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# PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE



**“An obvious example was the signing of the Panglong Pact in 1947. The Panglong Pact was a symbol of the unity of all indigenous races, and attainment of Myanmar independence could be attributed to this unity”.**



President U Htin Kyaw. PHOTO : MNA

## Countrymen,

On this auspicious occasion of the New Year, I wish all the people in the Union, all our national ethnic brethren, physical and mental well-being.

## Countrymen,

During the nine-month tenure of the incumbent government in 2016, constant effort was exerted in implementation of the following policies laid down for

the sake of the country: internal peace; national reconciliation; emergence of a union based on democracy and the federal system and promotion of the social life of the people.

As the foundation for making the above-mentioned policies a success has already been laid down, continued efforts can now be made for these policies to materialise properly within

the year 2017.

## Countrymen,

If the history is any indication, it will be found that the country always enjoyed enormous benefits whenever the countrymen were united. An obvious example was the signing of the Panglong Pact in 1947. The Panglong Pact was a symbol of the unity of all indigenous races, and attainment

of Myanmar independence could be attributed to this unity.

It is common knowledge that now again, effort is being put forth commencing from the 21<sup>st</sup> century Panglong conference to be able to establish a democratic, federal union which the indigenous people are desirous of. As the building of a democratic country or a democratic system can meet with success

only through the participation of the majority of people, I would like to urge the entire mass of people in the country to join us with full democratic spirit and unity in building up a democratic, federal union.

I wish all national brethren physical and mental well-being in the New Year. May all your wishes be fulfilled.—*Myanmar News Agency*

# New Year Messages

## Vice President U Myint Swe



Vice President U Myint Swe.

I EXTEND my sincere good wishes to all national brethren living in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for their good health and happiness in 2017.

It is my earnest hope that we will achieve internal peace as soon as possible and that the Republic of the Union Myanmar will develop and prosper so that our all national brethren can equitably enjoy the fruits of development.

## 2017 New Year Greeting Message sent by U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw



U Win Myint, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw.

On this auspicious occasion of the 2017 New Year Day, I send my greetings to all our respected and beloved ethnic nationalities and citizens, and wish them all good health and happiness.

Now is the time when we are transforming our country into a democratic state in accordance with the wishes of all the ethnic national races. So, it is necessary

for all our citizens to join us to successfully reach our goal. And it is also the time for all the nationalities to contribute their labor and exert their efforts in unity for national reconciliation, internal peace and for the emergence of a Federal Democratic Union.

To achieve internal peace with peace and stability, for democratic transformations to continue with vigour, for our Union to endure, I pray that all of you would be able to work with unflagging zeal, constant vigilance and diligence to the best of your mental and physical abilities. May you all be able to work for the country and all the citizens more than ever before. It is my hope that in the New Year, all of you will be able to work with new mindsets and renewed strength for the country and future generations.

## U Han Shwe, National Unity Party

I WOULD like to wish the Myanmar people peace through negotiations, national reconciliation and security of public life. Furthermore, I wish all the rule of law and peace. In 2016, national races and the lower strata of people encountered difficulties due to low incomes and high commodities prices. We wish that foreign investment, international cooperation and efforts of our country will be able to overcome the crises and adopt fundamental economic development.



U Han Shwe, Vice Chairman of the National Unity Party.

## U Nyan Win, secretariat member of the National League for Democracy



U Nyan Win, secretariat member of the National League for Democracy.

I wish all Myanmar citizens peace and prosperity, success in the peace process and the upcoming peace talks.

## U Thu Wai, Democratic Party (Myanmar)



U Thu Wai, Democratic Party (Myanmar).

EVERYTHING is in order as the incumbent government is in power for about a year. The union government will be able to realise democracy and federalism successfully in the New Year. I wish all people of Myanmar higher economic and social standards.

## Vice President U Henry Van Thio

AS WE enter 2017, I wish all national brethren of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar a Happy New Year.

The New Year will bring prospects for development of the country and it is hoped that new challenges are also expected to come in the New Year.

As stability is sine qua non for development, I would like

to urge all the people to work for prevalence of peace and stability across the country and to participate in the federal democratic Union.

I wish all the people in the country physical and mental well-being, and I hope the New Year will bring development to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.



Vice President U Henry Van Thio.

## 2017 New Year Greeting Message sent by Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw

ICORDIALLY sent my greetings by praying for you all, respected and beloved ethnic nationalities and brethren, to be blessed with great happiness, excellent health and fulfillment of all your wishes, on this auspicious occasion of having changed into the New Year from the old one.

By ruminating and assessing over matters and events experienced in the previous year, we need to get rid of our bad deeds and behaviors in the past and take lessons from them. Simultaneously, we are required to carry out all commitments to be done with firm resolution, pure

motives and unswerving morals, starting from the time of changing into the New Year.

For the emergence of a prosperous and modern Federal Democratic Union—the common aspiration of all nationalities living in the Union—I hereby want to urge our national brethren to cast away our doubts, vengeful thoughts, pride and egos, to join hand in hand with each other in unity in building up our Union with renewed spirits and strength.

I wish all of you—Myanmar citizens, a peaceful and prosperous life, as of 2017.



Mahn Win Khaing Than, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw.

## U Myo Kyaw, Member of CEC, Rakhine National Party

IN the time of the new government that we believe in, I'd like to urge the people to cooperate with the government in the new year for achieving peace, democracy and federal affairs. Only then will the wishes of the people be fulfilled. I wish all the people of the country physical and mental well-being.



U Myo Kyaw, Member of the Central Executive Committee, Rakhine National Party.

## Sai Kyaw Nyunt, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy



Sai Kyaw Nyunt, Shan Nationalities League for Democracy.

I wish peace shines in the east, west, south and north directions of Myanmar and the people of the country enjoy comfortable livelihoods in the year 2017.

## Daw Dwe Bu, Unity and Democracy Party (Kachin State)

I wish all Myanmar citizens peace, which has been desired by all, development based on friendship of all national races in Myanmar and a democratic trend.



Daw Dwe Bu, Unity and Democracy Party (Kachin State).

## Saw Say Wah, General Secretary Kayin People's Party

I wish for the country to achieve eternal peace and development in the New Year. I wish the civil war an end and the recovery of the socio-economic status of the people in the New Year. I wish for all people to walk on the path toward democracy as the country achieves eternal peace in 2017.



Saw Say Wah, General Secretary Kayin People's Party.

## U Than Htay, Chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party

The first day of the New Year 2017 is an auspicious day. We are determined to join hands with the people with our willingness to help people, our intellectual strength and unity based on our nature to serve people wherever we are. It is necessary to work in the interests of the people practically. I wish all people in Myanmar liberty, justice and socio-economic development in the New Year.



U Than Htay, Chairman of the Union Solidarity and Development Party.

# New Year Admonitory Message of Bhamo Sayadaw



**Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabivamsa**

THE 2017 New Year, that is, 1378-79 ME, is upon us. On this auspicious occasion, our prayers will be recited. A series of groups

of universes is called an infinite or boundless universe. In these universes reside human beings, gods and Brahmas, the same as the beings in the four nether worlds. If the four nether worlds, one human world, six celestial worlds and 20 Brahma worlds are added, we have 31 worlds in the universe. These 31 worlds abound with beings. We need to send our loving kindness to all beings in these 31 worlds, praying for their health, peace and prosperity so that they can be safe and free from dangers. As a boomerang effect, we will be able to enjoy health, peace and prosperity.

And, only the Lord Buddha, being the most sophisticated one

in the whole series of universe, knows that there are infinite universes. We must abide by the Buddha's teachings. If we do wholesome deeds, we will be reborn in happy abodes. On the other hand, if we commit unwholesome deeds, our next destinations after death will be the nether worlds. Hence, we, all Buddhists nationwide and worldwide, need to take refuge in the Triple Gems — Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha — and to keep ourselves moral and pure from ill will.

I hereby pray for all beings to be wealthy, healthy, peaceful and free from all dangers.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## The unity will become a force to make our country prosper and able to defend against any danger encountered

WE need not worry about the rehabilitation of our country because of the unity of Four Great Forces. Much as we face great dangers, we will be able to resist them so long as we have the Four Great Forces in defending our nation from any dangers or threats. Our Lord Buddha says unity will bring about happiness and prosperity. Failing that, prosperity and progress cannot be achieved.

Becoming the Buddha-hood brings about the prosperity into the world, but if there exists disunity among Sanghas, the Teachings of the Buddha will never be propagated.

Although we say Buddha's Teachings give peace, we cannot achieve peace if there is disunity among us listening to Buddha's Preaching.

People, Sangha, the State Government and the Tatmataw — the Four Groups that devoutly believe in the truth of Buddha and Dhamma — will move in unity helping each other, like a



**Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nan-nisara.**

tetrapod with four legs, and our country will never get into trouble.

Instead, the unity will become a force to make our country prosper and able to defend against any danger encountered. For this, I wish you all can perform your respective responsibilities in unity in the New Year.—*Myanmar News Agency*



**Rector Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nanda Mala Bivamsa.**

**To achieve the greatest blessing, there are necessary qualifications such as strong belief, morality, knowledge, unselfishness and farsightedness.**

### Dr Bhaddanta Nanda Mala Bivamsa, International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University

FOR the year 2017, I wish Mingalar, or greatest blessings, for the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Auspiciousness or greatest blessing (Mingalar) means genuine progress. To achieve the greatest blessing, there are neces-

sary qualifications such as strong belief, morality, knowledge, unselfishness and farsightedness. All the people of Myanmar are urged to strive for the year 2017 to become the year with greatest blessings.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## New Year messages of religious leaders



**U Aye Lwin.**



**Samuels.**



**U Tun Nyein.**



**Rev. Mahn San Thein Tun.**



**John Saw Yaw Han.**



**U San Win.**

**Ye Khoun Ngunt,  
Photo :Zaw Min Latt**

### Rev. Mahn San Thein Tun, Archbishop of Myanmar Baptist Christian Church

As Jesus Christ protected us in all 2016, we are now ushering in 2017. In our faith, each and every New Year is planned by Jesus. It means that we are born again with new concepts.

