

Vice President attends 16<sup>th</sup> Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference

PAGE 3

Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses meeting of LRMCC

PAGE 3

ANALYSIS

How poisonous can a school lesson be?

PAGE 8

# SEZ GIVEN GREEN LIGHT

## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approves Kyaukphyu SEZ on 4,289 acres

THE Establishment of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone on more than 4,289 acres of land was passed by vote at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Parliament) yesterday.

Following a debate by seven MPs on the issue submitted by the president to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the issue was taken to a vote and passed by 424 to 23 votes.

MPs supported Kyaukphyu SEZ saying that it would be very beneficial for the growth of the country's economy as well as that of Rakhine State.

They also stressed the need to have transparency as the project is a huge one with special importance put on the interests of the people and the country.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann acknowledged the majority of MPs' nod to the project, urging the next government to make sure of transparency in implementing the remaining work of the project.

President U Thein Sein, who serves as the chairman of the Myanmar Special Economic Zone Central Working Body, called on the body last week to speed up its efforts to announce the result of the tender for the development of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone during the term of the current government.

During the meeting, MPs agreed with the amendment of the Specific Goods Tax bill, which was amended by the Bill Joint Committee and put forward by the Ministry of Finance in December.—GNLM



A small-scale model of the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone. PHOTO: KYAUKPHYU SEZ

### Appeal to be made on behalf of two Myanmar citizens

U WUNNA Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs met with Mr Pisanu Suvanajata, the Thai Ambassador to Myanmar yesterday morning in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, the union minister told the Thai ambassador that an appeal will be made step by step in accordance with the proce-

dures of the Thai Judicial System on behalf of Win Zaw Tun and Zaw Lin, upon whom the death sentence was handed down by a Thai court on December 24.

The Myanmar government is working closely with the Myanmar embassy in Bangkok and the Thai Barr Council.—Myanmar News Agency

### Ward, Village-tract administrators to be selected in January 2016

THE Ministry of Home Affairs is planning to assign new administrators for wards/villages in January 2016, replacing outgoing administrators in line with the Ward/Village-tract Administration Law.

The period of duty of current administrators is the same as the term of the Pyithu Hluttaw and will finish in January of next

year, according to the Section-9 of the Ward and Village-tract Administration Law.

Section 10 of the law reads that if a ward/village-tract administrator is a member of a political party, he or she must not take part in the activities of the party starting the date when he or she is assigned their role as administrator.—Myanmar News Agency

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## Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker suggests govt review strategies to prevent jade casualties

FOLLOWING the Mines Ministry's three options to prevent casualties at jade mines in Lonkhin and Hpakant, the speaker of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw sent a letter to the president yesterday suggesting the Union government review its strategies using different approaches.

The letter also conveyed the parliament's remarks on the government's plan to prevent further tragedies in the jade land.

The three strategies submitted by the Ministry of Mines to the parliament were: banning jade mining

in Lonkhin and Hpakant; imposing a curfew on the mine areas; or putting the at-risk areas under martial law in order to enforce the rule of law there.

Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann suggested the government seeks a better way to solve the issue.

Deputy Minister for Mines U Than Tun Aung said at the parliament yesterday that union ministries, the Kachin State government and the Tatmadaw as well as armed groups will cooperate in order to enforce the rule of law in the area. He said it is necessary to



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

evict squatters and to systematically manage jade mining in Lonkhin and Hpakant in accordance with the by-laws of the Myanmar Gems Law. He disclosed the ministry's plan in response to a question at

the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw over landslides of dumped soil causing casualties, heavy machinery in jade mining and the over-exploration of natural resources harming local people.

According to the statistics of the Myanmar Gems Enterprise up to 30 November, there are 1,872 backhoes and 3,327 dumpers in total in Lonkhin and Hpakant.—GNLM

## MCPD looks to increase inclusivity of persons with disabilities

Ye Myint

PEOPLE living with a disability have had their hopes boosted of achieving more inclusion in society following the election of disabled candidates in the country's 2015 election, said the Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities yesterday.

According to the MCPD, three disabled parliamentarian-elects in regions and states emerged from the 2015 general elections held in November.

"We have high hopes of making society more inclusive of persons with disabilities through the efforts of three parliamentarian-elects who emerged from the recent general elections," said MCPD's vice-chairperson Dr Ko Ko Oo.

"There will be a louder voice to promote the rights of people with disabilities in parliament, focusing on the issue of disability with their own points of views," he said at the commemoration of the International Day of Disabled Persons 2015 in Yangon.

Two of the three parliamentarian-elects are Saw Thura Aung from Oakpo of Bago and U Aung Kyaw Myat from Einme

of Ayeyawady Region who won seats in their respective regional parliaments. Both are from the National League for Democracy.

The NLD's Patron U Tin Oo who graced the event stated in his address that there will be a greater focus on the issue of dis-

ability, hoping to see more work done in the future.

U Nyunt Aung, general secretary of the council, said

that people living with disabilities are not burdens on society, adding that they will be a power for change as they have a lot to contribute to the country if they are provided with the necessary support.

According to the 2014 nationwide census, Myanmar has a population of more than 2.3 million people with disabilities, accounting for 4.6 percent of the country's total population of over 51 million.

In her words of encouragement to disabled people, Khin Hnin Kyi Tha, a solo volunteer helping people in need, described the actions of those who want to discriminate against people with disabilities as immoral.

On 5 June this year the Myanmar government passed the Disable Rights Law that allows the disabled to have voting rights and the right to be elected.

The Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities formed with 21 members representing four groups of disabled people is a national association of disability rights organizations.

In Myanmar, an individual with a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment.



Rules and regulations are not coming yet despite a period of 180 days is over following the promulgation of the Disable Rights Law, Myanmar Council of Persons with Disabilities says. PHOTO: YE MYINT

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Section 10 of the law reads that if a ward/village-tract administrator is a member of a political party, he or she must not take part in the

activities of the party starting the date when he or she is assigned their role as administrator.

In assigning duties, the set qualifications for ward/village-tract administrators is described in Chapter (3) of the Ward/village-tract administration Law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Monsoon Tour Sets Down in Mandalay

THE Monsoon Tour Film Festival was celebrated at the Mega Ace Cineplex of Myo Gone Young Cinema at the corner of 31 Street and 83 Street in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay on Monday.

Included in the festival were natural documentary films and true stories by amateur directors. The attendees included a Professor and faculty members of the

Film Department of Mandalay University of Culture and students, Media, NGOs and movie enthusiasts.

Attendees were able to ask questions of the directors following the screenings. Before starting the festival video producers, video editors and interested people joined the Black Magic Camera Road Show.—*Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)*

# Vice President attends 16<sup>th</sup> Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference

WITH a key-note address from the Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, the 16<sup>th</sup> Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners' Conference was opened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, he called on traditional medicine practitioners to conduct research on safety, quality and potency of the country's indigenous medicines and to cooperate with pharmacologists, foresters, agriculturalists and medical experts to conduct scientific research.

The vice president also encouraged practitioners across the country to expose and preserve the potent herbs grown in Myanmar's jungle and to reproduce, cultivate and produce them.

Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham also urged them to begin records of therapy, saying that it is a must for all the traditional medicine practitioners.

The pros and cons of their therapies are to be put on record and these records need to be systematically compiled so as to disclose the findings with firm evi-



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham meets practitioners at 16<sup>th</sup> Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference. . PHOTO: MNA

dences, he added.

Up to December 2015, three 100-bed hospitals, nine 50-bed hospitals, four 25-bed hospitals

and four 16-bed hospitals were built, 50 District Traditional Medicine Department Offices opened and 210 Township Tra-

ditional Medicine Centres were established in regions and states.

At the conference, the indigenous medicine practitioners

submitted five proposals and held discussions.

The conference continues today.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses meeting of LRMCC

A NATIONAL Land Resources Management Central Committee was held in the meeting hall of the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry on Tuesday with an opening speech by Chairman of the central committee Vice President U Nyan Tun.

In his speech, the vice president said that 17 meetings were held in the Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and states and regions to seek advice from the public on draft policy for land resources management and it was revised

by experts to include the advice of the public.

Another reason for adopting a national land resources management policy was to harmonise the various laws concerning land applied by different ministries and to enact an umbrella law for national land resources management, according to the vice president.

The government has been cooperating with the USAID, the EU and the SDC of Switzerland to produce a land use classification map and the One Map My-



Vice President U Nyan Tun addresses meeting of National Land Resources Management Central Committee. PHOTO: MNA

anmar Project, the vice president added.

In addition, the central committee is working to develop the Land Governance Assessment Framework in cooperation with the World Bank, the vice presi-

dent said.

In conclusion, the vice president urged those who attended the meeting to finalise the draft of nation land use policy.

The secretary and vice chairmen and officials of the central

committee reported on classification of land, management of land resources and the drafting of the land resources management law.

The meeting ended with remarks by the vice president.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Betel planters, sellers thriving in Myinmu



Betel Leaves.

BETEL leaves of the nuwah variety are fetching good prices in Myinmu Township this season.

A village farmer said the prices vary from K8,000 to K10,000 for a 1.5 kilo batch, depending on the quality of the leaves. He said buyers even come to his plot to buy leaves, removing the need for him to find a wholesaler in town.

A local resident said the hustle and bustle selling of betel leaves by villagers beside the busy Monywa-Mandalay highway is dangerous and worrisome.—*624/Kyemon*

## Ambassador of Myanmar presents his Credentials to Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of Republic of Mauritius

U Tha Aung Nyun, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Mauritius, presented his Credentials to Her Excellency Mrs. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President of the Republic of Mauritius on 16 December 2015, in Port Louis.—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

## Famed architect Shigeru Ban builds quake-proof homes from rubble in Nepal

TOKYO — After twin earthquakes in April and May claimed 9,000 lives and left vast swathes of Nepal in ruins, survivors worried if they reused the brick rubble, they would end up with the same vulnerable, seismically unsound structures.

Renowned Japanese architect Shigeru Ban — who helped bring global attention to humanitarian architecture and continues to influence fellow architects and disaster-relief workers — devised a solution.

“Each disaster is different, so I have to go there to find out the particular problems to solve,” said 58-year-old Ban, who built paper emergency shelters in Haiti after the 2010 quake and the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan two years ago.

The prototype for his latest humanitarian housing project in Nepal consists of standard timber door frames joined together and reinforced with plywood. The frames are filled in with brick rubble, and the roof is covered with a plastic sheet and thatched for insulation.

The resulting structure is strong enough to meet Japan’s stringent earthquake standards, he said in an interview at his office in Tokyo.

“I’m hoping people will copy my design. If we make 20, some other NGO might make more. I’m encouraging people to copy my ideas. No copyrights,” Ban said, noting he always tries to enlist the help of his houses’ future inhabitants.

“If they’re involved in the construction, if the structure needs maintenance, they will know how to do it themselves.”

Ban, who in 2014 won the Pritzker Prize, architecture’s top award, has also built shelters for Rwandan refugees in 1994, Sri Lankan survivors of the 2004 tsunami, and victims of major disasters in Japan.

