director General U Khin Maung Win of the Electric Power Planning Depart-

ment, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Aung visited the booths.

A total of 21 countries including France, Germany, Belarus, Thailand, China (Taipei), Singapore, Korea and Japan are exhibiting construction materials, mining equipment, auto parts, electronic equipment, cables, generators, excavators, bulldozers and other heavy machinery.

The exhibition is open from 26 to 28 November and admission is free.—*Soe Win*

## High-rise condominium to emerge in Yangon City coming three years

MERCHANT Luxury Condominium, jointly built by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development and Moon Sun Company Ltd, is set to be completed within three years.

Land preparation was carried out in December 2014.

The condominium is located

on Merchant Street between 50<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> street in Yangon.

The building will have 17 storeys with four penthouses and includes a double basement.

The fifth to 14<sup>th</sup> floors will have 2,676 square feet. Offices will be allocated from the ground floor to third floor.

—*Soe Win (MLA)*



MERCHANT Luxury Condominium. PHOTO: SOE WIN (MLA)

## Pyin Oo Lwin celebrates hot-air balloon festival



Local people enjoy releasing of hot-air balloons in Pyin Oo Lwin. PHOTO: MAUNG PYI THU

THE 11<sup>th</sup> Tazaungdine hot-air balloon festival kicked off at Maha Arnthoo Kantha Pagoda in Pyin Oo Lwin on Monday

with Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint and officials in attendance. Basic education students performed

songs and dances at the event in commemoration of the festival. A total of 109 hot-air balloons were released.—*Maung Pyi Thu*

## Well-wishers generously donate offertories to monasteries

TATKON Township held the 49<sup>th</sup> Kathina robe offering ceremony for 52 monasteries this year.

Well-wishers including local citizens, Tatmadaw regi-

ments and units, police, civic departments, schools and private banks donated various kinds of offertories. One well-wisher donated a Hijet car worth K6.9

million (US\$5,295) to the monastery. senior monks will share offertories and the car with respective monasteries today. —*Tin Soe Lwin (Tatkon IPRD)*



## Easing of China one-child policy too late for those who lost only child

BEIJING — Cui Wenlan was devastated when she heard the news last month that China was scrapping its one-child policy. She is among more than a million grieving Chinese parents who have lost the only child the government allowed them to have.

Cui's son was 30 when he died after an illness and she had been forced to abort her second baby in 1985. Now she and her husband are adrift in a country where parents traditionally rely on their children to look after them in old age.

"If, back then, we had been allowed to give birth again, I

wouldn't be in so much trouble and wouldn't be so lonely," said Cui, 53, from the northern city of Zhangjiakou.

Cui's story underscores the punitive nature of China's family planning policy, beyond the more well-known stories of forced abortions and sterilisations, and highlights the plight of an estimated million "shidu" families, or those who have lost their only child.

China, the world's most populous country with nearly 1.4 billion people, says the once-child policy has averted 400 million births since 1980, saving scarce food resources and helping to pull families out of



Huang Peiyao, 54, plays with her adopted daughter in a room that was used by her dead son, while a suitcase containing a picture of her son is seen in another room, during an interview in her house in Zhangjiakou, China, on 22 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

**"One-child families are walking a tightrope. Once you lose your child, you lose all hope."**

Fan Guohui  
Chinese parent

poverty. Cui's husband, Gao Zhao, said the government of Zhangjiakou gives the couple 680 yuan (70 pounds) a month in compensation, an amount that falls far short of what is needed in a country where there is little in the way of welfare or health benefits.

"We are rural people and

don't have much education," Gao said. "The state told us what to do and we followed."

Cui said she could not get surgery after being injured in a car accident because she did not have a child to sign the agreement for surgery. Fan Guohui, 56, has petitioned the government to support

"shidu" parents financially and emotionally. His son died from a car accident in 2012. Fan's wife, Zheng Qing, said the couple was "emotionally ruined".

"One-child families are walking a tightrope," Fan said. "Once you lose your child, you lose all hope."—Reuters

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

## Thai junta faces backlog of industry problems and scrutiny mounts

BANGKOK — Thailand's military seized power last year vowing to halt years of political unrest. Now the junta faces one dividend of its imposed peace: a snowballing backlog of safety and compliance problems within key industries that previous civilian governments failed to tackle.

International scrutiny of industries such as fishing and aviation poses another challenge to a military which has struggled to revitalise Thailand's economy and thaw diplomatic and trade relations with Western countries since its May 2014 coup.

A report commissioned by Swiss food giant Nestle SA released on Monday said its seafood supply chain in Thailand included slave labour, sparking renewed calls to clean up a \$3 billion industry long dogged by allegations of abuse.

Two days later, a study released by labour rights groups Swedwatch and Finnwatch said factory workers from Cambodia and Myanmar also faced exploitation by Thai brokers and employers who withheld their passports and levied exorbitant fees.

And next month Thailand faces crucial judgments by international bodies that could threaten seafood exports and shake confi-



Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak. PHOTO: REUTERS

dence in the country's aviation industry.

The European Union (EU) will decide whether to ban fish imports from Thailand after issuing the country a yellow card in April for failing to crack down on illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The junta subsequently ordered a clean-up of the fishing industry, prompting some fishermen to go on strike to protest against what they said were unfair and unrealistic measures.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha said the government would continue to

prosecute human trafficking suspects and would send teams to inspect fishing vessels and seafood-processing plants.

A seafood ban could cost Thailand dearly.

Thailand is the world's third-largest seafood exporter. Its annual exports to the EU are estimated to be worth between 575 million and 730 million euros (\$641 million-\$813 million), according to the Thai Frozen Foods Association.

Thailand's aviation industry also faces a downgrade by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) over persistent safety is-

sues. In July, the FAA gave Thailand 65 days to take corrective measures.

That deadline has now passed and the FAA's decision is expected soon. Thailand could be demoted from the FAA's category 1 to 2, which carries a flight ban to the United States.

No Thai airline currently operates flights to the United States, which means the commercial impact would be minimal. But it could undermine confidence in the industry, especially when Thailand's safety ratings were already downgraded in June by The International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) of the United Nations.

While the junta won't be blamed for problems inherited from previous governments, it could be faulted for not solving them, say analysts.

Prayuth has amassed immense power since May 2014 and prides himself on a reputation for fighting corruption and getting things done.

The backlog of problems he now faces was built up during years of political chaos "where nothing has been done", said a Bangkok-based Western diplomat, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity surrounding issues to do with the junta.—Reuters

## 2 Koreas to hold talks in Dec in joint industrial zone

SEOUL — North and South Korea agreed Friday to hold vice-ministerial talks on 11 December at the inter-Korean joint industrial zone in the North Korean border town of Kaesong, according to South Korea's Unification Ministry.

They "agreed a vice-minis-

ter-level official will head the delegation for the upcoming talks to discuss pending issues between the South and the North," according to a ministry statement issued at the end of bilateral working-level talks, held at the truce village of Panmunjeom Thursday through the early

hours of Friday. The two Koreas agreed on 25 August to hold high-level talks to improve relations. Tensions had escalated earlier that month after South Korea accused the North of planting landmines in the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas that seriously in-

jured two South Korean soldiers. Tensions rose further after the two sides fired artillery shells at each other.

The two Koreas are still technically in a state of war as the 1950-1953 Korean War ended in an armistice, not a permanent peace treaty.—Kyodo News



# Nepal finally unlocks quake funds after 7 months!

KATHMANDU — Seven months after a massive earthquake devastated Nepal, the government has finally found its way through a political logjam that was holding up billions of dollars pledged for reconstruction.

International donors pledged more than \$4 billion after the 25 April quake and another tremor on 12 May. The earthquakes killed close to 9,000 people and destroyed or damaged almost a million homes.

The government formed a National Reconstruction Authority to devise quake-resistant building regulations and risk reduction strategies as well as to oversee the allocation and utilisation of funds. But political wrangling prevented the body from being authorised to begin its work. Opposition parties disagreed with the ruling Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist, known by its Nepali-language acronym UML, over who should run the NRA, and the issue remains unresolved.

But the Cabinet has belatedly found its way through the political muddle by authorising the country's National Planning Commission to decide how much funding will be spent in particular sectors over the rest of the fiscal year to the end of April.

"We are now planning to spend around 500 of the \$733 million allocated for this financial year," commission joint secretary Gopi Nath Mainali told IRIN.



Residents walk past a building damaged during the earthquake in the city centre in Chautara, Nepal, on 8 July. PHOTO: IRIN

Much of the \$500 million will be spent on rebuilding homes, and the government plans to distribute \$2,000 to people whose houses have been destroyed completely. About \$3 million will be spent in the education sector, and around \$2 million will go towards rebuilding damaged roads.

About \$1.3 million will be directed to the energy, drinking water and sanitation sectors.

Another \$2 million has been allocated for rebuilding govern-

ment and community buildings.

"However, these figures are preliminary and might be revised in the days to come," Mainali said.

Despite the progress in unlocking the funds, the decision was greeted with scepticism by some.

