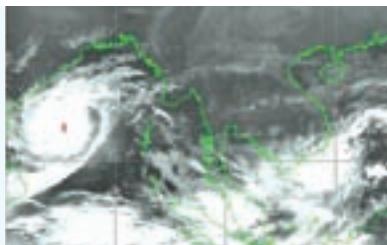


## NATIONAL

Vardah over Bay of Bengal not likely to move into Myanmar



► PAGE 2

Vol. III, No. 239, 12<sup>th</sup> Waxing of Nadaw 1378 ME

## NATIONAL

Warning shots kill motorcyclist



► PAGE 3

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## NATIONAL

Joint armed groups collect extortion from vehicles in Shan State

► PAGE 3

Sunday, 11 December 2016



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu delivers aid to Muslim people from Ducheertan Village in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

## Aid flows into northern Rakhine

AID from the UN, the Rakhine State Government and NGOs has flowed into two local communities in northern Rakhine State, where unrest occurred following attacks by violent armed men on border posts on October 9 that killed nine police officers.

The Rakhine State Government and the organization One More delivered food to 318 households from five village tracts in Maungtaw Township yesterday.

The aid included 79 bags of rice, 159 viss of cooking oil, 159

viss of beans, 159 viss of salt plus basic medicines.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Mr Chris Carter, UN senior adviser for Rakhine state, and officials left Sittway for Maungtaw by watercraft on Friday morning and visited the

villages of the two communities in the northern and southern parts of Maungtaw.

At a meeting with the Muslim community in Ducheertan Village, Ywathitkay Village and Ohntaw Village, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu expressed his delight

at seeing an improved socio-economic situation for the residents, calling on them to abide by the law as the situation in Maungtaw District returns to normal.

"The two communities need to live in peaceful coexistence  
**SEE PAGE 3 >>**



The mine detector seized from MNDAA armed group.

PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

## Government troops find nine bodies, weapons and ammunition in Mongko

GOVERNMENT troops seized assorted arms and ammunition and found two bodies of members of the MNDAA armed group and seven bodies of civilians during area clearance operations in the Mongko area on Thursday and Friday.

Following a skirmish with the MNDAA on Friday, government troops found two bodies of MNDAA members, four M-22 assault rifles, two .22 calibre weapons, four air rifles, nine ammo cartridges loaded with bul-

lets, four pairs of binoculars, 175 rounds of ammunition, 11 grenades, two RPG mortar rounds, one land mine, two sets of walkie-talkie, one mine detector, one backpack, two uniform jackets of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), 33 complete sets of uniforms and seven bodies of civilians, according to the office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. In a separate incident nearby, troops seized one M-22 rifle and one cartridge containing 20 bullets and one gun string in a

bush east of the Mongko military outpost.

Similarly, the troops discovered one M-22 rifle, three cartridges, three grenades and 300 bullets in a sugarcane plantation near Ward-6 in Mongko on Friday.

They also discovered two RPG mortar rounds, one grenade, 45 bullets for a machine gun and 20 bullets for an M-22 rifle near Haymoelon Village around 2 pm on Friday.—Myanmar News Agency

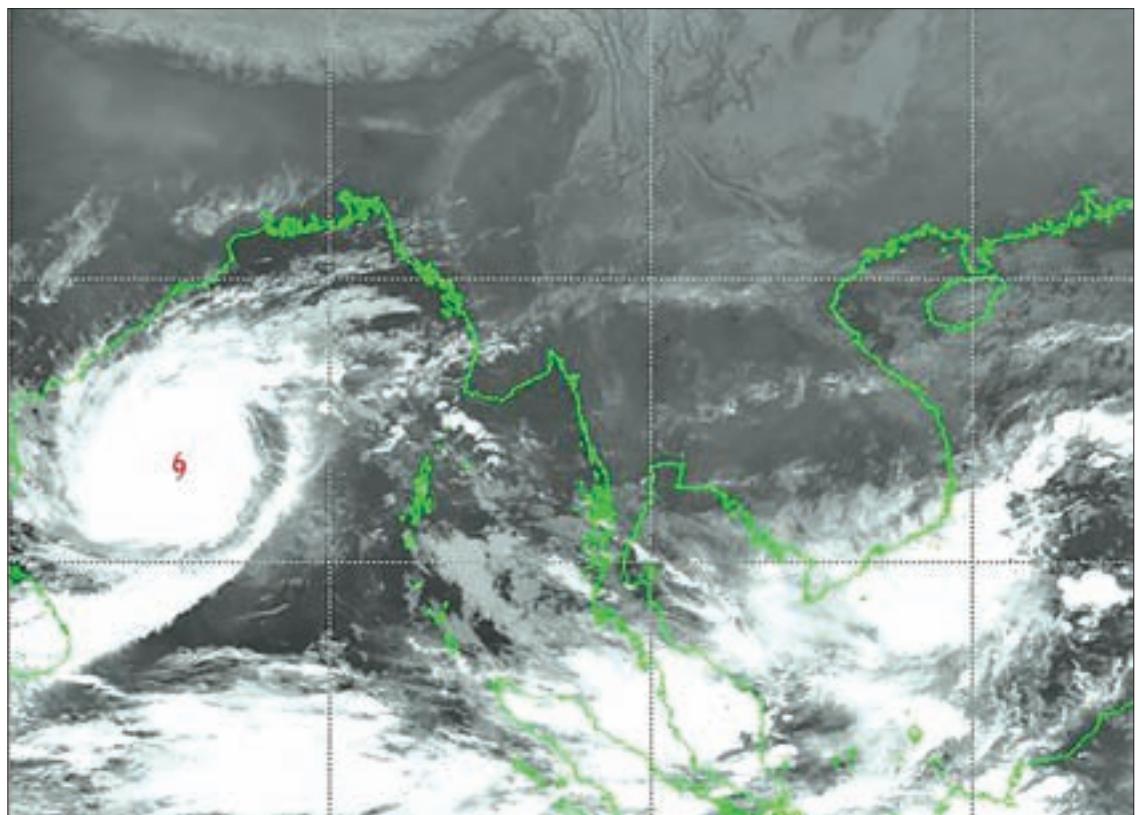
# Vardah forming over Bay of Bengal not likely to move into Myanmar

MYANMAR'S Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) has issued a 'yellow' warning for Cyclone Vardah forming over the Bay of Bengal, predicting that it may not move into Myanmar.

The cyclone could still cause squalls and rough seas off and along the Myanmar coasts, with surface wind speeds reaching 35 miles per hour, the announcement said.

The weather bureau has warned fishing boats and vessels against the rough seas.

Cyclone Vardah in the Southeast Bay of Bengal has intensified into a severe cyclonic storm. It will continue to move west-northwestwards, gradually moving closer to the state of Andhra Pradesh on the coast in India. The system is likely to gain more strength during the next 24 hours, weakening thereafter. Vardah is likely to make landfall over Andhra Pradesh coast between Nellore and Machilipatnam during the afternoon or evening hours of December 12.—GNLM



## Universities in Myanmar and Britain discuss educational cooperation



Union Minister Dr Myo Thein Gyi gives talks on education reforms of Myanmar at Warwick University. PHOTO: MNA

A MYANMAR delegation led by Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi discussed the possibilities for cooperation between the universities in Britain and Myanmar during their trip to the United Kingdom from 27th November to 7th December.

One of the focuses of the discussion included conducting English language courses for

higher education and basic education teachers in Myanmar at the British Council.

The delegation also visited Warwick University, Manchester University and Liverpool University. The union minister explained the education reforms of Myanmar at Warwick University and Oxford University's St Hugh's College. —Myanmar News Agency



MYANMAR youths participate in an event held in commemoration of the International Human Rights Day which falls on the 10th of December 2016 in the People's Park in Yangon. Myanmar National Human Rights Commission has been handling complaints that lodged to it. A total of 495 complaints were received during the period starting from 1st of January 2016 to the present point in time and they have been reviewed in accordance with the Procedures. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

## Inle night bus terminal to construct by January, 2017

THE construction of Inle night bus terminal is to be finished no later than January 2017, it is learnt from the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

"Currently, we are building the night bus terminal at Nyaung Shwe town. Presently, the visitors' vehicles can park near Botkyo bronze statue and Independence Monument Ground at day time," said U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism at the Sustainable De-

velopment of responsible tourism forum in Yangon on 7 December.

Night market will be opened at the Independence Monument Ground in Nyaung Shwe from 4 pm to 10:30 pm. The passenger buses can stop after market hours to reduce the traffic problems.

"The traffic jam occurred all the time in Inle because of the trucks and the passenger buses. The Inle road is too narrow. The passenger buses can stop at Inde-

npendence Monument Ground at the day time and the night market will be opened at the night time. We can implement the project starting from 4 January," said Union minister U Ohn Maung.

KBZ Company donated Ks 100 million to build the night bus terminal and U Aung Myo Min Din and Daw Su Su Tin family donated Ks 1.05 million to supply the electricity at night bus terminal.—Myitma News Agency

## Twelve pistons seized

WHILE conducting area clearance operations on hills near Mayin Taung and Mhaw Taung Villages in Maungtaw, security forces seized eight guerilla uniforms and 12 pistons, which are assumed to be used in landmines hidden in a bush on Friday. —Myanmar News Agency



Twelve pistons and uniforms seized from MNDAA armed group. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION TEAM

## Contestants take a selfie during a kick-off event for the upcoming Miss Universe pageant, in Pasay, Metro Manila

KIRANMEET Kaur Baljeet Singh from Malaysia, Chalita Suansane from Thailand, Htet Htet Htun from Myanmar, Sari Nakazawa from Japan, Jenny Kim from Korea, and Kezia Roslin Cikita Warouw from Indonesia (L-R) take a selfie during a kick-off event for the upcoming Miss Universe pageant, in Pasay, Metro Manila, Philippines December 10, 2016.—Reuters





Rakhine people from Thayargon Village in Maungtaw Township gather to get aid from Rakhine State Government, UN and One More. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION TEAM



Mr Chris Carter, UN senior adviser for Rakhine State delivers aid to Muslim people from Ducheertan Village in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION TEAM



People from Thayargon Village receives aid from the organization One More aid group. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

## Aid flows into northern Rakhine

>> FROM PAGE 1

and need to give correct information to local authorities," said U Nyi Pu at the meeting.

He also invited open, transparent discussions with the villagers while meeting with the officials of the UN and UNHCR, who

were also present at the meeting.