Fellow Pritzker prize winners Thom Mayne and Frank Gehry teamed up with Ban to work with actor Brad Pitt’s Make It Right Foundation, a non-profit group set up in 2007 to help rebuild New Orleans’ Lower 9th Ward after Hurricane Katrina.

Ban’s work has pushed aid agencies to take on challenges differently, said Brett Moore, a shelter, infrastructure and reconstruction advisor for World Vision International.

“Ban’s approach to humanitarian work prompts the entire humanitarian community to think outside the box, to reject generic and inappropriate responses to vastly different contexts, and to approach the work with individuality and creativity,” Moore said.

His emphasis on reusing materials also fits with a broader trend, as aid agencies try to rebuild sustainably after disasters.

“There’s a lot more concern now than there has been in past decades on reuse and recycling. That is something for us as humanitarian agencies to look into,” said Sandra D’Urzo, who works on shelters and settlements for the International Federation of the Red Cross in Geneva.

While Ban said he enjoys working on grand projects commissioned by privileged people,



Construction workers make the final touches to a prototype house of the Nepal House Project designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban in Kathmandu on 15 October. PHOTO: REUTERS

he also wants to help people who have lost their homes, and is encouraged that many architects have followed in his footsteps.

After the massive 2011 earthquake and tsunami ravaged the Japan’s Tohoku region, Ban noticed an increase in architects on the ground compared to the aftermath of the Kobe quake.

“When I was working in Kobe in 1995, there were no architects in the disaster area, but in Tohoku after the earthquake, there were so many,” he said.

“I’m very happy that now, even young architects and students are interested in what I’m doing, which was not the case 20 years ago.”—Reuters

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## A year after stampede, Shanghai opts out of New Year celebration



People offer prayers during a memorial ceremony for people who were killed in a stampede incident during a New Year’s celebration on the Bund, in Shanghai on 2 January 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

SHANGHAI — Authorities in the Chinese city of Shanghai have opted not to organise New Year celebrations the historic riverfront Bund this week, a year after a stampede killed 36 people.

City spokesman Xu Wei announced the decision on Tuesday, state broadcaster CCTV reported on its microblog.

“There will be no activities on the Bund to greet the 2016 new year. Citizens who go there on their own, please pay attention to maintaining order,” Xu

was quoted as saying.

The deadly crush last year occurred at around midnight on steps up to a riverside walkway as thousands of people gathered by the Huangpu River. Most of those who died were in their 20s while 49 people were injured.

Two years ago, a New Year’s Eve fireworks and laser show on the Bund drew a crowd of 300,000 people, and officials canceled last year’s show days before it was set to take place due to concerns about crowd management, the *Shanghai Daily* re-

ported at the time. Despite that, a huge crowd still gathered.

Four district-level officials were fired and stripped of their Communist Party posts after the stampede and another seven were disciplined after an investigation concluded they had not done enough to mitigate the risks of such a big crowd.

The municipal government later canceled a series of events, including annual Lantern Festival celebrations and an agricultural produce exhibition that has run for 14 years.—Reuters

## Families of those killed demand open apology on AirAsia crash anniversary

JAKARTA — Monday marked the one year anniversary of the crash of AirAsia’s flight QZ8501 in Indonesia, with the families of those killed in the crash demanding an open apology from the airline.

AirAsia flight QZ8501 crashed en route from Surabaya to Singapore on 28 December, 2014, killing all 162 people aboard.

Relatives of those killed in the crash and officials from AirAsia gathered Monday in Surabaya for a private ceremony to mark the tragedy.

“This is a gathering event to convey pray and commemorate the AirAsia tragedy together with the victims’ families and relatives,” AirAsia Indonesia President Director Sunu Widyatmoko said on the sidelines of the event.

The event was also attended by head of Indonesia’s National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas) and former Surabaya major Tri Rismaharani and co-founder of Air Asia Datuk Kamaruddin.

“No other programme than praying together and meeting with families of the victims, memorizing those perished (in the crash). Representatives of the families conveyed their expectations,” Sunu was quoted by a local media as saying.—Xinhua

## Japan urged to apologise to and compensate Taiwanese ‘comfort women’

TAIPEI — Taiwan’s President Ma Ying-jeou called on the Japanese government yesterday to apologise to and compensate Taiwanese women forced to work in military brothels before and during World War II, after Japan and South Korea struck a landmark deal on the long-standing issue on Monday.

Ma said the position of Taiwan’s government on “comfort women” is clear.

“We have been asking the Japanese government to respond to our demands for offering an official apology and compensation to comfort women so all victims will get the justice and dignity they deserve,” he said.

Ma made the remarks after Japan and South Korea signed an agreement, promising to “finally and irreversibly” resolve the protracted dispute.

Under the Japan-South Korea deal, Japan’s foreign ministry said the Japanese government recognises its respon-

sibility over the issue and will contribute 1 billion yen (\$8.3 million) from its state budget to a foundation South Korea will establish to provide support for former comfort women.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will also express his apologies and remorse.

Taiwan’s Foreign Minister, David Lin, told a press conference on Tuesday that the Japan-South Korea deal is a significant breakthrough, and Taiwan would like to seize a “new opportunity” to push forward with ongoing negotiations with Japan over the issue.

Taiwan is estimated to have had about 2,000 comfort women, of which 85 have been confirmed as victims, according to the Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation. However, there are now only four alive in Taiwan, and their average age is about 90.

Lin said he has asked the island’s de facto ambassador to

Japan to personally supervise the negotiation process.

While the United States reportedly played a major role in encouraging Japan and South Korea to seal the deal, Lin made it clear that Taiwan does not need the help of “a third country” to resolve the issue with Japan, because bilateral communication channels have been smooth.

Chang Jen-joe, secretary-general of the Association of East Asian Relations, which deals with bilateral ties, told Kyodo News that he is optimistic about the negotiations with Japan.

Describing the Japan-South Korea deal as “the beginning of a chain reaction,” Chang said while Tokyo may have priorities in terms of resolving the “comfort women” issue, it is highly unlikely that it will ignore Taiwan after it signed the landmark agreement with Seoul.—*Kyodo News*

## Fears of 30,000-litre sulphuric acid leak from Australian train derailment

SYDNEY — It was feared more than 30,000 litres (7,925 gallons) of sulphuric acid had spilled after all 26 carriages of a freight train carrying the chemical derailed in remote northern Australia, authorities said yesterday.

The train, belonging to locally listed freight firm Aurizon Ltd, was carrying about 819,000 litres (216,360 gallons) of sulphuric acid, four times the amount first estimated, when it derailed in Queensland state on Sunday.

“One of the carriages has likely ruptured and it is possible that up to 31,500 litres of acid has leaked out,” Queensland Police said in a statement.

Testing by the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection suggested that a nearby waterway had not been adversely affected by any leak, the statement said.

Aurizon said in an email to Reuters the cause of the incident was not yet known. Three train

drivers had received minor injuries but had been released from hospital, it said. A derailment and chemical spill adds to pressure on the haulage company after a downturn in coal shipping volumes forced it to issue a profit warning last week, sending its shares sharply lower.

It would also disrupt mining companies already slashing production volumes to cope with weak commodity prices. Miners use sulphuric acid to separate and clean some minerals.

The train was travelling from the east coast port city of Townsville to Phosphate Hill, 1,000 km (620 miles) inland, Aurizon said.

The police statement did not give a cause for the derailment but said the area had experienced flooding, causing a nearby highway to be cut off.

Police said they had formed a 2-km (1.2-mile) exclusion zone around the crash site to help salvage crews gain access.—*Reuters*

## Tech giants spot opportunity in forecasting China’s smog

BEIJING — Air pollution in China could be big business.

Two of the world’s largest technology firms, IBM and Microsoft, are vying to tap the nascent, fast-growing market for forecasting air quality in the world’s top carbon emitters.

Bouts of acrid smog enveloping Beijing prompted authorities in the Chinese capital to declare two unprecedented “red alerts” this month — a warning to the city’s 22 million inhabitants that heavy pollution is expected for more than three days.

Such alerts rely on advances in pollution forecasting, increasingly important for Communist Party leaders as they seek improvements in monitoring and managing the country’s notorious smog in response to growing public awareness.

Official interest has also been boosted by China’s preparations to host the Winter Olympics — Beijing’s smog is worse in the colder months — in 2022.

“There is increasing attention to the air quality forecast service,” said Yu Zheng, a researcher at Microsoft. “More and more people care about this information technology.”

A rudimentary forecast was pioneered by Dustin Grzesik, a US geochemist and former Beijing resident who created Bانشime.com, a free website and smartphone app, in 2013 to predict clean air days us-

ing publicly available weather data on wind patterns.

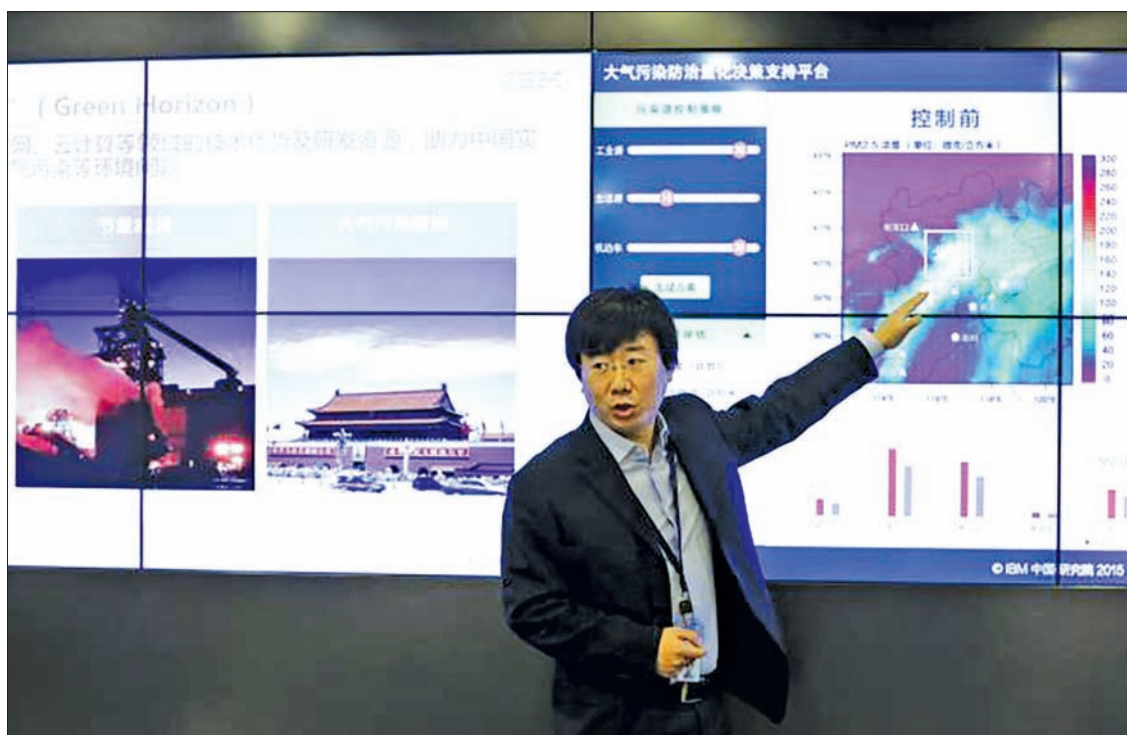
“If you can predict the weather, it only takes a few more variables to predict air quality,” said Robert Rohde of Berkeley Earth, a US-based non-profit that maps China’s real-time air pollution. “Most of the time pollutant emissions don’t vary very rapidly.”