A new year is a time when we leave all sins and troubles behind and we pray for peace, stability and happiness for mankind in 2017.

### John Saw Yaw Han, Assistant Archbishop

I wish all citizens of Myanmar mental and physical peace, equality and human rights.

It is our responsibility to exert effort for the prosperity and development of the country. If all of us contribute something to the development and prosperity of our country, Myanmar will emerge as a peaceful country in the world. I would like to invite all citizens to participate in the efforts.

### Haj U Aye Lwin, member of interfaith group

As old bad things will be

replaced with better new things in the New Year, I would like to give a gift of words from Quorum, "As long as you cannot change yourself, then God will never change your life. It means that one who is desirous of change is required to change oneself, including one's ideas and actions. Then Myanmar will be able to usher in a better new year.

I wish all national races of different religions the ability to express the real beauty of Myanmar, which is unity in diversity.  
**Samuels, the Head of Jewish Community in Yangon**

I wish all people of different religious faiths and races in Myanmar friendship and coexistence forever.

### U Tun Nyein, All Myanmar Hindu Federation

I would like to wish all people of different religions and races in Myanmar brotherhood.

### U San Win, All Myanmar Bahá'í Faith Organization

I would like to wish all Myanmar citizens physical and mental well-being. It is our desire to improve the world as a whole. It is also important how to make that happen. Our organisation wishes you all a better world.

## Crime NEWS

### Stimulants seized in Kengtung and Heho Townships

MEMBERS of anti-narcotic suppression unit 25 from Taunggyi searched a vehicle driven by Zaw Htay together with Ma Saw Mu Win and Ye Lwin Oo aboard the vehicle and seized 40,919 stimulant tablets at Bawathanthayar Bridge of milepost No. 98 near Heho Township on the Taunggyi-Meiktila road, Taunggyi Township on 30 December.

Similarly, an anti-narcotic suppression squad from Kengtung searched Arr Hu at a farm and seized 634 stimulant tablets from him near Naung Woe Petrol road, pump on the Kengtung-Tachilek, Kengtung Township. Police have filed charges against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. —*Myanmar News Agency*



Zaw Htay, Saw Mu Win and Ye Lwin Oo with drugs. PHOTO: MPF

### Over 18 tonnes of illegal timber confiscated in Pauk township

THE authorities confiscated illegal timber weighing over 18 tonnes in Pauk township, Magway region, it is learnt from forestry department.

"We found illegal timber when we were conducting area cleaning operation. We seized timber from two places on Thursday," said U Nyein Chan, an officer of forestry department.

The seized 18 tonnes of timber are teak, Inngyin, Htauk Kyant and Thin Wun. Those timber will be managed according to the forestry law. The illegal timber was mostly seized in Pauk township. There are illegal timber weighing nearly 70 tonnes seized within one week of December. —*Myitmakha News Agency*



Authorities are inspecting illegal timber. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

### More than 4 million methamphetamine pills seized at sea



Thar Tun, Khin Hla and Thein Nyunt. PHOTO: MNA

THE Myanmar navy arrested three drug traffickers and seized more than 4 million methamphetamine pills on Friday while on patrol.

Security forces found Thar Tun, 37, Khin Hla, 27, and Thein Nyunt, 25, together with 4.3 mil-

lion methamphetamine pills in 18 bags.

The naval ship signaled for the boat that was travelling north west of May Yu Island in Rakhine State to stop and fired warning shot as the boat attempted to escape.

The naval ship intercepted the boat at around 10:30 pm.

The drug traffickers and the seized narcotics have been handed over to the police and measures are being taken to take action against them. — *Myanmar News Agency*

### Head of 100-households of Gwazone village beaten and abducted by an armed group

ON his way to the village Gwazone (middle) on business, Annar Mular, a head of 100-households of the village of Gwazone, was beaten by a group of six

people armed with sticks, knives and other weapons and abducted on to the May Yu range in the east of the village, tied with rope.

As regards this case security forces are making arrangements to take legal action against those who abducted. — *Myanmar News Agency*

### Two injured when car crashes into tea shop

TWO people were injured when a car crashed into an Al Fresco tea shop at Kaw San Naing Ward, Kyaikhto township, Mon state on Friday, it is learnt.

"The driver was drunk and so he lost control of his vehicle and hit the tea shop. The driver and a waiter sustained minor in-

juries in the accident," said Police Inspector Zaw Myo Lwin from Kyaikhto Myoma Police Station.

The vehicle was en route to Mawlamyine from Yangon driven by Nay Myo Aung, 49, of Hmawby township when it crashed into the tea shop as the driver was allegedly under the

influence of alcohol.

The vehicle also hit So Ko, 21, a waiter, and another vehicle.

The injured are undergoing medical treatment at the Kyai-khto general hospital. The driver has been charged under section 279/338 of the Penal Code. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

### Drug dependents will be helped to quit habit of drug abuse

THE drug dependents who want to stop abusing illegal drugs in Kayin state will be helped by the Hpa-an hospital, Kayin state Police command and Myanmar Anti-narcotics Association (MANA).

"There are currently over 30 patients normally receiving methadone therapy in our hospital. But, the patients are not coming of their own will. Their parents forcibly took them to the hospital when they were in serious condition, said Dr. Sai Kyaw Kham Maung, in charge

of mental health ward, Hpa-an Hospital.

The number of drug addicts has been on the rise, and so police have had to arrest the drug abusers who failed to register with the health department.

"We will have responsibility if we cannot send a drug dependent who wants to receive the methadone therapy.

On the other hand, there are weaknesses in amending the law. Currently, there is not enough space to keep the prisoners in the correctional facilities.

The Kayin minister granted a plot of land for the drug abusers to receive the methadone therapy, said Police Col Kyi Lin from Kayin state police command.

A short-term training course for the methadone therapy will be conducted for the doctors from seven townships. At the training, the doctors will be given the guideline for the remedy.

The authorities have planned to open similar drug treatment centers in other townships in Kayin state. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

### Over Ks 95 million will be spent to renovate the school and supply electricity

MANDALAY region government will spend Ks 95.55 million to renovate the village primary school and supply the electricity for two villages, it is learnt.

"The project is expected to complete in 2016-2017 FY,"

said U Myint Soe, the representative from regional Hluttaw Pyawbwe township.

"The regional Hluttaw representatives are taking the responsibility as chairmen to supervise the project," said U Myint Soe.

The primary school will be built at Thabyay village, Pyawbwe township at a cost of Ks 21.6 million. Also, the electricity supply will spend Ks 12.9 million at Paw Inn village and Ks 46.05 million at Twin village.

"We just have to discuss the project condition. We don't need to instruct the company. But, we have to go and observe when they start the project.

We also have to inform the ministry concerned if the

company overestimates, said U Aye Cho, chairman of National League for Democracy in Pyawbwe township. The Pyawbwe Thar construction was chosen to build the primary school at Thabyay village. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

# No space for Hong Kong independence, China says

BEIJING — There is no space for Hong Kong independence in the “one country, two systems” agreement under which Beijing governs the former British colony, but there can be tolerance for differences in their systems, a senior Chinese official said.

Chinese leaders are increasingly concerned about a fledgling independence movement in Hong Kong, which returned to mainland rule in 1997 with a promise of autonomy known as “one country, two systems”, and recent protests in the city.

The head of China’s Hong Kong Macau Affairs Office, Wang Guangya, told pro-Beijing Hong Kong magazine *The Bauhinia* that “under ‘one country, two systems’ there is absolutely no space for ‘Hong Kong independence’”, in comments carried in the ruling Communist Party’s *People’s Daily* on Saturday.

“Hong Kong is an inseparable part of the country, and in no situation is ‘Hong Kong independence’



allowed. This is a bottom line that cannot be touched in ‘one country, two systems’,” Wang said.

As “one country, two systems” is new, it has no ready-made experience to draw from, and it’s normal that in this process “new situations, new problems and new challenges” will arise, he added. “You can’t expect it to be all plain sailing,” Wang said.

“The central government has confidence in and patience with Hong Kong. As long as the ‘one country’ principle is not damaged, the differences in the ‘two systems’ absolutely can be tolerated and respected,” he added.

China’s parliament last month staged a rare interpretation of the Basic Law, Hong Kong’s mini-constitution, to effectively bar

pro-independence city lawmakers from taking office there.

In separate comments from the same interview reported by the official Xinhua news agency late Friday, Wang said the interpretation did not harm the independence of Hong Kong’s legal system, but that independence could not limit the Chinese parliament’s ability to interpret the Basic Law.

“It needs to be pointed out that the independence of the legal system is an important principle of the rule of law in Hong Kong, and the central government has always cherished and protected the independence of Hong Kong’s legal system.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping told outgoing Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying last week that China’s central government strongly supports efforts by the Hong Kong government to curb moves by some promoting independence for the global financial hub.

Hong Kong returned to China under the “one country, two systems” agreement that ensured its freedoms and wide-ranging autonomy, including a separate legal system.