Mr Chris Carter also clarified the reasons for the trip.

Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Mr Chris Carter and officials of the UN delivered aid including clothing, blankets, mosquito nets and family kits to the villagers of the

Muslim community.

In the afternoon, the Chief Minister and UN officials visited Rakhine villages including Ale Thankyaw, Oodaung, Shwebaho and Bohdigon villages and distributed aid to the villagers —*Global New Light of Myanmar*

## Myanma Democracy Film Week event to be held in September 2017

A meeting to organise Myanma Democracy Film Week Event was held at Myanmar Radio and Television in Yangon yesterday.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint discussed production of documentaries to commemorate the event.

Responsible personnel the Myanmar Motion Picture Association and film professionals reported on production of seven films and television series for the event from 15 to 21 September, 2017.

Later, members of the film

and video censor board reported on their functions and filmmakers discussed their challenges.



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint holds meeting with personnel from Myanmar Motion Picture Association. PHOTO: MNA

## Joint armed groups collect extortion from vehicles in Shan State

A joint force of the KIA, the TNLA, the MNDAA and the AA stopped all vehicles on the Namtu-Lashio Road in Namtu Township, Shan State on

Friday night and demanded money in order to pass, it has been learnt. The joint force reportedly extorted Ks500,000 from each vehicle for an un-

known period of time and then retreated to areas near Parchin Village yesterday morning. The traffic has since returned to normal.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Four fined for breaching curfew in Maungtaw

Patrolling at night in Maungtaw, police detained four people including Kyaw Myo Lwin of Minbargyi Street in Myoma (East) Ward at about 9:50 pm.

Found to be in breach of the curfew, they were charged at the

township court under section 188 and fined Ks. 20,000 each.

Curfew was imposed on Maungtaw from 7 pm to 6 am for regional stability following violent attacks on the Kyikanpyin Border Guard Police Command

Centre, the Ngakhuya Area Office and the Kotankauk Police station on 9 October.

Since 9 December, curfew has been imposed on Maungtaw under Section 144 of Martial Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Myanmar Navy rescues Thai vessel

A sport fishing vessel owned by the Namjai Ranong Company of Thailand had to be rescued by the Myanmar Navy yesterday after its engine failed about 120 miles west of Kawthoung.

The boat, a Namjai-9 sport fishing vessel, was at anchor when a navy ship arrived to rescue it with 17 people aboard

including 9 Chinese, two Britons, three Thai crew members, two Myanmar nationals and one Myanmar tour guide.

The vessel set out from Kawthaung on Monday.

The navy ship provided necessary assistance to the shipwrecked victims.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Warning shots kill motorcyclist

WARNING shots from security forces killed a motorbike rider who refused to stop for a security check in Lashio on Friday.

While conducting area clearance operations in Lashio, security forces instructed the rider of the motorbike heading from Namtu to Lashio to stop at about 10 pm, but the motorbike

rider refused to halt. As a result, security forces fired warning shots that hit the rider.

Security forces found a mine in the toolbox of the motorbike, according to a press release of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—*Myanmar News Agency*



A modern explosive device found in the motorcycle. PHOTO: THE MYANMA MOTION PICTURES ASSOCIATION

## Ks3.6 billion to be spent on waterway development and prevention of riverbank erosion



**Photo shows an eroded river bank of Ayeyawady River.** PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

A project to develop waterways and to prevent erosion of riverbanks will be implemented in the villages beside the Ayeyawady River in early 2017, it is learnt from Mandalay Region's Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems Department.

Field studies were conducted in October, 2016. Tenders were invited by the department

beginning from December 5.

"All the projects will start this financial year. We plan to implement the projects only when the water level in the river decreases. Some parts of the project will be implemented by the private companies. We will provide the technology," said Director U Toe Aung Lin of the department.

The waterway develop-

ment and riverbank erosion prevention measures will be implemented in Singu, Madaya, Patheingyi, Sintgaing, Taungtha and Myingyan townships.

The project will cost Ks3.6 billion, it is learnt from Mandalay Region's Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems Department.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

## Over Ks41 billion cut from 2017-2018 budget

### Aung Thant Khaing

OVER Ks41 billion was cut from the 2017-2018 fiscal year budget, said U Myat Thu, Minister for Regional Planning and Finance on Friday on the second day of the Mandalay Hluttaw emergency meeting.

The Mandalay Region Government has already directed the ministries not to ask for a higher budget than absolutely necessary.

Among the budget cuts, over Ks5 billion was cut from the Irrigation Department, over Ks1

billion from the Water Resources and Utilization Department, Ks600 million from the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems, Ks400 million from the Meteorology and Hydrology Department, over Ks5 billion from the Electric power, over Ks1 billion from the General Administration Department, over Ks3 billion from the Fire Service department, Ks100 million from the Agriculture Department, Ks100 million from the Livestock Breeding and

Veterinary Department, Ks700 million from the Forestry Department, Ks600 million from the Dry Zone Greening Department, over Ks1 billion from the Environmental Conservation department, over Ks1 billion from the Sports and Physical Education department, over Ks6 billion from the Urban and Housing Development Department, Ks893 million from the Development Affairs department, and over Ks11 billion from Mandalay City Development Committee.

## 3,000 solar-powered lamp posts and CCTV installed at pagodas

OVER 3,000 solar-powered lamp posts will be erected along with closed-circuit television cameras at pagodas in Yangon region in 2017, it is learnt from Yangon Region Government.

"The Yangon region government will supply 3,000 out of 100,000 solar-powered

lamp posts to supply lighting at night. We will also install the CCTVs," said Daw Naw Pan Thinzar Myo, Kayin ethnic minister of Yangon region government at the Sustainable Development of Responsible Tourism forum in Yangon on Wednesday.

The lamp posts will be

installed using foreign companies' investment, not with the government budget.

There are over 100,000 lamp posts in Yangon region but it will take two years to install all of them. Thus, only 3,000 lamp posts will be installed in the initial phase. —*Myitmakha News Agency*

## Tuberculosis cases in Mandalay increased by 56 over past 11 months

THE number of patients living with tuberculosis in Mandalay Region has risen to 635 this year from 579 last year, an increase of 56 cases, according to the 200-bed TB Special Hospital in Patheingyi Township in Mandalay Region.

According to figures collected over the past nine months, people between the ages of 30 and 50 were found to be the group most affected by the communicable disease, said Dr Moe Zaw, medical superintendent of the hospital.

Dr Moe Zaw said that the hospital continues to treat not only TB patients, but also patients with multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB), which is present among patients who have also contracted HIV. Some of them are being treated in the serious disease section of the hospital as inpatients. The majority of TB patients are from Mandalay followed by Shan State, Sagaing Region and Magway Region.

A specialist in infectious dis-

eases at the 200-bed TB Special Hospital established in 1996 said the disease has strong correlations to poverty and sub-standard living condition. "TB cases are reported mostly in peri-urban areas. The outbreaks of the cases are linked to living standards. A decline in the poverty rate may reduce the outbreak of the disease" the specialist said.

According to a World Health Organisation survey, Myanmar has one of the highest burdens of tuberculosis in the world with an estimated 180,000 new cases of TB every year, more than 40,000 of them in children. It is estimated that over 20,000 people die from TB each year. About 9,000 people are annually diagnosed with multi-drug resistant TB.

The WHO report shows that there are approximately 500,000 people with MDR-TB around the world. In Myanmar, it is found that about 5 per cent of new TB patients have MDR-TB.—*Myitmakha News Agency*



**The 200-bed TB Special Hospital in Patheingyi Township, Mandalay Region, which has seen a marked increase in the number of tuberculosis cases.** PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

## Crime NEWS

### Yaba seized in Kyaikto, Mon State

POLICE from Kyaikto Myoma seized Yaba tablets on Thursday from a guest house in Kyaikto Township, Mon state.

"We received the information and went to the guest house. We found a man seemingly waiting for the customers to sell the drugs beside the guest house. As he looked suspicious, we searched him and found the yaba tablets in his pockets. He was promptly arrested," said Police Inspector Zaw Myo Lwin.

Ko Paing, also known as Soe Moe Paing Thu, 21, was arrested after 67 yaba tablets worth Ks335,000 were found on him.

Police have filed charges against the suspect under sec-



**Ko Paing, also known as Soe Moe Paing Thu.**

PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

# Solomon Islands scrambles to reach areas hit by second major quake

SYDNEY — The Solomon Islands plans to dispatch emergency supplies to areas affected by a 6.9 magnitude aftershock on Saturday, a day after a much larger tremor triggered a tsunami warning that send hundreds of coastal people fleeing into the hills.

General Secretary of the Solomon Islands Red Cross Joanne Zoleveke said the supply boat could take almost 24 hours to reach Makira Island, which lies close to the epicentre of Friday's deeper 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

Both quakes triggered tsunami warnings which were lifted a short time later.

"We are working with the National Disaster Office of the Government and we've mobilised our emergency response teams to accompany the government officers and other international non-governmental organisations that are going on this boat," Zoleveke said.

Makira Island's air-strip services small planes incapable of shuttling the volume of aid required for the relief effort.



Solomon Islands Red Cross Auki Branch officers distribute aid to families affected by Saturday's earthquake, at Malaita Province on the Solomon Islands, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"We still don't have that much detail but we know people are really affected by what's happened," Zoleveke said.

Zoleveke said based on reports received by two-way radio, Friday's quake caused significant damage and forced people from homes in the town of

Kirakira on Makira Island, about 200 km from the Pacific Island nation's capital of Honiara.

She said she knew of only one reported casualty, a 25-year-old with non-specific injuries. The remoteness of the region and the failure of communications meant it was im-

possible to know the full extent of any injuries or damage, she said.

Australia has provided A\$50,000 (\$37,235) worth of supplies and a helicopter to undertake an initial assessment of affected areas to help target relief efforts, Zoleveke said.

Suzy Sainovski of

World Vision in Honiara said staff from the humanitarian organisation in Kirakira saw people fleeing to higher ground.

"One of the reasons we need to get them shelter assistance (is) because it's the start of the wet season here," Sainovski said.

—Reuters

## Japan launches cargo spaceship to take supplies to ISS

TANEGASHIMA, (Japan) — Japan launched a rocket late Friday carrying an unmanned cargo spaceship loaded with supplies for the International Space Station.

The H-2B rocket car-

rying the Kounotori6 cargo transporter blasted off from the Tanegashima Space Centre in Kagoshima Prefecture in southwestern Japan at 10:26 pm.

