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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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The United Dynamic arrives in Made Island, Rakhine State with 130,000 metric tons of crude oil that will be sent to China. PHOTO: MNA

## Trial pumping of imported crude oil to China via South East Asia pipeline

THE crude oil tanker United Dynamic, carrying 130,000 metric tons of crude oil, arrived in Made Island, Kyaukpyu Township, Rakhine State from the Middle East on 10 April and discharged its cargo into crude oil storage tanks yesterday morning, com-

pleting the first step toward a trial pumping of crude oil through a pipeline across Myanmar into China.

As the crude oil makes its way through Rakhine State, Magway Region, Mandalay Region and Shan State, those

states and regions will receive health, education, socio-economic developments and job opportunities, according to the agreement.

The Crude Oil Transportation Agreement between Myanmar and China was signed dur-

ing the President's recent trip to China. The 32-inch diameter pipeline will carry the crude oil 770 kilometers to Namkham Township, Shan State, at the country's eastern border with China.

SEE PAGE 3 >>

## 453 from Insein Prison included in pre-Thingyan prisoner release

PRIOR to the Myanmar New Year Thingyan Festival, 1,883 prisoners who have observed the rules and behaved well in various prisons and detention camps had their sentences reduced in order for them to be released yesterday morning, and included 453 from Insein Jail.

Ko Myint Oo, who served 16 months of a one-and-a-half-year sentence for a traffic accident said he only recently received news of his early release and hadn't yet told his family.

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### WEATHER

## Low pressure expected to form in Bay of Bengal

THE Meteorology and Hydrology Department has forecasted that a low pressure area may form in southern part of the Bay of Bengal in the next 72 hours.

The weather bureau said yesterday that its Wednesday 1.30 pm forecast calls for rain and thunder within 24 hours over Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, and Kachin, Shan, Kayin and Mon states with an 60 per cent degree of certainty.—GNLM





## PRESS RELEASE

## Myanmar, China discuss maintaining peace and stability and development of the border areas, continuation of China's constructive support for the peace process of Myanmar

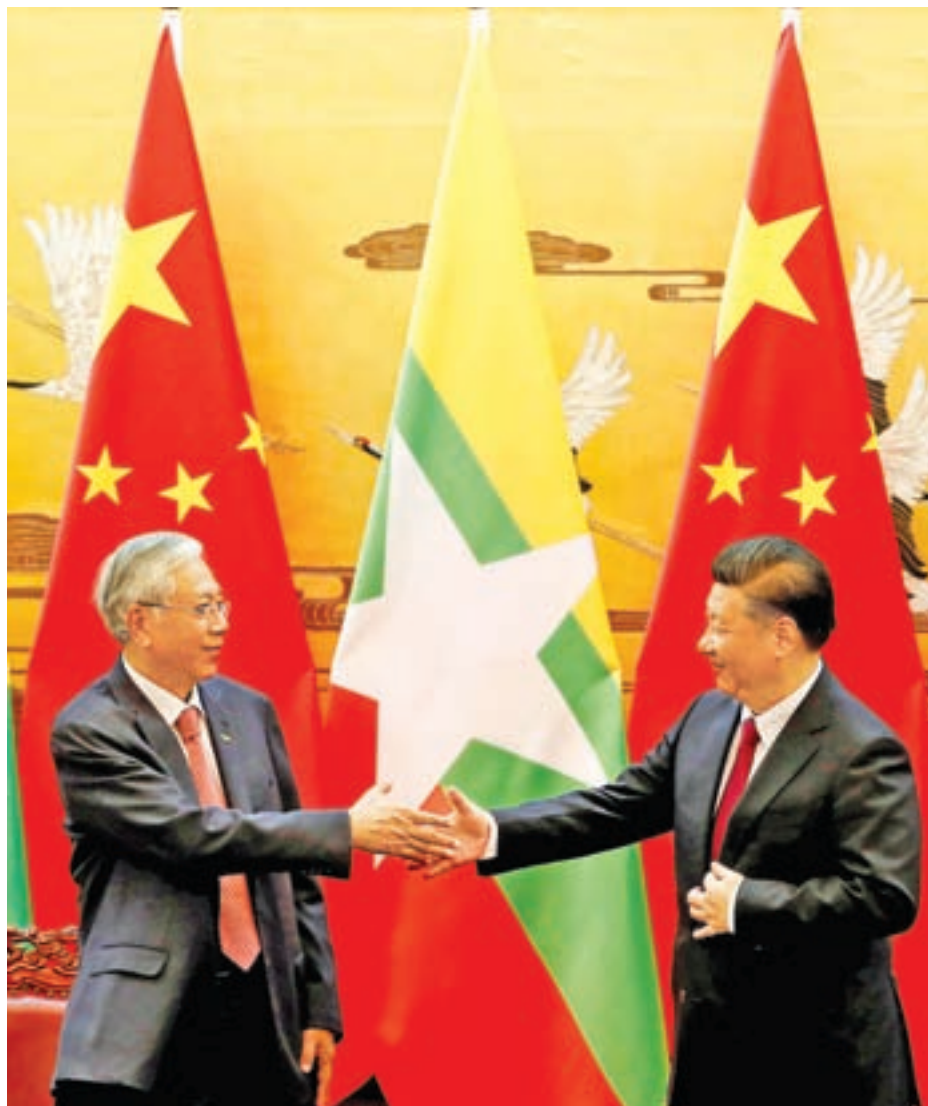
The following is the press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the visit of President U Htin Kyaw to the People's Republic of China.—Ed

1. At the invitation of President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw and wife Daw Su Su Lwin paid a State Visit to the People's Republic of China from 6th to 11th April 2017 and arrived back to Nay Pyi Taw in the evening of 11th April 2017.

2. During the visit, President U Htin Kyaw held bilateral talks with President Xi Jinping and met with Premier Li Keqiang of the State Council, and Chairman Zhang Dejiang of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress separately on 10th April 2017.

3. During the meetings, the leaders stressed the importance of advancing "Comprehensive Cooperative Strategic Partnership Relations" based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and existing "Pauk-Phaw" friendship; promoting diverse cooperation between the two countries particularly for the benefit of the two peoples through the high level exchange of visits; to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, technology, transportation, culture, health and sports; strengthening closer coordination at the regional and international fora such as United Nations, Mekong-Lancang cooperation and ASEAN-China Cooperation with a view to promoting peace, stability and development of the region. The leaders also cordially discussed about the ongoing infrastructure projects including oil and gas pipelines and Kyauk-Phyu Special Economic Zone and Deep Sea Port.

4. Furthermore, they discussed on the matters of maintaining peace and stability and development of the border areas, continuation of China's constructive support for the peace process of Myanmar and further pursuance of 2+2 high level consultations led by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense. China also expressed its support toward Myanmar Government's efforts for the national reconciliation and peace, promoting demo-



President U Htin Kyaw shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping. PHOTO: REUTERS

cratic transition, improving socio-economic lives of the Myanmar people.

5. After the meeting, the two leaders attended the signing ceremony of cooperation agreements between Myanmar and the People's Republic of China. A total of (9) MoUs, Agreements and Exchange of Letters were successfully inked, namely Agreement on China's grant for economic and technical cooperation of RMB Yuan

(1) billion to Myanmar to implement projects in economic developments and living standard improvement of Myanmar people including education, rural development and other fields; Cooperation in the Field of Forestry; Cooperation in Seafarers Training, Education and Development; Cooperation in Medical Technic Training Centre and Disease Control; Technical Cooperation Project Regarding the 29th South East

Asian Games; Crude Oil Transportation Agreement and implementation of Development of Deep Sea Port Project and Industrial Park in Kyauk Phyu Special Economic Zone. At the conclusion of the visit, a Joint Press Communique between Myanmar and the People's Republic of China has been issued in Beijing.

6. During the State Visit, President U Htin Kyaw and wife also visited Sichuan Province, Shaanxi Province and Shanghai City. While in Sichuan Province and Shaanxi Province, President U Htin Kyaw received Mr. Wang Dongmin, Governor of Sichuan and Mr. Hu Heping, Governor of Shaanxi on 6th and 7th of April 2017 respectively.

7. President U Htin Kyaw and wife also visited Myanmar Embassy in Beijing to meet with staff and families of the Myanmar Embassy and Office of the Military, Naval and Air Attache' and attended the Luncheon hosted by Myanmar Ambassador U Thit Lin Ohn and wife on 9th April 2017.

8. On the same day, the President received Mr. Guo Tianmin, Senior Vice President of Huawei Technology and also attended the Book Launching Ceremony of the Chinese translation book of writer "Min Thu Won's literature, "Bond of friendship between Min Thu Won and China" published by the China International Publishing Group at the Diaoyutai State Guest House.

9. The President also received the Governor of Yunnan Province Mr. Cheng Hao in Kunming, on 11th April, 2017. During the visit to China, President U Htin Kyaw and wife paid homage to Lesheng Giant Buddha in Sichuan, conducted tours to Terracotta Army Museum of Qing Dynasty in Shaanxi, Oriental Pearl Tower and National Museum in Shanghai. He also paid homage to Buddha Tooth Relic and visited Forbidden City and the Great Wall in Beijing and Stone Forest in Yunnan.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
April 13, 2017

## Some like it hot, but heat can be fatal

IN 2016, the Earth experienced its hottest year since the 1880s when modern records began, marking the third consecutive year of record-high temperatures. Less than four months into 2017, parts of Myanmar, India and Australia are already in the throes of heat waves.

While sunny skies may be synonymous with summer fun, too much heat can be fatal.

It is estimated that between 15,000 and 19,000 people died during France's heat wave of 2003, while the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said some 600 Americans died every year from exposure to extreme heat between 1999 and 2010.

The Thomson Reuters Foundation spoke to half a dozen climate scientists to understand what

rising temperatures mean for human health. Here are some key facts and figures:

With a temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius, cities in China, India, Bangladesh, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Vietnam and Myanmar will regularly start to experience heat stress, according to the UK study.

If global temperature rise hits 2.7 degrees Celsius, Tokyo, Beijing and Manila will also be affected, while a 4 degree rise would see New York and Rio de Janeiro join the club.

Southeast Asia faces a 16 per cent loss of labour capacity in the next three decades due to heat stress, said a study by risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft. A separate report by the UN Development Programme, International

Labour Organisation and the Climate Vulnerable Forum said emerging economies could lose as much as 10 per cent of their daytime working hours due to searing temperatures.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that without adaptation measures, there will be nearly 65,000 additional deaths annually among people over 65 due to heat exposure in 2030, with the greatest impacts in Asia-Pacific.

Rice, Asia's staple food, is highly susceptible to heat stress, with yields plummeting if temperatures are above 35 degrees Celsius for 10 days during the reproductive stage.

