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## Investigators continue field trips in Rakhine

THE Investigation Commission on Rakhine State, which is on its second round of field trips to northern Rakhine, visited Norula Village and Alethanyaw Village in Maungtaw yesterday morning.

The chairman Vice President U Myint Swe and members of the commission, accompanied by Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Soe and officials, visited the scene of an ambush by six violent attackers on motorbikes at the police outpost in Norula Village, where police repelled the attack by sacrificing a police officer and seizing a pistol and three motorcycles from the attackers. Witnesses of the attack were interviewed yesterday.

Later, the Vice President and the commission met with residents at the post-primary school in the village. The residents told the commission that they had to flee the village as violent attackers approached. They promised to cooperate with others for the security of the village and surrounding villages. They said they had received adequate supplies from the Union Government. The residents interviewed said that they had never seen security forces commit violence against local women.

After it was explained to them, the residents also said they were willing to accept the National Verification Card (NVC) programme of the Union Government and were desirous of freedom of travel to other areas.

The Vice President said that he wanted to urge parents to send their children to school as teachers were ready to resume classes and to tell any organization and any media to tell the truth without worries. The Vice President also promised immediate issuance of NVC cards and told them that



Vice President U Myint Swe talks to police officers at Norula police outpost during the visit to conflict areas in northern Rakhine. PHOTO: MNA

there would be no restrictions on travel and religious activities before encouraging them to report to authorities for transportation difficulties.

Meanwhile, commission members Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin and Daw Kyaing Ngai Man interviewed women in the village at the school exclusively and separately and were told that they had never experienced violence against them.

Later, the commission chairman and members met with locals at the high school of Alethanyaw

Village and asked them to talk about their difficulties for food, shelter, clothing, education and health. The residents told the commission that they had never seen violence and requested that the authorities arrange for their fishing activities.

The Vice President was pleased with the questions and requests of the residents and said that the commission would be able to decide what to do correctly thanks to the questions and requests. He also pledged to solve any other problems.

Arrangements are underway to explain the process of the NVC as many residents could not understand it.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu also said that he would like to urge local residents to tell the truth about the incidents they had experienced so that regional stability could be restored. The Chief Minister also said that measures have been taken for safe fishery operations for local fishermen and trawlers.

At the same time, commission members Dr Daw Thet Thet

Zin and Daw Kyaing Ngai Man interviewed women in the village separately and they told the commission that no women and children in the village experienced abuse against them.

Then, the Vice President met with members of border guards and their families at No. 4 Border Guard Police Headquarters and provided food. The Chief of the Myanmar Police Force Police Maj-Gen Zaw Win also provided edible oil to the members and families of the border guards.—  
*Myanmar News Agency*

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Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meeting with villagers in northern Rakhine. PHOTO: MNA

## Villagers in northern Rakhine receive aid, cash

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement delivered aid to villages in northern Rakhine on Friday which had been affected by the armed attacks in October and November last year.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye, along with Rakhine State authorities, delivered food worth more than K10 million to people in ten villages in Maungtau Township.

During the visit, the Union

minister made arrangements for providing health care services to the people and assisted them to send their children to universities.

At a meeting with locals, Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye pledged to give humanitarian assistance to all areas which were affected by the violent attacks.

The humanitarian aid team also provided cash assistance to pregnant women and mothers during the visit.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## 23 members of KKO splinter group turn in arms, ammunition to Tatmadaw

TWENTY-THREE members of the Klohtoobaw Karen Organization (KKO) splinter group of Saw

Hsan Aung returned to the legal fold bringing along with them arms and ammunition to Hlaing-

bwe Township, Kayin State, yesterday.

The group led by Soe Soe contacted the Tatmadaw column performing area clearance operation at 10 am yesterday. They brought eight assorted weapons, 149 rounds of bullets, eight magazines, three bombs and seven mines. They were warmly welcomed by officials concerned from the local Tatmadaw column.

They said they did not accept the attitudes of the Saw Hsan Aung splinter group, that wanted them to live peacefully abandoning the armed line, that they had come to realise true attitudes of the government and Tatmadaw towards the indigenous people and that, they, therefore, returned to the legal side, it is learnt.—*Myanmar News Agency*



23 members of KKO splinter group of Saw Hsan Aung are seen after they returned to the legal fold. PHOTO: MNA

## Four suspects arrested for involvement in Kyikanpyin border outpost attack in October in northern Rakhine

FOUR men were arrested yesterday on suspicion of involving in violent attacks to a border outpost in Kyikanpyin in northern Rakhine in October.

Acting on a tip-off that the suspects were sheltering in Myitnar Village around 2.30 pm yesterday, the security forces carried out an area clearance operation in the village and arrested Bawni Arm and Marmauk Bweyar who involved in the attacks and Abdullah Kein who financed the attackers.

Similarly, members of the Myanmar Police Force and local authorities arrested Mamud



The four suspects for violent attacks in October last year are seen. PHOTO: STATE COUNSELLOR'S OFFICE INFORMATION COMMITTEE

Rawphi from Kyatyopyin Village.

The suspects would be handed over to a local police station for further interrogations.

The security forces are carrying out the area clearance operations in the township.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Police recruit training course graduation ceremony held

POLICE recruit training course No 291/2016 graduation ceremony was held at the parade ground of No. 2 Police Training School at 7:00 am yesterday.

Police colonel Myo Min

Htike, commander of Bago Regional Police Force, addressed the graduation ceremony, and awarded the outstanding prizes to the award-winning cadets.

There were 218 recruits attending the training course.

Senior police officers, trainers, recruits and their relatives attended the graduation ceremony.—*Police Information*

## Third coordination meeting on organizing Myanmar Democracy Week Film Festival held



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint addresses third coordination meeting on organising the Third Myanmar Democracy Week Film Festival. PHOTO: MNA

THE third coordination meeting on organising the Third Myanmar Democracy Week Film Festival was held at the meeting hall of the Myanmar Radio and Television in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint highlighted the need to find stories and select from them before writing scripts, finding

directors, performers and producers.

Officials of the Myanmar Motion Pictures Association participated in the meeting and reported to the union minister on the formation of a committee for selection of stories and the difficulties in shooting the films.

The union minister attended to the needs for the festival.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Saturday-Sunday Yangon Books Street opened

UNDER the ministry of Information's literature development programme, the Saturday-Sunday Yangon Books Street was opened in front of the Central Press, Printing and Publishing Department on Theinphyu street, Yangon at 9:00 am yesterday.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint, chairman of Myanmar publishers and distributors' association Dr Thar

Tun Oo and chairman of Yangon Books Street supervision committee U Nay Myo Nyunt cut the ribbon to formally open the ceremony.

Next union minister and guests visited the book stalls opened on the books street.

Yangon books street which has over 100 book shops will sell the books from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm on every weekend until April.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects safety measures along Yangon-Mandalay Expressway

CHAIRMAN of the National Road Safety Council Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspected the measures taken for reduction of traffic and road accidents along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway.

The Vice President, accompanied by Deputy Ministers Maj-Gen Aung Soe and U Kyaw Myo, arrived at C Junction in Nay Pyi Taw at 6:30 pm yesterday morning and heard reports on measures taken for responses to road and traffic accidents, construction of recreation centres along the expressway and expansion of the expressway for reduction of accidents. The officer-in-charge of the expressway reported on raising funds for road and traffic safety and inspection of vehicles in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw.

The Vice President said that the major cause of traffic accidents is speeding, and it has been



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects the measures taken for reduction of traffic and road accidents along the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. PHOTO: MNA

discovered that the number of traffic accidents has decreased dramatically as speed limits have been imposed and pointed out that it is necessary to set up signboards for road safety along the expressway.

In conclusion, the Vice

President highlighted the need to replant trees on the road divider and on both sides of the road properly before expansion as a pilot project for the upgrading.

Later, the Vice President visited the traffic control centre

at the junction of Yangon-Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw expressways and inspected functions of the centre for traffic safety.

Afterwards, the vice president proceeded to the site of road paving between mile-posts 163 and 173.

Measures are being taken by the National Road Safety Council and the Ministry of Transport and Communications through monitoring vehicles registered in the entire country and radio frequency identification system.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Myanmar is starting a great journey of hope in terms of democracy, socio-economic development: Bredan Rogers

*Exclusive Interview with Ireland Ambassador HE Bredan Rogers*



Ireland Ambassador HE Mr. Bredan Rogers.

**Q:** How's your visit to Myanmar?

**A:** I enjoy every visit to Myanmar. This is my fourth visit. I presented my credentials to your president in April. This visit is to enjoy your 69th Independence celebration in Nay Pyi Taw.

We in Ireland always extend a hundred thousand welcome to visitors. A hundred thousand welcomes were extended to me on all my visits to Myanmar.

I am getting to know your beautiful country. I am getting to know a little bit of troubles meeting your leaders, meeting your people and meeting your civil society and business leaders and I am becoming very familiar with your wonderful country. And I hope over the year I will be the non-resident ambassador to Myanmar and I hope I can strengthen and deepen relations between both of our countries.

We have a very similar history. In 1922, Ireland celebrated a hundred years of independence. I hope the peoples of the two countries will get to know each other in a much better way, in deepening ways. Over the coming years, in

culture, in politics, in business we want to see peoples of both of our countries extend business relationships. I want to see lots of our people will visit your country and I hope lots of your people visit my country.

**Q:** Ireland is one of the EU member countries, and followed a non-aligned foreign policy and a longstanding policy of military neutrality. Ireland is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Please tell us the role of Ireland in EU and United Nations peace-keeping missions.

**A:** Ireland joined the European Union 1973. I have seen my country transform. We liberalised and reformed the economy. Now Ireland is one of the wealthiest countries in the world with a per capita income of over \$50,000 per head. In 1962, 1963, our per capita income was \$1,500 per head. One of the reasons for transformation was joining the European Union. When we joined with other countries in the EU, we ensured that we can sell to those markets. The EU also assists us to build up infrastructures and gives us opportunities to partake fully as a member of the union. We also contribute to the European Union as well. I believe, and people of my country believe, we must not build walls between nations. We must join with nations. This is a global economy. We play a role in the European Union in extending influence for peace building and increasing global trade. Ireland is a small and neutral country with 5 million people. Our country was born in conflicts. Our country was born in violence. We have a long history. We overcame all of those

issues and played a role internationally. We joined the United Nations in 1955. Since that time we adopted a strong policy for the nuclear non-proliferation and that is the keystone for us in ensuring the peaceful resolution of disputes. We've played a major role in the United Nations peacekeeping. Many members of the Irish Defence Force lost their life in peacekeeping operations. We've been involved in peacekeeping operations in Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, in the Middle East. We have a history of bringing peace. We used our small voice. A small voice is very important in the United Nations system. That's why we are very great supporter of the multilateral system. you have ASEAN. We have EU. Both of us are members of the United Nations. Hopefully we will continue to use our voice for peaceful resolution of disputes and for people to come closer together. That is very important in the global situation.

**Q:** Ireland has supported democracy and human rights in Myanmar. What's your impression on Myanmar's democratic transition?

**A:** We think great progress has been made. Our country was born in violence and conflict. In 1998 we signed a good agreement with Britain ending 30 years of conflicts. Overcoming issues of conflicts is different. It takes time. It takes dialogue. It takes inclusiveness. It takes patience. I've seen major positive changes in your country in a short period of time. But, there's always a long way to go. It is important to ensure all people talk

to each other. It is important for the people to keep the challenges of communication open. I have no doubt in due course we will see full peace in your country.

**Q:** Myanmar is now endeavouring democratic reforms, peace-building and also socio-economic reforms which are essentials for emergence of a federal democratic union. How about your opinions on the reforms.