If successfully put into orbit around the

Earth, the spaceship is expected to dock with the space station on Tuesday, according to the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency.

The cargo spaceship is carrying 5.9 tons of

supplies including food, drinking water and other daily necessities for astronauts on board the ISS, seven ultrasmall satellites developed by some universities and firms, and Japanese-made lithium-ion bat-

teries for use on the space station.

The launch of the Kounotori6 was delayed from its originally scheduled 1 October launch due to a leak in its piping.—Kyodo News

Thailand's poor people get giveaway cash from gov't banks

BANGKOK — Nearly 7 million people, officially categorised as "impoverished," are receiving a sum of giveaway cash from government banks throughout Thailand.

Under condition set by the Ministry of Finance, those who may earn no more than 30,000 baht (about 857 US dollars) per year are entitled to 3,000 baht (about 85.7 US dollars) and those who may earn more than 30,000 baht but less than 100,000 baht (about 2,857 US dollars) per year are entitled to 1,500 baht (about 42.8 US dollars) in give-away cash. According to an official of the ministry, about 8.27 million Thais had earlier filed for the government's grant nationwide.

However, 6.98 million of those people were certified by the authorities as eligible to the give-away cash, the official said.

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha earlier commented that the government's grant was not a populist campaign and that it was merely meant to help stimulate the country's grassroots economy.

Beginning on Saturday until the end of this month, the eligible poor can get money from the government banks — the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives, the Government Savings Bank and Krung Thai Bank. The money is available via ATMs throughout the country. —Xinhua

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<b>New</b> alfa 13000 ks Lemon Fruit Filling 2.7kg	<b>New</b> alfa 14000 ks Apple Fruit Filling 2.7kg	<b>New</b> alfa 14500 ks Peach Fruit Filling 2.7kg	<b>New</b> alfa 15000 ks Kiwi Fardura / Strawberry Fardura 3.15kg	<b>New</b> alfa 16000 ks Mango Fruit Filling 2.7kg	<b>New</b> alfa 16500 ks Raspberry Fardura 3.15kg	<b>New</b> alfa 18500 ks Blueberry Fruit Filling 70%, Strawberry Fruit Filling 2.7kg	<b>New</b> alfa 350KS Shell Curry Puff 35gm	<b>New</b> alfa 3900ks Mix Dim Sum 400gm	
<b>New</b> Sujon 3000ks Sweet Corn Garden Fresh	<b>New</b> Sujon IQF Blueberries 6000 ks	<b>New</b> Sujon IQF Cranberries 6000 ks	<b>New</b> Sujon IQF Mixed Berries 5700 ks	<b>New</b> Sujon IQF Blackcurrants 5300 ks	<b>New</b> NAAN 2300ks Naan, Aloo Paratha 400gm	<b>New</b> ZADE 1250ks Zade Spaghetti 500gm	<b>New</b> DOUX 13000ks Turkey Whole 2kg (1 nos)	<b>New</b> Scampi Grade 1 70000ks New Zealand Premium	<b>New</b> Scampi Grade 3 52000ks New Zealand Premium
<b>New</b> Scallop 1/2 Shell Oyster 1/2 Shell Black Mussel Whole Mussels New Zealand	<b>New</b> King Salmon Headed & Gutted	<b>New</b> Salmon Fillet Trim C Tuna Saku	<b>New</b> Creamy Doru Boneless Skinned Fish Fillet	<b>New</b> Holland Duck Whole 2-2.4kg	<b>New</b> Australian Meltique Bell Striploin Portion Beef Tenderloin Portion, New Zealand Lamb Foreshark & Rack	<b>New</b> TAMEK 100% Apple Juice Product of Turkey (inclusive of Promotion Items)	<b>New</b> TAMEK 100% Apple Juice Product of Turkey (inclusive of Promotion Items)		

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# Japan SDF in South Sudan may withdraw if security worsens: defence chief

TOKYO — Japanese Defence Minister Tomomi Inada has said Self-Defence Forces personnel stationed in South Sudan to take part in UN peacekeeping operations could withdraw if the security situation deteriorates with a protracted gunfight.

"The situation could abruptly change so we will consistently gather necessary information for ensuring safety," Inada said in a recent interview with Kyodo News and other media before SDF members

become ready Monday to perform their new task of rescuing UN staff and others in response to an urgent request.

Inada said she is "not concerned" about the new mission in line with Japan's new security legislation, which provides them with more leeway in the country's war-renouncing Constitution. The SDF troops "are well trained" and the chief commanding the unit in South Sudan "is a person who can assess the situation calmly," the minister

added. In the capital Juba, more than 270 people died in July due to a large-scale clash between government forces and rebels. While admitting that the overall security situation in South Sudan is tough, the Japanese government has said Juba is relatively calm.

"If a gun battle lasts longer than the (July) fighting, and the SDF cannot secure their safety, it is possible that we would consider their withdrawal," Inada said.

The new role legally

includes a rescue operation of foreign military personnel but Inada said such a scenario "is not expected in actual situations. Foreign troops can protect themselves."

The rescue mission remains controversial at home, with some critics warning that the new role could lead SDF members to become embroiled in overseas military actions for the first time since World War II, in possible violation of the postwar Constitution.—Kyodo News

# Aussie experts call for '9-to-5' work week to be scrapped during heatwaves

CANBERRA — Health and weather experts in Australia have called for the traditional '9-to-5', 38-hour work week to be revised in the case of extreme heatwaves.

Peng Bi, professor of public health at the University of Adelaide, said on Saturday that as Australia con-

tinues to experience more heatwaves during the brutal summer months, workplaces need to adjust accordingly so worker health is not put at unnecessary risk. He told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) that working traditional hours in a heatwave could be detrimental to the health

of many workers — particularly older workers and pregnant women, for example.

"During a heatwave, the 38-hour, nine-to-five week may not be the best thing, or the most healthy way to work," Peng said.

"I reckon some regulations should be set up to get

employers to pay attention to the occupational health and safety of their employees," he said.

Peng said lawmakers should consider drafting legislation which would amend Australia's health and safety laws to accommodate the changing climate.—Xinhua

# After impeachment, South Korea prime minister urges calm, vigilance



South Korean Prime Minister and the acting President Hwang Kyo-ahn releases a statement to the nation at the Government Complex in Seoul, South Korea, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SEOUL — South Korea's prime minister sought to calm anxiety over national security and to reassure financial markets on Saturday, a day after parliament voted to impeach President Park Geun-hye, making him acting leader.

Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn, who assumed presidential authority late on Friday after the overwhelming impeachment vote, and with more protests against Park due later on Saturday, called on authorities to ensure that rallies are peaceful.

"So far, financial and foreign exchange markets have been relatively stable and there are no signs of unusual movements by the North, but all public servants should bear vigilance in mind as they conduct their duties," Hwang told a meeting.

He said national security was the priority and reiterated that the military should be on high alert for any provocation by old rival North Korea, including the possibility of cyber attacks aimed at sowing confusion in the South.

Park's powers were suspended after 234 of parliament's 300 members voted to impeach her, meaning more than 60 members of her own party backed the motion against her.

The impeachment, which has to be reviewed and approved by a nine-judge Constitutional Court within 180 days to remove Park from office, sets the stage for her to become the country's first elected leader to be ousted in disgrace.

Park, 64, the daughter of a former military ruler, is accused of colluding with a friend and a former aide,

both of whom prosecutors have indicted, to pressure big businesses to donate to foundations set up to back her policy initiatives.

Park, who is serving a single five-year term ending in February 2018, has denied wrongdoing but apologized for carelessness in her ties with her friend, Choi Soon-sil.

For six consecutive Saturdays, huge crowds have gathered in central Seoul in peaceful demonstrations calling for Park to step down, with another planned for Saturday.

"The candle-lit rallies we have been holding and the weekend rally in Kwanghwamun will go on," organisers said in a statement, referring to an imposing gate that opens to an imperial palace in front of the presidential Blue House, where Park remains despite losing her powers.

"The impeachment is the start, not the end," they said.

If Park leaves office early, an election must be held within 60 days. She would also lose presidential immunity from prosecution. Prosecutors have named Park as an accomplice in their investigation.

Earlier, the Bank of Korea said the financial market impact of the impeachment appeared to be limited after a meeting to review policy measures that it may take. Governor Lee Ju-yeol asked for close monitoring of the markets.

The United States, which has about 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea, was in close contact with South Korea and remained a strong ally, the White House said late on Friday.—Reuters

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# Security council meets on North Korea human rights despite China opposition

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations Security Council discussed on Friday what a senior UN official described as "appalling human rights violations" in North Korea, despite a failed attempt by China to stop the third annual meeting on the issue.

China's UN Ambassador Liu Jieyi said the Security Council was "not a forum for discussing human rights issues and still less for the politicization of the human rights issue."

"Given the current context, where a plethora of dire challenges are confronting international peace and security, the council should scrupulously honour its responsibility and focus on issues concerning international peace and security with undivided attention," Liu told the 15-member council.

China, an ally of Pyongyang, called a rare procedural vote to try to stop the meeting. Nine countries voted to hold the meeting — the minimum required — while Angola, China, Egypt, Russia and

Venezuela were against. Senegal abstained.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power told the council that Pyongyang had displayed increasingly aggressive behavior throughout 2016 by conducting a record number of missile launches and two nuclear tests.

"We see the DPRK (North Korea) regime grow its illicit weapons programme rather than growing its own children," said Power, citing World Health Organisation data that one in four North Korean children suffers stunted growth from malnutrition.

She warned North Korean officials, saying: "We are methodically documenting your abuses and your impunity will not last forever. When the day comes that you are publicly held accountable, we will be ready."

Earlier this year, the United States angered North Korea by blacklisting its leader Kim Jong Un for human rights abuses.—Reuters

# CIA says Russia intervened to help Trump win White House

WASHINGTON — The CIA has concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help President-elect Donald Trump win the White House, and not just to undermine confidence in the US electoral system, a senior US official said on Friday.