Although he didn't think the political deadlock should be allowed to delay assistance, Semanta Dahal, a lawyer and political commentator, said the NPC is not authorised to actually implement

reconstruction work — that remains the role of the NRA.

"Assigning the role at this moment to NPC is only tactical gimmickry," he told IRIN.

There were 761,000 people with ongoing humanitarian needs at the end of September, according to the Early Recovery Cluster, which is chaired by representatives from the government and the United Nations.

Aside from the political hurdles to reconstruction, Nepal is

facing a fuel shortage due to a separate political crisis. Protests erupted on the border with India against a new constitution, which was passed by parliament on 20 September.

Many in the ethnic minority Madhesi and Tharu communities oppose the size and borders of seven new provinces created by the constitution, claiming those and other measures mean they will now be under-represented in parliament. Nepali officials accuse India of imposing an unofficial blockade, which has prevented fuel imports, while India blames violent protests for blocking fuel convoys.

Aid agencies say the fuel shortage is hampering relief efforts.

Damian Kean, a spokesman for the World Food Programme, said it has been taking measures to conserve fuel while still trying to get emergency food and shelter supplies to about 84,000 people in remote communities, many of whom will soon be cut off as the winter snows begin to fall.

Nepal's rugged geography also makes it hard to get supplies to remote communities. In many areas, villages are not accessible by roads, and even mountain paths were destroyed by the quake. Kean told IRIN that WFP is hiring porters and using mules to make deliveries in some areas.

"They're racing against time, really," he said.—IRIN

## Islamic State claims responsibility for attack on Bangladesh Shi'ite shrine

DHAKA — Islamic State has claimed responsibility for an attack on a Shi'ite Muslim mosque in Bangladesh on Thursday, killing one person and wounding three as they prayed, the second attack on the country's tiny Shia Muslim community in a month.

Witnesses said three young men stormed into the mosque in northwestern Bogra District and shot at worshippers indiscriminately.

"The attackers entered the mosque and opened fire on the devotees after locking the main gate and then fled immediately after the shooting," police official Ahsan Habib said.

Two people from two nearby villages had been picked up for questioning about the attack,

another police officer Arifur Rahman said. SITE monitoring service said that Islamic State had claimed responsibility for the attack, just as it did for the previous bombing on the biggest Shi'ite shrine in the country.

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

Tensions have rising since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched a crackdown on militants, putting several leaders on trial for war crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence. About a dozen Christian priests in the north have also received death threats, a week af-

ter an Italian doctor working as a missionary was shot and wounded, police said on Thursday. "We have already stepped up security around the churches," local police chief Abdullah Al Faruk said.

Bangladesh's government has rejected Islamic State claims of involvement in the attacks and says local militants are involved. Critics say the government is whipping up a climate of fear to go after its political rivals.

Earlier on Thursday, police said they had killed a top militant suspected to have masterminded the 24 October attack on the Shi'ite shrine in Dhaka.

They said he was the military chief of a banned underground militant group.—Reuters

## India testfires nuclear-capable missile

NEW DELHI — India Thursday successfully testfired its home-made, nuclear-capable Prithvi II missile from a defence base in the eastern state of Odisha, sources said.

"The surface-to-surface missile, with a strike range of 350 kms and capable of carrying 1,000 kg warhead, was testfired

as part of a user trial by the Indian Army," sources said.

Prithvi II has two engines that are thrust by liquid propulsion.

The missile uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target.

The missile was inducted

into the armed forces in 2003 after the state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation developed its India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.

The last testfiring took place successfully in February this year from the same test range in Odisha.—Xinhua

## Russia to help Cambodia build nuclear capacity

YEKATERINBURG — Russia will help Cambodia work towards building a nuclear power plant under an agreement the two countries signed this week, said Sergei Kirienko, the head of state nuclear firm Rosatom.

Cambodia depends heavily on imported fuel and power. Electricity in the country is among the most expensive in Southeast Asia and a common source of complaint from investors.

"The Cambodian government is mulling, in future, a nuclear power station construction," Kirienko told reporters on Wednesday when asked about the agreement.

Cambodian energy officials declined to comment on the deal on Thursday.

The agreement was signed during a visit by Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev to Cambodia this week. His visit was the first to Cambodia by a senior Russian politician since 1986.

Under the terms of the agreement, Russia will pro-

vide expertise, research and training to Cambodia.

"Perhaps, it is better to begin with a research reactor and a research centre in Cambodia," Kirienko said, noting that Russia has concluded a similar agreement with Bolivia.

"All emerging economies are now facing a key issue: for a normal development they need a reliable, cheap and guaranteed source of energy," Kirienko said.

Other agreements signed on the trip covered a range of issues such as monitoring Cambodia's financial system and measures to combat money laundering.

Cambodia is seeking \$3 billion (2 billion pounds) in foreign investment to build six hydropower plants by 2018 as it seeks to keep up with rising domestic power demand.

Cambodia has already been studying nuclear power technology, in part prompted by similar moves among its Southeast Asian neighbours.—Reuters



# Stranded migrants try to storm into Macedonia



A migrant tries to escape from Macedonian police officers as he tries to cross the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni on 26 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

IDOMENI — Hundreds of Moroccans, Algerians and Pakistanis tried to storm the border between Greece and Macedonia on Thursday, tearing down part of the barbed wire fence at the crossing and demanding to be allowed to carry on into northern Europe.

They were among about 1,500 migrants who have been

stranded near Greece's northern border town of Idomeni after Europe decided to filter migrants, allowing only those fleeing conflict in Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq to cross into the Balkans.

Some threw stones at police while others fell to their knees shouting, "We want to go to Germany!"

A few ran across into Macedonia but were quickly detained by police. Police in riot gear guarded a gap where migrants had torn down about 30-40 metres of fence, and a Reuters photographer saw riot police armed with assault rifles.

More than 800,000 refugees and migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Asia have arrived in Europe by sea so far this year, most through the Greek islands, seeking a better life in wealthier European countries such as Germany.

Balkan countries have clamped down at their borders recently to stem the largely unchecked stream of people, leaving tens of thousands stranded in Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia.

The United Nations has condemned the new restrictions on travel based on nationality.

So far, only 148 refugees have been relocated from Italy and Greece to other EU countries under a plan for transferring 160,000 agreed by EU leaders in September.—Reuters

## France pays tribute to victims of Paris attacks

PARIS — France paid tribute yesterday to the 130 mostly young people killed while they were enjoying themselves in Paris two weeks ago by Islamist gunmen and suicide bombers in the most deadly attacks the nation has seen since World War Two.

Blue-white-and-red French flags hung from the windows of public buildings and private homes as hundreds of survivors and relatives of the dead joined political leaders for a remembrance ceremony at the military museum Les Invalides in the capital.

The militant group Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the 13 November attacks,

which targeted cafes, restaurants, a sports stadium and a rock concert. More than 350 people were wounded and nearly 100 of them remain in hospital.

Under a wintry sky, the names and ages of the 130 victims were read out. A majority were under 35 and they came from all over France and from 17 other countries.

In a poignant but defiant speech, President Francois Hollande vowed to destroy Islamic State and urged his compatriots to help combat the group simply by continuing to go to bars, restaurants and cultural and sporting events and to enjoy the simple pleasures he said the militants hat-

ed. "I solemnly promise you all that France will do everything to defeat the army of fanatics who have committed these crimes, that she will act tirelessly to protect her children," he said.

"The terrorists want to divide us, to oppose us, to pit us against one another. They will fail. They have the cult of death, we have the love of life," he said.

Hollande said the 13 November attacks were part of a chain stretching back to the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, and he noted that many other countries — including, this month alone, Mali and Tunisia — had been hit by militant groups.—Reuters



French President Francois Hollande delivers a speech during a ceremony to pay a national homage to the victims of the Paris attacks at Les Invalides monument in Paris, France on 27 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

### NEWS IN BRIEF

## Italian police seize 800 shotguns

ROME — Italian police seized almost 800 shotguns bound for Belgium from Turkey from a truck that arrived in the northeastern port of Trieste, a statement said on Thursday.

The finance police, who are often in charge of port security, said that while customs rules had not been violated, the Turkish truck driver did not have the licences needed to transport the 781 Winchester SXP shotguns.

Pump-action Winchester

SXP rifles are made for hunting and are not considered assault weapons, but police said they had "substantially" increased their border inspections in the wake of the 13 November Paris attacks and subsequent alert in Belgium.

"Given the delicate nature of the cargo, its origin and its destination, the documentation regarding the rifles was immediately examined," the statement said.—Reuters

## Turkey's Erdogan requests meeting with Putin in Paris: Kremlin

MOSCOW — Russia said yesterday that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan had requested a meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Paris on 30 November.

"A proposal from the Turkish side about a meeting at the level of heads of state has been delivered to the president," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on a conference call on Friday. "That's all I can say."