**A:** Your country held a general election successfully and elected a government democratically last year. We congratulate your country's major reforms. Reform takes a long time. Reform in my own country took a long time. Ireland has a 100-year old history. We had a very bloody conflict with Britain. We had an independence. Then we had a civil war for nine months and that ended in 1922. Since that time we had a peaceful reform. In 1933, we had a very difficult time with democratic elections. Those who lost in the civil war were elected. Economic reform also takes a long time. When I wander in your beautiful city, I see a lot of business activities. Your businesses are taking off. You have a new investment law which is hopefully attractive for international investors. Many tourists are coming. I see new airports in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon. These are excellent and wonderful infrastructures. Roads are getting better. Myanmar is starting a great journey of hope both in terms of democracy but also in term of socio-economic development. I always think if people have jobs, people will

do well. I think all they really want are decent jobs. They want to send their children to school. They want a good family life. This all goes hand in hand with democracy, human rights and economic development.

**Q:** Myanmar has goodwill with Ireland. We receive the same from the Irish people. What's your opinion on cultural and educational exchanges and granting scholarships to young aspiring ones?

**A:** People to people exchange is most important exchange of all. What a surprise when I walked around the book shops in the city and saw many translations of Irish classic that you can get in your own language. I've been amazed. That is much stronger connection of the literary nature between Ireland and Myanmar. That's because they share history. I think we can really ensure that the link between our two nations is strong. The people can do that. There have been many students from Myanmar who are studying at Dublin University and other universities in Ireland as well. One of the things I know my government wants to do is open up relationships and more scholarships will be available for Myanmar students to go to Ireland for three or four years. We have just published a new international strategy on education. The core aim is to get more foreign students to study and work in Ireland for years and then come back to their own country. But it should not be a one way. It should be two ways. I would like to see more Irish academics here. —(*Nandar Win & Win Win Maw*)

## Yangon Region Social Affairs Minister: Peace is within a reach



Peace forum in progress in Yangon. PHOTO: PO HTAUNG

A forum aiming at finding ways to achieve peace in Myanmar was held at the Green Hill Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

The forum was addressed by Dr Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong and Abbot U Awbarsa.

The Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee (UPDJC) Secretary U Hla Maung Shwe and Yangon Region Government Social Affairs Minister U Naing Ngan Lin participated on behalf of the government at the forum.

U Hla Maung Shwe said that the biggest challenge to the peace process is trust-building, and now is the most favourable time for the peace process as the new government has emerged and the State

Counsellor has stepped up efforts for the process since 1st January by opening the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) office in Nay Pyi Taw and talking with young people about peace.

U Naing Ngan Lin said that the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement is a favourable condition for the country and urged the people to cooperate with the government as peace is within reach. As soon as non-signatories to the NCA sign, there will be no fighting between the ethnic armed groups and the government forces.

Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, Secretary General of the Kayin National Union, said that people in the jungle, civil society organ-

isations, as well as members of ethnic armed groups are demanding peace because there is no peace in their region and the NCA is an opportunity for peace.

However, writer Naung Kyaw pointed out that the current government and the defence services should be try to fulfil the wishes of the people. They should solve problems caused by political causes by political means, without considering ethnic armed groups as terrorists. The government and the government troops should declare a unilateral ceasefire, Naung Kyaw said.

The forum responded to the questions raised by the attendees. —*Ye Khaung Nyunt*

## Haka bus line losing money



A bus from Haka city bus line stands at the bus-stop in Haka town. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

THE Haka City Bus Line running within Haka town, Chin state, is operating at a loss because of the decrease in the number of passengers, it is learnt.

The Haka City Bus Line was started on 1st December, 2016 with two mini buses.

Although the city buses run day and night, they only earn Ks1 million by the end of a month. The owners of Haka City Bus Line have to spend over Ks1 million on wages for the drivers and

conductors plus car petrol charges.

“Currently, our buses are in good condition, so it does not require costs for repair. We are thinking of running only one bus. The passengers want the bus line to run a car every 30 minutes. But, it is quite impossible at a time when we are losing money even with two buses. The main problem is a decrease in the number of passengers,” said Salai Kyone Hean Htaung, in-charge

of Haka City Bus Line.

Currently, two buses are running at 7am, 8am, 12 noon, 3pm and 4pm every day.

“Actually, we are more comfortable with the bus. But the problem is only a few passengers are using the bus. So, It’s not a cost-effective business. As for me, I’d like to recommend using the bus because they are safer than the motorbikes,” said a resident from Haka.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

## MoHT launches community-based tourism service in Kanpetlet Township

THE Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has launched a community-based tourism service in Kanpetlet, a town in Chin State, the least developed state in Myanmar, according to the announcement.

The ministry officially announced the launching of the CBT service in Sawloun Village in Kanpetlet Township on Tuesday. This is the first time the ministry has developed a CBT project in Chin State.

The Sawloun Village, which is a 15-minute drive from Kanpetlet, has developed for tourist accommodations six traditional huts, each with double rooms, built with domestic forest products such as bamboo, wood and thatch. Mindut, Matupi and Kanpetlet townships are included in list of the least developed areas in Myanmar but they are rich in natural scenery and have a lot of potential for eco-tourism, said Salai Isaac Khen, Chin State Minister for Municipal Affairs, Electricity and Industry.

He went on to say that the economic health and social status of residents are expected to

be promoted in the future thanks to the CBT project.

The CBT project was created to introduce tourists to additional places in Myanmar besides the already popular sights in Bagan, Mandalay and Yangon.

In Chin State, visitors may observe a wide range of species of reptiles and birds, including the great hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*), the state bird, along with mammals, butterflies, insects, trees and flowers, especially rhododendron and orchids along the Chin hills. Representatives of the government, tourism-related organisations and relevant bodies visited the areas in May to meet and speak with residents.

The CBT projects have also been implemented by the ministry and its partners in six regions and states including three villages near Indawgyi Lake in Kachin State, some villages in Loikaw of Kayah State, Thantaunggyi area in Kayin State, Pa-O area in Shan State, four villages in Myaing Township in Magway Region and some villages in Mandalay Region.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

## Crime NEWS

### Heroin and stimulants seized in Hpa Khant

MEMBERS of anti-narcotic combined team 3 from Mohnyin searched a house at No.18, Hmaw Thit Kone Ward 3, Hway Khar village, Seik Mu village-tract, Hpa Khant Township on 3 January, and found 25,935 stimulant tablets and 96 grams of heroin at a room in which Ma Yin Hwan Phon stayed in the house.

Similarly, an anti-narcotic squad from North Dagon Myo Ma Police Station searched

a motorcycle driven by Htet Lwin Aung with Arkar Tun on board at the corner of Bo Hmu Ba Htoo street and Bayintnaung street, Ward 43 in North Dagon Myo Thit Township. Police found 2,579 stimulant tablets and arrested them in possession of stimulants.

Police filed charges against the three suspects under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

### Vehicles overturn on Ygn-Mdy Highway

A Toyota Wish driven by Nyein Chan hit an aluminum safety rail on the right side of Yangon-Mandalay express way and overturned as he fell asleep while driving. The vehicle en route from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw turned over between mile posts 193/7 and 193/8 at 4 pm on 3 January. Fortunately, the driver was not injured but the vehicle was damaged, and the losses incurred from damages amounted to Ks 15 lakh.

Likewise, a Toyota Hilux driven by Saw El Htoo hit a road divider and overturned when he lost control as the left front tire

burst open. The vehicle en route from Mandalay to Nay Pyi Taw overturned between mile posts 332/5 and 332/6 at 9:15 pm on 3 January on Yangon-Mandalay highway.

Out of the three persons including the driver on board, two persons were injured in the accident but not seriously, and the injured persons were taken by a car from Saga Inn highway police station to Tada-U General Hospital to receive medical treatment. Police from respective townships filed charges against both reckless drivers.—*Than Oo (Lemyethnar)*

## Japan to set up body to promote maritime safety in Southeast Asia

TOKYO — The Japan Coast Guard plans to establish an organization dedicated to helping Southeast Asian countries improve maritime safety capabilities, apparently as part of Japan's moves to deal with China's assertiveness at sea, JCG officials said on Saturday.

The coast guard aims to build stronger ties with counterparts in the region as part of Japan's drive to enshrine the rule of law in coping with disputes in the South China Sea, where surrounding countries including China have competing territorial claims, they said.

In addition to disputes with China, the coast guards of Southeast Asian countries face a pressing need to enhance their ability to respond to natural disasters and piracy.

The new organization, to be launched in April with a staff of seven, will engage in organizing training and international symposiums on maintain-

ing rule-based maritime order, the officials said.

In addition to the Japanese government supplying patrol boats to a number of the countries, the Japan Coast Guard has regularly engaged in joint exercises and other exchanges with the coast guards of some Southeast Asian nations, such as providing training to Viet Nam.

The new body will expand such activities, and start by inviting trainees from Thailand and Myanmar, the officials said.

The coast guard believes its expertise in dealing with Chinese government ships in and near territorial waters around Japanese-controlled, Chinese-claimed islands in the East China Sea will be helpful to other nations in responding to China's assertive behavior and illegal fishing in contested waters while avoiding escalation to armed clashes.—*Kyodo News*

## Malaysia says search for missing MH370 to end in two weeks

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia said on Friday the hunt for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 will end in two weeks after the search is completed of a 120,000 square kilometre (9,650 sq mile) area where experts thought it went down.

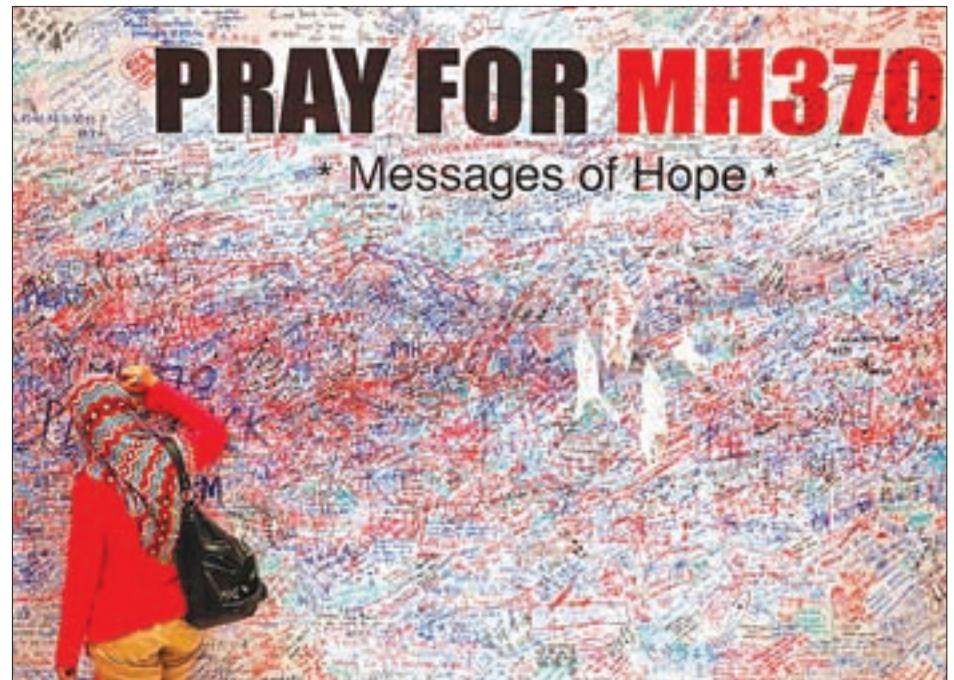
Investigators recommended last month that the search be extended by 25,000 sq km to an area further north in the Indian Ocean, after conceding for the first time they were probably looking in the wrong place.

But Malaysia's transport minister, Liow Tiong Lai, told reporters the search of the 120,000 sq km area would be completed but the hunt would then end in the absence of any "credible clue" suggesting it be extended.

The latest report by the search coordinator, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, was due to be completed in a week or two, he said.

"The search mission will end soon and after that," Liow was quoted as saying by state news agency Bernama.