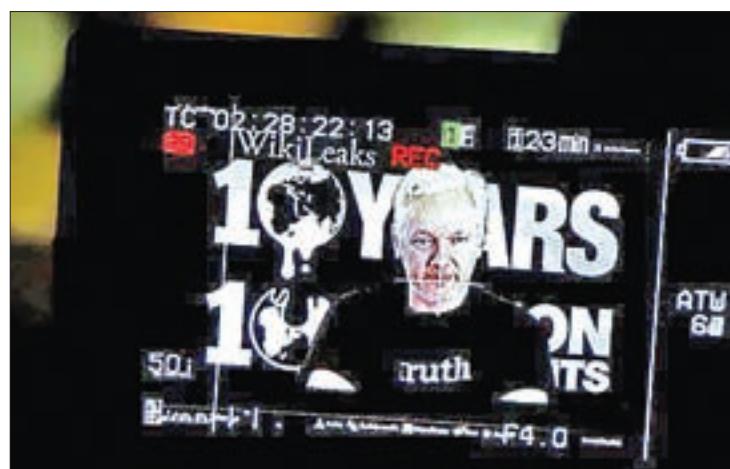
US intelligence agencies have assessed that as the 2016 presidential campaign drew on, Russian government officials devoted increasing attention to assisting Donald Trump's effort to win the election, the US official familiar with the finding told Reuters on Friday night on condition of anonymity.

Citing US officials briefed on the matter, the Washington Post reported on Friday that intelligence agencies had identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided thousands of hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee and others, including the chairman of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, to WikiLeaks.

US President Barack Obama ordered intelligence agencies to review cyber attacks and foreign intervention into the 2016 election and deliver a report before he leaves office on 20 January, the White House said on Friday.

As summer turned to fall, Russian hackers turned almost all their attention to the Democrats. Virtually all the emails they released publicly were potentially damaging to Clinton and the Democrats, the official told Reuters.

"That was a major clue to



**Julian Assange, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of WikiLeaks speaks via video link during a press conference on the occasion of the ten year anniversary celebration of WikiLeaks in Berlin, Germany, on 4 October 2016.** PHOTO: REUTERS

their intent," the official said. "If all they wanted to do was discredit our political system, why publicize the failings of just one party, especially when you have a target like Trump?"

A second official familiar with the report said the intelligence analysts' conclusion about Russia's motives does not mean the intelligence community believes that Moscow's efforts altered or significantly affected the outcome of the election.

Russian officials have denied all accusations of interference in the US election.

A CIA spokeswoman said the agency had no comment on the matter.

The hacked emails passed to WikiLeaks were a regular source of embarrassment to the Clinton campaign during the race for the

presidency.

US intelligence analysts have assessed "with high confidence" that at some point in the extended presidential campaign Russian President Vladimir Putin's government had decided to try to bolster Trump's chances of winning.

The Russians appear to have concluded that Trump had a shot at winning and that he would be much friendlier to Russia than Clinton would be, especially on issues such as maintaining economic sanctions and imposing additional ones, the official said.

Moscow is launching a similar effort to influence the next German election, following an escalating campaign to promote far-right and nationalist political parties and individuals in Europe that began more than a decade ago, the official said.—Reuters

# French election's 'third man' kicks off campaign for presidency

PARIS — France's popular former economy minister, Emmanuel Macron, gets his campaign for the French presidency into gear with a rally in Paris on Saturday which should mark him out as a dark horse in the race for the Elysee.

The 38-year-old Macron, once a protege of President Francois Hollande, has faced strong criticism from the Socialists for deciding to stand as an independent in the 2017 election outside of the party structure.

He has steadfastly refused pleas — most recently by former prime minister Manuel Valls who is seeking the Socialist party ticket — to join in the Left's attempts to decide on a single candidate for next spring's election.

Macron, a former investment banker, will be hoping for a turnout of more than 5,000 at his rally on Saturday, eclipsing last weekend's modest gathering by the Socialists when party grandes struggled to re-energise the



**Emmanuel Macron, head of the political movement "En Marche" or "Forward" and candidate for the 2017 French presidential election, attends an economic forum in Paris, France, on 1 December 2016.** PHOTO: REUTERS

faithful at a gathering that drew only 2,500 supporters.

Polls show there is little chance of any left-wing candidate reaching the election run-off next May and, barring an upset, the stage seems set for a head-to-head between conservative Francois Fillon and far-right leader

Marine Le Pen.

Fillon, a centre-right former prime minister who has pledged to cut deep into the public sector, would easily beat the anti-immigrant and anti-euro Le Pen, taking two thirds of the vote if the polls are correct.

Macron quit as economy minister in the Valls government after he set up his own political movement called "En Marche", which translates as "Forward" or "Onwards".

Promising to be "neither on the left nor on the right", he is widely seen as a wild card in an election that will be fought on high unemployment, national security and immigration.

Some say he could fragment the leftwing electorate and enhance Le Pen's chances of reaching the second ballot next May.

Opinion polls show him consistently ahead of Socialist candidates such as Valls who will compete for the party ticket in late January.—Reuters

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Death toll rises as cargo train explodes in Bulgaria

SOFIA — At least five people were killed and 25 injured when a cargo train derailed and exploded in the northeastern Bulgarian village of Hitrino, demolishing around 20 buildings, police said on Saturday.

At least three of the victims remain in critical condition and the number is likely to rise, authorities said.

"There will be more casualties for sure," outgoing Bulgarian Prime Minister Boiko Borisov said after arriving to the village, some 280 km northeast of capital Sofia and home to around 800 people. Seven of the train's tanks, carrying propane-butane and propylene, derailed at the station of the village, hit electricity line and exploded in flames on Saturday, National Railway Infrastructure Company's general director Mincho Lambrev said.—Reuters

### France seeks to extend state of emergency until July — PM Cazeneuve

PARIS — The French government will propose extending the state of emergency until July 15 2017 due to presidential and parliament elections in spring next year, prime minister Bernard Cazeneuve said on Saturday.

The socialist government imposed the state of emergency, which gives police extended powers to search and arrest, in November 2015 following the attacks on Paris last year.

The extension needs to be approved by parliament, which will debate the proposal on Tuesday. The senate will review it on Thursday.—Reuters

### Two runners die at Xiamen Half-Marathon

XIAMEN (China) — Two Chinese runners died on Saturday after they collapsed at Xiamen International Half-Marathon in southeast China's Fujian province, according to the local organizing committee.

A runner, with the surname Lin, fell down and suffered sudden heart failure with 4.5 kilometers to go before the finish. The other runner, surnamed Wu, fell down after crossing the finish line.

Both runners were given first aid by medical staff and immediately sent to hospital, where they were pronounced dead.

The organisers expressed their deep condolences to the runners' families. The Xiamen International Half-Marathon used to be a spin-off race of the annual IAAF gold label race Xiamen International marathon, which will be staged on 2 January 2017, and has been separated as an independent race since 2016. The organisers did not demand compulsory physical exams in the registration process for participants.—Xinhua

### China, Japan agree on early launch of air, maritime contact system

HAIKOU — China and Japan have agreed to work for the creation of an air and maritime contact system between their defence ministries as early as possible.

The agreement was reached during the sixth round of high-level consultations on maritime affairs between the two countries' various departments, held from Wednesday to Friday in China's southern city of Haikou.

They also agreed to hold the first meeting of expert discussions on marine pollution before March 2017, and expand information exchanges to jointly crack down on transnational crimes such as smuggling and drug trafficking. The two sides pledged to beef up cooperation on fisheries management and sign a marine search and rescue agreement as early as possible.—Xinhua

### Vucic: We are considering 25-year concession for airport

BELGRADE — The Serbian government is considering offering a 25-year concession for Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport, which would bring a 350-400 mln euro advance payment and a further 10-11 mln every year, PM Aleksandar Vucic said on Friday.

A decision has not yet been made, but the government is closest to offering a concession, he said.

"We would go for an advance payment for the entire contract and an annual concession fee. A tender procedure would be opened and I think we would be able to secure a 25-year concession," Vucic said. Talks about this are underway with concession adviser Lazard Freres, Vucic added. — Tanjug

# Opinion

## Whither the future of Myanmar Cultural Heritage—Myanmarsar, Myanmarsagar?

**Khin Maung Oo**

**E**VERYTHING or every individual is impermanent. In other words, all are being consumed by time. Very often, we see and hear news about devastation caused by natural disasters and great destruction caused by wars. These are, in fact, the ruins of physical properties. With the increasing population, we need to build more and more for living, storing or applying for such-and-such a use. For our increasingly urbanized society, urban renewal and urban sprawl projects are urgently needed. At such a time, some old buildings and unimportant ones need demolishing. Some may be very old, but if it is regarded to be things of sentimental value for us, it is required to be kept intact. That is to say, if people cherish and value these old buildings, we are responsible to maintain them.

Each country has its own characteristics: culture, customs

and traditions, language, art and literature. Undeniably, these distinguish us from others. Socially unacceptable ideas and habits disappear naturally. But we need to keep our own image. Our nation owes its existence to the maintenance of these characteristics by our ancestors, our language of which is an important factor. Here I would like to express my emphatic regret about our mother tongue, "Myanmar Language."

It is none other than colonization of Myanmar usages used only in Facebook, during recent times. According to our nature, people like and want to be avant-garde. Yet, this can be said to be destroying the Myanmar language accidentally or otherwise. Myanmar is generally said to be a monosyllabic language and many words are corrupted Pali words. Out of the new words they have invented, a few are presented here. "Nyi-

lay-ပြိုး" is a combined word—Nyi and Lay, the former is meant for brother and the latter for younger. Now some are writing and calling each other, "Ngayay-လွှား" which means nothing. Similarly, "Mingasaung-မင်္ဂလာဆောင်" is being used for "Mingalar-saung-မင်္ဂလာဆောင်" Mingalar-saung is a corrupted Pali word and it has a good meaning—auspiciousness." "Bwa-ဘား" is replacing "Bawa-ဘား" that means life.

It will be an endless task to name all these neo-nonsense-words. Before we recognize it, they are on the lips of most youths. They may be using these terms for pleasure, seeming to fail to notice that they are destroying their own language themselves. There seems to be an element of hyperbole in such a claim that this is a big problem for the country. This problem will continue due to our indifference. It is just a matter of time

before our most cherished language will be on the brink of extinction. The government, Ministry of Education, teachers, all literary workers and conscientious people who love our language are responsible to solve this problem.

Pali is a spoken language, not a written one. But it based on a systematic Pali grammar. It has no alphabets and writings. All Buddha's teachings were transcribed into Sanskrit. Wonderfully enough, Theravada Sayadaws maintained it for an enormous period of time. We need to learn from them. Rome was not built in a day, but it can be ruined in a moment. Something new is being built, and old ones are being conserved and renovated. Let us protect our language from being harmed by our carelessness, understanding the sentimental value of our cultural heritage from the deepest part of our souls.