Putin and Erdogan will at-

tend the global climate summit that begins in Paris on 30 November. Peskov also said that Erdogan had telephoned Putin seven or eight hours after Turkey shot down a Russian warplane on Tuesday. Erdogan told the France 24 television channel on Thursday that he had called Putin after the jet downed but that the Russian leader had not yet called him back.

"This request was also delivered to the president," Peskov said.—Reuters

## South African court lifts ban on domestic rhino horn trade

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's High Court has lifted a ban on the local trade in rhino horn imposed by the government in 2009 after finding that the state had not followed the process of public participation before imposing the moratorium, media reported

on Thursday.

The ruling came after an application by two of South Africa's largest rhino farmers who wanted to overturn government's moratorium on the domestic trade in rhino horn, the online editions of the IOL News and the Citizen said.—Reuters

## Man who jumped White House fence facing charges

WASHINGTON — A man who jumped the White House fence on Thursday, triggering a lockdown of the presidential mansion, was quickly caught and now faces criminal charges, the US Secret Service said.

Joseph Caputo scaled the north fence line of the White House grounds at around 2:45 pm and was immediately apprehended, the Secret Service said in a statement. It did not provide further details about the suspect.

The White House was locked down as the Secret Service conducted a security sweep of the area, and nearby streets were closed off, ABC News and *The Washington Post* reported earlier.

The Thanksgiving Day incident came amid heightened security concerns in the United States and other Western countries following the 13 November attacks in Paris that killed 130 people.—Reuters

## New Zealand aims for more overseas students with new visa

WELLINGTON — A new student visa to be issued from next month is aimed at making New Zealand's education sector more competitive in the international market, the country's ministers said yesterday.

The Pathway Student Visa would allow international students to undertake a pathway of up to three consecutive program-

mers of study with selected education providers for a maximum of five years, said Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment Minister Steven Joyce. The Pathway Student Visas would be implemented from 7 December for an initial pilot period of 18 months and cover more than 500 primary, secondary and tertiary institutions.—Xinhua



## OPINION

## Why violence is cowardice disguised

Kyaw Thura

**A**LTHOUGH we live in a multicultural society, we cannot avoid encountering racial, political, social and religious persecution. Differences are natural and common and there is no reason to discriminate on any grounds whatsoever, whether it be on race, gender or religion.

If we have to hate people for being different

from us in terms of differing ideas and thoughts, we ourselves are the first people we should hate, simply because we keep changing our points of view depending on the situation we find ourselves in. Clearly, there are times in which we find ourselves contradicting our own views.

Despite our differences, at the end of the day we are all human beings. That is why neither a single soldier nor a single enemy has ever been killed at war. All the deaths that war has ever claimed were in fact human lives. From a religious point of view, all human beings are related to each other in some way, given our numerous past existences or rebirths.

It is safe to assume that inflicting death and destruction on others is nothing less than a sign of cowardice, whereas courageous people avoid conflicts that cause sorrow and destruction. In other words, sacrifice and peacefulness lies at the

core of courage.

In short, every dispute has its roots in stubbornness and self-esteem. It is therefore important to display our broadmindedness and compassion about the plight of innocent victims trapped in conflicts in the knowledge that all lives are of equal worth.

### 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](mailto: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.

# We must prepare now for another major El Niño

Axel van Trotsenburg

**E**L Niño is back and may be stronger than ever.

The latest cyclical warming of Pacific Ocean waters, first observed centuries ago and formally tracked since 1950, began earlier this year and already has been felt across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Weather experts predict this El Niño will continue into the spring of 2016 and could wreak havoc, because climate change is likely to exacerbate the intensity of storms and flooding in some places and of severe drought and water shortages in others.

El Niño's impacts are global, with heavy rain and severe flooding expected in South America and scorching weather and drought conditions likely in the Horn of Africa region.

The risk is especially great for East Asia-Pacific countries that are highly vulnerable to altered weather patterns because of climate change. This year will likely be the hottest ever recorded, increasing the El Niño effect caused by weakened trade winds that fail to push warmer Pacific Ocean waters to the west.

We know what the potential effects might be. In 1997 and 1998, the strongest El Niño on record led to the deaths of 23,000 people from natural disasters, increased poverty rates by 15 percent in some countries

and cost governments up to \$45 billion due to severe storms, droughts and other effects.

Such a global challenge calls for a global response – with coordinated efforts by governments, international institutions such as the World Bank, relief agencies and communities – to minimize the death and destruction from natural catastrophes while building more resilient societies.

The good news is that we have learned from past experience how to better predict, prepare and respond. We now know that disaster risk management and early warning systems can provide forecasts and data that reduce death tolls and economic losses from severe weather.

These achievements show that building resilient and adaptable societies is the most effective strategy for challenges such as El Niño. Instead of limiting our approach to the specific challenge of El Niño, we should continue to support investments in sustainable growth and building resilience to the changing climate.

In our recent East Asia-Pacific Economic Update, the World Bank Group warned that failing to anticipate El Niño's impacts can have serious economic development repercussions for the region. Food shortages, wildfires and depleted

water resources are likely in some areas, and torrential rains in other areas can cause flooding and human migration.

An El Niño typically leads to higher demand for polluting energy sources like coal and crude oil, because hydropower generation declines due to high heat and drought. Drought and flood can also spark outbreaks of diseases from contaminated water and reduced hygiene as well as mosquito-borne viruses like dengue.

In the Philippines, the government predicts 80 percent of the country will likely experience drought by February 2016, while farmers in parts of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia already are leaving fields and rice paddies unplanted due to excessively dry and hot conditions.

Meanwhile, the lowest rainfall levels since 1951 left more than 230,000 people in China's Liaoning province short of drinking water in July. This summer, Myanmar experienced severe flooding and landslides that displaced more than 1.6 million people.

Pacific islanders also face water shortages, because a lack of rainfall threatens freshwater sources in societies mostly dependent on agriculture. Water shortage can have serious health implications, with increased risk of disease outbreak.

At the World Bank Group, we stand ready to

help countries with a proactive strategy that includes technical assistance and monitoring and mitigation tools, such as early-warning systems and post-disaster needs assessments and mobilizing financing, which governments can tap into shortly after disasters hit.

For example, in the last three years, we helped Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu assess the impact of destructive cyclones to assist reconstruction efforts. And in 2014, the Philippines used a new financing mechanism developed by the World Bank — Catastrophe-Deferred Drawdown Option — to quickly respond to severe Tropical Storm Sendong, also known as Washi.

In the 1997-1998 El Niño, the World Bank Group provided emergency loans to help many countries restore infrastructure and productivity in sectors such as transport, flood control, health, agriculture, and energy. We also helped countries strengthen early-warning systems and risk management capacities.

Now, as we get ready to confront an El Niño that could be one of the strongest on record, it's time for us to mobilize a unified response to protect the development gains of recent decades for people in East Asia Pacific.

#### About the author

Axel van Trotsenburg is the World Bank Vice President for East Asia Pacific

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

Canada has elected a new government to the office and it is time for exploring and expanding new economic opportunities overseas to open up economic opportunities. Myanmar has also started her journey as democratic nation with a new government in charge. Now it is important that both Canada and Myanmar comes together on a common platform for opening a dialogue for strengthening their socio-economic ties and cooperate in areas of agriculture, industry, infrastructure development as well as developing human resources. Canada is currently looking for new economic partners and Myanmar with her vast natural resources could easily fit into that requirement frame to initiate new economic opportunities' and building windows for booting trade and commerce between the two nations to build bridges between the people of both nations for building friendly ties and start an era of peace, stability, economic and social development. The Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau must visit Myanmar for starting new bilateral relationships and strengthening the economic ties. The Myanmar diaspora in North America should also come forward in helping building and developing Myanmar further and act as a connective bridge between the two nations.

Thanking you  
Sincerely yours  
Saikat Kumar Basu

## Capital's youths learn first-aid



An official presents prize to outstanding trainee in first-aid course. PHOTO: MIN MIN LATT

A FIRST-aid course, conducted by the Nay Pyi Taw Red Cross Supervisory Committee concluded at Thitlaylone Basic Education High School in Pinyinana Township on Wednesday.

Head of Nay Pyi Taw Public Health Department Dr Hla Hla Kyi, who chairs the Red Cross supervisory committee and Deputy Director Daw Amar Kyu Min of the

Nay Pyi Taw Education Department spoke at the event.

Headmistress Daw Than Than Aye and teachers presented membership applications for the District Red Cross Society.

Officials presented certificates and prizes to the trainees. A total of 82 trainees attended the basic first-aid course. —Min Min Latt (Mandalay University)



## Yekyaw Market readies for shopkeepers



New Yekyaw market in Yekyaw Complex is almost completed in Pazundaung Township. PHOTO: TIN HLA MAUNG

CONSTRUCTION of Yekyaw Market of the Modern Yekyaw Complex Project is almost completed, with shopkeeper expected to move in on 1 December at the site in Pazundaung Township.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) assigned AMPS Construction Company to build the project.

The New Yekyaw market is one of multiple sites with 272 shopping apartments, a recrea-

tion centre, sports ground and seven penthouses.

