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## President pays homage to Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws and seeks advice

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw paid homage to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws and sought Ovada from them at Vijaya Mingalar Dhamma Hall on Kaba Aye Hillcock yesterday afternoon.

First, the President supplicated religious affairs before saying he was delighted to see the venerable abbots healthy enough to walk without any assistance and that it was encouraging for the Sasana and to seek Ovada from the abbots.

Afterwards, Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bharmo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa delivered Ovada on Dana, Peyyavijja, Athacariya and Samanatta.

Later, the Chairman and Sayadaws were presented offertories by the President, Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and officials. —Myanmar News Agency



President U Htin Kyaw donates offertories to Sayadaws. PHOTO: MNA



Dr Win Myat Aye (R) and Ms Retno L P Marsudi (L) sign agreement on humanitarian assistance for Rakhine. PHOTO: MNA

## Indonesian FM presents humanitarian aid for Rakhine State

A ceremony to deliver humanitarian aid donated by the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in accordance with the policy of the Union Government of Myanmar was held at the meeting hall of the Rakhine State Government yesterday morning.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno L P Marsudi explained the purpose of the humanitarian aid before she, on behalf of the

Indonesian Government, and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye signed an agreement for the aid. Later, they posed for documentary photos with the guests.

The humanitarian aid included 10,000 articles of clothing, 1,500 boxes of dried noodles, 1,050 boxes of children's nutritional supplements and 920 bags of flour.

The union minister and the Indonesian foreign minister later attended a ceremony to hand over two schools in Letmache Village and Thetkalpyin Village in Sittway donated by the PLPU, an Indonesian NGO.

Later, they visited the childcare centre founded by the ABC Foundation in Mingan Ward and presented food and cash donations for the children. —Myanmar News Agency

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## British foreign secretary visits Yangon



British foreign secretary Mr. Noris Johnson visits Yangon General Hospital. PHOTO: MNA

A delegation led by British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson visited Yangon General Hospital yesterday morning, the final day of his three-day visit.

Dr. Aye Ko Ko, superintendent of the hospital, explained recent renovations to the hospital and healthcare services provided before the delegation toured the wards and visited patients.

Later in the day, a dinner hosted in honour of the British foreign secretary was held at the house of the British ambassador and attended by National Security Advisor U Thaung Tun, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon

Mayor U Maung Maung Soe and Yangon Region Cabinet ministers and guests.

Earlier in the day, the British foreign secretary visited Shwe Dagon Pagoda.

On Friday, the British foreign secretary visited Nay Pyi Taw, where he met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and discussed Myanmar's change to a democratic government and pledged Britain's full support of the effort.

Johnson said: "Myanmar's transition to democracy is not yet complete but it is worth reflecting on just how far Myanmar has come since Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League

for Democracy party took office just nine months ago. Launching a major new peace initiative, establishing a commission led by Kofi Annan to resolve tensions in Rakhine and releasing more than 300 political prisoners are positive steps. It is clear that many challenges remain and full reform will take time.

"The UK, as a longstanding and long-term friend to Myanmar, will continue to offer its fullest support. I look forward to seeing Burma continue to develop into a country where there is peace and prosperity for all its people," in a statement released by the British Foreign Office. — *Myanmar News Agency*

## Government needs to control car import

GOVERNMENT needs to control systematically the import of motor vehicles either individually or through showrooms and sale centers, said Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, chairman of Supervisory Committee for Motor Vehicle Importing under the Ministry of Commerce on Friday at the Supervisory Committee for Mo-

tor Vehicle Importing (1/2017) meeting.

"Our committee needs to control the vehicle import. We need to take account of the repressions upon issue of model year restriction rule. Whatever we do, we should be proactive in our draining of plans," he added.

The inspection teams were

formed in February 2016 to conduct field inspection tours of the car showrooms and sale centers to ensure that the car importing companies comply with the rules and regulations.

The government has already granted import of 350,852 vehicles as of 30 December, 2016.— *Myitmakha News Agency*



File photo shows cars are crawling during the rush hour in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

## EU will buy legally traded timber only

THE Mon state government is ready to comply with Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT-VPA) according to which Myanmar and European Union members are required to be engaged only in legal trading of forest products, said U Min Min Oo, Chief Minister of Mon State government.

"Our state government is ready to comply with FLEGT-VPA. I want to urge the respective government departments, private businessmen and civil society organisations (CSOs) to co-operate with positive attitudes," he added.

The UK government will provide over 4 million pounds to implement FLEGT-VPA in Myanmar. Currently, both governments are taking necessary measures to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

"Both governments are sharing the information, and will legally discuss to reach an agreement between the two countries. Then, they will sign a MoU," said an official from the Mon

state forestry department.

The project is aimed to reduce negative impact from illegal logging and timber production in European countries. The project encourages not only legal timber production and trading but also development of the ability of forestry governance in order that illegal timber production can be reduced.

"Deforestation occurs in Myanmar because of weak forestry governance. There will be deforestation as long as there is illegal timber trading. So we need to eliminate the illegal timber trade. Myanmar needs to participate in FLEGT-VPA," U Kyaw Tun, the facilitator from FLEGT.

Myanmar's forestry coverage was 61 per cent in 1975, which went down to 47 per cent in 2010. Myanmar's deforestation rate between 1990 and 2010 was 0.95 per cent. An official from the forestry department said the causes of deforestation include illegal logging and timber trading. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

## Fallow and virgin land Management Central Committee held the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting

THE fallow and virgin land management central committee held its 4th meeting in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation meeting hall on Thursday, it is learnt.

The land management central committee was vested with the power to manage the fallow and virgin land across the nation in accordance with the remarks of the ministry of planning and finance. The land management central committee has already submitted a proposal to collect the land tax beginning from 2017-2018 financial year to Union government, it is learnt from

the meeting.

The land management central committee is granting the land to those farmers and businessmen who will really use the land which have not been put under cultivation for four consecutive years, said an official.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu, Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw and Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win, permanent secretary Dr. Tin Htut, directors-general, deputy directors-general and members of the Central Committee. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

## Number of tourists entering from Tachilek border increases

OVER 200,000 tourists visited Myanmar from the Tachilek border gate in 2016, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Tourists who visited Myanmar from the Tachilek border gate enjoyed visiting attractions in Tachilek, Mongphyat, Kengtung, Taunggyi, Inlay, Bagan, Mandalay, Yangon and

Kyaikhtiyo, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Most of the tourists who visited Myanmar were Thai and Chinese citizens and other tourists who visited Myanmar via Thailand.

Thailand topped the list of tourists who visited Myanmar, followed by the Chinese and the Japanese tourists.— *Min Min*

## Pa-O ethnic people in Mon State meet for National-Level Political Dialogue

A meeting of Pa-O people in Mon State for a preliminary National-Level Political Dialogue was held at the Taikkyoung Monastery in Aleywa Village in Thaton Township, Mon State.

“Under the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement, it is necessary to organise political dialogues including the 21st Century Panglong Conference and we are preparing for the national-level political dialogue for the entire Pa-O people,” U Khun Myint Tun, Chairman of the organisation committee for national-level political dialogue.

National-Level Political Dialogue for Pa-O ethnic people is scheduled in Shan State (North)

with about 500 representatives of the ethnic group across the country.

Fifty representatives will be chosen from Mon State at the ongoing meeting.

U Khun Myint Tun and UP-DJC member U Khun Tun Shwe explained the development of the NCA and National-Level Political Dialogues, and participants discussed matters related to establishing a democratic federal union, ethnic rights and roles of women and youths before selecting the representatives.

About 100 Pa-O ethnic people participated in the meeting.—*Thet Oo (Thaton)*



Pa-O ethnic people in Mon State attend political dialogue in Thaton. PHOTO: THET OO (THATON)

## Nobel Myanmar Literary Festival to be held on grand scale

NOBEL Myanmar Literary Festival-2017 will be held on a grand scale at the National Theatre in Yangon on 22nd, 23rd and 24th January.

U Maw Lin, Chairman of the Organization Committee for the literary festival said that it is the third time since the first such festival was held in Myanmar, with the first event highlighting literature and peace, the second focusing on children's literature and third one on literature, which mainly appeals to those who start reading books and literary enthusiasts, before saying that will the country be able to enjoy progress only when its literature has developed.

He also said that literary festival and a book fair will also be

held in front of the theatre and the opening ceremony will be held in two agendas before saying that rare books will also be available at the book fair.

U Win Cho, Secretary of the organizing committee, said that there will also be seven topics on literature and U Maw Lin will facilitate the topic on literature nursery while Saya Munag Khin Min, Saya Thitsar Ni, Sayar Myayalatt Maung Myint Thu and Saya Nye-in Min will participate in the discussions of the topic.

The festival will feature 24 rare book shop and 150 new bookshops, morning free-of-charge Monthingha, afternoon Myanmar traditional drum entertainments and about 200 cartoons.—*Yi Yi Myint and Ohmar Thant*



National Theatre is decorated for hosting Nobel-Myanmar Literary Festival. PHOTO: YI YI MYINT



Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein sees off Speaker U Win Myint at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: MNA

## Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw leaves for Britain

A Hluttaw delegation led by Speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint left for Britain yesterday morning at the invitation from Speaker of the House of Commons Rt. Hon. Mr. John Bercow.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Yangon Region Chief Minis-

ter U Phyo Min Thein, Speaker of Yangon Region Hluttaw U Tin Maung Tun, Deputy Speaker of Yangon Region Hluttaw U Linn Naing Myint, representatives of Hluttaw and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw's office.

Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw Citizens' Fundamental Rights Affairs Committee U

Saw, member of Bill Committee U Zaw Win, member of Hluttaw Rights Committee U Sai San Thein, member of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee Dr. Daw Shwe Pon and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw's office accompanied Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## UN Rights envoy holds press conference in Yangon

MS YANGHEE LEE, UN's Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, held a press conference in Yangon Friday, calling for building trust between the two communities in northern Rakhine.

During her 12-day visit, she visited Kachin, Rakhine and Mon States as well as Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw.

During her visit to northern Rakhine, she visited the border outposts where the 9 October attacks occurred, four villages in northern Rakhine and the prison in Buthidaung.

She also met with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Union ministers, the Attorney-General, MPs from parliamentary committees, the Rakhine State Peace and Development Committee and the Investigation Commission on Maungdaw.

During her visit to Yangon, Ms Yanghee Lee held talks with responsible personnel of the Peace Commission at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre and Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, officials of the Insein Prison and Myanmar Press Council.

She also visited a hard labour camp in Zin Gyaik, Mon State.

Ms Yanghee Lee arrived



Ms Yanghee Lee talks to reporters at the press conference in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

in Myanmar on 8 January to assess the recent developments in the human rights situation in the country, especially in northern Rakhine, where coordinated attacks by violent armed insurgents killed nine police officers.

At the press conference, she condemned the deadly October 9 attacks on the border guard posts.

In the security clearance operations that have followed, Ms Lee urged government forces to perform their duties within the law.

“It would be particularly important for the security forces to

always act within the parameters of the rule of law and in compliance with human rights,” Ms. Lee said.

The envoy, however, expressed optimism, saying government officials are committed to improve the situation.

“From my meetings and conversations with the state counselor and various officials, I can see their genuine commitment and dedication in improving the lives of all in Myanmar,” she said.

She called for stepping up efforts for increasing humanitarian aid to northern Rakhine State.—*GNLM*

## Myanmar Ramayana story to be performed at Panda Hotel



File photo shows artistes perform Ramayana play last year. PHOTO: MYANMA ALIN

A Myanmar Ramayana play will be performed to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Pyapon Township Association (Yangon). The anniversary will be celebrated at Panda Hotel on Sunday, it is learnt.

