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# UNITY WITHIN OUR REACH

## Negotiations only way to find a solution

DEBATE, compromise and mediation will lead to solidarity, accord and harmony, the leaders of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) said yesterday.

Unity is possible if stakeholders have the same goal, but it is difficult to build a consensus and as a result it is necessary to engage in negotiations to find a solution, said U Thu Wai, the vice chairman of the UPDJC.

The second day of the UPDJC continued in Nay Pyi Taw and Vice Chairmen Dr Tin Myo Win, Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win and U Thu Wai, representatives of the government, signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement and ethnic armed groups attended the meeting.

Discussions focused on the work guidelines of the UPDJC, UPDJC Secretariat, and work committees.

Vice Chairman Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win called for a pragmatic approach in making decisions and pointed out that realistic decisions, not theoretical ones, would lead to success.

He also added that each stakeholder was responsible and accountable for the success of implementation of decisions.

Vice Chairman Dr Tin Myo Win said the meeting was able to



The second day meeting of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC). PHOTO: MNA

make nine decisions and eight motions were put on record.

Most of the decisions were required for the national-level political dialogues and the second Panglong Conference.

The UPDJC meeting was held for two days and the structure for political dialogue, work guidelines for national level political dialogues, regional level political dialogues, content-based

national level political dialogues, supervisory committee of the UPDJC, the UPDJC, the UPDJC Secretariat, work committees and the UPDJC Office and topics to be discussed at the

first national-level political dialogues.

National-level political dialogues will begin in some regions and states that are ready to host them.—*Myanmar News Agency*



A container ship is seen in the Yangon River. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

## Government to reduce service costs through cooperation with entrepreneurs

The union government is trying to reduce logistics costs and import service charges, both of which are pushing up local commodity prices, by cooperating with private entrepreneurs, according to U Ni Aung, Acting Managing Director of the Myanma Port Authority (MPA).

The Ministry of Transportation and Communications formed a committee comprising government departments and organisations of private entrepreneurs to find ways to reduce service charges for shipping containers arriving at ports in Myanmar on

15 September this year.

U Ni Aung made the comments at a meeting on prevention of delays and reduction of service charges held at Myanma Port Authority yesterday. Entrepreneurs were also invited to the meeting, it is learnt. Myanmar is a country with some of the highest logistics costs in Southeast Asia, which is one of the reasons, the managing director said, why Myanmar ranks 170 out of 190 countries in the Doing Business Report. The managing director urged entrepreneurs to cooperate with the MPA with goodwill toward the people.

The meeting was attended by officials of the MPA, the Customs Department, resident representatives of shipping lines, the Myanmar Mercantile Marine Development Association, the Myanmar International Freight Forwarders' Association, the Inland Container Depot, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers' Association, the Myanmar Customs Brokers' Association, the Myanmar Container Trucks Association, the Myanmar Automobile Importers' Association and importers.—*Myanmar News Agency*





Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint being briefed about the museum. PHOTO: MNA

## Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker visits War Memorial Museum and National Museum

U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw, visited the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul yesterday. During the visit to the museum which was opened in 1994 to exhibit and memorialize the mili-

tary history of Korea, the Speaker signed in the visitors' book of the museum.

Afterwards, the Myanmar delegation also visited the National Museum of Korea.

In the evening, Chairman of the Korea-Myanmar Friendship Association hosted a dinner in honour of the Myanmar delegation.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## 90 million gallons of above-ground water to be distributed by 2025 in co-operation with JICA

A project to distribute 90million gallons of above-ground water by 2025 is being conducted to reduce the use of underground water in Yangon Region, it is learnt from the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The aforementioned project is being carried out in cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project is expected to produce 90 million gallons of above-ground water, said an official from the Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation) under the YCDC.

The project will be initially launched in the Koatku river project for South, North and East Dagon, Dagon Seikkan townships. The plan will proceed to

the Lagunpyin river project for Hlaingthaya, Ahlon, Kyimyindine, Kamayut and six downtown townships of Yangon, it is learnt.

"We are making attempts to phase out the use of underground water because the use of underground water by Yangon residents is not as safe. Distribution of an above-ground water system, control of waste water and storage of rainwater must be made. The survey and management plans of underground water usage should also be carried out", said Daw Khin Ni Ni Thein, a member of National Water Resources Committee (NWRC).

Japan will provide technical assistance in reducing the use of underground water, with a loan of US\$921million, it is learnt

from YCDC.

Currently, 201million gallons of aboveground water are being distributed in Myanmar. The authorities concerned make sure that there is no wasting in water distribution in Mayangon Township, it is learnt.

There are over 10,000 artesian wells used for underground water, including drilled water wells, said U Myint Thein, an underground water assessor.

Excess use of underground water supply increases the risk of landslides, experts said. Also, underground water resource preservation is needed to be systematically conducted in Yangon, Mandalay and upper Myanmar, it is learnt from NWRC.—*Myit-makha News Agency*

## Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visits terracotta warriors in Xian

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing visited Hang Zhong, Shan Xi Province of China yesterday by a special flight.

The delegation led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

observed a Y-9 E transportation airplane manufactured by CAT-IC company.

In the afternoon, the delegation went to Xian and visited the terracotta warriors of Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Terracotta warriors statues are seen at the site museum in Xian. PHOTO: MNA

## Water Taxi To Ply beginning from Early 2017

ACCORDING to Daw Nilar Kyaw, Yangon Region Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transport, Water Taxi will ply for the convenience of the people traveling in the Region, beginning from early 2017.

Water Taxi Service will help solve the problem of the traffic jam happening in Yangon Region, using Yangon river, Hlaing river, Bago river, Ngamoeyeik and Pazundaung creeks as its routes, it is learnt.

In answer to the query raised by U Yan Aung, Yangon region parliamentarian of constituency 2, Dagon township, Daw Nilar Kyaw replied, "Yangon is a city surrounded by rivers of great value and these are to be used effectively to overcome current traffic problem."

Seven jetties are to be built up to Pansodan along the Hlaing river and 11 jetties from Ngamoeyeik creek to Bago river whereas tender bidders from local and foreign companies are

to be invited to run the business very soon, it is learnt.

To launch Water Taxi Service, Yangon Transport Authority has formed a body comprising international experts, Myanma Port Authority and department of water resources and rivers, starting the process of project beginning from June, 2016.

The ebb and flow of the tide in the rivers and water depths have been measured, and the construction will commence starting from August 2016 based on number of passengers allowed to ply on board and availability of linking with bus, it is learnt.

U Yan Aung, Yangon Region parliamentarian of Mingalar Taungnyunt constituency 2 said, "The convenience of the people should be prioritized than focusing on the profit."

Previous plan to run the water taxi business was abortive. As per 2014 census, 2.4 million populace out of 7360630 dwellers in the region are relying on buses, it is learnt.—*Ko Moe*

## Jade dealers from Mandalay Jade Purchasing & Selling Depot In demonstration

SOME 300 jade dealers from Mandalay jade purchasing and selling depot took part in demonstration at 9 am on October 29, shouting slogans comprising five demands including stopping jade drilling ad infinitum, due to the continual market drop, under the official permission of the authority concerned,

it is learnt.

According to U Than Win, the leader of the demonstration, jades are now being produced by drilling using heavy machineries, plus being smuggled out of the country via illegal routes. For this the market is out of order, but authorities neglected the current situation. Dealers at the

bottom level are now in trouble.

The slogans include stopping jade drilling temporarily, abolishing the law on jewelry amended for second time, blocking illegal smuggling and transferring authorities including director-general and director of the department.—*Aung Thant Khaing*



Jade dealers peacefully participating in the demonstration. Photo: Aung Thant Khaing



# President U Htin Kyaw arrives back in Myanmar after his state visit to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

1. At the invitation of the H.E. Mr. Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, H.E. U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and wife Daw Su Su Lwin paid a state visit to Viet Nam from 26th to 28th October 2016. Earlier, the President had participated in the World Economic Forum for the Mekong Region, the 7th ACMECS and the 8th CLMV Summits in Hanoi. The Myanmar Delegation headed by President U Htin Kyaw arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw on the afternoon of 28th October.

2. President U Htin Kyaw was accompanied by a high-level delegation that included Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, U Kyaw Tin, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and senior officials.

3. President U Htin Kyaw was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi on October 26th, 2016,

which was followed by a bilateral meeting between the two Presidents. During the bilateral talks, H.E. Mr. Tran Dai Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, congratulated President U Htin Kyaw and the National League for Democracy Party on the victory in the general election in November 2015, and praised the achievements attained by the new government of Myanmar in the process of national reconciliation, economic and social development and expansion of foreign relations, including the successful hosting of the 37th ASEAN Inter-Parliament Assembly (AIPA-37). President Tran Dai Quang also congratulated the new government of Myanmar on significant development in the peace process and national reconciliation in Myanmar, including the organization of the 21st Century Panglong Conference.

4. H.E. U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, congratulated his Vietnamese counterpart on

important accomplishments Viet Nam has achieved over the past 30 years of “Doi Moi” economic reforms. The two Presidents held wide-ranging discussions on various issues of mutual interest, and expressed their satisfaction on the progresses made over 40 years of diplomatic ties, particularly in the 12 prioritized areas of bilateral cooperation. The two Presidents are committed to deepen the friendly ties and create opportunities to expand the existing cooperation between Myanmar and Viet Nam. Both sides are committed to uphold the existing cooperative mechanisms, including the organization of the 9th Session of the Viet Nam- Myanmar Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation in Viet Nam, the 7th Session of the Political Consultation at Deputy Foreign Minister Level in Myanmar in 2017 and other specialized cooperative mechanisms.

5. The two sides also committed themselves to further expand the bilateral invest-

ment and trade ties on the basis of mutual interests and to create favourable conditions to enable bilateral trade and investment to reach its full potential. Both sides agreed to work closely for the early conclusion of Agreements on Customs and Finance and to amend the existing Agreement on Investment Facilitations and Protection and Memorandum of Understanding on Investment Promotion to accommodate the changing business environment. It was also agreed to hold the 5th Session of the Security Dialogue in Viet Nam and discuss the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

6. The two Leaders shared views on matters of common interests in regional peace, security and affirmed their commitments to enhance security cooperation between the two countries. President U Htin Kyaw extended an invitation to the President of Viet Nam to visit Myanmar at the earliest possible, mutually convenient date and the invitation

was accepted. A joint statement was issued after the bilateral meeting between the two Presidents.

7. President U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin attended the State Banquet hosted in their honour by President Tran Dai Quang and wife Madam Nguyen Thi Hien.

8. During the visit, President U Htin Kyaw called on H.E. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, and held talks with H.E. Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. President U Htin Kyaw and Myanmar delegation paid tribute to the Monument of National Heroes and Martyrs. President and the Myanmar delegation also met with Myanmar's community in Ha noi and received Vietnamese entrepreneurs during his stay in Viet Nam.

Date, 28 October 2016  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Nay Pyi Taw

## YWCA building receives commemorative blue plaque installation

THE Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) building on Bogalay Zay Street (Brooking Street) yesterday received the Blue Plaque of the Yangon Heritage Trust, in recognition of its importance as one of the city's architectural landmarks.

The Blue Plaque is the 15th issued under the YHT's initiative.

The YWCA is the oldest women's organization in Myanmar and has been serving people from all walks of life with various development projects/programs for women to become empowered and serve the communities as change makers.

Built in 1902, the building on Bogalay Zay Street served the Yangon YWCA after its of-

ficial recognition in June 1900 as a branch of the Indian National Committee which in turns was affiliated with the World YWCA. In 1921, the United Engineers Ltd was commissioned to build an extension to the premises.