An owner of a tailoring shop said that shopkeepers thanked YCDC and construction teams for modernising the market. —Soe Win (SP)

## Hot air balloon competition held in Shan State

THE 45<sup>th</sup> Tazaungdine hot air balloon competition was held in Monghsat township, Shan State (East) on Wednesday. The Kyiphyu, Wahin, Tailoi, Shwebrother and Bawana groups participated, while the Pyanhlwar, Khitthit, Cherry, Hsaungnya and Ngwekyei teams competed on Thursday.

Township official U Aye Naing presented K100,000 to each of the seven teams while Col Thura Hla Min of local station presented K300,000 to the third prize winner Cherry team, K500,000 to the second prize winner the Khitthit youth team and a trophy and K700,000 to the champions, Ngwekyei team.—District IPRD



An official presents consolation prize to a hot-air balloon team in Monghsat. PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD

## ASEAN youths dock in Yangon

UNDER the supervision of the Japanese government, M.S. Nippon Maru carrying youths from ASEAN countries and Japan arrived at Bo Aung Kyaw Port in Yangon on Thursday.

Myanmar is the fourth stopover of the vessel which is carrying 323 youths, including 28 youths from Myanmar universities and colleges. It will be a 51-day trip which began in Japan on 5 November.

Myanmar has arranged for the trip to stay one night with local Myanmar families and to visit Yangon University and other significant learning centres in Yangon. The ASEAN-Japan youth goodwill journey started with five

ASEAN countries in 1974. Myanmar joined the programme in 1998.

The vessel will depart Bo Aung Kyaw Port on Sunday and arrive back in Japan on 16 December.

Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe welcomed the youths at Bo Aung Kyaw Port in Yangon on 27 November. The alumina of ASEAN-Japan Journey performed elephant dances.

The chief minister presented bouquets to youth leaders of 11 countries. Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages Dr Lwin Lwin Soe and administrator of the journey Mr Hideki Uemura spoke at the event.—Myanmar News Agency



Youths of ASEAN and Japan being welcomed at Bo Aung Kyaw Port in Yangon. PHOTO: MNA



Officials inspect functions of departments at one-stop shop in Pyigyidagun Township. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

## One-stop shop in Pyigyidagun opens

A ONE-stop shop was launched at the General Administration Department of Pyigyidagun Township yesterday, with the aim of providing services and assistance to locals.

District and township officials cut the ribbon to officially open the office.

The OSS, formed with 11 relevant departments, will service registrations for organisations, issue various licences, birth and death certificates, labour registration forms, permissions for private tuitions, boarding schools passes and a host of other services.—Tin Maung



# Russia threatens economic revenge against Turkey

ISTANBUL — Russia threatened economic retaliation against Turkey on Thursday and said it was still awaiting a reasonable explanation for the shooting down of its warplane, but Turkey dismissed the threats as “emotional” and “unfitting.”

In an escalating war of words, President Tayyip Erdogan responded to Russian accusations that Turkey has been buying oil and gas from Islamic State in Syria by accusing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and his backers, which include Moscow, of being the real source of the group’s financial and military power.

The shooting down of the jet by the Turkish air force on Tuesday was one of the most serious clashes between a NATO member and Russia, and further complicated international efforts to battle Islamic State militants.

World leaders have urged both sides to avoid escalation. In

an apparent attempt to cool the dispute — and appeal to Western countries — Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said in a letter to Britain’s Times newspaper that Ankara would work with its allies and Russia to “calm tensions”.

Earlier, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev ordered his government to draw up measures that would include freezing some joint investment projects and restricting food imports from Turkey.

Economy Minister Alexei Ulyukayev said Moscow could put limits on flights to and from Turkey, halt preparations for a joint free trade zone, and restrict high-profile projects including the TurkStream gas pipeline and a \$20 billion nuclear power plant Russia is building in Turkey.

Russia’s defence ministry meanwhile said it had suspended all cooperation with the Turkish

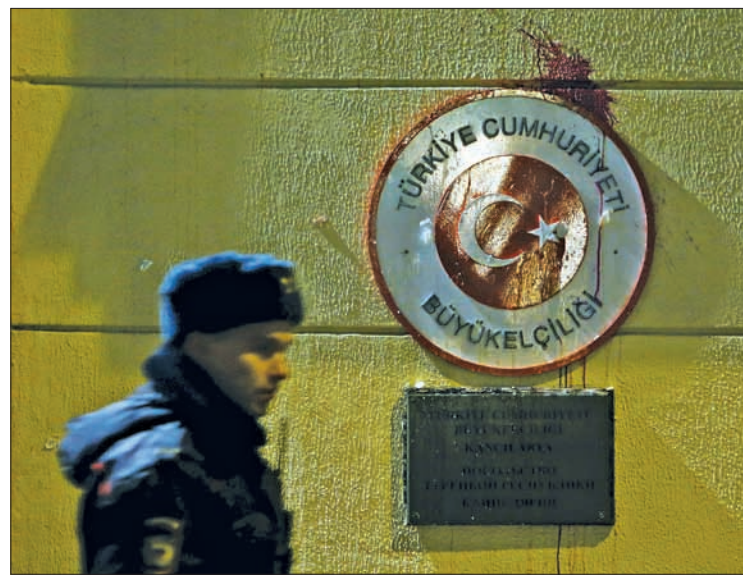
military, including a hotline set up to share information on Russian air strikes in Syria, the TASS news agency reported.

“We are strategic partners ... ‘Joint projects may be halted, ties could be cut’? Are such approaches fitting for politicians?,” Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara.

“First the politicians and our militaries should sit down and talk about where errors were made and then focus on overcoming those errors on both sides. But instead, if we make emotional statements like this, that wouldn’t be right.”

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was still awaiting a reasonable answer from Ankara on why it downed the fighter jet. Moscow insists it never left Syrian air space, but Ankara says it crossed the border despite repeated warnings.

The Turkish foreign ministry said diplomatic missions and Turkish business interests



A policeman walks past a sign of the Turkish Embassy stained by protesters in Moscow, on 25 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

in Russia had come under attack and said Russia’s ambassador in Ankara had been summoned in protest.

Erdogan said the Russian jet was shot down as an “automatic reaction” to the violation of Turkish air space, in line with standing orders given to the military.

Those instructions were a separate issue to disagreements with Russia over Syria policy, he

said, adding Ankara would continue to support moderate rebels in Syria and Turkmen fighters battling President Assad’s forces.

Erdogan told CNN that Russia, not Turkey, should be the one to apologise for the incident. And in an interview with France 24, he said he had called Putin after the jet was shot down but that the Russian leader had not yet called him back.—Reuters

# Niger says Boko Haram gunmen kill 18 in village bordering Nigeria

NIAMEY — Niger’s government said on Thursday that Boko Haram militants killed 18 people, including a local religious leader, in an attack on a village in Niger’s southern border area of Diffa on the Nigerian border.

The Islamist militants rarely claim attacks but they are based in the north of Nigeria and often launch cross border attacks in Niger, Chad and Cameroon.

The gunmen arrived in the

village of Gogone near the shores of Lake Chad on foot and fired indiscriminately on residents and attacked their homes, security sources said.

They also fired rockets in the attack, the sources said.

“Boko Haram has once again sent us into mourning,” said Justice Minister and government spokesman Marou Amadou in a statement. “Eighteen villagers were killed, including the chief

imam for the village whose throat was slit by his own nephew.”

Niger’s Diffa region has suffered dozens of cross-border strikes this year by Boko Haram, whose stronghold in northeast Nigeria lies just a few kilometres (miles) away.

A state of emergency has been declared there in a bid to boost security. But the attackers often manage to flee across the River Komadougou, marking the border

with Nigeria. Amadou said eleven people were injured and a three-year-old girl has disappeared. The army was pursuing the “terrorists in all nooks and crannies of Lake Chad”, he said.

Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to Islamic State, which operates mainly in Syria and Iraq, has killed thousands and displaced millions of people in its six-year campaign to carve out a caliphate run according to strict

Islamic law. Central African leaders in regional bloc CEEAC said on Wednesday at a summit that they were raising 50 billion CFA Francs (£53 million) to help Nigeria’s neighbours fight the Islamist militant group.

An 8,700-strong regional task force with troops from Chad, Niger, Benin, Nigeria and Cameroon is operational but has yet to begin joint military strikes against Boko Haram.—Reuters

# 2 Palestinians shot dead after ramming cars into Israeli soldiers

JERUSALEM — Two Palestinians rammed vehicles into Israeli soldiers in separate attacks in the occupied West Bank yesterday and were then shot dead, Israeli police and military said.

A wave of Israeli-Palestinian violence that began more than eight weeks ago has shown no end in sight. It is the worst unrest since last year’s Gaza war and has prompted talk of a new Palestinian uprising, or Intifada, against Israel.

Near the city of Hebron, a Palestinian slammed his car into a group of Israeli soldiers wounding six, before being shot dead, a military spokesman said.