The report would be



A woman leaves a message of support and hope for the passengers of the missing Malaysia Airlines MH370 in central Kuala Lumpur on 16 March, 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

made available online, he said, adding:

"Any decision based on the report will be done later."

Flight MH370 disappeared in March 2014 with 239 passengers and crew on board, most of them Chinese, en route to Beijing from the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur.

Its whereabouts have become one of the world's

greatest aviation mysteries.

Families of many of those on board have called for the search to continue and to be extended to other areas.

The three countries involved in the search — Malaysia, Australia and China — would meet before 28 January to decide on the next course of action, Liow said.

Australia last month

also rejected recommendations to extend the search, citing a lack of "credible evidence".

A total of 33 pieces of wreckage suspected to be from the plane have been found, including parts of wings and a tail, on the shores of Mauritius, the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa.—*Reuters*

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## S Korea court convicts ex-Reckitt Benckiser unit chief in sterilizer case

SEOUL — A South Korean court on Friday convicted 14 people including a former head of the local unit of British consumer goods maker Reckitt Benckiser over the sale of humidifier sterilizers linked to deadly lung injuries, sentencing the former boss to seven years in prison.

The Seoul Central District Court found the former executive, Shin Hyun-woo, guilty of criminal negligence for failing to inspect the safety of the product and allowing its sale, and false labeling for marketing it as safe, according to a spokeswoman for Reckitt.

Two current employees of Reckitt Benckiser Korea, research and development head Cho Hanseog and R&D manager Michael Choi, were convicted of the same charges, as was former R&D head Kim Jin-

gu. Cho and Kim were also sentenced to seven years while Choi received five years.

Reckitt Benckiser Korea, the company, was found guilty of false labeling and fined 150 million won (\$126,000).

"We hope the verdicts in the criminal case will mark another important stage in resolving the humidifier sterilizer issue," said Reckitt spokeswoman Patty O'Hayer. "Oxy RB remains deeply remorseful for the harm caused to all victims and their families."

O'Hayer said Reckitt was taking actions to prioritise safety across the company, whose other products include Durex condoms, Scholl foot products and Nurofen tablets.

The South Korean government said in 2015 that 92 people were be-

lieved to have died from causes related to humidifier sterilizer products, not all of them made by the Reckitt Benckiser unit.

In May last year, the current head of Reckitt's South Korean unit, as well as group chief executive Rakesh Kapoor, apologised and accepted responsibility. The Oxy brand, which Reckitt acquired in 2001, was the market leader for the liquid sterilizers, which were used to keep the water in humidifiers clean during Korea's dry winters.

Of those sentenced on Friday — which also included employees from rival manufacturers and retailers LotteMart and Homeplus — several were charged with criminal fraud. All were found not guilty.

South Korean prosecutors opened a probe into

the use of the products last year amid mounting pressure from the families of victims who said earlier offers of compensation by the company were insufficient given the seriousness of the damage.

South Korea said more than 5,200 people have come forward as of 31 December with claims of lung ailments from using humidifier sterilizers, with the number increasing sharply after the prosecutors' probe became public last year.

In May, the government said of the 530 claims received until then, 221 were assessed as being eligible for compensation. Of those, 177 had used the sterilizer sold by Reckitt, which had been on the market for more than a decade.

The remaining cases are currently being reviewed.—*Reuters*

## Japan, France agree to start talks on defense supplies-sharing pact

PARIS — The defence and foreign ministers of Japan and France agreed at their “two-plus-two” meeting on Friday to start negotiations for a bilateral accord on sharing defence supplies and services.

In a joint statement issued after the meeting in Paris, the ministers also expressed opposition to “unilateral action that would raise tensions” in the South China Sea, a reference apparently to China’s land reclamation and other activities in the contested waters symbolizing its growing assertiveness.

The third meeting of the kind between the two countries involved Japanese Defence Minister Tomomi Inada and Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault.

Under the envisioned acquisition and cross-servicing agreement, Japan’s Self-Defence Forces and the French military would provide each other with supplies, such as water and food, and services, including equipment transportation and repair work.



French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (L) and his Japanese counterpart Tomomi Inada agree in Paris on 5 December 2017 to strengthen bilateral cooperation ahead of the “two-plus-two” talks involving the countries’ foreign ministers. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Ayrault said at a press briefing that France and Japan have taken a new step in defence cooperation and will be able to further collaborate on humanitarian

assistance and UN peacekeeping operations.

Kishida told reporters that Japan and France will seek to finalize the acquisition and

cross-servicing agreement “at the earliest time possible.”

Japan already has such agreements with the United States and Australia, and is ne-

gotiating similar accords with Britain and Canada, all part of Tokyo’s effort to expand defence cooperation with other countries. It is also considering a similar deal with New Zealand.

In the joint statement, the ministers called on all parties that have stakes in the sea to respect their obligations under international law and refrain from reclaiming land, building outposts on it or using them for military purposes.

On the basis of a bilateral defence equipment development accord that went into force last year, they also confirmed their governments’ intention of turning joint research into undersea drones that search for mines into concrete form.

Regarding the humanitarian crisis in Syria, Kishida unveiled a Japanese plan to provide \$240 million to surrounding countries for refugee assistance.

Japan and France last held a “two-plus-two” meeting between their defence and foreign ministers in March 2015. The next meeting is expected to be held in Tokyo in 2018.—*Kyodo News*

## India braces for growth chill after Modi’s cash crackdown

NEW DELHI — India on Friday predicted robust economic growth in the fiscal year that ends in March, but without fully accounting for the disruption caused by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s decision to abolish high-value old currency bills.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to achieve annual growth of 7.1 per cent in the fiscal year 2016/17, slower than a provisional figure of 7.6 per cent for 2015/16.

Most private economists

have pared their growth forecasts to 6.3-6.4 per cent for 2016/17, citing the impact of the demonetisation, which they reckon will linger for one more year.

Friday’s GDP estimate is a cornerstone of Finance Minister Arun Jaitley’s budget on 1 February. But the federal statistics office said the projection was mostly based on data available by the end of October.

Modi’s decision on 8 November to scrap 500- and 1,000-rupee banknotes as part

of a crackdown on tax dodgers and counterfeiters has inflicted pain on companies, farmers and households.

“I am very worried with the projected growth rate,” said Aneesh Srivastava, chief investment officer at IDBI Federal Life Insurance Co.

“Take demonetisation into account, the rate will substantially drop,” he said, adding that he expected full-year growth to be well below 6.8 per cent.

Until last year, the government’s statisticians would wait

for GDP data for the quarter through December before putting out full-year estimates. This year, that quarter’s figures will not be available before the end of February, making the projection largely reliant on the economy’s performance in the period before demonetisation, when consumer demand was strong.

The statistics office will release the data on 28 February, along with revised full-year growth estimates.

The withdrawal of 86 per cent of cash out of circulation has disrupted supply chains at small, medium and even larger companies and left many customers short of cash.

Modi had called for patience until 30 December. While his deadline has passed, the pain has not. Services industry shrank for a second straight month in December amid a severe cash shortage. Manufacturing activity plunged into contraction too.

The cash crackdown has also hit capital investments.

New investment proposals slumped by nearly 61 per cent to \$121.21 million a day between 9 November and 31 December from the period between 1 October and 8 November, according to the think-tank CMIE.

“Mostly the impact of demonetisation will be proportionally higher in micro-, smaller- and medium-scale enterprises,” said Varun Khandelwal, managing director at Bulero Capital.—*Reuters*

## Sri Lanka, Chinese company to go ahead with southern port deal

COLOMBO — T

he Sri Lankan government said on Thursday that it will sign three crucial agreements with a Chinese company over the Hambantota Port in the southern part of this country before the end of the month.

Sri Lankan International Trade Minister Malik Samarawickrema told reporters that the first agreement will be signed after 7 January with China Merchants Holdings Ltd who will be getting an 80 per cent stake in the Hambantota Port.

The three agreements that are expected to be signed are a Joint Venture Agreement, a Lease Agreement and a Concessionary Agreement.

“This deal will benefit the country as all agreements have been drafted to benefit the country as much as possible. This project will also generate a lot of jobs,” Samarawickrema said.

He further said that cabinet approval had been obtained for the deal with China merchants Holdings. Samarawickrema also dismissed reports of selling state lands to any country for a massive development drive in the south, where it was expecting several international investors to come in.

He added only 5 per cent of private lands had been used and all agreements would be signed on a 99 year lease. Sri Lanka is expecting 2 to 3 billion worth of foreign investments this year and expects a total of 50 billion dollars or more worth of investments to come in the future.—*Xinhua*



A labourer stands on a truck carrying construction materials at a construction site of residential buildings in Noida on the outskirts of New Delhi on 29 November 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

# In emotional farewell speech, Michelle Obama praises diversity

WASHINGTON — First lady Michelle Obama made an impassioned case for embracing diversity and welcoming all religious groups on Friday in a not-so-veiled message to her husband's successor two weeks ahead of Inauguration Day.

In what was billed as her last formal speech before President Barack Obama leaves office, the first lady said at an event honouring high school counsellors that the United States belonged to people from all backgrounds and walks of life.

"Our glorious diversity — our diversities of faiths and colours and creeds — that is not a threat to who we are, it makes us who we are," she said. The remarks were reminiscent of her vigorous campaign speeches in favour of Democrat Hillary Clinton during the 2016 election. President-elect Donald Trump has proposed building a wall along the border of Mexico and temporarily banning Muslims from entering the country.

"If you or your parents are immigrants, know that you are part of a proud American tradition: the infusion of new cultures, talents and ideas, generation after generation, that has made us the greatest country on earth," Mrs Obama said.

"If you are a person of faith,



US first lady Michelle Obama speaks in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, US, on 27 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

know that religious diversity is a great American tradition, too ... And whether you are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh — these religions are teaching our young people about justice and compassion and honesty."

Mrs. Obama gave a series of high profile speeches at campaign events for Clinton last year and made clear her disapproval of Trump for questioning President Obama's citizenship and for the New York businessman's treatment of women after a recording was released in which he bragged about groping women.

Trump was a leader of the so-

called birther movement that questioned whether President Obama, who was born in Hawaii, had been born in the United States.

Mrs Obama has kept a lower public profile since the election.

Choking up on Friday, she said being first lady had been the greatest honour of her life. "So that's my final message to young people as first lady. It is simple. I want our young people to know that they matter, that they belong," she said. "Lead by example with hope, never fear. And know that I will be with you, rooting for you and working to support you for the rest of my life."—Reuters

# Ex-Republican Party head Barbour to lobby US for Ukraine



Haley Barbour, the former Republican governor of Mississippi, speaks at the GE conference on "American Competitiveness: What Works" in Washington on 13 February, 2012. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Haley Barbour, former Republican Party leader and Mississippi governor, has been hired by the Ukrainian government to lobby US politicians, according to documents filed this week.

The hiring of Barbour and his lobbying firm BGR Group comes at a time when US President-elect Donald Trump's public embrace of Russian President Vladimir Putin has increased worries in Washington that the new adminis-

tration may side with Russia in the Ukrainian dispute.

Russia has increased its military presence in Ukraine since annexing the Crimean peninsula in 2014.

Barbour and BGR agreed in late December to a \$50,000 a month retainer to "design and implement a comprehensive government affairs and business development strategy" for the Ukraine government — including "arranging meetings" with US officials,

according to a disclosure filed 1 January with the Department of Justice.

BGR also said in the federal disclosure filing that it "seeks to strengthen US-Ukrainian relations and encourage private US businesses to invest in Ukraine."

American firms that do business with foreign governments are required to file disclosures with the Department of Justice detailing the work they agree to undertake and the amount of payment.

A BGR representative declined to elaborate on the specifics of the agreement.