## No Need To Respond And Yield To Every Allegation!

**ODHITHA**

**O**N December 6, I heard the CNN news referring to Mr Kofi Annan, the former UN secretary-general as saying that he hoped for humanitarian aid workers and media men to have an access to the place very soon, in which violent armed attacks originated, making people convinced of the Rakhine Affairs.

The above statement was made by Mr Kofi Annan, chairman of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State during the visit to northern area of Rakhine area in the state of instability, accompanied by the commission members.

As regards the fact, the Mirror Daily describes in its December 7 issue as follows:

"I had an access to the place of conflicts, managing to discuss with those concerned. Here, I would like to say that the Tatmataw, the military sector plays an important role in protecting the benefits of Rakhine State. Yet, it is necessary to take careful attention of protecting rights of civilians in the region. In terms of these, there had had prolonged arguments. Some governments say that security needs to be prioritized with freedom of civilians to be reduced, severed or suspended as needed depending upon situations, in fighting against terrorism. In my opinion, it is a questionable one whether security

will be attained eventually if human rights and freedom of people have been abandoned. Availability of live news coverage of newsmen in the area will lessen spreads of rumors, I hope. Transparency is the best way to conquer rumors."

I happened to entertain a thought of Mr Kofi Annan's saying—"Transparency is the best way to conquer rumors."

When I analyzed who spread rumors, I noticed political instigators. At such a time when social media websites are very popular with people, there may be political instigations to arouse hatred and furore among people by using these digital media. Rumor can be construed in two meanings—the first one is the outbreak of a riot as an omen in advance, for example, people know the day of Apocalypse will come to the world beforehand, inter alia.

The second one is the kind of knowledge of news about imminent events or unreasonable news whose sources are not known.

Rumor which ignites racial or religious hatred among people is categorized into unreasonable one of unconfirmed sources. It can cause a great harm to the whole populace. Last year, rumors on private banks in our country begot a serious anxiety among people.

Concerning current rumors on Rakhine State, people had

best take care of everything so as not to make wrong responses out of anxiety. The most important thing is for the public to respond to those prudently whenever rumors occur.

Yet, we need not respond to every fabricated story that we hear every day, and concurrently we need not yield to every allegation. Some disappear per se, without our influence to control them. We should note that some will worsen just at the time when we try to control them.

We must hold the concept that as long as our stance and deeds are right, we need not respond. Our right deeds will solve problems to emerge. "Not making any responses," ipso facto cannot be assumed to be "Yielding to." Our Reverend Sayardaw, "Ashin Vijja(Daik Oo) reprimands in writing that "Not making any responses" is just getting rid of unnecessary feelings, without being conceived in our minds.

We need to respond to some words which are really-needed for making responses. Such an action is just a deed to bring about mutual understanding between one and another, not a aggressive response. Therefore, bilateral discussions or dialogues must be done whenever a problem occurs. In the term of modern usage, dialogue and diplomacy are of great importance.

Recently, diplomatic tension between ASEAN member countries is being heard. It is none

other than the outbreak of consequent criticism of Malaysian Prime Minister, Najib Razak's talk at the mass rally demonstrating against Rakhine Affairs.

Dr Mahathir Mohammad, former Malaysian Prime Minister criticized that Najib Razak should deal with the problem only by the diplomatic way instead of taking part in demonstrations. The former questioned the latter why he had chosen the way of demonstrating instead of exercising the right to solve by diplomatic ways. "Demonstrations are ways for people opposing to governments to use, but the government itself need not stage a demonstration," Dr Mahathir said in a press conference concerning Democratic Action Party(DAP)'s National Conference.

He added that he himself was no longer a Cabinet member, thus having the right to demonstrate.

Meanwhile, an opposition leader, Dr WAN Azizah also criticized over Najib's action. He said he supported Dr Mahathir's assumption that Najib need not take part in demonstrations, and as a prime minister, he should release a statement as an approach between the governments.

All kinds of solutions—in diplomatic ways, in social or political ways—are based on rightful judgment, reasonable thinking and performing for the benefit of the majority.

Instead, provided that we re-

spond to every word with our feelings, we will be stuck in the rut of sequence of mistakes. Thus I think that we are required not to make prompt response to these false allegations.

We must remove unbeneficial words out of our minds. Failing that, all responses will turn up as our mistakes. Here, I want to share 4 characteristics of a speech. They are 1/ beneficial speech, 2/ sweet & pleasantries speech, 3/ solemn speech and 4/ justifiable speech. These must be exercised as ethics.

In the Anguttara Pali of the Buddha, it is referred that 8 characteristics of a diplomat are understanding of what the other party delivers to the other concerned, recounting exactly what one delivers, memorizing all, performing exacting, understanding the literal meaning, reproducing words for others to understand, knowing whether it is beneficial or not, managing to avoid any arguments or altercations.

To sum up, we assume that we need to be careful and prudent as worldly beings. False news, extreme propaganda instigating racial and religious conflicts is to emerge among us all the time. After assessing if they are beneficial or not, wholesome or unwholesome, we should perform in the best way. I am well convinced that we need not respond and yield to every allegation.

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# UK retail sales in November show strongest growth in 14 months — BDO

LONDON — Britain's retailers enjoyed their strongest monthly sales growth for 14 months in November, helped by a return to growth in the fashion sector for the first time since January, industry data showed on Saturday.

UK high street sales rose 1.7 per cent year-on-year in November, according to BDO, the accountancy and business advisory firm.

Like-for-like growth in the fashion sector was 1.5 per cent, it said.

Robust growth in consumer spending has been one of the

main things sustaining Britain's economy since June's vote to leave the European Union. But many retailers expect to have to raise prices next year, probably squeezing consumer demand.

"Consumer spending may appear to be robust for now as many people are having a final shopping spree while the economy is exceeding growth expectations," Sophie Michael, head of retail and wholesale at BDO, said.

"(But) the challenges facing retailers continue to mount, which will inevitably impact on



A woman looks at a coat in a discount clothing shop in Blackpool, Britain, on 7 November 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

retailers' costs and consumers' disposable income and the question is 'when' not 'if' the spending squeeze will come."

The BDO data contrasts with more subdued numbers from the British Retail Consortium, published on 6 Decem-

ber — a disparity which may be partly explained by the slightly longer period of the BDO data.—Reuters

# Bitcoin hits highest levels in almost three years

LONDON — Web-based digital currency bitcoin hit its highest levels in almost three years on Friday, extending gains since India sparked a cash shortage by removing high-denomination bank notes from circulation a month ago.

Bitcoin was trading as high as \$774 on the New York-based itBit exchange, up almost 1 per cent on the day and the highest since February 2014, having climbed almost 9 per cent in the past month.

Bitcoin is a cash alternative

that can be used for moving money across the globe quickly and anonymously with no need for a central authority to process transactions. It has climbed around 80 per cent so far this year, far exceeding its 35 per cent rise in 2015.

Indian prime minister Narendra Modi announced a shock move on 8 November to ditch 500 and 1,000 rupee notes — worth a combined \$256 billion — that he said were fuelling corruption, being forged and even paying for attacks by militants

who target India.

The cryptocurrency's value has been highly volatile — after rocketing above \$1,100 in 2013, it had fallen to around \$150 by early 2015. But it has since stabilized, staying above \$500 for the past six months.—Reuters

# Samsung to disable Note 7 phones in the US via software update

NEW YORK — Samsung Electronics Co Ltd said on Friday that a software update for Galaxy Note 7 smartphones will be released mid-December in the United States preventing them from charging and functioning as mobile phones, rendering them useless.

The smartphone maker said that more than 93 per cent of all recalled Galaxy Note 7 devices had been returned as a part of its exchange programme in the United States.

The US Transportation Department and other agencies in October ordered Galaxy Note 7 owners from carrying the devices or stowing them in checked baggage during flights following reports of fires in replacement Note 7 devices.

However, Verizon Communications Inc said it would not take part in the update because of the added risk this could pose to Galaxy Note 7 users that do not have another device to switch to.—Reuters



A customer uses his Samsung Electronics' Galaxy Note 7 as he waits for an exchange at company's headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, on 13 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Hawkish Fed a potential speed bump for stock bulls

NEW YORK — Next week's Federal Reserve meeting and possible signals on the pace of rate hikes for next year could pose the biggest risk yet to the rally the US stock market has seen since last month's presidential election.

While investors have long anticipated the Fed will raise rates at the 13-14 December meeting — in what would be its first such move in a year and second in nearly a decade — the worry for some stock investors is that the Fed takes a more aggressive stance on inflation and future hikes.

Stocks have set a string of record highs since the 8 November election on hopes of a pickup in US economic growth, thanks to President-elect Donald Trump's promises of increased infrastructure spending, lower taxes and easier regulations.

US investors seem optimistic about prospects of future growth, but the question remains if the Fed does as well.

The US central bank should announce new economic forecasts next week, along with a rate hike. If inflation is expected to pick up quickly, the Fed may need to raise rates faster than investors expect, and that could be a negative for US stocks.

"If they believe that inflation



Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York City, US, on 8 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

is going to march higher and more rapidly ... That would give the market reason to pause," said Quincy Crosby, market strategist at Prudential Financial in Newark, New Jersey.

"I don't think investors want to hear that this is going to be an aggressive Fed."

Fed Chair Janet Yellen will more likely want to reassure investors that the transition to higher rates will be gradual, she said.

Last December, the Fed raised rates for the first time in nearly a decade, and later signaled four more hikes would come in 2016. But the outlook quickly changed as

the economy did not pick up speed, oil prices fell further and the stock market plunged at the start of 2016.

Next week, "the market is going to try to key off of whether we are going to fall into the one-to-two (hikes), or the three-to-four for 2017," said Jason Ware, chief investment officer at Albion Financial Group in Salt Lake City.

"If in the statement and the discussion afterwards it appears that the Fed is getting more concerned that they are behind the curve and they have to tighten more aggressively than the market currently expects, that could knock stocks back." —Reuters



People visit the ruins of the historic city of Palmyra ahead of a musical event at its amphitheatre, Syria, on 6 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Syrian army rushes forces to historic Palmyra in IS battle

BEIRUT — The Syrian army said it has sent reinforcements to Palmyra, where Islamic State fighters have advanced to its outskirts in some of the heaviest fighting since the group lost the historic city earlier this year.