A few hours earlier another Palestinian rammed his car into Israeli soldiers at a bus stop near a Jewish settlement, police said. He was shot dead by a civilian and two Israeli soldiers were injured.

Police and the Palestinian Health Ministry said the driver was the brother of a man who on Sunday had been shot dead in a similar incident nearby.

Almost-daily Palestinian stab-

blings, car rammings and shootings, have killed 19 Israelis and one US citizen since 1 October and Israeli forces have killed 93 Palestinians, some of whom were carrying out assaults and others in clashes with police and troops. Many of those killed have been teenagers.

The attacks, many of them carried out spontaneously, have been fueled in part by Muslim anger over Jewish visits to the Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem, Islam’s third holiest site, which is sacred in Judaism too.

The Palestinians are also frustrated by the failure of decades of peace talks to deliver them an independent state and have accused Israel of using excessive force to quell attacks, saying that in many cases assailants could have been stopped and detained without being shot and killed.

The first Palestinian intifada lasted from 1987-1993 and the second from 2000-2005, although both were far more intense and deadly than the present wave of violence.—Reuters



Israeli police tow the vehicle they said was used by a Palestinian to ram into two Israeli soldiers and wound them, near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Adumim in the occupied West Bank on 27 November. PHOTO: REUTERS



# Highest-ever number of new HIV cases in European Region: WHO

STOCKHOLM — The World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Thursday that in 2014 it had recorded the highest number of new HIV cases in its European Region, which also includes Central Asia, since the start of reporting in the 1980s.

WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in a statement that more than 142,000 people in WHO's European Region were diagnosed with HIV last year with the increase coming from its eastern sector which comprises 15 countries including Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia.

The statement followed publication on Tuesday of findings by the United Nations AIDS programme which showed that new HIV infections overall had fallen by 35 percent since the peak of the three-decade-old pandemic in 2000.

"Heterosexual transmission is responsible for the increase in eastern Europe, and transmission through drug injection remains substantial," the joint statement by the WHO and ECDC said.

ECDC spokeswoman Caroline Daamen said "eastern Europe"



HIV self tests are displayed in a pharmacy in Bordeaux, France, on 15 September 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

referred to the eastern part of WHO's European Region, where the organisations said the number of new HIV cases had more than doubled in the past decade.

Apart from Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia, this region also

includes countries of the Transcaucasus.

"In the EU and the EEA, sex between men is the predominant mode of HIV transmission. Two in three new HIV infections are among native-born Europeans,"

the organisations said.

In the European Union generally, the number of people diagnosed with HIV was roughly unchanged over the past decade, ECDC's Daamen said. — Reuters

## Healthy diets may not be one-size-fits-all

BOSTON — When two people follow the same weight-loss diet to the letter, but one fails to lose weight, the problem might be their bodies' different responses to the same foods, a recent Israeli study suggests.

That's because when two people eat the same meal, one may experience a spike in blood sugar levels when the other person doesn't, the study found. Over time, elevated blood sugar can lead to health problems like obesity and diabetes.

Many popular diets such as Atkins, The Zone and South Beach centre on a component known as the glycemic index (GI), a fixed ranking of foods based on how fast and how high they raise blood sugar after meals. The index was originally developed to help people with diabetes choose foods that wouldn't cause blood sugar to rise too high.

The logic behind the weight-loss diets is that consuming foods with a lower GI like fish, lean meat and vegetables can help keep blood sugar low and promote weight loss.

"The idea behind the low-GI diet is that the glycemic response to a certain food is an intrinsic property of the food which means that we should be able to predict how a certain individual would respond to some food by looking at the average response of a small group of other people to that food," senior study authors Eran Segal and Eran Elinav of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot said by



Food is seen on a table at a restaurant at the port of El Masnou, near Barcelona. PHOTO: REUTERS

**"The idea behind the low-GI diet is that the glycemic response to a certain food is an intrinsic property of the food..."**

**Eran Segal and Eran Elinav**  
Weizmann Institute of Science

email. "Our study demonstrates that this cannot be done."

To see how foods are digested, Segal, Elinav and colleagues recruited 800 adult volunteers and collected data through health questionnaires, body measurements, blood tests, glucose monitoring, stool samples and a mobile app used to report lifestyle and food intake for a total of 46,898 meals. In addition, they asked participants to eat similar meals for breakfast each day. As expected, age and body

weight appeared to impact blood sugar levels after meals.

But the study also found that different people show vastly different responses to the same food, even though their individual responses remained the same from day to day.

For example, one middle-aged woman in the study had tried and failed a number of diets over the years. Tests found that tomatoes — a food considered healthy on the standardised glycemic index be-

cause it's believed to have little impact on blood sugar — were linked to blood sugar spikes after meals for this particular woman.

Overall, the participants showed wide variation in their blood sugar responses to a single food type, such as bread, the study team found. They also varied significantly in the type of meal that provoked the highest blood sugar rise. Researchers also found that two standardised meals designed to be equivalent on the glycemic index could produce opposite blood sugar responses in an individual.

Researchers also did a second experiment with 26 of the participants to see if they could provide personalised nutrition recommendations that would lower blood sugar. When they recommended meals with foods they knew wouldn't raise blood sugar for each person, the people did indeed have lower blood sugar levels after meals.

The study team also noted changes in the gut microbe population after people followed their customised diet. One shortcoming of the study is its reliance on participants to accurately report on their own food and drink consumption, the authors acknowledge in the journal *Cell*. The results, while intriguing, may also be difficult for doctors to use in real life to guide patients to the best nutrition plan, said Allen Taylor, a nutrition researcher at Tufts University in Boston who wasn't involved in the study. — Reuters

## Scientists unveil geckos' wall-walking genes

NANJING — Chinese scientists have found genetic evidence illustrating some of the most intriguing talents of geckos, including climbing up smooth walls.

As detailed in this week's edition of the *Nature Communications* journal, a team from Nantong University in Jiangsu Province sequenced the genome of a Schlegel's Japanese Gecko. They identified the functions of 22,487 genes, making this the largest genome sequencing performed on a reptile species. Compared to reptiles lacking the wall-walking ability, geckos have more genes in the beta-keratin family, which prompts the formation of adhesive setae on their toes that help them cling to surfaces, said team leader Gu Xiaosong.

Studying such genetic features may help develop technology mimicking geckos' wall-walking abilities, Gu said. The team also studied genes related to the reptiles' nocturnal vision and regeneration of tails. — Xinhua

## H5N1 avian influenza case in France

PARIS — A case of avian influenza was confirmed Tuesday night in Dordogne, southwestern France, the French Ministry of Agriculture announced on Wednesday.

"An abnormal mortality had led to the taking of samples for analysis by the Departmental Directorate of Population Protection," the ministry said in a press release. The case of avian influenza, along with its virus strain H5N1, was confirmed on Tuesday by the National Agency of Risks Assessment (ANSES), while "the sequencing of the strain is underway".

But the ministry said "it seems to be of a strain already detected in Europe, which had a low-pathogenic avian influenza profile".

Experts from ANSES are evaluating the potential dangerousness of the strain for man.

French Minister of Agriculture Stephane Le Foll also immediately activated the national urgent sanitary intervention plan. According to the ministry, the Animal Health Advisory Committee will have an emergency meeting on 26 November to discuss the application of protection measures against the avian influenza. — Xinhua



## Mali arrests two suspects linked to Bamako hotel attack

BAMAKO — Mali authorities arrested two people on Thursday suspected of links to an attack on a luxury hotel in the capital that killed 20 people, the security ministry said.

At least two armed men launched a dawn raid on the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako on Friday last week, killing six Russians, three Chinese and an American among others, in the worst jihadist strike on the West African country in years.

The siege ended hours later when Malian commandos stormed the hotel and freed 170 hostages. Two attackers were killed.

“There are two suspects arrested,” said Amadou Sangho, a spokesman for the ministry, without naming them.

Three Islamist militant groups - al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI),

its splinter group al Mourabitoun and Massina Liberation Front (MLF) — have claimed the strike. Security analysts say they could be collaborating.

A source close to the investigation said the suspects had been brought in for interrogation, based on information found in one of the attacker’s mobile phones.

One of them had been regularly in touch with one of the gunmen since August while another sent telephone credit to an attacker, he said.

“It’s only after questioning that we will find out if the second suspect sells phone credit or is an accomplice,” said the source, requesting anonymity.

The attack comes amid deteriorating security in the country just two years after a French-led military operation to scatter Islamist mili-



People drive motorcycles past the Radisson Blu hotel in Bamako, Mali. PHOTO: REUTERS

tants who briefly occupied the desert north.

French troops and a 10,000-strong UN peacekeeping force (MINUSMA) are struggling to stabilize the former French colony and strikes on both Malian and Western targets have spread further south and far beyond traditional militant strongholds.

The US Embassy in Bamako has warned of the possibility of “further ter-

rorist activity in the capital” and advised its citizens to avoid bars, restaurants and shopping centres.

Since the Radisson hotel attack, Malian forces have begun night patrols alongside UN forces and searched several private residences as part of a package of emergency measures.