Hotter days and nights, and heat waves will become more common. Multiple studies have

found that heat waves are happening more frequently, while cold spells declined in urban areas in the last 40 years.

Extreme heat can cause heat-related illnesses, such as heat stroke and exhaustion, and increase mortality. It can also exacerbate existing health conditions. Heat stress occurs when the body absorbs more heat than is tolerable.

The total number of days on which heat reaches "health-threatening levels" will rise rapidly over the next several decades, noted one study by the Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-International (ISET-International) and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). Another recent study by British researchers warned that conditions

that have challenged and overwhelmed people in the most heat-stressed regions could become "much more frequent", while population growth will make things worse.

Urban centres in the developing world will be hit hardest. They tend to be hotter than rural areas due to factors including population density, pollution from industrial activities, and the presence of buildings and machinery that create heat. This "urban heat island" effect is well known, but will worsen with rising temperatures.

New populations will become heat-stressed while those already exposed to dangerous levels of heat will be subject to harmful conditions more often, scientists say.—Thin Lei Win / Thomson Reuters Foundation





## Traditional grinding of sandalwood before Thingyan

Ethnic Rakhine women grind sandalwood mixed with water on a flat stone to make scented water during a sandalwood grinding competition in Yangon on 12 April 2017. The tradition celebrates the Myanmar Thingyan water festival that welcomes the New Year. The scented water is used to wash Buddha statues on the first day of the four-day New Year festival. PHOTO: NYI ZAW MOE

## Trial pumping of imported crude oil to China via South East Asia pipeline

>> FROM PAGE 1

This project was implemented according to the agreement signed between the South East Asia Crude Oil Pipeline Company (SEAOP), in which Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise of Ministry of Electric Power and Energy is a shareholder, and China National HK Corporation Limited.

US\$2.25 billion was invested in the pipeline project, which can annually transport up to 22 million metric tons of crude oil. Myanmar Oil & Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Electric Power and Energy holds a 49.1 per cent share and China National Petroleum Corporation holds 50.9 per cent share in the pipeline project that was started in June 2010 and completed in 2015. The Made Island crude oil terminal was transferred to the Myanmar Port Authority, Ministry of Transport and Communications on 28 February 2015. The project duration is 30 years. In addition to the pipeline, project assets includes the oil terminal on Made Island, a work boat wharf, five tugboats, 12 crude oil storage tanks each capable of holding 22 million gallons of crude oil, buildings, three pumping stations (Sinkhondaing, An Township, Mandalay and Hsipaw) and a crude oil metering station (Namkham).

The Southeast Asia crude oil pipeline passes through Rakhine State, Magway Region, Mandalay Region and Shan State. Myanmar will annually receive a Right of Way fee of US\$6.905 million, a pipeline usage fee of US\$1 per metric ton of crude oil, crude oil tariff of US\$31.56 per metric ton and profit shares according to the shareholding.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## 2,075 land grabbing complaints settled in one year

THE central committee on scrutinising confiscated farmlands announced yesterday that it has received 4,184 complaints from region and states from May 2016 to March 2017 and has solved 251 cases, with 3,933 left.

During the period from March 2016 to March 2017, the central committee continued to review 6,707 unsettled cases left by the previous government's committee for Land Use Management and have settled 1,806 cases with 4,901 cases left.

The Central Committee during its one year term from March 2016 to March 2017 has settled a total of 2,075 com-

plaints.

A total of 419,771.791 acres of discarded land, which were handed over to the central committee for Land Use Management during the previous government's administration, and as of 31 March 2017, the scrutinising central committee has returned 412,248.662 acres of discarded land to people concerned with 7,523.129 acres of land remaining, according to an announcement of the committee yesterday.

Citizens can check to see if their confiscated lands were included in the list of discarded lands at their respective township or community's office for

Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands and reclaim their land with proper ownership documents.

The announcement said the citizens who wish to submit injustice or dissatisfaction can lodge complaints to their respective township, community, district, Nay Pyi Taw, region, or state's office for Review Committee on Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands, and all complaints will be reviewed and followed up in a concise manner and discarded lands will be returned to their rightful owner in accord with proper rules and regulations.—*GNLM*

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Office of the President Order 6/2017

1<sup>st</sup> Waning of Tagu, 1378 ME  
(12 April, 2017)

### Appointment of Yangon Region High Court Judge

In accordance with the provisions stated in Article 308 section (b) sub-section (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Article 82 section (d) of the Union Government Law and Article 45 of the Union Administration of Justice Law, and Article 18 section (d) of the Region or State Government Law, U Aung Naing has been appointed as Yangon Region High Court Judge.

Sd/ Htin Kyaw  
President  
Republic of the Union of Myanmar



## Tenders to be invited for 10 projects including upgrading of Yangon circular railway

TENDERS will be invited for 10 projects including the upgrading of the Yangon circular railway this month, said an official from Myanmar Railways.

Currently, Myanmar Railways is planning to upgrade the railway and improve the drainage system to prevent flooding.

Myanmar Railways will also invite tenders for upgrading railway crossings, railway signals and communication buildings, constructing of gate huts, upgrading of railway stations and platforms, upgrading of DEMU coaches, supplying electricity and other urban engineering activities.

Myanmar Railways will in-

crease the speed of trains from 20 kph to 40 kph, which will require fortifying of the tracks.

Thousands of people rely on the circular trains in the city of Yangon, so an upgrade of the railway system is being undertaken with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The Ministry of Transport and Communications and JICA have been conducting the development of a railway system since 2014 to increase the number of passengers. Japan estimated that there will be about 3 million passengers in Myanmar relying on the circular trains by 2020.— *Min Min*



A locomotive runs on the Yangon Circular Railway at Yangon Central Railway Station. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

## Viber Group to be formed for YBS complaints

A Viber group will be formed for passengers to lodge complaints concerning the Yangon Bus Service (YBS), said Dr. Maung Aung, secretary of the Yangon Region Transport Authority.

The YBS started operations on 16 January. The Viber group will be formed with an aim to accept the passengers complaints concerning the collection of extra

fares, rude treatment of passengers, sexual harassments/assaults and changing the prescribed routes.

Although the new YBS has replaced the All bus Line Supervisory Committee, also known as Ma Hta Tha, commuters are still expressing problems of inconvenience. So, U Wai Phyto Han, Regional Hluttaw representative

for Insein township constituency 2, submitted a proposal on 5 April complaining that the YBS bus drivers and conductors are still treating the passengers in an unbecoming manner. More than 3,500 buses are currently running with YBS. The public company is making arrangements to run new buses in Yangon Bus Service (YBS).— *200*

## Private schools offering teaching positions

NEARLY 100 teaching positions are being offered monthly by private schools this year. The job opportunities are increasing this year, compared with the same period last year, according to work.com.mm statistics.

Private schools are offering pre-primary school teacher positions and middle school teacher positions, in addition to mathematics, science, Myanmar language and art teacher positions.

The private schools are also in need of office staff, human resource managers, teaching assistants and teacher who can teach the basic education curriculum subjects. More applicants have applied for the private school positions this month, a 9.84 per cent increase from last year.

Job opportunities are also being offered in the goods and transportation sector, computer technology sector, telecoms net-

work technology sector, engineering sector, import and export sector, construction sector, monetary management sector, hotel and guest house sector and the NGO/INGO sector. Among them, the education sector stands 13th in terms of creation of job opportunities. According to work.com.mm statistics, nearly 26,000 applicants applied for nearly 1,900 job vacancies in the Yangon region.—*200*

## Wheel tax will not be imposed at toll gates

A wheel tax for motorbikes will not be imposed at toll gates in 25 townships in Magway Region before the water festival, said U Zaw Min, Magway Region government minister for Planning, Finance and Development Affairs.

Regional Hluttaw representatives submitted a proposal on 20 February to Regional government

to stop assessment of wheel tax for motorbikes at the toll gates.

"Previously, the toll gates collected Ks100 per motorbike for wheel tax. Now, the regional government issued a directive to the regional development affairs department that prevented the toll gates from collecting the motorbike wheel tax beginning from 8

April," said the minister.

Although the collection of a wheel tax has been stopped at the toll gates, people still need to pay Ks2,000 for the annual motorbike wheel tax, said U Aye Kyaw, chairman of Magway region Hluttaw Planning, Finance and Development Affairs committee.— *The Mirror*

## Traffic authorities accelerate road safety activities in hot spot areas in Monywa

TRAFFIC authorities are accelerating road safety activities in hot spot areas across Monywa Township in Sagaing Region with the hopes to decrease the number of accidents, police reported.

According to official figures released by traffic police, 86 people were killed and 629 others sustained injury in 374 cases of vehicle accidents in 2015 in downtown

Monywa. A total of 173 cases of traffic-related accidents in 2016 left 304 people dead and 49 injured. Four people died on the spot while 33 others received moderate injuries in 25 cases in the first two months of this year. A police officer said that the deaths and injuries were due to failure to abide by traffic safety rules and regulations by both drivers and pedes-

trians. Drivers are urged to follow the rules to fasten seat belts that prevent ejection from the vehicle during a crash. Police are now raising public awareness on traffic rules through educative talks. They continue to share road safety knowledge mostly in crowded places in the town from 7 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. daily.—*Myo Win Tun (Monywa)*

## Nearly 3,000 lepers need to receive treatment annually

NEARLY 3,000 lepers in Myanmar need to receive treatment annually, according to an official from Health Department.

"Around 2,000 or 3,000 people are inflicted with the leprosy disease in Myanmar", said Dr. Myat Thidar, a responsible person from The Leprosy Mission Myanmar at a ceremony to explain the disability rights law.

Myanmar presently has the fourth-highest level of leprosy infection in the world after India, Indonesia and Brazil.

Leprosy cannot be prevented by a vaccine, but we can provide treatment to control the disease. The patients who are suspected to be inflicted with

leprosy can receive treatment at the nearest health center. Patients who need to receive special treatment are required to go to the special dermatological ward at Mandalay and Yangon general hospitals.

Patients who need to receive long-term treatment can receive the treatment at the leprosy hospital near Shwe Nanthar village, Madaya Township, Mandalay Region and Mawlamyine Leprosy Hospital.

There are two types of leprosy: tuberculoid and lepromatous. Not all people are vulnerable to leprosy. The patients need to be careful of eating habits and personal hygiene.— *MMAL*

## Summer paddy to be grown on 185-acre plot of land in Sagaing township

A summer paddy will be grown on a 185-acre plot of land with irrigation from the SinTat River Dam in Sagaing township.