Now, advances in “cognitive computing” — machines programmed to improve modelling on their own — allow more sophisticated forecasting software to provide predictions for the air quality index up to 10 days in advance using data on weather, traffic and land use, as well as real-time pollution levels from government monitoring stations and even social media posts.

Forecasts can help governments plan when to close schools and airports, restrict vehicles or postpone sporting events, and also decide which polluting factories to shut down temporarily.

Both Microsoft and IBM secured their first government clients last year after developing their respective pollution forecasting technologies at their China-based research labs.

Chinese authorities only began releasing real-time levels of PM2.5 — airborne particulate matter under 2.5 microns in diameter that can penetrate deep into the lungs — in 2012, after denouncing the U.S. embassy for publishing



Meng Zhang, Chief Meteorologist of IBM Research in China, talks about graphics showing the company’s smog forecasting system called the ‘Green Horizon’, at its research office in Beijing, China on 9 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

its own real-time monitoring data on Twitter. IBM’s first client was the city of Beijing’s environmental protection bureau, which bases its colour-coded pollution alerts on the technology.

The company launched a “Joint Environmental Innovation Centre” — staffed by government and IBM scientists — with the bureau earlier in December, allowing officials to better model pollution reduction scenarios during the worst episodes.

Still the municipal government only makes public a 24-hour forecast on its website, meaning residents aren’t able to see for themselves when a “red alert” may be due.

The environmental bureau’s monitoring centre did not respond to a request for comment.

IBM has also signed a deal with Zhangjiakou, which will jointly host the 2022 Winter Olympics alongside Beijing, to do forward planning and scenario modelling ahead of the games.

For its part, Microsoft has signed up China’s environment ministry, and the environmental protection bureaus in Fujian province and Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern province of Sichuan.

Outside China, IBM has also signed deals for air quality modelling with Delhi, one of the world’s most polluted cities, and Johannesburg.

“We should be able to use the same base system and do air quality forecasting in different parts of the world,” said Brad Gammons, the business leader behind the IBM

initiative, which the company calls ‘Green Horizons’.

“With the machine-based learning we can do it very quickly.” The two tech rivals aren’t just competing over government clients. Business clients — in particular renewable power generation companies — are another target, along with consumers. Already more than 30 solar farms in China are using IBM’s forecasting technology, which can also help predict the availability of sunlight.

Microsoft has created a website called Urban Air and a smartphone app with a 48-hour forecast for cities across China, while the China Open tennis tournament put two-day IBM pollution forecasts for parks across Beijing on its public WeChat social messaging account.—*Reuters*

## Britain needs 'rethink' on flood defence after swathes of England hit

LONDON — Britain needs a 'complete rethink' of its flood defences after towns, cities and countryside across northern England were inundated when rivers broke their banks in recent days, a government agency said on Monday.

Hundreds of soldiers have been deployed to evacuate residents and help emergency services. Local authorities said around 500 properties were flooded in the historic city of York, and 2,000 homes and 400 businesses in Leeds. Flood defences have been bolstered in recent years, but that has not been enough to prevent some residents of northern England, including the scenic Lake District, from having their homes

flooded time and again this month.

"We are moving from known extremes to unknown extremes," David Rooke, deputy chief executive of the Environment Agency, which handles the government's flood response, told BBC radio.

"We will need to have a complete rethink and I think we need to move from not just providing better defences (...) but looking at increasing resilience."

Prime Minister David Cameron defended the government's record on flood defences during a visit to York, saying it had committed to spend 2.3 billion pounds over the next six years, and he would consider doing more.

"Let's have a look and see whether more needs to be done

and whether the flood defences need to be made even higher than they are already, and that's exactly what we'll look at," he told Sky News. There was a lull in the heavy rain on Monday, and the Environment Agency said river levels were stabilising or starting to fall.

But nine severe flood warnings, which indicate a danger to life, remained in place, and further rain was expected on Wednesday on already saturated ground, the government said. Regional power supplier Electricity North West said it had restored supplies to 24,750 homes since Saturday, but around 1,200 customers in the northwestern city of Manchester were still cut off.—Reuters



Members of the emergency services rescue a woman from a flooded property in York City Centre, in northern England, on 28 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

## German states to spend around 17 bn euros on refugees in 2016

BERLIN — Germany's federal states are planning to spend around 17 billion euros (13 billion pounds) on dealing with the refugee crisis in 2016, newspaper *Die Welt* said on Tuesday, citing a survey it conducted among their finance ministries.

The sum, bigger than the 15.3

billion euros that the central government planned to allocate to its education and research ministry in 2015, is a measure of the strain that the influx is causing across the country as a whole.

Germany is the favoured destination for many of the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing

conflict and poverty in the Middle East and Africa, partly due to the generous benefits that it offers. The German states have repeatedly complained that they are struggling to cope, and Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door policy has caused tensions within her conservative camp. *Die Welt* said that excluding the small city state of Bremen, which did not provide any details, current plans suggested the states' combined expenditure would be 16.5 billion euros.

The paper said actual costs would probably be even higher because the regional finance ministries had based their budgets on an estimate from the federal government that 800,000 refugees would come to Germany in 2015. In fact, 965,000 asylum seekers had already arrived by the end of November.—Reuters



Refugees pose for a picture as they take part in a workshop organized by the Arrivo Berlin initiative to receive new professional skills, in Berlin, Germany, on 17 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Ship with low-enriched uranium leaves Iran for Russia: US

WASHINGTON — A ship carrying more than 25,000 pounds (11,000 kg) of low-enriched uranium materials left Iran for Russia on Monday in an Iranian step toward honouring a 14 July nuclear deal with major powers, the United States said.

Under the landmark nuclear accord, certain US, European Union and UN sanctions are to be removed in exchange for Iran accepting long-term curbs on a nuclear programme that the West has long suspected was aimed at creating a nuclear bomb.

A key provision of the agreement, negotiated by Iran with the United States, Britain, China, France, Russia and Germany, is Tehran's commitment to reduce its stockpile of low-enriched uranium to below 660 pounds (300 kg).

If much further refined, low-enriched uranium can yield fissile material for nuclear weapons.

"The shipment included the removal of all of Iran's nuclear material enriched to 20 per cent that was not already in the form of fabricated fuel plates for the Tehran Research Reactor," US Secretary of State John Kerry said in a written statement.—Reuters

#### Bombs in Syria's Homs kill 32, wound 90

BEIRUT — At least 32 people were killed and 90 wounded in two bomb explosions in the Syrian city of Homs on Monday, monitoring group the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The blasts, one from a car bomb and another from a suicide attack, struck the Zahra district in the middle of the city, said the Britain-based Observatory, which monitors the conflict through a network of contacts on the ground. Syria's state news agency SANA reported two car bomb blasts, but gave a lower initial toll of six dead and 37 wounded.

It was the second major attack in the city since a ceasefire deal took effect earlier this month, paving the way for the government to take over the last rebel-controlled area of Homs.

Twin blasts on 12 December, also in Zahra, killed at least 16 people. Islamic State claimed responsibility for that attack, saying it had detonated a suicide car bomb.

Under the Homs ceasefire deal, at least 700 insurgent fighters and members of their families left the last rebel-controlled area of the city, al Waer district. The United Nations presided over implementation of the deal.—Reuters

#### Turkey prosecutor investigates pro-Kurdish opposition head over 'self-rule' comments

ISTANBUL — A Turkish prosecutor has opened an investigation into the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) head Selahattin Demirtas over alleged comments about Kurdish self-rule, Dogan news agency reported on Monday.

On Sunday, a congress of Kurdish groups, including the HDP, made a call for self-rule after a two-day meeting in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir.

"The rightful resistance mounted by our people against the policies that degrade the Kurdish problem, is essentially a demand and struggle for local self-governance and local democracy," the groups said in their final resolution.—Reuters

#### Belgian strike set to disrupt international rail services in January

BRUSSELS — A strike of Belgian rail workers on 6 and 7 January will disrupt international high-speed trains between Belgium, Britain, France, Germany and the Netherlands, rail operators said.

Though rail unions were still in talks on Monday about whether the strike would be given the final go-ahead, all major international railway operators had updated their websites to reflect the disruptions.

High-speed rail operator Thalys, with services to France, Germany and the Netherlands, said it would cancel two late trains on Tuesday 5 January, would run no trains on Wednesday 6 January and only two services late on Thursday 7 January.

Eurostar, connecting Belgium and Britain, said it would be operating a limited service on the Brussels-London line terminating at Lille in northern France.

Deutsche Bahn said it would be operating bus replacement services on its route between Brussels and Cologne in Germany.—Reuters

# Iraq PM vows to defeat IS in 2016 after army's first major victory

BAGHDAD — A triumphant Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared on Monday that the coming year would see his forces defeat Islamic State, after his military achieved its first major victory since collapsing in the face of the fighters 18 months ago.

Iraqi forces flew the national flag above the main government complex in Ramadi earlier in the day, declaring they had recaptured the city, a provincial capital west of Baghdad, which fell to Islamic State in May.

"2016 will be the year of the big and final victory, when Daesh's presence in Iraq will be terminated," Abadi said in a speech broadcast on state television, using an Arabic acronym for Islamic State that the hardline group rejects.

"We are coming to liberate Mosul and it will be the fatal and final blow to Daesh," he added. Mosul, northern Iraq's main city, is by far the largest population centre in the self-proclaimed caliphate Islamic State rules in Iraq and Syria.

The army's apparent capture of Ramadi, capital of Anbar Province in the Euphrates River valley west of Baghdad, marks a major milestone for US-trained forces who crumbled when Islamic State fighters charged into Iraq in June 2014. In previous battles since then, Iraq's armed forces operated mainly in a support-



Tanks are seen in the city of Ramadi, on 28 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

ing role beside Iranian-backed Shi'ite militias.

Soldiers were shown on state television on Monday publicly slaughtering a sheep in an act of celebration. Gunshots and an explosion could be heard as a state TV reporter interviewed other soldiers celebrating the victory with their automatic weapons held in the air.

US President Barack Obama, vacationing in Hawaii with

his family, received an update on Monday on the Iraqi forces' progress in Ramadi, the White House said.

"The continued progress of the Iraqi Security Forces in the fight to retake Ramadi is a testament to their courage and determination, and our shared commitment to push ISIL out of its safe-havens," the White House said in a statement, using an acronym for Islamic State.

Congratulating the Iraqi government, US Defence Secretary Ash Carter said: "The expulsion of ISIL by Iraqi security forces ... is a significant step forward in the campaign to defeat this barbaric group." In a statement, Carter added: "Now it's important for the Iraqi government ... to seize this opportunity to maintain the peace in Ramadi, prevent the return of ISIL and other extremists, and facilitate the return of Rama-

di's citizens back to the city."