With its member around the country, the YWCA in Yangon held continuous activities such as Bible studies, physical education, recreation, music, home arts, business training and employment services to empower women. Unfortunately, with the war sweeping the country in 1942, all the activities and work process in the YWCA did not have a chance to continue. During the Japanese Occupation, the building on Brooking Street was

used as a night club. Only in June 1950 on the association's Golden Jubilee, the building on Brooking Street was reoccupied.

The Founder and Chairman of Yangon Heritage Trust Dr Thant Myint-U, said “Yangon was one of Asia's first modern cities. And the YWCA was one of the most dynamic of many Myanmar institutions that shaped this city and this country over the 20th century, through its activities and its prominent personalities such as Mrs Ba Maung Chain.”

“Our cultural inheritance from this uniquely important modern period comes to not only through cinema, art, literature, and music, but dress and food, and in the spaces people inhabited, like this building on Brooking Street that we are recognizing today. It's a physical link to a special past whose influences are still all around,” he said.

Daw May Tin Oo, President of Yangon YWCA, is proud to have the Blue Plaque on the building. “Yangon YWCA having served over 100 years for the holistic development of women, in accordance with its motto ‘By Love Serve One Another’ is very much honored to have the Blue Plaque of the Yangon Heritage Trust installed at the Yangon YWCA building,” she said.—  
Myat Sandi



YWCA building on Bogalay Bazaar Street (Brooking Street).

PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT

## Unfurnished meteorological radar station nearly to be completed

A 12-storeyed Mandalay Meteorological Radar Station with 50 meter height near the real estate of the Tada-U airport in Singaing Township started to be built in December 2015 is nearly completed, with the opening expected to be in mid-year 2017, according to U Kyaw Lwin Oo, Director-General of Meteorological Department (upper Myanmar).

Out of 3 radar stations built with an investment amounting to US\$ 40 million aided by JICA, Kyaukphyu Radar station was inaugurated on October 9 of 2015 and Yangon Radar Station on October 24 this year.

He added, “More observation and more favorable forecasts are available. Before now, it is impossible to access to accurate formation of storms by seeing images sent by satellites. Now we can watch and access in three dimensional ways.”

Radars will help forecast signs of storms, their potential growth and sizes in accord with meteorological standards and storms seem small but it may be more dangerous. Previously, there were some cases in which wind speeds were forecast more than usual.

U Khin Maung Soe, assistant engineering manager of Taisei Corporation said that now the consultant has to approve whether the equipment used in



The meteorological radar.

PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHAING  
construction are in compliance with international standards or not. U Kyaw Lwin Oo went on saying that Nay Pyi Taw central meteorological observatory unit will monitor images sent by three radars to release news to keep with the time.

Central part of Myanmar is the arid zone but whirls if air is likely from east and northwest, causing severe weather, so radar stations were built. These radars are capable of collecting facts within a parameter of 900 km in circumference, it is learnt.—  
Aung Thant Khaing



# LOCAL Business

## Japan and EU countries increase orders of CMP garment products, fetching over US\$940million

WITH an increase in the orders of garment products under the Cut, Make and Pack (CMP) system by Japan and European Union countries, Myanmar's CMP garment export as of 21st October in this fiscal year 2016-2017 fetched over US\$940million, which is US\$530million higher than that of the similar period in the previous fiscal year.

In a similar period, the earning from garment export was only US\$408.615million. Thirty-three per cent of Myanmar's garment exports goes to Japan and 22 per cent goes to the EU market, especially to Germany. The remaining exports go to Korea, America and China.

Currently, 65 per cent of companies which are engaged in Myanmar's garment sector are from China, it is learnt. The Myanmar garment sector consists of over 400 garment factories, with an estimated 400,000 labour force.

After Myanmar is restored to the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) from the EU, the country will receive a growing number of orders. —*Ko Htet*



A garment factory in an industrial zone. PHOTO: AMS

### South Korea to provide mushroom cultivation expertise

MYANMAR and South Korea will collaborate in mushroom cultivation in order to boost Myanmar's mushroom production, said U Tin Aung, the secretary of the Myanmar Mushroom Cultivators and Distributors Association.

The association under the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable producer and exporter association (MFVP) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2015 with experts from South Korea to improve the mushroom cultivation industry. They discussed whether the technical assistance could be implemented

as early as this month.

Myanmar mushroom growers will receive technical know-how from South Korean experts through course work and practical cultivation. The consumers in Myanmar will also be made aware of the health benefits of mushrooms in order to expand the demand for mushrooms, said U Tin Aung.

Mushrooms can be cultivated in all types of weather. Mushrooms also have a short growing cycle and are used extensively in many cuisines (notably Chinese, European, Korean and Japanese).—200

### Over 48,000 tonnes of raw rubber exported

THE export of raw rubber as of 14th October in this fiscal year fetched US\$56.755million with a volume of 48,795 tonnes, an increase of 3,975 tonnes when compared to the same period last year, it is learnt from the Ministry of Commerce.

The international rubber price has risen by over US\$50 per tonne and so, the export price of Myanmar's rubber should be aligned with the international market price, according to an announcement released by Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.

The raw rubber export through border trade camps between 8th and 14th October earned US\$1.72million, with an export volume of 1,281 tonnes of various rubber. The figure is 122 tonnes higher than the export volume of the previous week.

The export volumes are four tonnes of RSS1, 905 tonnes of RSS3, 366 tonnes of MSR 20 through Muse 105th Mile trade camp and six tonnes of rubber latex through Tachilek trade camp. This week, the rubber price at Muse depot was Ks16.182 lakhs per tonne

of RSS3, which slumped by Ks34,800 per tonne when compared to that of last week. The rubber prices in Mawlamyine are Ks14.89lakhs per tonne of RSS3 and Ks12.68lakhs per tonne of RSS5 respectively.

The volume of rubber exports through normal trade from 9th to 15th October was 584 tonnes worth US\$0.762 million, with 539tonnes of RSS3 to Malaysia, 29 tonnes of MSR20 to Japan and 16 tonnes of MSR10 to Indonesia, it is learnt from the statistics of the Commerce Ministry. —*Mon Mon*

### Exemption from parking permits for mini-bus import requested

A proposal has been submitted to the Yangon regional government to exempt mini-bus imports from needing parking permits, it is learnt from the Supervisory Committee for Vehicle Import and Associated Enterprises.

"We have requested the authorities to grant import permits for mini-buses without parking permit. The grant for parking permits has been suspended in Yangon because the city's traffic congestion has grown even worse. The action might be negotiated by the

Yangon region government", said an official from the said committee.

Yangon region government has permitted the import of vehicles over 5 tonnes, city buses, trucks, express cars, construction machines and charity cars without the need for parking permits. Yangon region government will announce soon their decision on whether they will grant permission for mini-bus imports without parking permits, it is learnt.

The suspension in granting parking per-

mits in Yangon Region began on 1st April, 2016. The motor vehicles importers requested to resume permits for the import of vehicles with a Yangon license. However, the resumption is likely to start only after dealing with the traffic congestion.

There were 36,478 cars imported by individuals and 21,131cars imported by companies between 1<sup>st</sup> January,2015 and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2016 with parking permits in Yangon Region. —200



# India offers to buy 200 foreign combat jets — if they're Made-in-India

NEW DELHI — India is offering to buy hundreds of fighter planes from foreign manufacturers — as long as the jets are made in India and with a local partner, air force officials say.

A deal for 200 single-engine planes produced in India — which the air force says could rise to 300 as it fully phases out aging Soviet-era aircraft — could be worth anything from \$13-\$15 billion, experts say, potentially one of the country's biggest military aircraft deals.

After a deal to buy high-end Rafale planes from France's Dassault was scaled back to just 36 jets last month, the Indian Air Force is desperately trying to speed up other acquisitions and arrest a fall in operational strength, now a third less than required to face both China and Pakistan.

But Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration wants any further military planes to be built in India with an Indian partner to kickstart a domestic aircraft industry, and end an expensive addiction to imports.



An Indian Air Force (IAF) light combat aircraft 'Tejas' performs during the Indian Air Force Day celebrations at the Hindon Air Force Station on the outskirts of New Delhi, India, on 8 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Lockheed Martin said it is interested in setting up a production line for its F-16 plane in India for not just the Indian military, but also for export.

And Sweden's Saab has offered a rival production line for its Gripen aircraft, setting up an early contest for one of the biggest military plane deals in play.

"The immediate short-

fall is 200. That would be the minimum we would be looking at," said an air officer briefed on the Make-in-India plans under which a foreign manufacturer will partner local firms to build the aircraft with technology transfer.

India's defence ministry has written to several companies asking if they would be willing to set up an assembly line for sin-

gle-engine fighter planes in India and the amount of technology transfer that would happen, another government source said.

"We are testing the waters, testing the foreign firms' willingness to move production here and to find out their expectations," the person said.

India's air force originally planned for 126 Rafale twin-engine fighters

from Dassault, but the two sides could not agree on the terms of local production with a state-run Indian firm and settled for 36 planes in a fly-away condition.

Adding to the military's problems is India's three-decade effort to build a single-engine fighter of its own which was meant to be the backbone of the air force. Only two of those Light Combat Aircraft, called Tejas, have been delivered to the air force which has ordered 140 of them. The Indian Air Force is down to 32 operational squadrons compared with the 45 it has said are necessary, and in March the vice chief Air Marshal B.S. Dhanoa told parliament's defence committee that it didn't have the operational strength to fight a two front war against China and Pakistan.

Saab said it was ready to not only produce its frontline Gripen fighter in India, but help build a local aviation industry base.

"We are very experienced in transfer of technology — our way of working involves extensive co-operation with our partners

to establish a complete ecosystem, not just an assembly line," said Jan Widerström, Chairman and Managing Director, Saab India Technologies.

He confirmed Saab had received the letter from the Indian government seeking a fourth generation fighter. A source close to the company said that while there was no minimum order set in stone for it to lay down a production line, they would expect to build at least 100 planes at the facility.

Lockheed Martin said it had responded to the defence ministry's letter with an offer to transfer the entire production of its F-16 fighter to India.

"Exclusive F-16 production in India would make India home to the world's only F-16 production facility, a leading exporter of advanced fighter aircraft, and offer Indian industry the opportunity to become an integral part of the world's largest fighter aircraft supply chain," Abhay Paranjape, National Executive for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Business Development in India said in an email.—Reuters

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## Thais gather at palace to view late king's funeral urn

BANGKOK — Tens of thousands of Thais gathered at Bangkok's glittering Grand Palace on Saturday hoping to pay their respects before the funeral urn of late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest-reigning monarch.

King Bhumibol, 88, died on 13 October after reigning for seven decades as a constitutional monarch and unifying figure in the politically febrile country.

Thailand's military-led government has declared a year-long period of mourning for the late king, formally known as Rama IX, and many Thais are wearing black as a sign of respect.

About 80,000 mourners arrived at the palace on Saturday morning, deputy police spokesman Major General Songpol Wattanachai told Reuters.

Authorities have said 10,000 mourners will be allowed to enter the Dusit Maha Prasat Throne Hall,

inside the palace, each day.

"I'm prepared now to go in and pay my respects to our late king because this will be the last time for us to express our sorrow," said mourner Waewwan Imsud, 42, waiting to enter the hall.

Daily religious rites are taking place in the hall, where the king's body lies in state, and senior members of the royal family have taken turns attending daily, amid chanting by Buddhist monks.

The bodies of high-ranking Thai royals traditionally used to be placed in a golden urn. But palace officials said that tradition would no longer upheld and the king's body would be placed in a coffin with the symbolic urn nearby.

Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, 64, is the king's designated successor, but junta chief Prayuth Chan-ocha told the country hours after the king's



Mourners line up to get into the Throne Hall at the Grand Palace for the first time to pay respects in front of the golden urn of Thailand's late King Bhumibol Adulyadej in Bangkok, Thailand, on 29 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

death that the prince had informed him he would delay his ascension to the throne to give him time to mourn his father.

Prayuth said last week the prince could become king in seven to 15 days after the king's death, or later.

His coronation, however, cannot take place until after the royal cremation, in a year's time.

Since taking power in a May 2014 coup, the military, which sees itself the

protector of the monarchy, has cracked down on perceived royal critics and has shown it is highly sensitive to any discussion of the monarchy and succession.

Criticism of the king, queen, heir or regent is a crime punishable by up to 15 years in prison for each offence.

The government said last week that it would ask other countries to extradite people suspected of insulting the monarchy.—Reuters



# US challenges China's imports of North Korean coal amid UN sanctions

BEIJING — China's imports of North Korean coal run counter to global sanctions, a senior US official said on Saturday, adding that a US missile system deployed in South Korea should "motivate" Beijing to pressure Pyongyang over its nuclear programme.

North Korea's exports of coal to China provide a lifeline for the country and are also seen by the United States as a crucial area where Beijing has leverage over its neighbour, which has carried out a series of missile and nuclear tests in defiance of international sanctions.

China announced in April that it would ban North Korean coal imports to comply with UN sanctions, though it made exemptions for deliveries intended for "livelihood purposes".

Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken told journalists that China had reversed the burden of proof put forward under UN Security Council resolution 2270 adopted in March in response to a North Korean nuclear test.

"The plain language of 2270 makes it very clear that the export of coal, or the importation of coal if you are China, is prohibited unless you can demonstrate that the transaction in question goes to the livelihood of the North Korean people," Blinken said in Beijing after visits to Japan and South Korea.



Trucks are parked next to a pile of coal on the bank of the Yalu River in Sinuiju, opposite the Chinese border city of Dandong, on 14 March 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"The Chinese have reversed the presumption and their approach has been that the trade in coal is allowed unless you can demonstrate that it is going to the weapons programme. But that's not what 2270 says," he said.

Coal is particularly important to the economic health of North Korea because it is one of its only sources of hard currency. China imported \$1 billion worth of North Korean coal in 2015, according to Chinese customs data.

Beijing fears strengthening

sanctions could lead to collapse in North Korea, sending a flood of refugees across the border into China, and it also believes the United States and South Korea share responsibility for growing tensions in the region.

North Korea's fourth nuclear test in January was followed by a satellite launch, a string of tests of various missiles, and its fifth and largest nuclear test in September.

China has repeatedly expressed anger at the United States and South Korea for their decision to deploy the US Ter-

minal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system in the South to counter threats from North Korea. Beijing worries that the system's powerful radar will compromise China's security.

Blinken said THAAD "was the latest but not the last defensive step" that the US would take if the North Korean nuclear threat persists, and that hopefully it would "motivate China to work with us to change the conduct of the North Korean regime".

—Reuters

## Red Cross struggles to raise funds for North Korean flood relief

BEIJING — The Red Cross is struggling to raise needed funds to aid flood-affected regions of North Korea after a disappointing response from the international community to its emergency appeal, a spokesman said on Saturday.

At least 133 people have died in North Korea and some 600,000 people have been affected by flooding caused by heavy rain in late August and early September.

Concerns are growing about the health and welfare of those affected as winter sets in.

Red Cross has only raised 25 percent of the 15.2 million Swiss francs (\$15.38 million) it sought in an emergency appeal aimed at helping more than 330,000 people needing humanitarian assistance over the next 12 months.

International donors need to "put politics aside and recognise this is a humanitarian tragedy for thousands of people," Patrick Fuller, communications manager for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), told reporters in Beijing after returning from North Korea.

Donors' political concerns about the North Korean government have hampered efforts to raise funds, Fuller said, even though the money donated to the Red Cross is spent by the organisation, without passing through the government.

—Reuters

## Thousands protest in South Korea, demand president quit over scandal

SEOUL — Thousands of South Koreans rallied in Seoul on Saturday demanding the resignation of President Park Geun-hye, as a crisis deepened over allegations a friend exerted inappropriate influence over her and interfered in state affairs.

The street protest came as prosecutors investigate presidential aides and other officials to determine whether they broke the law to allow Park's friend, Choi Soon-sil, to wield undue influence and gain financially.

Angry Koreans say Park betrayed public trust and mismanaged the government, and has lost a mandate to lead the country.

"She must step down," Lee Jae-myung, mayor of Seongnam city south of Seoul and a vocal critic of the government, said to a loud cheer from the crowd. "If Park Geun-hye is no longer president, will our lives be any worse off and will the tension with North Korea be any worse?" he asked the crowd, which responded "No!"

About 8,000 people attended the rally, according to police, organised by a group of left-leaning civic groups. Organisers said up

to 30,000 people took part in the march through the capital.

"It's become clear the people made a wrong decision and picked a wrong president," Jeong Hong-woo, 22, told Reuters at the rally.

Police in riot gear faced some protesters as they tried to march on the presidential Blue House.

Park is in the fourth year of a 5-year one-term presidency. Opposition parties have demanded a thorough investigation, but have not raised the possibility of impeaching her.

Park's office said late on Friday she ordered her senior secretaries to tender their resignations, and she will reshuffle the office in the near future. Her chief of staff separately offered to resign earlier, the office said.

The deepening crisis over Choi has sent Park's public support to an all-time low. In one opinion poll, more than 40 percent of respondents said Park should resign or be impeached.

Prosecutors are investigating two of Park's aides who allegedly helped Choi get access to drafts of Park's speeches and set up two

foundations with about 50 billion won (\$44 million) in contributions from conglomerates that she later benefited from, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported.

The presidential office said

it was cooperating with the prosecutors' investigation, including a request for documents.

A public apology by Park on Tuesday — for giving Choi access to draft speeches during the

early months of her presidency — has done little to deflect demands that the president reveal the full extent of her ties with Choi and whether Choi gained favours from the relationship. —Reuters



A man takes photographs of a satirical banner of South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Choi Soon-sil during a protest denouncing President Park Geun-hye over a recent influence-peddling scandal in central Seoul, South Korea, on 27 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



## Three in Florida, Virginia charged with voter fraud

WASHINGTON — Officials in Florida and Virginia filed voter fraud charges against three people in apparently unrelated cases on Friday, just 11 days before American voters cast ballots in the hotly contested presidential race.

The charges targeted a Florida woman and a Virginia man accused of filing bogus voter registration forms and a Florida woman alleged to have tampered with absentee ballots she was opening at the Miami-Dade Elections Department. In the Iowa capital of Des Moines, county election officials referred three cases of suspected voter fraud to police earlier this week, leading to one arrest on Thursday, police said.

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has charged in recent weeks that the election will be rigged in favor of Democrat Hillary Clinton, though he has shown no proof for these claims and many Republicans have called them unfounded. Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle in Florida said that 74-year-old Gladys Coego had been working as an absentee ballot opener when a supervisor allegedly

saw her changing ballots that had been left blank to support a mayoral candidate. Prosecutors said that Coego admitted to marking the ballots and was charged with two felony counts of marking or designating the ballot of another.

"The integrity of the electoral process is intact because our procedures work," said Christina White, the county's election supervisor, in a statement.

Tomika Curgil, 33, was charged with five felony counts of submitting false voter registration information for allegedly handing in forms filled out by fictitious voters while working on a voter-registration drive for a medical marijuana advocacy group. A Virginia man was also charged with submitting falsified forms while working for a voter-registration campaign, state prosecutors said.

Vafalay Massaquoi, 30, was arraigned on two felony counts of forging a public record and two counts of voter registration fraud.

"There is no allegation that any illegal vote was actually cast in this case," said Virginia Commonwealth's Attorney Bryan Porter. "Furthermore, since the fraudulent

applications involved fictitious people, had the fraud not been uncovered, the risk of actual fraudulent votes being cast was low."

Neither Coego, Curgil nor Massaquoi could be reached for immediate comment. Police in Des Moines on Thursday arrested a woman who was accused of voting twice - casting early-voting ballots at two locations — in one of three cases of suspected voter fraud reported by the Polk County Auditor's Office.

Police did not disclose the political affiliation of the woman, identified as Terri Lynn Rote, 55, but the Des Moines Register newspaper reported she was a registered Republican.

A man in Texas, where early voting started on Monday, was arrested on Monday on charges of electioneering and loitering near a polling place, public records show.

The man, Brett Mauthe, had been charged for showing up to vote in a Trump hat and T-shirt with the phrase "basket of deplorables," a reference to a comment Clinton made disparaging her rivals' supporters, election officials told media.—*Reuters*

## Clinton email problem resurfaces as FBI announces review

WASHINGTON/NEW YORK — The FBI is investigating more emails as part of a probe into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email system, it said on Friday, in a new twist that could damage the Democratic candidate in the 2016 presidential race.

Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey said in a letter to senior lawmakers that the agency would determine whether the additional emails contained classified information, adding that he did not know "how long it will take us to complete this additional work."

The announcement came as Clinton and Republican opponent Donald Trump enter the final stretch of campaigning ahead of the 8 November election.

In a news conference late on Friday in Des Moines, Iowa, Clinton urged Comey to release more details about what the FBI was looking for in the newly discovered emails.

She leads Trump in opinion polls after a bruising campaign in which she has struggled to convince voters that she is trustworthy and honest. Fresh revelations about her use of email are unlikely to assuage those concerns, and questions around the FBI investigation will now likely dog her in the coming days as she campaigns across battleground states.

US stocks immediately fell sharply on the news, but went on to partially recover.

The FBI spent about a year investigating Clinton's use of the unauthorised server at her home



US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton talks to staff members, including aide Huma Abedin (L), onboard her campaign plane in White Plains, New York, US, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

in Chappaqua, New York, while she was US secretary of state after classified government secrets were found in some of her emails.

Comey said in July that while "there is evidence of potential violations of the statutes regarding the handling of classified information, our judgment is that no reasonable prosecutor would bring such a case." Although Comey recommended no criminal charges be brought against Clinton, Trump has repeatedly said her email practices are criminal and should disqualify her for office. He seized on Friday's development at rallies in Maine and New Hampshire.

"This is the biggest political scandal since Watergate, and I'm sure it will be properly handled from this point forward," Trump told a crowd in Lisbon, Maine.

"We hope that all, all justice will be fully served," he said. Supporters cheered his words and chanted, "Lock her up."

Clinton said she had learned of the newly discovered emails from news reports. "I'm confident whatever they are will not change the conclusion reached in July," she said.

"That's why it's incumbent upon the FBI to tell us what's going on."—*Reuters*

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Medvedev: Free trade zone talks with Serbia to start soon

MOSCOW — Russian PM Dmitry Medvedev on Friday announced the start of free trade zone talks between the Eurasian Economic Union and Israel and Serbia, respectively.

"The first round of talks is planned with Israel before the end of the year. Talks with Serbia and a number of other countries will also start", said Medvedev at a meeting of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, Russia Today reported.

The Supreme Eurasian Economic Council decided in May to commence talks with Serbia on a unification of trade regimes, which, as EEU Minister of Trade Veronika Nikishina said at the time, will result in a free trade zone of all EEU members and Serbia.