The group had taken over areas to the northwest and southeast of Palmyra, and clashes continued on Saturday, the army said in a statement.

A rebel commander from the Jaish al-Mujahideen group based in the Aleppo countryside said

the IS attack was forcing the Syrian government to divert troops from Aleppo, where the army and its allies are on the verge of a major victory against rebels.

The army did not specify where reinforcements were brought from.

Islamic State's assault, which began late on Thursday, has killed dozens of Syrian soldiers and quickly taken over grain silos and control of some oil and gas fields around Palmyra, monitoring group the Syrian

Observatory for Human Rights said.

A statement by Islamic State's Amaq online news agency said the militants had pushed towards Palmyra airport on the town's eastern outskirts, which Russian forces have been using to support the Syrian army.

A US-led coalition which is separately fighting against the jihadist militants said late on Friday it had carried out 168 IS oil tanker trucks near Palmyra in a large air raid.—Reuters

## Drone strike kills militant linked to Charlie Hebdo attack

WASHINGTON — A US drone strike in Syria has killed an Islamic State militant linked to the 7 January 2015 attack on satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris, defence officials said on Friday.

Boubaker el Hakim was killed late last month in Raqqa, the Islamic State's defacto capital in Syria, the officials said, adding he was believed to be involved with planning the attack.

*Charlie Hebdo*, known for its satirical covers gleefully ridiculing political and religious leaders, lost many of its top editorial staff when brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, armed with assault rifles and other weapons,

broke into an editorial meeting and killed 12 people and wounded 11 others.

The attacks prompted a worldwide solidarity movement, with the "Je Suis Charlie" (I am Charlie) slogan going viral on social media.

Islamic State, which has controlled parts of Iraq and Syria in recent years, has lost some territory this year to Iraqis and Syrians supported by a US-led coalition of air strikes and advisers. Apart from the killings at *Charlie Hebdo*, Islamic State sympathizers around the world have carried out other shootings and bombings of civilians.—Reuters



Gunmen gesture as they return to their car after the attack outside the offices of French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo (seen at rear) in this still image taken from amateur video shot in Paris, on 7 January, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## US allies caution Trump on Syria strategy

WASHINGTON/PARIS — Key US allies in Europe are quietly expressing concern over President-elect Donald Trump's approach to Syria, warning that his pledge to work more closely with Russia, Damascus' main backer, will do little to diminish the terrorist threat emanating from Syria.

The diplomatic persuasion campaign has taken on new importance in recent days as the Syrian army, backed by Russia, Iran and Shi'ite militias, appears poised to retake all of Aleppo city in a major defeat for Western-backed rebels.

Moscow and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad are expected to cast Aleppo's fall as the end of a revolt against Assad that began in March 2011, although Western analysts predict the civil war, which has killed more than 300,000 people and made more than half of Syrians homeless, will continue, perhaps for years.

Western diplomats, who described discussions with Trump advisers on condition of anonymity, said their message was that a US alliance with Russia, and by

extension Assad, to crush groups like Islamic State will backfire.

Trump has said defeating Islamic State was a higher priority than persuading Assad to step down.

"On Syria the new administration says crushing Islamic State is its priority, but we've explained our view that without a political solution in Syria those efforts will be fruitless because

new pockets of radicals will reform," a senior French diplomat told Reuters.

France has been the target of coordinated attacks claimed by Islamic State. Western capitals fear that a prolonged conflict will exacerbate mass refugee flows in which radicalized individuals might hide.

A political solution in Syria, as envisioned by Western pow-

ers, would involve a transition in which Assad eventually left power. Assad, from the minority Alawite sect, cannot unite Syria and quash extremists after nearly six years of warfare, they argue.

In a rare public speech in London on Thursday, Alex Younger, chief of Britain's MI-6 intelligence agency, said, "we cannot be safe from the threats that emanate from (Syria) unless the civil war is brought to an end. And brought to an end in a way that recognises the interests of more than a minority of its people and their international backers."

Trump has frequently said that he wants to work with Russia to fight Islamic State, which holds territory in Iraq and Syria, and other militant groups.

"When you think about it, wouldn't it be nice if we got along with Russia?" he said during a campaign rally in July. "Wouldn't it be nice if we got together with Russia and knocked the hell out of ISIS?" Trump added, using another name for Islamic State.

US defence officials have repeatedly said the vast majority

of Russian strikes in Syria are not against Islamic State.

How Trump will actually proceed remains unclear. He has not named a secretary of state, and some current and prospective members of the president-elect's national security team have voiced more skeptical views of Russia.

Trump's transition team did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the allies' concerns.

"What we're getting from our conversations with the Trump administration is that already they are toning down the prospect of a Russia-US deal on fighting Islamic State and a full-on rapprochement with Moscow," the senior French diplomat said.

A senior Arab diplomat also was cautious about Trump's Syria policy.

"We can't really predict it now," the diplomat said.

A diplomat from another US ally, while declining to discuss the American political transition, expressed doubts about the advisability of a Western alignment with Moscow and Assad.—Reuters



A member of Forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad carries his weapon as he walks past damaged buildings in a government held area of Aleppo, Syria, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

**READING : DAYS GONE BY**

Michael took a very special trip last month. He went back to Fullerton, his home town. Michael's visit to Fullerton was very special to him. He was born there, he grew up there, but he hadn't been back there since he finished high school.



He went to places he hadn't gone to in years. He walked through the center of town and remembered the days he had walked through the same park with his first girlfriend. Her passed by the empty field where he and his friends had played baseball every day after school. And he stood for a while in front of the movie theater and thought about all the Saturday afternoons he had spent there sitting in the balcony, watching his favorite movie heroes and eating popcorn.



He did things he hadn't done in a long time. He had some homemade ice cream at the ice cream shop, he rode on the merry-go-round in the park, and he went fishing at the lake on the outskirts of town. For a while, he felt like a kid again. He hadn't had homemade ice cream, ridden on a merry-go-round, or gone fishing since he was a young boy.



He also saw people he hadn't seen in years. He visited several of his old neighbors' who had never moved out of the neighborhood. He said hello to the owners of the candy store near his house. And he even bumped into Mrs. Riley, his tenth-grade science teacher. During his visit to his home town, Michael remembered places he hadn't gone to things he hadn't done, and people he hadn't seen since his childhood. Michael's trip back to Fullerton was a very nostalgic experience for him. Going back to Fullerton brought back many memories of days gone by.

**READING CHECK-UP**  
TRUE, FALSE, or MAYBE?

- I. Answer True, False, or Maybe (if the answer isn't in the story.)
1. Michael moved back to Fullerton last month.
2. He hadn't seen Fullerton in years.
3. When Michael passed by the field last month, children were playing baseball.
4. Michael enjoyed going to the movies when he was young.
5. The ice cream shop was near Michael's home in Fullerton.
6. Michael rode on the merry-go-round when he was a young boy.
7. Some of Michael's old neighbors still live in the same neighborhood.
8. Mrs Riley still teaches science.

**II. WHICH IS CORRECT?**

1. I always enjoy eating Aunt Betty's (home town, homemade) food.
2. The new shopping mall is located in the (outskirts, outside) of our city.
3. She recently visited the town where she had ( spent , grown up) her childhood.
4. I bumped (through, into) an old friend on the street the other day.
5. The hadn't been (back, by) to their old neighborhood in several years.
6. Seeing my old college friends was a (nauseous, nostalgic) experience for me.

Answers : I. No 2. Yes 3. No 4. Yes  
5. Maybe 6. Yes 7. Maybe 8. Maybe

II.1. homemade 2.outside 3.spent 4. into  
5.back 6. nostalgic

**INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE****YANGON TO BANGKOK**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-2302	15:00	16:55	1,5,6,7
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	15:45	19:15	2,4,6,7
UB-017	17:45	19:15	1,3,5
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

**BANGKOK TO YANGON**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-2351	10:10	11:00	1,5,6,7
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7

**YGN TO DMK**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:15	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:20	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:45	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

**YGN TO CAN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
8M-012	07:00	11:30	7
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6

**YGN TO SIN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5

**SIN TO YGN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
8M-232	13:40	15:15	Daily
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6

**NRT TO YGN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
TR-2823	9:45	2:15	1,2,4,5,6,7
UB-001	7:30	11:45	Daily

**YGN TO NRT**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily

**YGN TO ICN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily

**KUL TO YGN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily

**ICN TO YGN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily

**KUL TO YGN**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily

**YGN TO KMG**

Flight no.	Dep	Arrv	Days
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily

**KMG TO YGN**
<table

# United States, Russia, trade barbs at European security meeting



Photo taken on 9 December 2016 shows a view of the closing session of the 23rd ministerial meeting of Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Hamburg, northern Germany. The 23rd ministerial meeting of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security organisation, closed Friday with some consensuses being reached among its member states. PHOTO: XINHUA

HAMBURG — The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) remained divided over the conflict in eastern Ukraine at the end of a two-day meeting in Hamburg, with the United States accusing Russia of blocking a resolution.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, OSCE chairman for the past year, said that even though no formal resolution on eastern Ukraine had been signed, ministers agreed on the need for the parties involved in the war to meet their commitments to end the violence.

But the US ambassador to the OSCE, Daniel Baer, blasted Russia for what he called its ongoing "obstructionism".

He said many of the few resolutions ultimately adopted were "weakened considerably" by Russia, while others, notably on human rights and the Ukraine crisis, were blocked outright.

"It's really important to recognise that on most things in the OSCE today there is still consensus among 55 or 56 of the 57 participating states," Baer told reporters. "It sends a political signal that Russia is isolated."

Russia annexed the Black Sea peninsula of Crimea from Kiev in March 2014, and went on to back a rebellion in east Ukraine. The conflict has claimed nearly 10,000 lives and efforts at implementing a peace agreement, brokered by Germany and France, have stalled for nearly two years.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in turn accused Washington of stalling talks about evacuating remaining rebel-held parts of the Syrian city of Aleppo, which is on the verge of falling to Moscow-backed Syrian government forces.—Reuters

## Germans see refugees as biggest problem despite falling numbers

BERLIN — More than half of Germans see refugees and integration as Germany's biggest problem, a survey showed on Friday, despite the number of newcomers falling significantly on the year.

A record 890,000 mainly Muslim migrants from the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere arrived in Europe's largest economy in 2015, prompting concerns about security and integration.

Arrivals have slowed this year, with the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) saying on Friday around 305,000 new asylum seekers were registered in its 'EASY' computer system in the first 11 months of 2016; but 'EASY' numbers are seen as too high as some migrants get registered more than once. The BAMF received 26,438 asylum applications in November — a fall of around 54 per cent on the year.

Nonetheless, a survey by pollster Forschungsgruppe Wahlen for broadcaster ZDF found 58 per cent of Germans deem ref-



Syrian refugees arrive at the camp for refugees and migrants in Friedland, Germany, on 4 April 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

ugees and integration the most important problems facing Germany.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's popularity has waned since migrants started arriving in large numbers last summer and she expects next year's federal election, in which she plans to run for a fourth term, to be "tough like no other".—Reuters

# OPEC, Russia see smooth road to global deal on output cut

VIENNA — Russia and Saudi Arabia said they expect OPEC and non-OPEC producers to reach an agreement on Saturday to curtail oil output and prop up prices in the first such joint move since 2001.

"We have a deal already. We are just putting the final touches. Everything is good!" Khalid al-Falih, energy minister of OPEC's de facto leader and top oil exporter Saudi Arabia, told reporters.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak, speaking as he joined a breakfast with OPEC and non-OPEC ministers in Vienna, said: "I don't see such risks (of a deal failing)."

The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will meet producers from outside the group later in the day, hoping non-OPEC will commit to cutting 600,000 barrels per day after its own members agreed a reduction of 1.2 million bpd last week.

OPEC Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo said he expected 12 non-OPEC countries to sign a declaration with the organisation and fully contribute to cuts of 600,000 bpd or more.

"This is a very historic meeting ... This will boost the global economy and will help some OECD countries to reach their inflation targets," Barkindo told reporters, referring to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which groups most of the world's richest economies.

OPEC sources said non-OPEC Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Oman, Mexico, Russia, Sudan,

South Sudan, Bahrain and Malaysia would attend the meeting. Bolivia may also attend and Barkindo said Brunei had sent its commitments but would not be present.

Many non-OPEC countries such as Mexico and Azerbaijan face a natural drop in oil production and several OPEC ministers going into the breakfast said the discussions would focus on whether those declines should be counted as contributions.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia told its US and European customers it would reduce oil deliveries from January, signalling it had already started implementing cuts.

OPEC producers Iraq and Kuwait have also told buyers of their crude about planned reductions.

From the non-OPEC camp, so far only top global oil producer Russia and Oman have pledged cuts, with OPEC and non-OPEC sources saying Mexico could contribute as much as 150,000 bpd.

In contrast, Kazakhstan plans to boost output in 2017 as it launches the long-delayed Kashagan project.—Reuters



OPEC Secretary-General Mohammed Barkindo addresses a news conference in Vienna, Austria, on 24 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Scientists detect radiation from Fukushima disaster on US west coast

NEW YORK — Scientists have for the first time detected radiation from Japan's 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster on the west coast of the United States, local media reported.

The radioactive matter, in the form of an isotope known as cesium-134, was collected in seawater samples from Tillamook Bay and Gold Beach in the U.S. northwest state of Oregon, according to a report released by *New York Post* Friday.

The levels are very low and cannot harm people eating fish from the West Coast or swimming in the ocean, Ken Buesseler, a senior scientist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, was quoted as saying by USA Today.

"To put it in context, if you were to swim everyday for six hours a day in those waters for a year, that additional radiation from the addressed cesium from Japan is 1,000 times smaller than one dental x-ray," said Buesseler.

On 11 March, 2011, a massive 9 magnitude earthquake, the strongest quake ever recorded in Japan, created three tsunamis that knocked out the Fukushima-Daiichi plant, causing the worst nuclear crisis since the Chernobyl disaster three decades ago. Massive amounts of contaminated water were released from the crippled nuclear plant, more radiation was released to the air, and then fell to the sea.—Xinhua

# Tiny parties throng to have their say on Italy's new leader

ROME — President Sergio Mattarella is consulting a total of 23 parties to help him find a successor to outgoing Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, showing how little progress Italy has made in reducing political fragmentation.

On Friday, Mattarella met separately with groups that few Italians have even heard of, such as the Thought and Action Party, the Civic Innovators Party and one known only as "Fare!", which would roughly translate as the "Doing" party.

The political landscape is even more fragmented than it looks. Several of the delegations holding talks with the president are actually mini-coalitions and the total number of movements in parliament is around 40. The first group to emerge from the meetings in Mattarella's sumptuous Rome palace on Friday recounted their encounter in German. They represented the Austrian minority in the South-Tyrol border region.

One of the bigger players, the Northern League,



**The Italian Carabinieri band performs before President Sergio Mattarella starts consultations at the Quirinal Palace in Rome, Italy, on 8 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS**

which polls show is Italy's third most popular party at about 13 per cent, said it favoured a snap election rather than creating a new government with anything other than a short-term caretaker role.

"We must vote as soon as possible," Giancarlo

Giorgetti, the League's deputy secretary, said after his meeting with Mattarella.

The president's consultations will continue on Saturday, including with Renzi's Democratic Party (PD), which has more parliamentarians than any other bloc. The fragmentation of

politics into countless parties and factions is one of the reasons Italy has had 63 governments in the last 70 years.

Until the early 1990s an electoral system of proportional representation (PR) was widely blamed for allowing small parties to prosper, yet since pure PR

was scrapped in 1993 the fragmentation has only got worse.

To preserve their existence at elections, tiny parties merge into broad coalitions, but then often splinter again and change names and allegiance once the new parliament has been formed.

At the same time, individual parliamentarians move freely between parties from one election to the next, often changing the make-up of the majority backing the government. In the first 18 months of the current parliament, 116 of the 315 senators elected in 2013 changed their political colours.

The cause of Italy's latest political crisis was Renzi's decision to resign after failing to get popular support for constitutional reforms aimed at increasing government stability. Critics said one weakness was that his proposal did nothing to prevent party-swapping.

Renzi's own centre-left government was propped up in parliament by centre-right splinter groups that abandoned Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party after the last election, including the New Centre-Right (NCD) led by Angelino Alfano.

Alfano and the NCD will meet Mattarella on Saturday, as will Berlusconi's Forza Italia and the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement.—Reuters

## East Japan Railway line suspended since 2011 tsunami partially reopens

SENDAI — A 23-kilometer section of East Japan Railway Co.'s Joban Line reopened Saturday five years and nine months after the March 2011 quake and tsunami.

The reopened section runs between Soma Station in Soma, Fukushima Prefecture, and Hamayoshida Station in Watari, Miyagi Prefecture, both in Tohoku in Japan's northeast, the region hardest hit by the disaster.

There are six stations

on the section. Following severe damage from tsunami, three of the six — Shinchi, Yamashita and Sakamoto stations — were moved inland by up to 1.1 km.

"This station is a symbol of recovery. I pray that many people visit this place," said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as he attended an opening ceremony for the new Shinchi station.

At 6 am the first train to Sendai departed from Yamashita station in

Yamamoto, Miyagi Prefecture.

"I become overwhelmed by emotion when I think about the roads after the quake. I celebrate the start of the first train," Yamamoto Mayor Toshio Saito said at the ceremony.

"I want to go to Sendai for shopping," said Tamaki Fujikawa, 12, who was at Yamashita Station with her mother and younger sister to see the train off.

Of the whole Joban Line, chiefly running along

the Pacific coasts to connect Tokyo and Miyagi Prefecture, only a section in Fukushima Prefecture between Tatsuta Station in the town of Naraha and Odaka Station in Minamisoma, remains suspended.

The government hopes to enable the resumption of services between Tomioka and Namie stations, the section running closest to the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station that suffered meltdowns in the disaster, by the spring of 2020 after



**People wave off trains leaving the new Shinchi station in Fukushima Prefecture on 10 December 2016. A 23-kilometer section of East Japan Railway Co.'s Joban Line reopened five years and nine months after the March 2011 quake and tsunami. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

reopening other sections in 2017. "I hope that the interrupted services restart soon," said Yutaka Sugano, a resident of the town of Shinchi, 69, who was aboard the train going to Sendai.—Kyodo News

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV TYRA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TYRA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T / A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PIYA STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PIYA STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.12.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 CONTINETAL SHIPPING  
LINE PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

## Motherhood is biggest challenge for 'Woman of the Year' Madonna

NEW YORK — Madonna was presented on Friday with *Billboard* magazine's Woman of the Year award, but the seven-time Grammy Award winner said one of her biggest challenges was being a good mother.

"The biggest accomplishment I think was finishing my tour, doing my shows every night. And dealing with the challenges of being a mother. That's always the challenge for me. Being a good mother, being an artist, getting through it all," the "Material Girl" singer told reporters on the New York red carpet.

Madonna, 58, who has four



Madonna. PHOTO: REUTERS

children, in March completed her 82-show "Rebel Heart" world tour while embroiled in a legal battle over the custody of

her 16 year-old son Rocco with ex-husband Guy Ritchie.

Rocco left Madonna during the tour to live with Ritchie in London. The dispute was settled in September.

The annual Billboard Women in Music awards recognise women who have made significant contributions to the music business and who have inspired other women.

Other honorees on Friday included, pop singer Kesha, country-pop star Shania Twain, jazz singer Andra Day, pop star Meghan Trainor, electro-pop artist Halsey and country singer Maren Morris.—Reuters

## Country star Garth Brooks in talks for Trump inaugural celebrations

NEW YORK — Country star Garth Brooks is in discussions to perform at the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump, the singer's representative said on Friday, as organisers of the event denied media reports that they were struggling to find A-list stars to take part.

Brooks, 54, one of the world's best-selling solo artists, performed for Democrat Barack Obama's inauguration in 2009, along with a line-up that included Bruce Springsteen, U2, Beyoncé, and

Stevie Wonder.

"Garth has performed for the five living presidents," his publicist Nancy Seltzer said on Friday. "While rumour has it that he has been asked to perform for President-elect Trump, he has not been able to commit yet."

No celebrities have yet been announced as taking part in the 20 January inauguration.

Brooks, a Country Hall of Famer with US sales of more than 135 million albums, is currently in Hawaii as part of a world tour.

He is due to perform in Cincinnati, Ohio on 21 January — the day after the inauguration in Washington.

Asked on camera by celebrity website TMZ earlier this week if he would sing for Trump, Brooks replied "It's always about serving. It's what you do." Brooks stayed silent during the divisive election in which most stars, including Beyoncé, Katy Perry, Jay-Z and Jennifer Lopez, threw their support behind Democrat Hillary Clinton.—Reuters

## Taylor Swift, Zayn Malik surprise fans with 'Fifty Shades Darker' duet



Singer Taylor Swift arrives at the Vanity Fair Oscar Party in Beverly Hills, California, on 28 February 2016.  
PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — American pop star Taylor Swift and former One Direction member Zayn Malik released a surprise duet on Friday after joining forces for the upcoming "Fifty Shades Darker" movie soundtrack.

"I Don't Wanna Live Forever" will feature in the sequel to the "Fifty Shades of Grey" film, based on the hugely successful erotic trilogy by E.L. James.

Grammy Award winning Swift told her fans of the collaboration on Instagram, posting a picture of what appeared to be the single cover and a message reading "Z T 50". She also added a video snippet of the song.

Malik, who quit the chart-topping boy band One Direction last year, posted a picture of himself with Swift with the hashtag #idontwannaliveforever.

"Fifty Shades Darker", starring Jamie Dornan and Dakota Johnson, is scheduled for release in February.—Reuters



## Rihanna denies throwing shade at Beyoncé

LOS ANGELES — Rihanna has denied that she threw shade at Beyoncé on Instagram after she did not get nominated for Album of the Year category at Grammys. Rihanna earned eight nods this year, including Record of the Year for "Work," her collaboration with ex Drake — her acclaimed album Anti was not nominated for Album of the Year, while Beyoncé's stunning visual album, Lemonade, was.

Shortly after the nominations were announced, Rihanna liked a fan's Instagram post dissing Beyoncé, sparking rumours of a feud between the two pop superstars. The singer, 28, later took to the social media to quash fueled speculation.

"I never actually read your

caption, thought the pic was funny and moved right along! Til I saw it pop up over and over! (sic)" she wrote. "I'm petty of, yes. But this is just unnecessary! I wish y'all would drop this topic and see things from the bigger picture! We don't need to be putting black women against each other! We deserve to be celebrated, and the Grammy Academy agrees! (sic)," she added.

Rihanna also made it clear that despite missing out in the Album of the Year category, she was happy to bag 8 nods. "How could y'all say that?" she replied to another fan's comment saying Anti was snubbed. "8 nominations later! God is great!!!"—PTI

## Director Verhoeven to head Berlin Film Festival jury

BERLIN — Dutch director Paul Verhoeven, best known for films such as "Basic Instinct" and "RoboCop", will head the jury of the Berlin International Film Festival in February.

The 67<sup>th</sup> edition of the Berlinale will be held in the German capital from 9 February to 19 February.

"With Paul Verhoeven as jury president, we have a filmmaker who has worked in a variety of genres in Europe and Hollywood," Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick said on Friday.

"His creative, multifaceted

boldness and his willingness to experiment are reflected in the spectrum of his works."

Verhoeven, also a screenwriter, has worked on action and sci-fi films such as "RoboCop", "Total Recall" and "Starship Troopers". He directed "Basic Instinct" starring Sharon Stone and Michael Douglas as well as 2006's "Black Book" about a World War II Dutch resistance fighter.

His latest film "Elle" stars French actress Isabelle Huppert as a businesswoman trying to find the unknown assailant who attacked her at home.—Reuters

# United States returns stolen 14<sup>th</sup> century image of saint to Italy

WASHINGTON — A stolen 14<sup>th</sup> century illustration of a Roman Catholic saint was returned on Friday to Italy, where it will be put in a museum, US Customs officials said.

The image, an ink, tempera and gold image of a haloed Saint Lucy, had spent decades at the Cleveland Museum of Art, which bought it in good faith in 1952, the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency said in a statement.

It said the artifact was turned over in a ceremony at the Italian Embassy.

A two-year investigation determined that the item, a leaf of the book, had been stolen and the museum turned it over to US officials last month after another stolen leaf from the same book turned up in the Swiss market. That leaf has also been returned to Italy.

The Cleveland leaf, which measures about 17.4



**A page from a 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript repatriated by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) repatriated to the government of Italy at a ceremony at the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C., is shown, on 9 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS**

inches (44.3 cm) by 13.9 inches (35.2 cm), was taken from a page in an illuminated parchment antiphonary, a type of hymnal, created around 1340. Known as Co-

dex D, the manuscript is in a museum in Castelfiorentino, near Florence. The customs agency did not say how or when the leaf had been stolen. In addition to the man-

uscript leaf, US officials repatriated a 19<sup>th</sup> century painting by artist Consalvo Carelli that had been stolen from a home in Naples in 2001.—Reuters

## National Museum of Singapore's Glass Rotunda reopens with new installations

SINGAPORE — The National Museum of Singapore's Glass Rotunda reopened on Saturday after two years of renovation to showcase two new permanent installations, which offers visitors a journey to Southeast Asia's tropical rainforests and local old trees.

Upon entering the Glass Rotunda, visitors will be greeted by a larger-than-life interactive digital installation called "Story of the Forest". Inspired by the museum's prized collection — The William Farquhar Collection of Natural History Drawings, art collective teamLab utilizes cutting-edge technology to transform 69 drawings from

the collection into animated illustrations.

Toshiyuki Inoko, founder of teamLab, said this installation is by far the most challenging digital artwork created by teamLab due to the massive size and scale of the Glass Rotunda. With a ceiling measuring 15-meter high and a 170-meter passage stretching down to the base, the installation is divided into three segments.

A constellation of flora that cascade endlessly from the top of the dome structure will embrace the visitors at the upper rotunda. As visitors start their journey down the passage, they will encounter various fauna such

as an animated Malayan Tapir or a mouse deer. The installation concludes at the lower part, where visitors can witness flora which are native to the region, such as palmyra palm, lotus flower, durian, mangosteen and rambutan.

At the bottom of the Glass Rotunda, visitors will be able to tour the exhibition "Singapore, Very Old Tree" by renowned local photographer and artist Robert Zhao. Inspired by one of the oldest postcards found in the National Archives of Singapore depicting an unspecified tree dating back to 1904, the set of 30 images from the project have been acquired by National Mu-

seum of Singapore and are the newest additions to the National Collection.

The exhibition showcases 17 images out of the 30 that have been acquired, highlighting intimate stories of each and giving visitors an alternative perspective of Singapore's history and the personal connections that Singaporeans have with local trees.

Director of National Museum of Singapore Angelita Teo said the two new installations at the revamped Glass Rotunda are inspired by the region's rich ecological heritage, and remind people of the museum's early beginnings almost 130 years ago.—Xinhua

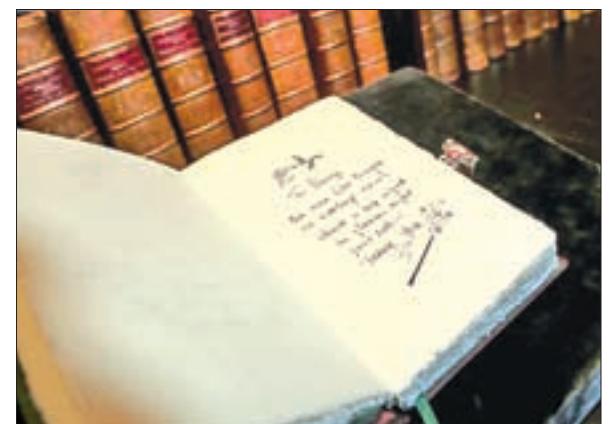
## Book hand-written and illustrated by J.K. Rowling up for sale

LONDON — "Harry Potter" fans will be able to bid for a piece of history next week when a book designed, hand-written and illustrated by J.K. Rowling goes on sale at Sotheby's auction house in London.

"The Tales of Beedle the Bard" is one of six copies the author produced to give as gifts to those who helped bring the story of the boy wizard to life, and is seen fetching 300,000-500,000 pounds (\$378,000-\$630,000) at Tuesday's sale.

"This one has an inscription to Barry, thanking him," said Sotheby's books and manuscripts specialist Philip Errington. "It says, 'To Barry, the man who thought an overlong novel about a boy wizard in glasses might just sell', which is a lovely little insight into the role of author and editor."

Bound in brown Morocco leather, the copy is adorned with silver ornaments with a skull in the center and has seven mounted rhodochrosite stones, according to Sotheby's.—Reuters



**A copy of 'The Tales of Beedle the Bard', handwritten and illustrated by Harry Potter author JK Rowling, is displayed at Sotheby's auction house in London, Britain, on 8 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS**

**mitv** **Myanmar International**  
Programme Schedule

(11-12-2016 07:00 AM ~ 12-12-2016 07:00 AM)

07:03 Am	News
07:26 Am	Unique Pattern of Myanma Ethnic Group: A Trend of Chin Traditional Dress
07:56 Am	Black Gold ( P - II )
08:03 Am	News
08:25 Am	The Longest Living Siblings (Part-1)
08:47 Am	Ancient Heritage at Natalin
09:03 Am	News
09:27 Am	Travelogue: To my dream city (Part-2)
09:46 Am	Grow Back For Posterity "The Dawn of Development"
10:03 Am	News

10:25 Am	Shrinking Footprints
10:50 Am	Mt.Naw Bu Baw
(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 PM)- Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 PM ~ 07:00 PM) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)	
<b>Prime Time</b>	
07:03 Pm	News
07:26 Pm	Interesting Features of Rakhine
07:48 Pm	Today Myanmar: Seatbelt & Road Safety
08:03 Pm	News
08:26 Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode — 2)
08:44 Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Zay Yar Aye
(11:00 PM ~ 03:00 AM)- Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am) (03:00 AM ~ 07:00 AM) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 AM)	
(For Detailed Schedule – <a href="http://www.myanmaritv.com/schedule">www.myanmaritv.com/schedule</a> )	

**MRTV (11-12-2016, Sunday)**

6:00 am	Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw
3:50 pm	Teleplay
4:35 pm	Mono Classical Songs
4:50 pm	Analysis For Myanmar Movie
5:15 pm	Gitadagale Phwintbaohn
6:35 pm	Monthly Weather Forecast (December)
7:15 pm	TV Drama Series
8:00 pm	News/International News/ Weather Report
8:35 pm	Documentary
9:35 am	People's Talks
9:50 am	Poem for Children
10:00 am	Sunday Talks
11:35 am	Documentary
12:50 am	Myanmar Movie
3:35 pm	This Week's Special
3:50 pm	Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance

Note/Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