At the ceremony, the annual

general meeting of the Pyapon Township Association will be held and members of the association will elect a new executive committee, pay respects to elderly people over the age of 80, honour those who were awarded literary and music medals by the

government and present prizes to those who have passed the matriculation exam with at least three distinctions.

Shwe Taung Pan theatrical troupes will perform dance and music, it is learnt.—*Myanmar Alin*

## Local residents want IWT to run ships in Rakhine coastal region

LOCAL residents from the Rakhine coast who rely on water transport want the government to resume the operation of ships in the Rakhine coastal region, it is learnt.

The State government stopped running vessels in Rakhine coastal region in 2015, when Aung Dagun vessel capsized. Since then, authorities have banned the running of old vessels in the coastal area. But this has made local people suffer, because they now have to depend on express ships that are charging exorbitant prices,

according to the local residents.

“Previously, we had to pay from Ks 500 to Ks 3,000, depending on the travelling distance, when we used the government-run ships. Now we have to pay from Ks 8,000 to Ks 21,000 per head when we ride on the private ships,” said U Soe Naing, a local resident.

Local residents are currently using privately owned ships such as the She Pyay Tan, the Malikha and the Maykha.

“A new ship from Japan will arrive in March, 2017. We

will run this new ship for coastal routes. Another new ship will also arrive in April 2017. We understand the difficulty of the passengers’ problem,” said U Aung Kyaw Zan, Minister for Rakhine State Electric Power and Road Transportation.

There are 3,000 to 5,000 passengers dependent on water transport. The Rakhine city of Sittwe is well-connected and accessible to Kyaukpyu, Taungup, Yathedaung, Buthidaung, Minbya, Manaung through waterways. — *Myitmakha News Agency*

## Ayeyawady dolphins population to be updated

TO prevent the extinction of dolphins and to update their population in Ayeyawady River between Bhamo and Mandalay, a survey will be conducted by the Fisheries Department together with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), said U Han Win, a

Dolphin Specialist from Mandalay Fisheries Department.

According to 2016 February data, there were 65 dolphins in Mandalay and Bhamo towns, three died within 2016.

“The Ayeyawady dolphins are listed as scarce species. We

will update the population of dolphin this year because we want to know the exact number of dolphins to prevent their extinction, he added.

Although there are 25 dolphins in Mandalay area and 40 dolphins in Bhamo town, three dolphins died: one on 15 August, the other on 13 September and the third one on 13 November.

“Data will be collected with the use of a small boat and a ship. When they are searching the dolphin, they will use the GPS system, 7x50 mm lens, depth meter, sounder and cameras,” said the WCS manager. The Ayeyawady dolphins will come up to the water surface every 30 to 60 secs. The Ayeyawady dolphins do not jump like the sea dolphins, they only swim slowly, it is learnt.—*Aung Thant Khine*



Ayeyawady dolphins population to be updated.

## Authorities mediate between mining companies and labourers in Phakant

AUTHORITIES are intervening in the conflicts between mining companies and the migrant miners labourers in Phakant Township, Kachin State, according to U Tint Soe, the representative from State Hluttaw Phakant township Constituency 2 on Monday.

“The region has so many problems. So, we tried to solve them as much as possible. Especially, we have a lot of squatters in the region. There are over 10,000 squatter houses in our region. The squatter houses were built at the jade mines, and so they suffer from landslides, house collapses. We tried to mediate whenever conflicts break out between company officials

and stone-collecting labourers,” said U Tint Soe, State Hluttaw representative.

“The conflicts between companies and manual labourers are big issues. The region also has valuable jade stones. There will not be conflicts if they try to understand each other,” he added.

There are many jade hunters killed in landslides while they were excavating in Phakant Township. Many jade stone dealers, whose businesses are of manageable scale, and jade hunters are engaged in the jade business in the region. Administrators and Hluttaw representatives often have to mediate between stone companies and hand pickers.—*Myitmakha News Agency*

## Crime NEWS

## Heroin and stimulant tablets seized

A combined team comprised of members of Anti-drug Unit (3) and the Mohnyin Police searched a Toyota Probox on the road near Whekhar Village in Hpakanton Friday and seized 1,046 stimulant tablets and 11 grams of broken stimulant tablets from Daw Sint.

In a separate incident, police from Kyauktalone Station searched the house of Khun Tun Aung in Naungka Village in Taunggyi and found 800 stimulant tabletson Thursday.

Police from Momeik Police Station also seized 44 grams of heroin and 690 stimulant tablets



Daw Sint. PHOTO: MPF

from Soe Thwin, who was travelling on a footpath in the jungle.

Action has been taken against all the suspects under the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Law. —*MPF*

## Traffic accident on Yangon-Mandalay Expressway claims eight lives

A Toyota Hiace heading to Yangon from Nay Pyi Taw crashed into the aluminum road divider between Mile-posts 4/1 and 4/2 on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway before it caught fire, killing eight out of the nine passengers, including seven women, and injuring one male passenger yesterday morning.

Police and the fire brigade rushed to the scene and sent the bodies and the injured male passenger to Hlegu Hospital.

The passengers on the vehicle were from Hexagon Construction Company in Thingangyun, Yangon.

They were reportedly on their return trip from a Bagan pilgrimage. *Than Oo (Lemyathnar)*



PHOTO: BY EXPRESSWAY POLICE

# Chinese state media hopes for best with Trump, prepares for worst

BEIJING — Chinese state media on Saturday said that it hoped the new US administration of President Donald Trump understood the importance of relations with China, but that Beijing should also prepare for the worst.

On the campaign trail, Trump railed against China, accusing it of stealing American jobs, and also angered Beijing by taking a call from the president of self-ruled Taiwan, which China views as a wayward province with no right to formal foreign ties.

While Trump made no direct mention of China in his inaugural address, he struck a defiant tone, saying American workers have been devastated by the outsourcing of jobs abroad.

In a front page commentary, the overseas edition of the ruling Communist Party's official *People's Daily* said the two countries should not try to force each other into submission, but look for win-win cooperation and manage their disputes.

"The new US government should realize that it's normal for these two great countries to have problems



Chinese news papers showing US President Donald J. Trump at a newsstand in Shanghai, China, on 21 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

and disagreements. What is crucial is to control and manage disputes and find a way to resolve them," it said.

"China hopes the inauguration of the new US president can be a new starting point for the development of China-US ties," the paper said.

"The stable and healthy development of relations accords with the interests of both peoples, and is the common expectation of the international com-

munity." Sister paper the *Global Times*, an influential publication which often strikes a stridently nationalistic tone, noted that while Trump has said a lot about China, his actual policy has yet to take shape.

"Definitely, the Trump administration wants to boost exports to China and relocate factories from China back to the US. Taiwan will be merely a bargaining chip for them to put trade pressure on China," it said in an editorial.

The paper said Trump's China policy will hinge on how well he understands the overlapping interests of the world's two largest economies and whether he will be motivated enough to change the existing structure with force.

"Undoubtedly, the Trump administration will be igniting many 'fires' on its front door and around the world. Let's wait and see when it will be China's turn."—*Reuters*

# Crane falls on Takahama plant building housing spent nuclear fuel

FUKUI (Japan) — A crane collapsed Friday night at the Takahama power station in Fukui Prefecture, western Japan, damaging a building housing spent nuclear fuel, the plant operator said on Saturday.

No one was injured in the accident, which occurred around 9:50pm near the plant's No. 2 reactor building, and although the roof of the adjacent building was damaged, nothing fell into the spent nuclear fuel pool below it, according to the operator, Kansai Electric Power Co.

The crane also damaged the roof of another building nearby. A wind warning was in effect in the area, and strong winds were blowing at that time, according to the utility.

The 112-metre-long crane had been used to prepare for safety-enhancement work in which a concrete dome-shaped cover will be placed over the No. 2 reactor building. Work was not being undertaken at the time of accident.

An official apologized for the accident at a news conference at the plant, saying the utility would re-examine the risk of crane accidents amid strong winds and investigate the cause of the latest incident.

There are a total of 259 fuel assemblies in the pool, including spent ones, according to Kansai Electric.

The No. 2 reactor is one of two aging reactors at the plant with over 40 years of operation. Safety-enhancement work for the facility is expected for completion in 2020.

In June last year, nuclear regulators approved the utility's plan to extend the operation of the Nos. 1 and 2 reactors beyond the government-mandated 40-year service period. It was the first such approval given under new safety regulation introduced following the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident.

The plant has two newer reactors. All four reactors are currently offline.—*Kyodo News*

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# India pressed ahead with banknote ban despite RBI concerns

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI — India pushed ahead with its decision to scrap banknotes even as the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) own board expressed concern whether the cash could be replaced quickly enough, the central bank has said in written testimony to parliament.

The revelation comes amid growing criticism about whether the central bank and the government had sufficiently assessed the potential fallout from the 8 November ban of about 86 per cent of the cash then in circulation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's shock move caused a severe cash shortage that brought large parts of the economy to a virtual standstill, as the central bank struggled to print new 500-rupee and 2,000-rupee notes to replace the old currency.

A copy of the private testimony to a parliament panel, seen by Reuters, showed the central bank had also warned the government of "possible inconvenience to the public for some time," among the potential conse-

quences of the massive exercise. Despite its own doubts, the testimony showed, the RBI board approved the plan to ban 500-rupee and 1,000-rupee notes, as it believed the move would rein in counterfeiting and reliance on cash, and pull unaccounted cash into the financial system.

"It might not immediately be possible to replace these notes fully in terms of both value and volume," the board felt at a meeting ahead of Modi's 8 November announcement, according to

the central bank submission.

But the RBI's board ultimately believed that "corrective" action could be taken and decided to recommend the move, the document showed. The RBI also believed the impact of such an exercise would be "transitory", given its efforts to quickly replace the old notes, it said in the testimony. The RBI's endorsement of the government action has drawn strong criticism from several former policymakers, including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh,

the architect of India's 1991 financial reforms and a former central bank governor. The document also notes the proposal to ban the cash had come from the government, in a letter a day before the announcement that advised the RBI to "immediately" put the plan before its board for approval.

Under India's RBI Act, such a move was necessary.

The central bank did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comments on its submission to parliament.—*Reuters*



People queue outside an ATM of State Bank of India to withdraw cash in Ahmedabad, India, on 27 November 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Chemical giant eyes bigger presence in China

BEIJING — The Dow Chemical Co. says it will continue to make investment in China, eyeing business opportunities emerging from the country's ongoing economic transformation.

"When I look at the market here, I see incredible growth opportunities across virtually every sector," said Neil Hawkins, Dow's chief sustainability officer and corporate vice president.

Despite facing downward pressure, China's ambition in urbanization, new energy technology, infrastructure construction and green growth provide ample room for innovation companies,

Hawkins said.

A staunch investor for the world's second largest economy, Dow is expanding its business in China in an unprecedented pace, opening one new business center each year since 2012 and stretching to inland areas that many overseas companies barely notice.

It currently boasts a 5,000-strong staff, and operates 10 business centers and 17 manufacturing sites across the country. The Shanghai Dow Centre, Dow's largest R&D center outside the US, gathers more than 700 scientists working in over 80

world-class laboratories.

Instead of targeting "easy money" like many foreign firms, Dow is digging for gold through innovation and technological co-operation.