Serbia currently has free trade zone agreements with only three EEU members - Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus — and they differ in some of the provisions, she explained.—*Tanjug*

#### EU and Canada to sign trade pact after Belgians strike key deal

BRUSSELS — Canada and the European Union will sign a landmark free trade deal on Sunday after a series of key votes in Belgian regional assemblies on Friday ended opposition that had threatened to destroy the entire agreement.

Soon after the final Belgian vote, European Council president Donald Tusk called Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and invited him to Brussels for the signing ceremony, which is scheduled for noon local time (1000 GMT).

"The Canada-EU Summit will be Sunday. Great news and I'm looking forward to being there," Trudeau said on Twitter.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which backers say will boost bilateral trade by 20 per cent, appeared to be in trouble after Belgium's French-speaking Wallonia region raised a series of late objections.

All 28 EU governments back CETA but Belgium's central government had been prevented from giving consent because it needed approval from sub-federal authorities.—*Reuters*

#### Trump looks for boost from Clinton's new email problem

CEDAR RAPIDS (Iowa) — US Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump shifted quickly on Friday to take advantage of a new twist in Democrat Hillary Clinton's long-running email saga, seeking a much-needed boost in the campaign's waning days.

The FBI's disclosure that it is investigating more emails as part of a probe into Clinton's use of a private email server gave fresh energy to Trump.

At rallies in New Hampshire, Maine and Iowa, Trump hit hard on his message that Clinton is a corrupt leader who cannot be trusted and he pulled back a bit on his charge that the political system is rigged against him. Trump called the new development part of "the biggest political scandal since Watergate," the 1970s scandal that forced the resignation of Republican President Richard Nixon.

Trump abruptly changed his tune after repeatedly attacking FBI Director James Comey in the last three months for not indicting Clinton for her handling of classified information while US secretary of state from 2009 to 2013.—*Reuters*

#### Tribe vows to continue North Dakota pipeline fight despite arrests

WASHINGTON — A Native American tribe and other activists opposed to a multibillion-dollar oil pipeline project in North Dakota vowed on Friday to continue their fight through direct action, legal challenges and growing celebrity support, a day after police arrested 141 of their members.

Thursday's arrests came at the site of the \$3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline when dozens of riot police swept through a protester camp on private land using pepper spray, bean bag rounds and an audio cannon against demonstrators who refused to leave.

Some of the protesters set fire to roadblocks and threw rocks, bottles and Molotov cocktails at the law enforcement officers, the local Morton County Sheriff's Department said.

Dallas Goldtooth, 33, an activist from the Indigenous Environmental Network, said on Friday the demonstrators were taking the day off to regroup and pray. He added there were still ample opportunities for them to stop the pipeline.

"They still have miles of construction to happen and that is miles of construction yet to be stopped," Goldtooth said via telephone from the protest site in North Dakota. "There are still windows of opportunity to disrupt construction."—*Reuters*



# Opinion

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## Be Honest, Ethical and Professional to help solve complex issues in Rakhine

Aye Min Soe

**T**HE armed violent attacks occurred last month in Rakhine State as the new government was systematically handling human rights and humanitarian issues by all possible legal means.

The attacks arose shortly after the third committee meeting on human rights at the United Nation's General Assembly lifted the remaining US sanctions and soon after the announcement that the EU wouldn't submit the human rights report on Myanmar in tribute to the progress being made.

Those who wanted to inflame the issue of Rakhine State made the problem worse, while the new government was deal-

ing with the issue systematically by legal means.

From the beginning, the government has taken the most cautious approach in dealing with the issues in Rakhine State, in order to prevent unnecessary accusations of human rights violations and to not to be blamed unfairly by the international community.

Recently, some social media have released reports related to the handling by the government of the armed attacks. In their posts they used video clips and photos of the conflicts in Rakhine State in 2012 and those in foreign countries. They also accused the troops who are carrying out area clearance operations in an effort to bring

back peace to the community.

Neglecting fairness, one of the important ethical tenets of the journalism, some media wrote stories on that issue without mentioning the clarifications from the authorities and responsible personnel.

Meanwhile, biased news reports, videos and photos of the 2012 communal conflicts in Rakhine State were spread to the world through a news network established just for one community in Rakhine State, making it clear that those who want to bring the Rakhine State issue to the international stage are working behind the scene.

In response to the unfair reports, the government requested the foreign media established

about 100 years ago to report on the clarifications of the government.

Violation of professional ethics can cause unnecessary consequences and can be considered on act of violation of human rights.

Only flexible and systematic approaches can help solve these complicated issues. The Myanmar government is dealing with human rights issues, in particular the complaints over rights violations, as all countries are being confronted with their own human rights issues.

In dealing with complicated issues, the government alone cannot solve them, requiring the cooperation of the people, including media personnel.

# Balance of Power

**U KHIN MAUNG**  
(A retired diplomat)

### Introduction

While I was studying at Rangoon (Yangon) university. I took up "political science" as one of my optional subjects in my B.A Junior and Senior classes. Our professor Dr. Ohn Khaing had held a Ph.D degree from the British University and senior lecturer, Daw Khin Su had earned Masters degree from American University. In those days at university, all the subjects were lectured in English. With devotion and dedication to their jobs, with a goodwill to share a wealth of knowledge and experience of their abilities with us, they did their jobs to the best of their abilities with loving kindness and goodwill. We, the students were very much impressed with their lectures and we were very much enlightened too. In fact, all of our professors and lecturers won the hearts and minds of their students, for their good teachings, for their academic qualifications, and also for enlarging the channels of their students' knowledge. So, humbly and honestly, sincerely and seriously. I would like to say that all that I am today, I owe an infinite debts of gratitude to the Buddha, to the Dhamma, to the Sangha, my parents and to all of my teachers, teachers from whom I learn something through their actual teachings, teachers from whom I learn something through hearing of what they say, and teachers from

whom I learn something through seeing of what they do.

On the subject of "political science", we were taught about the then political situations of the world, especially about the power struggle between the two blocs, capitalist bloc, led by the United States of America and communist bloc led by the Soviet Union. In those days, the United States of America and the Soviet Union were the two super powers. And the two treaty organizations, NATO-North Atlantic Treaty Organization and Warsaw Pact were two rivals. NATO is still strong and to which many European countries, U.S.A and Canada belong. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, "Warsaw Pact" is no more in existence.

### Balance of Power

As the subject of "political science" is too wide an area of knowledge to study, in this article. I would like to present to you about "balance of power" in the light of contemporary world situations. Well, then, I think you may wish to ask me what does "balance of power mean?". "Balance of power" is a situation in which political or military strength is divided between two countries or two groups of countries. Another political principle which is worth studying is "checks and balances". This theory, or this principle is usually adopted and practised in a country's domestic affairs. "Checks and balances". This phrase means influences in an organization or political system which help to keep it fair and

stop a small group from keeping all the powers. In the United States of America this phrase means the principle of government by which the President, the Congress and the Supreme Court, each have some control over the others. This principle can be compared with that of the "separation of powers." It is the principle of the U.S Constitution that the political power of the government is divided between the President, the Congress and the Supreme Court.

Well, now, I think we should take a careful study of the current political situations of the world, so that we may come to have a better understanding of "balance of power," or shifting of alliances. At present, China is a rising power, economy and military in Asia and the second biggest economy in the world, next only to the United States of America, one and the only super power of the day. We have learnt from the Central News Agency that China will construct a maritime silk road in the South China Sea. The maritime silk road will connect the world's 65 countries for global trade. As such, C.N.A reports that Chinese power is shaping Central Asia. China has also created outposts out of large islands it reclaimed from contested reefs in the South China Sea. China has refused to recognize the ruling of United Nations Arbitrary Court, in a case brought by the Philippines. The Arbitrary Court ruling invalidated China's historical claims in the South China Sea.

Parts of the South China Sea

water-ways are claimed by Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, 4 Asean member countries, and Taiwan, a self-ruled territory. To "rebalance" as used by the U.S President Mr. Obama, or to strike the balance of power, the United States lifted a lethal arms embargo on Vietnam, its one time enemy and ramped up military aid to the Philippines, trying to boost maritime capabilities to assert its claims over the contested territories in the South China Sea.

The United States of America welcomes the rise of the People's Republic of China as a peaceful, stable, prosperous country and responsible member in the family of nations and as a responsible player in global affairs. Why? Because the United States believe that, that sort of China will benefit all countries across the world. But there are some, including even in China, who would like to see the United States of America rebalance as an attempt to contain the rise of China, which has been cementing its dominance in the region through investment, trade and aid as well as military build-up in the South China Sea.

China has created outposts out of the large islands it reclaimed from contested reefs. And when the Philippines, one of countries which makes claim on the part of the South China Sea waters presented the case to the UN Arbitral Court. The Court invalidated China's historical claims on South China Sea and passed a ruling in favour of the Philippines. However, China has refused to recognize the result of July Arbitral ruling, saying the ruling is non-binding. The United States has no claims on the South China Sea but has interest-stakes in the freedom of navigation and overflight. On the part of the develop-

ing and small nations, their interest is to see "the upholding of international law and peaceful settlement of disputes."

While asserting that UN Arbitral Court ruling is valid and binding, the United States of America conducted freedom of overflight and navigation operations close to China-claimed islands, to challenge what it sees as China's excessive maritime claims. Their rivalry in the region and differences have prompted some nations to ask if the two power may be headed for confrontation.

According to the recent news item, the Philippine President Mr. Rodrigo Duterte has said that he would raise a controversial Arbitral ruling on the South China Sea with China's leaders and he vowed not to surrender any sovereignty or deviate from the July U.N Arbitral Court ruling. In essence, the Philippine leader has said during his state visit to China, he would raise the UN Court ruling with China's leaders, but he wouldn't bargain. In this connection, I would like to present to you, as a retired diplomat, the significance of choice of language in diplomacy. As far as I understand "raise" in this context means "to bring up for consideration, or to put forward; and "bargain" means "to negotiate." In other words, the UN Arbitral Court ruling" is valid and binding, so the two parties to this conflict should bring up how to implement it, how to put the ruling into force," and not to negotiate on this issue.

Well, let's wait and see.

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# POPPY: DRUG SCOURGE OR LIFELINE?

Mark Angeles

PACHAKALO, Shan State, Myanmar – It was the middle of the rainy season in Myanmar, when planting begins in the poppy fields of Shan State. Days can go by before the sun briefly appears, only to be quickly obscured again by grey clouds and the steady rain that helps the crops flourish.

For the farmers of one such crop, it takes a two-hour trek through dense forest to reach their field. Hidden in the mountains, it is accessible only by way of winding, slippery footpaths, near-vertical climbs and the crossing of at least two streams forded only by fallen logs, which they must traverse while carrying baskets, seeds and tools.

The farmers, small and thin, easily navigate the treacherous trails that are part and parcel of the only jobs generations of Shan State villagers have ever known.

One of Pachakalo's four leaders, U Htan Ngwe, 53, says there are 305 households in his village, 300 of which contain at least one member involved in small-scale poppy farming. "In the remaining five households, they do not farm poppy because they are simply too old," U Htan Ngwe says.

One of the younger villagers, Nu Kyi, 23, cannot remember when she stopped going to school, only that it was when she was very young. Elders say the average resident is educated to elementary level.

Nu Kyi, slender with a wide smile, has worked in poppy fields for almost a decade, since she was 15. Asked if she likes the work, she says: "It is not a matter of like or dislike, it is the only job to do in my village."

Another villager, U Htun, 78, has been farming poppy in the lush mountains of Shan State for about 40 years, and over that time has been joined in the illegal effort by his daughter, grandson and in-laws. They are part of what has become something of a cultural and familial tradition of small-scale poppy farming in Myanmar, which is now second only to Afghanistan as a producer of raw opium.