Plots of land in the area of the SinTat River Dam area were reclaimed with the invitation of tenders in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. The 85-acre plot was reclaimed by spending Ks25.5 million in loans sought from the co-operative department and the 100-acre plot of land was reclaimed by spending Ks50 million from the fund of the Sagaing regional government. Currently, a summer paddy started to grow on the 185-acre plot of land, according to Region agricultural mechanization department.

"There are only a few

farmers interested in systematic cultivation. So, we reclaimed the land with the assistance of co-operative department loans and regional government funds. We just demonstrate the summer paddy growing method to the local farmers," said an official from Region agriculture mechanisation department.

Sagaing Region Agriculture Mechanisation Department has reclaimed a 500-acre plot of land by spending the regional government fund and an 85-acre plot of land by a co-operative department loan in five villages in four townships in Sagaing Region in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.— *Win Oo (Zayar Tine)*



# LOCAL Business

## 19,000 tonnes of teak, hardwood to be sold

THE Myanmar Timber Enterprise (MTE) announced on 11 April that 19,408 tonnes of teak and hardwood logs will be sold by the open tender system.

Over 19,000 tonnes of illegal teak and hardwood logs were seized in Sagaing, Yangon, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions, and southern Shan and Kachin states. The tenders to be submitted from 3 May to 5 May will be checked with the special open tender system in Gyogone MTE office compound in Insein Township, Yangon Region. Export Market and Milling Department under Myanmar Timber Enterprise has also invited tenders to bid in US dollars for more than 9,000 tonnes of teak and hardwood logs recently.

The Myanmar Timber Enterprise has targeted to earn Ks250 billion in the 2016-2017 fiscal year from selling the logs by a competitive bidding system, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and En-



A man uses a chainsaw to cut teak logs in a logging camp in Pinlebu township, Sagaing Region. PHOTO: REUTERS

vironmental Conservation.

Although the production of hardwood was halted this year, 15,000 tonnes of teak logs and 3

lakh tonnes of hardwood that were produced during past years will be sold to domestic entrepreneurs, according to officials from

the MTE.

The Myanmar Timber Enterprise has arranged to sell over 600,000 tonnes that remained unsold dur-

ing the past year and illegally seized timbers this year to fulfill the domestic demand, according to MTE.—Zaw Zaw

### Dr Aung Thu talks with Russian ambassador for fishery products to enter Russian market

DR AUNG THU, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, received an ambassador from the Russian Federation to Myanmar at 1:30 pm in the afternoon on 11th April at the Hall of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry.

During this meeting, they discussed promoting ties between the two countries and matters concerning technical cooperation in agriculture and livestock production. The Russian ambassador invited Myanmar to export its agricultural and fishery products to Russia.

## One Stop Service Markets coming soon

Ko Moe

A marketplace selling traditional ethnic clothing, cuisine and other commodities will be constructed, said Union Minister U Kyaw Win from the Ministry for Planning and Finance.

One-stop services such as these need to be implemented and can be a boosting factor for the hotel and tourism sector, he said.

“This kind of marketplace where you can find all sorts of ethnic clothing and

food is in the works. With its completion we hope to boost tourism in the country,” said the Union Minister. The plan for the One Stop Service market will begin this coming May.

The market will be built on a large scale to draw in tourists and will be constructed in key locations of Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay. The Union Minister said interested persons can submit forms for which sector they wish to invest in to the Ministry. The market

will not only be inclusive of traditional ethnic clothing but other commodities concerned with their culture and everyday life. Strict guidelines will be put in place to ensure the best quality of reliable foodstuff to attract both local and foreign customers.

Since the hotel and tourism sector creates lots of job opportunities and direct income to the national budget, it will be greatly beneficial when these one-stop service markets are completed.

## Edible oil local consumption hit about 1m tonnes a year

THE local consumption of edible oil is around 1million tonnes, with only 400,000 tonnes locally produced and about 600,000 imported, according to Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association.

Palm oil, sunflower oil, mustard oil and soybean oil are imported into the country. Myanmar's edible oil crop accounted for 16 per cent of total plantation.

About 1.2 to 1.4 million tonnes of oil crops, including peanut, sesame and

sunflower, are yearly produced. Myanmar is the top producer of sesame in the world and is ranked 6th in groundnut production. “We do not have self-sufficiency, even if all the oil crops are crushed to produce oil”, said U Myint Kyu, a chairman of the Myanmar Edible Oil Dealers Association.

“There is no sufficient oil crop even if there is foreign demand. The oil crops fetched over US\$1,800 per tonne in the international

market and so, these are suitable crops to increase production”, he said. About 80 per cent of edible oil in the domestic market is mixed oil with chemical powders and less than five per cent is pure edible oil produced from oil crops. There are 169 heavy oil mills, 987 medium oil mills and 1987 small oil mills. However, only 10 per cent of oil mills can operate at full capacity, it is learnt. — Mon Mon

## THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine



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U Myo Yan Naung Thein, who got six-months' imprisonment under Section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law, waves hand to the crowd outside Insein Correctional Department in Yangon after his release. PHOTO: ZAW GYI (PANITA)

# 453 from Insein Prison included in pre-Thingyan prisoner release

>> FROM PAGE 1

“With reductions, my term is almost complete, but even a few days of an early release means an earlier reunion with my family. My family didn’t know about my release and I still don’t know how I can return back to my home town”, he said.

U Myo Yan Naung Thein, the secretary of the NLD Central Committee for Research and Strategy, who was sentenced for six months for defaming the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services on a social media site (Facebook) under section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law, was also released.

“I was sentenced for six months and had served 5 months and 7 days. I was released when my term is only days away from completion with reductions. Those remaining inside are mainly for crimes like robbery and theft. Two-thirds are under detention for drug related cases.”

Family members of the prisoners were seen gathering in front of Insein Jail yesterday afternoon after they heard the news of the government reducing the prison sentences of detained prisoners and releasing them according to Myanmar Jail

Manual Section 847 and 848.

“My son was serving a sentence for a drug case. He is six months from completing his sentence. I heard that those having a few months remaining to serve were released so I come and wait. He is not out yet. As a parent, I came to see if he is included in the released prisoners”, said Daw Kyi Kyi Win from Shwepyitha Township.

Similarly 2,283 were granted special reductions and released from prisons and detention camps before last year’s Thingyan holiday.—Zaw Gyi (Panita)

## PICTURE OF THE DAY



Myanmar punks celebrate Myanmar Thingyan New Year Festival in Yangon on Wednesday one day ahead of the festival. PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT/MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

## The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of State Counsellor Office

### Press Release

1<sup>st</sup> Waning of Tagu 1378 ME  
12 April 2017

### Release from prison and detention camps of prisoners who observed rules and behaved well

1. Prison sentences of detained prisoners who observed the rules and behaved well were reduced according to sections 847 and 848 of Myanmar Jail Manual Rule.
2. Of the prisoners serving sentences before previous Thingyan, 2,283 were granted special reductions and released.
3. In this Myanmar New Year, before the Thingyan festival, sentences of the following prisoners who observed the rules and behaved well are reduced and released in order for them to start a new life with new thoughts on the New Year.

Sr.	State, Region, Department	Male	Female	Total
(a)	Yangon Region	391	62	453
(b)	Mandalay Region	356	48	404
(c)	Sagaing Region	135	12	147
(d)	Ayeyawady Region	117	6	123
(e)	Shan State	101	7	108
(f)	Bago Region	139	37	176
(g)	Mon State	30	7	37
(h)	Taninthayi Region	25	-	25
(i)	Kachin State	53	7	60
(j)	Rakhine State	86	20	106
(k)	Magway Region	70	11	81
(l)	Kayah State	6	1	7
(m)	Kayin State	30	3	33
(n)	Production Department	111	12	123
	Total	1650	233	1883

## Announcement of social pension plans

The Department of Social Welfare under the Ministry for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in accord with the Myanmar National Social Protection Strategic Plan and laws concerning senior citizens will begin supporting senior citizens with a monthly pension of Ks 10,000 beginning from April 2017. Those concerned can submit to their city, ward, village, community, state, region, or district social welfare office with the following facts –

- (A) Person concerned must have reached the age of 90 starting from 1 April 2017.
- (B) Recently taken passport sized photo
- (C) National Registration Cards.
- (D) Household registration [Form 66 (D)]
- (E) At least either NRC or Household registration is required.

Department of Social Welfare  
Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

## Invitation to printing press vendors

News and Periodicals Enterprise, Ministry of Information is planning to purchase 4 unit of high performance, long-life 4 Hi Tower color printing press. Local and foreign companies interested to sell the printing press are invited to contact to the following address from 18 April 2017 to 24 April 2017 in order to introduce and explain about their presses.

Contact Address  
Deputy Director (Planning)  
News and Periodicals Enterprise  
Ministry of Information, Minister Office  
Office No. 7, Nay Pyi Taw  
Phone 067-412123, 412828



## Jakarta's Christian governor, Muslim rival in tight election race — poll

JAKARTA — The Christian governor of Jakarta, Basuki “Ahok” Tjahaja Purnama, and his Muslim opponent are neck and neck in the race to lead Indonesia's capital, an opinion poll showed on Wednesday, a week ahead of the hard fought vote.

The election campaign — which has been among the most divisive in the city's history — has been marred by religious and ethnic tension over the blasphemy trial of the incumbent Purnama, who is accused of insulting Islam.

Purnama was on 46.9 per cent of the sample vote, trailing his rival Anies Baswedan by 1 percentage point in one of the first opinion polls published since the two candidates made it through a first round election in mid-February.

A candidate needs a simple majority to win.

Pollster Saiful Mujani Research Center (SMRC) said the survey of 800 respondents showed Baswedan enjoyed support primarily because of his Islamic faith, while Purnama was popular due to his record in office.

Nearly 90 per cent of Indonesia's 250 million population is Muslim, but the country recognizes six religions and is home to sizeable communities of Christians, Hindus and those adhering to traditional beliefs.

The state ideology, Pancasila, enshrines religious diversity in an officially secular system.

Purnama, who is Jakarta's first ethnic Chinese and Christian governor, offended Muslim groups when he made comments last year about his opponents' use of the Islamic holy book, the Koran, in political campaigning.

Since then, Muslims, led by headline groups, have held mass rallies to call for Purnama to be sacked, and to urge voters not to elect a non-Muslim. The rallies have raised concerns about growing religious intolerance in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation.

Purnama has apologised for his comments and denied any wrongdoing. He faces up to four years in prison if found guilty.

Judges hearing the case decided this week to adjourn the trial until after voting day, after police and prosecutors asked for a delay because of security concerns.—Reuters

## China's Xi calls for peaceful resolution of North Korea tensions in call with Trump

BEIJING/TOKYO — Chinese President Xi Jinping called for a peaceful resolution of rising tensions on the Korean peninsula in a telephone conversation with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, as a US aircraft carrier strike group steams towards the region.