Christophe Monbelle-Valloir, deputy police commissioner for MI-

NUSMA, said on Thursday a team from the FBI had arrived to help the Malian-led investigation.

Germany has said it is willing to send up to 650 soldiers to bolster the UN force which has yet to reach its full strength of 12,680 men.

It was not clear if the additional troops would expand the scope of the mission or help fill the current gap.—Reuters

## A million children need aid in Central African Republic

DAKAR — More than a million children in the Central African Republic are in urgent need of humanitarian aid while almost half of those under five are malnourished, the United Nations said yesterday ahead of Pope Francis’ visit to the conflict-torn country.

The majority Christian nation plunged into tumult when mostly Muslim Seleka rebels briefly seized power in a 2013 coup.

Sectarian violence has plagued the country since and fresh fighting broke out in Bangui two months ago, the worst violence in the capital this year, when the murder of a Muslim man triggered reprisal attacks on a largely Christian neighbourhood.

Some two million children have been affected by violence which first broke out in December 2012, and 1.2 million now need urgent aid, said the UN children’s agency, UNICEF.

“The violence that has plagued this country has had a devastating impact on the lives of children,” said Mohamed Fall, UNICEF representative in the Central African Republic. “The humanitarian needs are overwhelming, to meet them we need access and we need greater international support.” The conflict has uprooted 400,000 people within the country and forced half a million to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, while recent insecurity and attacks on convoys have hindered aid deliveries and life-saving activities, UNICEF said.

Clashes between mainly Christian anti-balaka militias and mainly Muslim Seleka factions initially cast doubt on the pope’s visit, and risk derailing internationally-backed elections now due on 27 December after being postponed in October due to violence.—Reuters

**“The violence that has plagued this country has had a devastating impact on the lives of children.”**

Mohamed Fall

Representative of UNICEF

## Mexico Federal Police open to probe on use of excessive force

MEXICO CITY — Mexico’s Federal Police is open to an investigation into its possible use of excessive force, particularly in two incidents this year that claimed the lives of dozens of people, police chief Enrique Galindo said on Thursday.

Mexico’s National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) on Wednesday said six people died unlawfully after police were excessive in their efforts to restrain a group of protesters in the violence-wracked city of

Apatzingan in Michoacan state.

Galindo said in an interview with Reuters he wanted to know “if it was excessive or not. And if it was, it should be sanctioned, and if it wasn’t, that should be stated.”

International organisations such as Human Rights Watch have also raised questions about whether the Federal Police — which has some 41,000 officers — carried out extra-judicial killings in a May clash in western Mexico with suspected

gang members that left 42 civilians and one officer dead.

“In both cases, our position is to provide all the possible evidence that could help to shed light on the facts and, of course, if there was any wrongdoing, we will take responsibility,” Galindo said. “I am waiting for the prosecutor to finish the investigation.”

Last year, prosecutors ended up charging a group of soldiers with murder over a clash with alleged gang members that killed 22, after having initially rejected the suggestion of foul play.

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto has been under pressure to clean up abuses by security forces since the disappearance and apparent massacre of 43 students in the city of Iguala in southwestern Mexico in September 2014.

The government said the trainee teachers were abducted by corrupt local police, then handed over to members of a violent drug gang who killed them and incinerated their remains.—Reuters



Federal police officers stand guard near a vehicle with a “Wanted” sign of fugitive kingpin Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman. PHOTO: REUTERS

### Invitation for Tenders

Ministry of Industry (MoI)  
Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
Tender Notice (Post-qualification)  
Vocational Training Programme Sinda  
KfW Ref. No.: 2014 67 521

Tender Reference T-01

Procurement of Machinery, Tools, Accessories and Consumables, Training Equipment

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financial assistance from the German Government through KfW Development Bank towards the improvement of the TVET sector in Myanmar. GOPA Consultants, Germany, acting in the name and on behalf of the Ministry of Industry (MoI), Nay Pyi Taw, invites qualified contractors to bid for the procurement of goods for the ITC Sinda in Sinda.

The Tender covers 3 Lots:

Lot 1 : Car Mechatronics

Lot 2 : Electrical Mechatronics, Building Automation, AC & Refrigeration

Lot 3 : CNC, Mould- Tool & Die Making, CAD / CAM, Production Technology

Firms may request the full tender dossier by email mentioning the full company address, contact data and contact person from:

GOPA Consultants  
Hindenburgring 18  
61348 Bad Homburg  
Germany  
E-Mail: vtpsinde@gopa.de

The tender dossier will be distributed in electronic version only (download link).

Deadline for submission of bids is 12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, 10:00 a.m. local time, at below mentioned premises in Nay Pyi Taw:

Ministry of Industry (MoI)  
Directorate of Industrial Collaboration  
Department of Supervision of Industrial Training Centers  
Office Building No 30, Zaya Htarni Road  
Nay Pyi Taw  
Republic of the Union of Myanmar



# El Niño to cause worst coral bleaching event in Australia

SYDNEY — Australian scientists are preparing for what's predicted to be the nation's most damaging coral bleaching event in history from a combination of rising sea temperatures and this year's El Niño.

Marine scientists from across the country have gathered in Perth, Western Australia, to make plans for the monitoring and assessing of damage as quickly as possible.

El Niño weather systems have caused mass coral bleaching events around Australia, and this year's "Godzilla" is proving more a worry.

"It could be really bad, it could be one of the worst events we've seen, but it's hard to know yet," WA Department of Parks and Wildlife marine scientist Shaun Wilson told Australia's national broadcaster on Friday.

Coral bleaching occurs when stress such as heat causes the animal to expel the symbiotic algae, losing vital nutrients and thus colour, which has led to wide scale loss of productive habitats for fish.

"When coral is bleached, it no longer gets enough food energy and so it starts slowing down in growth and loses its fat and other energy reserves —just like humans do dur-

ing times of hardship," Dr Verena Schoepf from the University of Western Australia's Oceans Institute said.

"The coral then becomes increasingly weak and susceptible to disease, and when bleaching is prolonged, it can die."

Researchers will be deploying in January to set up ocean monitoring stations throughout northern Australia to document how

widespread, severe and the characteristics that cause the bleaching event.

Corals can recover from bleaching events, however severe events may take highly impacted reefs up to 10 years to recover, causing concern among scientists amid rising global sea temperatures.

Corals with high levels of fat or other energy reserves can withstand the impact of annual bleaching

events, UWA researchers have recently found, which is critical to predicting the persistence of corals and their capacity to recover from more frequent events resulting from climate change.

Coral reefs are one of the most important and productive marine ecosystems which the world is dependent upon for tourism and fisheries sustainability.—Xinhua

## Opposition activist's murder shakes Venezuela before election

CARACAS — Venezuela opened an investigation on Thursday into the murder of a local opposition leader days before a legislative election, stirring fears of renewed political violence in the volatile South American OPEC nation.

Luis Diaz, a leader of the opposition Democratic Action party in Guarico state in Venezuela's central plains, was shot toward the end of a public meeting Wednesday night, the latest of several violent incidents during the campaign.

The Public Prosecutor's Office said two of its prosecutors, aided by police investigators, would lead the probe.

"There was a burst of 10 shots and he fell on the floor covered in blood," said Lilian Tintori, wife of jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, who was on stage near Diaz when

he was shot. Democratic Action is part of an opposition coalition contesting a 6 December vote for a new National Assembly.

Polls show the ruling Socialists could lose the legislature for the first time in 16 years.

The high stakes have raised anxiety of a flare-up in political violence. Opposition protests last year sparked violence nationwide, killing 43 people and injuring hundreds.

Both President Nicolas Maduro's government and the opposition accuse each other of harboring a violent agenda.

South American regional bloc UNASUR, which has sent a mission to observe the election, condemned the killing.

"We call on the relevant national authorities to carry out an exhaustive investigation of this awful



Lilian Tintori, wife of jailed opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez, speaks during a news conference in Caracas on 26 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

incident," it said.

The United States also condemned the murder and called on Venezuela's government to protect all candidates. Democratic Action's national leader, Henry Ramos, originally pointed the finger at the Socialist Party for Diaz's death.

The Venezuelan government, however, said preliminary investigations suggested paid killers had murdered Diaz in a fight between gangs. State ombudsman Tarek Saab said police had identified a presumed "intellectual author" of the crime as a member of Diaz's rival union.

"Ramos' accusation is reckless," Maduro said,

condemning the killing.

Tintori alleged she too had been the victim of two attempted attacks on Wednesday, including the dismantling of brakes on a plane her team was using.

The Democratic Unity coalition said three other opposition politicians had also been victims of aggression recently, including Henrique Capriles, who lost the 2013 presidential vote to Maduro after the death of former leader Hugo Chavez.