And their efforts show no sign of abating.

A recent report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates Myanmar had 55,000 hectares of



Farmers clear a steeply inclined field to ready it for planting poppy. The number of small-scale poppy farms in Shan State such as this one have increased over the past few years. PHOTO: MARK ANGELES

poppies under cultivation in 2015, most of it in Shan State. Some say that is a conservative estimate and place the figure at closer to 160,000 hectares.

By either measure, Myanmar is by far the most prolific producer of opium in the Golden Triangle of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, Southeast Asia's illegal drugs hub. The report notes that, after a decline, the country's opium production numbers have tripled since 2006 and remained stable for a third consecutive year. It accounts for 91 per cent of the Golden Triangle's raw opium, which is often further refined into heroin.

Opium and heroin produced in Myanmar provides subsistence for farmers, but also supplies a growing number of addicts in the region, including China, which accounts for 70 per cent of heroin users in Asia, according to the UNODC. One of the most devastated areas is Yunnan province, near the border of Myanmar. The southern province is the main entry point in China for Myanmar's illegal drugs, and has become home to half of China's registered drug addicts, according to the UNODC. The drugs are often then transported to Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and further overseas.

U Htun, his daughter, 54, grandson, 30, and other villagers would rather not farm the land for poppy, which not only fuels drug

addictions worldwide but also puts them at the mercy of the Myanmar army, which regularly threatens to destroy their crops.

"There is no alternative," U Htun says through a translator at a gathering in the home of a fellow farmer in the village of Pachakalo. "There are no other jobs for us to do. It is very simple – if we don't grow it, we don't eat."

Experts agree there are few options. "Most farmers grow it because of poverty," says Tom Kramer, a researcher for the Netherlands' Transnational Institute who has been visiting Myanmar regularly since 1993. "They grow poppy as a cash crop to address food shortages and to access health and education."

Attempts have been made over the years to convince farmers to grow other crops, with little success. In 2006, U Aung Soe, 60, invested 1.5 million kyats (US\$1,268) to switch to sugar cane. By the time he harvested his second crop, the price for sugar cane had plummeted. U Aung Soe lost his life's savings. He did not have a job for two years, but eventually returned to work – growing poppy. "In our hearts we sincerely want to stop farming poppy, but it is our only real option because there is no other suitable crop," says U Aung Soe.

Similar attempts have been made with coffee beans and, most

recently, avocados. But poppy remains the king of the cash crops in Shan State due to its light weight and long shelf life. Its compactness is an important factor in Myanmar, where infrastructure is notoriously weak. Village roads are narrow and unpaved, making it impossible or prohibitively expensive to get heavy, large crops onto trucks and into markets. Electricity is unreliable, making processing plants unrealistic.

And unlike sugar cane, coffee and avocados, poppy is eminently portable. While still on the stem, an immature bud is scored several times with a knife to allow a yellow-brown residue to leak out. The sticky residue then dries and is scraped off, ready for further processing. This process has not changed since ancient times, and neither has the resulting convenient, compact size of the product.

A rattan basket full of dried residue from an average year's harvest from a typical poppy field is easily carried through the steep and narrow forest pathways. The raw opium, which can comfortably fit into a large backpack, will be sold to an agent, who pays about 600,000 kyats. That will be barely provide a family with health care, food and education for a year.

With skirmishes between the Myanmar army and rebel groups still occurring, the drug's portabil-

ity is an extra blessing.

"In conflict-affected areas, opium is the perfect crop as buyers come to the village," says Kramer. "And unlike other crops, opium is easy to carry and can be stored for some years."

Myanmar has endured decades of convoluted civil war, with dozens of insurgent ethnic groups fighting the army and each other for territory, natural resources, the right to self-determination, religious freedom and the drug trade. Peace talks have been held in fits and starts for years. Ceasefires have been agreed in the past, most recently in October, but the fighting persists.

The ongoing ethnic conflicts and poppy growing are inextricably linked, according to experts. The less developed a village, the more prevalent the opium fields, according to the UNODC.

"There is no infrastructure without peace, hence more poppy growing [in areas such as Shan State]," says Troels Vester, the Myanmar country manager for the UNODC.

The quality of Myanmar's raw opium that contains the powerful opioids morphine and codeine is said to be superior to that of Afghanistan's. In addition to global recreational use, the highly addictive drug is regularly used in villages to treat diarrhoea, pain and for anaesthesia. This is critical in the small, poor villages of northern Myanmar that do not have access to modern health care or essential medicines, according to Kramer, the Dutch researcher.

He says opium is also sometimes offered to guests at weddings and funerals, with some small amounts saved in case of an unexpected expense such as a sudden illness that requires hospital treatment.

Presented with statistics showing increasing opium and heroin addiction in neighbouring countries, U Aung Soe expresses concern as well as frustration.

"I have not seen or heard of these statistics, but I trust you that they are accurate," said U Aung Soe.

"But without an alternative, poppy is our only way of survival."

*This story was originally published in the South China Morning Post.*

## Mass cycling event held in Mandalay

UNDER the direction of the Ministry of Education and Health, the Myanmar Cycling Federation and the Mandalay Region Sport and Physical Education Department, a mass cycling event was organized recently in Mandalay.

With the aims of ensuring national physical fitness, energy conservation, reduction of air pollution and easing of traffic congestion, the event was held in Mandalay on 29 October.

The event began in front of the Mandalay City Development Committee and concluded at the town hall of

Mandalay. Two-hundred amateur cyclists, among them Mandalay Region Chief Minister Dr. Zaw Myint Maung, participated in the event.

The mass cycling event will be held during the last week of every month as a community activity in Mandalay, it is learnt.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

Amateur cyclists at the starting line for the community event promoting fitness and environmental improvement.  
PHOTO: THIHA KO KO (MDV)





## Iraqi Shi'ite militias say offensive toward Tal Afar started

BAGHDAD — Iranian-backed Iraqi Shi'ite paramilitary groups said they started an offensive on Saturday against Islamic State positions west of Mosul, assisting in a campaign to take back the city.

The operation will target Tal Afar, an Islamic State-held area close to Turkey where a sizeable ethnic Turkmen population lives, which could cause concern in Ankara.

Earlier announcements by the militias, collectively known as Hashid Shaabi or Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF), on advancing toward Mosul have drawn warnings from human rights groups concerned about sectarian violence in the mainly Sunni province. Shi'ites make up a majority in Iraq but Sunnis are predominant in the north and the west.

The PMF said it had started moving early on Saturday toward Tal Afar from positions south of Mosul, Islamic State's last major city stronghold in Iraq.

"The wounded city of Tal Afar (is among) the cities to be liberated," said a statement on the PMF's website.

The PMF officially reports to the Shi'ite-led government of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi who on 17 October announced the start of an offensive targeting Mo-



Iraqi pro-government forces are seen in Qayyara. PHOTO: REUTERS

sul, Iraq's second-largest city, with the backing of a US-led coalition.

The PMF was formed in 2014 to help push back Islamic State's sweeping advance through northern and western provinces.

Amnesty International says that in previous campaigns, the Shi'ite militias have committed

"serious human rights violations, including war crimes" against civilians fleeing Islamic State-held territory.

The UN in July said it had a list of more than 640 Sunni Muslim men and boys reportedly abducted by a Shi'ite militia in Falluja, a former militant stronghold west

of Baghdad, and a list of about 50 others who were summarily executed or tortured to death.

The government and the PMF say a limited number of violations have occurred and that they were investigated but they deny that abuses were widespread and systematic.—*Reuters*

## UN Security Council slams attack on Russian Embassy in Syrian capital

UNITED NATIONS — The UN Security Council on Friday "condemned in the strongest terms" another mortar shelling earlier in the day on the Russian embassy in the Syrian capital of Damascus, which caused significant material damage.

The 15-nation UN body, in a press statement issued Friday night, recalled the fundamental principle of the inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises as well as the obligations of host governments to take all appropriate steps to protect diplomatic and consular premises against any intrusion or damage, and to prevent any disturbance of the peace of these missions or impairment of their dignity.

The fundamental principle and obligations were provided by international conventions including the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the statement said.

Two mortar shells coming from the Jobar district in Damascus, an area controlled by anti-government forces, hit the embassy compound located in the central al-Mazra area of the Syrian capital, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry.

"It was a lucky coincidence that casualties were avoided," a statement from the ministry said.

The embassy building suffered "material damage" in the attack, with four of the Russian diplomats' cars being hit, the statement added.

This was the third time in October that the Russian Embassy was shelled from militant-controlled areas. Both previous attacks, which took place on 4 and 13 October, damaged the embassy building but caused no casualties, reports said.—*Xinhua*

## Russia fails to win re-election to UN Human Rights Council

UNITED NATIONS — Russia failed to win re-election to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Friday, beaten out by Hungary and Croatia, following lobbying by rights groups against Moscow's candidacy because of its military support for the Syrian government.

In a secret ballot by the

193-member UN General Assembly, Hungary received 144 votes, followed by Croatia with 114 votes and Russia with 112 votes. Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said Moscow had faced good competition.

"It was a very close vote," Churkin told reporters. "Croatia,

Hungary — they are fortunate because of their size they are not as exposed to the winds of international diplomacy; Russia is quite exposed." "We have been there a number of years, I'm sure next time we're going to get in," he said.

Russian air power has been backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces in the country's nearly six-year war.

A recent offensive to capture eastern Aleppo — the rebel-held half of Syria's largest city — has sparked international outrage. Russia's three-year term on the 47-member Geneva-based Human Rights Council will finish on 31 December. It had been competing for a second three-year term. Council members cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.

"UN member states have sent a strong message to the Kremlin about its support for a regime that has perpetrated so much atrocity in Syria," said Louis Charbonneau,

UN director at Human Rights Watch. The United States, Egypt, Rwanda, Tunisia, Iraq and Japan were elected to the body, while Saudi Arabia, China, South Africa and Britain won a second terms. Their candidacies were uncontested but needed to win a majority vote. In the other competitive slate, Cuba and Brazil beat out Guatemala.

"The re-election of China, Cuba and Saudi Arabia — regimes which systematically violate the human rights of their citizens — casts a shadow upon the reputation of the United Nations," said UN Watch Executive Director Hillel Neuer."

A Saudi Arabia-led military campaign in Yemen has been criticized for killing civilians. UN sanctions monitors have accused the Saudi-led coalition, Houthi rebels and Yemen government troops of violating international humanitarian and human rights laws.—*Reuters*



A still image, taken from video footage and released by Russia's Defence Ministry on 18 August 2016, shows a Russian Sukhoi Su-34 fighter-bomber based at Iran's Hamadan air base dropping off bombs in the Syrian province of Deir ez-Zor. PHOTO: REUTERS

## At least two killed in suicide bomb attack against Shiite mourners in Baghdad

BAGHDAD — At least two people were killed and eight others wounded on Saturday in a suicide bomb attack targeting a Shiite mourning tent in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, a police source said.

The attack occurred before noon as a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest within the vicinity of a mourning tent in the Shiite neighbourhood of Tobchi in the

area of Eskan in central Baghdad, said the source on condition of anonymity.

The tent was prepared for the annual Shiite Muslim commemoration of the death of Imam Hussein, one of the Shiites' twelve most revered Imams, killed in 680 AD and buried in Karbala, 110 km south of Baghdad.

Shiite Muslims already com-

memorated the date of death of the Imam on 12 October, through a ritual called Ashura Day, however, they typically continue mourning until the al-Arbaeen ritual, or 40 days after the Imam's death, which will be on 21 November.