With its leading water filtration technology, Dow collaborated with Haier Group, China's leading home appliance producer, to make washing machines that reduce 30 percent of water use. Dow's formaldehyde abatement technology, developed by its China research team, has been applied in eco-paint in China and many other countries in the world.—Xinhua

## ASEAN agree to develop a joint declaration on cruise tourism

SINGAPORE — ASEAN members on Friday reiterated their commitment to develop Southeast Asia into a vibrant cruising destination during ASEAN Tourism Forum 2017 held in Singapore.

In support, they agreed to develop a joint declaration on cruise tourism, according to the joint media statement of the 20th meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers.

The five-day tourism forum came to a close on Friday after the launch of "Visit ASEAN@50" campaign on Wednesday. ASEAN ministers also made agreement on cruise tourism, quality

tourism during the gathering.

The inaugural Cruise Dialogue was organized on Thursday to further realize the potential growth of cruise tourism in the region, showcase examples of cruise port development projects, and discuss how cruise lines and entities can partner ASEAN member states to develop cruise ports.

Hosted on board currently the largest cruise ship homeporting in Southeast Asia, ASEAN ministers were briefed on the industry. They urged to develop infrastructure to accommodate various cruise ships.

Noting that passengers ex-

pected to cruise in Southeast Asia would reach approximately 4.5 million by 2035, ASEAN ministers agreed to develop a joint declaration on cruise tourism. According to the statement, the joint declaration will set out principles to spur port and destination development in the region, and further encourage industry stakeholders to collaborate and grow cruise tourism.

Lionel Yeo, Chief Executive of Singapore Tourism Board, stressed that curbing is a multi-destination product, it will take collective efforts within Southeast Asia in order for the industry to flourish.—Xinhua



Former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon pays a tribute at the national cemetery in Seoul, South Korea, on 13 January 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Former UN chief Ban apologises over family in US bribery case

SEOUL — Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who is believed to be considering a presidential run in South Korea, apologised on Saturday for causing public concerns over his family members who had been named in a bribery case in the United States.

Ban said in a statement he hoped any discussions between law enforcement authorities of South Korea and the United States — if they were taking

place as reported — would be "strict and transparent" so that there is no suspicion left in the South Korean public.

He also reiterated he has "absolutely no knowledge" of the case. A US prosecutor has said Washington has asked South Korea to arrest Ban's brother, Ki-sang, on charges he engaged in a bribery scheme to carry out the sale of a Vietnamese building complex.—Reuters

## Japan to urge US to lead free trade after Trump inauguration

TOKYO — Japan will continue to push the United States to join it in taking the lead in advancing free trade globally, officials and lawmakers said on Saturday, after Donald Trump announced the country will begin withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership following his swearing in as president.

"It is not yet final that (the TPP) will not be ratified," a Japanese government official close to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said, referring to the trade pact which was signed by 10 other countries in February but is now in limbo due to the impending US withdrawal.

The official stressed the importance of "assessing the true intent of Mr. Trump," saying, "We will gather information thoroughly and encourage the United States (to ratify the TPP)."

Abe and Trump's predecessor Barack Obama together championed the pact, preaching its potential economic benefits and the influence they hope it would give their nations in writing trade rules for the Asia-Pacific region. The pact would cover some 40 per cent of the global economy.

But on Friday's inauguration day, the White House announced



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe arrives at his office in Tokyo on January 20, 2017.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

that the strategy of using international trade to grow the US economy "starts by withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and making certain that any new trade deals are in the interests of American workers."

Masahiko Komura, vice president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, defended the 12-nation trade deal, saying,

"The TPP will have a very good impact on the US economy."

"Putting aside the possibility that Mr. Trump would make a sudden change (in his position), there is a need to again explain" the importance of the deal, he added in a statement.

Japanese business leaders, for their part, urged their government to boost efforts to build trust between Tokyo and Washington in areas such as economic cooperation and free trade.

US withdrawal from the TPP would "adversely affect the global economy, including ours," said Akio Mimura, chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, urging the Abe government to "tenaciously urge" Trump to see the significance and value of free trade.

If the pact fails to come into force, China, the world's second-largest economy which is not part of the TPP, is likely to take on a greater role in influencing regional trade rules. The TPP aside, lawmakers from Japan's ruling and opposition parties expressed hope for stronger ties with the United States, its key security ally, reflecting the country's stance that casts the bilateral alliance as the linchpin of foreign policy and security.

The LDP's Komura said the alliance is not only good for both countries but also for the international community. "We must firmly maintain such ties and make them even better," he added.

Yoshihiko Noda, secretary general of the main opposition Democratic Party, said he wants Japan to "build even stronger ties" with the United States, calling on Trump to be more level-headed when faced with criticism.

He also said, "I don't want Mr. Trump to be dictated by a cost-benefit analysis that puts his country's interests first."

Kazuo Shii, leader of the smaller opposition Japanese Communist Party, took issue with Trump's "America First" agenda, which aims to protect American citizens on issues of trade and immigration. In a statement, he said he has "deep concerns" that the US government may try to impose its will on other countries.

Other Japanese business leaders also weighed in on the Trump administration's trade policy, with Yoshimitsu Kobayashi, chairman of Keizai Doyukai, Japan's association of corporate executives, saying in

a statement that advancing free trade is indispensable for sustainably developing the world economy.

With Trump's protectionist policies in mind, Sadayuki Sakakibara, chairman of the Japan Business Federation, the country's largest business lobby known as Keidanren, stressed Japanese companies' contribution to the United States.

"Japanese firms are greatly contributing to the US economy, with direct investment of up to 410 billion yen (around \$3.6 billion) and creating jobs for 1.7 million people," he said in a statement.

In contrast, Toshiaki Tobita, chairman of the Hokkaido arm of the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, sounded somewhat more welcoming about the US move to withdraw from the TPP, crediting his organisation with waging a successful campaign to protect farming in the largely agrarian region.

Tobita went on to say that his group will keep "close tabs" on the United States, however, given that the Trump administration's trade policies are likely to focus on bilateral deals instead of multilateral arrangements.—Kyodo News

# Apple files \$1 billion lawsuit against chip supplier Qualcomm

NEW YORK — Apple Inc filed a \$1 billion lawsuit against supplier Qualcomm Inc on Friday, days after the US government accused the chip maker of resorting to anticompetitive tactics to maintain a monopoly over key semiconductors in mobile phones.

Qualcomm is a major supplier to both Apple and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd for “modem” chips that connect phones to wireless networks. The two companies together accounted for 40 percent of Qualcomm’s \$23.5 billion in revenue in its most recent fiscal year.

In the lawsuit filed in US District Court for the Southern District of California, Apple accused Qualcomm of overcharging for chips and refusing to pay some \$1 billion in promised rebates. Apple said in its complaint that Qualcomm withheld the rebates because of Apple’s discussions with South Korea’s antitrust regulator, the Korea Fair Trade Commission.

“If that were not enough, Qualcomm then attempted to extort Apple into changing its

responses and providing false information to the KFTC in exchange for Qualcomm’s release of those payments to Apple. Apple refused,” Apple said in its lawsuit.

In a statement, Qualcomm General Counsel Don Rosenberg called Apple’s claims “baseless.”

“Apple has been actively encouraging regulatory attacks on Qualcomm’s business in various jurisdictions around the world, as reflected in the recent KFTC decision and FTC complaint, by misrepresenting facts and withholding information,” Rosenberg said in the statement.

“We welcome the opportunity to have these meritless claims heard in court where we will be entitled to full discovery of Apple’s practices and a robust examination of the merits.”

Qualcomm’s stock closed 2.4 per cent lower at \$62.88 on the news.

Qualcomm has patents for chips which include standard essential patents, a term used to describe technology that is required to be licensed broadly and on “reasonable” terms.

In its lawsuit, Apple accused Qualcomm of refusing to license the technology to other manufacturers to prevent them from making the chips.

It also accused Qualcomm of selling chips while requiring Apple to pay a separate licensing fee for the same chips, in a “no license, no chip” policy. In addition, Qualcomm pressured network carriers to not sell or support Apple devices made with Intel chipsets Apple said.

The KFTC fined Qualcomm \$854 million in December for what it called unfair patent licensing practices.

In February 2015, Qualcomm paid a \$975 million fine in China, while the European Union in December 2015 accused it of abusing its market power to thwart rivals.

On Tuesday, the US Federal Trade Commission filed a lawsuit against Qualcomm, saying the San Diego-based company used its dominant position as a supplier of certain phone chips to impose “onerous” supply and licensing terms on cellphone manufacturers. Qualcomm said it would contest the FTC complaint.

Qualcomm was the sole supplier of modem chips for Apple’s phones until the release of the iPhone 7 in September. Intel Corp supplied about half of the modem chips for the newest models, said Stacy Rasgon, a senior analyst at Bernstein Research. Intel’s shares closed up 1 per cent at \$36.94 after the Qualcomm suit was announced.

Apple made the move around the same time that Samsung, which had switched to using its own internal chips for its Galaxy S6 phones, returned to Qualcomm for the Galaxy S7. —Reuters

# Uber hires Google search veteran Singhal for senior engineering post



A photo illustration shows the Uber app logo displayed on a mobile telephone, as it is held up for a posed photograph in central London, Britain, on 28 October 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO — Ride-hailing company Uber Technologies Inc [UBER.UL] has hired the man behind Google search to work closely with Chief Executive Travis Kalanick and help grow the company’s self-driving car programme.

Amit Singhal announced on his personal blog on Friday that he will join Uber after 15 years at Alphabet Inc (GOOGL.O), where he led Google’s search division. Singhal will take the post of senior vice president of engineering, an Uber spokesman said, a role which oversees the company’s marketplace and mapping efforts — the core of Uber’s business. He will also act as an adviser to both Kalanick and Anthony Levandowski, who heads Uber’s self-driving programme.

In his blog post, Singhal said he was excited for the engineering challenges Uber is tackling, and called the company “a

geek’s candy store.”

“And don’t even get me started on how interesting and exciting self-driving is for a computer scientist,” he wrote.

Uber debuted its self-driving car pilot in Pittsburgh, in September. It launched a second fleet in San Francisco last month, but a feud with California regulators over Uber’s failure to obtain proper permitting compelled the company to take its autonomous testing cars off the streets.

Uber then packed up its cars and brought them to Arizona, where there are no special regulations for autonomous testing.

Singhal announced his departure from Google nearly a year ago, and said his next career move would involve philanthropy. He founded the Singhal Foundation, which aims to provide education to underprivileged children in India. —Reuters



People line up at an Apple store shortly before it opens in Beijing, China, on 3 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Morgan Stanley, Citi plan Brexit job moves — sources

LONDON/FRANKFURT — US banks Morgan Stanley (MS.N) and Citigroup (C.N) have identified many of the roles that will need to be moved from Britain following its exit from the European Union, sources involved in the processes told Reuters.

Morgan Stanley, which bases the bulk of its European staff in Britain, will have to move up to 1,000 jobs in sales and trading, risk management, legal and compliance, as well as slimming the back office in favour of locations overseas, according to one source.

Citigroup, which already has a large banking unit in Dublin, will need to shift 100 positions in its sales and trading business, sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Leading financial firms warned for months before last June’s Brexit referendum that they would have to move some jobs if there was a leave vote, and have

been working on plans for how they would do so for the past six months.

More details are starting to emerge after Prime Minister Theresa May confirmed Britain would leave the European single market, ending banks’ hopes they might retain “passporting” rights that let them sell their services across the EU out of their London hubs.

HSBC (HSBA.L) and UBS (UBSG.S) said on Wednesday they could each move about 1,000 jobs out of London.