American officials said the US-led coalition backing Iraqi forces had carried out more than 630 air strikes in the area over the past six months and provided training and equipment.

The US-led coalition, which includes major European and Arab powers, has been waging an air campaign against Islamic State positions in both Iraq and Syria since a third of Iraqi territory fell to the fighters in mid-2014.

The Iraqi army was humiliated in that advance, abandoning city after city and leaving fleets of American armoured vehicles and other weapons in the militants' hands. One of the main challenges of the conflict since then has been rebuilding Iraq's army into a force capable of capturing and holding territory.

Baghdad has said for months it would prove its forces' rebuilt capability by rolling back militant advances in Anbar, a mainly Sunni province encompassing the fertile Euphrates River valley from Baghdad's outskirts to the Syrian border.

After encircling the provincial capital for weeks, Iraqi forces launched an assault to retake it last week and made a final push to seize the central administration complex on Sunday. Their progress had been slowed by explosives planted in streets and booby-trapped buildings.—Reuters

## Strike that killed Syrian rebel chief complicates peace talks push: US

WASHINGTON — Russian air strikes like the one that killed a top Syrian rebel leader last week send the wrong message to groups engaged in a political dialogue to end the conflict and complicate efforts to begin negotiations, the US State Department said on Monday.

Syrian rebel chief Zahran Alloush, the leader of Jaysh al-Islam who commanded thousands of fighters in the Damascus suburbs, was killed on Friday in an air strike that rebel sources said was carried out by Russian warplanes.

Jaysh al-Islam was a participant in the Riyadh conference where Syrian opposition groups agreed on common aims for proposed political negotiations to end the country's civil war and chose a former Syrian prime minister to represent them in the dialogue. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the United States did not provide support to Alloush's group and had concerns about its "behaviour on the battlefield," but noted that Jaysh al-Islam had fought Islamic State rebels and was participating in the political di-



Zahran Alloush (C), commander of Jaysh al-Islam, sits during a conference in the town of Douma, eastern Ghouta in Damascus, Syria, in 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

alogue to end Syria's civil war.

"So the strike on Alloush and others in Jaysh al-Islam and other opposition groups do in fact complicate efforts to bring about meaningful political negotiations and a nationwide ceasefire," Toner said in response to questions at a State Department briefing. "We need progress on both these efforts in the coming weeks."

"It doesn't send the most

constructive message to carry out a strike like that," he added, noting that the United States hoped the attacks would not reverse progress toward negotiations.

Asked if Washington had raised the issue with Moscow, Toner said there had been conversations between the two sides but he was not certain whether that specific issue had been discussed directly.—Reuters

## At least 48 killed in bombings in north Nigeria

MAIDUGURI — At least 48 people were killed in suicide attacks and bombings on Monday in two cities in northern Nigeria where the jihadist Boko Haram group is waging a six-year campaign to create an Islamic state, officials and residents said.

The attacks came a day after the army fought Boko Haram militants west of Maiduguri, capital of Borno state and birthplace of their insurgency in the northeast of Africa's most populous country.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the blasts bore the hallmarks of the group, whose insurgency has killed thousands and displaced some 2.1 million people in the region.

The first blast on Monday took place at a mosque in a Maiduguri suburb where the army had exchanged fire on Sunday with suspected Boko Haram fighters who it said had tried to slip into the town to carry out suicide bombings.

Around 20 people were killed and 91 wounded, said Mohammed Kanar, a local official in the national relief agency

NEMA.

Musa Abdulkadir, a resident, said he had counted more than 50 bodies in the hospital after the blast. Medics had told him more bodies had been brought to two other hospitals. The count included victims from Sunday's fighting.

"We all fled yesterday as our houses were on fire. This morning we came back, and while we were counting the people who had burned in the houses, another bomb exploded," said Ibrahim Goni, another resident.

There was a second attack, army commander Lamidi Adeosun, told reporters, but no more details were immediately available. South of Borno in Madagali in Adamawa state two female suicide bombers blew themselves up at a crowded meat and fish market, killing many people, according to Victor Ezegwu, another army commander. At least 30 people were wounded. He gave no precise toll but Dauda John, a resident, said he had helped security agents load 28 bodies on two trucks.—Reuters

## OPINION

### How poisonous can a school lesson be?

Myint Win Thein

School lessons are generally supposed to teach children life skills and how to make progress in life by utilising lessons in logic, ethics and the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. They are taught to better the future of society as a whole based on the lessons they have learned. As a result, these lessons should set the best examples for them.

For the past decades, all Myanmar matriculation students have had to learn an article entitled “The

World of Fish Paste” which depicts the live of fish paste workers, the process of making fish paste and the nutritional values of fish paste for their Myanmar language examination. According to the article, there is no problem with fish paste, which always is the main and only dish for poor Myanmar people as it is abundantly available to them.

It is a knowledgeable article about one of Myanmar’s traditional food, which is made of salt and fish or prawn. The people of Myanmar were contented with fish paste, which is cheap and readily available, for six decades.

Nevertheless, it is made with a lot of salt. As it is fermented, it has bacteria in it. Now it is known to all that salty food causes hypertension and bacteria cause various diseases in people. As a result people no longer eat fish paste as much as they used to.

Furthermore, it costs the country a lot of spending on health and a slow pace to change. As people are contented with what is readily available for them, they do

not ask for change. Now they know that it is not as healthy as the article suggests, they demand a balanced diet which will make them healthier in the future. We ought to demand the same standards of our education system. If the information provided to students is out of date or lacks proper logical and scientific basis our children cannot hope to be the future of the nation.

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# When will Tatmataw leave Myanmar politics?

Thiha Zaw  
(Nay Pyi Taw)

Currently, domestic and international media are flooded with the result of Myanmar election, the prospect of peaceful transfer of power and the role of Tatmataw in future political landscape in Myanmar. A lot of questions are asked about the possibility of the democratic control of armed forces, the time table for the departure of delegates of Tatmataw from various legislatures. There are a lot of assumptions from home and abroad about these issues. Being a Myanmar citizen, I cannot help myself thinking and formulating the best solution that will benefit all citizens of our country.

Looking back into the history, every new political system has developed not because of divine creation but because the situation has demanded since the prevailing political system cannot provide the necessary well being of the public. For example, the industrial revolution and free market economic system had brought so many innovations and development for mankind. Industrial revolution required cheap labour for mass production and free market system required colonies to exploit basic commodities at cheap price and profitable market for their finished products. That system has brought out the issues like exploitation of labour and social injustice which was an intolerable condition for philosophers and political scientists like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Their work on Das Capital later evolved into new political system called communism which was very appealing for young nationalists under colonial rule which include politicians in Myanmar. But even before the fall of Berlin wall, many societies have lost favour for communism, and nowadays communism exist as just the name without any real essence even in countries like China, Viet

Nam and Cuba.

Looking back to Myanmar history again, democracy has taken roots since independence but it has not flourished for long enough because of the fierce ideological and ethnic conflicts leading to the world’s longest running civil war. The geopolitical power struggle at the time of Myanmar independence was very turbulent among the communist east bloc and the west bloc. Inside the east bloc the competition between Maoist China and Soviet Russia was even stronger similar to the present day conflict between Sunny and Shite sects of Islam. The leaders of Myanmar had to use full diplomatic power to stay away from those conflicts in order to protect territory integrity and sovereignty as well as to uphold the democracy under the umbrella of 5 principles of peaceful and mutual existence. But the power struggle between the leaders caused by irreconcilable personal grudges led to the division between political and civilian societies and had finally brought down the fall of democracy in Myanmar. Neighbouring countries like Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh have also fallen victim to the tsunami effect of power game among the giants leading to the replacement of civilian governments by military administrations in order to protect territory integrity and sovereignty.

It is only a matter of months before the second generation civilian government takes office in Myanmar. At this time there are a lot of worries at home and abroad about whether that government will be able to perform the nation building tasks without any interference from military. There are a lot of arguments and counter arguments about the amendment of 2008 constitution, the possibility of the departure of delegates of Tatmataw from various legislatures, democratic control of armed forces, the provision for the role of president as commander-in-chief of armed forces.

As a matter of fact, there should not be such an intense argument if everybody focus on the common interest of the well being all Myanmar citizens. The public has casted the vote with the hope of providing political freedom, stability and peace, improvement of economy and personal income by the next government. The provision of political freedom is evident from free and fair election on November 8 without any violence or boycotts which were commonly seen in many elections in countries in democratic transition. Press freedom is evident if someone has just walked in front of the roadside bookstalls. Even before the next government takes office, every Myanmar citizen can enjoy freedom of expression in accordance with the law without endangering national security and sovereignty.

Based on the historical background, geopolitical position and long standing armed conflict, the civilian government cannot work alone on the security matters. The close cooperation between civilian and military institutions is essential to the stability of the state. The same principle applies to the ethnic armed organizations. Enduring peace can only prevail when they follow the true democratic practices and leave behind the old practices of armed struggle. Provided that the enduring peace and stability is achieved after close cooperation between civilian and military institutions and ethnic armed organizations, the next government will only need to focus their work on the improvement of socioeconomic conditions of the public.

Once the enduring peace process has been set up and the decent livelihood of the public in the whole country in all states and regions has been achieved, there will no longer be questions and arguments about the role of the delegates of Tatmataw in various legislatures, control of the defence, internal security and border affairs ministry by the commander-in-chief and democratic

control of armed forces. When will that time come would be a multimillion dollar question? Once I met some influential people like Tom Malinosky, Assistant Secretary of State and General Crutchfields, Deputy Commander of Pacific Command of the United States in our National Defence College and asked them about their opinions for the possible time frame for the departure of the Tatmataw from the politics. They answered that the exact time table is just the internal matter and it is for all the people in Myanmar to formulate and decide. They added that theoretically the sooner the better. So there is quite clear that the matter is not that straight forward as many media has wanted to know so urgently?

The best solution is the next government should focus on the sectors which they can control with absolute majority within framework of 2008 constitution like education, health, social and economic sectors since there are so many opportunities to reap and so many challenges to overcome. There are many priority tasks like improvement of health care and education system to produce healthy, educated and skilled labour force, creating the business friendly environment for foreign direct investment for job creation, reform of the whole agricultural supply chain to send finished Myanmar agricultural product to the global market, revitalizing Myanmar SME and building the industrialized nation for the Myanmar products to enter the global supply chain, improvement of banking, stock exchange and other financial institutions in line with the international practice, transforming the government model from resource revenue dependent to tax dependent model by mobilizing the public to follow the responsible tax culture, fighting corruption, improvement of bureaucratic efficiency and judicial reform. The opportunities and challenges in these sectors can keep the next government very

busy over the next 5 years. So instead of wasting their precious time and energy arguing over the 2008 constitution, the elected delegates should focus on these priority tasks. Once succeeded, the impact of these Nation Building tasks can pave the way for ultimate objective of full-fledged democracy without any nonelected members being seen in the various legislatures.

As mentioned above, it is very difficult for the most learned scholars, think tanks and seasoned politicians to define the exact time table for the departure of Tatmataw from the Myanmar political landscape. We have to formulate another way in terms of numbers. According to the study from Freedom House of Washington DC, there is a direct correlation between the enduring democracy and the economic status of the country based on the annual per capita income. They define the threshold as annual per capita income of US\$ 4,000. Once a society has crossed that threshold, the possibility of democratic backsliding is very rare. So the question is “Should we set up a society with annual per capita income level of US\$ 4,000 as an intermediate objective before we go for full democratization?”

Our annual per capita income level is US\$ 1,269 at present. If the successive democratic government can steer the economy to double the annual per capita income level every 5 years, it will be US\$ 2,500 in 2020 and US\$ 5,000 in 2025. According to this estimate, the term between 2025 and 2030 would be ripe for full democratization. If a party can lead that path, I am sure the people will cast the vote for them successively every 5 years and the ultimate objective of the Myanmar people will arrive in time. According to the democratic principle, there can be different opinions about the political roadmap for Myanmar in the coming decade. Anyhow this formula is likely to be the most pragmatic and best formula for our country.



# Firewood season brings jobs to Thabeikkyin



Villagers are cutting logs on the bank of Ayeyawady River in Thabeikkyin Township. PHOTO: SOE NAING WIN (THABEIKKYIN)

THE locals of Thabeikkyin Township are seeing seasonal job opportunities in the cutting of firewood from logs.

The process involves cutting logs before they are transported

by trawlers and loaded onto boats for sale at markets in Mandalay.

“A labourer earn around K7,000 to K8,000 per day from cutting logs for firewood,” said a local. The logs are sourced from

trees grown in Thabeikkyin and Moemeik townships.

The logs are loaded at jetties at Kyarnyat and Myintha villages on the bank of Ayeyawady River in Thabeikkyin Township which

become bustling during the busy time of year.

Local people in Thabeikkyin Township mainly work agricultural jobs for their livelihood.—*Soe Naing Win (Thabeikkyin)*

## U Hla Tun Cancer Foundation to expand hospices in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay

THE U Hla Tun Cancer Foundation is planning to expand its hospice centres to Nay Pyi Taw and Taunggyi.

The foundation, which currently provides cancer patients with free medical care and aid at its two hospice centres in Yangon and Mandalay has been running since 2000. The foundation held its annual meeting in Yangon on Monday.

“So far, more than 4,950 patients had received free medical care at the two hospice centres,” said Daw Chaw Kalayar, a granddaughter of U Hla Tun.

The foundation originates from home medical care provided to cancer patients starting in October, 1998.—*Yi Yi Myint/Photo Tin Soe*

## Crime News

### Bikers feel sting of traffic law enforcement

POLICE arrested motorbike drivers found not to be wearing a helmet in Kawlin township, Sagaing region between 14 and 28 December. During the operation 35 motorbike drivers were charged under

traffic law.

The police also fined each rider K 3,000 for not wearing a helmet. The move is aimed at reducing the death from traffic accidents in the region.—*Ko Ko Nyein (Kawlin)*

### Small vehicle crashes into pony cart

FOUR people were injured in a vehicle accident that occurred in Chauk town, Magway region on Sunday.

A Toyota Carina driven by one U Khine Maung Win,55, crashed into a pony cart being driven by one U Tin Myat,51,

who had four passengers including a Daw Mya Than,78, when the driver lost control near mile post 20/7 on the Chauk – Seikphyu road. The driver is being charged with careless driving by local police.—*Police IPRD*

### Motorbike driver killed in Thazi

A MAN was killed and another injured in a motorbike accident that occurred on Sunday in Thazi township, Mandalay.

A motorbike being driven by one Chit San Maung,

22, lost control and crashed. The passenger Tin Myo Hlaing,21, was injured while the driver died at the scene. The driver was deemed guilty of careless driving by the police.—*Police IPRD*

### 10 Year Sentence Handed Down for Murder



THE Yangon Western District Court handed down a 10-year jail sentence with hard labour to a man yesterday for murdering model Aye Chan Myat Moe on 26 August, 2014.

“The sentence does not include charges of premeditation so we will lodge an appeal

against the 10 year sentence to a higher court,” said U Wunna, father of the victim. Arnt Phyto Paing, 22, received the sentence one year and five month after he stabbed the 19-year old girl to death. She was a second year student at Dagon University studying an English major.—*Ko Moe*



Arnt Phyto Paing

PHOTO: AYE CHAN MYAT MOE'S FACEBOOK.

## Saudi plans spending cuts, reforms to shrink budget deficit

RIYADH/DUBAI — Saudi Arabia, its finances hit by low oil prices, announced plans to shrink a record state budget deficit with spending cuts, reforms to energy subsidies and a drive to raise revenues from taxes and privatisation.

The 2016 budget, released by the Finance Ministry on Monday, marked the biggest shake-up to economic policy in the world's top crude exporter for over a decade, and includes politically sensitive reforms from which authorities previously shied away.

The plan suggests the kingdom is not counting on a major recovery of oil prices any time soon but is instead preparing for a multi-year period of cheap oil. The International Monetary Fund warned in October that Riyadh would run out of money within five years if it did not tighten its belt.

"Our economy has the potential to meet challenges," King Salman said in a speech, adding the 2016 budget launched a phase in which his kingdom would diversify its revenues.

The government ran a deficit of 367 billion riyals (\$97.9 billion) or 15 per cent of gross domestic product in 2015, officials said. The 2016 budget plan aims to cut that to 326 billion riyals, reducing pressure on Ri-

yadh to pay its bills by liquidating assets held abroad and issuing bonds.

Next year's budget projects spending of 840 billion riyals, down from 975 billion riyals actually spent this year. The ministry said it would review government projects to make them more efficient and ensure they were necessary and affordable.

Revenues next year are forecast at 514 billion riyals, down from 608 billion riyals in 2015, when oil revenues accounted for 73 per cent of the total. The Brent oil price averaged about \$54 a barrel this year but is now around \$37.

The success or failure of the budget plan will be key to maintaining the confidence of financial markets in Riyadh.

As the deficit has swelled, the riyal has dropped in the forwards market to its lowest since 1999 because of fears Riyadh may eventually have to abandon its peg to the US dollar.

In its budget statement, the ministry said it would adjust subsidies for water, electricity and petroleum products over five years. That is a politically sensitive step since the kingdom has traditionally kept domestic prices at some of the lowest levels in the world as a social welfare measure. —Reuters

## Cisco wins US patent dispute over wifi technology



PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Cisco Systems Inc did not infringe a patent holding company's wifi technology, a US appeals court ruled on Monday, reversing a near \$64-million judgment against the networking equipment maker in the long-running patent dispute.

After eight years of litigation that also included a trip to the US Supreme Court, the decision from the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit said Cisco was not liable for directly infringing or inducing others to infringe a patent held by Commil USA LLC on a way to help spread wireless signals over a large area, where multiple access points are needed.

Cisco General Counsel Mark Chandler said the company was gratified by the ruling. "The patent never had anything to do with our products and the millions of dollars spent defending this unmeritorious suit are a travesty," he said in an emailed statement.

Representatives for Commil could not be reached on Monday.

Texas-based Commil USA sued Cisco in 2007, shortly after buying the patent from an Israeli company, Commil Ltd, according to court documents. Cisco has called it a non-practicing entity, referring to a company that primarily makes money by licensing patents instead of making products. In 2011, a federal jury in

Texas found that Cisco induced infringement by encouraging its customers to use Cisco products that infringe Commil's patent. The jury awarded Commil almost \$63.8 million in damages. A judge subsequently added \$10.3 million in interest.

In 2013, the Washington, DC-based Federal Circuit, the nation's top appeals court specializing in patent issues, ordered a new trial, saying that Cisco should have been able to mount a defence based on its "good faith belief" that Commil's patent was invalid.

The Supreme Court in May said that defense was not legitimate, throwing out the ruling and sending the case back to the Federal Circuit.

A three-judge Federal Circuit panel on Monday again ruled in favor of San Jose, California-based Cisco.

The panel said that when it last considered the case, it did not consider some of Cisco's arguments that it did not infringe the patent. In weighing those arguments this time, the panel said that "substantial evidence did not support the jury's findings."

The case is Commil USA LLC v. Cisco Systems Inc, in the US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, No. 12-1042. —Reuters

## Samsung Pay plans to enable US online shopping in 2016

CHICAGO — Samsung Electronics Co plans to expand its fledgling mobile payment service in the United States next year, allowing users to shop online and with more smartphones that support the electronic wallet.

Lower-priced Samsung phones will likely start offering the mobile wallet "within the next year," Thomas Ko, global co-general manager of Samsung Pay, said in an interview. The service debuted in South Korea on just a handful of high-end Samsung phones, including the Galaxy Note 5, the Galaxy S6 Edge, Galaxy S6, and S6 Edge Plus.

Wider "handset availability of Samsung Pay as well as online payment support is coming soon," he said late last week.

He did not comment on which other countries Samsung Pay would expand to.

Samsung Pay has already scored a lead over its major rivals Apple and Android, by launching

its US service on 28 September with technology that is widely used at most stores. Apple Pay and Alphabet Inc's Android Pay require retailers to install new equipment.

By accepting payments online, Samsung Pay will compete with established rival PayPal Holdings Inc, as well as newcomers such as Visa Inc's Visa Checkout.

Mobile wallets have struggled to find favour in the United States, which has also been slower than Europe and Asia to adopt technologies such as credit cards embedded with microchips.

Samsung Pay is already the most widely accepted mobile wallet in the United States because it is compatible with new and older credit card terminals and do not require any special arrangements with retailers, Ko said. For instance, shoppers at Wal-Mart Stores Inc or Target Corp can pay by just waving their smartphones with the app.

By contrast, Apple Pay, launched in September 2014, requires retailers to install new equipment that supports near-field communication (NFC) compatible with its service, which has hindered wider acceptance, consultants said.

"For Samsung, moving online could be a smart move," James Wester, research director, global payments, at IDC Financial Insights, said. "It will help them build customer habit and they can benefit from that when US consumers transact in stores."

While Samsung Pay is the most widely accepted mobile wallet, customer adoption remains a hurdle because many shoppers find it is not worth the trouble to use the service when swiping a credit card is just as easy, he noted.

Samsung Pay had an average of eight transactions per US user within the first four weeks of its launch, the company said in October. — Reuters

## Snapdeal to invest in logistics to speed up delivery

MUMBAI — Online marketplace Snapdeal, backed by Japan's SoftBank Group Corp and others, will spend more on logistics and technology to better compete with Flipkart and Amazon's (AMZN.O) Indian unit, its co-founder said on Monday.

Shopping online is becoming more popular in India due to the rising use of cheaper smartphones and e-commerce firms are struggling to cope with the growing demand and make faster deliveries in different parts of the country.

The e-commerce market in India is expected to grow to \$220 billion in the value of goods sold by 2025, up from an expected \$11 billion this year, Bank of America Merrill Lynch said in a recent report.