The death toll may rise as ambulances and civilian vehicles evacuated the dead and wounded people to several nearby hospitals

and medical centers, the source said.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State (IS) militant group, in most cases, is responsible for similar suicide attacks against Shiite mourners observing their communal rituals in Iraq, in order to provoke sectarian strife in the violence-fraught country.

Terrorist acts and armed violent conflict killed 1,003 Iraqis and wounded 1,159 others in Sept. throughout Iraq, said the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Many blame the current chronic instability in Iraq as well as the cycle of violence and the emergence of extremist groups, such as the IS, on the US, since it invaded and occupied Iraq in March 2003.—*Xinhua*



# INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK					BANGKOK TO YANGON					RGN TO ICN					ICN TO RGN					MDL TO DMK					DMK TO MDL																			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days																
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily		TG-303	7:55	8:50	Daily		KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily		KE-471	18:45	22:25	Daily		FD-245	12:45	15:00	Daily		FD-244	10:50	12:15	Daily																
TG-2302	15:00	16:55	Daily		TG-2301	13:15	14:10	Daily		RGN TO KUL					KUL TO RGN					MDL TO SIN					SIN TO MDL																			
TG-306	19:45	21:40	Daily		TG-305	17:50	18:45	Daily		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days																
PG-706	6:15	8:30	Daily		PG-701	8:50	9:40	Daily		AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily		AK-502	6:55	8:00	Daily		MI-533	15:20	20:15	2		MI-522	11:00	12:50	2,6																
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily		PG-707	13:45	14:35	Daily		AK-503	19:30	23:45	Daily		AK-502	17:50	19:00	Daily		MI-522	13:40	20:15	2,6		MDL TO BKK					BKK TO MDL														
PG-708	15:20	17:15	Daily		PG-703	18:25	19:15	3		8M-501	7:50	11:50	1,3,5		8M-502	12:50	13:50	1,3,5		Flight no.					Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.					Dep	Arv	Days								
PG-708	18:20	20:15	3		PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily		MH-741	12:15	16:30	Daily		MH-742	13:40	14:50	1,6,7		PG-710					14:05	16:30	Daily		PG-709					12:00	13:20	Daily								
PG-704	20:00	21:55	Daily		PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily		MH-743	15:45	20:05	1,4,6,7		KMG TO RGN					MDL TO KMG					KMG TO MDL																			
8M-335	7:40	9:25	Daily		8M-336	10:40	11:25	Daily		RGN TO KMG					MDL TO KMG					NYT to BKK					BKK TO NYT																			
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily		8M-332	19:15	20:00	Daily		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		CA-415	10:45	11:15	Daily		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days											
UB-017	15:10	19:20	1,3,5		UB-020	11:00	11:30	7		CA-416	12:15	15:45	Daily		MU-2031	14:00	14:30	1		PG-722	20:25	22:35	2		PG-721	18:25	19:35	2		PG-721	17:00	19:00	1,2,3,4,5,7											
UB-017	17:50	19:20	2,4,6,7		UB-018	20:20	20:50	Daily		MU-2032	15:20	18:40	2,4,5,6,7		MU-2011	08:15	11:25	3		PG-722	19:30	22:30	1,2,3,4,5,7		Flight no.					Dep	Arv	Days												
UB-019	8:05	9:35	7		UB-020	9:15	9:45	1,2,4,5,6		MU-2012	12:25	18:40	3		MU-2031	13:55	14:30	2,4,5,6,7		Flight no.					Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.					Dep	Arv	Days								
UB-019	6:30	8:00	1,2,3,4,5,6		DMK TO RGN					RGN TO TPE					TPE TO RGN					PEK TO RGN					HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN														
					Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days											
					FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily		CI-7916	10:45	16:15	1,2,3,4,6		CI-7915	7:00	9:45	1,2,3,4,6		CA-905	19:30	22:50	3,7		VN-957	16:50	18:10	1,3,5,6,7		VN-943	9:35	11:10	2,3,4,5,7											
					FD-255	12:05	12:55	Daily		RGN TO PEK					PEK TO RGN					HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																			
					FD-253	16:20	17:00	Daily		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		CA-905	19:30	22:50	3,7		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																			
					FD-257	18:05	18:55	Daily		CA-906	23:50	0550+1	3,7		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																								
					DD-4234	10:25	11:15	Daily		RGN TO HAN					HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																								
					DD-4230	6:20	7:05	Daily		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																								
					DD-4238	19:30	20:15	Daily		VN-956	19:10	21:30	1,3,5,6,7		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN																								
					SL-200	9:05	10:00	Daily		RGN TO SGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN																			
					SL-207	20:05	21:45	"Daily"		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN																			
					CAN TO RGN					RGN TO HAN					HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN														
					Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN														
					8M-711	20:30	01:05+1	5		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN														
					8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,7		VN-956	19:10	21:30	1,3,5,6,7		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN														
					8M-711	11:25	16:15	3,6		VN-942	12:10	15:00	2,3,4,5,7		HAN TO RGN					SGN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN														
					CZ-3056	17:30	22:35	1,5		RGN TO HKG					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN														
					RGN TO SIN					SIN TO RGN					HKG TO RGN					DOH TO RGN					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN														
					Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days											
					8M-231	8:20	12:50	Daily		8M-232	13:50	15:20	Daily		KA-251	1:10	5:45	1,2,3,4,6,7		KA-250	21:45	23:30	1,2,3,5,6,7		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days											
					SQ-997	10:35	15:10	Daily		SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily		KA-251	1:30	5:55	5		KA-252	22:50	00:30+1	4		PG-723	11:40	12:35	Daily		BG-060	12:45	15:30	1,3,6											
					MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,5		MI-522	11:00	12:20	4,6		UB-8027	9:45	14:15	1,5,7		UB-8028	15:15	16:55	1,5,7		DAY					4 = Thursday														
					MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily		MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily		RGN TO DOH					DOH TO RGN					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					1 = Monday					5 = Friday				
					MI-522	15:45	20:15	4,6		MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,5		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					2 = Tuesday					6 = Saturday				
					MI-533	13:10	20:15	2		MI-533	11:00	12:20	2		QR-919	8:15	10:55	1,4,6		QR-918	20:40	6:25	3,5,6		CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					3 = Wednesday					7 = Sunday				
					3K-584	19:15	23:50	2,5		3K-583	17:05	18:35	2,5		RGN TO CNX					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					DAY					4 = Thursday									
					3K-582	11:15	15:50	1,3,4,5,6,7		3K-581	8:55	10:25	1,3,4,5,6,7		RGN TO CNX					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					DAY					4 = Thursday									
					TR-2823	9:45	2:15	Daily		TR-2822	7:20	8:45	Daily		RGN TO CNX					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					DAY					4 = Thursday									
					UB-001	7:30	12:00	Daily		UB-002	13:15	14:45	Daily		RGN TO CNX					CNX TO RGN					DAC TO RGN					DAY					4 = Thursday									
					RGN TO NRT					NRT TO RGN					RGN TO DAC					DAC TO RGN					DAY					4 = Thursday														
					Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days		DAY					4 = Thursday														
					NH-814	21:45	06:50+1	Daily		NH-813	11:00	15:40	Daily		BG-061	16:15	18:00	1,3,6		BG-060	12:45	15:30	1,3,6		DAY					4 = Thursday														





Singer Bob Dylan performs during a segment honouring Director Martin Scorsese, recipient of the Music+ Film Award, at the 17th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards in Los Angeles in January 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Bob Dylan now says will accept Nobel prize for literature

STOCKHOLM — American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature earlier this month, has now told the Swedish Academy that he will accept the prize.

The notoriously media-shy Dylan had not made any comment on the 8 million crown (\$900,000) prize, despite repeated attempts by award-givers the Swedish Academy to contact him since it named him as the winner on 13 October.

The Nobel Foundation said in a statement that Dylan this week told Sara Danius, Permanent Secretary of the Swedish Academy, that he now accepts

the prize.

The committee that awarded the Nobel Prize to Dylan had said it was up to him whether to attend the prize-giving ceremony later this year or not.

"It has not yet been decided if Bob Dylan will attend any events during the Nobel Week in Stockholm in December," the Nobel Foundation said on Friday.

"The Nobel Foundation will share information as soon as it is available."

Separately, Dylan told British daily the *Telegraph* in an interview that he will be at Nobel Prize ceremony, if he can. —Reuters

## Rajoy set to win vote to be Spain's leader, ending gridlock

MADRID — Spain's 10 months without a government should end on Saturday when parliament is set to grudgingly grant conservative Mariano Rajoy a second term as prime minister.

But political instability may persist as Rajoy's weak minority government struggles to build support to pass legislation in a hostile parliament.

After two inconclusive elections and months of fruitless attempts at coalition-building, a controversial decision by the opposition Socialists to abstain should allow Rajoy to be confirmed as

prime minister in a parliamentary confidence vote set for 7.45 pm (1745 GMT) on Saturday.

The result will be a triumph for the 61-year-old Rajoy, who is renowned as a political survivor.

After winning the 2011 election, Rajoy was forced to implement austerity policies as Spain endured a severe recession, unemployment soared to 27 per cent and the country's banks needed a 41 billion euro (\$45 billion) European bailout. Unlike in his first term, when his absolute majority meant he could afford to ignore the opposition, his conservative Popular

Party now has only 137 seats in the 350-seat parliament and will depend on support from others.

Rajoy sounded conciliatory in a speech to parliament this week, offering to work with opponents on issues like pension and education reform.

"The exceptional circumstances demand that we put aside ideological confrontations and combine our efforts ... because we are dealing with an unheard-of situation," he said.

But his political foes are skeptical he can change his style. Thousands of demonstrators are expect-

ed to march in protest against a new Rajoy government in Madrid on Saturday.

The Socialists, the second largest force in parliament, have made clear that while they will allow Rajoy to form a government to end the political stalemate, they will fight Rajoy's policies and will not approve his budgets.

That could mean the new government will be short-lived. Antonio Barroso, a senior analyst at risk consultancy Teneo Intelligence, said Rajoy will head a minority government with the weakest parliamentary support since democ-

racy was restored in Spain after General Francisco Franco's death in 1975.

"It is unlikely that the new government will last four years," he said in a note.

Rajoy will be able to count on support on some issues from the liberal Ciudadanos or "Citizens" party, which came fourth in June elections. Rajoy will attempt to out-manoeuvre a divided left-wing. The Socialists, in power for half of the last four decades, are bitterly divided over their leaders' decision to allow Rajoy to govern after blocking him earlier.—Reuters

## American Airlines jet catches fire on takeoff at Chicago airport

CHICAGO — The engine of an American Airlines Group Inc jet caught fire seconds from takeoff at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport on Friday, prompting the crew to abort its departure and evacuate passengers via emergency chutes, authorities said.

No serious injuries were reported in the incident, which occurred hours before an unrelated mishap in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where the landing gear of a FedEx Corp cargo plane collapsed on touchdown, sparking a fire that was quickly extinguished.

The company later said the FedEx pilots were safe.

American Airlines Flight 383, a Boeing Co 767 bound for Miami with 161 passengers and a crew of nine, was headed down an O'Hare runway at about 2:30 pm CDT (1930 GMT) when the right-side engine of the twin-engine jet burst into flames, authorities said.

Footage from Chicago's ABC News affiliate station, WLS-TV, showed the idled plane on

the ground with flames and large clouds of black smoke billowing from its right side and emergency slides deployed on the left side. Passengers milled about watching the blaze as fire trucks pumped water on the flames.