"The killing of Luis Manuel Diaz provides a terrifying view of the state of human rights in Venezuela," said rights group Amnesty International.—Reuters

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

#### MV SPAR CORONA VOY NO (1508)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SPAR CORONA VOY NO (1508) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-2 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 BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

#### MV AQUILAJ VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV AQUILAJ VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.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 BENLINE AGENCIES (S'PORE) PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301186

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## NOTICE FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY MEMBERS' GOLF TOURNAMENT OF THE CITY GOLF RESORT

The 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary golf tournament for the members of the City Golf Resort is scheduled to be celebrated on 10-1-2016, and the games are to be played on the basis of handicaps in three levels — Gold Level (H'cap 0 to 12), Silver Level (H'cap 13 to 18) and Bronze Level (H'cap 19 to 24). Prizes shall be worthily awarded to winners in every level of competition, and so our members are hereby intimated to declare your handicaps at the Reception Counter, together with K.5000 as a payment for entrance fees, not later than 16:00 hours of 5-1-2016.

General Manager  
City Golf Resort



## Norway's Aurora writes 'songs for the scars we get'

LONDON — The Norwegian singer Aurora cast her spell over a London audience this week with her special brand of electro-pop and deep lyrics, delivered with an angelic voice that has made Katy Perry a fan.

Aurora, 19, is an emerging artist whose debut album is set for release next year, but she already has some serious followers.

Perry, the highest-earning woman in music this year according to Forbes, tweeted back in March that Aurora's music made her heart flutter, and urged her own fans to "check this angel".

"It was very kind of her to do that," Aurora said.

Aurora started writing music at about age 10. She found an old electronic piano in the attic and taught herself to play classical pieces. But she told Reuters that she had not sought out a singing career. "I never really wanted to sing, or to be on the stage at all," she said. "I just wanted to write, maybe become a doctor or a physicist or something of that kind." She has nevertheless been making waves on the music scene this year. Her single "Runaway" reached 1 million streams in six weeks.

Her songs cover dark and deep topics; one of the tracks from the upcoming album is called "Murder Song (5,4,3,2,1)".

"I was a happy child, but I have had my things and I lost a lot of people and I write a lot about that and how to understand it and accept it," she said.

"I want my songs to be especially for the people that fight a lot of battles, because I want my music to be a kind of medicine for the scars that we get." — Reuters

## Adele announces 2016 live concert tour, first in four years

LONDON — Adele, whose latest album "25" has smashed sales records in its first week of release, announced on Thursday she would begin a 15-week concert tour of Britain, Ireland and continental Europe in February.

Fans applauded the tour, Adele's first in four years, on Twitter while media sites noted that the 27-year-old singer appeared to have overcome her self-professed fear of performing before large crowds.

Adele, announcing the tour in a brief video on her website, said the reports of her fear of performing had been exaggerated.

"Hello it's me," she says in the clip, standing in front of a map of Europe and the British Isles.

"I have been bluffing this whole time and I'm so relieved to finally tell you I am of course coming on tour and I can't wait to see all of you

there." The tour will open on 29 February at the SSE Arena in Belfast and will end at the Sportpaleis in Antwerp, Belgium, a notice sent to subscribers to her website said.

Other concerts will be elsewhere in Britain and in Ireland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and France, the notice said.

Fans were jubilant, with one tweet saying: "Omg. Next year Adele is gonna sing in Verona on 28-29 May! Can you imagine all the Arena singing #HELLO?! Italia's waiting for the queen!"

Adele broke the single-week US album sales record in just four days with "25", Nielsen Music said on Tuesday, with sales at 2,430,000 since its release on Friday. —Reuters



PHOTO: REUTERS

## 2015's my worst year: Khloe Kardashian

LONDON — Reality TV star Khloe Kardashian, whose estranged husband Lamar Odom was hospitalised a few weeks ago following a drink and drug binge, believes 2015 has been the worst year of her life.

The "Keeping Up With The Kardashians" star said she would rather forget the year that has seen her contract a staph infection after holding a bedside vigil for Odom's bedside, reported Female First. When a fan tweeted her to say, "except with the whole Lamar thing 2015 was good to you Khloe. You [hot] asf (sic)", she tweeted back, "hands down worst year of my life lol (sic)".

The 31-year-old beauty, however, recently revealed she is recovering well from her illness and Odom is making good progress, too. —PTI

Reality TV star Khloe Kardashian. PHOTO: REUTERS



## Is singer Adam Lambert just too sexy for strait-laced Singapore?

SINGAPORE—Adam Lambert may have been a hit on American Idol but rival petitions in Singapore have gathered thousands of online votes in a lively debate over whether he is too sexy to be allowed to perform at the city-state's largest New Year's eve concert.

The petition against Lambert, addressed to concert organiser Mediacorp and the government, has gathered around 14,000 signatures to back its case that a performance by the openly gay singer did not align with Singaporean values.

However, two rival petitions backing Lambert had gathered more than 11,000 votes by Friday arguing that al-

lowing the performance would show that Singapore shunned discrimination and promoted diversity.

The concert organiser said it was sticking with Lambert, a runner-up on American Idol who caused controversy during his 2009 American Music Awards performance when he kissed his male keyboard player and stimulated sexual acts with dancers. Sex between men is illegal in Singapore.

"We urge the organisers of Countdown 2016 to recognise and respect the values of the majority of Singapore that has voiced its desire to preserve our nation's moral fiber," reads the protest petition, which was posted anonymously by a group saying it represented concerned parents. —Reuters

## I don't mind cutting people from my life: Jennifer Lawrence

LOS ANGELES — Actress Jennifer Lawrence never feels guilty about cutting people out of her life if she thinks they are using her.

The 25-year-old "Hunger Games: Mockingjay — Part 2" actress has a "very small" circle of friends and only wants to have pals for the "right reasons", rather than being used for her fame, reported Entertainment Weekly.

"I have a very small circle. The moment I feel like someone is using me or is in it for the wrong reasons, I have zero guilt about just cutting them out of my life," she said. —PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS



## PICTURE OF THE DAY



Couples practice the tango at a private lesson during the Tango in Paradise Festival 2015, at Denpasar in Bali, Indonesia, on 17 November 2015. Tango in Paradise Festival is a unique Tango festival that combines Tango with Indonesian traditional culture. This year, one of the traditional fabrics from Bali "Saput Poleng Bali" (a cloth with checkered pattern of black and white) will be the icon of the festival. PHOTO: XINHUA

## New York's Thanksgiving parade draws huge crowd amid tight security

NEW YORK — Crowds of spectators watched the marching bands, floats and giant balloons of Macy's annual Thanksgiving Day Parade on Thursday, held without incident under tight security almost two weeks after deadly attacks in Paris.

New York officials expected more than 3 million spectators to have lined the route for the city's signature parade in its 89<sup>th</sup> year. They had urged residents and visitors to carry on with holiday plans, saying there were no credible threats to the United States' most populous city.

President Barack Obama sought to reassure Americans on Wednesday they were safe to travel over the holiday..

Police, who were patrolling in record numbers, arrested a 41-year-old Russian tourist for flying a drone in Central Park near the parade route with his son, 14. No other incidents were reported, a spokeswoman said.

Police walked alongside many parade groups and helicopters hovered overhead amid enhanced security following the 13 November attacks in Paris. Islamic State militants have claimed responsibility for the assault in which 130 people died.

Debbie Irey, 50, a tourist from Salem, Oregon, said security was on her mind as she and her husband watched the parade.

"You can't live in fear," said Irey, who works in the financial sector. "The police officers with guns in Times Square heightens your awareness."



Floats gather on Central Park West prior to start of the 89<sup>th</sup> Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in the Manhattan borough of New York on 26 November 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

About 50 million people worldwide were expected to have watched the televised 2.5-mile (4-km) parade on a route ending at Macy's flagship store. The show ushers in the US holiday season and the busiest time of year to travel.

Crowds up to 80 people deep in places applauded baton twirlers, stilt walkers and giant helium balloons of such cartoon characters as Snoopy and Hello Kitty, which hovered over the parade route.

Children on their parents' shoulders narrated the parade to those in the crowd unable to see. Some youngsters climbed onto police vans, adding to the holiday

atmosphere. Police had added members of a new counterterrorism unit to parade security. Officers guarded subway entrances and circulated through crowds under mostly sunny skies.

"The security is so stringent in NYC that it puts you at ease right from your arrival at the airport," said Anne Marie Sheehy, 49, of Liverpool, England, who was watching the parade with her travel companion, Paula Deegan, 50.

A Reuters-Ipsos poll shows Americans have become more concerned about threats since the Paris attacks and identified terrorism as the most important problem facing the country.—Reuters

## Frescoes stolen from ancient tomb go on display in Italy

ROME — Five frescoed stone slabs stolen from a tomb in the ancient city of Paestum and trafficked by a notorious artefact smuggler went on display in Italy on Thursday after a 10-year investigation.

Police were led to the pieces, all dating from around 400 BC, after an international trafficker known as "The Captain" died in a road accident, leaving thousands of photographs of archaeological finds in his car.

A police squad dedicated to tracking down art and artefacts dug up illegally from Italy's numerous ancient sites traced the slabs to the Italian-Swiss border and brought them to Rome.

The frescoes show a noble lady and her slave girls, a triumphant warrior on horseback and a young armed man walking with a donkey.