A spokesman for Morgan Stanley said no decisions had been taken with regard to its Brexit plans.

“Our focus is on ensuring that we can continue to service our clients whatever the Brexit outcome,” he said. “To that end, we continue to evaluate what changes we may need to make to our business”.

A spokeswoman for Citi de-

clined to comment.

Morgan Stanley currently bases the vast majority of its European staff in Britain, employing around 6,000 people there. It has relied on passporting out of London to service it clients elsewhere in the EU.

In order to continue certain businesses such as trading European securities it will need to shift those operations to a licensed entity in the regional bloc.

The source said that given the bank already had a trading licence in Frankfurt, it was likely to move most of these jobs there despite some of the city’s other drawbacks.

“We don’t like Frankfurt but that’s the only place to go,” the source said. “Culturally, it’s not a vibrant city”.

The source added that US regulators were expected to discourage US banks from moving to countries with a poor country credit rating such as Ireland and Spain.



A view of the Morgan Stanley London headquarters at Canary Wharf financial centre in London, Britain, on 24 June 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

James Gorman, chairman and chief executive of Morgan Stanley, told analysts this week that Brexit was “a moving chessboard”.

“We like the UK, we like the rule of law in the UK, [and] our aspiration is to keep as much of our business there as possible,” he said.

“But to the extent we have to

comply with, obviously, the Brexit rules, we’ll be putting a headquarters somewhere in continental Europe and that will have some implications going forward”.

Investment banking roles, such as merger and acquisition bankers, are expected to be able to stay in London. —Reuters

# Opinion

## Write for us

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## "A grain of sand, a piece of brick"

Khin Maung Oo

**I**N the world, everybody or everything is concerned with the word, "Beginning." The word is defined in dictionaries as, "the time when something starts," and "the first or early ideas, signs or stages of something." Familiar as it is with all of us, we tend to forget meaningful essence of this word. "Beginning", the word, carries the characteristic meanings—inexperience, unfamiliarity and excitement and others. Here, remarkable experiences that nearly every individual had ever faced in their life need to be recounted. Most will be remembering their very first day of going to schools. Some will have known bitter experiences at the very beginning of schooling, according to

recounts made by their parents. At that time, worries and fears of departing our parents and families we love would have occupied our immature minds.

The second experience is concerned with nearly all the adults who have joined the new environment or a job. Much as we have a considerable knowledge about the new environs, we have anxieties, and worries together with excitement. That could be called "a baptism of fire" which is meant for a difficult introduction to a new job or activity. Fears as to whether we shall meet inconveniences in associating with fellow staff including superiors and in performing office routines have occupied our minds. Yet, we

came to know that our career environments became comfortable ones, as time passed. Suffice it to say that the beginning might have been "a hell-like period" for us, but later it may become a pleasant one. But, there is one condition that we also need to try ourselves to get acculturated and accustomed to the new working environments. Failing that, the career we have chosen will never give us enjoyment or satisfaction all throughout our lives.

Now, our country is trying to march toward a modern federal democratic Union under the leadership of our chosen government which is keenly focused to keep its election promises. Most of the people in the country showed their aspi-

rations by voting overwhelmingly for the NLD party which won by a landslide victory in the 2015 November general elections. They wanted to change everything—old regime, old habits and behaviors, mindsets, malpractices, bribery and corruption, traffic and urbanization issues. Some took part in changes significantly whereas some are still reluctant to give up their deep-rooted habits. At such a time of nation building, we need to invite all people to join in the efforts of the government. Do not be hesitant to be a grain of sand or a piece of brick in these epoch-making historic changes. Work hard for peace then development will surely follow.

## Learning the Singapore way of topping global education rankings

Siti Rahil

**S**INGAPORE'S climb to the top of global education rankings has put the spotlight on how an education system that had been seen as somewhat too competitive, stressful and exam-oriented has evolved into one of the best in the world.

Last year, the wealthy city-state, which had already been doing well in global educational rankings, outperformed the rest of the world in the OECD's PISA survey, which tested around 540,000 15-year-old students in 72 countries and economies on science, reading, math and collaborative problem-solving.

Singapore's Education Ministry's website states that "we have been moving in recent years towards an education system that is more flexible and diverse" so as to provide students with "greater choice to meet their different interests and ways of learning."

Hence it aims to "reduce reliance on rote learning and encourage independent learning and experimentation."

Clearly Southeast Asia's most advanced economy can afford to pump huge amounts of money into boosting educational services. Teachers are carefully selected and go through rigorous training and retraining, while innovative ideas are infused into the centrally planned curriculum, which is reviewed every six years.

"Basically it's a whole host of factors," Ridzuan Abdul Rahim, lead curriculum specialist at the Education Ministry, said when asked about Singapore students' strong performance in math.

"The teachers are committed



to the students' learning. The parents are also very, very interested in their children's education," he said. "From our side, we try to make available school resources," he said. For example, resources are provided for primary school mathematics to be taught by "pictorial abstracts, learn by doing something." "We are a small country, there is high availability of school resources...we can centrally plan our curriculum and make sure that everybody implements this curriculum," he said.

"In this country there is a strong emphasis on math, science and technology. You cannot achieve, even with the best curriculum, if the students, parents and society at large don't value math."

At the National Institute of Education, where teachers are trained, educational tools of various shapes, sizes and colors, are neatly stacked on shelves in a classroom. They are designed to make learning math fun for primary and secondary school students.

An ambitious and novel project is currently under way to help students overcome their fear of mathematics and grasp its concepts better through comics.

Toh Tin Lam, deputy head of NIE's mathematics and mathematics education academic group, said he was inspired to think about using comics to help lower secondary school students understand math after observing their weaknesses in class. "I listened to what the kids say in class -- they were not talking about math, they were talking about their life, but their conversation itself is mathematical logic," he said.

"That makes me think that... we can use a more vivid approach to reach out to the kids, especially those less motivated ones...use jokes to get students to think."

The project was launched in 2014 and currently there is one chapter on percentage and another on statistics, and now the team is working on the subject of probability in math. His comic-based teaching and learning materials as an alternative to the usual textbooks began to be used at three secondary schools, and now eight other schools have also come on board.

"When we conceptualized this project...we targeted our lowest achieving students, those students who are not interested in math and who would not want to have any-

thing to do with math."

However, the idea was so well received that even teachers from the "express" stream classes for the academically stronger students have expressed interest in the idea.

One of the most unique traits of Singapore's education system has been the streaming of schoolchildren at a young age for classes that offer faster or slower paces of learning that suit their abilities based on their exam performance.

Students in the express stream will take just four years to complete their secondary school before moving on to either junior college or a polytechnics, which is why the express stream is seen by parents and students as the most promising route to enter local universities. Students in the normal-academic stream will take five years to complete their secondary education.

Despite the criticism it has received in the past, proponents of streaming argue that it allows educators to teach at a pace more suited to the students and give them more attention, ensuring no one falls through the gaps of the system. Singapore's school teachers also provide extra coaching for students who are struggling with math, especially those in the weaker streams.

"Generally if you go to any school, our teachers will conduct additional lessons if the students need it," Ridzuan said.

Izz Afq Hermansyah, 16, said, "I wasn't doing so well until I was eleven years old. My math teacher saw that I was struggling and she just approached me."

He said his teacher "put a lot of time and effort" into coaching him individually after class. "That's how I improved a lot," said Izz, who was in the express stream and

recently obtained the highest score for math in his national exams at the end of secondary school.

Saiful Rizal, a 28-year-old private math coach who also provides motivational talks for students, says that one of the factors behind Singapore students' edge in math is that they start off in primary school by learning concepts more visually. "There is a more visual way of learning for the kids. So perhaps I think this has an impact...by being more visual it is easier for them to solve."

However he says the math exams in Singapore have become more challenging in recent years.

"All the questions now require higher order thinking skills," he said. Referring to Singapore school exams, he said, "the teachers come up with so many creative ways to ask questions, especially if you come from better schools, it's like math Olympiad standard already."

Part of a booming private tuition industry estimated to be worth more than S\$1 billion (US\$701 million) to help students meet the high standards of the education system, he has been operating a tuition center for the last five years and has authored a bestselling book about how he has helped schoolchildren who are struggling with math improve on their math scores.

While he thinks it is good that Singapore is ranked number one in the world for math and science education, he is concerned about "the stress level on the children."

"I think it's the Singapore culture of constantly improving," he said, referring to the label of "Singapore Inc." which suggests Singapore is run efficiently like a company. "That's why we always have to be better." — *Kyodo News*

# Trump, now president, pledges to put 'America First' in nationalist speech



US President Donald Trump takes the oath of office with his wife Melania and son Barron at his side, during his inauguration at the US Capitol in Washington, US, on 20 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — Donald Trump took power as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States on Friday and pledged to end what he called an “American carnage” of rusted factories and crime in an inaugural address that was a populist and nationalist rallying cry.

Striking a defiant tone, Trump said American workers have been devastated by the outsourcing of jobs abroad.

“From this day forward it’s going to be only America First,” the Republican told thousands of people gathered on the National Mall to see him take over from Democrat Barack Obama.

With Obama and three other former presidents sitting nearby, Trump accused previous US administrations of enriching Washington at the expense of struggling American families.

Underscoring the deep divisions in the country, protests against Trump turned ugly in downtown Washington. Black-clad activists smashed store windows, blocked traffic and fought with police in riot gear who responded with tear gas and stun grenades. Police said more than 200 people were arrested.

Aerial pictures of the crowds of Trump supporters on the Mall showed a much smaller turnout at midday on Friday than that in comparable photos from Obama’s first inauguration in 2009. Estimates of Friday’s crowd size were not immediately available from police.

The inaugural address was vintage Trump, with plenty of material gleaned from dozens of campaign rallies he staged last year on the road to victory on 8 November over Democrat Hillary Clinton, who attended the ceremony with her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

Trump said the United States has enriched foreign industry at the expense of American companies, subsidized the armies of other countries while letting the U.S. military become depleted, and spent trillions abroad while allowing infrastructure at home to crumble.

“The wealth of our middle

class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed across the entire world,” he said.

Trump accused the Washington establishment of protecting itself but abandoning regular citizens who have suffered from poverty and crime.

“This American carnage stops right here and stops right now,” he said. “Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs, will be made to benefit American workers and American families,” he said.

Trump, 70, takes over a country divided after a savage election campaign. The grim vision of America he often paints is belied by statistics showing low levels of unemployment and crime nationally, although Trump won many votes in parts of the nation where manufacturing industry has been badly hit.

While Trump positioned himself as a champion of working Americans, the Tax Policy Centre non-partisan think tank estimates that his tax proposals would not only add \$7.2 trillion in US government debt over the first 10 years, but are skewed to help the wealthiest Americans.

Hours after taking the oath of office, Trump, who repeatedly promised to repeal Obama’s signature health-care law, signed his first executive order, directing U.S. agencies to delay, waive or grant exemptions from any provisions of the Affordable Care Act deemed burdensome for states or individuals.

Republicans in Congress hope to repeal the health care law, also known as Obamacare, and replace it.

Sitting behind the presidential Resolute Desk, Trump signed the order in a hastily arranged ceremony. In the Oval Office, which Obama vacated Friday morning, gold drapes had already been hung in place of crimson ones.

Trump’s election was greeted with concern by many countries around the world, in part because of the potential for an isolationist foreign policy.

In an interview after Trump was sworn in, German Vice

Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel said, “What we heard today were high nationalistic tones.”