Timothy Sampey, assistant deputy fire commissioner, said the mishap could have been much worse. The plane was fully loaded with 43,000 lbs (19,504 kg) of jet fuel, which was leaking when fire crews reached the jet, Sampey told a news conference later.

"So they had a heavy volume of fire on both the engine and the entire wing," he said. "This could have been absolutely devastating if it happened later."

Sampey confirmed the incident began with a fire in the right-side engine.

The plane's CF6 engine, the "workhorse" of the commercial aviation industry, was built by General Electric Co, and GE dispatched investigators to the scene, the company said.

The Federal Aviation Administration initially said the pilot aborted takeoff after reporting a blown-out tire. But city fire spokesman Larry Langford said he saw no blown tires at the scene.

Langford said 19 passengers and one flight attendant were taken to a hospital with minor injuries - such as bumps, bruises and sprained ankles - suffered in exiting the plane. There were no burns or cases of smoke inhalation.

"The fire never got into the cabin," he said. "This happened so close to one of the airport fire stations that they were on it in a minute." He said the plane was 15 to 20 seconds away from being airborne when the fire erupted.

Inside the aircraft after it came to a stop, frantic passengers shouted at each other to hurry while making their way down the aisle to an emergency exit slide, as seen in a video posted on Facebook by passenger Hector Gustavo Cardenas. The incident forced the closure of at least three of the airport's



Smoke rises after an American Airlines jet (background) blew a tire, sparking a fire and prompting the pilot to abort takeoff before passengers were evacuated from the plane via emergency chute, at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago, Illinois, US, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

eight runways, the city Aviation Department said.

By about two hours after the incident, the airport had experienced 130 delays of departing flights and 170 inbound flights, according to flight-tracking website FlightAware.com.

The Fort Lauderdale airport said 29 flights were diverted due to the FedEx plane incident, but the facility was later reopened to air traffic. As the Chicago mishap unfolded, O'Hare's tower control-

lers began ordering inbound planes to abort landing approaches and "go around," initially closing all runways so emergency vehicles could reach the stricken aircraft, according to audio recordings of the main tower frequency posted by the website liveatc.net.

Operations later resumed on the north side of O'Hare airport, one of the world's busiest, according to web tracking sites and a live feed of tower conversations from liveatc.net.—Reuters



# Tesla's Musk adds solar roofs to his clean energy vision

LOS ANGELES — Tesla Motors Inc (TSLA.O) Chief Executive Elon Musk on Friday unveiled new energy products aimed at illustrating the benefits of combining his electric car and battery maker with solar installer SolarCity Corp (SCTY.O).

The billionaire entrepreneur showed off solar-powered roof tiles that eliminate the need for traditional panels and a longer-lasting home battery, which Tesla calls the Powerwall, aimed at realizing his vision of selling a fossil fuel free lifestyle to consumers.

"This is sort of the integrated future. An electric car, a Powerwall and a solar roof. The key is it needs to be beautiful, affordable and seamlessly integrated," Musk said while showcasing the products on homes that once served as the set of the television show "Desperate Housewives."

Musk is the biggest

shareholder in both Tesla and SolarCity, which is run by two of his first cousins. Analysts have been dubious of the deal's proposed synergies, with some suggesting the merger is a way for Tesla to rescue money-losing SolarCity. A vote on the acquisition is scheduled for 17 November.

The rollout of the product, expected as soon as next summer, would be "unwieldy" if the two companies are not combined, Musk told reporters.

Having two separate companies "slows things down, makes them more expensive. It's worse for shareholders," he said.

Musk refused to answer a reporter's question about how Tesla's balance sheet would accommodate the acquisition of SolarCity. By incorporating solar modules into rooftops, Tesla is hoping to succeed with a solar technology that to date



Tesla's electric car, Powerwall and solar roof are shown by Tesla Motors Inc Chief Executive Elon Musk (R), unveiling new energy products aimed at illustrating the benefits of combining his electric car and battery maker with solar installer SolarCity Corp, in Los Angeles, California, US, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

has had little success. Just this year, Dow Chemical said it would stop selling a solar shingle it launched five years ago.

Tesla's glass solar roof tiles would look far better than any similar product, Musk said. They can be

manufactured in a range of styles, which were demonstrated on the rooftops on the set.

Tesla gave little detail on cost, except to say that the cost of the roof would be less than a conventional roof plus solar. The product

will appeal to home builders and people looking to replace their roofs, Musk said, adding that the shingles would be more durable and have better insulation qualities than conventional roofs.

SolarCity co-founder

Peter Rive, Musk's cousin, said the solar roofs could easily have a five percent share of the new roof market within a year or two.

The new generation of home and industrial batteries will be available this year.—Reuters

## France avoids nuclear plant closure decision as election looms

PARIS — France has delayed a decision on promised nuclear reactor decommissioning, effectively

putting on hold a process that could ultimately be overturned with a change of government next year.



The logo of the Electricite de France (EDF) is seen near the cooling tower at the entrance of nuclear power plant in Civaux, France, on 21 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

A government investment roadmap published on Friday stopped short of identifying reactors for closure under 2015 legislation that commits France to reducing atomic energy to 50 per cent of its electrical power mix, from more than 75 per cent currently. Instead, the Energy Ministry plans leaves it to state utility EDF to issue a strategic review of plants and energy requirements around April of next year.

However, the final decision on whether the reactors are scrapped is a political one.

France goes to the polls

in the first round of presidential voting in April, followed by legislative elections in June — meaning the issue looks unlikely to be resolved before a new president and assembly has been elected.

Former Prime Minister Alain Juppe, the conservative candidate currently leading the race, has called Socialist President Francois Hollande's 50 per cent target absurd and vowed to scrap it, in common with several other right-wing candidates.

Lawmaker Herve Mariton, a Juppe ally and prominent energy specialist among the conservative Les Repub-

licains, has also rejected Hollande's plan to close EDF's ageing Fessenheim plant after a new reactor opens at Flamanville in 2018.

Opinion polls show conservative candidates easily defeating any potential Socialist rivals in the presidential election, which takes place in two rounds, the second due in May.

Environmental group Greenpeace said the French government was failing to implement the 2015 energy law and had betrayed last year's Paris Climate Agreement to curb climate-warming emissions by not doing

enough to support renewable energy alternatives.

In order to meet the 2015 commitment, France would have had to decide on the shutdown of 22 reactors by now, it said.

According to the energy investment plan published on Friday, a decision to close Fessenheim, France's oldest nuclear plant, will be taken by the end of the year. The plan also pledged to almost double renewable power output to 150-167 terawatt hours (TWh) by 2030. The plan also seeks to cut nuclear power output by 10 to 65 TWh by 2023.—Reuters

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV DAWEI STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV DAWEI STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.10.2016 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING  
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SHAMIM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SHAMIM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.10.2016 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 LAND AND SEA SHIPPING  
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.10.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/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.

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Amy Schumer. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Amy Schumer defends her 'Formation' video, says Beyonce approved it

NEW YORK — After a social media backlash, comedian Amy Schumer penned an essay defending the video she made dancing and lip syncing to Beyonce's 2016 hit "Formation," saying she made it out of admiration.

"It was NEVER a parody. It was just us women celebrating each other," Schumer wrote in the essay titled, Information about My 'Formation', which appeared on online publishing platform Medium on Thursday. Actresses Goldie Hawn, Wanda Sykes, Joan Cusack and Raven Goodwin were also in the video.

Schumer said that Beyonce and rapper Jay Z, her husband, had approved it and they streamed it last Friday on music service Tidal exclusively for the first 24 hours.

The hashtag "#AmySchumer-GottaGoParty" went viral on Twitter after the video was released, with many calling Schumer's video culturally insensitive.

The "Trainwreck" screenwriter and star said her video was

meant to bring women together. Beyonce's sixth solo album "Lemonade," which contains the single "Formation," was viewed as a power anthem to race and feminism.

Schumer said she considered that album "one of the greatest pieces of art of our time."

"If you watched it and it made you feel anything other than good, please know that was not my intention," Schumer said of her video. "The movie we made is fun and the women in it are strong and want to help each other. That's what it was about for me."

She wrote that viewers had "every right to feel however you feel about the video and me, but I want you to know I'm not going anywhere. Use whatever hashtag you like."

"My mission is to continue to work as hard as I can to empower women and make them laugh and feel better, and I won't let anything stop me."

—Reuters

## 'Dr Strange' cast inspired by teaching from Buddhist monk on set

BEVERLY HILLS, (Calf) — Tutelage from a Buddhist monk helped British actor Benedict Cumberbatch with his starring role in "Doctor Strange", the latest film from Marvel Cinematic Universe.

Cumberbatch stars as "Stephen Strange", an arrogant surgeon who draws on powers of mysticism and spirituality when his glamorous life is taken away from him after damaging his hands in a car accident.

"That's a great practice to have in your life — full stop," said Cumberbatch, referring to the mindfulness training the monk provided on set.

"As an actor it's great because it brings you into that moment of stillness and presence. You've got a lot of people demanding your attention in film making."

The Tibetan monk was invited on set by British actress Tilda Swinton, who plays mystical character "The Ancient One", who transforms "Strange" from incompetent student to a magic-wielding sorcerer.

"I introduced him to the project and he's been hanging out with us and teaching everybody, if they don't know, about mindfulness and about how to still the mind," Swinton told Reuters.—Reuters

## Leonardo DiCaprio asked to return Wolf of Wall Street corrupt funds

LOS ANGELES — An anti-corruption organization has asked Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio to pay back his earnings from The Wolf of Wall Street, estimated to be worth USD 25 million, following his alleged ties to the 1MDB Malaysian corruption scandal. "If he knows these are corrupt funds, we would very much like to see him return them If that money is found by the

DOJ (Department of Justice) to be corrupt, to not give it back sort of says that money that was due to go to the Malaysian public is sitting in Leonardo DiCaprio's account," said Samantha Grant of Transparency International, a Berlin-based NGO that looks to combat global corruption and prevent criminal activities arising from it.

Those allegedly connected to the scandal include his Wolf

of Wall Street producers Riza Aziz and Joey McFarland, who are co-founders of Red Granite, which funded the Martin Scorsese-directed 2013 film, and controversial Malaysian businessman Jho Low, according to the Hollywood Reporter.

In his first statement so far on his alleged ties to the scandal, the 41-year-old actor asserted that he would return "gifts and charitable donations," but not

the more than USD 25 million compensation he made from the film.

DOJ of Malaysia had filed its complaint, which included over a billion dollars of assets in the US, including properties, artwork and even Wolf of Wall Street, for all were allegedly financed with money diverted from the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund.—PTI

## 'Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen' singer unveils extended version of viral song

TOKYO — Japanese social media star Pikotaro unveiled a new, extended version of his internet hit "Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen" (PPAP) on Friday.

The original video quickly went viral after being uploaded in early September, with Canadian singer Justin Bieber helping boost viewing numbers by labeling it his "favorite video on the internet" in a Twitter post on Thursday.

"Yesterday my head was full of white hair, but now it has all turned black," said Pikotaro, overwhelmed by the attention he has received, including a Guinness World Record for the short-

est song to make it into the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Pikotaro, whose real name is Kazuhito Kosaka, wore a gold animal print outfit complete with scarf and sunglasses as he performed the new two-minute version of what was a 45 second song to journalists in Tokyo.