Xi's call with Trump came after an influential state-run Chinese newspaper warned that the Korean peninsula was the closest it has been to a “military clash” since Pyongyang's first nuclear test in 2006. Tension has escalated sharply amid concerns that reclusive North Korea could soon conduct a sixth nuclear test or more missile launches and Trump's threat of unilateral action to solve the problem. Trump had already ordered the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier group to head for the Korean peninsula in an attempt to deter North Korea's nuclear and long-range missile ambitions, which it is developing in defiance of United Nations resolutions and sanctions.

Wednesday's call between Xi and Trump came hard on the heels of their first face-to-face meeting in Florida last week. It was not immediately clear who initiated the call.

Trump, who has urged China to do more to rein in North Korea, had warned earlier on Twitter that Pyongyang was “looking for trouble” and that the United States would “solve the problem” with or without Beijing's help. Xi stressed that China “is committed to the target of denuclearization on the peninsula, safeguarding peace and stability on the peninsula, and advocates resolving problems through peaceful means,” Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said of the exchange between the two leaders.

“China is willing to maintain close communication and coordination with the US side”, Xi said.

Earlier on Wednesday, two sources in Tokyo said Japan's navy planned exercises with the Carl Vinson carrier group in a joint show of force, amid concern over the rapid pace of North Korea's ballistic missile development.

China's Global Times news-



Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump welcomes. PHOTO: REUTERS

paper also said in an editorial North Korea should halt any plans for nuclear and missile activities “for its own security”. While widely read in China and run by the ruling Communist Party's official People's Daily, the Global Times does not represent government policy.

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) transits the Pacific Ocean on 30 January, 2017. US Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Tom Tonthat/Handout via Reuters

The editorial noted Trump's recent decision to launch 59 Tomahawk missiles at a Syrian airfield in response to a deadly gas attack last week. “Not only (is) Washington brimming with confidence and arrogance following the missile attacks on Syria, but Trump is also willing to be regarded as a man who honors his promises,” the Global Times said.

“The US is making up its mind to stop the North from conducting further nuclear tests. It doesn't plan to co-exist with a nuclear-armed Pyongyang,” it said. “Pyongyang should avoid making mistakes at this time.”

North Korean state media warned on Tuesday of a nuclear attack on the United States at any

sign of American aggression.

Officials from the North, including leader Kim Jong Un, have indicated an intercontinental ballistic missile test or something similar could be coming. North Korea launched a long-range rocket carrying a satellite on 13 April, 2012, marking the anniversary of the birth of North Korea's founding president Kim Il Sung. Saturday will be the 105th birthday of the founding leader.

Two sources in Japan said the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (MSDF) and the US Navy could conduct helicopter landings on each other's ships, as well as communication drills, as the US ships pass through waters close to Japanese territory.

“Japan wants to dispatch several destroyers as the Carl Vinson enters the East China Sea,” one of them said. One of the people who spoke to Reuters has direct knowledge of the plan, while the other has been briefed on the exercises. MSDF officials did not respond immediately when asked for comment. A senior Japanese diplomat said it appeared the US position was to put maximum pressure on North Korea to reach a solution peacefully and diplomatically.

“At least, if you consider over-all things such as the fact that the US government has not put out warnings to its citizens in South Korea, I think the risk (of military action) at this point is not high,” said the diplomat, who asked not to be identified. South Korea's acting president, Hwang Kyo-ahn, has warned of “greater provocations” by North Korea and ordered the military to intensify monitoring.

The North fired a liquid-fueled Scud missile this month, the latest in a series of tests that have displayed Pyongyang's ability to launch attacks and use hard-to-detect solid-fuel rockets.

North Korea remains technically at war with the United States and its ally South Korea after the 1950-1953 Korean conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. It regularly threatens to destroy both countries. The Carl Vinson strike group, which canceled a planned visit to Australia, is sailing from Singapore. The 100,000-ton Nimitz-class vessel is powered by two nuclear reactors and carries almost 100 aircraft. Japan's navy, the second largest in Asia after China, is made up mostly of escort destroyers, but includes four large helicopter carriers.—Reuters

## Home after six months detention, Indian fishermen recall ordeal in Gulf

CHENNAI — For six months, Indian fisherman S George lived in fear on a boat, thinking he would never see his wife and children again.

George was one of 15 fishermen from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu detained in October last year on charges of straying into Iranian waters while fishing in the region, officials said. Reaching their homes last week, after months with no contact with their families, the fishermen said nothing had prepared them for the ordeal they went through when they left their homes in 2014 to work on fishing boats off the coast of Bahrain.

“Once we were trapped, there were days of confusion,” George told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“It was not clear to us that we had crossed international waters into Iran while fishing and were being detained. What followed we never imagined could happen.”

There are an estimated six million Indian migrants in the six Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman, many of them trafficked and exploited, campaigners say.

“We are seeing increasing cases of fishermen being de-

tained,” said Josephine Valarmathi of the non-profit National Domestic Workers' Movement, based in Chennai.

“Even as this lot of fishermen have returned, another 24 have been caught in the same circumstances and are now stranded. Most of them are not clear on what visa they have travelled or the terms and conditions of the workplace.”

George said they were given very little food, forced to drink water from toilets, made to do sit ups and often went hungry. After being held in a prison in Iran for a few days, the fishermen were kept on their boats off the coast.

“We were under constant watch,” George said. “Sometimes we were given just one roti (bread) and survived on that all day. We earn our livelihoods from fishing but living on a boat under fear of death was not what we had signed up for.”

A Maria Joseph Kennady said language was a barrier to understanding of what was going on.

“We were forced into a prison for four days and then back on the boat. We were herded like cattle,” Kennady said. Officials at the Iranian embassy in New Delhi declined to comment on the matter.—Reuters



# Opinion

## Write for us

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

## Traditional culture that is worth keeping in our minds

Khin Maung Oo

OUT of the 12 seasonal festivals, the Myanmar New Year Water Festival is the most crowded and joyful festival. Usually, during Thingyan, we experience happiness and disappointment, pleasure and displeasure at the same time. It must be said that the civilized traditional water festival is coming nearer and nearer to the danger of extinction, hence the need to remind our youths of throwing water happily and keeping our traditional cultural heritage whenever we have this festival season. The real essence of water festivals is for us to take part in throwing water. Our forefathers used to play water with "Tha Byay Khet" (that is, spraying water with a tiny branch of the Tha byay tree), then with water tube pipes, thence with water pipes used for extinguishing fire in present times.

Yet, Thingyan revelers cannot stop their rejoicing just by enjoying themselves to that extent. Many revelers are found to throw water on to Thingyan wanderers who go about the town to experience the Thingyan water throwing, to the extent of harming their bodies. Moreover, careless and undisciplined driving, intoxication, drug abuses and excessive merry-making are found to be the common practice, leading to the incidence of harmful and dangerous events.

To prevent such events from occurring, authorities concerned are taking disciplinary and preventive actions to take action against those who break the law during the festival period. During the Thingyan Water Festival, despite all these efforts to prevent crimes and accidents, violation of rules and laws, and failure to follow certain disciplines are happening everywhere in the country. So, it is not an easy task to control these violations. Year after year, those who take actions against and those who violate rules are increasing, like playing hide and seek. In fact, we should help the authorities to prevent those who commit mischievous deeds from committing crimes excessively, even if we cannot maintain our Myanmar traditional culture. Without people's co-operation, we cannot achieve anything. At the same time, we should cooperate with the authorities to prevent such events from happening across the nation.

Though a disciplinary body by itself cannot perform its duties well to some extent, we need to co-operate with respective organizations for the long term and for gaining more success. Nowadays, warnings and notifications as to what to do and what not to do, in the Thingyan Water festival, have been disseminated one month ahead of the Thingyan festival via the news media.

During previous Thingyan festivals, we have found cases of excessive drinking and drug abuses that threatened people's security. And, it is difficult to distinguish good and bad men, as a lot of people participate in the festival, especially just prior to the accidents and crimes. Thus, it is necessary for the public to join in and assist the authorities to prevent such kinds of mischievous behaviour. The most important thing is to take care of our girls so that they do not become prey to those villains who will try to commit sexual abuse by using drugs which promote sexual urges and promiscuous behaviour.

Last but not least, we humbly urge our people to help the authorities concerned to assist in the task of maintaining Myanmar traditional culture and preventing our girls from becoming victims of debauchery.

# Thingyan New Year Festival: The Time for Community

Oxford Sayadaw Prof. Dr. Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

ONCE again, Thingyan, the Myanmar New Year, is upon us that we have to say goodbye to the old year and welcome the new one, and this year I wish to focus my thought on Thingyan that this is an occasion for the community. This is the time when members of the community individually and collectively reflect and communicate for the sake of harmony and peaceful coexistence. This is amply demonstrated in both the outer appearance of related Thingyan rituals as well as in the Thingyan's centuries-old emotional healing approach for inner peace.

Although Thingyan is practised not just in Myanmar but also in South and Southeast Asia, in some places (Andra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, Kunkan,

Manipur, Kashmir and Sindh states in India) celebrate it either in March or April depending on the astrological calculation of the year, while others (Northern and central states as well as Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Odisha and Bengal states in India; Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Yunnan of China and some part of Vietnam) have fixed the dates as 13 to 15 April each year to hold this important festive occasion. While Myanmar retains a more elaborate culture of Thingyan, I will not say anything on that aspect but focus on the importance of the community in the Thingyan tradition.

Thingyan as the focal point of a calendrical system to ensure social harmony has some ritual practices to remind people of the importance of the

community. For instance, the astrological calculation associated with the Thingyan calendrical system helps the people to see both good and bad experiences in their life and acknowledge them part and parcel of human existence; with this acceptance, there is a chance to improve. Moreover, there is a ritual called in Burmese a-tah (meaning the end/ the last), believed to predict possible misfortunes for those who were born on the same day as the end of the day the year ends. To avert any bad luck that might fall on oneself, one has to offer flowers to holy objects such as the Buddha, if one is a Buddhist. For this, seven types of flowers should be presented to represent everyone born on this planet, from Monday to Sunday. This is to help the people associated with a-tah each year to think of everyone in the society, rather than just themselves which is a tendency we often display when under severe stress. In brief, when

faced with problem in life, think of the community, instead of withdrawing from it, and then do something good for it. On the last day of the old year, which is called the day of a-tah, the people born on the a-tah day should dress up nicely and make an offering to the Buddha, if they are Buddhist, and elders. Again, this is about not giving up easily but preparing for the predicted upheaval with the blessing of the community. Even, the splashing of water, it is to carry out with decorum demonstrating respect to others. Just as we use water to purify ourselves daily, we use water as symbolism to purify the relationship between ourselves and other members of the society. To consolidate the same message of humility and maturity, we also wash our hair ceremonially, to show that we acknowledge any shortcoming in the past year and are prepared to learn and move on with the New Year. These centuries-old rituals have

profound message for us as individual and community.