But Communist Party rulers in Beijing have ultimate control, and some Hong Kong people are concerned they are increasingly interfering to head off dissent.—Reuters

## Japan proposed holding 3-way summit with China, South Korea in February

TOKYO — Japan has proposed to China and South Korea that they hold a postponed trilateral summit in February in Tokyo, diplomatic sources said Saturday.

Seoul, likely to be represented by acting president and Prime Minister Hwang Kyo Ahn, is willing to hold the summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Chinese Premier Li Keqiang as proposed while China has not clarified its position on the matter, the sources said.

The Japanese government sounded China and South Korea out on holding the leaders’ meeting around Feb. 10 in mid-December shortly after South Korea’s President Park Geun Hye was stripped of her powers following a vote by legislators to impeach the president over a corruption and abuse-of-power scandal, the sources said.—Kyodo News

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# Indonesia warns airline after videos appear to show intoxicated pilot

JAKARTA — Indonesian authorities have issued a warning to airline PT Citilink Indonesia after videos circulated appearing to show an intoxicated pilot from the low-cost carrier going through security and then sounding incoherent on the aircraft’s public address system.

Citilink, which is a unit of national carrier PT Garuda Indonesia, said that the company had fired the pilot after a 28 December incident at Surabaya airport ahead of a flight to Jakarta and that two executives had offered to resign.

The pilot was replaced before the flight proceeded, according to a company statement.

Fary Djemi Francis, who heads a parliamentary commission overseeing transportation, said that the airline had been asked to investigate whether the pilot had been on drugs.

“Second, we also ask Citilink’s management to sanction the pilot who went on board the aircraft without going through the briefing room, missing checks on his fitness to fly,” Francis said.

The transportation ministry had sent a warning letter to Citilink and called for



A Citilink Airbus A320 approaches for a landing at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport in Jakarta, in 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

an internal investigation after finding that health checks and other procedures had not been followed according to regulations, said ministry spokesman Bambang S Ervan.

Citilink did not name the pilot but said in a statement that it had fired him after he had “ignored the flight safety and security procedures which could potentially endanger the security and safety of passengers and other crew members.”

Chief Executive Albert Burhan and operations director, Hadinoto Soedigno, had also offered to resign over the incident, Citilink

spokesman Benny Butarbutar said on Saturday.

The spokesman said the resignations would require the approval of shareholders.

“We would never mess around when it concerns the condition of a flight, let alone experiment with passenger safety,” Butarbutar said.

The widely circulated videos have caused alarm in Indonesia, which has had a patchy air safety record.

One appears to be CCTV footage of an unsteady pilot going through security, and the other appears to be shot on a phone

and shows a pilot remonstrating in slurred speech with other staff members in the plane’s cockpit that he was able to fly.

Reuters could not authenticate the videos and Citilink did not comment directly on them.

Indonesia has been trying to improve safety in its airline sector after a series of accidents. For a while, some carriers were barred from flying to the European Union and some other markets over safety concerns.

Citilink operates 34 aircraft, conducting 184 flights daily, the company’s website said.—Reuters

# Modi defends bank note move as Indians line up for cash

NEW DELHI — Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday defended his decision to withdraw high denomination bank notes from circulation, as a deadline to end severe cash shortages passed with Indians still queuing at banks to deposit savings and withdraw money.

Modi abolished 500 and 1,000 rupee bills on 8 November, taking out 86 per cent of cash in circulation, in a bid to fight corruption, end terror financing and turn India into a cashless society.

The move, however, caused a major cash crunch as the government struggled to replace old notes with new 500 and 2,000 rupee bills. Modi had asked for 50 days, until the end of this month, to ease the crisis.

Speaking in New Delhi at the launch of a digital payment app linked with a nationwide biometric database, Modi exhorted Indians to reduce their dependence on cash.

“The world is surprised to see the way we’ve overcome the challenge after 86 per cent of cash was withdrawn,” Modi said.

He is expected to address the nation on New Year’s Eve to further talk about so-called “demonetisation”.

While cash shortages have

eased somewhat, bankers and analysts said the situation is far from normal and could last at least another six months. They said the move could hit economic growth and lead to job losses and a drop in demand for goods.

Only 35-40 per cent of ATM machines were dispensing cash, according to Ramaswamy Venkatachalam, managing director, India

and South Asia, Fidelity Information Services, a banking technology provider.

The government has put a weekly cap on how much an individual can withdraw from an account at 24,000 rupees, but many banks were only handing out 10-15,000 rupees to clients because they did not have enough cash to go around, said Harvinder Singh, general secretary of All India Bank Officers’ Association, which represents nearly 300,000 bankers.

Singh said ATM operations were unlikely to be normal before the end of February.

“I’m here to deposit a few old notes before the deadline expires,” said Rakesh Kumar, lining up outside a bank in New Delhi.

“But I expect the government

and RBI (central bank) to quickly replenish banks and ATMs with new notes so that we can withdraw without any trouble.”

Modi’s radical decision is turning into a test of his popularity, and is already a central issue in Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state, where the outcome of state elections early next year will be key for Modi’s expected bid for a second term in 2019. The cash shortages have started to make some allies and members of his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party anxious, with some distancing themselves from the move.

The opposition, led by the Congress party, has joined forces, mocking the government for being ill-prepared and blaming it for hardships faced by the poor as a result. It has called for Modi’s resignation.

“In the last 50 days, the people have been put (through) enormous hardship and suffering,” said P. Chidambaram, a senior leader from opposition Congress party and former finance minister.

“Altogether, the whole exercise has been a case of total mismanagement, administrative collapse and widespread corruption,” Chidambaram added, accusing the government of taking the decision in haste.—Reuters



People queue outside the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to exchange their old high denomination bank notes as a security personnel stands guard, in New Delhi, India, on 30 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Japan declined to join G-7 nations in condemning Russia over Syria

TOKYO — Japan declined calls for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to join Western leaders in condemning Russia earlier this month over the Syrian civil war, fearing doing so would negatively affect his impending summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, diplomatic sources said Friday.

Japan’s dissociation from that action despite its role this year as chair of the Group of Seven industrialized nations has drawn criticism that Tokyo put its interests ahead of the humanitarian crisis in the Syrian city of Aleppo and damaged G-7 solidarity.

In a statement issued on 7 December, the leaders of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Canada and the United States called for an immediate cease-fire in Aleppo, and condemned the Syrian government for its attacks and Russia, the chief backer of Syria,

for blocking humanitarian aid.

It also called on the United Nations to investigate reports of alleged war crimes and to gather evidence to hold perpetrators responsible, while singling out Russia for preventing the UN Security Council from working effectively to end atrocities in Aleppo.

Sources close to the G-7 said that with the exception of Japan, the leaders of its member countries including US President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel backed the statement. Several days before its release, their governments also sounded out the Japanese government about Abe endorsing the statement, but Tokyo declined, they said.

One diplomatic source expressed disappointment over Japan’s stance, saying Abe’s absence made what should have been a G-7 statement a Group of

Six statement. The source also wondered whether the other G-7 nations might balk at supporting a statement blaming China for its activities in the South China Sea should the need for such a statement arise.

The statement was issued just days before Putin arrived in Japan for a summit to discuss a long-running territorial dispute and economic cooperation between Japan and Russia.

“We held consultations over this at the Foreign Ministry and the prime minister’s office after we were asked to join the statement through Germany,” a high-level Japanese government official said.

“We picked Russia over Europe and the United States this time around, determining that even if Japan added its name (to the statement), it would not have a major impact on the Syrian civil war.”—Kyodo News

## Top China coal province vows 20 per cent cut in pollution by 2020 — Xinhua

SHANGHAI — One of China’s top coal-producing provinces has vowed to slash its level of fine particle pollution by one-fifth by 2020, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Saturday, citing the provincial government.

China has adopted various measures from policing barbecues to halting industrial production in efforts to ease the yearly winter haze that hit the country earlier this month leaving cities veiled in foul-smelling smog.

China’s northern Shanxi province aims to increase the proportion of days per year with good air quality to 75.4 per cent, the agency said.

The move comes after concentrations of PM2.5, fine particulate matter, in a major northern

Chinese city exceeded a World Health Organisation guideline by 100 times in December.

The province will create a pollutant discharge license system covering all polluting enterprises, while industrial capacity expansion will be restricted and no new coal, steel, cement or plate glass projects will be approved, it added.

By the end of 2017 all coal-fired plants of 300,000 KW and above will be upgraded to produce fewer emissions, Xinhua said. But under its five-year plan for the coal sector, the state planner said it was targeting national coal output of 3.9 billion tonnes in 2020, up from 3.75 billion tonnes in 2015, even as it attempts to tackle pollution.—Reuters



A worker operates a vehicle at a coal mine on the outskirts of Xiaoyi, China’s Shanxi Province, on 3 August 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Mine waste collapse kills 10, traps dozens in eastern India

NEW DELHI — As many as 10 miners were killed when a huge mining waste heap collapsed at a coalfield in India’s eastern state of Jharkhand on Thursday night, a state police official con-

firmed Friday.

“So far 10 dead bodies have been taken out...more miners are feared trapped, and rescue work is still on to rescue them,” the official said.

The mine is located in the state’s Godda district. According to the official, mining waste piled up near a mine suddenly caved in, trapping dozens of workers.—Kyodo News

# Threat of New Year attack in US low but ‘undeniable’ — agencies

WASHINGTON — US defence and security agencies said they believed the threat of militant attacks inside the United States was low during this New Year’s holiday, yet some chance of an attack was “undeniable,” according to security assessments reviewed on Friday.

“There are no indications of specific threats to the US Homeland,” said a “situational awareness” bulletin issued to US Army personnel this week by the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command. “However the threat

from homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) in the United States is undeniable,” the bulletin added.

A copy of the bulletin was seen by Reuters on Friday.

A senior US official familiar with government-wide analyses of New Year’s holiday attack threats said the Army assessments were consistent with those of other US security and intelligence agencies.

Some specific threats have come to the attention of government agencies, but were not considered credible, said the senior

US official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

A separate bulletin, issued by the US Army Criminal Investigation Command and headlined, “New Year’s Day Celebration Threat Assessment,” rated the overall threat of attacks against US Army installations and personnel as “moderate.”

The command’s intelligence operations centre received “no reporting of specific or credible threats targeting US Army installations or its personnel for the upcoming 2017 New Year’s cel-

ebration,” said the bulletin, a copy of which also was made available to Reuters.

The assessment, however, noted that two recent issues of Rumiya, an Islamic State propaganda publication, did “provide information on conducting knife attacks and using vehicles to cause mass casualties in populated areas.”

Such tactics were used in recent attacks on civilians in Nice, France, and in Columbus, Ohio, said the bulletin. It did not mention the 19 December truck attack

on a Christmas Market in the German capital, Berlin.

An update to the Army’s Training and Doctrine Command bulletin said that 100 “blocker vehicles” and 7,000 police officers — 1,000 more than were deployed last year would be stationed at Times Square on Saturday night.

Pentagon officials did not immediately respond to requests for comments on the threat assessments. The US army said it did not discuss “internal threat warnings or security posture”, according to a spokesman.—Reuters

## Russians leave country retreats in the US, ordered out by Obama

CENTREVILLE, (Md.)/UPPER BROOKVILLE, (N.Y.) — In small convoys of vehicles, Russians departed two countryside vacation retreats outside Washington and New York City without fanfare on Friday, ordered out by US President Barack Obama who said the premises were linked to spying.

The Russians were given until noon ET (1700 GMT) on Friday to vacate the compounds in Centreville, Maryland, and in Upper Brookville on Long Island in New York state. By early afternoon, trucks, buses and black sedans with diplomatic licence plates had left.

“The premises have been vacated and it’s under control of the government,” Elliot Conway, the mayor of Upper Brookville, told reporters soon after noon, when a total of six vehicles had driven away from the Russian com-

pound there.

“They’ve been quiet neighbours,” Conway said, adding he had never met anyone who lived at the estate set in rolling countryside about 25 miles (40 km) from Manhattan.

In Maryland, about a dozen vehicles left the sprawling waterfront estate, watched by officials from the US State Department. Some passengers smiled and waved as they rode away from the compound, which is located in a wooded farm area with winding narrow roads.

Obama abruptly ordered the closures on Thursday, saying the compounds had been “used by Russian personnel for intelligence-related purposes.” It was part of his response, including the expulsion of 35 suspected Russian spies, to what US officials have called cyber interference by Moscow in the 2016 US presi-

dential election campaign. The Kremlin has denied the hacking allegations.

The closures echoed the old days of tensions between the United States and the former Soviet Union.

When Soviet officials bought compound in Centreville to be used as a country retreat for diplomats posted to Washington, it rattled residents of the bayside Maryland town. It was 1972, in the deep chill of the Cold War.

People were suspicious of the Soviets and “thought they were spies ... It was the folklore of Centreville,” said Joe Dawkins, who works locally in agriculture. The Federal Bureau of Investigation kept an office in Centreville for a time, residents said. The FBI office closed years ago, they said, and over time neighbours in this community of about 4,500 people got used to



Vehicles enter Killenworth, an estate built in 1913 for George du Pont Pratt and purchased by the former Soviet Union in the 1950’s, in Glen Cove, Long Island, New York, US, on 30 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Russian-accented officials shopping at the liquor store, hunting nearby and dining at a popular Irish pub, O’Shucks.

The Russian government maintained the compound after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Property records show the Russian government owns an estate on Town Point Lane in

Centreville valued at \$8 million for tax purposes.

The 45-acre (20-hectare) estate includes a Georgian-style brick mansion, tennis courts and smaller cottages. It sits on the banks of the Corsica and Chester Rivers, where the locals like to fish, harvest oysters and hunt geese.—Reuters

## European cities ramp up security for New Year after Berlin attack

BERLIN/PARIS — European capitals tightened security on Friday ahead of New Year’s celebrations, erecting concrete barriers in city centers and boosting

police numbers after the Islamic State attack in Berlin last week that killed 12 people.

In the German capital, police closed the Pariser Platz square in

front of the Brandenburg Gate and prepared to deploy 1,700 extra officers, many along a party strip where armored cars will flank concrete barriers blocking

off the area.

“Every measure is being taken to prevent a possible attack,” Berlin police spokesman Thomas Neuendorf told Reuters TV. Some police officers would carry sub-machine guns, he said, an unusual tactic for German police.

Last week’s attack in Berlin, in which a Tunisian man plowed a truck into a Christmas market, has prompted German lawmakers to call for tougher security measures.

In Milan, where police shot the man dead, security checks were set up around the main square. Trucks were banned from the centers of Rome and Naples. Police and soldiers cradled machine guns outside tourists sites including Rome’s Colosseum.

Madrid plans to deploy an extra 1,600 police on the New Year weekend. For the second year running, access to the city’s central Puerta del Sol square, where revellers traditionally gather to bring in the New Year, will be restricted to 25,000 people, with police setting up barri-

cades to control access.

In Cologne in western Germany, where hundreds of women were sexually assaulted and robbed outside the central train station on New Year’s Eve last year, police have installed new video surveillance cameras to monitor the station square.

The attacks in Cologne, where police said the suspects were mainly of North African and Arab appearance, fueled criticism of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s decision to accept nearly 900,000 migrants last year.

The Berlin attack has intensified that criticism.

In Frankfurt, home to the European Central Bank and Germany’s biggest airport, more than 600 police officers will be on duty on New Year’s Eve, twice as many as in 2015.

In Brussels, where Islamist suicide bombers killed 16 people and injured more than 150 in March, the mayor was reviewing whether to cancel New Year fireworks, but decided this week that they would go ahead.—Reuters



Armed French soldiers patrol at the Louvre Museum as emergency security measures continue ahead of New Year’s eve celebrations in and around the French capital, in Paris, France, On 30 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Opinion

## Write for us

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

## Contemplation of the Middle Path

Editorial from the Mirror Daily (Kyemon) dated 31st December 2016

Translated by Khin Maung Oo

**J**UST prior to His "Parinibbana" (final entry into Nibbana) Lord Buddha addressed His disciples, "I leave with you My last words—every impermanent thing is subject to dissolution. So, you need to contemplate impermanence and suffering on true nature of Mind and Matter with unceasing mindfulness."

All things, physical and mental have the nature of coming into existence and ceasing to exist. Nothing is permanent. Cessation comes just after existence. In the teachings of Buddha, it is said that if we meditate on suffering and impermanence consciously, real peacefulness will be attained.

We, lay people, enjoy ourselves with sensual pleasures without knowing nor understanding impermanence and sufferings. Thus we torture ourselves while living a life of pain and misery. So, our Lord Buddha teaches us that the Middle Path is free from errors. If we follow the middle path, we will gain the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths and experience peace.

The Middle Path constitutes the Noble Eightfold Paths--Right Understanding, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Today is the ultimate day of a year. Time ceases every

second, swallowing a year. In the last year we are savoring luxuries, torturing ourselves, without ruminating on sufferings and impermanence.

Tomorrow, we will leave the old year to move into the new one. Today—the present time will be left in the past. We can assess how many good deeds we have done for ourselves and our world. We are the very ones who know the best about us, as to whether we did wholesome deeds or not.

We should not hold a care-free attitude that time is very long. Looking back into the past will make us notice time is short. Several decades and events in those days are being remembered in our minds.

Hence, we should exert our efforts for the betterment of our lives, societies and country, in the remaining part of our lives.

By taking lessons from our mistakes in the past, we should follow the Eightfold Noble Path which leads us to Nibbana with mindfulness. Failing that, it is just a matter of time before you meet suffering and destruction.

The old year is going to end and the New Year will usher in Leaving evil deeds in the past without carrying them into the New Year, we call upon all of you to make good efforts with good discipline either for yourselves or for the nation, walking along the Middle Path.

## Old and New, Embrace the Year Mindfully and Positively

Oxford Sayadaw Venerable Prof. K. Dhammasami DPhil (Oxford)

**P**EOPLE welcome the New Year in different ways. Some simply dance away the last day of the old year under the influence of alcohol while some reflect on the past year mainly lamenting the shortcomings and vowing to remedy them with some New Year resolutions. Others get carried away by the excitement of the festive season, often associated with holiday or shopping. Yet, still there are people who fear the coming year simply because they cannot leave the shadow of the old year behind.

I believe there needs to be a balanced view in the way we say goodbye to the old year and welcome to the new one. And, a balanced outlook can only be achieved when we are able to see the past year objectively. Objectively! The word is used often in many debates and its frequent use threatens to awash us with complacency. Here, by objective I mean we need to take into consideration both the joys and dis-

appointments of the past twelve months and manage them in a stable way.

Looking only at the shortcomings of the past cannot be objective nor balanced, especially psychologically. By thinking only of the failure of the past we promote negative outlook in our long term memory. Memories are mostly associated with emotion, which means our long term memory stores not just negative outlook but also negative emotion. With such a habit repeated year after year, it is difficult for people to summon their positive energy at the time of need. As neurologists and psychologists at Wisconsin University and other top universities in the United States of America and United Kingdom who compare the brains of the meditators and non-meditators have found the emotion influences neurons in the brain, which in turn commands the nerve system in the whole body.