“I think we have to prepare for a rough ride,” Gabriel told public broadcaster ZDF, adding that Europe should stand together to defend its interests.

Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto congratulated Trump on his inauguration, but cautioned that the sovereignty, national interest and protection of Mexicans would be paramount.

Mexicans have been angered by Trump’s pledge to build a wall along the southern US border to keep out illegal immigrants, and to make Mexico pay for it. Trump has also frequently criticized US companies that have manufacturing operations in Mexico.

US stocks closed higher on Friday in a modest advance, marking the first time in more than 50 years that a new commander-in-chief has been welcomed by a rising equity market on his first day in office.

Pope Francis urged Trump to be guided by ethical values, saying he must take care of the poor and the outcast.

In Moscow, Russians hoping Trump will usher in a new era of detente celebrated his inauguration. Russian nationalists held an all-night party at what used to be the main Soviet-era post office in Moscow. In the city of Zlatoust, craftsmen released a limited series of silver and gold commemorative coins, engraved with “In Trump We Trust.”

Trump signalled the possibility of a more aggressive approach to Islamic State militants.

“We will reinforce old alliances and form new ones, and unite the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the earth,” he said.

The US Senate overwhelmingly voted on Friday to confirm retired General James Mattis as defence secretary and retired General John Kelly as homeland security secretary, making them the first Trump Cabinet nominees to be approved. New Vice President Mike Pence swore both in Friday night.

After repeating the 35-word oath of office in the ceremony, Trump stretched his arms wide and hugged his wife, Melania, and other members of his family. Ceremonial cannon blasts fired.

The Trumps rode in a heavily armoured limousine to lead an inaugural parade to the White House. The couple and their 10-year-old-son, Barron, hopped out of the limo and walked part of the parade route, waving to cheering well wishers. Later, they watched some of the parade from a reviewing stand built on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House.—Reuters

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Dead miner pulled from under landslide in Peru, six others missing

LIMA — The body of one of seven miners trapped under a landslide for four days in southern Peru was pulled from a 200-metre (660 feet) deep tunnel on Friday, but hopes of finding the others alive dimmed, authorities said.

The miners had been working in an underground copper mine owned by Chinchilico Minero SAC in the region of Arequipa when more than 50 meters of mud and rock piled on top of the entrance during a downpour on Monday. One miner managed to escape on Tuesday and reported that three of his seven colleagues inside had been alive when he left. But no sign of life has been heard since Wednesday, said Jorge Martinez, a chief of Peru’s all-volunteer firefighting force in Arequipa.

“We shouldn’t be pessimistic, we have to keep working until the end,” policeman Helbert Espinoza said on TV station Canal N.—Reuters

### Sixteen dead, mostly Hungarian teenagers, in Italy bus accident — police

ROME — At least 16 people were killed and some 40 injured after a bus carrying Hungarian students burst into flames on a highway in northern Italy, police said on Saturday.

Girolamo Lacquaniti, head of highway police in the city of Verona, said most of the passengers were teenage students and others were teachers and parents. He told SkyTG 24 television that the bus went off the road near a highway exit during the night. Television images showed the bus engulfed in flames.—Reuters

### Blast kills at least 21 in Pakistan vegetable market, says official

PESHAWAR (Pakistan) —An explosion in a busy vegetable market killed at least 21 people on Saturday in Pakistan’s remote northwestern tribal region, an official said.

About 40 others were wounded in the blast in Kurram region, near the border with Afghanistan, said Sajid Hussain Turi, member of the National Assembly from the region.

“We received 21 bodies of the local tribal people killed in the blast,” Turi said, adding that there would be a mass funeral and then a demonstration over the attack. Reports differed on the cause of the explosion. Turi said a homemade bomb had been planted in a pile of tomatoes and exploded as people gathered in the market in Parachinar, Kurram’s main town, early on Saturday morning.—Reuters

### Iran rescuers find three bodies at collapsed building, hopes for survivors fade

DUBAI — Iranian rescuers have removed three bodies from the rubble of a high-rise building in Tehran that collapsed after a fire, a fire department spokesman said on Saturday, as hopes of finding survivors trapped beneath the shopping mall were fading.

“Rescuers are tunnelling under the rubble to try to reach the cellar of the Plasco building, but we have not succeeded yet,” Tehran fire department Jalal Maleki told state television.

The television quoted Maleki as saying equipment used to locate survivors had not given any indications on the third day of rescue efforts, and that “the probability of rescuing anyone alive from under the rubble is very low”.—Reuters

### Mexico sends 91 Cubans back after US law change

MEXICO CITY— Mexican authorities have repatriated 91 undocumented Cuban migrants to their country, the first to be returned after the United States eliminated the “wet foot, dry foot” policy that allowed any Cubans reaching US soil to claim residency.

The 91 Cubans were found in an illegal status on Mexican territory, according to a release by the National Institute of Migration (INM) on Friday. Those illegal Cuban migrants, 71 men and 20 women, were sent to Havana Friday morning on a police plane leaving from the airport of Tapachula, in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. Cuban authorities had previously agreed to receive them.

Passed in 1995, the “wet foot, dry foot” policy allowed any Cubans touching US soil to access permanent residency in the country, while any Cubans caught at sea between their country and the United States were sent back. The law was eliminated earlier this month by then US President Barack Obama as part of the normalization of diplomatic ties between Havana and Washington.—Xinhua

## Gambia's leader Jammeh says he will step down, ending political impasse



**Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh, who is also a presidential candidate for the Alliance for Patriotic Re-orientation and Construction (APRC), smiles during a rally in Banjul, Gambia, on 29 November 2016.** PHOTO: REUTERS

BANJUL —Gambia's leader Yahya Jammeh said on Saturday he would step down from power in a statement made in the face of pressure from West African armies that entered his country to remove him after he refused to concede an election defeat to President Adama Barrow.

His decision ends a political impasse and will likely be welcomed by democracy advocates and viewed as a triumph for African diplomacy. It also brings to a close a reign that began in 1994 when he seized power in a coup. Jammeh's authoritarian government established a reputation for torturing and killing perceived opponents to stifle dissent.

"I have decided today in good conscience to relinquish the mantle of leadership of this great nation," he said on state television, wearing a white robe and looking tired.

"All those who have supported me or were against me in this

period, I implore them to put the supreme interest of our nation the Gambia above all partisan interest and endeavour to work together as one nation," he said.

Jammeh made no mention of whether he would go into exile but said he was leaving power in the national interest after prayer and was proud to have served the Gambian people and grateful there was no bloodshed during the political impasse.

In practice, he had little choice but to step down. Around 7,000 soldiers from Nigeria and neighbouring Senegal entered Gambia late on Thursday backed by tanks and warplanes and were poised to swoop into the capital as his army provided no resistance.

Jammeh lost to Barrow in December sparking celebrations on the streets of Banjul but, after initially conceding defeat, he changed his mind and said he would challenge the result in court.—Reuters

## Rockets fired at Istanbul police and AKP offices, no casualties

ISTANBUL —Unidentified assailants attacked Istanbul's police headquarters and an office of the ruling AK Party with improvised rocket launchers on Friday, officials said, the latest acts of violence in a city which has seen a string of bombings and shootings.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks and there were no reports of casualties. Islamic State, Kurdish militants and far-leftist groups have all claimed or been blamed for attacks in the city in the recent past. The first attack on the police headquarters in Fatih, a district on the European side of the city, damaged a wall, according to Istanbul Governor Vasip Sahin. There were no casualties, he said in a statement.

President Tayyip Erdogan had been informed about the attack on the police headquarters and the second one on the AK Party offices in the nearby Sutlucu neighbourhood, his office said.

"A rocket attack has been

carried out on our provincial headquarters by terrorist centres which are quickly melting down," Selim Temurci, the AKP's provincial head in Istanbul said on Twitter, adding there were no dead or injured. An AKP lawmaker was quoted by the Cumhuriyet newspaper as saying the attacks may have been carried out by the far-left Revolutionary People's Liberation Army-Front (DHKP-C), which has carried out such acts in the past and is considered a terrorist organisation by the United States and Turkey.

A gunman who killed 39 people in an Istanbul nightclub on New Year's Day in an attack claimed by Islamic State is believed to be held in the police headquarters in Fatih.

The mass shooting on 1 January followed a year of attacks in NATO member Turkey, including a twin bombing claimed by Kurdish militants outside a soccer stadium in Istanbul on 10 December which killed 44 people.—Reuters

## Turkish parliament approves presidential system, paving way for referendum

ANKARA— The Turkish parliament approved a constitutional reform bill overnight including strengthening the powers of the presidency, paving the way for a referendum expected in the spring which could see President Tayyip Erdogan in office until 2029.

Erdogan says the reform will provide stability in the European Union candidate country at a time of turmoil and prevent a return to the fragile coalitions of the past. His opponents fear it will herald increasingly authoritarian rule.

The bill was approved with 339 votes, parliament said on its official Twitter account on Saturday. The legislation needed at least 330 deputies in the

550-member assembly to support it in order to go to a public vote.

"A new door in Turkish history and in the lives of the Turkish people has been cracked open today. With our people's 'yes' vote, this door will be completely opened," Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag wrote on Twitter.

The reform would enable the president to issue decrees, declare emergency rule, appoint ministers and top state officials and dissolve parliament — powers that the two main opposition parties say strip away balances to Erdogan's power.

Erdogan assumed the presidency, a largely ceremonial position, in 2014 after over a decade as prime minister. Since then, pushing his powers to the limit,

he has continued to dominate politics by dint of his personal popularity.

Critics accuse him of increasing authoritarianism with the arrests and dismissal of tens of thousands of judges, police, military officers, journalists and academics since a failed military coup in July.

Erdogan and the government say the extent of the crack-down is justified by the nature of the threat to the state from 15 July when rogue soldiers commandeered tanks and fighter jets in a violent bid to seize power.

Turkey has also been hit by a spate of deadly bombings and gun attacks by Islamic State and Kurdish militants over the past year and a half.—Reuters



**Supporters of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan wave national flags as they listen to him through a giant screen in Istanbul's Taksim Square, Turkey, on 10 August 2016.** PHOTO: REUTERS

## Iraq slowly untangles Islamic State's bureaucratic legacy

KHAZER —Bushra Mohamed married two years ago in her hometown of Mosul and bore a child last spring but as far as the Iraqi state is concerned she is single and her son does not exist.

Bushra is one of thousands of Iraqis emerging from more than two years of Islamic State rule to find themselves in legal limbo: neither her marriage nor her son's birth certificate issued

by the militants are recognised by the Iraqi government.

As Iraqi forces retake territory from the militants, the state is working to reverse the bureaucratic legacy of Islamic State, which subjected millions to its rule after seizing large parts of Iraq during the summer of 2014.

At a makeshift court housed in a cluster of portacabins at a camp for the displaced in Khazer near Mosul, Iraqi bureaucrats are

busily converting certificates issued by the self-declared caliphate into official government documents. "We are changing them so that we can feel like citizens again," said 20-year-old Bushra, her infant child tugging at the bottom of her abaya. "(Islamic State) are not a state: this is a state."

Despite the violence and privation that came with Islamic State rule, life went on in Mosul and other areas controlled by the militants: people married, had children, divorced and died.

Outside the portacabin court, displaced Iraqis clutch Islamic State documents as proof not only of their rites of passage, but also of the sophisticated bureaucracy the militants ran in their ambition to create a state for all Muslims.

"We don't recognise Daesh (Islamic State) procedures," said judge Khalid al-Shammari, his suit and tie incongruous with the spartan portacabin in which he sits.