As to the healing of emotions within, there is a belief that one has to avoid certain things, usually ten in total, during the Thingyan festive period. According to some texts on Thingyan still known in Myanmar today, one must refrain from negative emotions such as anxiety and anger. What it means is we should take care of our negative emotions especially at this time of the year because as time goes by, any emotion not properly healed can lead to perception of injustice, grievances, bitterness and hatred, or even violence. The Thingyan tradition also advises people not to engage in business of any kind or major construction when those negative emotions remain unsolved, and to instead pay priority to managing them. In Buddhist psychology, we call this as mindful refraining from fight and flight mode on the one hand, and, on the other, encouraging a



Oxford Sayadaw Prof. Dr. Dhammasami, DPhil (Oxford)

tend-and-befriend behaviour. This is about emotional intelligence.

Life in general is not perfect and we often have to be content with something nearest to our set goal. And, it is everyday experience for everyone to experience dissatisfaction, disappointment, anger or regret. When it comes to the community, these emotions should be carefully and objectively looked at so that there is a possibility of achieving reconciliation

and that Thingyan annually offers. Any sense of injustice, be it from the majority or the minority within the family and the community and even the nation, should be given a fair hearing. Some Buddhist meditation masters call this exercise as deep listening practice. Both sides may have some feeling of insecurity based on how they see the situation, real or perceived, and the message here is that those feeling

should not be ignored. Some of widely known Burmese poems on Thingyan describe how fragile and sensitive emotions should be given sufficient attention so that the community as a whole can move on and coexist peacefully. So, Thingyan is more than a mere festive occasion and a holiday; it is imbued with profound wisdom on how we as community may co-exist peacefully.

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## Maha Thingyan Sar {မဟာသင်္ကြန်စာ}

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dhaja, Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

ACCORDING to Myanmar-English Dictionary Published by Myanmar-sar Commission, Maha Thingyansar is "the Bulletin predicting the time of transition into the new year and climatic and crop conditions to be expected in that year".

Myanmar Kings (Mon, Rakhine, Bama, Shan) formed the State Board of Calendar composing monks, Brahmins and learned laymen who were gurus in astrology, astronomy, meteorology, climatology, seismology, mathematics and occult sciences to work out and issue a calendar for the up-coming new year.

Reproduced in this article is the illustration and gist of Mandalay Maha Thingyan Sar for the coming Myanmar Sakarrit 1379. It is the joint work of the calendar board headed by Saya U Min Thein B.Sc (Hons) H.G.P. He is the grandson of Saya U Hla Kyaing and Saya U Ba Hlaing, who were sons of Saya U Bo Htwe (Veda Seinda Bala) member of the State Calendar Board. They all are descendants of Kisna Monshana, Brahmin Guru who received the title Dhamma Rajadi Raja from

Myanmar Kings.

The illustration shows from left to right, Prawka Devi Angle hands over the head of Athi Brahma to Rathaka Devi Angle who takes the charge. On the night is the Banu Raja Sunday Planet King wearing the dress of conch shell colour riding a handsome bullock, holding a hammer in one hand and a sickle in the other coming out from the south-east direction and going to the west direction. Hammer represents workers sickle represents peasants, bullock represents agriculture conch colour represents parity. The Sun measures 50 yuzanas in diameter and 150yuzanas in circumference.

It is composed of gold at the core with a crystal cover emitting one thousand rays to light and give warmth to the entire world.

Paragraphs of prediction, prophesy, forebodings followed with instructions for the dos and the do nots for human beings in their daily life. Auspicious days and in auspicious days in every month are given in a rhy med formula. Good days and bad days for long journey are given in a chart.

Prescriptions for 8 days born are given to protect, to prevent danger or to lessen or to relieve danger are given separately. 8 days are (1) Sunday (2) Monday (3) Tuesday (4) Wednesday (5) Thursday (6) Friday (7) Saturday and (8) Rahu. Their cardinal directions are also mentioned such as Sunday at North-East, Monday at East,

Tuesday at South East, Wednesday at South, Thursday at West, Friday at North, Saturday at South West and Rahu at North West directions. Each day is symbolized by terrestrial, aquatic or Ariel creatures such as Winged garuda bird for Sunday, tiger for Monday, Lion for Tuesday, Elephant for Wednesday, Rat for Thursday, Guine Pig for Friday, Naga Snake for Saturday and Elephant without tusk for Rahu.

Thingyan pan or special variety of seven kind of flowers and springs representing 7 days are made into a bouquet to put into a terracotta medium size uncovered pot filled with clear cool scented water.

Seven flowers of springs are Coconut leave for Sunday, Gantgaw (Mesua Ferrea Linn) Iron Wood for Monday, Sein Pan (Gold Mohue) for Tuesday, Ywet Hla (crotton) for Wednesday, Myayzar Grass (Couch grass) for Thursday, Than (Oliveni) Taminalia or Thi (Wood apple) for Friday and Dan (Henna) for Saturday and Yeyo (Yeyo) for Rahu. Thabyey (Eugenia) springs are also added as a symbol of victory just like laurel in Greek culture.

Here we notice that water, the elixir of life, and flora and fauna and earthen Thingyan pot signify Myanmar Thingyan is green Thingyan. It has environmental implications and significance.

Days, dates and exact timings of religious days and functions are given in the bulletin in rhymed formula. Beginning of Buddhist lent, end of Buddhist lent, Sabbath days, Waxing, Waning moons and no moon days are given in rhymed formula for easy memorization.

Details regarding the ploughing wing, trans-planting, weeding, harvesting, winnowing storing in granaries (ဝေါးကျွဲ) and selling times are given for the benefit of the farmers.

Usual climate cycle and unexpected national disasters, earthquakes, volcanic eruption, wild-fire, flood or draught are predicted. Even human disasters like armed conflicts, rebellions, wars, crimes are prophesied. Prescriptions are given to prevent them, or to lessen their evil impact.

Old sayings or proverbs from Thingyan Festival are interesting to note. When the Athi Brahma head changed hands, it is the change of the burden of duty assignment. The angle who is released is happy and the angle who is taking the charge is unhappy. If an unpleasant duty is given you we used to say the head of Athi Brahma is coming to me. In the days of Myanmar Kings, the exact time of the beginning of Thingyan was signalled by firing a cannon with a blank round. It is harmless. We use to call empty boaster as Thingyan Amyauk Kyi (သင်္ကြန်အပြောင်ကြီး အသံသာကြီး).

There is a strong belief that is the day of your birth coincides with the last day of Thingyan you are atar-sar (အတာစာ) it portends misfortune for you.

You have to do more deeds of spiritual merits to evade misfortune.

The very act of throwing water at each other during Thingyan is to clean each other physically as well as to cleanse each other's mind. Cleaning and cleansing must be accompanied with four Brama cariya-Metta (loving Kindness) Garuna (Compassion) Up-ekha (Neutral Feeling) Mudita (happiness only. No jealousy at others' success).

On the New Year Day,



Myanmar visit their parents, old members of the family, teachers and bosses of their work to pay homage with Thingyan gift—such as soap, shampoo, cake, Thingyan Htamin (Rice seasoned with bee wax fragrance and powdered dry fish). They beg pardon for any act of insult they may have committed physically, verbally and mentally. They are given pardon and words of appreciation 3 times Sadu (well done). The worshippers and the worshipped include not only Buddhists but also non-Buddhists, Islam, Chirstian, Hindu, Confucians, Taoists, Theravada, Mahayana Buddhists even nat-spirits worshippers.

Thingyan is the Festival of rejoice.



# Putin says trust erodes under Trump, Moscow icily receives Tillerson

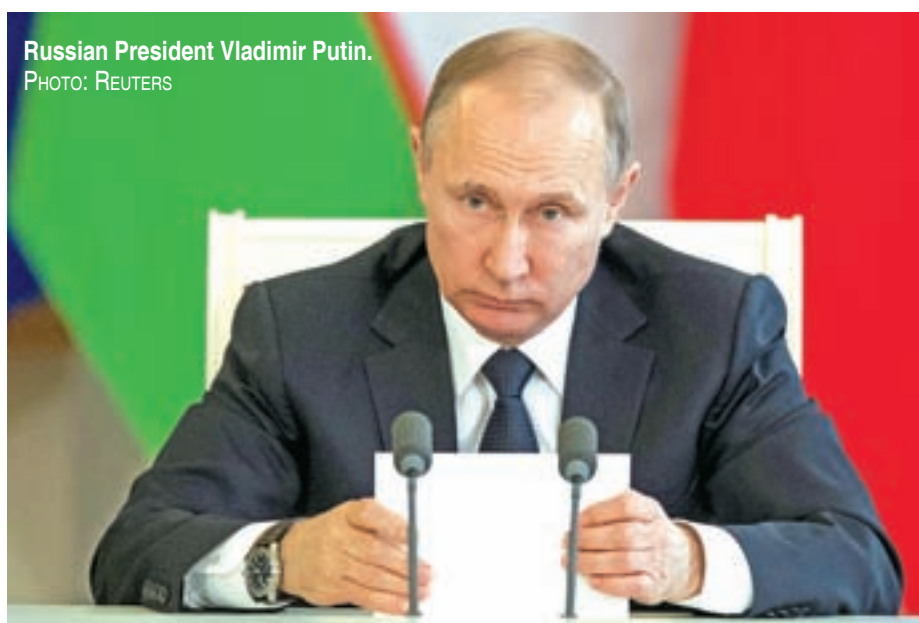
MOSCOW — Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday trust had eroded between the United States and Russia under President Donald Trump, as Moscow delivered an unusually hostile reception to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in a face-off over Syria.

Any hope in Russia that the Trump administration would herald less confrontational relations has been dashed in the past week after the new US leader fired missiles at Syria to punish Moscow's ally for its suspected use of poison gas. Just as Tillerson sat down for talks, a senior Russian official assailed the "primitiveness and loudness" of US rhetoric, part of a volley of statements that appeared timed to maximise the awkwardness during the first visit by a member of Trump's cabinet.

"One could say that the level of trust on a working level, especially on the military level, has not improved but has rather deteriorated," Putin said in an interview broadcast on Russian television moments after Tillerson sat down with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in an ornate hall.

Putin doubled down on Russia's support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, repeating denials that Assad's government was to blame for the gas attack last week and adding a new theory that the attack may have been faked by Assad's enemies. Moments earlier, Lavrov greeted Tillerson with unusually icy remarks, denouncing the missile strike on Syria as illegal and accusing Washington of behaving unpredictably.

"I won't hide the fact that we have a lot of questions, taking into account the extremely ambiguous and sometimes contradictory ideas which have been expressed in Washington across the whole spectrum of bilateral and multilateral affairs," Lavrov said. "And of course, that's not to mention that apart from the statements, we observed very recently the extremely worrying actions, when an illegal attack against Syria was undertaken." Lavrov also noted that many key State Department posts remain vacant since the new administration took office — a point of sensitivity in Washington. One of Lavrov's deputies was even more undiplomatic. "In general, primitiveness and loud-



Russian President Vladimir Putin.  
PHOTO: REUTERS

ishness are very characteristic of the current rhetoric coming out of Washington. We'll hope that this doesn't become the substance of American policy," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Russia's state-owned RIA news agency.

"As a whole, the administration's stance with regards to Syria remains a mystery. Inconsistency is what comes to mind first of all," Tillerson kept to more calibrated remarks, saying his aim was "to further clarify areas of sharp difference so that we can better understand why these differences exist and what the prospects for narrowing those differences may be." "I look forward to a very open, candid, frank exchange so that we can better define the US-Russian relationship from this point forward," he told Lavrov.

After journalists were ushered out of the room, Lavrov's spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova, wrote on her Facebook page that US journalists travelling with Tillerson had behaved as if they were in a "bazaar" by shouting questions to Lavrov. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tillerson might meet Putin later on Wednesday if the two top diplomats decided it would be useful to brief the Russian president on their talks. But Peskov too did not hold back his criticism, saying calls from Western powers for Russia to cut support for Assad amounted to giving terrorists a free hand. Moscow's hostility to Trump administration figures is a sharp change from last year, when Putin hailed Trump as a strong figure and Russian state television was consistently full of effusive praise for him.

The White House has accused Moscow of trying

to cover up Assad's use of chemical weapons after the attack on a town killed 87 people last week.

Trump responded to the gas attack by firing 59 cruise missiles at a Syrian air base on Friday. Washington warned Moscow, and Russian troops at the base were not hit. Moscow has stood by Assad, saying the poison gas belonged to rebels, an explanation Washington dismisses as beyond credible. Putin said that either gas belonging to the rebels was released when it was hit by a Syrian strike on a rebel arms dump, or the rebels faked the incident to discredit Assad. Trump came to the presidency promising to seek closer ties with Russia and greater cooperation fighting against their common enemy in Syria, Islamic State. Tillerson is a former oil executive who was awarded Russia's Order of Friendship by Putin.

Last week's poison gas attack and the US retaliation upended what many in Moscow hoped would be a transformation in relations between the two countries, which reached a post-Cold War low under Trump's predecessor Barack Obama.

The United States and its European allies imposed financial sanctions on Russia in 2014 after Putin seized territory from neighbouring Ukraine. Washington is leading a campaign of air strikes in Syria against Islamic State fighters and has backed rebels fighting against Assad during a six-year civil war, but until last week the United States had avoided directly targeting the Syrian government. Russia, meanwhile, intervened in the civil war on Assad's side in 2015 and has troops on the ground, which it says are advising government forces. Both

Washington and Moscow say their main enemy is Islamic State, although they back opposing sides in the wider civil war which has killed more than 400,000 people and spawned the world's worst refugee crisis.

In an interview with the Fox Business Network, Trump said he was not planning to order US forces into Syria, but that he had to respond to the images of dead children poisoned in the gas attack. "We're not going into Syria," he said in excerpts of the interview on the station's website. "But when I see people using horrible, horrible chemical weapons ... and see these beautiful kids that are dead in their father's arms, or you see kids gasping for life ... when you see that, I immediately called (Defense Secretary) General Mattis."

Tillerson travelled to Moscow with a joint message from Western powers that Russia should withdraw its support for Assad after a meeting of the Group of Seven industrialised economies also attended by Middle East allies. Some of Washington's allies had been wary of Trump, who spoke during his election campaign of seeking closer ties with Moscow and questioned the value of US support for its traditional friends. Tillerson's mission sees the Trump administration taking on the traditional US role as spokesman for a unified Western position. Trump's relations with Russia are also a domestic issue, as US intelligence agencies have accused Moscow of using computer hacking to intervene in the election to help Trump win. The FBI is investigating whether any Trump campaign figures colluded with Moscow, which the White House denies.—Reuters

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Djuric: Elections in Kosovo in line with highest standards

BELGRADE — The Serbian presidential elections were prepared and held in Kosovo-Metohija in line with the highest democratic standards, the director of the Serbian government Office for Kosovo-Metohija Marko Djuric said at a meeting with OSCE Mission in Kosovo head Jan Braathu on Tuesday.

He thanked Braathu for the Mission's assistance in organising the elections in the province, as well as for the technical support offered to the steering team tasked with drafting the statute of the Community of Serb Municipalities, the Office for Kosovo-Metohija said in a statement.—Tanjung

### China's H7N9 bird flu death toll at 47 in March: government data

BEIJING — China reported 47 human fatalities from H7N9 bird flu in March, the national health authority said on Wednesday, compared with 61 deaths in February.

It also reported 96 cases of human infection from H7N9 bird flu for last month, according to a statement posted on the website of the National Health and Family Planning Commission.—Reuters

### Magnitude 5.6 quake hits the Philippines — USGS

MANILA — A 5.6-magnitude earthquake struck the center of Mindanao island in the Philippines on Wednesday, the US Geological Survey said.

The quake, initially reported as a magnitude 6.0, struck at 5:21 am on Wednesday (2121 GMT on Tuesday). It was very shallow, at a depth of 4 miles (6 km), which would have amplified its effect. Its epicenter was 47 miles (75.5 km) northeast of Cotabato on the large southern island of Mindanao.

A magnitude 5.6 quake is considered moderate and is capable of causing considerable damage.—Reuters

### France sees US strike on Syria as tool to push for peace talks-Hollande

PARIS — France and the rest of Europe must use last week's US missile strike on Syria as a tool to revive peace negotiations between warring parties, French President Francois Hollande said in a newspaper interview published on Wednesday.

In the interview with Le Monde, Hollande said intelligence suggested that the nerve gas attack which prompted the US missile strike was tactical in nature and launched from an aircraft.

Major western powers and their Middle Eastern allies blame Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for the attack and have been pushing this week to try to isolate him over the attack on a rebel-held town last week that killed 87 people including 31 children.

Pressure is also building on Russian President Vladimir Putin to break ties with Assad.—Reuters

### Germany's Merkel appalled by Dortmund attack, spokesman says

BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel was appalled by the attack on a bus carrying players from soccer club Borussia Dortmund (BVB) on Tuesday, her spokesman said on Wednesday.

"The chancellor was last night, like people in Dortmund, like millions everywhere, appalled by the attack on the BVB team bus," spokesman said Steffen Seibert told a government news conference.

"One can only be relieved that the consequences were not worse," he said, praising Dortmund fans for lodging AS Monaco fans after their Champions League match was postponed until Wednesday evening.

Seibert added that investigators were doing everything in their power to track down the perpetrator, or perpetrators.—Reuters



# Ex-Iranian President Ahmadinejad submits his name for presidential election

LONDON — Ex-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad submitted his name on Wednesday for registration as a candidate in Iran's presidential election in May, state media reported.

Although the move by the former hardline president was seen as an attempt to bolster the candidacy of an ally, it was also a challenge to the authority of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who had ordered him not to run.

Registration for the 19 May election started on Monday and will last five days, after which entrants will be screened for their political and Islamic qualifications by a vetting body, the Guardian Council.

President Hassan Rouhani, a moderate who engineered Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers that secured a removal of international financial and trade sanctions against Tehran, is expected to seek re-election but faces a stiff challenge from conservatives who oppose the deal.

Ahmadinejad, who frequently enraged the West with his rhetoric during his eight years in office, wanted to challenge Rouhani's bid for a second term, but Khamenei ordered him last year not to nominate himself.

Khamenei, who has the final say in Iran's clerical establishment, warned in September that Ahmadinejad's candidacy could



Ex-Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad reacts as he submits his name for registration as a candidate in Iran's presidential election, in Tehran, Iran on 12 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

create division in the country and harm the nation.

Ahmadinejad, who had a rift with Khamenei in his final years of office, announced in a public statement in October that he would abide by the order and would not run.

However, he named one of his main allies and former deputy Hamid Baghaei as a candidate.

Ahmadinejad accompanied Baghaei to the interior ministry on Wednesday for registration.

By putting his name forward, analysts say Ahmadinejad is trying to make any disqualification of Baghaei costly for the Guardian Council. The powerful election vetting body is close to Khamenei as he appoints half of its members.

Mehr news agency quoted Ahmadinejad as saying that he registered as a candidate "only to support Baghaei."

While conservatives are worried that Ahmadinejad or

Baghaei's presence might split their votes, allies of Rouhani are also concerned about the attractiveness of populist candidates with nationalist anti-establishment slogans.

Baghaei, 48, was held under arrest in 2015 for almost seven months on charges that were not made public but many suspected were related to corruption. Iran's judiciary spokesman said in March that his case was still open.—Reuters

## Turkish interior minister says Diyarbakir blast was terrorist attack

ISTANBUL — An explosion at a police compound in the south-eastern Turkish city of Diyarbakir that killed three people was the result of a terrorist attack, Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Wednesday.

Officials had previously said that Tuesday's blast in the biggest city in the mainly Kurdish southeast appeared to have been triggered during the repair of an armoured vehicle.

But Soylu said it had been launched via a tunnel dug beneath the compound. The death toll from the attack has risen to three from an initial one, hospital sources said on Wednesday.

"It turned out that the explosion was the result of a terrorist attack. The attack was carried out through a tunnel dug from the outside. They dug a tunnel and placed the explosives in the ground," he said in an interview with broadcaster Haberturk.

He did not say who was believed to be behind the blast, although Kurdish militants have previously carried out similar attacks on police and military compounds in the southeast. Dogan news agency said five people had been detained.

The attack came ahead of Sunday's referendum on changing the constitution and creating an executive presidency long sought by President Tayyip Erdogan. It also marks the first militant attack since the campaigning for the April 16 referendum officially started.

Turkey faces multiple security threats, including from Islamic State and Kurdish militants. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which took up arms against the state in 1984, is considered a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States and Europe.—Reuters

## Somali forces clash with pirates, free Indian ship crew — officials

MOGADISHU — Somali security forces clashed with a pirate gang early on Wednesday and freed nine seamen kidnapped on an Indian cargo ship this month, officials said.

The pirates seized the dhow Al Kausar off Somalia's coast, part of a surge of attacks after

years without a reported incident.

The kidnappers took the crew onshore in central Galmudug state on Monday and clashed with troops two days later, the territory's minister for ports and sea transport, Burhan Warsame, said.