Positive emotion helps the brain to rewire itself to improve its own function, and according to this new finding summed up in the newly discovered neuro plasticity theory, positive neurons can help the body to heal

itself.

This means to heal to disappointments of the past we have to start with something positive. This is to say that we have to first celebrate and rejoice in the good part of the old year. One needs to revisit the many positive moments of the last twelve months and to do so mindfully. By revisiting them often and mindfully, one ensures those good times have a place in the long term memory. Here, one also needs to revisit the good work of family members in the past year and should even extend this joyful exercise to friends and others. In Pali Buddhist tradition, this is one of the many reflective meditation practices and is called anussati.

This simple, yet crucial point is often ignored or taken lightly. Many are not capable of genuinely feeling joyful for the successful or beneficial work their past year has had. Except through excitement, they would not know how to relate to the bright side of the recent past. Once the excitement fades away, there is almost no emotional connection with their good work.

With no positive energy ha-

bitually present in the long term memory, negative emotion and outlook may be the only force dominant in the memory of the past year. That will certainly shape how one prepares for the coming one. This is not a statement that one should ignore the shortcomings of the past year. Rather, one should start from a positive note even when one has to confront the reality of the downside in life. I emphasize the positive emotion and outlook because people normally have a more powerful negative energy and less so for the positive one.

Here, I wish to mention a tradition of how people relate to each other in the Theravada Buddhist practice of eastern Shan State, Union of Myanmar. There is Pali formula which people recite, especially when meeting the seniors. The formula may be roughly translated this way: I greet you with respect. Forgive me if you see my shortcoming; do also rejoice in the good work I do. I do celebrate your good work as well.

The short formula contain a balanced approach to emotion management, addressing both negative and positive points in

oneself; and when it comes to the other, it draws attention to their good side because we are usually aware of other people's fault only, not their bright side.

I believe if we have this balanced emotion approach, then we can confidently reconcile with the disappointments from the old year and look to the New Year with a heart no longer in pain resulted from the imbalanced emotion and outlook. With our own heart at peace, we are better prepared to make the most of the Year 2017.

Myanmar and the world need peace. World peace begins with peace in our own heart. This individual peace may not be considered great in terms of scale and its immediate impact; however, if we take care of ourselves to ensure a balanced and healthy emotion, we shall be doing a small job in a great way, for without individual peace there can be no other peace around.

May all of us be able to help each other to find peace in our own heart.

With positive emotion and outlook, may we be able to say goodbye to the old year and to welcome the New Year.

## New Year message of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing

TODAY ushers in 2017 with the end of 2016, which saw many significant events, including the assumption of State power by the Union Government led by the National League for Democracy, which won the general election. The Tatmadaw has been cooperating with the Union Government for the success of the transition period.

The Tatmadaw has restored stability by sacrificing lives, blood and sweat as stability was undermined in some parts of Kachin State, Northeastern Shan State and Northern Rakhine State and people suffered from loss of lives and property due to armed groups.

The Tatmadaw acted in ac-



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

cordance with its duty to protect the sovereignty of the State and the lives and property of the people and to prevent the detrimental

functions of the union government. It can also be seen that the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong was also convened in 2016 and was made a success thanks to the cooperation of the entire nation.

In 2017, the Tatmadaw is determined to exert efforts to maintain the stability of the State and national development and for the emergence of a democratic federal union. I would like to request the people to continue to cooperate with the Tatmadaw in its efforts.

I would also like to urge the people to cooperate with the Tatmadaw for the national development and wish all physical and mental health.—*C-in-C Office*

## December mass walk activity held in Taungoo

THE last week of December mass walking activity was held in Taungoo yesterday morning.

Over 2,000 participants — including Regional Hluttaw Representatives U Moe Ma Kha

and U Aye Min Win, Taungoo District Administrator U Aung Soe Moe, township administrator and departmental staff and students from Nursing Training School and Midwife Training School — took part in the activity as they started walking from Min Gyi Nyo Statue.

The activity was concluded at the District Sport Ground (Maidan ground). Upon arrival at the sport ground, they performed physical fitness exercises.

At the end of the event, the District Sport and Physical Education Department arranged the lucky draw programme for participants.—*Shwe Win (Pyay)*



Participants gathering to start the mass walking activity. PHOTO: SHWE WIN (PYAY)

## Wishing a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all

### Arakan Sein

My next-door neighbour gave us a Christmas gift of assorted cakes on 25th December, 2016, saying “Merry Christmas to you, uncle!. My prompt reply ‘Same to you, young girl! She doesn’t know me, nor do I. I was overwhelmed with great joy because the gift conveys a lot of meanings during this joyous moment: love, joy, happiness, peace, success, etc. After all, the excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value. My thoughts went beyond this small gift to reflection and compassion of Christianity.

Every year people from across the world, Christian or non-Christian, celebrate Christmas feast with different ways in different countries.

A shortened form of Christ’s mass, the word ‘Christmas’ is popularly known throughout the world and falls on 25th December of every year.

The Christmas Day is cel-

ebrated with full joy and cheers because Jesus Christ’s was born on this auspicious day. It is a worldwide festival, with Christians congregating at churches and spending more time than regular days; all other people have observed holiday on the day of Christmas. It is a delightful time to cherish with your family and friends, especially children eagerly waiting for Christmas to receive gifts and play around and elders enjoying holidays by just sitting and relaxing. It is also a great moment for spending some time with your near and dear ones by letting them know you care about them. Most young people attend for dinner and will drink alcohol and the lighting fireworks until midnight to mark the New Year. The ultimate goal of everyone is to party hard and enjoy the New Year beginning with large celebrations.

In this year Pope Francis paid tribute to Middle East Christians who have clung to their faith during persecution by Islamic militants. The Pope

spoke to thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square for his holiday blessing on the feast of St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Mother Teresa, one of the most influential women in the Roman Catholic Church’ 2000-year history, was canonized by Pope Francis in front of St. Peter’s basilica just 19 years after her death although many of the Church’s 10,000 saints had to wait centuries before their elevation.

In addition, most of the Christmas quotes mentioned below will delight you and I hope you will put them into practice in the coming New Year.

Christmas is the gentlest, loveliest festival of the revolving year—and yet, for all that. When it speaks, its voice has strong authority. — W.J. Cameron Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful. — Norman Vincent Peale May peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through! —Author un-

known Forgive? Forget? What? It’s Christmas time so, whatever it was. Forget about it. Merry Christmas Happy New Year 2017: It is the time change our old calendar with the new one which is completely filled with the new beginnings, new expectations and new memories. New year is actually celebrated by everyone across the world with great fun and joy. A New Year will begin with the calendar’s count which increments the year by one. The Day is one but many cultures around the world celebrate the new in their own ways but the ultimate thing all will require is happiness and fun for the whole year. Mostly the New year is celebrated as per the Gregorian Calendar which falls on the first January of every year.

It is celebrated by participating in social gatherings and some parties near to their place. Everyone has their own unique style in celebrating the New Year which plays a vital role in the beginning of the Year. Many people have fun by meeting their

family, friends, relatives or their loved ones and partying together. Hereunder are mentioned some quotes to your delights and practice.

May the magic and the wonder of the holiday season stay with you throughout the coming year. Warmest thoughts and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. Best wishes for a happy New Year filled with health, happiness and spectacular success.

Here in our country most important thing people really want is to achieve a genuine peace throughout the country for progress, prosperity and stability for future developments in order to catch with the changing times. I sincerely hope the year 2017 will see the genuine peace initiated by the former government and continued with great efforts by the present government by praying for the achievement of that very peace from this joy time of a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

\*\*\*\*\*



### POEM:

## Say ‘Hi’ 2017

- \* Did thou accept nice cheer  
Goodbye melody of previous year  
Be encouraging, Oh my Dear !
- \* Each light and dark  
That like tenderness so much  
Waking the world up  
why not thee refreshness start ?
- \* Seasons dutifully share  
Multi-tastes everywhere  
Sweet, sour and bitter  
Hot, acrid and salty  
Do try them wishfully.
- \* As two beauties good and bad  
preach The Noble Truth as yet  
To the earth  
To the waters  
To the atmosphere  
Come out from worldly usage first  
Hold my hands smart  
Say ‘Hi’ 2017 with thy heart.

*Yin Nwe Ko (Linn)*



German Chancellor Angela Merkel. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Merkel says Islamist terrorism is biggest test for Germany

BERLIN — Islamist terrorism is the biggest test facing Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday in a New Year's address to the nation, and she vowed to introduce laws that improve security after a deadly attack before Christmas in Berlin. Describing 2016 as a year that gave many the impression that the world had "turned upside down," Merkel urged Germans to forsake populism and said Germany had an interest in taking a leading role in addressing the many challenges facing the European Union. "Many attach to 2016 the feeling that the world had turned upside down or that what for long had been held as an achievement is now being questioned. The European Union for example," Merkel said.

"Or equally parliamentary democracy, which allegedly is not caring for the interests of the citizens but is only serving the interests of a few. What a distortion," she said in a veiled reference to claims by the far-right party Alternative for Germany (AfD) that is stealing votes from her conservatives. Liberals across the Atlantic have hailed Merkel

as an anchor of stability and reason in a year that saw the Donald Trump elected as US president, Britain vote to leave the EU and US-Russia relations deteriorate to Cold War levels.

She compared Brexit to a "deep incision" and said that even though the EU was "slow and arduous", its member states should focus on common interests that transcend national benefits.

"And, yes, Europe should focus on what can really be better than the national state," Merkel said. "But we Germans should never be led to believe that each could have a better future by going it alone."

It was her second allusion to the populist AfD, which wants Germany to leave the EU and shut its borders to asylum seekers, more than one million of whom arrived in the country this year and last.

The record number of migrants has hurt Merkel's popularity and fuelled support for the AfD, which says Islam is incompatible with the German constitution. But her conservatives are still expected to win the general election in nine months.—Reuters

## A letter of clarification by Ambassador of Poland

### 1. The proposed regulations regarding the work carried out by journalists in the Sejm

- Until now, the presence of the media in the Polish Parliament was not regulated by concrete and clear-cut provisions that allow for work to be carried out in a professional manner by both parliamentarians and journalists. At present, the entire communication process takes place in chaotic, seemingly random, conditions that are not congruent to the seriousness of the place and the issues dealt with by the parliament.

- The proposed changes will increase the comfort, safety and professionalism of the work of both journalists and politicians, and they will contribute to improving the image of the Sejm and the Senate. A Media Centre will be established — as is the case in other parliaments, which will apply the latest technological solutions enabling a full service (briefings, conferences, live coverage, etc.) with regards to events taking place in the Sejm and the Senate. Changes regarding how the work of journalists is organized are modelled on solutions already in existence in Europe: in Italy, France, the European Parliament in Brussels, the Czech Republic and elsewhere.

- The proposed changes include the appointment of Permanent Parliamentary Correspondents by each editorial outlet, who will receive special passes, guaranteeing unlimited access to the Media Centre and the main building of the Sejm and the Senate. At the same time, important events in the parliament (including sessions of the National Assembly, exhibitions, special conferences) will be eligible for wider media coverage.

In view of the situation that took place on Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, a meeting took place between Senate Speaker Stanislaw Karczewski and representatives of media outlets, another meeting on the organization of the work of journalists in the parliament will be held on Monday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. The Senate Speaker said that he would present a package of proposals for discussion. He added that PiS intends to facilitate the work of journalists and improve their working conditions. The Senate Speaker also assured that at no point did anyone want to restrict journalists' access to important political events taking place in the Sejm and the Senate.

**2. Description of the events in the Sejm on December 16th**  
PO MP Michel Szczerba was excluded from the session on the decision of the Marshal of the Sejm after he provocatively came to the podium with a card that read "Free media in the Parliament" during the vote on the draft budget. Szczerba then placed the card on the podium and spoke on the proposed amendments regarding journalist activity in the Sejm. The blockade of the plenary hall by opposition MPs, which occurred after the exclusion of the PO MP, and the obstruction of continued work on, among other things, the draft State Budget for 2017 and a law on the removal of former Communist secret police operatives, was a violation

of the law and security in the House. In such cases, the Marshal of the Sejm has — in accordance with the Rules of the Sejm — the obligation to respond. Article 10, paragraph 1, point 13 of the Rules of the Sejm states that the "Marshal of the Sejm oversees peace and order within the grounds belonging to the Sejm. The Marshal of the Sejm also orders, if necessary, the use of the Marshal's Guard".

- At the Council of Elders, the Marshal of the Sejm first asked the heads of parliamentary groups to enable proceedings to take place in the plenary hall. In the absence of a response, Marek Kuchciński made the decision to move the venue of the meeting to the Column Hall, which the MPs were informed of in advance. Art. 10, paragraph 1, point 3 of the Rules of the Sejm authorizes the Marshal to convene meetings and to determine their time and place. The relocation of the parliamentary session to Column Hall is not a precedent, for example the 73<sup>rd</sup> parliamentary session of the Sixth Sejm also took place in the Column Hall, on August 12<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Due to the existing conditions, the Marshal of the Sejm decided, pursuant to Art. 188, paragraph 3 of the Rules of the Sejm, to order the vote by a show of hands and for the votes to be counted by parliamentary secretaries. The results of all the votes clearly showed that they were carried out in accordance with the constitutional quorum.

- This situation was met with a disproportionate and asymmetrical protest, prepared in advance by the opposition. Perhaps it was

designed to destabilise the political situation in the country.

- In a special statement, Prime Minister Beata Szydło said that government has a duty to take care of its citizens and the state. She assured that the government fully complies with this obligation. She indicated that the situation caused by the opposition, based on extreme political emotions, has nothing to do with the actual condition of our country, and that it is a result of the helplessness and frustration of those who lost power and those who lack ideas to win over the Polish people.

- Premier Minister Szydło appealed for responsibility, which is a joint responsibility. She also said that despite the barriers and existing prejudice one needs to talk, it is never too late to get back on track and follow the path of dialogue in the name of something that should unite people unconditionally, that is Polish national interest,

- On Sunday, President Andrzej Duda met with representatives of the opposition. He appealed to all sides of the political scene to calm tensions, so that the work of the parliament can take place smoothly, in a civilized manner and with due seriousness — in accordance with the principles of parliamentary democracy.

- The President expressed his deep regret that the situation associated with changes in regulations for journalists has been used by part of the opposition as an excuse to disrupt the proceedings of the Sejm. He said that we have witnessed behaviour that is hardly worthy of parliamentarians.

### THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE ( INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER )

( 17 / 2016 )

Open tenders are invited for supply of the following respective items in United States Dollars.

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-075(16-17)	Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) for Gas Coalescing Filter (22,680)	US\$ KG
(2)	IFB-076(16-17)	Spares for Mack Truck (17) Items	US\$
(3)	IFB-077(16-17)	Spares for Mitsubishi 8DC8 1A Engine Ex Mitsubishi Fuso Bowser (26) Items	US\$
(4)	IFB-078(16-17)	Spares for CAT D 379 Engine (45) Items	US\$
Tender Closing Date & Time		-	19-1-2017, 16:30 Hr

Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 30<sup>TH</sup> December, 2016 at the Finance Department, Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise, No(44) Complex, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise  
Ph . +95 67 - 411206 / 411274

## Syria rebels: ceasefire 'void' if government violations persist

BEIRUT — Syrian rebel groups said on Saturday they would consider a ceasefire deal brokered by Russia and Turkey "null and void" if the Damascus government's forces and their allies continued to violate it.

Russia, which supports Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, has urged the United Nations to give its blessing to the fragile ceasefire, the third truce this year seeking to end nearly six years of war

in Syria.

Clashes and air strikes have persisted in some areas since the ceasefire began on Friday, though the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a monitoring group, said on Saturday the truce was still largely holding.

"Continued violations by the regime and bombardment and attempts to attack areas under the control of the revolutionary factions will make the agreement null and void,"

a statement signed by a number of rebel groups said.

It said government forces and their allies had been trying to press advances, particularly in an area northwest of Damascus.

Russia and Turkey, which backs the armed opposition to Assad, brokered the ceasefire agreement in the hope of preparing the way for peace talks in Kazakhstan in the new year.—Reuters



## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

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

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

YGN TO CAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-012	07:00	11:30	7	
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6	
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5	

YGN TO SIN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily	
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily	
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5	
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily	
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6	
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2	
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily	
3K-582	11:35	16:05	1,3,4,5,6,7	
TR-2823	9:45	2:15	1,2,4,5,6,7	
UB-001	7:30	11:45	Daily	

YGN TO NRT				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
NH-814	22:10	06:45	Daily	

BANGKOK TO YANGON				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily	
TG-2351	10:10	11:00	1,5,6,7	
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily	
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily	
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily	
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily	
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily	
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily	
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily	
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily	
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5	
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily	
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6,7	

DMK TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-251	7:15	8:00	Daily	
FD-255	11:35	12:25	Daily	
FD-253	16:20	17:05	Daily	
FD-257	20:15	21:10	Daily	
DD-4234	10:30	11:15	Daily	
DD-4230	6:30	7:15	Daily	
DD-4238	19:25	20:15	Daily	
SL-200	08:45	10:00	Daily	
SL-206	17:10	18:35	Daily	

CAN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-012	12:30	15:45	7	
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6	
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5	

SIN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-232	13:40	15:15	Daily	
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily	
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6	
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily	
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5	
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2	
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily	
3K-581	09:10	10:40	1,3,4,5,6,7	
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,6,7	
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily	

NRT TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
NH-813	11:00	16:30	Daily	

YGN TO ICN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KE-472	23:30	7:50	Daily	

YGN TO KUL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
AK-505	8:30	12:45	Daily	
AK-503	19:10	23:30	Daily	
8M-501	16:00	20:15	2	
8M-501	11:45	15:45	1	
MH-741	11:15	15:40	Daily	
MH-743	16:00	20:15	1,4,6,7	

YGN TO KMG				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-416	12:30	16:00	Daily	
MU-2032	15:30	18:50	Daily	
MU-2012	12:55	19:55	3	

YGN TO TPE				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CI-7916	10:50	16:10	Daily	

YGN TO PEK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	3,7	

YGN TO HAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-956	19:10	21:35	Daily	

YGN TO SGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-942	12:10	14:55	2,3,4,5,7	

YGN TO HKG				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KA-251	1:05	5:25	Daily	
UB-8027	09:00	13:30	1,3,5,7	

YGN TO DOH				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,4,6	

YGN TO CNX				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-724	13:40	15:35	Daily	

YGN TO DAC				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
BG-061	16:45	18:30	1,3,6	

MDL TO DMK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-245	12:55	15:15	Daily	

ICN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KE-471	18:30	22:30	Daily	

KUL TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
AK-504	6:55	8:00	Daily	
AK-502	17:20	18:30	Daily	
8M-502	16:45	17:45	1	
8M-502	21:10	22:10	2	
MH-742	13:55	15:05	1,4,6,7	
MH-740	09:10	10:15	Daily	

KMG TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily	
MU-2031	14:00	14:30	Daily	
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3	

TPE TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CI-7915	7:00	9:50	Daily	

PEK TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-905	19:30	22:50	3,5	

HAN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-957	16:40	18:10	Daily	

SGN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-943	9:25	11:10	2,3,4,5,7	

HKG TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
KA-250	21:50	23:45	1,3,5,7	
KA-252	22:20	00:10	2,4,6	
UB-8028	14:50	16:20	1,3,5,7	

DOH TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-918	20:10	5:20	3,5,6	

CNX TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-723	12:00	12:55	Daily	

DAC TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
BG-060	13:30	16:00	1,3,6	

DMK TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-244	11:10	12:25	Daily	



## INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

# Grandparents who help care for grandchildren live longer than other seniors

LONDON — Grandparents who help out occasionally with childcare or provide support to others in their community tend to live longer than seniors who do not care for other people, according to a study from Berlin, Germany.

Having full-time custody of grandchildren can have a negative effect on health, but occasional helping can be beneficial for seniors, the researchers write in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*.

“Having no contact with grandchildren at all can negatively impact the health of grandparents,” said lead author Sonja Hilbrand, doctoral student in the de-

partment of psychology at the University of Basel in Switzerland.

“This link could be a mechanism deeply rooted in our evolutionary past when help with childcare was crucial for the survival of the human species,” Hilbrand told Reuters Health by email.

The findings are drawn from data on more than 500 people over age 70 in the Berlin Aging Study.

The participants completed interviews and medical tests every two years between 1990 and 2009.

The researchers did not include any grandparents who were the primary caregivers for their grandchil-

dren, only those who cared for grandchildren occasionally.

The study team compared this group with seniors who provided support for non-family members, such as friends or neighbors, and seniors who did not provide any care to other people.

Overall, after accounting for grandparents' age and general state of health, the risk of dying over a 20-year period was one-third lower for grandparents who cared for their grandchildren, compared with grandparents who did not provide any childcare.

Half of the grandparents who cared for grandchildren were still alive ten

years after the initial interview. The same was true for participants who did not have grandchildren but supported their adult children in some way, such as helping with housework.

In contrast, about half of the participants who did not help others died within five years of the start of the study.

Caregiving was linked with longer life even when the care recipient wasn't a relative. Half of all childless seniors who provided support to friends or neighbours lived for seven years after the study began, whereas non-helpers lived for four years on average.

“Caregiving may give

caregivers a purpose of life because caregivers may feel useful for the others and for the society,” said Bruno Arpino, an associate professor at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain who was not involved in the study.

“Caregiving may be thought also as an activity that (keeps) caregivers physically and mentally active,” Arpino said by email, adding that previous studies suggest that caregiving may improve cognitive functioning, mental and physical health.

Arpino noted, however, that caregiving is not the only activity that can improve health, and too many

caring responsibilities can take away from other beneficial activities like working, being in social clubs, or volunteering.

“Children should take into (consideration) their parents' needs, willingness and desires and agree with them on the timing and amount of childcare,” Arpino suggested.

“It is very important that every individual decides for him/herself, what ‘moderate amounts of help’ means,” Hilbrand said, adding, “As long as you do not feel stressed about the intensity of help you provide you may be doing something good for others as well as for yourself.”—*Reuters*

## Catalan independence referendum ‘not possible’

MADRID — Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy on Friday flatly rejected the possibility of a referendum in the northeastern region of Catalonia on a split from Spain, telling pro-independence politicians to desist from attempts to hold one next year.

The regional Catalan government has said it will hold a referendum on secession before September 2017, with or without consent from the central government, although they would prefer a consensual vote like the one Scotland held in 2014. Scots voted

to remain part of the United Kingdom.

“It is not possible to hold a referendum that will do away with national sovereignty and the equality of Spaniards,” Rajoy told a year-end news conference, adding he was open to talks over other issues but the

law was clear that a referendum was illegal.

“This is not going anywhere, I’m offering something which is a lot more reasonable — dialogue,” Rajoy said. “I ask that no more steps are taken in the opposite direction.”—*Reuters*

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Dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017 lmm@kcyangon.com

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MV IVS KINGLET VOY. NO (5)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV IVS KINGLET VOY. NO (5) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P.L 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 TOKO KAIUN KAISHA LTD.**  
Phone No: 2301191, 2301178

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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 NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES**  
Phone No: 2301185

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.1.2017 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 REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES**  
Phone No: 2301185

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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**  
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### Mr Leo Gasser

**59 years**

Mr Leo Gasser, son of Mr Hans Gasser (Deceased) and Mrs Marion Gasser of Switzerland and the beloved husband of Norma Tun Shwe, passed away peacefully at home at 3:40 am on 30 December, 2016.

**Norma Tun Shwe and Family**

### Sundee Soe Thwin (Teacher Sundee) (Age-40)

Loving daughter of U Khin Maung Thwin and (Teacher Marjorie), youngest sister of Teacher Mi Mi, (U Mg Mg Thwin), U Nyi Nyi Thwin and U Thiha Soe Thwin, loving niece of Teacher Irene, Daw Yee Yee Thein, Daw Ni Ni and Teacher Mar Mar, loving cousin of U Yan Naing Soe and Teacher Haymar, was called to her heavenly home on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and was cremated in the presence of her pastor and her family on the same day.

Praise and Worship Service to celebrate the life of Sundee Soe Thwin will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at U Naw Church, (115) Anawratha Road, Latha Township, at 3:00 pm in the afternoon. All family and friends of Teacher Sundee are respectfully invited to attend the worship ceremony.

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# Tips from Spain's centenarians on how to live to 100



Maximino San Miguel, 102, holds a picture of himself when he was young as he poses for a portrait in a park near his home in Leon, northern Spain, on 3 September 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

CANGAS DE ONIS, (Spain) — With more than 100,000 people aged 100 or over, Spain is the country with the greatest life expectancy after Japan, OECD data and the latest population census shows.

Over a year, Reuters photographer Andrea Comas interviewed and photographed Spaniards aged 100 or more across the country from the green-hilled northern region of Asturias to the Balearic island of Menorca.

Average life expectancy at birth in Spain is 83.2, according to the latest OECD statistics made available in 2013, just a shade below the 83.4 years on average a Japanese newborn can expect to live.

Most of the men and women Comas interviewed showed a zest for life and an interest in pastimes from amateur dramatics to playing the piano. Many also continued to carry out daily duties from farm work to caring for a disabled child.

Pedro Rodriguez, 106, plays the piano every day in the living room of his flat in Asturias, north-

ern Spain, where he lives with his wife who is nearly 20 years younger than him. Their daughters visit them often.

"The nuns taught me how to play the piano as a child," he said after giving a rendition of a Spanish waltz.

The majority of these elderly people were surrounded by family or had loved ones calling in on them daily showing how Spain continues to be a closely-knit society, where family ties are paramount.

Francisco Nunez, 112, is the oldest person Comas interviewed. He lives with his octogenarian daughter in his house in Badajoz, south-western Spain. He says he doesn't like the pensioners' day-care centre because it's full of old people.

"He hasn't had to leave his home. I'm single and I live here with him," says daughter Maria Antonia Nunez, 81, as she adjusts his beret.

When questioned about their most vivid memories, many recall Spain's 1936 to 1939 civil war which set neighbour against

neighbour and resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths followed by the 36-year dictatorship of Francisco Franco.

Pilar Fernandez, 101, suffered hunger and hardship during the war years alongside her nine brothers and sisters. To avoid history repeating itself, she limited herself to one child.

"From pure fear, I didn't have any more," says the sprightly woman who lives with her daughter's family in Asturias and tends livestock and a vegetable garden.

Tips for long life ranged from a spoonful of honey a day to regular intake of gazpacho, a traditional cold Spanish soup made from tomatoes and cucumbers.

Gumersindo Cubo, 101, from Avila, puts his longevity down to a childhood spent in a house in the woods with his eight brothers and sisters, where his father was a park ranger.

"It's from inhaling the pine resin from the woods where I lived as a child," he says, telling of how his mother would put a jar of the resin under the bed of the sick.—Reuters

## Wedding vows a blessing for clean-up of filthy Indonesian river

JAKARTA — Only a year ago, this stretch of the Ciliwung river in Indonesia's capital was foul-smelling and clogged by a thick layer of floating plastic and other trash.

Now, after a clean-up involving hundreds of volunteers, the river hosted a wedding ceremony for a young couple who grew up on its banks in a bid to inspire others to help preserve Indonesia's fragile environment.

"We have shown our love for our language, culture, now we should start to show our love for the environment," said the groom, Novanto Rahman. His bride, Sandra Fidelia Novianti, is a volunteer for the Depok Ciliwung Community that launched the clean-up with the local government in 2015.

The couple made their wedding vows on an inflatable boat decorated with flowers that was paddled down the Ciliwung on 18 December, something that previously would have been impossible due to the piles of trash in the water.

The Ciliwung, which runs more than 100 km (60 miles) from its source in West Java to Jakarta bay, has played an important role in the livelihood of the city since the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Despite the dire water quality, poorer communities living by the river have used its water

to wash clothes and shower.

The Ciliwung, however, became a dumping ground for trash and barely able to flow into Jakarta bay. This contributed to flooding on the swampy plain of greater Jakarta, which has sunk 4 meters (13 feet) over the past three decades.

Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama has relocated some illegal settlements along its banks in a bid to allow the river to flow.

The founder of the Depok Ciliwung Community, Taufiq Deso, said he hoped community help in cleaning up the river would focus the city government's attention on the problem.

About 4,000 city workers retrieve trash from 13 rivers and hundreds of canals zig-zagging through the city of 10 million people, according to Jakarta's Sanitation Department.

Even though there has been a reduction in surface trash on the Ciliwung, an environmentalist said better enforcement of existing laws against polluters was needed to improve water quality.

"Despite evidence that showed a few companies are guilty of releasing waste into the river, these companies are still able to continue their operations," said Dwi Sawung of the Indonesian Forum for the Environment.—Reuters

## UK Olympic athletes, Posh Spice and Andy Murray honoured in Queen's New Year List

LONDON — Olympic athlete Mo Farah, tennis star Andy Murray, actor Mark Rylance, comedian Ken Dodd and Kinks musician Ray Davies have been knighted in Queen Elizabeth's New Year's Honours List.

Spice Girl and designer Victoria Beckham was awarded an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) while other fashion notables included Anna Wintour editor-in-chief of "American Vogue" and accessories designer, Anya Hindmarch.

The biannual honours list is released on the Queen's official birthday in June and at the end of each year.

It celebrates those who have made significant contributions to British life as well as providing public recognition for exceptional achievements or service.

Many British sporting stars of the 2016 Rio Olympics and Paralympics were recognised including damehoods for athlete Jessica Ennis-Hill who retired after the games and rower Katherine Grainger, the first female Olympian to win five medals at five games.

Sir Roger Bannister, the first man to run a mile in under four minutes in 1954 was made a Companion of Honour, one of the Queen's highest awards.

David Adjaye received a knight bachelor award. His most recent project was the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. while Turner



Victoria Beckham. PHOTO: REUTERS

Prize-winning painter Chris Ofili received a CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire).

A host of diplomats and ambassadors were also recognised for their exceptional services to Britain overseas.

Not all the recipients were household names, 74 per cent of people were recognised for carrying out outstanding works in their local communities, while just over half the recipients were women. The Queen honoured 1,197 people in total.

Entrepreneur Josh Littlejohn, co-founder of "Social Bite" a sandwich shop that supports the homeless and whose customers have included George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio, was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire).

One of the oldest recipients was 94-year-old Janet Gillespie who received a British Empire Medal for her charitable service, voluntarily selling commemorative poppies for over 60 years.—Reuters



# New Year Wish



The chairman and board of directors  
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the entire mass of Myanmar citizens  
physical and mental well-being on  
this auspicious occasion of  
the New Year of 2017.



The chairman and board of directors of  
Kanbawza Bank Limited

# Late Barkley goal earns Everton a point at Hull

LONDON — England midfielder Ross Barkley headed a late leveller to salvage a 2-2 draw for Everton at Hull City in the Premier League on Friday.

Barkley headed the ball home in the 84<sup>th</sup> minute from left back Leighton Baines' cross after Robert Snodgrass had put Hull ahead with a superb free kick into the top corner 19 minutes earlier.

Defender Michael Dawson had given Hull an early lead when he scored from Curtis Davies' flicked pass in the sixth minute but an own goal by home keeper David Marshall at a corner gifted Everton an equaliser on the stroke of halftime.

Hull, who had lost five of their previous seven matches, climbed to second from bottom in the table with 13 points from 19 matches. Everton are seventh with 27 points, 19 shy of leaders Chelsea.

City manager Mike Phelan refused to criticise Marshall for his own goal.

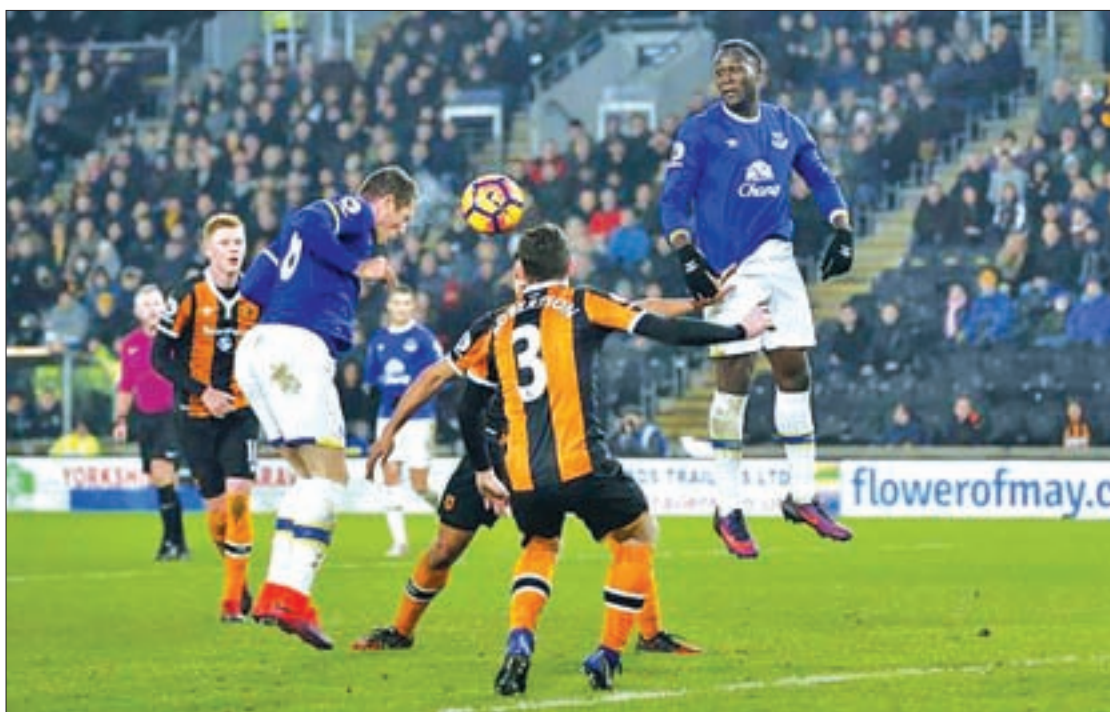
"Mistakes happen," said Phelan. "In the second half he pulled off a couple of important saves.

"I think it's a terrific point. We produced a battling performance and I'm pleased with the players. We are in a battle for the rest of the season but we're up for it." Everton manager Ronald Koeman praised his team's battling qualities.

"I'm really pleased with our performance," said the Dutchman. "I wasn't happy with our slow start but we showed a really good attitude and reaction twice.

"We played good football and created a lot of opportunities. We keep the momentum after the win against Leicester — two away games and four points is good."

—Reuters



Everton's Ross Barkley scores their second goal during Premier League at The Kingston Communications Stadium on 30 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Murray loses season opener to Goffin in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI — World number one Andy Murray started his new season with a surprise 7-6(4) 6-4 loss to David Goffin in the semi-finals of the Mubadala World Tennis Championship in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

After losing the opening set at the year-ending exhibition event, Murray, twice winner of the tournament, recovered to go

3-2 up in the second set but Goffin broke back twice and held serve to progress to the final.

Goffin will face either Milos Raonic or Rafael Nadal in Saturday's final, with Murray, who lost just nine matches in his entire 2016 season, up against the loser of the semi-final.

Murray ended the year at the top of the men's rankings for the first time having won titles

including Wimbledon, the Rio Olympics and the ATP World Tour Finals.

Because the Abu Dhabi tournament is classed as an exhibition event, the 29-year-old Briton will carry his 24-match winning streak into the Qatar Open in Doha as he builds towards his push for a first Australian Open title next month.

—Reuters



Britain's Andy Murray returns the ball against David Goffin of Belgium, in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 30 December 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Serena lands in New Zealand ahead of season opener

AUCKLAND — Newly-engaged Serena Williams touched down in Auckland on Friday and quickly made her way to the court to hit some balls ahead of the start of her 2017 season.

The 22-times grand slam singles champion announced her engagement on Thursday to Alexis Ohanian, co-founder of the social media company Reddit, who accompanied her to New Zealand for the ASB Classic which starts on Thursday. American Williams, 35, is top seed for the tournament, a warm-up event for the Australian Open grand slam later in Janu-

ary, and she was whisked through a crowded airport, telling reporters she was excited to be in New Zealand for the first time.

"It's fun to go to new places," the world number two said.

Serena's older sister Venus is also competing in Auckland, an event she won in 2015, and said she was delighted to hear about her sibling's engagement.

Serena said it was unlikely the duo, who have won 14 grand slam doubles titles together, would team up to play in New Zealand.

"Probably not. I wish, we will see," Serena said.—Reuters

## Woods gets 'at least one win' next year, says Begay

NEW YORK — Tiger Woods celebrated his 41st birthday on Friday and long-time friend and fellow professional Notah Begay III predicts he will have more to celebrate in a triumphant return to the PGA Tour in 2017.

Though Woods has competed only once over the past 16 months due to chronic back problems that required multiple surgeries, Begay was encouraged by that solitary tournament appearance earlier this month in the Bahamas.

Woods made his long anticipated return at the Hero World Challenge which he hosts and despite delivering mixed form he ended the week with a tournament-high aggregate of 24 birdies.

"I don't think anybody in the inner circle, including Tiger, could have been happier," Begay told Reuters about Woods' per-

formance in the elite, limited-field event. "There was a lot of curiosity around what was going to happen, what his swing was going to look like ... how his mind was going to adjust to the tournament environment because it's just so different, you can't recreate that focus in practice.

"For him to go out and make more birdies than anybody else in the field after being on the shelf for 15 months was quite remarkable. He's seeing some definite returns on the time that he's put in with regard to his recovery."

Woods has already committed to playing in the PGA Tour's Genesis Open at Riviera Country Club from 16-19 February and is also expected to tee it up three weeks earlier in the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines.—Reuters