Barbour, who served as head of the Republican National Committee from 1993 to 1997, co-founded BGR in 1991. He continued to build an expansive lobbying operation after his term as Mississippi governor from 2004 to 2012. Barbour considered running for president in 2012, but ultimately sat out the race.

Barbour and BGR have also done work for other foreign governments, including Kurdistan, India, South Korea and Bangladesh.

Barbour's corporate lobbying clients have included Airbus, Caterpillar, Chevron, Huntington Ingalls and Toyota Motor Corp.—Reuters

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Armed guards to man Swedish nuclear power plants

STOCKHOLM — Security guards at Sweden's three nuclear power plants are to be armed with guns for the first time.

The new measure, to be introduced in just a few weeks, followed the introduction of stricter security demands from the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority.

Since 4 February, guard dogs will also watch the areas surrounding Sweden's nuclear power plants.

Speaking to Swedish Television, Anders Osterberg, head of communications at the Oskarshamn power plant, said that there is no targeted threat against Oskarshamn but the stricter measures to protect the area surrounding the plant are being implemented "against the backdrop of a changing world."

"In light of that, it is quite natural to tighten security demands," said Osterberg.

Armed security guards and guard dogs will be stationed around the clock at the Oskarshamn, Ringhals and Forsmark nuclear power plants.—Xinhua

### Doctors advise Germans to walk like penguins on ice

BERLIN — German trauma surgeons advised the public on Wednesday to walk like penguins to avoid slipping on pavements with freezing temperatures forecast nationwide over the next few days.

An advisory published on the website of the German Society of Orthopaedics and Trauma Surgery said that walking like the aquatic birds involves leaning the torso forward so that the centre of gravity is on the front leg.

A drawing attached to the advisory explains that when humans walk normally, body weight is split almost evenly over both legs, which the surgeons say increases the risk of losing one's balance and falling on slippery surfaces.

Municipal authorities in Berlin were criticized over their failure to sprinkle the capital's pavements with rock salt in January 2014 despite warnings of a freeze from meteorologists.

As a result, rescue services received more than 750 emergency calls and emergency rooms were overstretched with patients with bone fractures.

Temperatures in Berlin are expected to plunge to -10 degrees Centigrade (14 Fahrenheit) on Saturday.—Reuters

### Iraq says deal reached over withdrawal of Turkish forces from Bashiq

BAGHDAD — Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said on Saturday an agreement had been reached with Turkey over an Iraqi demand that Turkish forces withdraw from a town near Mosul in the north of the country, Iraqi state TV reported.

Abadi met his Turkish counterpart Binali Yildirim in Baghdad. State television did not provide further details about the agreement over the town of Bashiq, where Turkish forces have been stationed since before a recent offensive against Islamic State in northern Iraq.—Reuters

### Ghana swears in Akufo-Addo as president

ACCRA — Nana Akufo-Addo was sworn in as Ghana's president on Saturday in a ceremony attended by dozens of African leaders, sealing a rare peaceful transfer of power in a region plagued by political crises.

Akufo-Addo, 72, a former opposition leader, defeated incumbent John Dramani Mahama in elections a month ago.

The major cocoa and gold exporter is half-way through a three-year aid programme with the International Monetary Fund to fix an economy dogged by high public debt and inflation.—Reuters

### Gunfire erupts in western Ivory Coast city of Man — residents

ABIDJAN — Gunfire erupted in the city of Man in western Ivory Coast early on Saturday, residents said, though it was not immediately clear whether the shooting was related to a revolt by disgruntled soldiers that has struck at least five other cities and towns.

"There's shooting right now. We have shut ourselves inside at home," resident Alphonse Yao told Reuters by telephone from Man.—Reuters

# Opinion

## Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email [ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com](mailto:ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com) with your name and title.

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

## A friendship worth recording in history books

Editorial from  
Myanma Alinn  
Newspaper of 6  
January 2017

Translated by:  
Kyaw Myaing

MYANMAR is a country where the right of its citizens to profess their faiths and worship freely have been respected and recognized. Just as the 135 ethnic national groups have the right to profess their religions freely, the descendants of Indians and Chinese who are now citizens also have the right to profess their religions freely. This good tradition may be seen clearly in Myanmar's long history. Only in certain times, during the period when our country had its twists and turns in history, we encountered instability due to the instigations of destructive elements. At such times we encountered racial and religious riots. However, those ri-

ots did not have any harmful effects on citizens who had different religious beliefs and racial origins. They also did not have any effect on the friendly relations that has existed among the Myanmar citizens throughout history.

During recent years, we have witnessed clearly and noticeably attempts to damage Myanmar's historic good image in the world arena. Because of these attempts to cause damage and harm, Myanmar's historic good image has been tarnished and hurt to a certain degree. We believe strongly that it is important not to take such kind of damage and its consequences lightly. As a result of the problems in Rakhine State, be-

cause of the evil and destructive elements who wish to tarnish the good image of Myanmar in the international arena, our country has become one of the items on the hit list of terrorists unwittingly and without any reasonable cause.

However, because of the initiative made by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to meet and have discussions with Asean Foreign Ministers, it has given us the opportunity to present very clearly Myanmar's just and correct position. The kind of approach needed in the international arena and also with regard to the Rakhine State problem is to have friendly and warm discussions, consul-

tations and mutual cooperation. We wish to solemnly welcome and applaud the news that Indonesia is making arrangements to send 10 containers worth of longyis (sarongs), clothes, instant noodle packets and food for children for both communities in Rakhine State. This act is a concrete example to implement the aforesaid approach.

Indonesia's act which is in full accord with the Asean spirit has further strengthened the existing friendly relations between the two countries. In addition by this act Indonesia has showcased very effectively Asean's historic good traditions. Thus this should be recorded in our history books.

# I loved an Englishman once

(Phoehlaing)

RECENTLY while in Mandalay for the ceremony of homage to teachers of Mandalay University, I got a chance to visit my old school, the Royal Diocesan High School. Nationalized in 1965, its name changed to No. 10 Basic Education High School. U Htay Kywe, chairman of old students group contacted me, and he and two others took me out for monti breakfast in a decent shop, and one hour spent recalling long past events, and enquiring who's who and where now. Then they proposed a visit to the school, and we did. To my knowledge this is the only school in the country that boasted relation to royalty, although the royal honor has been dropped in favor of the State. But the school's history beginning with the King Mindon ought to be revived.

In 1969 King Mindon asked Rev. E.B. Marks, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G.) in London, to open an English school in Mandalay. Four years earlier Dr. Marks had successfully founded St. Johns School in Yangon. In addition to financially supporting the Christian missionary, the King donated the school compound, a church and buildings for the school. And he sent his sons to the school, including Prince Thebaw, the future king. Thanks to King Mindon, today the former royal

school, now No. 10 B.E.H.S. is one of the very few schools in Mandalay to own a football field, in addition to a spacious compound.

The school has been known by various names: Saya Hmat Kyee Kyaung (Great Teacher Marks' School), the Royal School, S.P.G. School (because of its affiliation with S.P.G., London), Thande Kyaung (because of its location in the diplomatic quarters, thande being Myanmar word for diplomatic compound).

As our car entered the school gate, fascinating memories flashed in haphazard sequence. First came the elephant post, close to the gate. It was a sort of parking spot; the elephant being the princes' Mercedes; after they got off, the creature was chained to the big teak post. "Is the elephant post still there?" I queried my friend Hla Baw. "Oh, it's there", he replied pointing at it. It is decaying, a lot of it eaten away by time. Delightfully I saw the elephant post protected by a roof. But it still needs better conservation.

### Marvelous religious harmony in Mandalay

As is well known, Mindon was a deeply religious king who sponsored the Fifth Buddhist Council to recite and review the whole set of Tipitaka. The edited version is recorded on 729 big stone slabs, separately housed near Mandalay Hill. These stone pages of Tipitaka which still stand and, which many tourists

care to visit, constitute 'the world's biggest book'. Apart from his lavish support for Buddhist Sasana, the king also showed big heartedness in matters of worship. He built mosques for Panthay Muslim Chinese, and also for Sunnis and Shiites.

Contemporary with Dr. Marks, there was also Bishop Bigandet, the Catholic missionary. Unlike their Churches, the two were never at odds, but rather friendly and cooperative. Dr. Marks' book, *Forty Years in Burma*, contains interesting recounts of his friendly relations with the king. In it he wrote about one amusing meeting he and the Bishop had with the king. It was an unofficial private meeting. At one point King Mindon asked, "Khingyi (his term for religious men) you are both Christians, yet you belong to different Orders. What really is the difference between your faiths?" For a while the missionaries kept silent, but looked at each other, meaning to say, "you answer". Dr. Marks broke the silence, "Great King, Bishop Bigandet cannot marry, but I can!" The polygamous King burst with laughter and made a big offer for Dr. Marks, a bachelor. "Oh, I have a number of surplus queens, and I can spare you one or two, Khingyi Marks".

### I once loved an Englishman

I came from a remote village of an almost hundred percent Myanmar township, Ayadaw. With early education in the mon-

astery and village life, I felt I loved my country and race. By 1951, when I joined the Royal School, only eleven years old then, the country had been independent just over two years, but there were only very few Englishmen, the master race, left in the country.

From Dr. Marks, my memory shifted to an Englishman. His name was Khin Nyunt Maung. Yes, an Englishman with a Myanmar name! I confirmed it with my friend Ko Hla Baw. He said I was right. But Khin Nyunt Maung was a pathetic man. He was mad man, a beggar. Sayagyi U Ba Than, our principal, told us his story. He was his former student, an old boy of the school, and during World War II, he saw his wife and three children die brutally under Japanese bombs. The shock left KNM deranged and he never recovered. With no relatives and no friend, KNM made his former school his haunt, and earned his living begging from young students. He had some talents. He could crack a few jokes, and he was good at sketching nude pictures (in our exercise books, with red and blue pencil). We young boys loved him, or sympathized him. We used to give him five or ten pyas out of our pocket money. It wasn't difficult for him to collect 50 pyas, and in those days it was enough to make a meal. So our rapport with KNM continued.

I remember one morning when KNM came into our class-

room where Principal U Ba Than was giving moral instruction. Disregarding the master, KNM begged for money. U Ba Than told him not to disturb and to go away. "They are willing to give me, sir," he insisted. "KNM, I have been good to you in many ways, but this is a classroom. Just go away," said the master. KNM did not move. He must be desperate for his meal. "Please take him away," the principal demanded. A senior boy took him by the arm and pulled out from the classroom. We were left in silence, full of sympathy for KNM.

We, the students, were unanimous with kindness for KNM, an Englishman.

### Did KNM have a British passport, or Myanmar Nationality ID?

This was what came to my mind next. National ID cards were not introduced then. And no one appeared to check KNM's legal status. The country had been independent just a few years. Wasn't it time for KNM, the Englishman, to leave the country? Why did young Myanmar boys accept him, or befriend him? Well, I concluded that he was an Englishman and thus irrelevant; there was unseen humanity at work. KNM the human being, insane and destitute he was though!

*I am proud that Myanmar boys of the Royal School acted with humanity.*

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## Israel cuts \$6 million in UN funding over settlements resolution

UNITED NATIONS — Israel said on Friday it would cut \$6 million in funding to the United Nations in 2017 in protest against a UN Security Council resolution that demanded an end to Israeli settlement building on land Palestinians want for an independent state.

The United States abstained from the 23 December vote, allowing the 15-member Security Council to adopt the resolution with 14 votes in favour. Israel and US President-elect Donald Trump had called for Washington to wield its veto.

Israel's mission to the United Nations said funding would be cut to UN bodies it described as "anti-Israel," including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

"It is unreasonable for Israel to fund bodies that operate against us at the UN," Israeli UN Ambassador Danny Danon said

in a statement. "The UN must end the absurd reality in which it supports bodies whose sole intent is to spread incitement and anti-Israel propaganda."

The Israeli mission said it would move ahead with further initiatives aimed at ending anti-Israel activities at the United Nations after Trump takes office on 20 January.