"We are emergency judges, like you have emergency doctors. These are exceptional circumstances."—Reuters



**Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) gather during an operation to clear the al-Zirai district of Islamic State militants in Mosul, Iraq, on 18 January 2017.** PHOTO: REUTERS

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily	
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	17:45	19:15	Daily	
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7	
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6	

YGN TO DMK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily	
FD-256	12:55	14:40	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	22:55	Daily	
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily	
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily	

YGN TO CAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-713	20:25	01:00+1	1	
8M-711	8:40	13:15	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3056	11:35	15:50	3,6	
CZ-3056	17:40	22:20	1,5	

YGN TO SIN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-231	8:20	12:40	Daily	
SQ-997	10:25	15:10	Daily	
MI-515	14:20	18:50	1,3,5	
MI-519	17:35	22:10	Daily	
MI-522	16:20	20:50	4,6	
MI-533	13:35	20:50	2	
3k-584	19:40	00:10	Daily	
3K-582	11:35	16:05	Daily	
TR-2823	9:25	13:55	1,2,4,5,7	
UB-001	7:15	11:45	Daily	

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

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

BANGKOK TO YANGON				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily	
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	

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

CAN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-714	2:05	3:40	2	
8M-712	14:15	15:50	2,4,5,7	
CZ-3055	8:40	10:35	3,6	
CZ-3055	14:40	16:40	1,5	

SIN TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
8M-232	13:45	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	Daily	
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7	
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily	

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

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

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

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

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

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

YGN TO PEK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-906	23:50	0550+1	1,3,5,7	

YGN TO HAN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
VN-956	19:10	21:30	Daily	

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

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

YGN TO DOH				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-919	8:05	11:30	1,3,4,6,7	

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

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

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

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

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

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

KMG TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-415	10:50	11:30	Daily	
MU-2031	13:50	14:30	Daily	
MU-2011	08:20	11:55	3	

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

PEK TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
CA-905	19:30	22:50	1,3,5,7	

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

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

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

DOH TO YGN				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
QR-918	20:10	5:20	1,3,4,6,7	

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

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

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

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

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

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

MDL TO BKK				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-710	14:10	16:35	Daily	

BKK TO MDL				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
PG-709	12:00	13:20	Daily	

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

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

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

BKK TO NYT				
Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days	
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

# Shenzhou-11 crew awarded with medals

Astronaut Jing Haipeng salutes during a ceremony held to honour the two astronauts of the Shenzhou-11 spaceflight mission for their outstanding contributions to the country's space endeavors in Beijing, capital of China, on 20 January 2017. PHOTO: XINHUA

BEIJING — China on Friday held a ceremony to honour the two astronauts of the Shenzhou-11 spaceflight mission for their outstanding contributions to the country's space endeavors.

Jing Haipeng, crew commander and a third-time space traveler, was honored a first-class aerospace achievement medal, and Chen Dong, a first-time space traveler, was conferred a third-class medal and the honorary title "heroic astronaut."

Xu Qiliang, vice chairman of the Central Military Commis-

sion, called for learning from the astronauts' devotion to the motherland and their courage to overcome hardships.

Launched on 17 October last year, Shenzhou-11 docked two days later with China's space lab Tiangong-2, where the two astronauts lived for 30 days, the longest time Chinese astronauts spent in space.

The Shenzhou-11 mission is part of China's ambitious plan to build a permanent manned space station. —Xinhua

# Malaria champions see Trump uncertainty at crucial time

DAVOS, (Switzerland) — When it comes to fighting malaria, Bill Gates and Ray Chambers are both inspired and concerned: With victory in sight, will the world's new leaders commit to finally beating this persistent parasite?

In exclusive interviews with Reuters in Davos, Gates and Chambers highlighted uncertainty about leadership changes in the US and in United Nations bodies and what these might mean for funding and commitment to global health.

"The imponderable is what happens with President Trump," said Chambers, the United Nations special envoy for malaria. "We're just not sure."

Falls in deaths and infections due to the mosquito-borne parasite in the past 15 years are "one of the greatest success stories in the history of public health", Chambers said.

And Gates, whose Gates Foundation commits vast funds to global health projects, said the world has never been closer to ending malaria "once and for all".

But with the disease still killing a child in Africa every few minutes, those eager to finish the job are worried that the presidency of the United States — a crucial funding source for international malaria control efforts — is now passing to a man whose commitment to global health projects is uncertain.

And with looming leadership changes at organizations key to global health and development aid — the heads of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the World Bank — malaria champions say the risk of setbacks is unnerving.

"With malaria there's no standing still," Gates said. "Malaria is very complicated."

It is almost a decade since Gates first dared to revive what in global health circles is known as the "e-word" in relation to this ancient disease.

"We will not stop working until malaria is eradicated," Gates declared in 2007.

Now, half the world's na-

tions are malaria-free, and since 2000, global malaria deaths have dropped by 60 per cent.

In Africa, where the vast majority of malaria deaths occur, the malaria death rate has come down by more than 70 per cent.

But there's still much to do. Despite a steep rise in malaria spending from 2000 to 2010, it has now plateaued.

Funding in 2015 was less than in 2013, with combined international and domestic sources totalling \$2.9 billion. Even this is only 45 per cent of what malaria experts say is needed annually to reach a target of a 40 per cent reduction in malaria incidence and mortality by 2020.

The US is by far largest international malaria donor, accounting for about 35 per cent of total funds in 2015, followed by Britain, at 16 per cent.

The US government-funded President's Malaria Initiative has been a powerful force in the past decade, and monies for that rose above £600 million in 2016 from \$30 million in 2006.—Reuters

## Four children and woman rescued, two days after Italy avalanche

PENNE, (Italy) — Four children and a woman were saved on Friday from the wreckage of a mountain hotel in central Italy that was flattened by an avalanche, surviving almost two days in sub-zero temperatures in the buried ruins of the luxury spa.

A further five people have been located, trapped under tonnes of snow and debris, and rescuers said they would work through the night to try to free them, while the hunt continued for other possible survivors.

More than 30 people were in the Hotel Rigopiano on Wednesday afternoon when a wall of snow and toppled trees tore apart the isolated building. So far two bodies have been recovered, officials said.

After a fruitless night scouring the disaster site, sniffer dogs helped locate a first group of people who were buried in a small room, its roof of reinforced concrete protecting them from the heavy weight of snow that had entombed the hotel.

"They were incredulous



Firefighters rescue a survivor from Hotel Rigopiano in Farindola, central Italy, hit by an avalanche, in this handout picture released on 20 January 2017 provided by Italy's Fire Fighters. PHOTO: REUTERS

when they heard our voices. They couldn't believe it," said Marco Bini, a rescue worker from Italy's finance police. "They survived thanks to this bubble of air that formed inside the hotel."

Rescuers clapped and shout-

ed "bravo" as first a boy of eight was pulled to the surface and then his mother. Both appeared to be in good health and were helicoptered to safety.

Officials said they were the son and wife of Giampiero Parete, who had left the hotel to get

medicine from his car seconds before the avalanche hit and had subsequently raised the alarm.

His six-year-old daughter was rescued as night fell on Friday along with the only other two missing children. —Reuters

## Mexico seeks stronger US ties despite Trump campaign barbs

MEXICO CITY — Mexico's president said on Friday he wanted to strengthen relations with his new US counterpart Donald Trump, whose threats and barbs against the country raised fears of a major economic crisis, and battered its currency.

President Enrique Peña Nieto, pilloried at home for meeting Trump in August after the New York businessman called Mexican migrants rapists and murderers, said on Twitter he would defend the interests of Mexico and its people in a "respectful" dialogue.

"We will work to strengthen our relationship with shared responsibility," said Peña Nieto, who likened Trump's rise to the ascent of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini after the American's broadsides early in the election campaign.

Trump vowed to build a wall along the US southern border to keep Mexicans out and threatened to tear up a joint trade deal if he cannot recast it in favor of the United States.

The White House website said on Friday that Trump was committed to renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which underpins Mexico's economy, and would move to withdraw if no "fair deal" is forthcoming.

Mexico's government said Peña Nieto will make a foreign policy address on Monday morning, a few days before a delegation of senior Mexican officials travel to Washington to discuss relations with top Trump advisers. —Reuters

## Mexican drug lord 'El Chapo' pleads not guilty in US court

NEW YORK — Drug kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman appeared in a US court on Friday after his surprise extradition from Mexico and pleaded not guilty to charges that he ran the world's largest drug-trafficking organisation during a decades-long criminal career.

Guzman, 59, once one of the world's most wanted drug lords, was accompanied by two court-appointed lawyers during the appearance in federal court in Brooklyn.

Best known by the nickname El Chapo, or "Shorty" in Spanish, the diminutive Guzman was

extradited on the eve of Donald Trump's inauguration, raising speculation about the timing.

Some officials said it was an olive branch to the incoming US president, who had said he would kick Guzman's "ass" after taking office. But some Mexican officials pointed out that Guzman's extradition came hours before Barack Obama's term ended in a nod to the outgoing president.

Either way current and former law enforcement officials on both sides of the border said the move would likely boost security cooperation and smooth the path for improved relations between

the neighbours.

The Mexican attorney general's office rejected claims the move was related to Trump's swearing-in, noting that Guzman faces 10 pending cases in Mexico following his US sentence.

Guzman, who was once known to carry a gold-plated AK-47 rifle, wore a blue jail uniform. Standing just 5 foot 6 inches (167.6 cm), El Chapo was clean-shaven, without his signature mustache, and his hair was close-cropped.

He did not appear to be wearing handcuffs and had no visible expression on his face as

he listened to questions from a judge.

After US Magistrate Judge James Orenstein asked Guzman if he understood the accusations against him, he responded through a Spanish interpreter, "Well, I didn't know until now." Later, when asked again, Guzman said he understood.

An additional hearing was scheduled for 3 February. Guzman's lawyers promised a zealous defense to ensure he receives a fair trial, and they said they would examine whether Guzman was extradited appropriately. —Reuters

## Violence flares in Washington during Trump inauguration

WASHINGTON — Black-clad activists among hundreds of demonstrators protesting Donald Trump's swearing-in on Friday clashed with police a few blocks from the White House, in an outburst of violence rare for an inauguration.

At least 217 people were arrested in the melees, police said.

The burst of civil disorder followed a fierce presidential campaign that ended in a stunning victory for Republican Trump over Democrat Hillary Clinton on 8 November and left the country divided.

Many of Trump's supporters traveled to Washington to cheer their new president on Inauguration Day. Tens of thousands of detractors are expected to march peacefully on Saturday.

In the violence, knots of activists in black clothes and masks threw rocks and bottles at officers

wearing riot gear, who responded with volleys of tear gas and stun grenades as a helicopter hovered low overhead.

At one flash point, a protester hurled an object through the passenger window of a police van, which sped away in reverse as demonstrators cheered. Earlier, activists used chunks of pavement and baseball bats to shatter the windows of a Bank of America branch and a McDonald's outlet, all symbols of American capitalism.

Multiple vehicles were set on fire, including a black limousine. A knot of people dragged garbage cans into a street a few blocks from the White House and set them ablaze, later throwing a red cap bearing Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan into the flames.

Police said six officers were injured in scuffles with protest-

ers. The people arrested would be held overnight before making court appearances on Saturday, Peter Newsham, interim chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, told a news conference. Newsham added that police would continue to monitor security around the night's celebrations.