Flush with \$500 million from a funding round in August, led by China's Alibaba (BA-BA.N), SoftBank (9984.T) and Foxconn (2317.TW), Snapdeal is now looking to expand its services.

One area Snapdeal will focus on is to cut delivery times by investing in better data analytics and demand forecasting, co-founder Rohit Bansal told Reuters. "We have done over 10 acquisitions and investments in the last one year, almost all of them in the field of technology or supply chain and payments," he said. "With all these investments we have been able to reduce our delivery times by 70 per cent in the last one year."

Quick and cheap delivery is important to be able to win over customers in a competitive industry in which companies are burning through substantial cash to grow. Snapdeal, which had \$4.5 billion in Gross Merchandise Volumes (GMV), a measure of value of goods and services sold, by August, bought mobile wallet company FreeCharge in April for around \$400 million.

It has also spent around \$35 million to buy about 50 per cent stake in logistics services company GoJavas. —Reuters

## China launches HD earth observation satellite



PHOTO: XINHUA

XICHANG — China yesterday launched its most sophisticated observation satellite, Gaofen-4, as part of the country's high-definition (HD) earth observation project.

Gaofen-4 was launched from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in the southwestern province of Sichuan at 00:04am aboard a Long March-3B carrier rocket. It was the 222th flight of the Long March rocket series, according to the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence (SASTIND).

Gaofen-4 is China's first geosynchronous orbit HD optical imaging satellite and the world's most sophisticated HD geosynchronous orbit remote sensing satellite, according to Xu Dazhe, head of SASTIND and China National Space Administration. The successful launch of Gaofen-4 was the 19<sup>th</sup>

space mission in this year. It will be used for disaster prevention and relief, surveillance of geological disasters and forest disasters, and meteorologic forecast, according to Tong Xudong, the chief designer of the Gaofen project with SASTIND. The Gaofen project aims to launch seven high-definition observation satellites before 2020.

Gaofen-1, the first satellite of the project, was launched in April 2013. Different from Gaofen-1 and Gaofen-2 in low orbits (600-700 km) around the earth, Gaofen-4 is located at the orbit 36,000 kilometres away from the earth and moves synchronously with the earth. It can "see" an oil tanker on the sea with a huge CMOS camera, reaching the best imaging level among global high-orbit remote sensing satellites, according to Li Guo, chief designer of Gaofen-4.—*Xinhua*

## Guinea declared free of Ebola virus that killed over 2,500

CONAKRY — Guinea was declared free of Ebola on Tuesday after more than 2,500 people died from the virus in the West African nation, leaving Liberia as the only country still awaiting a countdown for the end of the epidemic.

People in the capital, Conakry, greeted the declaration by authorities and the UN World Health Organisation with mixed emotions given the deaths and the damage the virus did to the economy and the country's health and education sectors.

"Several of my family are dead. This situation has shown us how much we must fight for those who are survivors," Fanta Oulen Camara, who works for Medecins Sans Frontieres Belgium (Doctors Without Borders), told Reuters.

"After I got better, the hardest thing was to make people welcome me. Most people that normally supported me abandoned me. Even the school where I was an instructor dropped me. It was very hard," said Camara, 26, who fell ill in March 2014.

Ebola has orphaned about 6,200 children in Guinea, said Rene Migliani, an official at the national coordination center for the fight against Ebola.



A health worker enters a tent in an Ebola virus treatment centre in Conakry, Guinea, on 17 November. PHOTO: REUTERS

There were more than 3,800 Ebola cases in Guinea out of more than 28,600 cases globally with 11,300 deaths, according to figures from the WHO.

Almost all the cases and deaths were in Guinea and its neighbours Liberia and Sierra Leone.

A country is declared Ebola free 42 days after the recovery or death of the final

patient and if there are no new infections.

Liberia has lost more than 4,800 people to the haemorrhagic fever, but if all goes well will be declared virus-free in January. The country was declared Ebola free in May and September, but each time new cases emerged.

Sierra Leone officially ended its epidemic in November.—*Reuters*

## Asthma rate stops climbing in some US kids



PHOTO: REUTERS

CHICAGO — Childhood asthma rates appear to have stopped rising among many US groups, but not among the poorest kids or children aged 10 and older, a study suggests.

Overall, asthma prevalence among kids under 18 had been rising for decades, until it peaked at 9.7% in 2009. Then it held steady until 2013, when it dropped to 8.3% from 9.3% the previous year, researchers reported online 28 December in the journal *Pediatrics*.

"International data on asthma prevalence over time shows that trends appear to be leveling off in many countries, and suggests that the trend in the United States seems to be following a general pattern," said lead study author Dr. Lara Akinbami of the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's National Centre for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Even though the recent decline is statistically meaningful, it's too soon to tell whether the decrease from 2012 to 2013 might be the start of another plateau or the beginning of a meaningful decline in asthma cases,

Akinbami said by email.

In addition to the scant number of years to assess a shift in asthma trends toward the end of the study period, it's also possible that changes in the way US researchers collected survey data on childhood asthma might have influenced the results.

"It also doesn't clearly identify which factors underlie changes in trends," Akinbami added. "There is likely a complex story on why asthma prevalence has apparently stopped increasing."

Part of the complexity stems from variations in rates of asthma based on age, income, region or race and ethnicity, the study found.

There was no change in asthma prevalence from 2001 to 2013 for white or Puerto Rican children or for kids living in the Northeast or West.

Over the same period, prevalence rose for kids aged 10 to 17, poor children, and residents of the South.

Disparities in asthma between white and black children stopped increasing, and Puerto Rican kids continued to have the highest prevalence.

For low-income children in particular, it's possible that environmental risk factors like tobacco exposure, poor housing and poor indoor air quality, and indoor dust mite and cockroach exposure may make asthma more likely, said Dr. Avni Joshi of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

"There is a vicious cycle of poverty and obesity which may also contribute to the risk of development and persistence of asthma," Joshi, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "In addition, children in poor households experience higher psychosocial stress, which is another risk factor for asthma."

If there's a silver lining in the study results, it's that a plateau or decrease in asthma suggests that newer medicines and more aggressive management of the disease may be making a difference, noted Dr. Todd Mahr of Gundersen Health System in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

"It appears that progress is occurring in decreasing the asthma epidemic," Mahr, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email.—*Reuters*

# Deal reached to allow stranded Cuban migrants out of Costa Rica

GUATEMALA CITY — Central American countries have agreed to a pilot programme to start allowing thousands of Cuban migrants stranded in Costa Rica to continue onward to the United States from next month, governments in the region said on Monday.

The deal, reached between officials meeting in Guatemala City, will provide flights for an undisclosed number of Cubans to El Salvador, where they will then be ferried toward Mexico by bus, Costa Rica's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The programme is due to begin during the first week in January, the governments of Guatemala and Mexico said.

Approximately 250 Cuban migrants will be flown to El Salvador initially, said Guatemalan Foreign Minister Carlos Morales.

Costa Rica's government, which stopped issuing transit visas to Cubans earlier this month, said providing shelter for the migrants has badly stretched local resources.

"The solution emerging is an absolute exception and only for those people who entered national territory legally," Costa Rica's foreign minister, Manuel Gonzalez, said.

It was not immediately clear how the migrants' travel will be paid for, but diplomats are ex-



Cuban migrants rests at a temporary shelter in the border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua in Penas Blancas, Costa Rica, on 24 December. PHOTO: REUTERS

pected to work out logistical details in upcoming meetings, the Mexican government said.

Mexico said the pilot programme will be subject to revision.

Since mid-November, the number of Cuban migrants stuck in limbo inside Costa Rica's northern border with Nicaragua has grown steadily. An estimated 8,000 Cubans are now stuck there.

The flow of migrants from the Communist-ruled island has surged as the process of a detente between Washington and Havana, announced last December, stirs fears that preferential US asylum rights for Cubans may soon end.

Migrants became stranded in Costa Rica after Nicaragua, which is a close ally of Cuba, shut its borders in November, saying that Costa Rica had sparked a

"humanitarian crisis" after Costa Rica issued transit visas to more than 1,000 Cubans.

On Sunday, Pope Francis urged the region to resolve the "humanitarian drama" in Costa Rica quickly.

Officials from Panama, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, Mexico, Costa Rica and the International Organisation for Migration took part in the talks, Guatemala said.—Reuters

## Burundi peace talks start amid divisions, protests

ENTEBBE — Burundi's government and opposition kicked off peace talks on Monday, though one senior member of the state delegation almost immediately threatened to pull out if he saw participants in a failed coup on the other side of the table. Regional powers called both sides to Uganda for discussions to end months of fighting, which began in April when President Pierre Nkurunziza's plan to seek a third term triggered street protests and, a month later, an attempted putsch.

Continued clashes and gun attacks in the central African nation have unnerved a region where memories of the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda are still raw. There has also been no sign of a rapprochement between the government and opposition groups who say Nkurunziza's re-election bid broke constitutional term limits and a peace deal that ended a decade-long civil war in 2005.

Nkurunziza, who went on to win a disputed vote in July, points to a court ruling allowing a third term. The ruling CNDD-FDD party "can't be part of the talks if those who took part of the failed coup are involved," Victor Burikukiye, a member of the ruling party delegation, said as the talks opened. It was not immediately clear who would participate from the opposition. The African Union said this month it was ready to send 5,000 peacekeepers to protect civilians in Burundi, something the government has rejected as a violation of its sovereignty. More than a hundred Nkurunziza supporters gathered at the Rwandan, Belgian and European Union embassies in the Burundian capital Bujumbura to protest against the plan. Monday's talks in Uganda drew Burundian government and opposition delegations, representatives from the African Union and the United Nations, and Western diplomats. The next phase of the talks will be held at the headquarters of the East African Community bloc in Arusha, Tanzania. "I appeal to you... to sit down and have a political solution so that you save your people from that suffering which they're going through now," Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni said as he opened the session. International monitors say they fear Burundi could be headed to civil war. The United Nations estimates 400 people have already been killed. More than 220,000 people have fled Burundi since April, and Rwanda, which has similar ethnic faultlines, says more than 73,000 Burundians are now on its soil.—Reuters

## Pentagon thwarts Obama's effort to close Guantanamo

WASHINGTON — In September, US State Department officials invited a foreign delegation to the Guantanamo Bay detention centre to persuade the group to take detainee Tariq Ba Odah to their country. If they succeeded, the transfer would mark a small step toward realizing President Barack Obama's goal of closing the prison before he leaves office.

The foreign officials told the administration they would first need to review Ba Odah's medical records, according to US officials

with knowledge of the episode. The Yemeni has been on a hunger strike for seven years, dropping to 74 pounds from 148, and the foreign officials wanted to make sure they could care for him.

For the next six weeks, Pentagon officials declined to release the records, citing patient privacy concerns, according to the US officials. The delegation, from a country administration officials declined to identify, canceled its visit. After the administration promised to deliver the records, the delegation traveled

to Guantanamo and appeared set to take the prisoner off US hands, the officials said. The Pentagon again withheld Ba Odah's full medical file.

Today, nearly 14 years since he was placed in the prison and five years since he was cleared for release by US military, intelligence and diplomatic officials, Ba Odah remains in Guantanamo.

In interviews with multiple current and former administration officials involved in the effort to close Guantanamo, Reuters found that the struggle over Ba Odah's medical records was part of a pattern. Since Obama took office in 2009, these people said, Pentagon officials have been throwing up bureaucratic obstacles to thwart the president's plan to close Guantanamo. Negotiating prisoner releases with the Pentagon was like "punching a pillow," said James Dobbins, the State Department special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan from 2013 to 2014. Defence Department officials "would come to a meeting, they would not make a counter-argument," he said. "And then nothing would happen."

Pentagon delays, he said, resulted in four Afghan detainees spending an additional four years

in Guantanamo after being approved for transfer.

In other cases, the transfers of six prisoners to Uruguay, five to Kazakhstan, one to Mauritania and one to Britain were delayed for months or years by Pentagon resistance or inaction, officials said.

To slow prisoner transfers, Pentagon officials have refused to provide photographs, complete medical records and other basic documentation to foreign governments willing to take detainees, administration officials said. They have made it increasingly difficult for foreign delegations to visit Guantanamo, limited the time foreign officials can interview detainees and barred delegations from spending the night at Guantanamo.

Partly as a result of the Pentagon's maneuvers, it is increasingly doubtful that Obama will fulfill a pledge he made in the 2008 presidential election: to close the detention center at the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Obama criticized President George W. Bush for having set up the prison for foreigners seized in the "War on Terror" after the 11 September, 2001, attacks on the US, and then keeping them there for years without trial.—Reuters



Detainees are seen inside the Camp 6 detention facility at Guantanamo Bay US Naval Base in Cuba in 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

# Uranium prices set to march higher as climate deal boosts nuclear

LONDON — Uranium prices are expected to outperform other commodities in 2016 and beyond as a global climate change deal and growing demand from Asia bolster the prospects of the nuclear industry.

The metal that powers nuclear reactors has been gradually recovering from a sharp decline in the wake of Japan's Fukushima disaster in 2011, and has gained this year as several other commodities slumped due to oversupply and concerns about Chinese economic growth and US monetary tightening.

It is expected to climb further, according to analysts, after governments forged a landmark agreement to reduce green gas emissions at a global climate summit in Paris last month — a move that supports nuclear power generation and in turn uranium.

Nuclear power stations currently provide around 11 per cent of the world's electricity but the share is likely to increase as China and India expand their capabilities.

China — seeking to re-



The Tamgak open air uranium mine is seen at Areva's Somair uranium mining facility in Arlit. PHOTO: REUTERS

duce its dependence on polluting coal — plans to build six to eight nuclear power plants a year for the next five years, and India aims to generate 25 per cent of its electricity from nuclear by 2050, up from 4 per cent in 2013.

Meanwhile Japan is re-starting four reactors, which may accelerate the country's return to atomic energy.

“The China boom is only now happening and while ‘nuclear’ might still be a toxic word, nuclear pow-

er generation is recovering towards pre-Fukushima levels,” said Macquarie analyst Stefan Ljubisavljevic.

“It might not be popular, but it does provide the clean and consistent base-load power generation that

many nations are seeking.”

Prospects of higher demand and strategic stockpiling from US utilities sent spot prices to an average of \$39 a pound in 2015, up 18 per cent from \$33 last year, making it the best-perform-

ing metal of the year and one of the few commodities to post a yearly increase.

Crude oil, the most traded commodity by far, lost 35 per cent of its value this year, while benchmark base metal copper fell 26 per cent and gold dropped 9.4 per cent. Cocoa bucked the trend, with a 12-per cent rise.

Both Bank of America-Merrill Lynch (BofA-ML) and BMO Capital forecast uranium prices will rise to test \$60 a pound by 2018.

Kazakhstan, the world's biggest uranium producer, has just signed cooperation agreements with Chinese companies to build a nuclear fuel plant in the central Asian country, while Canada's Cameco, the world's largest listed uranium mining company, signed a five-year deal in April to supply fuel to Indian nuclear reactors.

BofA-ML analyst Oscar Cabrera said he expected uranium prices to continue to advance after 2018, thanks to the increasing demand from emerging markets China and India.—Reuters

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (429N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (429N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING  
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

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MV SINAR BIAK VOY NO (454N)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BIAK VOY NO (454N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
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AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING  
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

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MV TU SON VOY NO (07/15)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV TU SON VOY NO (07/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-3 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S RK SHIPPING & TRADING  
PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

## CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV HUA YU-1 VOY NO (1512)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HUA YU-1 VOY NO (1512) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.12.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W-5 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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## Motorhead frontman, bassist 'Lemmy' died at 70

CHICAGO — Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister, the hard-living, hell-raising frontman for British heavy metal band Motorhead, has died at age 70 after recently being diagnosed with an aggressive cancer, the band said on its Facebook page on Monday.

On stage with Motorhead, the bassist and vocalist was famed for turning his amplifiers up to the max, and tilting his face, dotted with moles and framed by muttonchops, up to the sky. He growled into his raised microphone with a throat he said he fed for decades with a bottle of Jack Daniel's whiskey.

"You know I'm born to lose, and gambling's for fools, but that's the way I like it baby, I don't wanna live forever," went his signature song, the 1980s anthem "Ace of Spades." The hard living — including years of amphetamine use — had taken its toll and Lemmy struggled with a number of health issues in recent years.

In 2013, the band canceled European summer festival appearances after he reportedly suffered a hematoma, and he told Rolling Stone magazine in 2014 he had seriously cut back on his drinking and smoking.

"We cannot begin to express our shock and sadness, there aren't words," Motorhead said in its Facebook posting about Lemmy's death. "We will say more in the coming days, but for now, please...play Motörhead



Ian Fraser "Lemmy" Kilmister of Motorhead performs on the Pyramid stage during the Glastonbury Festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset, Britain, on 26 June 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

loud, play Hawkwind loud, play Lemmy's music LOUD. Have a drink or few."

After cutting his teeth in beat bands in the 1960s, he spent time as a roadie for Jimi Hendrix before his first taste of stardom with British space rockers Hawkwind, singing the band's biggest hit, biker anthem Silver Machine, in 1972.

During his stint in the band, Lemmy's pummeling bass lines became a stock-in-trade and provided the backbone of the ear-splitting Motorhead, which he formed in 1975 after being thrown out of Hawkwind following a drug bust in Canada.

After a bumpy start and early lineup changes, the trio of

Lemmy, guitarist "Fast" Eddie Clarke and drummer Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor, tore through a string of albums that fed off the energy of punk rock and helped inspire thrash metal.

Between early 1979 and late 1980, "Overkill," "Bomber" and "Ace of Spades" sent the band racing toward the upper reaches of the British album charts. In 1981, Motorhead finally hit No. 1 with its live classic, "No Sleep 'til Hammersmith."

Lemmy, who was born in England in 1945, lived in Los Angeles, near the Sunset Strip, for decades and was controversial for his collection of Nazi memorabilia. Motorhead recorded 22 studio albums.—Reuters

## Can't sing classical songs, I like to rap: Sonakshi

MUMBAI — Actress Sonakshi Sinha says she will not be able to sing classical songs as her voice suits hip-hop and rap numbers.

"I know I won't be able to sing all kind of songs. I won't be able to sing classical song that has 'nazakat, harkat', as I am not a trained person," Sonakshi told PTI.

The single "Aaj Mood Ishqolic Hai", released last week by T-Series, showcases Sonakshi's rapping skills. The song has music by Meet Bros and lyrics of Kumar.

"There is one genre that suits me, my voice. I like to rap... Rapping is something I enjoy, that comes easier to me. There was trial and error but we did it. I want to sing more," she said.

The "Lootera" actress says she will continue singing songs in hip-hop and rap style as that are her forte.

"May be there will be little deviation. It will be songs that I will be able to sing. I will be true to myself, I will not try and deviate and do something else. This is something I like, take it or leave it," she said.

The actress says singing was always her passion and she wanted to learn it formally as well.

"I was always passionate about it. When any new song used to come...I used to get the set up of a music system, get mike, would download and learn the lyrics. It was always easy for me to grasp music than grasp stuff from my textbook," she said.

"My mother even got me a teacher...He came home. He gave me one lesson and after that he did not come back. So, my dream of learning it remained unfulfilled," she said.

Sonakshi earlier rocked the stage of International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Weekend and Awards by singing.

"During 'Lootera', I told Vikramaditya Motwane to let me sing a song but he did not. I performed and sang on stage for IIFA, I enjoyed it. This time I felt I need to do something about it (singing)," she said.—PTI



Sonakshi Sinha. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Mel B teases Spice Girls reunion on 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

LOS ANGELES — Music personality and former member of Spice Girls has once again teased fans about the reunion on bands.

The British girl group, that will be celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anni-

versary is planning something special for the occasion, said The Hollywood Reporter.

"Hopefully something will be happening pretty soon ... I can't tell you what it is yet," Mel B said.

In November, the 40-year-old singer said, "Once we sort everything out we make an announcement, but right now we're just figuring it all out. Next year is your 20 anniversary so we're really just trying to

make sure something happens."

The Spice Girls' last reunion tour happened in 2007, and they last performed together at the closing ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics.—PTI



Spice Girls. PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Game of Thrones' leads list of most pirated TV shows

LOS ANGELES — One of the most watched shows, "Game of Thrones" has topped the list of most pirated TV show in 2015.

The HBO show, which has taken the top slot since 2012, was followed by "The Walking Dead" and "The Big Bang Theory" in the number two and three slots respectively, reported Aceso.biz.

The fifth season finale of the medieval drama was illegally downloaded 14.4 million times, according to the piracy tracking site TorrentFreak.

The channel had actually taken actions to reduce piracy of the show this year by airing episodes of season five on the same date worldwide.

"Arrow" is the fourth most pirated show, while "The Flash" rounds out the top five.—PTI

# Chilled delivery services boost fresh foods exports from Japan

TOKYO — Japanese exports of farm and marine products are growing on an unprecedented scale, thanks in part to the expanded use of refrigerated delivery services, which ensure that fresh foods are delivered promptly and at their seasonal best.

The trend is only likely to gather momentum given the growing popularity and higher profile of Japanese cuisine due to its listing as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2013 and as more foreign tourists visit Japan and acquire a taste for Japanese dishes.

A recent report by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries indicated that the value of Japan's farm, forestry and marine product exports is certain to hit a record high this year.

It said the preliminary value of the country's exports between January and October was 602.9 billion yen (\$4.94 billion), up 23.2 per cent from the year before, putting it on track to eclipse the previous record of 611.7 billion yen, set in 2014.

With demand for Japanese products growing, Yamato Transport Co., the top-ranked door-to-door

parcel delivery service provider, hopes that its service offering temperature and humidity control will help boost food exports.

Japanese cuisine favours the consumption of various natural, locally sourced ingredients such as fish, vegetables and edible wild plants.

"We hope to play a role in enhancing competitiveness among Japanese producers and expanding their business scope," said Katsuhiko Umetsu, head of Yamato's global business division.

Since beginning a chilled delivery service to Hong Kong from October 2013, Yamato's service now covers Singapore and Taiwan. The fastest deliveries arrive the following day.

"Japanese people put great emphasis on 'shun' — when farm and marine products are at their seasonal best. Producers want their products to be consumed at the prime season and we want to respond to that request through our chilled delivery service," said Umetsu.

Beginning last year, Yamato signed agreements with Miyazaki, Kumamoto, Ehime and Aomori prefectures to help the local gov-



Crabs taken from seas off Akkeshi, Hokkaido Prefecture, that are exported by the Akkeshi fisheries cooperative. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

ernments' efforts to accelerate exports of local farm and marine products and to expand their sales network.

Under the agreements, Yamato will also help with documentation and clearing quarantine and customs procedures, while allowing producers the convenience to send all their produce in one package.

"With the widespread use of e-commerce, the voices of consumers will become much more important," Umetsu said. "We

need to meet the demands of customers who have a particular preference, such as for this strawberry from that prefecture, even if that demand itself may not be huge."

These growing voices of consumers may eventually lead to bigger business, such as from restaurants, Yamato said.

Masahito Kawano, who has operated the "Genki Ippai" izakaya restaurant in Hong Kong for nearly 15 years, said he imports

Japanese fish, beef as well as vegetables and seaweed only grown in Japan such as "mitsuba," Japanese honewort.

"I must depend on imports from Japan as some foods here are not as tasty, fresh or high quality as those in Japan," said Kawano. "Vegetables and meat grown with Japanese technology are really very good. They are popular with the local people here, and I want to further promote Japanese foods."

One of the attractive features of Japanese produce is the huge variety, with each of the 47 prefectures having its own regional characteristics.

For instance, there are at least 13 kinds of strawberries across five prefectures, according to research conducted by Agriculture & Livestock Industries Corp. in 2014.

"I hope Japan's products will become more popular through their quality, safety and variety," Umetsu said.

Japan Post Co., a mail delivery unit of the state-owned Japan Post Holdings Co, has also started overseas delivery of chilled and frozen foods.

Demand for such ser-

vices could also grow as Japan, the United States and 10 other countries in October reached a broad agreement on a free trade deal, which will certainly affect Japan's agricultural sector.

While the Trans-Pacific Partnership could mean Japan will be flooded with cheap farm products from abroad and further weaken Japan's agriculture sector by exposing it to tougher competition, some view this as a good opportunity to strengthen the sector by expanding exports.

A fisheries cooperative in Akkeshi in Japan's northernmost island prefecture of Hokkaido hopes to increase exports of its famous oysters and hair crabs following the TPP agreement.

From November, the cooperative started a new service to deliver its marine products to the homes of foreign tourists.

"Visits by foreign tourists are increasing, but until now, they could not enjoy our marine products at home. I hope the delivery service will be helpful to them," said Hideo Furo-moto, head of a direct sales shop of the Akkeshi fisheries cooperative.—Kyodo News

## mitv Myanmar International

(30-12-2015 07:00 am~ 31-12-2015 07:00 am) MST

### Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	A Lucky Boy
07:43	Am	A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-2)
07:54	Am	Kyauk Phyu Township
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Reflected Glory
08:49	Am	Mt. Naw Bu Baw
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	Local Tour Guide: Pho Khant
09:39	Am	A Star for Great Achievement
09:49	Am	Kyeik Paw Law Pagoda
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Myanmar Charitable Labour Association
10:40	Am	Family of Toys

(11:00 Am ~ 03:00 Pm) - Tuesday 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	An Oasis Trip to Mt. Popa
07:55	Pm	Scented Buddha Images
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Myanmar Traditional Identity (EP- 3) The Sphinx Of Egypt And The Manousiha Of Myanmar
08:40	Pm	Great Minds of Myanmar (Anthropologist U Kyaw Win)
08:47	Pm	Director: Kyi Phyu Shin

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

## MRTV Entertainment Channel

(30-12-2015, Wednesday)

6:15 am	• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
6:40 am	• Fashion Show
7:00 am	• TV Drama Series
7:50 am	• TV Drama Series
8:35 am	• Musical Programme
8:45 am	• Catch Asia News (Part-23)
9:00 am	• Pyi Thu Ni Ti
9:20 am	• Musical Programme
9:35 am	• Myanmar-Japan Symphony Orchestra (Beethoven)
10:00 am	• Myanmar Movie (Black & White)
12:00 noon	• Close Down

## 'Extreme cold' draws tourists to Inner Mongolia

GENHE — A festival to enjoy "extreme cold" was held recently in Genha in China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, where the mercury is said to have

dropped to 58 degrees below zero.

A tourist said he had gone out in the evening wearing several layers of down jackets, "but I returned to the hotel as I

could not stand even one minute."

Local authorities are now trying to attract more tourists by appealing to the extreme cold.—Kyodo News

## MRTV News Channel

(30-12-2015, Wednesday)

6:00 am	• Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	11:15 am	• Documentary	5:15 pm	• People's Talks
7:35 am	• Money Talk Myanmar	11:35 am	• MRTV's Youth Programme	5:45 pm	• Documentary
8:35 am	• People's Talks	12:50 pm	• TV Drama Series	6:35 pm	• Real Story Real Movie
8:45 am	• Documentary	1:30 pm	• TV Drama Series	7:15 pm	• TV Drama Series
9:35 am	• Science and Technology Programme	2:35 pm	• Myanmar Traditional Boxing	8:00 pm	• News/International News/Weather Report
10:35 am	• Meet The Successful	3:35 pm	• Money Talk Myanmar	8:35 pm	• Documentary
				8:50 pm	• Documentary
				9:00 pm	• News
					• TV Drama Series
					• Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance
					• Channel Zero (Part-7)

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

# MFF will construct Football Academy Building



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe kicks off the ball at the opening ceremony of MFF U-14 Boys 100 Plus Super Cup 2015 tournament at Thuwunna Football Stadium on 29 December. PHOTO: MNA

MYANMAR Football Federation held a ground-breaking ceremony yesterday to build a football academy at Thuwunna Football Stadium, Thingangyun Township in Yangon.

At the ceremony, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and his wife Daw Khin Thet Htay and the officials sprinkled scented water on a wedge driven to mark the ground breaking.

U Myint Swe, Chief Minister of Yangon Region delivered the opening speech and U Zaw Zaw, Chairman of the Myanmar Football Federation presented 500 footballs to schools inside the Region.

The building will include the lecture halls, dining hall, training grounds as well as canteens, physical exercise halls besides a swimming pool. In ad-

dition, the dormitory for players will be built within the building. It will be 247 feet long, 49 feet wide and will be built at a cost of US\$ 784,794, funded by Myanmar Football Federation.

And then Myanmar Football Federation held the competition of MFF U-14 Boys 100 Plus Super Cup 2015 and U Zaw Zaw addressed at the opening match, while Daw Khin Thet Htay, Patron of Myanmar Women's National Football Team presented the donations of K 3 million (US\$ 2,300) to participants.

Mandalay Academy (A) Team and Ayeyawaddy Academy Team took their respective places in the football ground and Chief Minister U Myint Swe kicked off the ball. The tournament will be held until 31 December.—MNA

# Improved United draw with Chelsea, Arsenal go top

LONDON — Manchester United's winless run continued but they gave under-fire coach Louis van Gaal crumbs of cheer with a committed display in an entertaining 0-0 draw with Chelsea while Arsenal went top of the table on Monday.

Arsenal beat Bournemouth 2-0 with goals from Gabriel and Mesut Ozil to move on to 39 points from 19 Premier League games, one ahead of Leicester City who are at home to Manchester City, in fourth, on Tuesday.

Dutchman Van Gaal, whose tenure in the Old Trafford hot seat is under intense scrutiny after a Champions League exit and three successive league defeats, was afforded a warm reception by fans who have been critical of his team's lack of flair.

Van Gaal hinted after a 2-0 defeat at Stoke City on Saturday that he could walk away but, after a performance of attacking intent against Chelsea, he said he would not quit.

"No reason to resign for me, maybe the media want that but I shall not do that," he told BT Sport. "You have seen they (the players) are fighting for me."

"Even after this result they (the fans) were applauding. I have full confidence in the board and more importantly, in my players."

United, now eight games without a win in all competitions, struck the woodwork twice in the opening 16 minutes. Juan Mata rattled the crossbar with a fierce left-footed effort and Anthony Martial drilled the ball against the post.

But it was not all one-way traffic. Keeper David De Gea kept out John Terry's powerful header and made a fine double save to deny Pedro and Cesar Azpilicueta

at the start of the second half.

Opposite number Thibaut Courtois then somehow kept out Ander Herrera's close-range shot.

Chelsea, playing their second game under interim manager Guus Hiddink after Jose Mourinho's sacking, wasted the game's best opportunity when Nemanja Matic raced clean through before blazing the ball wildly over.

Wayne Rooney might have won it late on but skied the ball over to leave United in sixth spot on 30 points.

Champions Chelsea, who were minus the suspended Diego Costa and played without a recognised striker, are 14<sup>th</sup> with 20 points.

Van Gaal bemoaned United's luck in front of goal. "It was a very good performance but you have to score ... we don't have the luck we need," he said. "We were the dominant team." The draw left Hiddink reasonably content.

"On one hand I am happy with a point because we had a difficult game but, on the other, we had two big chances to get three points. In general I'm happy," said the Dutchman. Arsenal, thrashed 4-0 at Southampton on Saturday, got back to winning ways by seeing off Bournemouth at The Emirates. Ozil set up centre back Gabriel for the opening goal on 27 minutes, his first for the club, and scored the second after the break

by sidefooting home Olivier Giroud's flicked pass. Tottenham Hotspur rose to third after Son Heung-Min netted a late goal in a 2-1 victory at 10-man Watford. Spurs went ahead through Erik Lamela at Vicarage Road. In-form Odion Ighalo levelled with his 14<sup>th</sup> league goal of the season before South Korean Son flicked the ball past former Tottenham keeper Heurelho Gomes in the final minute.

Everton and Stoke served up a seven-goal thriller at Goodison Park as the away side came from 3-2 down in the last 10 minutes to win 4-3 with goals from Joselu and Marko Arnautovic's stoppage-time penalty.

Romelu Lukaku's double

for Everton moved him level with Leicester's Jamie Vardy at the top of the scoring charts on 15 goals while Stoke's record signing Xherdan Shaqiri struck his first two goals for the club.

Substitute Andy Carroll's 79<sup>th</sup>-minute winner lifted West Ham United to seventh with a 2-1 victory over Southampton while Darren Fletcher's goal for West Bromwich Albion was enough to beat struggling Newcastle United 1-0.

Aston Villa's miserable season continued with the bottom club, marooned on eight points, going down 2-0 at Norwich City. Crystal Palace and Swansea City drew 0-0.—Reuters



Chelsea's Kurt Zouma and Manchester Wayne Rooney during Barclays Premier League at Old Trafford on 28 December. PHOTO: REUTERS