"We rescued the nine crew and they are healthy and

safe," he added.

Somali pirate attacks peaked with 237 in 2012 but then declined steeply after ship owners improved security measures and international naval forces stepped up patrols.

But this month has seen a new rash of attacks, with two

ships captured and a third rescued by Indian and Chinese forces after the crew radioed for help and locked themselves in a safe room.

The Al Kausar pirates had said they were trying to force authorities to free some of their comrades imprisoned in India.—Reuters

## War better than peace for Uganda's rebel children, study says

NAIROBI — Children whose mothers were raped by rebels in Uganda say war was better than peace because they felt a greater sense of family cohesion and status during the conflict compared to the violence, stigma and rejection they face in peacetime, a study showed.

Researchers from Canada's McGill University interviewed 60 children born to women abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group, which waged a brutal insurgency in Uganda for two decades until 2005, when it was

forced over the border.

"The fact that children and youth identify the state of war and captivity — when violence, upheaval, starvation, deprivation and ongoing terror were at its height — as better than life during peacetime is highly disconcerting," Myriam Denov, the study's lead author and professor at McGill's School of Social Work, said in a statement on Tuesday.

The children, some of whom were fathered by LRA's messianic leader, Joseph Kony, often drew themselves and their sib-

lings with sad faces after the war.

"In my family, they hate the three of us who were born in captivity," the researchers quoted one child as saying.

"My uncle beats us and said he would kill us."

The children said their families and communities perceived them as dangerous, rebel children who had brought bad spirits with them from the bush.

The LRA is notorious for mutilating civilians and kidnapping children for use as fighters. Many children were forced to kill

their friends and family.

Dominic Ongwen, a former LRA commander who was captured and recruited as a young boy, is on trial for war crimes at the International Criminal Court.

Children born through rape and forced marriage were cared for by their rebel fathers who provided vital material needs, which they lack in peacetime, the research found.

"Life was not all that bad because my father was still there," the researchers quoted one child as saying.

"He would even wake me

up to eat what he brought for me because he used to love me so much."

The LRA, who are thought to number just a few hundred, roam remote jungle straddling the borders of Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic since being ejected from Uganda by its military.

Many of the children, aged between 12 and 19, interviewed for the study spent their formative years in captivity from the age of a few months to up to seven years.—Reuters





The commanders of CIS air defenses and air forces are due to meet in the near future. PHOTO: TASS

## Nearly 20 aviation and 40 air defence units protect CIS airspace

BISHKEK — Nearly 20 air force and about 40 air defence units constitute the combined system of the CIS air defence, the chief of the Russian Aerospace Force Staff, First Deputy chief of the Aerospace Force Commander Lieutenant General Pavel Kurachenko told the media on Wednesday.

“At the moment the combined air defense of the CIS member-states consists of 19 aviation units, 38 air defence missile units, 15 radio-technical units, nine air defense brigades and three radioel-

ectronic warfare units.

“The available forces and means are enough for coping with air defence tasks, but they can be built up further, if need be,” Kurachenko said. Within the framework of the combined air defense system Kazakhstan receives air defense weapons, Kyrgyzstan has upgraded communication systems, Tajikistan has received air defence planes and technologies, and Armenia and Belarus, spare parts.

“I rate positively the effectiveness of the system of military and

military-technical cooperation to upgrade and develop the combined air defence system of the CIS,” Kurachenko added.

The commanders of CIS air defenses and air forces are due to meet in the near future. There will be a meeting of specialists responsible for using a unified system of radar identification and a joint training session.

The coordinating committee for air defence affairs under the CIS Defence Ministers’ Council will hold two sessions.—TASS

## India’s denial of rights to tribals in tiger reserves raises fears of violence

MUMBAI — The Indian government has directed states not to grant rights to indigenous people and forest dwellers living in tiger reserves, a move that could hurt vulnerable communities, trigger clashes and endanger wildlife, human rights activists said.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority issued a notice to states two weeks ago asking officials to suspend granting of rights to tribals and other forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act in all critical tiger habitats.

“In the absence of guidelines for notification of critical wildlife habitats, no rights shall be conferred in critical tiger habitats,” said the notice to 17 states with tiger reserves. The Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006 gives indigenous people and forest dwellers the right to harvest and use forest resources to maintain their traditional liveli-

hoods. More than a fifth of India’s 1.2 billion population was expected to benefit from the law covering vast areas of forest land roughly the size of Germany.

But implementation has been slow and conflicts between states and tribal communities have risen as demand for land increases in one of the world’s fastest growing economies. Scarcity of land has also brought the competing needs of wildlife and humans into conflict across the country as land is increasingly sought for industrial projects. Land reserved for wildlife including tigers, elephants and rhinoceros is also inhabited by tribal villagers and hundreds have been evicted in violent clashes recently.

The new order will only trigger more such clashes and impoverish vulnerable communities, said Brajesh Dubey at the conservation non-profit Foundation for Ecologi-

cal Security. “We are going to see more people displaced because the government wants to show they care about tigers,” he said.

“But it has been proven that tribal communities help prevent poaching and also help in conservation efforts.” India has about half the world’s estimated 3,200 tigers in dozens of reserves established since the 1970s. Wildlife tourism is a growing money spinner for India, even as conservationists are divided over whether visitors help protect threatened species or encroach on their habitat.

Brinda Karat, a member of the opposition communist party, asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw the order. “This open contempt for laws that provide some protection for the rights of millions of tribals and forest dwellers is unprecedented,” she said in a letter to Modi.—Reuters

## Japan, Sri Lanka PMs vow further cooperation on maritime security

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his Sri Lankan counterpart Ranil Wickremesinghe agreed on Wednesday to further advance their cooperation in maritime security.

According to a joint statement released after their talks in Tokyo, the leaders emphasized the “special importance of maintaining a maritime order based on the rule of law, including the freedom of navigation and overflight and unobstructed trade.”

The agreement reflects Sri Lanka’s location near shipping routes on which Japan relies for its oil imports from the Middle East, as well as Japan’s concerns over China’s expansionary activities in the Indian Ocean and the East and South China seas.

“Without a free and open Indian Ocean, there cannot be real prosperity in the region,” Abe said at a joint press event after the talks.

“This is why it is essential for Sri Lanka to achieve sustainable growth as a hub, and develop ports that are open to everyone, something Prime Minister Wickremesinghe and I completely agreed on today.”

The Sri Lankan leader expressed his support for Abe’s approach, saying there “should not be any imbalances in the Indian Ocean.”

On the South China Sea, the leaders agreed on “the importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight, self-re-

straint, non-militarization and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

That language effectively cautions China over its overlapping territorial claims with neighbors and offshore development efforts.

The current Sri Lankan government, which came to power in January 2015, has taken a foreign policy stance seeking to balance the country’s relationships with China and other countries in the region, in contrast with the previous administration’s strong alignment with Beijing.

Abe announced at the meeting Japan’s provision of 45 billion yen (\$410 million) in yen loans for infrastructure projects and 1 billion yen in grant aid to develop the port of Trincomalee in Sri Lanka’s northeast.

Japan is also in the process of providing Sri Lanka with two patrol vessels to improve its maritime security capability.

Wickremesinghe’s six-day visit to Japan, ending Sunday, is his second trip to the country since he was appointed prime minister in January 2015 by President Maithripala Sirisena.

Earlier Wednesday, Wickremesinghe also held separate meetings with Defense Minister Tomomi Inada and Finance Minister Taro Aso.—Kyodo News



Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe (2nd from L) and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe (far R) hold talks in Tokyo on 12 April, 2017. The two agreed to increase cooperation in maritime security. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

## Russian diplomat says US stance on Syria “a mystery” — agencies

MOSCOW — The US position on Syria remains a mystery to Moscow and Washington’s rhetoric tends to be primitive and loutish, Russian news agencies quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying on

Wednesday.

Ryabkov’s remarks were released minutes before US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, the highest level representative of the Trump administration to visit Russia, was due to start

talks with his Russian counterpart.

Ryabkov said that at the talks Russia expected to discuss no-fly zones in Syria, and that North Korea and Ukraine would also be on the agenda.

“As a whole, the administration’s stance with regard to Syria remains a mystery. Inconsistency is what comes to mind first of all,” RIA news agency quoted Ryabkov as telling reporters.

“In general, primitiveness

and loutishness are very characteristic of the current rhetoric coming out of Washington. We’ll hope that this doesn’t become the substance of American policy,” RIA quoted Ryabkov as saying.—Reuters



# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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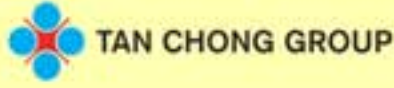
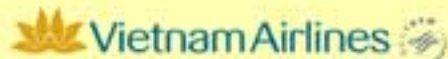
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Model Naomi Campbell (R) poses for a photograph with Baroness Amos (L) and fashion stylist Edward Enninful, after Amos received her Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour, and Enninful his Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), at Buckingham Palace in London, Britain on 27 October, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Edward Enninful named first male editor of British Vogue

LONDON — Fashion magazine British Vogue said on Monday it has appointed Edward Enninful as its new editor-in-chief, making him the first male editor in the publication's 100-year history.

Ghanaian-born Enninful is the successor to Alexandra Shulman, who announced in January

she would be stepping down from the magazine after 25 years in charge.

Enninful, 45, joins from W magazine, where he has been fashion and creative director since 2011. Previously, he had also worked for the Italian and American versions of Vogue.

Jonathan Newhouse, chairman and chief executive at Condé Nast International, the magazine's publisher, said Enninful was "an influential figure in the communities of fashion, Hollywood and music" who was "supremely prepared" for the job. —Reuters

## Brad Pitt confirmed to star in Ad Astra

LOS ANGELES — Actor Brad Pitt is set to star in James Gray's science-fiction film "Ad Astra", the director confirmed.

In the movie, the 53-year-old star will essay the role of a slightly autistic space engineer, who makes a journey through the solar system, reported AceShowbiz.

Gray broke the news in his recent interview with Collider and added that they would start shooting in July this year.

"Yes, yes, and yes," Gray said when asked whether Pitt would have a starring role in "Ad Astra".

"I'm terrified by it. The science-fiction genre is so tricky because there are elements of fantasy usually involved, and there are also fantastical elements. What I'm trying to do is the most realistic depiction of space travel that's been put in a movie and to



basically say, Space is awfully hostile to us."

He continued, "It's kind of a Heart of Darkness story about traveling to the outer edge of our solar

system. I have a lot of hopes for it but it is certainly ambitious... It starts shooting on 17<sup>th</sup> July, so not too far away. Im filled with terror, but that's fine."—PTI

## Jennifer Lopez 'loves dating' Alex Rodriguez

LOS ANGELES — Singer Jennifer Lopez is having a great time with new boyfriend Alex Rodriguez.

The 47-year-old songstress is happy with the retired MLB pro and loves dating him, source close to the "On the Floor" hitmaker confirmed People magazine.

"They both had a long work week. They were happy to spend a quiet Saturday at home before going for a late dinner. Jennifer is still very happy. All she talks about is A-Rod. She loves dating him," a source said.

The athlete, 41, recently confirmed their relationship during

an appearance on "The View".

"It's obvious. We're having a great time; she's an amazing, amazing girl, and one of the smartest human beings I've ever met and also an incredible mother," he said.—PTI

## Kylie Jenner attends high school prom as student's date

LOS ANGELES — Reality TV personality Kylie Jenner surprised students at Rio Americano High School in Sacramento when she unexpectedly arrived at their prom.

The 19-year-old reality star accompanied junior Albert Ochoa to the school prom, bringing along her longtime pal Jordyn Woods for the festivities, reported People magazine.

Kylie took to Snapchat to post a photo of the two in their

dress, sitting inside a private jet. She wore an off-the-shoulder mocha gown, while Jordyn sported a red gown.

Several students, including Ochoa's sister, also posted videos of Kylie at the prom.

"Tell me why my brother took kylie jennner to prom tonight," the sister wrote on Twitter, later posting a video of Jenner giving her date a hug.—PTI



Kylie Jenner. PHOTO: PTI



# Trumpet voluntary: Elephants 'excited' by banana-toting Queen Elizabeth

LONDON — Britain's Queen Elizabeth and her husband Prince Philip fed an elephant bananas on Tuesday to the apparent delight of the herd.

Elizabeth, who is patron of the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), and Philip met Donna, one of a nine-strong Asian elephant herd at the Centre for Elephant Care at ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, outside London.

The pachyderms were said to be thrilled.

"The elephants, when they saw Her Majesty, were excited and we know that, actually, because we track their communications in the barn and we could see that they were excited with what was going on," ZSL zoological director David Field said.



Britain's Queen Elizabeth, watched by Prince Philip, feeds an elephant during a visit to Whipsnade Zoo where she opened the new Centre for Elephant Care, in Dunstable, Britain on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

One of the centre's elephants is also called Elizabeth, born a day before the queen's 90th birthday

last year.

"Little Elizabeth didn't quite meet the queen. She's still a little

young and unpredictable," Field said. The monarch unveiled a plaque for the opening.—Reuters

## Korean-themed mall opens in Bangkok

BANGKOK — Hoping to capitalise on growing regional interest in South Korean pop culture, a Thai company opened a \$275-million Korean-themed shopping mall

and entertainment complex in Bangkok on Monday.

The 180,000 square meter (1.9 million square feet) building targets both Thai fans of K-Culture and foreign visitors. It hopes

to get 10 million visitors a year and become a major attraction in what was the world's most visited city last year.

"A lot of Asian people are fans of Korea,"

said Chayaditt Hutana-watra, chairman of privately-owned SHOW DC Corp Ltd. "Thailand is the place where people can just fly in." The mall has stores with clothing, cosmetics and restaurants from Korean brands and K-pop artists. It has statues and palm prints of Korean stars and plans to bring Korean performers in to the floor it has dedicated as a concert hall.

South Korea's Lotte Group is among the companies that will open a store there, the mall said.

Around a third of the more than 34 million tourists forecast to visit Thailand this year are from China — where interest in K-Culture has been driven underground by a recent row over Seoul's deployment of a missile defence system.—Reuters



Fireworks explode over the Show DC Korean-theme mall during an opening ceremony in Bangkok, Thailand, on 10 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Painted Thai elephants spray tourists with water to banish bad luck

AYUTTHAYA, Thailand — Colourfully painted elephants in the ancient Thai capital of Ayutthaya sprayed people with water on Tuesday in a water fight that has become tradition to mark the country's New Year festivities.

"It's indescribable, it's amazing. You come out, you get in the tuk-tuk and you start having a water fight with the elephants," said David Gray, a British tourist sporting a bright Hawaiian shirt.

Ayutthaya, a UNESCO World Heritage city, is home to one of the country's most popular elephant camps.

This year, Thailand

celebrates the annual water festival, called Songkran, from 13 to 15 April, to mark the traditional New Year.

The Songkran festival is often referred to as the world's biggest water fight - a time when revelers splash water on each other under the scorching sun. Everyone is fair game and tourists flock to the fun.

Thais believe water washes away bad luck and helps usher in prosperity.

Apart from the big splash, the New Year is also a time for family gatherings, praying, and paying respects to ancestors and dead relatives.

—Reuters



Elephants spray tourists with water in celebration of the Songkran Water Festival in Ayutthaya province, north of Bangkok, Thailand on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Amateur husky racers brave -24C in Arctic wilderness

OSLO — Amateur dog-sled racers pushed themselves to the limits to complete a 300 km journey in temperatures as low as -24 degrees Celsius in the Arctic wilderness.

Some 30 competitors led more than 200 Alaskan and Siberian Huskies between Signaldalen in Norway and Jukkasjarvi in Sweden in just five days for the Fjallraven Polar 2017 race organized by a Swedish outdoor clothing and equipment company.

The participants, hailing from 12 differ-

ent countries, slept in the open, braving the occasional snow storm. They also were accompanied by the magical Northern Lights filling the sky.

"This is probably (in my) top three. Getting married and my kids are obviously first and second, but this is an experience I will never forget," American Walter Herrmann, a furniture industry executive more used to the warmer temperatures of his native Louisiana, said in a video news release.—Reuters

### mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(13-4-2017 07:00am ~ 14-4-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Yathe Taung Township In A Nut-Shell
07:52	Am	Sagaing: Gold Leaf
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Mon Traditional Thingyan Rice
08:32	Am	Caves of Myanmar
09:03	Am	News
09:25	Am	"Myanmar's Traditions and Culture" Myanmar's Secret Beautifier
09:49	Am	Thingyan Songs & Dances
10:03	Am	News
10:25	Am	History And Mystery Behind The Caves

10:50 Am Thingyan Songs & Dances  
(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm)-Wednesday Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)  
(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm)-Today Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

#### Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	A Visit to Kyauk Kyi
07:43	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Toys
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Delicate Artistic Creations-Gem Stone Painting)
08:45	Pm	A Life In The Ring

#### Remark:

06:00 Am to 11:30 Am- Live: Mandalay Thingyan Festival  
03:00 Pm to 06:00 Pm- Live: Mandalay Thingyan Festival  
07:00 Pm to 11:00 Pm- Live: Mandalay Thingyan Festival  
(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)  
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am)-Wednesday 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))



# Blasts hit Borussia Dortmund team bus, leaving player hurt

DORTMUND — German police said “an attack using serious explosives” was launched on the Borussia Dortmund soccer team’s bus on Tuesday, leaving one player injured.

Defender Marc Bartra was taken to hospital. The bus was hit by three blasts from devices planted in bushes at the roadside close to the team’s hotel, as the vehicle made its way to a quarter-final first leg Champions League game at home to

AS Monaco. The match was called off and rescheduled for Wednesday. “The bus turned into the main street, when there was a huge boom, a real explosion,” Sky television quoted Dortmund goalkeeper Roman Burki as saying.

“I was sitting in the back row next to Marc Bartra, hit by fragments ... after the bang, we all ducked.”

Dortmund police said in a message on Twitter: “After the

initial investigation, we assume that this was an attack using serious explosives.”

The stadium, which is the largest in Germany and holds more than 80,000 spectators, emptied quickly and without incident.

“The explosive devices were placed outside the bus. Several windows were broken,” a police spokesman said. The incident was

in the Hoechst district in the south of the city of Dortmund.

Bartra, 26, joined Dortmund for eight million euros (\$8.5 million) last year from Barcelona, after coming through the Catalan club’s youth system. He has made 12 appearances for the Spanish national team.

Borussia Dortmund’s managing director Hans-Joachim Watzke was quoted as telling Sky: “The whole team is in a state of shock.”—Reuters



# Two-goal Dybala upstages Messi as Juve thump Barcelona

TURIN, (Italy) — Paulo Dybala upstaged his fellow Argentine Lionel Messi by scoring two exquisitely taken goals to set Juventus on the way to an emphatic 3-0 win over an underwhelming Barcelona in the Champions League on Tuesday.

The Spanish side, who overcame a 4-0 first-leg deficit in the previous round to beat Paris St Germain, will have to pull a similar trick out of the hat after being comprehensively outplayed in the quarter-final first leg.

Dybala fired Juve ahead in the seventh minute and added the second goal before the half hour while defender Giorgio Chiellini headed in the third early in the second half in another rousing Juventus performance.

It could have been worse for Barca as Gonzalo Higuain, usually Juve’s most dangerous marksman, missed two chances that he would usually have snapped up.

Barca had 65 percent of the possession but were strangely ponderous in midfield and leaky at the back, where they could not cope with the pace and aggression of Mario Mandzukic or Juan Cuadrado on the flanks.

The match pitted Chiellini against Barcelona forward

Luis Suarez for the first time since the infamous incident at the 2014 World Cup when the Uruguayan bit the Italian defender.

Juve, unbeaten at home in a European tie for four years, went straight on to the attack and Higuain wasted their first chance after three minutes with a poor close-range header from Miralem Pjanic’s cross.

They needed another four minutes to go ahead when Cuadrado found Dybala who cleverly turned and curled a left-foot shot past Marc Andre ter Stegen.—Reuters



Juventus’ Gianluigi Buffon in action with Barcelona’s Gerard Pique during the UEFA Champions League Quarter Final First Leg at Juventus Stadium in Turin, Italy on 11 April, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

# United on right track with Mourinho, says Vidic

LONDON — Manchester United may be struggling by their own high standards under Jose Mourinho this season but the Portuguese manager will get them back to winning ways, the club’s former captain Nemanja Vidic said on Tuesday.

United, who spent heavily in the close season, are only fifth in the Premier League, 18 points adrift of leaders Chelsea.



United manager Jose Mourinho. PHOTO: REUTERS

They remain in the hunt for a top-four finish and Champions League qualification, however, and with 57 points from 30 games they sit four adrift of fourth-placed rivals Manchester City, with a game in hand.

United face a tough task when they take on Mourinho’s former club Chelsea on Sunday and Vidic acknowledged that the winners of a record 20 English league titles have had to lower their expectations.

“Realistically, if we can add a Champions League slot to the (League) Cup we have won already, we have to be satisfied,” the retired 35-year old Serbian defender told the club’s website (www.manutd.com).

“We are not in the position we would like to be in but we are fighting for the Champions League (qualification),” said Vidic, who won five Premier League titles and the 2008 Champions League during his eight-year spell at United.—Reuters