Friday's protests played out just blocks from Pennsylvania Avenue, where New York businessman-turned-Republican politician Trump took part in the traditional parade a newly sworn in president takes from the US Capitol to the White House.

The various protest groups scattered around the city chanted anti-Trump slogans and carried signs with slogans including "Trump is not president" and "Make Racists Afraid Again."

"Trump is not going to be stopped at the top, he's going to



Activists race after being hit by a stun grenade while protesting against US President-elect Donald Trump on the sidelines of the inauguration in Washington, US, on 20 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

be stopped from the bottom, from people rising up," said Ben Allen, a 69-year-old retired teacher from San Francisco. "We support the right of everybody in this

country, no matter what nationality, what religion, the color of their skin, to be respected as a human being, and this guy doesn't respect anybody." —Reuters

# US Marine helicopter departs Okinawa islet after emergency landing

IKEI ISLAND, (Japan) — A US Marine helicopter on Saturday departed the small island in Okinawa where it had made an emergency landing the previous evening.

The AH-1 attack helicopter, from the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on the adjacent main island of Okinawa, was forced into a landing on a small rural road after apparently

experiencing mechanical trouble.

Speaking to reporters on the Ikei Island on Saturday, Kiichiro Jahana, head of the Okinawa governor's office, expressed displeasure over the second such landing in Okinawa involving a US aircraft in just over a month.

AN MV-22 Osprey aircraft from the same Marine base crash-landed in shallow coastal waters off the main island last month, reigniting safety concerns about the tilt-rotor aircraft among the people of Okinawa.

Koichiro Nakajima, head of the Defence Ministry's Okinawa bureau, was also on the island on Satur-

day morning. He directly lodged a protest with a US military officer at the site, saying that incidents like this have heightened anxiety among local people.

The helicopter left the ground at around 11:15 am after undergoing maintenance. It apparently developed engine trouble during a flight aimed at determining if nighttime training is possible, according to the prefecture.

The spot where the helicopter landed is about 1 kilometer from a nearby resort hotel and is surrounded by farmland.

Okinawa continues to host the bulk of US military facilities in the country.—*Kyodo News*

## Pope urges Trump to show concern for poor, be guided by ethical values

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis urged US President Donald Trump to be guided by ethical values and as he took office on Friday, saying he must take care of the poor and the outcast during his time in office.

"At a time when our human family is beset by grave humanitarian crises demanding farsighted and united political responses, I pray that your decisions will be guided by the rich spiritual and ethical values that have shaped the history of the American people and your nation's commitment to the advancement of human dignity and freedom worldwide," Francis said in a message sent to Trump minutes after he was inaugurated.

"Under your leadership, may America's stature continue to be measured above all by its concern for the poor, the outcast and those in need ...," Francis said in the message released by the Vatican. Francis, the first pope from Latin America, has made concern for the poor and the weakest members of society a key platform of his nearly four-year-old papacy.

Last year, in response to an answer about Trump's views on immigration and his intention to build a wall on the border with Mexico, Francis said a man with those views is "not Christian".

Trump struck back, calling the pope's comments "disgraceful." —*Reuters*



Pope Francis.  
PHOTO: REUTERS

## Interpol launches project to fight wildlife crime in Africa, Asia

NAIROBI — International police (Interpol) on Friday launched a new project to identify and dismantle the organized crime networks making billions in illicit profits behind wildlife trafficking between Africa and Asia. The project led by Interpol's Environmental Security programme will draw on the expertise of other specialised units and will focus on high profile traffickers in Asia sourcing

wildlife from Africa.

"The project will provide a strengthened law enforcement response in source, transit and destination countries, particularly those linked to the illicit trade in ivory, rhinoceros horn and Asian big cat products," Interpol said in a statement received in Nairobi. With environmental crime estimated to be worth up to 258 billion US dollars and linked to other

criminal activities including corruption, money laundering and firearms trafficking, the project led by Interpol's Environmental Security programme will draw on the expertise of other specialised units. "These include the Anti-Corruption and Financial crime unit, the Digital Forensics Lab for the extraction of data from seized equipment, the Firearms programme for weapons tracing and ballistics

analysis and the Fugitive Investigations unit to assist countries locate and arrest wanted environmental criminals," the statement said.

A recent Interpol-UN Environment report showed 80 per cent of countries consider environmental crime a national priority, with the majority saying new and more sophisticated criminal activities increasingly threaten peace and security.—*Xinhua*

## Chile declares state of emergency due to massive wildfires

SANTIAGO — Chile declared a state of emergency on Friday as more than a dozen wildfires that have scorched nearly 50,000 hectares (123,500 acres) threatened to encroach on towns, factories and vineyards.

Firefighters, forestry service personnel and members of the military are battling 18 separate blazes in the centre and south of the country that have been fueled by strong winds and a heat wave.

The largest has con-

sumed 24,000 hectares in and around Pumanque, a rural area some 140 kilometers (87 miles) south of the capital Santiago that is near some of Chile's vineyards.

"I've instructed the Interior Ministry to de-

clare a catastrophe zone and a state of emergency in the areas affected by the fires," President Michelle Bachelet said on Twitter.

The smoke from the blazes cloaked Santiago in a thick haze. Television news images showed helicopters and planes trying to douse the out-of-control fires, apparently to little avail.

The head of Chile's CONAF forestry service, Aaron Cavieres, said the fires were caused by humans, but that it could not be determined whether they were set intentionally.

CONAF said it would close access to all national parks between the northern Coquimbo and south-central Biobio regions until Sunday.

While several fires are in the vicinity of some of Chile's national parks, none have been directly affected.—*Reuters*



Fire is seen on a hill in a town called Pirque, on the outskirts of Santiago, Chile, on 20 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HUNSA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.1.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/A.I.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22.1.2017 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.

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# With Oscars in sight, Amazon, Netflix lead streaming at Sundance

PARK CITY (Utah) — After revolutionizing television with bold, award-winning original content, streaming networks are on the cusp of their first potential Oscar wins, and are back at the Sundance film festival looking for more awards-worthy fare.

Amazon.com Inc raised eyebrows when it paid \$10 million for the North American distribution rights to Sundance drama “Manchester By the Sea” last year. But the film is now the frontrunner to win Casey Affleck an Oscar for best actor, which would be the first Academy Award for a streaming platform.

Netflix Inc had four documentaries in previous Oscar races, but has yet to win the coveted accolade. Its documentaries “13th” and “The Ivory Game” have been shortlisted this year for Oscar nominations, announced Tuesday, along with Amazon’s “Gleason.”

“An Oscar would be really great for the filmmakers,” Netflix Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos said in an interview. “We’ve campaigned four times and it’d be really great to see it through to the finish line.”

Netflix and Amazon both plan



Actors Michelle Williams (L) and Casey Affleck pose for photographers at a Gala screening of their film “Manchester by the Sea” at the 60th BFI London Film Festival in London, Britain, on 8 October 2016.

PHOTO: REUTERS

to increase 2017 spending to create and market original movies and series and are being watched closely this year at Sundance, the premiere US independent film festival.

Liesl Copland, partner and

finance and distribution agent at talent agency William Morris Endeavor, which sold “Manchester” to Amazon, said each streaming platform offers filmmakers very different models.

“Amazon is very much a pro at integrating the theatrical release, Netflix is very much doing things for their large, international subscriber base, and now Hulu is working more like a pay television

network,” Copland said.

Amazon acquired its first Sundance film, music documentary “Long Strange Trip,” on Wednesday, and plans to release it to US and UK Prime subscribers in May.

Filmmaker Amir Bar-Lev said he was drawn to Amazon’s global reach and ability to air the entirety of his four-hour film across six parts.

“We showed this film to a number of people and everyone was excited, but the guys from Amazon really understood the film on a level I hadn’t really experienced,” Bar-Lev said.

Netflix, with 94 million global subscribers, entered Sundance this year having already purchased six films and two documentary series, including sci-fi drama “The Discovery,” which will air on March 31, and documentary “Casting Jon-Benet,” debuting in April.

“We acquired films ahead of Sundance so that we could really showcase them at the festival,” Sarandos said.

He said the strategy was in part to capitalize on publicity at the festival. Netflix will release the films exclusively soon after their Sundance premieres.—Reuters

## Cute ‘Dog’s Purpose’ movie turns disturbing after stunt video

LOS ANGELES — What was billed as a heart-warming comedy movie aimed at dog lovers turned into a marketing nightmare on Thursday after a video emerged of a frightened dog being forced into rushing water on the film set.

Animal activist group PETA called for a boycott of the movie, “A Dog’s Purpose.” Its director, Lasse Hallstrom, said on Twitter that as a lifelong animal lover he was “very disturbed” by the video and had not witnessed the event.

The American Humane Association, which monitors the treatment of animals in films, said in a statement that it had suspended its representative who was on the film set and was bringing in a third party to investigate.

The video, obtained by celebrity news website TMZ, showed a dog handler repeatedly trying to coax a German Shepherd into cold rushing water. Off-camera, someone is heard laughing, saying, “You just got to throw him in.”

The Universal Pictures release, starring Dennis Quaid, is about a devoted dog re-born several times to different owners, bringing warmth into their lives. It is due for release in the United States on 26 January.

Actor Josh Gad, who voices the dog in the film, said he was “shaken and sad” at the video, although he did not

know the circumstances as he was never on set.

“I signed on for a film that truly stands out as one of the most beautiful love letters to animals I have ever seen,” Gad wrote on Twitter. “I am shaken and sad to see any animal put in a situation against its will.”

Producer Amblin Entertainment said it was investigating the incident but had followed protocols about the use of animals on film sets.

“There were several days of rehearsal of the water scenes to ensure Hercules (the German Shepherd) was comfortable with all of the stunts. On the day of the shoot, Hercules did not want to perform the stunt portrayed on the tape so the Amblin production team did not proceed with filming that shot.”

“Hercules is happy and healthy,” Amblin said in a statement on Wednesday. However, animal lovers were shocked.

“Do not take your children to see this movie unless you want to reward and encourage animal abuse,” wrote Jerry Sprinkle on the user review page for “A Dog’s Purpose” on movie website IMDB.com.

“As an animal lover, I wanted to see this film. As an animal lover, I can never see it,” tweeted a user called @Amitsacheva under the trending Twitter hashtag #BoycottADogsPurpose.—Reuters

## Behind the Big Mac: McDonald’s gets movie and literary spotlight

LOS ANGELES — The man who turned a popular California hamburger stand into the McDonald’s global fast-food empire is having a posthumous Hollywood moment.

Michael Keaton plays Ray Kroc, a hard-drinking, somewhat desperate middle-aged milkshake equipment salesman who 60 years ago out-hustled the McDonald brothers to gain control of their namesake brand in “The Founder,” which is opening in US movie theaters on Friday.

Kroc, who died in 1984, convinced Richard and Maurice McDonald to let him franchise their clean, quick-service restaurants that helped end the US carhop era. He then wrested so much control over the brand that the brothers agreed to be bought out in 1961 for \$2.7 million.

“I’m drawn to stories about polarizing, difficult men,” said screenwriter Robert Siegel, who also wrote “The Wrestler.”

“Keaton is good at that oily charm,” Siegel told Reuters.

The film closes with the bombshell allegation that Kroc cheated the McDonald brothers out of what would have been a massive annual royalty payment.

The McDonald brothers’ survivors, who struck a rights deal with the film’s producers, have made that charge. However, it was not confirmed by other sources or in media interviews with the brothers themselves, whose major complaint appeared to be Kroc’s appropriation of the McDonald’s founder title.



Cast member Michael Keaton. PHOTO: REUTERS

McDonald’s Corp declined comment on the issue.