The Palestinians want an independent state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, areas Israel captured in a 1967 war. Most countries and the United Nations view Israeli West Bank settlements as illegal and an obstacle to peace.

Israel disputes that settlements are illegal and says their final status should be determined in any future talks on Palestinian statehood. The last round of US-led peace talks between the Israelis and Palestinians collapsed in 2014. The Security Council last adopted a resolution critical of settlements in 1979, with the United States also abstaining.—Reuters



Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon speaks during a United Nations Security Council meeting on the Middle East at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 22 October, 2015.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## In Istanbul district, horror but scant surprise at links to nightclub shooter

ISTANBUL— In a working-class Istanbul neighbourhood that Central Asian migrants have called home for decades, there is horror but scant surprise that a gunman who killed 39 people in a nightclub on New Year's Day may have spent time in their community.

Just beyond the ancient walls on Istanbul's historic peninsula, Zeytinburnu could not be farther removed from the upscale Ortakoy district on the shores of the Bosphorus where the gunman opened fire with an automatic rifle last Sunday.

Its bustling streets are full of Kazakh and Uzbek shops and restaurants, their signboards written in Uighur Arabic script. Old men wearing fur-lined caps greet each other as women, some covered from head to toe, browse in shop windows.

The gunman, whom Deputy Prime Minister Veysi Kaynak has said is thought to be an ethnic U-

ghur, is believed to have traveled by taxi from Zeytinburnu before the shooting and to have returned to a restaurant there afterwards, asking to borrow money to pay the driver. He is still at large.

The restaurant remains open, but several of its employees have been detained.

Many Turks feel strong ethnic and cultural ties with the Turkic speaking peoples of Central Asia, including western China and the nearby states of the ex-Soviet Union, and have welcomed migrants who live alongside them in areas like Zeytinburnu.

But some in the community say its fabric has changed with a new wave of immigration in recent years.

"Some of those who arrived have set up separate prayer rooms of their own instead of going to the official mosques ... they teach them things we don't know," said Recep Sadettin Akyol, 37, chairman of

the East Turkestan Migrants Association.

"Apartments are being rented just for the day. You can't tell who's coming in or who's leaving. Nobody informs the local administrators," said Akyol, who is of Kazakh origin but was born and grew up in Istanbul. The Uighurs are a largely Muslim, Turkic-speaking minority in far western China with significant diaspora communities across Central Asia and Turkey.

East Turkestan is a name they use for part of China's western Xinjiang region from where hundreds, possibly thousands, fleeing what rights activists say is religious persecution have traveled clandestinely to Turkey in recent years.

Beijing denies restricting their religious freedoms and blames Islamist militants, including those it says come from a group called the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), for a rise in violence in Xinjiang in which hundreds have died. It says some end up fighting alongside militants in Iraq and Syria. On a trip to China last September, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan vowed deeper counter-terrorism cooperation.

"We have our brothers here from East Turkestan who we've lived together with for years, who love our country and who our society is not at all bothered by," said Huseyin Sariyel, a local administrator in one of Zeytinburnu's neighbourhoods.

"But there are people here who welcome the ones who are coming to Turkey illegally," he said, adding that local authorities needed more powers to register where they stay.—Reuters



A Turkish police holds pictures of the suspected gunman behind the attack at Reina nightclub in Istanbul, during a security control near the Kapikule border crossing between Turkey and Bulgaria, in Edirne province, on 4 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Iraqi forces close in on Tigris river in Mosul — military spokesman

MOSUL — Iraqi forces closed in on the river that runs through central Mosul on Saturday in advances against Islamic State that have gathered pace thanks to new tactics and better coordination, a counter-terrorism spokesman said.

Advances in recent days, including Saturday's push to within several hundred metres of the Tigris, have included an unprecedented nighttime assault by elite forces and driven the militants out of several areas east of the river in what is their last major stronghold in Iraq.

Counter-terrorism service (CTS) forces were the closest they had been to the Tigris inside Mosul and closing in on a strategic bridge, the spokesman said. The US-backed operation to recapture the city was launched nearly three months ago.

"Counter-terrorism forces have been sent about 500m (yards) from the fourth bridge," Sabah al-Numan told reporters east of Mosul.

CTS seized the Ghufraan district, previously known as al-Baath, and entered neighbouring Wahda, he said.

A separate military statement said Iraqi federal police had recaptured a hospital complex in Wahda in southeastern Mosul, a significant turnaround after army units were forced to withdraw from the site last month.

Numan said fresh advances, which have gathered pace after

troops were bogged down for several weeks by Islamic State resistance and the presence of large numbers of civilians, were a consequence of new tactics and better coordination between different branches of the military.

CTS and federal police "are now moving in parallel on both axes" in southeastern Mosul, he said.

"We are proceeding side by side ... and advancing at the same level. This is a very important factor, thanks to which Daesh (Islamic State) has not been able to move its fighters. It has to support one axis (front) at the expense of another.

"We have worn down the terrorist organisation with this type of advance."

Friday's nighttime operation, launched after a week of planning, had been a particular success, Numan said.

CTS forces using night-vision equipment crossed the Khosr river, a tributary that runs perpendicular to the Tigris through eastern Mosul, via makeshift earth bridges after IS had destroyed permanent ones, he said.

Air strikes from the US-led coalition sped that advance into Muthanna district.

The CTS and federal police are part of a 100,000-strong Iraqi force made up of the military, Kurdish fighters and Shi'ite militias, backed by US-led air power.—Reuters

# Amazon's Alexa moves in on Google's Android system

LAS VEGAS — Amazon.com Inc's (AMZN.O) digital assistant appeared almost everywhere at the CES technology show this week in Las Vegas, even making an unexpected appearance on rival Google's Android system.

Companies ranging from appliance maker Whirlpool Corp (WHR.N) to Ford Motor Co (F.N) unveiled products featuring Alexa, the digital assistant from Amazon that responds to voice commands.

Most strikingly, Chinese firm Huawei Technologies Co [HWT.UL], which manufactures smartphones running on the Android operating system produced by Alphabet Inc's (GOOGL.O) Google, announced that its flagship handset will come with an app that gives users access to Alexa in the United States.

The adoption of Alexa by a prominent Android manufacturer indicates that Amazon may have opened up an early lead



Mike George, VP Alexa, Echo and Appstore for Amazon, speaks during the LG press conference at CES in Las Vegas, US, on 4 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

over Google as the companies race to present their digital assistants to as many people as possible, analysts said.

Many in the technology industry believe that such

voice-powered digital assistants will supplant keyboards and touch screens as a primary way consumers interact with devices.

While the shift is only in the early stages, Google must estab-

lish a strong presence quickly, particularly on Android devices, to maintain its dominance in internet search, said analyst Jan Dawson of Jackdaw Research.

"To the extent that voice becomes more important and something other than Google's voice assistant becomes the most popular voice interface on Android phones, that's a huge loss for Google in terms of data gathering, training its AI (artificial intelligence), and ultimately the ability to drive advertising revenue," he said.

Alexa debuted on the Amazon Echo smart speaker, and Amazon is establishing a broad array of hardware and software partnerships around it. The competing Google Assistant launched last year on the company's Pixel smartphone, after appearing on Google's messaging app, and has begun to roll out to third-party devices as well. Graphics processor maker Nvidia Corp (NVDA.O) announced at CES that its

Shield television will feature the assistant.

While Google has expressed an interest in bringing its assistant to other Android smartphones, the decision to debut the feature on its own hardware may have strained relations with manufacturers, Dawson said.

"It highlights just what a strategic mistake it can be for services companies to make their own hardware and give it preferential access to new services," he said. A spokeswoman for Google declined to comment.

While Amazon has a head start, Google is no by no means out of the race, given the strength of its internet search technology. The Google Assistant can already field queries that Alexa cannot, said Sergei Burkov, chief executive of Alterra.ai, an artificial intelligence company.

"A huge part of an assistant is search," he said. "Google is a search company. Amazon is not." —Reuters

## General Motors moving forward on sale of Gujarat car plant to China's SAIC

NEW DELHI — A subsidiary of China's top carmaker SAIC Motor Corp plans to acquire certain General Motors manufacturing assets in India, a filing with the country's competition watchdog showed on Friday.

The assets, which could give the Chinese automaker a toehold in the Indian car market, will be acquired via an Indian subsidiary of SAIC that is yet to be incorporated, according to the filing with the Competition Commission of India.

As part of a side deal, General Motors also plans to buy out SAIC's 9.2 percent stake in SAIC General Motors Investment - a joint venture it formed with the Chinese automaker in 2009 to expand its presence in emerging markets like India, a separate filing showed.

GM, in an emailed response to a Reuters query following the filing, said discussions with SAIC on the sale of Halol — its plant in Gujarat — were progressing well and that the two parties were working to secure necessary approvals.

"We'll share any progress at the appropriate time," GM said.

It was not immediately clear whether the two deals are being structured as some sort of asset swap, or whether there would be payments made by both parties for the assets. A spokeswoman for SAIC declined to comment.

Sources familiar with the matter had told Reuters last

April that the Chinese carmaker was in discussions to buy GM's Gujarat plant and had been evaluating car models to launch in India.

GM said in 2015 that it planned to stop production at one of its two plants in India by mid-2016 and consolidate operations at one location. The Detroit carmaker's Halol plant can manufacture up to 110,000 vehicles a year. GM also runs a plant in Talegaon in Maharashtra that has a capaci-

ty of about 170,000 vehicles a year.

Several foreign carmakers like GM, Volkswagen AG and Ford Motor have struggled to ramp up sales in India, expected to be the world's third-largest car market by 2020, and are now pushing exports from the country to utilize idle manufacturing capacity.

Sagging sales and a regulatory crackdown on diesel-powered vehicles had forced GM to redraw its plans in India.

In July, GM said it was re-evaluating a planned \$1 billion investment in India and had put on hold moves to bring a new car platform to the country that would have helped it better compete against market leader Maruti Suzuki.

Between April and November, GM's India sales fell 19 percent to 17,868 vehicles, while total passenger vehicle sales in India rose 10 percent over the same period, industry data showed.—Reuters



Employees work on the Chevrolet Cruze assembly line inside a plant of General Motors India Ltd at Halol, east of Ahmedabad, on 22 September, 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

## China Dec forex reserves fall less than expected to \$3.011 trillion

BEIJING — China's foreign exchange reserves fell for a sixth straight month in December but by less than expected to the lowest since February 2011, as authorities stepped in to support the yuan ahead of US President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration.

Reserves fell by \$41 billion last month to \$3.011 trillion, central bank data showed on Saturday, following a drop of \$69.06 billion in November. Economists polled by Reuters had expected reserves to drop \$51 billion to \$3.001 trillion, from \$3.052 trillion at the end of November.

The yuan depreciated 6.6 percent against the surging dollar in 2016, its biggest one-year loss since 1994, and is expected to weaken further this year despite authorities' latest attempts to slow its descent. Adding to pressure on the currency, Trump has vowed to label China a currency manipulator on his first day in office on 20 January and has threatened to impose huge tariffs on imports of Chinese goods.

While the world's second-largest economy still has the largest stash of forex reserves by far, it has burned through half a trillion dollars since August 2015, when it stunned global investors by devaluing the yuan.

If forex reserves continue to be depleted at a rapid pace and capital flight continues, some strategists believe China's leaders may have little choice but to sanction another big "one-off" devaluation which would roil global financial markets.