Each slab has a ragged crack across the middle, having been cut in half to make smuggling easier.

Paestum, a ruined city near Naples originally founded by the ancient Greeks, boasts hundreds of unique ancient tombs. Site director Gabriel Zuchtriegel said illegal digs such as the one that yielded the five frescoes were "devastating".

"I invite you to appreciate the beauty of this tomb, but also to reflect on this illicit business and the market that creates opportunities for it," he added.

Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini, speaking at a news conference with Zuchtriegel, cited the plundering of antiquities in Syria by Islamic State militants, who he said made money by illegally selling fragments.—Reuters



### Entertainment Channel

(28-11-2015, Saturday)

<b>6:00 am</b>	• Classical Songs	<b>8:10 am</b>	• Nay Ma Win Ah Hla Myar
<b>6:10 am</b>	• Fashion Music	<b>8:35 am</b>	• Musical Programme
<b>6:15 am</b>	• Real Story, Real Movie	<b>8:50 am</b>	• Dramatic Arts
<b>6:30 am</b>	• Myanmar Series	<b>10:10 am</b>	• Myanmar Video
<b>6:50 am</b>	• Cassette Drama	<b>12:00 noon</b>	• Close Down



### Myanmar International

(28-11-2015 07:00 am~ 29-11-2015 07:00 am) MST

#### Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon- Nine Wonders Around The Platform Of Shwedagon Pagoda
07:39	Am	Gardener: King Orange Plantation
07:52	Am	Graffiti: Portraiture
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Thread Charm "A Kayin Threading Ceremony"
08:35	Am	Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary And Its Rare Star Tortoises
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Day Life Of Kayan Padaung Tribe
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Travelogue "Chaung Tha at its peak period"
10:41	Am	Toddy Palm Product Shop
10:53	Am	Famous pagodas of Sagaing

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

#### Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Snow Flakes...Scenic Confluence...To Kachin State
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar: The Modernization Of Myanmar Customs
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Stories Of The Great Souls (Mar Mar Aye) (Ep-1)

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)  
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Friday 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](http://www.myanmaritv.com/schedule))



# Spurs, Liverpool and Bilbao through

THE value of an in-form striker was underlined as Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool and Athletic Bilbao needed goals from pivotal front men to grab vital wins that booked places in the Europa League last 32 on Thursday.

Harry Kane's late strike gave Spurs a 1-0 win at Qarabag, Liverpool needed Christian Benteke to dig them out of a spot of bother in a 2-1 win over Girondins Bordeaux and Bilbao had Aritz Aduriz to thank for a 3-2 comeback victory in Augsburg.

Those three sides were among 11 teams, who celebrated reaching the knockout stages of the competition.

FK Krasnodar, Lazio, St Etienne, Basel, Schalke 04, Sparta Prague, Villarreal and Braga will all be in the hat when the draw is made for next round having booked spots with one group game to spare on the marathon route to May's final.

Last season's surprise finalists Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk, however, were brought firmly down to earth with an early exit.

Dnipro made a surprise run to the final last term but their European adventure ended early this time when a 3-1 defeat at Lazio meant they could not finish in the top two in Group G.

There was also disappointment for former European champions Celtic as they lost 2-1 at home to Ajax Amsterdam to end their hopes of reaching the next round.

Tottenham's Kane struck in the 78<sup>th</sup> minute for his ninth goal in his last six games to ensure the English Premier League club can relax going into their final group outing.

The England striker had suffered a drought when he went eight games without a club goal at the start of the season, but questions about whether the 22-year-old could continue last term's prolific

scoring run have been long-since silenced.

After Tottenham's Son Heung-Min and Dele Alli earlier hit the woodwork, the powerful Kane thumped home a header from a corner to move them to 10 points at the top of Group J.

Liverpool were also in need of front-line inspiration after they fell behind at home to Bor-

deaux when keeper Simon Mignolet was penalised for holding on to the ball too long and Henri Saivet thumped home from an indirect free kick after 33 minutes.

Benteke was hauled down in the area to earn Liverpool a penalty, which James Milner converted after 38 minutes, and the Belgian striker then got on the scoresheet with a superb turn and finish in first-half stoppage time.

Aduriz's contribution for Bilbao was even more dramatic.

The group stage's most prolific marksman scored twice in the final seven minutes to secure a comeback win in Augsburg that kept the Spaniards top of Group L and moved them safely into the next round.

Bilbao have flourished with Aduriz scoring six goals in five group games, while Augsburg and Partizan Belgrade meet on the final matchday to decide who joins the Spaniards in the last 32.

There was late drama in Germany where Schalke needed to beat APOEL Nicosia to guarantee qualifying but had to wait until the 86<sup>th</sup> minute for Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting to snatch a 1-0 win.

Having ended a seven-match winless run in all competitions, Schalke stayed top of Group K, ahead of Sparta Prague who also reached the knockout phase with a 1-0 win over Asteras Tripolis.

Basel progressed as Group I winners after they came back from 2-0 down against Fiorentina, managed by the Swiss side's former boss Paulo Sousa, to draw 2-2.

The Italians, who took a stranglehold with a double from Federico Bernardeschi, had to play for more than an hour with 10 men after Facundo Roncaglia was shown a first-half red card.

Sousa's Fiorentina now need at least a draw in the final match against Belenenses to make it out of the group stage.

Villarreal came into their game at home to Rapid Vienna having already qualified earlier on Thursday after Viktoria Plzen lost 1-0 at Dinamo Minsk.

The Spaniards celebrated with a 1-0 win to end the Austrian side's 100 percent Group E record with Bruno Soriano's late goal. Borussia Dortmund, who lost 1-0 at FK Krasnodar, Molde, beaten 2-0 by Fenerbahce, Napoli, 1-0 winners at Club Bruges, and Rapid Vienna had already secured their places in the knockout stage on the previous matchday.—Reuters



Liverpool's Adam Lallana in action with Bordeaux's Cedric Yambere and Ludovic Sane. PHOTO: REUTERS

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Myanmar to host 2<sup>nd</sup> Men's Asian Hockey Challenge

Ko Moe

MYANMAR'S national hockey team has begun intensive training ahead of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Men's Asian Hockey Challenge, which will take place at Theinbyu Hockey Pitch in Yangon from 12 to 20 December.

Myanmar's 29 players are being trained by head coach Mr Muhammad Akhlaq from Pakistan.

China (Taipei), Singapore, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong will take part in the tournament.

Myanmar's team is comprised of players from the bronze medal winning team of the 28<sup>th</sup> SEA Games of 2014. Myanmar won silver in the 1<sup>st</sup> Men's Asian Hockey Challenge in 2013.

Myanmar hosted the U-18 Asian Cup hockey tournament in 2009, the SEA Cup hockey tournament in 2011 and the hockey event of the 27<sup>th</sup> SEA Games in 2013 at Theinbyu hockey pitch.

### Manchester United striker Wilson joins Brighton

MANCHESTER — Manchester United striker James Wilson has joined Championship side Brighton and Hove Albion on loan for the rest of the season, the second division club said.

The 19-year-old has made only two appearances for United this season, coming on as a substitute in the 3-0 defeat by Arsenal on 4 October and starting in the Capital One (League) Cup loss to Middlesbrough on 28 October.—Reuters

### Muguruza relishing night matches on grass

MADRID — Garbine Muguruza is looking forward to becoming one of the first to play night matches on grass when a new tournament in Mallorca starts in June, the Spanish world number three said on Thursday.

The event, to be staged the same week as the Aegon Classic in Birmingham, England, will give players a chance to hone their grass skills before Wimbledon starts at the end of June.—Reuters

## Birdie-less Scott not giving up on Australian Open

SYDNEY — Adam Scott cannot remember the last time he failed to secure a birdie in a round of golf but despite shooting a two-over-par 73 on Friday he still has not given up hope of a second Australian Open title this week.

The 35-year-old Australian has still not won in 2015 and had declared himself "fired up" to break the drought at the Australian Golf Club this week.

After a topsy-turvy level par 71 in high winds on Thursday,

however, the former world number one failed to raise his game in calmer conditions on Friday and combined 16 pars with two bogeys to slip down the leaderboard on two over for the tournament.

"It wasn't what I was looking for at all," he told reporters.

"I was hoping to come out and have a good start but I didn't. I just never got any momentum and never got myself in the right spot. Didn't make any

putts and it's a hard track."

Fatigued after an early start and failing to come to terms with slower greens, Scott had a chance of a birdie at the par-three 11<sup>th</sup> only to three putt for a bogey.

The former US Masters champion was left scratching his head when asked the last time he had failed to pick up at least one shot over 18 holes.

"I can't recall off the top of my head, normally I can sneak

one in," he said.

Given the tricky conditions on Thursday — only 18 players finished below par — Scott should comfortably make Friday's cut but knows he needs to play a lot better to remain in contention.

"I've just got to play two good rounds," he said. "I think I can shoot a couple of mid 60s, it's really do-able if you play good and I've just got to put it together."—Reuters