“The Founder” arrives on screens on the heels of “Ray & Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald’s Fortune,” a 2016 book by journalist Lisa Napoli that turns the spotlight on Kroc’s third wife.

Joan Kroc, who died in 2003, lived lavishly while using Kroc’s billion-dollar fortune to promote causes sure to have sent her husband, a pro-business conservative who supported US President Richard Nixon, spinning in his grave.

The book traces their tumultuous relationship, which blossomed through a mutual love of music and business. But Napoli says it was Ray’s unwavering devotion to bargain-barrel “Early Times”

whiskey that fueled both conflict in the marriage and aspects of Joan’s charitable giving.

In keeping with the times, Joan did not speak openly about Ray’s drinking, which “doesn’t square well with the mythology of McDonald’s,” Napoli said.

“She couldn’t get him to quit, so she helped other people like herself to deal with people who drink,” Napoli said.

Joan supported addiction research, awareness and treatment through gifts to major universities and facilities such as the Hazelden Foundation and the Betty Ford Clinic.

Other major recipients include the Salvation Army, National Public Radio and the Ronald McDonald House Charities.—Reuters

**Rev. Bro. Anselm Balthazar**  
**86 years (28.8.1931 - 21.1.2017)**

Rev. Bro. Anselm Balthazar, F.S.C., served in the De La Salle high schools in Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore as a teacher for over 50 years.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul rest in peace! Funeral Mass will be on January 23, Monday 11:00 AM at St Mary's Cathedral.

His bereaved brothers and sister, nephews and nieces, grand nephews and grand nieces and great grand nephews.

## Silk Road lanterns light up British gardens for Lunar New Year

LONDON — Hundreds of traditional Chinese lanterns lit up the sprawling gardens of London’s Chiswick House to celebrate the upcoming Lunar New Year.

This week’s Magical Lantern Festival focused on the Silk Road, a network of trade routes connecting China with the West, which expanded on Wednesday with the arrival of the first China-to-Britain freight train in London.

Around 1,500 lanterns replicated this journey along the ancient Silk Road, with illuminated models of Rome’s Colosseum, the Egyptian pyramids and a Tang dynasty palace.

The decorations, using 60,000 light bulbs, were also seen in figures associated with the Middle East, such as camels, and the characters of Aladdin, Jasmine and the Genie from the Disney film “Aladdin”.

The festival of lights and color runs for 29 days, and incorporates both traditional lanterns and technology, such as virtual reality.

London’s official Lunar New Year celebrations take place in Trafalgar Square on January 29, when tens of thousands of people are expected to fill the iconic landmark.

This year is the Lunar New Year of the Rooster, one of 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac.—Reuters



A woman photographs a light display during the The Magical Lantern Festival marking the Chinese new year at Chiswick House in London, Britain, on 18 January 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Sap surfing on the Mediterranean Sea



Beachgoers enjoy the Mediterranean Sea in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 9 April 2016. The picture was created by exposing for the shadows on a hazy day. PHOTO: REUTERS

TEL AVIV — Sap surfing - standing upright on a board using an oar to paddle - has become a popular pastime for tourists and locals alike off the shores of Israel. In a series of pictures taken by Reuters photographer Baz Ratner sap surfers appear suspended in the shot, with the hazy skyline merging with the still waters against a misty backdrop.

Similar conditions are seen on the Dead Sea, where swimmers enjoy a dip in the salty waters that are mentioned in the Bible and sit at the lowest point on Earth.—Reuters

## Melania Trump’s hometown hopes new-found fame will boost trade, tourism

SEVNICA (Slovenia) — “First Lady” apple pies in the Kruhek bakery in Melania Trump’s hometown of Sevnica in Slovenia are selling like hot cakes.

“We sell more than a hundred a day so the pies are our main product these days,” said Sergeja Gorenjec, a saleswoman at the bakery. “Our workday is longer but we are glad and proud of Melania.”

Tourist numbers have doubled over the past year, when interest in Melania rose during her husband Donald Trump’s presidential election campaign, said tour guide Janez Levstik. He did not give figures.

“We were a bit unprepared for the attention at first but now we are getting used to it and we expect tourist numbers to increase further in the future,” said Mojca Pernovsek, the head of local tourism bureau KSTM. As Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, the local municipality invited tourists and journalists to Sevnica on Friday to join in the celebrations.

Melania cakes, Melania pancakes and Presidential Burgers are among the offerings in the restaurants and cafes in the town in southeastern Slovenia, on the banks of the river Sava and surrounded by forest-covered hills.

It was there that Melania, born in 1970 when Slovenia was part of Yugoslavia, spent most of her youth in a flat in the town center before moving to the capital Ljubljana to attend high school. She started modeling at 16 and pursued her career in Milan and Paris before moving to New York in 1996. Her parents, former car dealer Viktor Knavs and his wife Amalija, live in Sevnica when not in the United States with their two daughters.

“So far we’ve had mostly Slovenian tourists but we expect to get more from abroad in future, particularly from neighboring countries,” said Levstik.

Visitors will see no photographs of Melania in the town of about 5,000 people — they were removed after her lawyer issued a warning in November that using Melania’s photo for commercial purposes without her consent was not allowed.

But as well as the “First Lady” pies, made from local apples and complete with a letter M on top and a paper US flag attached, they can sample local wine, tea, chocolate, sausages and honey. Other local products include face creams, lingerie, shoes and furniture.—Reuters

mitv

Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(22-1-2017 07:00am ~ 23-1-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Halin, A Treasure Trove of The Ancient Pyu City
07:52	Am	Myanmar Puppet
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	The Longest Living Siblings (Part-2)
08:48	Am	Interview with Foreign Affair Minister of Ukraine H.E. Mr. Pavlo Klimkin
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	The Precious Lands of Myanmar (Mandalay Region)
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	International Dances in Myanmar
10:45	Am	The Eel Business (Fisherman the eel culture)

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

Prime Time		
07:03	Pm	News
07:25	Pm	The Korean Treasure, Perilla Oil
07:47	Pm	Today Myanmar: Yangon Bus Service
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar National Poet And Literary Icon; Prolific Writer of Poems & Prose —www Min Thu Wun (Ep-3) His Public Service & Literary World
08:51	Pm	Yangon Markets: Da Nyein Gone Market

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

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

## Tourists’ luxury spending up in December for first time since February

PARIS — Global spending on luxury goods by tourists was up in December for the first time since February, lifted by strong business in Britain and France, a study by tax-refund services firm Global Blue showed.

Tourism spending on luxury goods was up 3 per cent year on year in December overall, with a 26 per cent increase in Britain and 21 per cent in France, which had suffered from a sharp downturn after deadly Islamist attacks in Paris and Nice.

The data does not include tourism spending in the United States, Hong Kong and Dubai.—Reuters



Britain's Johanna Konta celebrates winning her Women's singles third round match against Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki at Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia, on 21 January 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Konta calls the shots to ease into fourth round

MELBOURNE — Britain's Johanna Konta powered into the fourth round of the Australian Open for the second year in a row on Saturday, comfortably seeing off former world number one Caroline Wozniacki 6-3, 6-1 on Margaret Court Arena.

Konta, who is yet to drop a set in the tournament, broke the Dane midway through the first set with a smoking drop shot and never looked back, keeping the pressure up throughout the 75-minute contest.

The ninth seeded 25-year-old, the female contingent in a British charge into the second week at Melbourne Park, joined male compatriots Andy Murray and Dan Evans in the fourth round when Wozniacki put a backhand wide.

The Sydney-born Konta, a semi-finalist here last year, will next face 30th seed Ekaterina Makarova as she seeks to give Britain its first women's grand slam singles champion in four decades.—Reuters

## Liverpool title challenge dented by Swansea sensation

LONDON — Liverpool were on the end of the biggest sensation of the Premier League season when bottom club Swansea City repelled a dramatic comeback from Juergen Klopp's title chasers to earn their first-ever league win at Anfield on Saturday.

The Welsh strugglers leapt out of the bottom three with a quite extraordinary win that stunned Liverpool fans who had not seen their title challengers lose a home match league there since defeat by Manchester United a year ago.

Spanish international Fernando Llorente was the hero in Swansea's first league victory under new manager Paul Clement, toe-poking the ball home two minutes after halftime and heading home another five minutes later.

After Roberto Firmino had dragged Liverpool back into the game with two quite superb goals, it seemed wholly unlikely that the visitors could survive the onslaught until the ball broke for Gylfi Sigurdsson to slot home their 74th minute winner.—Reuters

## Nadal holds off rising talent Zverev to reach last 16

MELBOURNE — Rafa Nadal held off a fierce challenge from one of the hottest prospects in the game when he outlasted German teenager Alexander Zverev 4-6, 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-2 to reach the last 16 of the Australian Open on Saturday.

The Spaniard, champion here in 2009, needed to be at his resilient best to come out on top after more than four hours of top quality shot-making and thrilling rallies which earned both players a huge ovation from the Rod Laver Arena crowd.

The 19-year-old Zverev showed in spades why many consider him a future grand slam champion but was just unable to stay with the uber-fit 30-year-old in a

gripping deciding set.

"Everybody knows how good Alexander is, he's the future of our sport and the present too," said Nadal, who reached the fourth round for the 10th time in 12 appearances at Melbourne Park.

"Today was a great battle, I am very happy to be through. It was an important result for me as I've lost my last couple of matches in the fifth."

Returning to Melbourne Park as ninth seed after curtailing his 2016 season because of injury, Nadal will next face Gael Monfils of France as he bids for a 15th grand slam title.

While Zverev's performance reinforced his position in the vanguard of generation next, Nadal confirmed that he is healthy enough to take advantage of the early exit of 2016 champion Novak Djokovic from

his half of the draw.

It was the younger man, however, who got off to the quicker start, grabbing a break in the opening game with a sumptuous backhand dropshot and moving the former world number one around the court.

Zverev had a 20 kph advantage over Nadal on first serve but the German was unable to dominate in the second set the way he did in the first and a single break evened up the contest.

The third set developed into a ding-dong battle with neither player able to snare a single break point and it was Zverev who edged the tiebreak with an angled winner, again off his backhand.

Nadal grabbed the only break of the fourth set on Zverev's first service game and tied the contest up with his eighth ace, sending it into a decider.—Reuters

## Gerrard to return to Liverpool as Academy coach

LONDON — Liverpool's former captain and talisman Steven Gerrard will return to his roots as part of the Academy's coaching set-up, the Premier League club announced on Friday.

Gerrard, who made 710 appearances for his boyhood club during 17 years at Anfield, will begin his new role in February.

"It feels like completing the circle; returning to the place where professionally it all began," the 36-year-old told the club's website (www.liverpoolfc.com).

"However, this isn't a decision based on emotion — it's about what I can offer and contribute to Liverpool." Gerrard ended

his playing career in November when he announced his retirement a week after confirming he would not be returning to play for MLS side LA Galaxy.

A return to Liverpool in some capacity has always been on the cards and news that he will be working with the club's youngsters will be welcomed by the fans who idolised him. He will work under Academy manager Alex Inglethorpe at the club's Kirkby complex. "I don't think I need to explain to people what this football club means to me," said Gerrard, who famously led Liverpool to an unlikely Champions League final win over Milan in 2005.—Reuters



Former Liverpool player Steven Gerrard. PHOTO: REUTERS



Swansea City's Fernando Llorente celebrates scoring their second goal with Tom Carroll during Premier League at Anfield, on 21 January 2017. Photo: Reuters