China's gold reserves fell to \$67.878 billion at end-December from \$69.785 billion at end-November.—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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YGN TO PEK			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
CA-906	23:50	05:50+1	3,7

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

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

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

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

SGN TO YGN			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
VN-943	9:25	11:10	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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



### INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

MDL TO SIN				SIN TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MI-533	15:45	20:50	2	MI-522	11:30	13:20	4,6
MI-522	14:15	20:15	4,6	MI-533	11:30	14:50	2

MDL TO BKK				BKK TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily	PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily

MDL TO KMG				KMG TO MDL			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
MU-2030	14:25	17:15	Daily	MU-2029	13:20	13:15	Daily

NYT TO BKK				BKK TO NYT			
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-722	19:50	22:50	1,3,4,5,6,7	PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7

### AIRLINE CODES

8M	= Myanmar Airways International
BG	= Biman Bangladesh Airlines
MH	= Malaysia Airlines
MU	= China Eastern Airlines
NH	= All Nippon Airways
SQ	= Singapore Airways
PG	= Bangkok Airways
UB	= Myanmar National Airlines
VN	= Vietnam Airline
3K	= Jet Star
AI	= Air India
CI	= China Airlines
DD	= Nok Airline
KA	= Dragonair
MI	= Silk Air
TG	= Thai Airways
AK	= Air Asia
CA	= Air China
CZ	= China Southern
FD	= Air Asia
KE	= Korea Airlines
QR	= Qatar Airways
TR	= Tiger Airline

DAY			
1	= Monday	4	= Thursday
2	= Tuesday	5	= Friday
3	= Wednesday	6	= Saturday
		7	= Sunday



The logo of Swiss drugmaker Novartis is seen at its headquarters in Basel on 22 October, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Novartis joins forces with Ionis on cardiovascular treatments

ZURICH — Novartis has agreed with Ionis Pharmaceuticals Inc and its affiliate Akcea Therapeutics Inc to license two experimental cardiovascular treatments in a deal which Ionis said could eventually be worth more than \$1 billion.

The treatments aim to reduce cardiovascular risk in patients with high levels of lipoprotein. The therapies called AKCEA-APO(a)-LRx and AKCEA-APO-CIII-LRx have the potential to lower lipoprotein Lip(a) and Apo-

CIII by up to 90 percent, Novartis said in a statement on Friday.

Ionis and Akcea are eligible to receive \$225 million in near-term payments, including a \$75 million up-front option payment and a \$100 million equity investment in Ionis, Ionis said in a separate statement.

The deal would be valued at "significantly over \$1 billion" through license fees, milestone payments and royalties if both drugs are licensed and successfully commercialized, Ionis said.

Basel-based Novartis said it can exercise its options to license and commercialize the two products after they hit specified development milestones and before phase 3 trials for each programme begin.

Novartis would then be responsible for worldwide development and commercialization of both assets.

Shares in Novartis fell 14.6 percent in 2016, a steeper drop than the broader European health-care index.—Reuters

## Britain's health service in a 'humanitarian crisis' —Red Cross

LONDON — Britain's health service is engulfed in a "humanitarian crisis" that requires the support of the Red Cross to use Land Rovers to transport patients, the charity said on Saturday.

Founded in 1948, the National Health Service (NHS) is a source of huge pride for many Britons who are able to access care for free from the cradle to the grave.

But tight budgets, an ageing population and increasingly complex medical needs have combined in recent years to leave many hospitals struggling during the winter season, sparking headlines about patients being left to wait on trolleys for hours or even days.

In a statement on its website next to appeals for help in Yemen and Syria, the British Red Cross said it was now "on the front line, responding to the humanitarian crisis in our hospital and ambulance services across the country".

"This means deploying our team of emergency volunteers and even calling on our partner Land Rover to lend vehicles to transport patients and get the

system moving," said Mike Adamson, chief executive of the British Red Cross.

The NHS has always been an emotive issue in Britain — one of the richest countries in the world — and was once described by a former finance minister as the "closest thing the English have to a religion".

In recent years charities and opposition politicians have warned that government cuts to social care have resulted in more elderly and vulnerable patients being treated in hospital rather than at home, putting a huge burden on the service.

The Red Cross said it was working alongside the health service to support people in their homes to free up beds.

"We've seen people sent home without clothes, some suffer falls and are not found for days, while others are not washed because there is no carer there to help them," Adamson said.

A spokeswoman for NHS England said plans were in place to cope with increased pressure during the winter and that beds were not as full as this time last year.—Reuters

# Trump says Mexico would repay US funds spent on border wall

WASHINGTON — US President-elect Donald Trump said on Friday Mexico would repay the United States for his planned border wall, a day after news emerged that his transition team was exploring getting the Republican-led Congress to vote to approve the funding.

Trump told the New York Times he would most likely seek repayment through renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which groups the United States, Mexico and Canada.

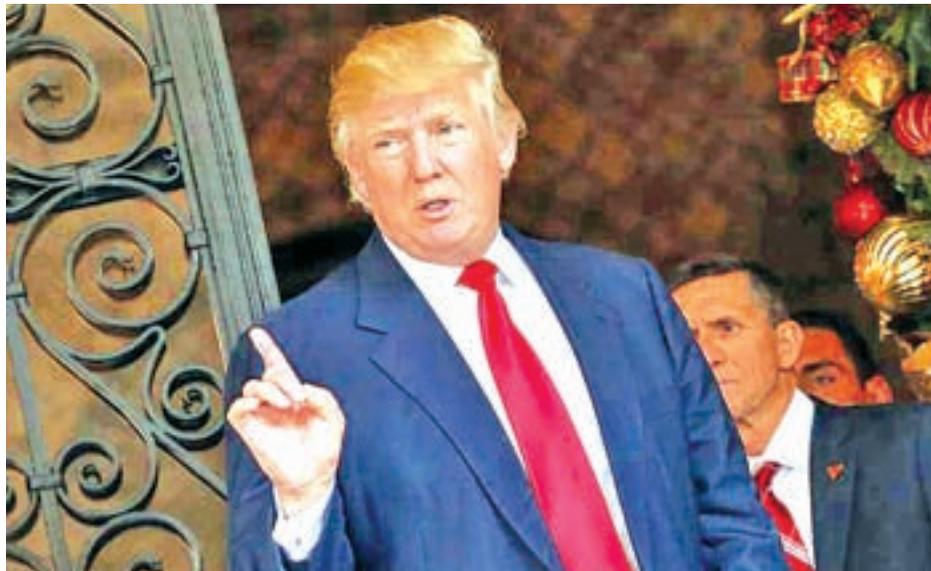
Sean Spicer, a spokesman for Trump, said on Friday the incoming administration would need government funding to build the wall and that Trump said in October Mexico's payment would be a reimbursement.

"The idea that we're going through the appropriations process and figuring out how to pay for it shouldn't be news," he told a briefing, confirming earlier reports on the funding.

Trump's promise to build a wall on the US-Mexico border, and make Mexico pay for it, was a major campaign theme and helped energize his supporters. The suggestion has infuriated Mexican officials who have said they would never agree to pay for a wall.

Trump may face resistance in Congress to the idea of the United States paying for the wall. Some Republican lawmakers worry about the high cost and question whether it is the best way to solve the complex issue of illegal migration.

Some conservative groups have called for a crackdown on benefits and jobs available to illegal mi-



US President-elect Donald Trump talks to members of the media at Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, US, on 21 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

grants, which they say are a magnet for migration.

Republican Representative Luke Messer told reporters on Friday he had proposed legislation to get Mexico to pay for the border wall by ending a child tax credit given to illegal immigrant parents, which he said cost \$4.2 billion annually.

"If you close that loophole for two years, you could pay for the higher ticket cost," Messer said, referring to one estimate that a wall could cost \$10 billion.

CNN and other media organizations reported on Friday Trump's transition team had signaled to congressional Republicans that he preferred to fund the wall through Congress as soon as April. In response, Trump tweeted that the media was not reporting that Mexico would repay money spent to build the wall.

A 'Pay for the Wall' memo Trump's team issued in early 2016 proposed pressuring Mexico by cutting off remittances from undocumented Mexicans in the

United States. It proposed amending the Patriot Act, passed after the 11 September, 2001 attacks, to include wire transfers as accounts that could be frozen.

"It's an easy decision for Mexico: make a one-time payment of \$5-10 billion to ensure that \$24 billion (in remittances) continues to flow into their country year after year," the memo said. "We have the leverage, so Mexico will back down," it said.

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto's office declined to comment on Trump's comments on Friday. In August, Pena Nieto told Trump Mexico would not pay for a border wall.

Representative Martha McSally, the Republican chair of the border and maritime security subcommittee, told Reuters a 2006 law known as the "Secure Fence Act" would give Trump the authority he needs to extend fencing or build a wall.

An internal report prepared by US Customs and Border Protection estimates initial costs for expanding

border fencing would cost over \$11.3 billion.

Building a wall would be more costly.

Trump has signaled since being elected that he would be open to fencing rather than a wall in some areas.

If funding was tied to a government funding bill, lawmakers could be forced to approve it to avoid a government shutdown. House appropriators have no interest in threatening a shutdown, spokeswoman Jennifer Hing said.

"The (appropriations) committee has not received any request from the Trump team or GOP leadership on this issue. If and when a proposal is received, we will take a careful look at it," she said. The Mexican peso MXN=, which briefly weakened about 0.2 per cent against the dollar following Trump's tweet, fell to record lows this week as Trump intensified criticism of businesses making goods in Mexico rather than in the United States.—Reuters

## US intel report — Putin directed cyber campaign to help Trump

WASHINGTON — Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an effort to help Republican Donald Trump's electoral chances by discrediting Democrat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential campaign, US intelligence agencies said in an assessment on Friday.

Russia's objectives were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate former Secretary of State Clinton, make it harder for her to win and harm her presidency if she did, an unclassified report released by the top US intelligence agency said.

"We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election," the report said. "We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump. We have high confidence in these judgments."

The report, although it omitted classified details, was the US government's starkest public description of what it says was an un-

precedented Russian campaign to manipulate the American body politic.

Reports of Russian interference in the already divisive election have roiled Washington, even as the US Congress on Friday certified Trump's victory in the Electoral College. Clinton won the popular vote by nearly 3 million ballots.

The report's conclusions, though lacking details of how the Russians may have relayed the material to WikiLeaks and others, will give ammunition to Democrats and Trump's fellow Republicans in Congress who want tougher action against Russia, setting the scene for a potential showdown with Trump.

It could also give a boost to members of Congress seeking an independent, bipartisan investigation of Russian hacking.

Trump, who has developed a rocky relationship with US spy agencies and at times disparaged their work, defended the legitimacy of his election victory after receiving a nearly two-hour briefing Friday on the report.—Reuters



A woman passes a billboard showing a pictures of US president-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Danilovgrad, Montenegro, on 16 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Berlin truck attacker may have got gun in Switzerland — report

BERLIN/ZURICH — The Tunisian man who killed 12 people last month by ploughing a truck into a Berlin Christmas market had made several trips to Switzerland and may have procured a gun there that he used to hijack a truck for the attack, German broadcaster ZDF reported.

"A lot speaks for that in the investigations so far," ZDF said of the possibility that Anis Amri, a failed asylum seeker from Tunisia, ob-

tained the gun in Switzerland.

Analysis of data from Amri's mobile phone indicated that he had visited Switzerland many times, ZDF reported, without citing its source. Amri was killed in a shootout with police in Milan on 23 December. Switzerland's Office of the Attorney General (OAG) said on Wednesday it had opened criminal proceedings in connection with the Berlin attack on 19 De-

cember. The OAG neither confirmed or denied that the suspect had stayed in Switzerland or had obtained the gun in the country.

"The OAG has opened criminal proceedings against unknown persons based on information from abroad," an OAG spokeswoman said in a statement on Saturday.