The video — that has racked up over 131 million views on YouTube — features Pikotaro miming the joining of an imaginary apple and pineapple with an imaginary pen, lyrics he said were inspired by items he found on the table when he began writing.—Reuters



Japanese singer and song writer Pikotaro (R), also known by his comedian name Kosaka Daimaou or his real name Kazuhito Kosaka, who is a current Youtube star with his song 'PPAP' (short for Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen), receives a certification of Guinness World Records for 'Shortest song to enter the Billboard Hot 100' during a news conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo, Japan on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS



# Osaka's landmark tower turns 60, attracts growing foreign tourists

OSAKA — Osaka celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tsutenkaku tower on Friday as the landmark regained its popularity in recent years with a growing number of foreign tourists drawn to the retro allure of the relatively short observation tower.

"I'm surprised to hear this tower has a 60-year history. It's tall and offers a great view," said Husna Hasan, a 21-year-old tourist from Malaysia, at the observation deck.

The operator of Tsutenkaku slashed the 700 yen (\$6) entrance fee for adults to 210 yen as a special offer for the anniversary day. The discount price is a pun as "tsuten" sounds similar to "two-ten."

Masaaki Nishigami, chief of the operator, said in a ceremony, "These 60

years have seen the ups and downs of the tower. We would like to go back to the starting point on this occasion and strive anew to remain a symbol of Osaka."

The number of visitors surpassed 1 million in the 1957 business year, shortly after its opening on Oct. 28, 1956. But it tumbled to 190,000 in the 1975 business year before rebounding to hit the 1 million mark again in 2007.

Between September last year and March this year, 670,000 visited, with 150,000, or 22 per cent, being foreigners.

Local shop owners say the retro and folksy atmosphere of the tower as well as the Shinsekai (new world) district of Osaka where it stands is increasingly catching the heart of foreign tourists.

Shinsekai used to be a "laborers' town" with men working on day-wages crowding restaurants serving "kushikatsu" dishes of deep-fried skewered meat and vegetables.

But recently, there are "days when 40% of our seats are occupied by foreigners," said a waiter at one kushikatsu restaurant in the area.

Some foreign backpackers opt for lengthy stays in the area by using cheap lodging facilities, according to Kojiro Onishi, head of an association of Shinsekai shop owners.

Tsutenkaku means "a tall building that reaches the heaven," as the tower must have had such an image when it opened to the public 60 years ago. But the 108-metre tower is now much shorter than its "rival" towers in Tokyo, with

Tokyo Tower standing 333 meters and Tokyo Skytree at 634 metres.

The current Tsutenkaku is the second-generation tower after the original Tsutenkaku, built in 1912, burned down in 1943.

Local shop owners started a campaign to rebuild the tower in 1954 and the drive proved successful.

The operator unveiled a 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary memorial song while a restaurant at a nearby train station started offering a curry udon noodle dish that is a one-500<sup>th</sup> model of the tower. The special wheat flour noodle dish is 20 centimetres high as it uses "chikuwa" tube-like food made of fish paste and Japanese quail eggs to create a miniature tower standing in a bowl of noodles. — *Kyodo News*



A banner to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Tsutenkaku tower, a much-loved landmark in the western Japan city of Osaka, is hoisted at the 108-metre tower, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

## The eight-year-old who gave publisher Bloomsbury Pottermania

LONDON — Alice Newton was just 8 years old when she gave Harry Potter his big break.

Her publisher father asked her to read the first book in J.K. Rowling's Hogwarts series, Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,

to test its appeal.

"I let Alice read for me and she came down in an hour later glowing about how wonderful this book was," recalls Nigel Newton, who is also chief executive of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc (BLPU.L).

"I think it is now a classic like Winnie the Pooh or (the books of) Roald Dahl or C.S. Lewis, and it will go on," he told Reuters on Friday. The franchise accounted for over 7 per cent of Bloomsbury's first-half sales.

With a new play, a book of the script and a spin-off film "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them" opening in November, Bloomsbury expects Pottermania to be a "big contributor" in the second half of its year ending February 2017.

Newton said an illustrated version of the second Potter book, released on 4 October had sold more copies in its first week than the illustrated version of the first book had in its first week on the stands a year ago.

In-house broker Investec forecasts full-year sales of 133.7 million pounds and pretax profit of 11.8 million pounds for Bloomsbury.

Bloomsbury plans to mark the franchise's 20-year anniversary next July with four special editions of the first Potter book with artwork from each of the houses in Hogwarts, Newton said. It also plans an illustrated version of the Fantastic Beasts book in 2017.

He added that Bloomsbury was in talks with Rowling over potential future books, but declined to say when and if any future work would materialize.

Newton said Bloomsbury had increased prices of some of its academic titles in August as the pound slid after Britain's vote to leave the European Union, but did not specify whether the price of the recently-released Potter book had been raised too.

He said Bloomsbury could absorb any sterling impact over the short term because more than quarter of its sales are in the United States.—*Reuters*

## Survey shows over half favour women staying on job after having baby

TOKYO — More than half of respondents approve of the idea that women should continue to work after having a baby for the first time since a survey on female empowerment started in 1992, according to government data released on Saturday.

The latest Cabinet Office survey finds that 54.2 per cent of the respondents are in favor of the idea, up 9.4 percentage points from the previous poll in 2014.

The result reflects a possible change in perception in society toward the empowerment of women, a government official said.

Japan is trying to urge greater women's participation in the workforce as the country seeks to

counter an expected labor shortage stemming from a decline in its population.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has set a goal of raising the proportion of women in leading corporate positions to 30 per cent by 2020.

By gender, 55.3 per cent of female respondents said women should continue to work after having a baby, while 52.9 of male respondents said they support the idea.

Among those in their 30s to 50s, nearly 60 per cent favor women keeping their jobs, while 47.3 per cent in the age group of 18 to 29 and 44.9 per cent of those aged 70 or older said they support the idea.—*Kyodo News*



Copies of the book of the play of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child parts One and Two are displayed at a bookstore in London, Britain, on 31 July 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Archaeologists explain life in southwest China 3,400 years ago

KUNMING — People living 3,400 years ago in southwest China's Yunnan province ate snails and lived in different houses in winter and summer, latest findings from a historical site showed.

The site in Xingyi village of Yuxi city was discovered in July 2015 during construction of a primary school.

Houses, tombs, coffins, ash pits, roads, ditches, pottery, stoneware and

bronze ware were all found there. A Xinhua reporter saw piles of snail shells at the site. Zhu Zhonghua, an archaeologist with Yunnan cultural relics and archaeological research institute, said the snails were of two types.

"One was unique to lakes in Yunnan and they are hard to find today. The other is known to have been used by people in prehistoric times for food and decoration," he said.—*Xinhua*

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### Today Fresh

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07:27	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: Nipa Plam
07:43	Am	We'll Leave After 12 Passengers Are On Board
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Yoga & Health
08:46	Am	He can do it
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Travel To The Southern Part of Shan State (Kalaw)
09:45	Am	Betel Nut Farmer
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Local Tour Guide: Pho Khant
10:39	Am	Tigers, Lions and The Guardians

10:50 Am Around The Maha Boditahtaung

(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)

### Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Myanmar's Traditions and Culture The Golden Land
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar: Inflation & Economic Stagnation
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	The Stories of The Great Souls (Daw Saw Mone Nyin- A Living Literary Legend of Myanmar)
08:52	Pm	Independent Filmmaker

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)  
(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)

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# Arsenal's Giroud and Sanchez blow away Sunderland

LONDON — Two goals each from Alexis Sanchez and Olivier Giroud, three of them delivered in a devastating seven-minute burst, saw Arsenal romp past Sunderland 4-1 at the Stadium of Light to go top of the Premier League after Saturday's early game.

The match turned on the introduction of Giroud as a 69th-minute substitute after a Jermain Defoe penalty had equalised Sanchez's first-half opener to give the home side a flicker of hope.

Giroud scored with his opening two touches, first with a superb left-foot shot from a Kieran Gibbs cross on 71 minutes and then with a near-post header from a corner five minutes later.

Sanchez scored Arsenal's third goal in seven minutes from close in when Gibbs's shot came back off the post.

The easy victory was no more than Arsenal deserved after enjoying 66 percent possession and spurning several chances to finish the game.

Asked whether he deserved credit for the decision to bring on Giroud, manager Arsene Wenger said: "The manager gets easy credit when he has quality players on the bench. You do not need to be a special manager to



Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez shoots at goal against Sunderland during Premier League at The Stadium of Light, on 29 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

make that decision."

The defeat will place manager David Moyes under further pressure as he seeks to turn

round what is now the worst start to a season after 10 games by any side in Premier League history, inferior to Manchester City

in 1995-96 on goal difference.

"We're trying (to turn things around)," said Defoe. "It is difficult to stay positive but our

position is reality, that's what it is. The important thing is to stick together like we did last year."

—Reuters

## Nishikori defeats del Potro to reach Swiss Indoors semis

BASEL (Switzerland) — Japan's Kei Nishikori dispatched Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina in straight sets Friday to advance to the semifinals of the Swiss Indoors in Basel.

The 7-5, 6-4 win was Nishikori's first career victory in five matches against del Potro, a former world No. 4 who claimed silver at this year's Rio Olympics in a comeback season after multiple wrist surgeries.

World No. 5 Nishikori never lost serve in the match, saving eight break points en route to the win in just under two hours.

"I am happy to win my first victory against Juan today. I played really solid match today, I think I didn't start quite so well but in the end I played one of the best matches so far this week," said Nishikori.

"It wasn't an easy match, he had a great serve, a great forehand."

Despite failing to convert any of five break chances in a long seventh game, Nishikori nabbed a 6-5 lead later in the set after del Potro double-faulted and dumped a forehand into the net to lose serve.

Nishikori closed out the opener with a love hold and went up an early break in the second set. He clawed his way out of a 0-40 hole in the fourth game to hold serve, and similarly fended off a double break situation at 15-40 in the sixth game to go up 4-2.

Four games later, the Rio bronze medalist set up match point

with an ace, and secured the win with an overhead smash. "Those important points I served really well, that for sure helped my game today, (at the) same time I tried to be aggressive. He has great forehands, but his backhand is the weaker side, so I tried to be aggressive and it worked well," said the Japanese.—Kyodo News



Japan's Kei Nishikori hits a backhand on his way to defeating Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina 7-5, 6-4 in the quarterfinals of the Swiss Indoors in Basel on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

## Cibulkova targets revenge win over Kerber in final

SINGAPORE — Dominika Cibulkova will hope to gain revenge on Angelique Kerber in their WTA Finals title showdown on Sunday, a repeat of their opening round-robin encounter at the eight-woman event that the German edged in three sets.

Both women will be seeking to claim the title for a first time but the Slovakian world number eight is delighted that she has a chance to secure the biggest win of her career against the best player in the world.

"We played our first match this year here. I lost but it was a great match," Cibulkova told reporters after rallying past Svetlana Kuznetsova in the semi-finals on Saturday.

"I couldn't wish for nothing more than to play against her in the finals and have my revenge in the finals.

"Yeah, it will be extremely tough. She is the world number one after having a great season and playing unbelievably well."

Kerber has risen to the top of the world rankings on the

back of her Australian and US Open victories but Cibulkova will be keen to draw on the experience of her grand slam final defeat in 2014 to find a way to triumph in Singapore.

"The WTA Finals and grand slams are two different things but also two of the biggest things of the year," added Cibulkova, who was beaten by Li Na in the Australian Open final two years ago.

"So that time I was new and playing my first grand slam final... it was really tough, really tough in the finals.

"I'm happy I have this experience or something like this. For me to go in the finals in Australia, you know, I was trying to do my best but I wasn't convinced I could really win.

"With this experience now I'm a different player. Tomorrow I will go there and just want to win."

The pair have met nine times previously with Kerber leading the head-to-head statistics 5-4, although the German has won the last five encounters.—Reuters