It said the information received was related to contact data linked to Amri.—Reuters

THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR  
MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY  
MYANMA OIL AND GAS ENTERPRISE  
( INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER )  
( 1 / 2017 )

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

Sr.No	Tender No	Description	Remark
(1)	IFB-079(16-17)	Spares for CNG Compressor Cooling System (7) Items	US\$
(2)	DMP/L-020(16-17)	Assorted Kind of Engineering Workshop Tools (3) Groups	Ks
(3)	DMP/L-021(16-17)	Brandt Shale Shaker Screen for NAT; 55 Series (3) Items	Ks
(4)	DMP/L-022(16-17)	Mechanical Seal for Andritz Pump(6)Items	Ks

Tender Closing Date & Time - 24-1-2017, 16:30 Hr  
Tender Document shall be available during office hours commencing from 5<sup>TH</sup> January, 2017 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

# Iraq war veteran accused of killing five at Ft. Lauderdale airport

FORT LAUDERDALE, (Fla.) — An Iraq war veteran took a gun out of his checked luggage and opened fire in a crowded baggage claim area at Fort Lauderdale's airport on Friday, killing five people, months after he showed up at an FBI office behaving erratically.

Esteban Santiago, 26, who was taken into custody immediately following the shooting and questioned at length, was expected to face federal charges in the shooting rampage, said George Piro, special agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's office in Miami.

Piro said investigators had not ruled out terrorism as a possible motive in the rampage and were reviewing the suspect's recent travel.

Santiago, who had served in the US military,



Travelers are evacuated out of the terminal and onto the tarmac after airport shooting at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Florida, US, on 6 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

had arrived in Ft Lauderdale shortly before 1 pm local time (1800 GMT) on a connecting flight from Alaska, authorities said, when he retrieved a 9mm semi-automatic handgun from his checked luggage and began firing indiscriminately.

Broward County Commissioner Chip LaMarca said on Twitter that the gunman went into a restroom to load his weapon and came out firing. Witnesses told MSNBC television he only stopped after running out of ammunition, at which point

he surrendered to police.

Cellphone video posted on social media showed travellers kneeling and treating victims on the floor next to a carousel. At least two victims had pools of blood from apparent head wounds.

The gunman, who wore

a "Star Wars" T-shirt, said nothing as he fired, witnesses told MSNBC.

"This is a senseless act of evil," Florida Governor Rick Scott told reporters.

A White House spokesman said President Barack Obama had spoken to Scott and Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief and had extended his condolences to the loved ones of the victims.

In addition to the five killed, eight others were wounded by gunfire and some three dozen were taken to local hospitals with bruises or broken bones suffered in the chaos surrounding the shooting massacre.

Piro said that Santiago had turned up at an FBI office in Anchorage in November of last year behaving erratically and was turned over to local police, who

took him to a medical facility for a mental evaluation.

A federal law enforcement official told Reuters that Santiago told agents at the Anchorage office in November that his mind was being controlled by a US intelligence agency, which was ordering him to watch Islamic State videos.

Santiago served from 2007 to 2016 in the Puerto Rico National Guard and Alaska National Guard including a deployment to Iraq from 2010 to 2011, according to the Pentagon.

A private first class and combat engineer, he received half a dozen medals before being transferred to the inactive ready reserve in August last year.

An aunt said he came back from his deployment "a different person," MSNBC reported.—Reuters

## Scotland says could put secession on hold if UK avoids 'hard Brexit'

LONDON — Scotland could suspend its drive to become independent if Britain avoids a "hard Brexit" in which it loses access to the European Union's single market, the head of its secessionist government said on Friday.

Nicola Sturgeon said she still wanted Scotland to remain a member of the EU, but was open to finding a Brexit deal that suited all parts of the United Kingdom.

While the UK voted narrowly in favour of leaving the EU in last June's referendum, Scottish voters wanted to stay by a margin of two to one.

Last month, the devolved Scottish government set out its thinking on Brexit, including Sturgeon's preferred option of an independent Scotland that remains in the EU.

"I've been willing, and am willing, to put aside my preferred option of independence in the EU to see if we can explore a consensus and compromise option," Sturgeon told BBC radio.

However, she added that any suspension of the drive towards independence would be temporary.

"I'm never going to stop arguing for independence," she said. "I think Scotland will become inde-



Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon arrives to deliver a statement on Brexit during a session of Scotland's Parliament at Holyrood in Edinburgh, on 20 December, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

pendent and I think that's the direction of travel."

British Prime Minister Theresa May intends to launch the two-year process of negotiation to leave the EU by the end of March and some members of her government have suggested this could include paying to maintain access to the

single market. But a former top UK official at European Commission warned on Friday that Britain will not be able to buy access to the single market following its exit from the EU, casting doubt on mooted government plans for Britain's future relationship with the bloc.—Reuters

## The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Yangon Region Government Yagon City Development Committee Invitation for Bids

Date 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017

Name of Project: Installation, Maintenance and Operation of Street Furniture Items in the City of Yangon.

1. YCDC invites bids from the interested bidders for the Installation, Maintenance and Operation of Street Furniture Items and the grant of an exclusive right to advertise on the street furniture items in the City of Yangon.

2. The interested bidders may obtain further information about this invitation for bids from the following office during office hours:

Engineering Department (Road and Bridge), Yangon City Development Committee, City Hall, Yangon.

Telephone no. 09-431 93314

3. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased upon submission of a written application to the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Kyat 50000 (fifty thousand kyats only) to YCDC..

4. Bids documents shall be delivered in person to the above office on or before 15 hrs. on 17th February 2017. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Any bid submitted after the designated date and time will be rejected.

5. All Bids must be accompanied by bid security (tender guarantee) in the amount of Kyat 300,000,000 or USD 250,000 issued by local bank as described in the bidding documents.

6. Bids will be opened in a session to be held at the office of Yagon City Development Committee in the presence of representatives of the bidders on the date and time as may be notified to the bidders.

Yangon City Development Committee

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING  
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANTRA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2017 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

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 8.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T./A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

## Trump blasts 'Apprentice' ratings; Schwarzenegger cites Lincoln

NEW YORK — US President-elect Donald Trump on Friday mocked his "Apprentice" successor Arnold Schwarzenegger over ratings for the TV show, sparking a Twitter fight between America's two biggest celebrities-turned-politicians.

Former action movie star Schwarzenegger responded by suggesting that Trump turn his attention to his work as the nation's new president. He quoted Civil War-era President Abraham Lincoln in advising Trump.

Trump, who became a household name as the tough host of "The Apprentice" and sister show "The Celebrity Apprentice" for 14 seasons, slammed a 43 per cent fall in the 18-to-49-year-old audience for the new TV show hosted by Schwarzenegger, which premiered on NBC earlier this week.



Host Arnold Schwarzenegger (4<sup>th</sup> L) and cast members (L-R) Nicole Polizzi, Brooke Burke-Charvet, Tyra Banks, Ricky Williams, and Patrick Knapp Schwarzenegger participate in a panel for 'The New Celebrity Apprentice' in Universal City, California, on 9 December 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

"Wow, the ratings are in and Arnold Schwarzenegger got 'swamped' (or destroyed) by comparison to the ratings machine, DJT," tweeted Trump, who controversially retains an executive producer credit on the reality show.

"So much for being a movie star — and that was season 1 compared to season 14. Now compare him to my season 1," he added.

Schwarzenegger, a Republican who served two terms as California governor but who has said he did not vote for Trump, responded swiftly.

"I wish you the best of luck and I hope you'll work for ALL of the American people as aggressively as you worked for your ratings," the "Terminator" actor tweeted.

He then asked Trump to study a quote from Lincoln's inaugural

address in 1861, about bringing Americans together, saying he hoped it would serve as an inspiration.

"We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies," the quote begins. Some 20 million Americans were regular watchers of "The Apprentice" in the show's first year, falling to around 6 million in 2015 for the last episode of "The Celebrity Apprentice" hosted by Trump.

The TV audience for Monday's revamped show with Schwarzenegger in the boardroom was 11 million, with a larger, 43 per cent, drop-off in the 18-49-year-old demographic coveted by advertisers compared with the show's last premiere in 2015, Nielsen data showed. Trump will be inaugurated as US president on 20 January. —Reuters

## Hollywood's superheroes, family fare boosted by China in 2016

LOS ANGELES — China's moviegoers embraced big-screen superheroes, cartoon animals and a video game-turned-action flick in 2016, adding \$1.8 billion in ticket sales to Hollywood's 20 highest-grossing films of the year.

The revenue from the world's second-largest movie market accounted for 13 per cent of the \$13.5 billion generated by the top 20 movies from US studios, according to a Reuters analysis of data from tracking firm Box Office Mojo. That was triple the 4 per cent level five years ago.

The numbers illustrate China's growing importance to US studios such as Walt Disney Co's (DIS.N) Disney Studios, Time Warner Inc's (TWX.N) Warner Bros. and Comcast Corp's (CMCSA.O) Universal Pictures.

While China's booming box office growth stalled this year in single digits, the country remains vital for Hollywood studios, box office analysts said. In 2016, China overtook the United States as the country with the largest number of movie screens.

Most of the top Hollywood movies would have reached the top of the film charts without China. But the additional revenue is significant, especially for blockbuster films that can cost \$200 million or more to make.

"You can grab an extra hundred million (dollars) of revenue from the Chinese market," said Jonathan Papish, film industry analyst for China Film Insider. "You can't do that anywhere else in the world."

Walt Disney Co's (DIS.N) animated "Zootopia," known in China as "Crazy Animal City," was Hollywood's biggest hit there, with \$236 million in ticket sales, and ranked as the third-highest-grossing movie worldwide. China's film

authorities extended the movie's theatrical run by two weeks beyond the typical 30 days for foreign films.

"Zootopia" was followed by Legendary Entertainment's "Warcraft," a video game adaptation that flopped in the United States and Canada but scored \$221 million in China, more than half of its worldwide total. It would not have landed among the year's top 20 films without the revenue in China.

Next in China was "Captain America: Civil War" from Disney's Marvel Studios, which rang up \$190 million, as superhero stories continued to lure Chinese crowds. Other family-oriented fare performed well in Chinese theaters, including Disney's "The Jungle Book" and DreamWorks Animation's "Kung Fu Panda 3."

"Family films have been doing better and better" in China, said Rob Cain, a consultant and partner at Pacific Bridge Pictures. "As the

market expands into third- and fourth-tier cities, less in major urban areas, it's becoming more of a family business."

US studios have tried to cater to Chinese audiences, in some cases filming in China or adding Chinese film stars. Not all of Hollywood's blockbusters are permitted in China.

The country allows 34 foreign imports in its theaters annually under a revenue-sharing agreement reached five years ago. The studios behind each film take home 25 per cent of ticket sales.

Hollywood executives hope the number of films will increase when US and Chinese negotiators meet to hammer out a new deal this year. Studios also are lobbying for a share of revenue higher than 25 per cent. The outcome of those talks is uncertain after the inauguration as US president later this month of Donald Trump, who has criticized China's trade policies.—Reuters



A group of fans dressed in homemade replica armour of "Avengers: Age of Ultron" movie characters, Iron Man, Captain America and Thor, watch the film in a theatre in Changchun, Jilin province, China, on 16 May 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## "Bright Lights" documentary captures Fisher-Reynolds bond



Actress Debbie Reynolds poses with her daughter actress Carrie Fisher backstage after accepting her Lifetime Achievement award at the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles, California on 25 January 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Fisher Stevens feels like he's in a dream. A strange dream.

Ten days after the shocking deaths of Carrie Fisher and, one day later, her mother Debbie Reynolds, the documentary Stevens made about their bond is coming to television.

"The beauty is that we caught Carrie and Debbie at that time where they kind of become best friends again. There were moments in their lives where they, you know, they had their ups and downs, didn't speak all the time," Stevens told Reuters.

"But by this point, and the reason I think Carrie wanted to do the film, was that she was so grateful and in love with her mother, you know?"

"Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds," will be shown on HBO on Saturday 7 January. The release date was moved up after 1950s Hollywood musical star Reynolds,

84, died of a stroke a day after her "Star Wars" actress daughter, 60, passed away following a heart attack on an international flight.

"I just keep thinking that this is a weird dream. So it hasn't really hit me," said Stevens.

"They were such larger than life characters and they lived this incredibly big Hollywood story. And so... it does make sense how it ended in a weird way. But you just never would have expected it."

Stevens and co-director Alexis Bloom spent 18 months with the two actresses after Fisher suggested the film. They began by filming Reynolds' stage act.

The former MGM star was "doing her vocal warm-ups or movement exercises, getting ready for the show, working out, warming up. And you know, she had energy, but when she hit that stage, wow! She just exploded, she was incredible," Stevens said.—Reuters

# London relaunches its menswear fashion week, Brexit casts shadow

LONDON — London re-launched its menswear fashion week on Friday with a new name and quirky designs as the city seeks to hold on to its status as a creativity hub following Britain's vote to leave the European Union.

In contrast to fashion capital rivals like Paris, Milan and New York, London showcases fewer big brands during men's fashion week, giving room to emerging hot talents to present their creations.

"The point of difference in London is that you have a real wealth of young, creative talent matched with these established, heritage businesses," Caroline Rush, chief executive of the British Fashion Council (BFC), told Reuters.

Among the first brands presenting on Friday was high street label Topman

Design. It looked to the 1990s "pubbing and clubbing scene" for a collection of loose sweaters with logos, fringed tops, neon coloured jackets and wide-leg jeans. Models wore high-waisted trousers with check print jackets, sports shoes and a single dangly earring.

The event first launched in 2012 as three days of catwalk shows known as London Collections: Men, but rebranded this year as London Fashion Week Men's running over four days.

Hanging over this year's fashion shows are Britain's looming divorce talks with the EU. A BFC survey ahead of the referendum in June revealed more than 90 percent of 290 designers wanted to remain in the bloc.

"We've got to abide by the results and make sure



A model is styled backstage of the Xander Zhou catwalk show during London Fashion Week Men's 2017 in London, Britain, on 6 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Brexit works for the fashion industry and for our country too," London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who campaigned for Britain to remain a member

of the EU, told Reuters at the launch.

"They want to make sure we can continue to attract talent."

According to data quoted by the BFC, the men's clothing market grew by 4.1 percent to 14.1 billion pounds (\$17.36 bil-

lion) in Britain in 2015. Menswear accounted for 25 percent of the total clothing market.

Some brands such as Vivienne Westwood will present womenswear together with menswear at the event as a growing number of designers opt for mixed-gender catwalk shows.

However many, including British luxury label Burberry, are doing so during the higher-profile biannual women's fashion weeks, raising questions over the future of separate menswear events.

"Certainly the men's market is incredibly strong, the womenswear market is incredibly strong and as it stands at the moment there is a definite validity to have two very strong fashion weeks," Rush said. —Reuters

## Chef Jamie Oliver to shut six UK restaurants over Brexit uncertainty

LONDON — British celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's eponymous group of Italian restaurants said on Friday it would close six of its UK eateries, citing pressures and uncertainty after the country voted to leave the European Union.

"As every restaurant owner knows, this is a tough market and post-Brexit, the pressures and unknowns have made it even harder," said Simon Blagden, CEO of the Jamie Oliver Restaurant group, which also includes high street restaurants such as Fifteen, Barbecoa and Union Jacks.

"Because we refuse to compromise on the quality and provenance of our ingredients and our com-

mitment to training and developing our staff, we need restaurants that can serve an average of 3,000 covers every week to be sustainable," he added in a statement.

Imports to Britain have become more expensive since sterling plunged in the wake of last June's Brexit vote.

The Group said it would look to sell its 'Jamie's Italian' restaurants in Aberdeen, Cheltenham, Exeter, Ludgate, Richmond and Tunbridge Wells in the first quarter.

Blagden said the group would refocus UK strategy on its Barbecoa brand, with two planned UK openings for it this year — along with 22 planned openings

for the Jamie's Italian brand abroad.

The company said it would move affected employees to its other restaurants and would help others

find alternative employment.

The closures represent less than 5 per cent of total turnover, it added. — Reuters



Chef Jamie Oliver slices fish during an appearance on a TV show in Miami Beach, Florida on 22 February, 2008. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Hakuho leads traditional new year stomping ceremony in Tokyo

TOKYO — Mongolian Hakuho led the best sumo wrestlers in welcoming in the New Year with a traditional foot-stomping performance at Tokyo's famed Meiji Shrine on Friday.

Hundreds of spectators, wrapped up on a cold day in Tokyo, cheered as Hakuho, in traditional dress, performed the ritual at the shrine ahead of the first event of the year on Sunday.

"I'd like to show performances that will make sumo fans remember me as powerful warrior of this era," said the 31-year-old Hakuho, who has won a record 37 top division

championships in his career. Hakuho's compatriots and fellow Yokozunas Harumafuji and Kakuryu also attended the ceremony.

Some Japanese expressed their dismay that foreign-born wrestlers were winning the top title of Yokozuna, or grand champion.

"Sumo wrestling is a Japanese sport so it's a little sad to see Japanese wrestlers lose to foreigners," said 16-year-old Haruka Katsuragawa. The last Japanese-born wrestler to hold the rank of Yokozuna was Wakonohana, who retired in 2000. —Reuters



Mongolian-born grand sumo champion Yokozuna Hakuho performs the New Year's ring-entering rite at the annual celebration for the New Year at Meiji Shrine in Tokyo, Japan, on 6 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

### mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(8-1-2017 07:00am ~ 9-1-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Those Who Never Give Up (Ep-6) In Pursuit of a dream
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The Longest Living Siblings (Part-1)
08:47	Am	A Historic Town: 9 Pagodas
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Travelogue: Trekking Around Kalaw Township
09:42	Am	Myanmar Weaving
09:54	Am	Temple Stalls
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	Myanmar Traditional Bullock-Cart & Equestrian Racing

10:35	Am	Myanmar Agarwood
10:49	Am	Mobile House

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

#### Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Travelogue: Ngwe Saung Beach
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar: Yangon Night Market
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Writer, Philanthropist: Daw Than Myint Aung (Part-2)
08:48	Pm	Beauties of Makyee Island — Island of Tamarind Tree

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~11:00 Am)  
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Saturday Repeat (07:00 Am~11:00Am)  
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – [www.myanmaritv.com/schedule](http://www.myanmaritv.com/schedule))

# Dimitrov stuns Raonic to set up Nishikori final



Japan's Kei Nishikori.  
PHOTO: REUTERS

BRISBANE — Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov upset top seed and defending champion Milos Raonic of Canada at the Brisbane International on Saturday to set up a title clash against Japan's Kei Nishikori.

Seventh seed Dimitrov saved a set point in the opener on his way to a 7-6(7) 6-2 win over world number three Raonic in 88 minutes in the second semi-final at the Pat Rafter Arena.

World number five Nishikori had an almost identical win against Swiss US Open champion Stan Wawrinka, who went down 7-6(3) 6-3 in the first semi-final of the warmup event for this month's Australian Open.

There was little to separate Dimitrov and 2016 Wimbledon finalist Raonic in the first set, both players

making the most of their big serves and not offering a single break-point opportunity.

Dimitrov managed to nose ahead by edging the first set tie-break 9-7 before racing away in the second with two breaks of serve to seal the match.

"I couldn't imagine a better scenario for sure," Dimitrov said in a court-side interview. "I have a lot of respect for him and it's always a pleasure playing against him. "Right now I am just focussed on my performance. In previous matches I wasn't returning as well. Against Milos, the only chance you have is to get into a rally against him."

Dimitrov has never won against his opponent in Sunday's final with Nishikori enjoying a 3-0 head-to-head record.

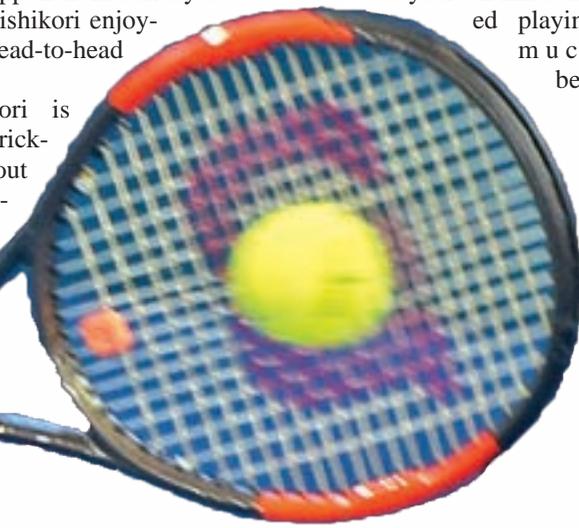
"Nishikori is one of the trickiest players out there," Dimitrov added. "He has a tremendous fighting spirit and has improved his game quite a bit. "He has quite a few weapons if you think about it. It's not

going to be an easy match for sure. But I am focussed on myself and what I need to improve and what I need to get better for Melbourne."

Nishikori, the 2014 US Open finalist, won five of the final six points in the tiebreaker to claim the first set. After an early exchange of breaks in the second, the Rio Olympic bronze medallist got the decisive break in the seventh game.

"I'm feeling very happy to be in the final tomorrow. I've tried many times and this is the first time to get to Sunday in Brisbane," the 27-year-old said.

"Especially beating Stan today, it's been a good start to the year. "Dimi started playing much better



ter last year, especially at the end of the season. He's going to be a tough opponent." —Reuters

## Wenger regrets Wilshere loan as injuries hit Arsenal

LONDON — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is now regretting his decision to allow Jack Wilshere to go on loan to Bournemouth this season after Francis Coquelin's injury left him with only two senior central midfielders available in Aaron Ramsey and Granit Xhaka.

Coquelin joined long-term absentee Santi Cazorla and Mesut Ozil on the sidelines and with Egypt's Mohamed Elneny heading to the African Nations Cup, Wenger is short of options for Saturday's FA Cup clash against Preston North End.

"Yes, I could use Wilshere now. What looks unfair at some moment in the season is that you know at some stage you could need the player," Wenger said when asked if he regretted allowing the 25-year-old to leave.—Reuters

## Guardiola wants City to become "believers"

LONDON — Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola had his spirits cheered with a 5-0 FA Cup thrashing of West Ham United on Friday that the Spaniard hopes will turn his side into "believers" for the rest of the campaign.

City came into the third round encounter at the London Stadium having won four of their last five Premier League games, but a seven-point deficit to Chelsea at the top of the table and some inconsistent recent displays had opened the door to criticism.

The City boss had cut a terse figure following their Premier League victory over Burnley on Monday, giving a tetchy post-match interview having grimly hinted at his own retirement in the build-up.

A comprehensive win at the London Stadium, however, the heaviest home defeat ever inflicted on West Ham in the competi-

tion, gave him cause for optimism and he called on his players to take inspiration from the way they got the job done.

"Finally, we were able to keep the ball more than the last games, where it was almost impossible, so we played much, much better in that sense. We create more chances when that happens and we concede few and of course it helps us a lot," he told the BBC.

"Always it is important to

win away, it's not easy at West Ham in the cup.

"Hopefully it can help us to make our players believers that they are good enough to play every game. They have to believe they are able to compete wherever."

City were irresistible as they tore into West Ham, taking the lead from the penalty spot through Yaya Toure, who has seemingly been reinstated as a pivotal presence in the City squad having been frozen out at the start of the campaign.

An own goal from Havard Nordtveit and an effort from David Silva gave the visitors a 3-0 halftime lead while Sergio Aguero and John Stones, who netted his first goal for the club, wrapped up victory in the second half.

"I should have scored in previous games," Stones said. It's nice to get one in a special cup."

"I thought we moved the ball well," the England defender added. "We changed our system and played with a diamond. It worked really well.

"To get a clean sheet was good — we haven't had too many."—Reuters



West Ham United's Adrian saves from Manchester City's Sergio Aguero at London Stadium on 6 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS