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# STREAMLING THE VOTES

## UEC to issue voting tickets to voters ahead of election

Aye Min Soe

THE Union Election Commission announced that it will issue polling tickets to voters to be certified as eligible before election day on 8 November in accordance with the Election Law.

Voters can get their tickets at ward or village sub-election commission posts from 1 to 7 November.

Eligible voters will also be able to cast their ballots on election day without tickets, according to a statement issued on Thursday.

On 19 October, the Shan Nationalities Democratic Party (SNDP) requested that the UEC suspend the election in three townships – Mongshu, Kyaythee and Tangyang– in eastern Shan State due to conflict between the Tatmadaw and local armed ethnic groups.

A follow-up letter from the SNDP, signed by the party's general secretary Sai Hla Kyaw, requested that the UEC resume the election in the three townships once stability had been restored.

Locals said that they did not believe the election would be a free election in their areas, as they are currently displaced by the fighting.

About 790 overseas citizens cast advance votes on Wednesday.



A woman cast advance vote at Myanmar embassy in Canberra, Australia. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Advance voting abroad began on 13 October. The total number of overseas voters up to 21 October reached 22,187.

Polling stations have been established at Myanmar embassies and consulates around

the world.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent ballots to the country's 44 foreign embassies to offer more than 29,000 people deemed eligible to vote by the UEC the means to do so.

The UEC requested that organisations involved in the election cooperate with them in the spirit of fairness and political freedom in the upcoming election.

Advance voting in Myan-

mar will run from 29 October to 7 November, and those eligible to cast advance votes from inside Myanmar include political candidates, local observers, media personnel and departmental officials.

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## MPs more focused on projects than laws: report

Ye Myint

A RESEARCH paper launched on Wednesday on Local Development Funds (LDFs) has identified a number of concerns regarding the implementation of funds in Myanmar, which are over-shadowing the primary duty of lawmakers.

Parliamentarians have become too focused on the implementation of their CDF projects and are investing less effort in their

main duty of passing laws, said Ms Cindy Joelene of The Myanmar Development Resource Institute's Centre for Economic and Social Development (MDRI-CESD), which is an independent think tank.

She made the remarks during the launch of the report at the Novotel Hotel in Yangon on Wednesday.

Ms Joelene said that the roles and responsibilities of members of the legislative and executive bodies involved in implementing

the fund's projects are unclear.

"As the work of committees formed for project implementation appears to overlap with that of departments concerned engaged in public works, the capacity of ministries and departments is eroded in the long term."

Another concern, she said, was a possible scenario in which funds could be misappropriated and used for political gain, as well as creating a pervasive mindset of 'clientelism' in Myan-

mar politics.

With the aim of supporting the construction and maintenance of small-scale infrastructure and other development projects, the Constituency Development Fund made its debut in Myanmar in 2013-14 financial year.

The fund has a total amount of K33 billion (US\$2.57 million), which is shared equally among Myanmar's 330 townships, which amounts to K100 million (\$78,100) per township.

## Car parking areas marked in busy Myawady

CAR parking areas have been designated on traffic-congested Bayintnaung Road in Myawady, Kayin State, on 16 October, according to the township's traffic rules supervision committee.

The two parking areas extend from the traffic-heavy Friendship Bridge to the District Development Office and

from Chetkyang Junction to Kyakhattaw Monastery. The parking areas are expected to improve traffic flow.

Myawady is home to Myanmar's second largest border trading facility, leading to rapid urbanisation and traffic congestion. The township is located on the border with Thailand.—*Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)*



Workers painted lines on a road to mark car parking area in Myawady. PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD).

## Climate change affects crop patterns in Nay Pyi Taw

AGRICULTURE Department representatives are pushing for the cultivation of winter crops such as green gram and sesame rather than summer paddies.

The most recent wet season brought little rain to the area, according to U Myo Naing of the Zeya Thiri Township Agriculture Department in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

In their discussions with farmers in the township on Wednesday, representatives of the department pledged assistance to farmers struggling to

grow winter crops. Most farmers in the area are reliant on water supplied from the Yezin Dam, which received just 51 centimetres of rain this year rather than the expected 127 centimetres.

Had the dam received the expected rainfall, it could have supplied water to around 4,000 acres of summer paddy.

Farmers have been advised to change their crop patterns this year in light of the meagre rainfall, which is a result of climate change, said U Myo Naing.—*Ko Pauk*



Farmers asked assistance from officials of the Agricultural Department to grow winter crops as they are threatened by climate change. PHOTO: KO PAUK

## Safety comes first in oilfields: energy minister

SAFETY procedures at oilfields and refineries across Myanmar are to be upgraded, while oilfield workers have been instructed to channel their energy into increasing overall quality and efficiency.

Production at the Chauk oilfield had stalled for some time, but it is now up and running again, said Union Minister of Energy U Zeyar Aung in a meeting with workers at No. 1 Fertilizer Factory in Sale on 19 October. He also signalled the need to maintain an excellent standard of production at the site and warned against the threat of sabotage.

While visiting the Chauk oilfield hospital, the union minister pledged financial assistance from

the ministry's corporate social responsibility fund.

The union minister later visited the Yenanchaung oilfield, Magway Myanmar Telecommunications, Mann oilfield and the Htauksharbin oilfield and petrol chemical factory.

Though there may be a change of government every five years, the union minister said, government staff should not engage in party politics but should serve the interests of the country.

Vote for the candidate who displays a great ability to lead the country, he said. U Zeyar Aung is also the minister of communications and information technology.—*Ministry of Energy*



Union Minister for Energy U Zeyar Aung. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF ENERGY

## Road section between Taungtha and Kyaukpadaung repaired

A ROAD section between Taungtha and Kyaukpadaung is being repaired by six contract-winning companies.

The section of the Yan-gon-Pyay-Mandalay road is 24

kilometres long and is being extended from 3.7 metres wide to 5.5 metres wide.

The upgraded road will feature 15 conduit pipes, each measuring 12 metres long and 1.5 metres

U Myint Thin Aung, director of the Myingyan District Administration Office, assisted in the road construction on 17 October.—*U Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)*

## Boom and bust in broom business



Villagers have earned a good income from broom business in Thayetpin Village, Pobbathiri Township.

PHOTO: TIN SOE LWIN

BROOM makers in Thayetpin village, Pobbathiri Township, in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, saw a boom in business during this February. Heightened demand for brooms have required six full-

time workers to keep up with orders every day that month.

A bundle of metre-long broom handles sells for K8,000.

After March, however, the broom business face difficulty be-

cause of a scarcity of raw materials and labourers. Customers' orders have come from the surrounding area as well as from Meiktila and Myingyan townships in central Myanmar.—*Tin Soe Lwin*

## Automobile Law explained in Nay Pyi Taw

OFFICIALS from the Road Transport Department and Nay Pyi Taw All Bus Lines Control Committee convened on 20 October at the Bawgathiri bus terminal in Nay Pyi Taw to car drivers the new Automobile Law to bus

drivers and their assistants.

The law, passed on 7 September, introduces several new road rules.

The officials clarified the details of the law and its by laws using video clips and

shared their experiences.

The drivers and their assistants were able to ask questions during the education session, and they received free copies of the Automobile Law.—*U Aung Ko Ko (IPRD)*

# President delivers speech at opening of Ayeyawady Bridge



President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo together with dignitaries and local people at opening of Ayeyawady Bridge (Htigyaing). PHOTO: MNA

**AYEYAWADY** Bridge (Htigyaing) was officially opened by President U Thein Sein on Thursday.

The president sprinkled scented water over the stone plaque at the bridge during the inauguration ceremony.

Also present were Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, union ministers, the chief minister of the region, deputy ministers and Hluttaw representatives.

Chief Minister U Thar Aye said in his speech that the 7,730-

foot bridge took just over five years to construct, which made it one of the fastest projects over the Ayeyawady Region. Construction cost a total of K56 billion.

A town elder thanked the government for the bridge, which will drastically improve the mobility of local communities. The president also said that the bridge is evidence of Myanmar's successful transition to democracy, as peace and stability allows concrete progress to be made. He said the benefits of reforms stretch into every strata of life,

including economics and administrative matters.

He also said that the recent signing of the nationwide ceasefire agreement will deliver many benefits to Myanmar people, and that the upcoming general election of 8 November represents another historic milestone for the country.

The president said that the government has replaced a heavily centralized systems with a people-centred approach on the administrative front and that the government will cooperate with the Union Election Commis-

sion to hold the general election, which will be observed by the international community and held in a free and fair manner. The president urged the public to cooperate in holding a free and fair elections.

The president and the senior general later proceeded to Mogok by helicopter, where he inspected Le-in (Mongkwin) project, and continued to Shwebo to inspect the maintenance of Maha Nandar Lake.

The president then paid homage to Maha Aungmyay Hsutaungpyay Pagoda and donat-

ed cash. Afterward, the president and party paid homage to monks at Maha Aungmyay Monastery and presented offerings to the monks.

The president and the senior general left Shwebo for Pyin Oo Lwin by helicopter.

Earlier in the morning, the president and the senior general inspected the construction of walls for prevention of water erosion in Katha and paid homage to monks at Dhamma Pala Priyati Monastery before discussing regional development tasks.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Myanmar, China move to promote trade ties

MYANMAR and China held a forum at the Park Royal Hotel in Yangon yesterday morning aimed at promoting trade and investment between the two countries.

During the forum, business representatives discussed

opportunities for investment in foodstuffs, agriculture, mining, hydropower projects, real estate and ports.

China is Myanmar's largest foreign investor, according to the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and In-

dustry (UMFCCI). Myanmar has entered 18 memoranda of understanding with Chinese business organisations.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation (OCBC) recently opened offices in Myanmar in an effort to encourage Chinese investors.

Chinese investors expressed hope that the Myanmar government's commitment to political, economic and administrative reforms would further encourage investment.—*Myat Sandi*

## Tourists cruise along Ayeyawady River

TOURISTS from Switzerland went took a cruise on RV Thurgau Exotic along the Ayeyawady River on 29 September, according to the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism.

Upland Travels & Tours Co. Ltd organised the cruise along the river, with 18 tourists visiting famous sites such as Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Bagan. They exited Myanmar via Yangon on 14 October.

Similarly, 42 Australian

tourists went took RV Sriksetra along the Ayeyawady River on 22 September, visiting several places along the river. They left the country via Mandalay on 29 September. The trip was conducted by Interconnection Travels & Tours Co. Ltd, which also brought 35 Australians on the same cruise along the river on 2 September.

The winter months are Myanmar's high tourist season.—

*Myanmar News Agency*



PHOTO: YE HTUT

**ELECTION COUNTDOWN**  
Make your voice count. Cast your vote.

**16** DAYS

## 1<sup>st</sup> Inauguration of Japan's Yen Loan Project for Rural Development in Taunggyi

ON 22 October 2015, the 1<sup>st</sup> ceremony of inauguration of the Yen Loan Projects for Local Infrastructure Development took place in Taunggyi, Shan State.

The Government of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have been engaged in development of key local infrastructure and poverty reduction of Myanmar, following the bilateral agreement signed on 26 May 2013, when His Excellency Mr. ABE, Prime Minister of Japan made his 1<sup>st</sup> official visit to Myanmar. This ODA Loan Project amounts to JPY 17 billion (approximately USD 170 million) and is the 1<sup>st</sup> package of Japan's ODA Loan Projects to Myanmar.

The project aims to newly build and rehabilitate basic infrastructure, namely roads, electricity, water supply, in every region and state. 65 sub-projects are in progress and expected to be completed soon in each region and state.

In Taunggyi, local residents and distinguished guests represented by His Excellency U Saut Aung Myat, Chief Minister of Shan State and His Excellency U Sai Hla Win, Minister of Shan State Development Committee, celebrated the newly built water treatment center in Nar Yaung. Mr. FUJIKAWA, second secretary of the Embassy of Japan and Mr. TOKUSHIGE, JICA staff joined to the ceremony. Thanks to this sub-project for water extension of Taunggyi City, the number of households having access to water supply will be doubled to 5,126.

The Government of Japan is willing to further contribute to the poverty reduction and improvement of livelihoods of the Myanmar people both in urban and rural areas. Japan believes such cooperation will help Myanmar to fulfill its vast potential, thus realize inclusive growth and balanced economy in this country. —JICA



Villagers and officials start to use water supply facility under the Yen Loan Projects for Local Infrastructure Development in Taunggyi, Shan State. PHOTO: JICA

## Gold mining pollutes Maezar River in Bhamauk Township

WATER from an illegal gold mine in Bhamauk Township, Sagaing Region, has polluted the Maezar River.

The spill flowed into tributaries of the Maezar River, on which local people and cattle rely for drinking and household use.

The river has turned yellow, said U Thein, a resident of Wahphytaung village.

"The pollution level of the river is increasing day by day. The current is changing as well due to the sediment," said a villager from Simaw village.

Local people are also experiencing a shortage of grazing land, as businessmen have bought local farmland at high prices from landowners in order to set up gold mines.—Maung Chit Lin

## Fifteenth Monsoon Forum 2015



About 40 officials discussed the present climate change in Myanmar at Fifteenth Monsoon Forum. PHOTO: MNA

THE OPENING ceremony of the Fifteenth Monsoon Forum 2015, jointly sponsored and organized by Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) & Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) was held this morning at the Yama-Nya Hall Hotel Royal ACE in Nay Pyi Taw. Dr. Hrin Nei Thiam, Director General of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology and Mr. A.R. Subbish Director of RIMES has briefed about the workshop.

Also present on the occasion were about (40) participants from the related (20) ministries and representatives of disaster management and local level authorities concerned.

The Workshop is focused on the present climate change situation in Myanmar, the general seasonal forecast for 2015-2016 winter monsoon season and the verification of Meteorological and Hydrological forecasts for the last Southwest monsoon season. The agenda included discussions on the summary of the

actions taken on the flood and drought events during the 2015 Southwest monsoon season, the applicability of the provided seasonal forecast by the various sectors the user of climate information. The discussion will be participated by eight working groups.

The monsoon forum has been held twice annually on regular basis starting from 2007 and the current forum is the fifteen. It will continue to hold till 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.—Myanmar News Agency

## Officials seize unauthorised jade

A TEAM of officials from various departments in Muse, northern Shan State, seized a cache of unauthorised jade on 18 October. The stones were seized at the Asia World Toll Gate, where they were found in an unregistered vehicle. The jades have an estimated worth of K196 million (US\$154,000), and the vehicle was valued at K5 million (\$3,920). The jade and car were handed over to the Myanmar Gems Brokerage and the Customs Department, respectively.—Muse(IPRD)



Authorities registered seized jade stones. PHOTO: MUSE IPRD



Illegal gold mine in Bhamauk Township is causing pollution of the rivers. PHOTO: MAUNG CHIT LIN

# Cambodia eyes bright solar future with tuk-tuks and microfinance

PHNOM PEHN — Outside the buzzing Russian Market, one of Phnom Penh's top tourist attractions, Win Soeun sells coffee from a sky-blue tuk-tuk in the searing midday heat.

The coffee cart, an adapted auto rickshaw, is run by Aziza's Place, a social business that provides work to women like Win Soeun who used to scavenge at a rubbish dump in the Cambodian capital to make a living for herself and her five children.

Powered by solar panels on its roof, the tuk-tuk is not just part of a project bringing hope to disadvantaged women, but a vivid symbol of Cambodia's potential

**“The government has recently been warming up to the idea that solar is becoming more cost competitive.”**

**Dennis Barbian**  
Renewable energy market development adviser



Garment workers look at shirts at a clothing stall after their lunch time in Phnom Penh. PHOTO: REUTERS

to become a solar powerhouse. The tuk-tuk, which can run at speeds of up to 37 miles per hour (67 kilometres per hour), is the brainchild of Australian company Star8, which recently opened a factory — the city's first solar-powered building — in Phnom Penh.

With an average of 5.5 hours

of sunshine per day throughout the year and high levels of solar radiation even when it is cloudy, Cambodia is highly suitable for solar power, the Asian Development Bank said in a report earlier this year. “The potential for Cambodia to become a solar power is huge, given how much solar radiation you get here all year round,” said

Phil Stone, Star8's managing director. “But the challenges are large too.”

The falling cost of solar technology, which has dropped in some countries to around \$0.13 to \$0.15 per kilowatt hour, less than the cost of grid power in many parts of Cambodia, adds to the attraction. But awareness of solar

energy and technical know-how are still low in Cambodia, one of Southeast Asia's poorest nations, Stone said. Cambodia still has a long way to go before it can match the solar development of neighbouring Thailand, which is largely alone in the region in boosting its capacity to harness the sun's energy. The Cambodian government, with international assistance, has installed some 12,000 solar household systems - still a small number in a country where only 35 percent of people have access to the electricity grid.

“The government has recently been warming up to the idea that solar is becoming more cost competitive,” said Dennis Barbian, renewable energy market development adviser at the Netherlands Development Organisation.

Some 1.6 million households, mostly in rural areas, depend for basic lighting and electricity on greenhouse gas-emitting kerosene and on diesel generators, some used to charge battery systems. The cost can be three of four times more than what those households would pay for grid electricity, or up to \$1 per kilowatt hour, a major drain on family incomes.—Reuters

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Printed and published at the Global New Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No. 00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.

## Philippines to hand China suspects in diplomats' shooting

MANILA — The Philippines said on Thursday two Chinese diplomats suspected of killing two colleagues will be granted diplomatic immunity and handed over to Chinese authorities, following a bizarre restaurant shooting in the central Philippines.

The husband of a Chinese woman working at a Chinese consulate in the central city of Cebu shot dead the deputy consul general and a senior staff member during a birthday lunch at the restaurant on Wednesday, police have said.

Consul General Song Ronghua was also wounded in the shooting. His deputy, Sun Shen, was shot in the neck and died. Li Hui, a female finance officer at the

consulate, was shot in the head and also died. The suspect was arrested and identified by police as Li Qing Liang. Li's wife, Guo Jing, who works in the consulate's visa section, was also held for questioning.

Philippines Foreign Ministry spokesman Charles Jose told a press briefing the couple “shall enjoy immunity from criminal jurisdiction” under the Vienna Convention, and handed over to Chinese officials.

“Upon the request of the Chinese embassy, they are being held by Philippine authorities in Cebu,” he said. “As soon as their security team from Beijing arrives here we will turn over the custody to the Chinese side.”



A police investigator surveys the blood-stained floor at the Lighthouse restaurant, where three Chinese diplomats were shot, in Cebu city, central Philippines on 21 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

He said the couple will undergo legal process in China and the Philippines respects the couple's right not to give any statement to local police.

A senior police officer told Reuters no charges had been filed as immunity was being granted.

China's Foreign Ministry said it was investigating what had happened. Spokeswoman Hua Chunying said she had no details to provide.

“We are deeply distressed that this kind of incident has taken place. The relevant situation and reasons are in the process of being investigated and understood further,” she told a daily briefing in Beijing. Rey Lawas, a police spokesman in Cebu city, said investigators believe the shooting could be the result of a personal grudge over financial matters between Li and Sun, the deputy consul general, or the woman finance officer. “They have been at odds for a long time over personal finances,” Lawas said, adding the fight “was purely personal”.

Waiters at the Lighthouse, a popular Filipino-food restaurant, have told police they heard shouting from a private room but could not understand what was being said. Minutes later they heard gunshots.

The senior police officer said investigators would also look into how the pistol used in the shooting had been acquired.—Reuters

## Singapore's finance chief assigned to review election

SINGAPORE — Singapore's Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat will lead the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) post-mortem committee to review the General Election (GE), PAP Secretary-General Lee Hsien Loong announced on the party's Facebook page on Thursday.

Heng, who was the former Minister for Education before the 11 September polling, will “lead the committee to analyse what happened, and draw lessons for our next campaign”, Lee wrote.

The party also decided to bring in many new members and get prepare for the next election.

“The work of preparing for GE2021 has started. The HQ EXCO (Headquarters Executive Committee) will work with MPs (Member of Parliament) and activists on the party's plans and programs. We will partner Singaporeans to deliver on what we have promised, improve people's lives, and fulfil our duty to Singapore,” Lee said.

The First Session of the 13<sup>th</sup> parliament will commence on 15 January 2016, starting with the election of the speaker and the swearing-in of the MPs.—Xinhua

## PICTURE OF THE DAY



North Korean Lee Han Shik comforts his South Korean mother Kwon Oh-hee after the separated family reunions at Mount Kumgang resort, North Korea, on 22 October 2015. Nearly 400 South Koreans crossed the heavily armed border into North Korea on Tuesday to be reunited, in an outpouring of emotions and tears, with family members separated for more than six decades since the 1950-53 Korean War.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Malaysia's Mahathir faces defamation charge

KUALA LUMPUR — Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad is being investigated for defamation over remarks he made against Prime Minister Najib Razak, with the police referring his case to the attorney general for further action, Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said in a statement Thursday.

Zahid said the police are investigating Mahathir, 90, under Section 500 of the Penal Code based on two police reports lodged against him.

Section 500 of the Penal Code refers to defamation that is punishable with imprisonment of up to two years or with a fine or both if found guilty.

The police have completed a probe on one of the two complaints lodged.

"The investigation papers have been referred to the Attorney General's Chambers on 9 October for further instruction," Zahid said in a written reply in Parliament dated Wednesday but made available to the press on Thursday.

He was answering a question submitted by opposition legislator Tan Kok Wai, who wanted to know the status of the probe on Mahathir, whom he said was "increasingly aggressive" in pressuring Najib to resign over a graft scandal.

Federal police chief Khalid Abu Bakar had previously stated that the police were probing Mahathir over a speech he made at an anti-government rally on 30 August, where he accused Najib of bribing officials from the ruling party, the United Malays Na-

tional Organisation, in return for their loyalty. Mahathir and his wife, Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, 89, stole the show at the rally organized by the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections.

The authorities had earlier declared the rally, aimed at pressuring Najib to step down, "illegal."

Najib is embroiled in a controversy over some \$700 million that was deposited into his personal bank account allegedly from companies linked to debt-laden state investment fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad.

Mahathir, who ruled for 22 years until 2003, has been his fiercest critic, heaping scorn on Najib's claim that the money was a political donation from an undisclosed Middle Eastern source.—*Kyodo News*

## Japan defence chief inspects inter-Korean truce village

PAJU — Japanese Defence Minister Gen Nakatani on Wednesday visited the heavily guarded truce village of Panmunjeom and inspected the Joint Security Area where soldiers from both Koreas face each other.

By visiting the front line of a war that is still technically not over, Nakatani, who arrived in the South on Tuesday for a three-day visit, appeared to be appealing for the necessity of cooperation between Japan and

South Korea. "I was able to feel firsthand the state of the Korean Peninsula, which has considerable strain," Nakatani, the first Japanese defence minister to visit the country in four years and nine months, told reporters.

"I realize the importance of close cooperation between Japan and the United States, and Japan and South Korean," he stressed.

At a briefing of the situation at the border he received

from the South Korean military prior to the visit, he expressed his "respect and gratitude" to the troops for contributing to the peace and safety of the region.

Nakatani also visited the Seoul International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition (ADEX) at Seoul Airport, a military base on the outskirts of Seoul, where he inspected defence equipment including a drone aircraft and an armored vehicle.—*Kyodo News*

## China environment bureau says Coca-Cola bottling plant falsified pollution data

SHANGHAI

An environmental protection bureau in northwest China said police temporarily detained an executive at a Coca-Cola Co bottling facility in Gansu province after it found the facility had falsified pollution data.

In a report on its website, the Lanzhou city office of China's Environmental Protection Bureau said authorities found Gansu COFCO Coca-Cola Beverage Co Ltd had tampered with data by altering the way it sampled and monitored its sewage output. The news was carried by local media outlets on Thursday.

Police detained at least one of the facility's executives for five days earlier this month as punishment, the Lanzhou environmental bureau's statement said.

Coca-Cola officials did not respond to repeated telephone calls and emails seeking comment.

The Gansu facility, part of a joint venture between Chinese food processor COFCO Corp and Coca-Cola, said in a

statement that it "attached great importance" to the matter and that an internal investigation had determined irregularities with monitoring equipment led to false data.

The company would "rigorously strengthen internal oversight and put an end to the future occurrence of similar issues", the statement said.

Companies have been scurrying to boost their environmental credentials after China introduced tougher regulations this year to combat the country's unwanted image of smog-choked cities, fouled waterways and heavy-metal tainted soil.

China will ban water-polluting paper mills, oil refineries, pesticide producers and other industrial plants by the end of 2016, as it moves to tackle severe pollution of the water supply which has left one-third of China's major river basins and 60 percent of its underground water contaminated.

Beijing authorities fined a McDonald's Corp frozen potato fries supplier earlier this year for water pollution.—*Reuters*

## Senior N Korean security official defected to S Korea

SEOUL — A senior North Korean security official defected to South Korea earlier this year, a Seoul daily reported Thursday.

The State Security Department official, whose rank is equal to that of a Cabinet minister, entered South Korea while traveling abroad on a temporary duty, a source well versed in North Korean affairs told the Dong-A Ilbo newspaper.

The State Security Department is known to have played a key role in the 2013 execution of Jang Song Taek, North Korean leader Kim Jong

Un's erstwhile mentor and uncle-by-marriage.

South Korea's state intelligence agency reported to the parliament earlier this week that 46 high-ranking North Korean officials, who were mostly based in overseas offices, have fled to the South over the past three years.

Since taking power upon the death of his father in December, 2011, Kim Jong Un has orchestrated a series of purges in apparent efforts to bolster his grip on power, resulting in a series of defections by officials.—*Kyodo News*

## Brunei flight returns to Manila after engine snag

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN — A Royal Brunei Airlines (RB) flight BI684 which departed Manila Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) for Bandar Seri Begawan on schedule at 15:05 local time Wednesday, experienced abnormal readings on one engine shortly after take off, returned to NAIA.

The RB announced Thursday on its official website, "As a safety precaution and in accordance with standard operating procedures, the captain de-

cidated to return back to Manila to enable technical checks to be completed."

The aircraft, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner powered by Rolls Royce Trent 1,000 engines, landed back safely at NAIA and all 152 passengers were safely disembarked at the terminal.

A number of passengers have already been re-routed to their final destination and all remaining passengers were provided with overnight hotel accommodation.—*Xinhua*

## Syria air strikes push Putin's rating to new high: Russian state pollster

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin's approval rating has hit a record high of almost 90 percent, primarily as a result of his decision to launch air strikes against Islamist militants in Syria, Russia's state pollster said on Thursday.

VTsIOM, the pollster, said Putin's rating had reached 89.9 percent in October, up from a previous high of 89.1 percent in June. In January 2012, it put his rating at 58.8 percent.

"Such a high level of approval for the work of the Russian president is linked, in the first instance, to events in Syria, to Russian air strikes on terrorist positions there," VTsIOM said in a statement.

Russia's air force says it has flown over 700 sorties against more than 690 targets in Syria since 30 September, a campaign to which state TV has given blanket coverage.

Before the strikes, polls showed Russians were wary about the risks of Kremlin involvement in the Middle East. But a poll conducted earlier this month showed that 72 percent had a broadly positive opinion of the Russian air campaign.

Putin, whose third term as president lasts until 2018, has en-



PHOTO: REUTERS

joyed a rating of over 80 percent for more than a year and a half, VTsIOM said. The country's other main pollster, the Levada Center, which is not linked to the Kremlin, has also registered strong public approval for Putin, saying he scored a rating of 83 percent in August this year.

VTsIOM said Putin's rating had begun to grow strongly in spring last year, a period that coincided with Russia's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea peninsula. Putin, whose words

and actions dominate state TV, where an overwhelming majority of Russians get their news, has not yet said whether he intends to stand for a fourth presidential term in 2018. If he did, he could remain in power until 2024.

VTsIOM said it had reached its findings by interviewing 1,600 people in 130 different parts of Russia from 17-18 October. It said the margin of error was not greater than 3.5 percent.—Reuters

## At odds with Republicans, Hillary Clinton to testify on Benghazi

WASHINGTON — Whether it's a fact-finding mission as Republicans insist or the political witch hunt that Democrats anticipate, the congressional committee investigating the deadly 2012 attack on the US diplomatic mission in Benghazi, Libya, on Thursday will hear from Hillary Clinton, then the secretary of state and now the top candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Clinton and many of her fellow Democrats have seized on the comments in recent weeks by Republican lawmakers as evidence that the goal of the Benghazi committee in the US House of Representatives was to hurt her front-runner status in the campaign for the November 2016 election. Clinton's appearance follows months of unflattering reports about her use of a private home email server for her State Department work. The reports emerged in part because of the Benghazi committee's demand last year to see Clinton's official records.

Trey Gowdy, the committee's Republican chairman and a former federal prosecutor, has been put on the defensive as the most high-profile event in his committee's 17-month existence drew near.

"Shut up" was his advice to Kevin McCarthy, the second most

powerful Republican in the House, and others in the party who would draw a link between the committee's work and Clinton's declining favorability in opinion polls.

Gowdy says he is focused on a serious inquiry into the killing of J. Christopher Stevens, the US ambassador to Libya, and three other Americans by suspected Islamist militants who invaded the US mission compound in the war-torn city of Benghazi with guns, grenades and mortars.

The committee's five Democrats, who may discuss abandoning the inquiry after Clinton's appearance, say they think there is little left to unearth on Benghazi that more than half a dozen previous inquiries did not find.

"I'm looking forward to answering questions about the real things when I'm there," Clinton said pointedly in a television interview earlier this month. She voiced disgust at what she said were Republican admissions that "it's a political partisan committee for the sole purpose of going after me."

Gowdy and some of the committee's six other Republicans say Thursday's hearing will dispel this notion. "The American people will be proud to see that this was a fact-centric, mission-focused proceeding," Mike Pompeo, a Kansas

Republican on the committee, predicted in a phone interview this week. He declined to place any special importance on Clinton's appearance, speaking of it as simply the latest, but not the last, in more than 50 committee interviews with witnesses.

The hearing is to begin at 10 am ET (1400 GMT) on Thursday. The committee's Republicans have asked the State Department to clear for possible public release about 130 documents that the department has supplied to the committee, according to two people with knowledge of the communications. Most of the documents are either Clinton's emails with Sidney Blumenthal, a friend who served as an unofficial adviser to Clinton and who often sent her long memoranda filled with purported intelligence from Libya, or communications involving State Department officials about diplomatic security in Libya in 2011 and 2012, the two people said. A 2012 report by a government accountability review board sharply faulted State Department officials for providing "grossly" insufficient security in Benghazi, despite upgrade requests from Stevens and others in Libya.—Reuters

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### US, allies demand UN council action after Iran missile test

UNITED NATIONS — The United States, Britain, France and Germany sent a letter to the United Nations Security Council's Iran sanctions committee on Wednesday notifying it of Tehran's recent missile test and demanded action in response to what they said was a violation.

The letter, which was sent to the committee by the United States on behalf of the four countries, said the launch was in

breach of Security Council resolutions and reiterated that the ballistic missile was "inherently capable of delivering a nuclear weapon."

"We trust that this information will assist the Committee in its responsibility to examine and take appropriate action in response to violations of UN Security Council resolutions," said the letter, which was seen by Reuters.—Reuters

#### Russia to build military base on contested Kurile Islands

MOSCOW — Russia plans to build a military base on the Kurile islands, a group of Pacific islands it seized from Japan at the end of World War Two, Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Thursday, according to the Interfax news agency.

The move is likely to wors-

en already frayed relations with Tokyo which lays claim to the Southern Kuriles, known in Japan as the Northern Territories.

The dispute is so acrimonious that Moscow and Tokyo have still not signed a formal peace treaty after the war.—Reuters

#### Five injured after sword attack at Swedish school

STOCKHOLM — One adult and four students were injured after being attacked by a masked man with a sword at a school in western Sweden, the police said in a statement on Thursday.

The suspect was later shot, police said. His condition was unclear. The incident occurred at the Kronan school in Trollhattan, an industrial town of around 50,000 inhabitants north of Gothenburg.

Police responded to an emergency call saying a masked man equipped with a sword was

on the premises and that a person had been attacked at or near the school cafeteria, police said.

"Shortly after this we received information that the assailant had been shot by police and that his condition was not known," the police said on its website. The police dispatch was also informed a further four students had been injured by the assailant. "We have received one person ... very seriously injured," said Niklas Claesson, head of communication at NAL hospital in Trollhattan.—Reuters

#### UK's Osborne: we want fair EU deal for all

LONDON — Britain is not trying to obtain a special deal for the City of London as it renegotiates the terms of its European Union membership, but does want a fair deal for all non-euro zone members, finance minister George Osborne said on Thursday. Osborne said Britain's fellow EU members had accepted the principle of a renegotiation

and of a change in Britain's relationship with the bloc, and that discussions with the EU Commission and Council were now moving into a technical phase.

The Conservative government has pledged to negotiate better terms for Britain and then hold a referendum by the end of 2017 on whether to stay in the union or leave.—Reuters

#### Food security body warns of famine in South Sudan

GENEVA — South Sudan faces the "concrete risk" of famine by the end of 2015 and 30,000 people are already classified as being in a food security catastrophe, a statement from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) said on Thursday.

The IPC, whose members include the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and the

World Food Programme, said famine had not been officially declared because it was hard to get data from conflict zones.

"There is a great concern that famine may exist in the coming months but it may not be possible to validate it at that time due to lack of evidence as the result of limited access to the affected areas and populations," it said.—Reuters

## OPINION

## A test of political maturity

Kyaw Thura

The public will go the polls on 8 November to select the government that they believe has the best potential to get Myanmar back on track.

With the election now just a couple of weeks away, political parties have heightened their electioneering by vying with each other for the voters' attention. The common refrain of who and who isn't voting is constantly being fed to potential voters by political parties, and as a result even swing voters may now have a particular party in mind for the historic poll.

It is encouraging to see that people all over the country have become more dynamic in a political sense than previous generations were. The reason for this is because today's generation is less naïve and can't be fooled twice. Another reason for heightened levels of public awareness is that we're living in the age of information and technology.

After witnessing the benefits of a major shift from the closed-door policy to an open door one, we have collectively come to understand the ways of the world.

Reforms in political, social, economic and educational settings are of paramount importance and we have nothing to lose in making our transition to democracy.

After all, the upcoming election is a time for all of us to show the rest of the world that we deserve a robust democracy. Above all else, it is a test of our political maturity.

## Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email wallace.tun@gmail.com with your name and title.

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

## TODAY CARTOON

The way they are handing out honorary doctorates left and right, an hon. Ph D for me is long overdue, man.

Quite right. You deserve it for cleaning up the environment.



# STRIKE A POSE

## Unravelling the benefits of yoga

*Jojo Yang swapped a financially comfortable but unfulfilling corporate life in New York and London for a yoga-led existence in Yangon*

Jessica Mudditt

JOJO Yang spent the first 20 years of her life avoiding all forms of exercise.

"I was never athletic – I was the last kid picked for sports teams at school because I was small, scrawny and uncoordinated," she told *The Global New Light of Myanmar*.

She was so determined to skip high school gym class that she used the only loophole that enabled her to do: by managing the boys' wrestling team.

Ms Yang took her first yoga class 10 years ago after a friend promised her that it wasn't like other types of exercise in that she could ease her body into it.

Ms Yang soon found yoga a useful outlet to counterbalance the prolonged periods she spent sitting down as a frequent business traveller – and as a way to pass the time during long evenings spent in hotel rooms. It certainly wasn't a case of immediate infatuation.

"For the first few years, I was like, 'I'm not sure I get it.' I was always asking myself if I was doing it right and I was always trying to match someone else's pose. It wasn't until I took a few private lessons that my practice completely transformed," she said.

The 30-year-old started getting serious about yoga three years ago. She found that if she went a couple of weeks without doing it, she'd get the feeling that "something was missing."

At around the same time, her disenchantment with life in the corporate fast lane, both in Manhattan and London, led her and her partner to give their careers a serious rethink.

"Every day felt like the worst day of my life. My job was draining and soul-sucking. No one ever came up to me at the end of the day to give me a hug and say, 'Thanks for that power point presentation' or whatever," she said.

Ms Yang zipped off to Bali to complete a 200-hour yoga teach-



American expat Jojo Yang at Yangon Yoga House. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY YANGON YOGA HOUSE

ers' course and she and her partner then settled in Myanmar last year, after friends insisted that Yangon is "where the action is."

Within a month of teaching her first class, a student came up to Ms Yang and gave her a hug – she was grateful that Ms Yang's cues had helped her master a certain yoga posture for the first time.

"It was the best career choice I ever made. What I do is fulfilling. I wake up every day and feel excited to teach," she said with a grin.

And it's not as though business in Yangon is grim: since starting off a little over a year ago teaching a free class once a week in a friend's apartment, Ms Yang now has her own studio – Yangon's first – and a client mailing list of around 750 people. As many

as 200 students visit Yangon Yoga House every week for a lesson from Ms Yang or one of the eight other teachers. Different styles of yoga are taught, with classes that cater to the beginner to the more advanced, and there's also pilates, barre and circuit training classes. Yangon Yoga House has arranged a number of international yoga retreats, including one at Cambodia's Angkor Wat that took place in early October.

## Overcoming the obstacles

However not everyone has been converted.

"The first thing I hear is: 'I can't do it because I'm not flexible enough,'" Ms Yang said.

She said this is one of the most common misperceptions about yoga – and yet as Ms Yang

**"I wake up every day and feel excited to teach."**

Jojo Yang

explains, flexibility is one of yoga's core benefits (pardon the pun). And this is not simply about being able to touch your toes or do the splits.

"As people start to get older, things start to contract. Mobility becomes limited. It commonly starts with lower back pain and that's because the core is weak or the hips are tight."

The more flexible a person becomes, the better able they are to sit or stand for long periods of

time. It's also an enormously effective way of preventing injuries among those who regularly do other forms of exercise, such as running.

Another common misperception is that yoga isn't hard enough because it's not a cardio-based workout.

"If the poses are done properly, it's always an effort. And if you breathe properly you will sweat and feel the intensity," Ms Yang said.

However Ms Yang is at pains to point out that yoga is more of a lifestyle than an exercise. Serious yogis rarely eat meat and one of the most common reasons people rave about yoga is its ability to soothe the soul and de-stress the mind.

However for some, yoga's



Jojo Yang at a recent retreat at Angkor Wat in Cambodia. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY YANGON YOGA HOUSE



Yoga students at Yangon Yoga House in Yankin Township. PHOTO: SUPPLIED BY YANGON YOGA HOUSE

spiritual aspects (namely, chanting) are off-putting; for years yogis fought against the stigma of being associated with hippies. Yet it's they who are having the last laugh as more and more become converted; perhaps in part out of sheer envy of practitioners' beautifully toned and sculpted bodies. (For the record, when asked, Ms Yang put her total lack of body fat down to "luck in the genetics department".)

## Yoga's meditative element

Interestingly, up until quite recently, yoga and meditation were one and the same. The sole purpose of a "vasana" (posture) was to prepare the body to sit for extended periods of time during meditation. It wasn't until 100 years ago that yoga became a sep-

arate discipline and a host of new postures were invented.

"Back then, being a yogi was like being a hermit – the original tradition was to retreat into the Himalayas and sit in a cave and eat very little," Ms Yang explained.

It's ironic that in today's modern age, in which we stare at computer screens for hours on end – during both work and play – that yoga's potential benefits have never been greater.

The West has in general been pretty slow to catch onto the benefits of the ancient practice, whose origins lie in India. Yoga was first mentioned in the texts of Hindu Upanishads and Buddhist Pāli Canon during the third century BC, but it took until the 1980s for yoga to be accepted as a legitimate form of ex-

ercise in the western world.

"In terms of general wellness, the exercise is just one element. If you really want to get healthy you need to bring it into your diet, how you approach life – stress plays a big part in how your physical being is. It's all connected."

As someone who never had the confidence to take on traditional sports, Ms Yang is keen to emphasise that everyone can enjoy the benefits of yoga.

"It's about accepting where your body is now. Yoga is a journey and there is no destination or end point. It's simply something you can do for the rest of your life."

For more information about Yangon Yoga House, visit [yangonyogahouse.com](http://yangonyogahouse.com)



## Greek dock workers walk out over privatisation

ATHENS — Greek dock workers walked out on Thursday in protest at the planned privatisations of the country's two biggest ports, a condition of a multi-billion euro bailout from international lenders.

Setting a date to submit binding bids for Piraeus and Thessaloniki ports is one of the actions that Athens needs to conclude its first bailout review and unlock more funds for its 86 billion euro bailout.

Shipping ministry officials said the industrial action did not appear to be disrupting traffic at the ports.

A statement from the dock workers' labour union vowed to avert privatisations and accused the government of attempting to sell out to "foreign owned monopolies".

"Ports should be developed by utilising own capital, through credit facilities and tapping European Union funds," it said. Mission chiefs of lenders are in Athens to assess compliance with bailout terms.

China's Cosco Group, Danish container terminal operator APM Terminals and Philippines-based International Container Terminal Services, which were shortlisted in an expression of interest process, have until 30 October to submit binding bids for a 51 percent stake in OLP.

But Greek government officials told Reuters this month that snap parliamentary elections on 20 September had held up work and the deadline would be pushed back by about 20 days.

Greece would also push back the deadline for submission of binding bids for Thessaloniki port to the end of March from early February, the head of the country's privatisation agency said last weekend.

Eight firms, including APM Terminals and Russia's state railway company, have been shortlisted for the Thessaloniki port.

Privatisations have been a key part of Athens' efforts to develop its state assets and raise money to cut Greece's mountainous debt. The programme has raised only 3.5 billion euros since 2011 versus an original target of 50 billion euros in the 2011-2015 period.

Greece will miss this year's target of 1.4 billion euros in privatisation receipts but a 3.7 billion euro target for next year is realistic, the head of its privatisation agency told Reuters last month.—Reuters

# Hungary's Orban urges EU migration debate, sees threat to democracy



Migrants' children keep themselves warm around a fire after crossing the border from Croatia in Rigonce, Slovenia, on 22 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

BUDAPEST — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban urged European leaders late on Wednesday to change their immigration policies and involve voters in a debate about the continent's future, saying they would otherwise face a political crisis and a threat to the democratic order.

Hungary has responded to the largest migration wave Europe has seen since World War Two by building a steel fence along its borders with Serbia and Croatia, a

step both welcomed and criticised by various leaders around Europe.

The fence has sealed Hungary's borders but caused a growing backlog in Balkan countries which are struggling to usher them on to Germany through Slovenia, which has already asked for the European Union's help.

Hungary's ruling centre-right Fidesz party has taken a hard line against the tide of immigrants fleeing war and poverty in the Middle East and Asia, most of them

refugees from Syria's civil war. It has spoken of a threat to Europe's Christian and democratic way of life and demanded action from the EU, which is deeply divided on the issue.

Orban, who was due to address the European People's Party congress in Madrid on Thursday, told the state television channel m1 that European leaders had no mandate to let hundreds of thousands of migrants enter the EU with little or no control.

"This destabilises European democracies," he said. "We need to start the debate about the future of our continent honestly, without the muzzle of 'political correctness', without pretence, talking straight."

"We need to listen to the people and incorporate their views in our politics. If we can't do that, we'll have a political crisis on top of our migrant crisis."

He said Hungary's border fence had been meant to turn migrants back from Europe, not divert them along a different path to Germany, and that he had asked Hungary's Balkan neighbours to help send the migrants back.

"The right thing to do is not to ensure their passage into Europe but to take them back to the refugee camps they started out from," he said.

"The further they come from their troubled countries, the more difficult it will be for them to return. Therefore these people must remain (in their region) and humane conditions must be created for them (there)."—Reuters

**"The right thing to do is not to ensure their passage into Europe but to take them back to the refugee camps they started out from."**

**Viktor Orban**  
Hungarian Prime Minister

## Palestinians keep up attacks in Israel as Kerry seeks to calm violence

JERUSALEM — Israeli police said they shot dead a Palestinian and wounded another on Thursday after the two stabbed a Jewish seminary student near Jerusalem on Thursday, as diplomatic efforts to calm three weeks of violence intensified.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met for talks in Berlin, where the Israeli leader is on an official visit. A State Department spokesman said Kerry was seeking practical ways to stem the bloodshed.

Describing the morning attack in the town of Beit Shemesh, police said the two Palestinian assailants from the occupied West Bank stabbed the student at a bus stop. He was taken to hospital, as was the surviving attacker.

Nine Israelis have been killed in Palestinian stabbings, shootings and vehicle attacks since the start of October. Forty-nine Palestinians, including 25 assailants, among them children, have been killed in attacks and during anti-Israeli protests.

Among the causes of the turmoil is Palestinians' anger at what they see as Jewish encroachment on the al-Aqsa mosque com-

pound in Jerusalem's walled Old City. The compound is Islam's holiest site outside Saudi Arabia and is also revered by Jews as the location of two ancient Jewish temples.

Netanyahu has pledged to maintain a decades-old status quo at the compound that bans Jews from praying there and has denied Palestinian allegations that he intends to change the arrangement.

As Israeli security forces and civilians become ever more jittery, a Jewish seminary student mistaken for an attacker was shot dead by soldiers on Wednesday at a busy intersection in Jerusalem, police said.

An Eritrean migrant was shot by a security guard and beaten by an angry crowd of Israelis in the town of Beersheba on Sunday. He died in hospital of his wounds, and four suspects al-

leged to have participated in what Israel's defence minister termed a lynching were due to appear in court on Thursday.

On Wednesday, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon held talks with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. But after two days of discussions in the region, there was no sign Ban had made progress towards bringing both sides back from what he described as a "dangerous abyss".—Reuters



Israeli police cordon off the area of a stabbing, west of Jerusalem, in the town of Beit Shemesh, Israel, on 22 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Mediterranean diet linked to healthier ageing brain



Food is seen on a table at a restaurant at the port of El Masnou, near Barcelona, on 16 May, 2008. PHOTO: REUTERS

NEW YORK — Following a Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, fish and healthy fats may preserve a more youthful brain in old age, a US study suggests.

Previous research has connected a Mediterranean diet to a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other degenerative brain conditions, noted lead study author Yian Gu of Columbia University in New York.

For the current study, researchers focused on elderly people with normal cognitive function to see if the diet might also be tied to losing fewer brain cells due to aging, Gu said by email.

"Among cognitively healthy older adults, we were able to detect an association between higher adherence to a Mediterranean type

diet and better brain measures," Gu said. To understand the relationship between the diet and brain health, Gu and colleagues reviewed surveys that 674 elderly people completed about their eating habits and then examined magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans of their brains.

Compared to the people who didn't regularly follow many aspects of the Mediterranean diet, the participants who adhered to this way of eating more often had larger total brain volume, as well as more gray and white matter.

Higher fish intake and lower meat consumption, one aspect of a Mediterranean diet, was tied to larger total gray matter volume on the brain scans.

Eating less meat was also independently associated with larg-

er total brain volume. Overall, the difference in brain volume between the people who followed a Mediterranean diet and those who didn't was similar to the effect of five years of aging, the researchers conclude in the journal *Neurology*.

One limitation of the study is that it can't show whether the diet actually causes less brain atrophy over time, the authors acknowledge. For instance, it's also possible that the effect might operate in the opposite direction, with differences in brain structure resulting in behavioral differences that include dietary habits. It's also hard to separate the effect of eating more fish from the impact of consuming less meat, noted Dr. Victor Henderson, a neurology and health policy researcher at Stanford University in California. "Someone who eats a lot of fish probably doesn't eat a lot of meat," Henderson, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "Other research suggests that it is not just fish and meat that are important," he added. Prior research on the Mediterranean diet has suggested that supplementing this diet with additional extra virgin olive oil may strengthen the connection to better cognitive function, Henderson noted.

For example, a long-term Spanish study linked a Mediterranean diet with extra nuts and olive oil to improved memory in older adults in a report published earlier this year. —Reuters

## New species of Galapagos giant tortoise identified

WASHINGTON — Scientists have identified a new species of giant tortoise on the Galápagos Islands, using genetic data to determine that a group of 250 of the slow-moving grazing reptiles was distinct from other tortoise species residing in the Pacific archipelago.

The newly identified species lives in a 15-square-mile (40-square-km) area of Santa Cruz Island and is as different genetically from the other giant tortoise species on the island as species from other islands, the scientists said on Wednesday.

The research differentiated the new Eastern Santa Cruz tortoise, given the scientific name *Chelonoidis donfaustoi*, from a larger population of about 2,000 tortoises living about 6 miles (10 km) away on the western part of the island that belong to the species *Chelonoidis porteri*. Scientists long had thought all the giant tortoises on the island were from the same species.

"Its closest relative is not the species on the same island but a species from the neighbouring is-



An Eastern Santa Cruz tortoise, *Chelonoidis donfaustoi*, is pictured on Santa Cruz Island in the Galapagos Islands in this undated handout photo obtained by Reuters 21 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

land to the east, San Cristobal," Yale University evolutionary biologist Adalgisa Caccone said.

The researchers used two types of genetic data to determine that it merited being recognized as a separate species, bringing to 15 the number of Galápagos giant tortoise species. In addition to genetic differences, the two Santa Cruz Island species also differ in the shape of their shell, with the

Eastern Santa Cruz tortoise having one with a more compressed shape, Caccone said.

The newly identified species lives in a drier part of the island, Caccone added. Giant tortoises, which can reach some 500 pounds (225 kg) are among the famous creatures of the Galápagos Islands closely studied by 19th century British naturalist Charles Darwin. —Reuters

## Einstein wouldn't like it: New test proves universe is 'spooky'

LONDON — The universe really is weird, which is bad news both for Albert Einstein and for would-be hackers hoping to break into quantum encryption systems.

Eighty years after the physicist dismissed as "spooky" the idea that simply observing one particle could instantly change another far-away object, Dutch scientists said on Wednesday they had proved decisively that the effect was real.

Writing in the journal *Nature*, researchers detailed an experiment showing how two electrons at separate locations 1.3 km (0.8 mile) apart on the Delft University of Technology campus demonstrated a clear, invisible and instantaneous connection. Importantly, the new study closed loopholes in earlier tests that had left some doubt as to whether the eerie connection predicted by quantum theory was real or not.

Einstein famously insisted in a 1935 scientific paper that what he called "spooky action at a distance" had to be wrong and there must be undiscovered properties of particles to explain such counter-intuitive behavior.

The idea certainly confounds our day-to-day experience of the world, where change only appears to occur through local interactions. But in recent decades scientific evidence has

been building that particles can indeed become "entangled", so that no matter how far apart they are, they will always be connected. The Delft experiment is conclusive because, for the first time, scientists have closed two potential loopholes at once.

The first suggests that particles could somehow synchronize behavior ahead of time, while the second implies that testing might detect only a subset of prepared entangled pairs.

To prove their case, the team led by Delft professor Ronald Hanson used two diamonds containing tiny traps for electrons with a magnetic property called spin and measured all entangled pairs across 1.3 km separating two laboratories.

The experiment effectively closes a chapter in an 80-year scientific debate, but Hanson said it also had important implications for the future, since sophisticated cryptography is already using quantum properties to guarantee data security.

Such quantum encryption systems will only be 100 percent secure, however, if all loopholes are closed, as in the Delft system. "Loopholes can be backdoors into systems," Hanson told Reuters. "When you go loophole-free then you add an extra layer of security and you can be absolutely certain there is no way for hackers to get in." —Reuters

## Genetics help explain poor showing for GSK malaria vaccine

LONDON — Scientists have found a genetic explanation for why the world's first malaria vaccine is not very effective in protecting some African children against the deadly mosquito-borne disease.

The analysis, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on Wednesday, comes at a critical time for the experimental shot from GlaxoSmithKline, when global experts are assessing how it might be deployed.

GSK's Mosquirix, also known as RTS,S, is specifically designed for use by African babies and toddlers. While it has the potential to help prevent many cases of malaria, researchers have been disappointed by its limited efficacy.

Hopes it could wipe out malaria were dampened when trial data in 2011 and 2012 showed it reduced episodes of the disease in babies aged 6-12 weeks by only 27 percent, and by about 46 percent in children aged 5-17 months.

Now scientists have discovered that genetic variability

in a protein found on the surface of malaria parasites may help explain the patchy response because, while the protein comes in different forms, GSK's vaccine incorporates only one variant. The new study, funded by the US National Institutes of Health, looked at blood from 5,000 youngsters and found that the vaccine gave less protection when toddlers were infected with parasites with a different protein variant to the vaccine.

GSK said the research was interesting but early-stage.

"This single study is too small to offer conclusive evidence for how RTS,S should be deployed," a spokeswoman said. "However, the work underscores how a full and comprehensive catalog of the genetic diversity of key pathogens could inform the design of clinical studies in the future," she said.

Experts advising the World Health Organisation (WHO) have been meeting in Geneva this week to draw up recommendations on how the vaccine could be used. —Reuters

# El Niño brings drought, hunger to Indonesia and South Pacific

**KETUNG MIRI VILLAGE** — Rice is so central to life in this tiny mountain village in Indonesia that Ngadimin uses the harvests as his calendar.

The weathered farmer breaks the year into harvests. There's the first harvest, then the second, with a growing season of alternative crops in between. It hasn't rained since "the second rice," said Ngadimin, who uses just one name like many Indonesians.

That harvest was about two months ago, before Indonesia was hit with one of the worst droughts in five years, causing plants to wilt on the stem, and water levels to drop to precarious levels. His fields would normally be flooded this time of year, but the dried, cracked earth is evidence of drought, and Ngadimin has had to switch to crops that don't need much water.

"We plant rice during rainy season, (but) now we are planting chili," he told IRIN.

Local rice production was down 20 percent at the last harvest in Ketung Miri, according to the village chief, Sugianto, and it could be months before farmers can plant again. Farming communities throughout Indonesia are struggling with drought as rising sea temperatures associated with this year's El Niño weather phenomenon affect rainfall across the globe. Governments in Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Samoa report similar situations as the region struggles to cope with what is shaping up to be the worst El Niño event since 1997-1998, when the weather phenomenon caused sugarcane harvests to fail and closed schools in nations across the South Pacific.

Indonesia's disaster mitigation agency reported that, by the end of August, there were drought conditions in 84 provinces affecting some 22 million people. It warned that Novem-



Ngadimin in his field in Ketung Miri village in Indonesia's Special Region of Yogyakarta in October 2015. Normally the field would be flooded, but his rice harvest failed due to drought so he planted tobacco and chilis. PHOTO: IRIN

ber's onset of the rainy season would likely be delayed into next year.

The Indonesian government announced plans this month to resume rice imports by the end of the year as national rice stocks, battered by the drought and an increase in subsidised rice handouts for the poor, continued to drop. In a typical year, the planting season would already be under way, but in villages like Ketung Miri, fields remain fallow or stocked with secondary commodities like tobacco, chili and corn that require less water than rice. Indonesia's poor and middle class remain particularly vulnerable to price shocks. According to World Bank data, nearly 100 million people hover around the

**"Communities, governments and humanitarian partners need to prepare now for a long road ahead."**

Sune Gudnitz  
OCHA

poverty line. Nationwide, the UN World Food Programme estimates that 37 percent of children under the age of five are chronically malnourished.

"I am concerned about what might happen if the rains don't come," said Anthea Webb, the

WFP representative in Indonesia.

"This is such a big country with such an important rice culture that if there are impacts on production when prices are already very high, I would be very worried about the nutritional situation, which is quite precarious compared to other countries in the region."

Webb said she was most concerned about those living in the Indonesian archipelago's underdeveloped eastern provinces like East and West Nusa Tenggara where many of the country's most vulnerable people live.

"They tend to have difficulty meeting their own needs when production is at the best of times," she said.

The situation is worse in the

island nations of the South Pacific, according to the regional office of the UN emergency aid coordination body OCHA. Fiji is experiencing serious water shortages, with the local government making emergency deliveries to 67,000 people, or 13 percent of the country's population. Government officials estimate that sugarcane production has fallen 25 percent since the drought began. Tropical cyclone Pam battered the nation of Vanuatu, destroying water tanks and decimating crops across the country. Emergency response teams estimate that more than 90,000 people are in need of food and water deliveries, especially in the country's hard-hit regions like North Tanna, where food shortages have already claimed at least one life.

It's been at least two months since rain fell in most affected South Pacific countries, raising concerns that the region may be in need of long-term humanitarian aid throughout the coming year, explained Sune Gudnitz, regional Pacific office head of OCHA. "That is a long time for a community to go without water or food crops," Gudnitz said. "Communities, governments and humanitarian partners need to prepare now for a long road ahead."

In Ketung Miri, farmers like Ngadimin are attempting to ride out the drought with alternative crops. Ngadimin planted cabe rawit, the small, fiery chilis that are a staple ingredient in Indonesian cooking. But so did everyone else in this drought-hit region, causing prices to plummet as much as 70 percent.

It's enough to leave Sugianto worried for the future of his village. "We are in difficult times," Sugianto said. "The costs are already so high and then when we do sell (our crops) it's for no money."—IRIN

## Brazil gives SBM ultimatum in \$250m bribery settlement

**BRASILIA** — Brazil has told Dutch SBM Offshore NV, the world's top oil production ship leaser, to agree soon to a \$250 million bribery settlement if it wants to regain its biggest client in the world's largest oilship market, a government source told Reuters.

The ultimatum gives SBM several days to sign a leniency deal that includes financial reparation and other clauses such as cooperation with a corruption investigation. The settlement, which has been under negotiation for months, would lift a ban on the Amsterdam-based firm from bidding for new business with Petrobras, Brazil's state-run oil company. Petrobras, whose officials were accused by Brazilian prosecutors of accepting bribes from SBM representatives in order to win contracts, will receive the proceeds

of the deal, gaining badly needed cash to finance expansion and pay debt, the largest in the oil industry. Petrobras officials were not immediately available for comment. SBM had no immediate comment on the matter.

The government source, who asked not to be named because he is involved in the negotiations, told Reuters on Wednesday that an agreement was very close but there remained a 50-50 chance of the talks folding over difficulties related to a few final clauses.

"We have negotiated endlessly and we gave them an ultimatum: Either we finish now or we break off talks and the company will be penalized," the source said.

The official did not detail the stumbling blocks but he said negotiations had been particularly complex because they involved several

parties, including the Comptroller General's office, which is the main negotiator, as well as Rio de Janeiro state prosecutors and Petroleo Brasileiro SA, as the oil company is formally known.

The source confirmed that the leniency deal under negotiation involves payment by SBM to Petrobras of about 1 billion reais (\$253 million), part of which would be paid in cash and the rest in services to be provided by the Dutch company to Petrobras. Brazilian prosecutors had accused SBM of paying millions of dollars in bribes between 1995 and 2003 to secure contracts with Petrobras. Since the corruption scandal emerged, SBM and other suppliers, including construction and engineering firms, have been implicated, resulting in a ban on doing business with Petrobras.—Reuters

## Six killed in eastern Congo by suspected Ugandan rebels

**KINSHASA** — Six bodies were found with stab wounds and bullet holes in northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo on Wednesday, killed by suspected Ugandan Islamist rebels, local and military sources said on Thursday.

The Centre of Study for the Promotion of Peace, Democracy and Human Rights (CEPADHO), a local activist group, said the bodies were found in the village of Kamakombu, more than 30 kilometers (19 miles) north-east of the territorial capital of Beni.

CEPADHO said in a statement it believes the victims were killed by fighters from the Allied Democratic For-

ces (ADF), an Islamist group founded in Uganda that has operated primarily on the Congolese side of the border for the last two decades and is active in the illicit trade of minerals and timber.

A commander of Congolese army operations against the ADF, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed the death toll and presumed ADF involvement, adding that the bodies were heavily decomposed.

Local activists say that more than 500 people have been killed in overnight massacres in the Beni area since last October, mostly in attacks with machetes and hatchets.—Reuters

# Zimbabwe's Mugabe warms to West as economy wobbles

HARARE — Robert Mugabe's anti-Western rhetoric has been conspicuous by its absence of late, a sign the 91-year-old leader has mellowed or realized that Zimbabwe may need financial help.

A year ago, the veteran turned to "old friend" China, but behind the official warmth Beijing made clear the days of blank cheques were over, forcing Harare to make repayments on \$1 billion of loans made over the previous five years.

Since then, the southern African nation's economic plight has worsened and Mugabe said he may need the support of foreign creditors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which he likened in 2006 to "the devil" and "a political monster".

"The economy is in such a dire state and Mugabe's rapprochement with Western donors is a realization that he has very few options — even if he may have personal misgivings and it goes against his political beliefs," said John Robertson, a Harare-based economist.

The government is forecasting growth of 1.5 percent this year but many analysts say Zimbabwe is



Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe greets other attendees before the sixth high-level meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region, during the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in Manhattan, New York on 29 September, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

tilting towards recession — its first since 2008, when hyperinflation clocked 500 billion percent and Mugabe lost his first ever election.

Deflation has taken root as consumer demand shrinks and the economy struggles with a shortage of dollars. Once bustling factories in Harare are now rusty shells, devastated by the 1999-2008 recession that cut GDP by about half.

In addition, the mines are reeling from the fall in commodity prices and a drought has left 16 percent of the population needing food aid. Formal unemployment stands at more than 80 percent and power shortages are getting worse.

"This is the worst since 2008. The economy looks very bleak and there is a lot of negative sentiment,"

said Anthony Hawkins, economics professor at University of Zimbabwe's Graduate School of Management who predicts a 1 percent contraction this year.

The third quarter Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries' latest Purchasing Managers Index stood at 43.1, only a shade above the 42 level that indicates a recession.—Reuters

## German police warn of racist attacks on pro-refugee politicians

BERLIN — German police warned on Thursday of a growing risk of racially motivated attacks on politicians by right-wing radicals angry about an influx of migrants, and said crimes directed at refugee shelters were rising dramatically.

The warning comes five days after Germans were shocked by the stabbing of Henriette Reker, a mayoral candidate in the city of Cologne. She was stabbed in the neck and seriously wounded on the eve of Sunday's election, which she won.

Germany is struggling to cope with the arrival of an expected 800,000 to 1

million migrants this year, many from war zones in the Middle East, and politicians are openly worrying about a potential rise

**"The rise in xenophobic violence is shameful for our country."**

Heiko Maas  
Justice Minister

in right-wing radicalism.

The BKA federal police said in the third quarter alone, 285 offences were reported against

asylum-seekers' shelters, compared with 198 for the whole of last year. The crimes included arson, criminal damage and incitement.

So far this year, 576 crimes on refugee accommodation were reported. The BKA said there was also an increased risk of aggression towards "people perceived as responsible, for example politicians or people who run the shelters".

Justice Minister Heiko Maas said in a statement: "The rise in xenophobic violence is shameful for our country."

Reker has been work-

en from an artificially induced coma and could make a full recovery, media have reported. An independent candidate with the support of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, liberal Free Democrats and Greens, she is known to have helped refugees. Media have reported that the attacker has links to right-wing radicals.

On Thursday, police in the southern state of Bavaria arrested three people with a right-wing background and seized firearms from property linked to them, state Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said.—Reuters

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV E.R TURKU VOY NO (083W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV E.R TURKU VOY NO (083W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims 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 HANJIN SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MOROTAI VOY NO (274YFR)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MOROTAI VOY NO (274YFR) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims 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 CMA CGM LINE

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV ESG CREMONA VOY NO (135W)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ESG CREMONA VOY NO (135W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims 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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## WEATHER REPORT

**BAY INFERENCE:** Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 23rd October, 2015:** Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Yangon and Taninthayi Regions, Kachin, Kayin and Mon States and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region.

# The future is here! Fans celebrate 'Back to the Future' day

LOS ANGELES — When Marty McFly travelled to the future in the 1989 "Back to the Future" sequel — to 21 October, 2015, to be precise — he was greeted by flying cars, self-tying sneakers and hovering skateboards.

The futuristic items were from a distant world for the time-travelling teenager on a journey from 1985 to 2015 to save his children.

But that day finally arrived on Wednesday, dubbed "Back to the Future Day" as fans of the blockbuster trilogy around the world celebrated the movie milestone. Social media sites were ablaze with talk about the sci-fi adventure, cinemas held special screenings of the film and companies jumped in on the hype with savvy adverts.

US President Barack Obama tweeted: "Happy Back to the Future Day, @realmikefox! Ever think about the fact that we live in the future we dreamed of then?"

That's heavy, man."

At the Houston, Texas headquarters of DeLorean cars, whose gull-winged DMC-12 model was adapted in the film into a time machine, crowds gathered to mark the anniversary.

"A lot of people are getting their cameras out and taking pictures," DeLorean Motor Co CEO Stephen Wynne told reporters. "When we opened... at 8 o'clock this morning, a woman ran in and she was dressed as Marty McFly and everybody goes, 'whoa!'"

In Canada, a playful recall announcement on the official Health Canada website said that "a certain DMC-12 car converted into a time machine, a defect in the flux capacitor could lead to inability to travel through time. Doc Brown will affect repairs."

One short scene has US baseball fans abuzz. A holographic news board informs Marty McFly that the long-suffering Chicago Cubs have won the 2015 World Series.—Reuters



Characters from the film 'Back to the Future Part II', Toby Fulp, 38, (2nd L) and Tommy Mack, 45, stand outside the Burger King featured in the movie, in Los Angeles, California, United States, on 21 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## New Bond 'Spectre' plays like a swan song, and a long one



Lea Seydoux, Daniel Craig and Monica Bellucci. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — It may be no coincidence that Agent 007's latest love interest, played by French actress Lea Seydoux in the new James Bond movie "Spectre," is called Madeleine Swann, because the film seems like a swan song for some of the participants.

Both Daniel Craig, playing Bond for the fourth time in the film screened for the press in London on Wednesday, and director Sam Mendes, in his second outing for the now 24-film franchise, have been widely reported as saying they want out.

Craig has even gone so far as to say he would rather slit his wrists than play Bond again.

In the ways of the movie world and successful franchises — the last Bond film, "Skyfall", raked in some \$1.1 billion at the box office worldwide - all that could change come Bond 25.

But this slick but overlong, at well over two hours, outing

that takes viewers on an armchair journey from Mexico City to London to Rome to Austria to Tunisia and then back to London, has a somewhat tired feel about it, as if it had overgorged on a diet of Aston Martin cars, Omega watches and Belvedere vodka — among the main product placements.

Michael Wilson, a co-producer of the film, said onstage at a central London screening in advance of the British premiere next week that he hoped the press would tweet opinions, but not spoilers. The film, though, trumpets roughly within the first half hour — so no spoiler here — that the high-rise, high-tech offices of a new uber intelligence agency being created in London, which will make double-0 agents like Bond superfluous, has been paid for with private funds — a heavy hint of what is up.

In other scenes, Mendes and the scriptwriters have had

fun, referencing scenes from gangster and crime-steeped films like "The Untouchables" — for an underworld boardroom ghastriness — to "The Italian Job" where Bond's latest Aston Martin supercar and an Audi replace Minis careening down steps in Rome.

There is a ring which will unite them all, as in "The Lord of the Rings", but saying what it will unite and why — that would be a spoiler.

That leaves Bond and his villains — in this case the Austrian Christoph Waltz, reprising a Bond villain of the past — but there are 23 previous films, so that is no spoiler — and his Bond girls.

There are three, but the only one who makes an impression is Seydoux, who gets a great catwalk moment in the dining car of an "Orient Express"-style train, wearing a mostly not-there dress.

Which brings us back to the Seydoux character's name — Madeleine Swann.

This film, with its villain from the past, and Bond rummaging back in time for answers to the film's mysteries, is riffing on the French author Marcel Proust, one of whose main characters was Swann and whose memories of childhood were triggered by eating a sweet madeleine cake.

That is no spoiler, but unfortunately it also may be one of the film's best takeaways, and surely literary allusions are not what audiences want from a Bond film.—Reuters

## Hrithik yet to take call on Nikhil Advani's 'Bazaar'

MUMBAI — Director Nikhil Advani said Hrithik Roshan has not walked out of his next project "Bazaar" and the actor is yet to give the final nod.

Gossip mills were abuzz that Hrithik had walked out of the project after Nikhil's unsuccessful films — "Hero" and "Katti Batti" but the director clarified that he is yet to finish the final draft of the script and then only things will be

sealed. "Hrithik and I had a conversation about the film only once. I am presently working on the final draft of the script.

Post which I would narrate the story to Hrithik and then he would decide about the film," Nikhil told PTI. There were also reports that he has put the project on hold, to which Nikhil said, "It's not true.. we are working on the final draft of the script." —PTI

## Adele tweets new album is '25', no release date set

LONDON — British singer Adele announced on Twitter on Wednesday that her new album, her first in four years, would be called "25".

The singer won six Grammy awards for her 2011 album "21" and an Academy Award for the theme song for the last James Bond movie, "Skyfall".

"My last record was a break-up record, and if I had to label this one, I would call it a make-up record," Adele said in the statement posted on Twitter, which did not reveal a release date.

"Making up for lost time. Making up for everything I ever did and never did," she added. The singer, who gave birth to her first son, Angelo, in October 2012, has followed a pattern of naming her albums for her age at the time she has created them, having called her debut album "19".

"25 is about getting to know who I've become without realising," she said in the post. "And I'm sorry it took so long, but you know, life happened."

Adele records for the inde-

pendent British label XL. Her album "21" surpassed the 11 million sales mark in the United States, according to Nielsen Soundscan, and was only the 12<sup>th</sup> album to reach that level since Soundscan began tracking the market in 1991.—Reuters



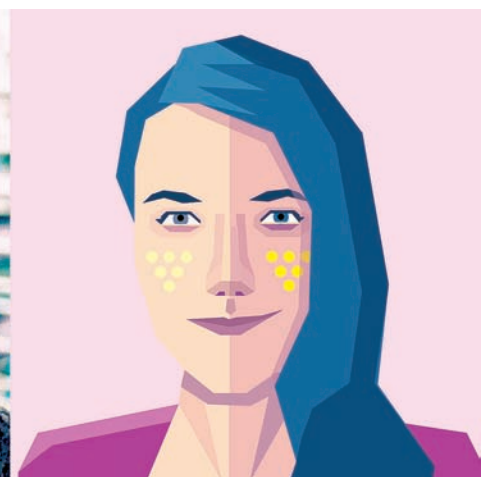
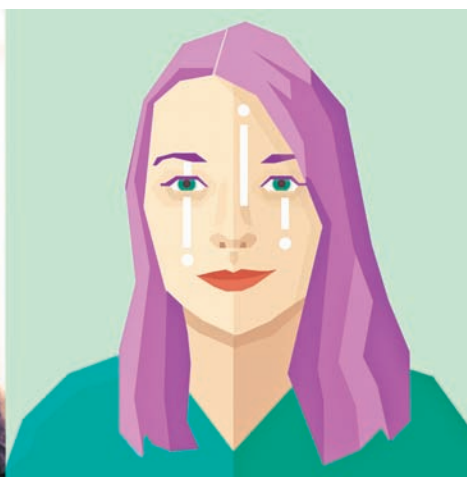
PHOTO: REUTERS



Yangon Redesigned, a community project that encourages Yangon residents to think critically about design, has launched a competition to find the most creative thanaka artist in the city. Thanaka enthusiasts can enter by posting selfies to the Yangon Redesigned Facebook page. The contestant with the most inventive thanaka face (or body) art will win a custom portrait by one of the lovely designers! The competition ends on 30 October.



Can you compete with these beautiful faces?



You could be transformed like these handsome humans.

More than 20 members of the Yangon Ultimate Frisbee club held a series of friendly matches at Shwe Hin Tha Resort at Nwe Saung Beach on 17 and 18 October to celebrate life in general. Once a secret well-kept by North American teachers, Yangon's finest frisbee club gradually opened its doors to journalists, entrepreneurs and humanitarians over the previous fiscal year. The group meets at the practice fields opposite Thuwanna National Stadium every Tuesday at 4:45 pm. Newcomers of all skill levels and vocations are welcome.



Yangon Ultimate Frisbee members pride themselves on their above-average intelligence and physical beauty. PHOTO: MONIKA TRAIKOV



7<sup>th</sup> Joint Bar & Grill, downtown Yangon's famed reggae-themed party palace, threw a special bash called Fusion — a "Ragga Jungle & DNB Music Mix", featuring guest DJs from Prague, last Saturday night. 7<sup>th</sup> Joint also hosts open mic nights on Tuesdays, Burmese music sets on Wednesdays and other live bands on Fridays. Be sure to check them out.



DJ? Czech. PHOTO: 7<sup>th</sup> JOINT BAR & GRILL

## Soe Minn Kyaw wins Myanmar Open Chess Tournament

THE final matches and award ceremony for the Myanmar Open Chess Tournament were held at Aung San Indoor Stadium in Yangon on 22 October.

Soe Minn Kyaw from the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry won the tournament with 9 victories in 11 rounds. Nay U Kyaw Tun from the Ministry of Home Affairs was the runner-up, and Saw Win Aung from Yangon Region was the second runner-up. The contestants were awarded either a trophy or a cash prize.

Below the top three winners Thet Naung from Mandalay Region placed fourth, Than Minn Hlaing placed fifth, Kyaw Linn Naing placed sixth, Htay Min Lwin placed seventh, Sithu placed eighth, Win Thu placed



Soe Minn Kyaw from Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry becomes the champion of Myanmar Open Chess Tournament. PHOTO: KO MOE

ninth and Myo Naing placed tenth. These contestants also received awards at the ceremony.

"I did my best to prepare for this tournament. I studied books

and followed instructions from the guides. I tried hard. I am so happy to have won this prize," said winner Soe Minn Kyaw.

Participants in the Myanmar

Open Chess Tournament who came in tenth place or above will qualify to enter the 42nd Myanmar National Chess Championship in 2016, and those who came in 20th place and above will be offered free registration at the Myanmar International Open Chess Tournament 2015 at the Central Hotel in Yangon in November. Contestants who placed 21st to 30th in the tournament will be eligible for a 75 percent discount on registration for the Myanmar International Open Chess Tournament 2015. Players that placed 31st to 40th are eligible for a 50 percent discount.

114 contestants from across the country participated in the tournament, which lasted from 15 to 22 October.—*Ko Moe*

## Myanmar Golf players en route to UAE for 27<sup>th</sup> Nomura Cup

MYANMAR golf players left Yangon for Yas Links Golf Club in the United Arab Emirates on the 19 October to compete in the 27th Nomura Cup 2015, held from 22 to 25 October.

The Myanmar competitors are Kyaw Thet Oo, Sithu Ye Yint, Hlaing Minn Htet and Zin Aung Min. The Myanmar Golf Federation (MGF) sent the players to the UAE to gain international golfing experience and to compete abroad for the sake of developing their skills and cultivating an interest in golf inside Myanmar, according to the federation.—*MNA*

## Man United prepare for Van Gaal's test against City

LONDON—Manchester United and Manchester City must switch their focus from the Champions League to the Premier League when they meet at Old Trafford on Sunday in a derby that Louis van Gaal says will show whether United are true title contenders.

United face City after labouring to a 1-1 draw with CSKA Moscow in the cold Russian capital on Wednesday while City make the short trip across town basking in the glow of their late 2-1 home win over Sevilla.

United must be ready because their manager Van Gaal believes a win for his side is vitally important.

"We have to be more consistent so next week when we win against Manchester City then we can say 'OK, now we think maybe about title aspirations'," the Dutchman said after last week's 3-0 win over Everton.

However Arsenal could be top for the first time in nearly two years by the time the two Manchester clubs meet on Sunday if they beat Everton on Sat-

urday evening.

Arsenal have been in electrifying form recently with three successive wins including a 3-0 victory over Manchester United and a 2-0 Champions League win over Bayern Munich, and now face an Everton side, eager to put last week's defeat by United out of their minds.

With nine matches played, City top the table with 21 points, followed by Arsenal and United on 19, with West Ham United a further two back on 17.—*Reuters*



Anthony Martial celebrates with Chris Smalling after scoring the first goal for Manchester United. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Competitive climbers hope the sport makes Olympic grade

AMERICAN rock-climbing wizard Alex Honnold insists he would not compete in the Olympics even if his sport gets the nod for inclusion in the 2020 Tokyo Games.

It is not that Honnold does not care for the Olympics or does not like to compete. The man widely considered the best free climber of his generation says he just is not good enough.

"The real reason I wouldn't compete in the Olympics is just because I wouldn't even be able to qualify," the 30-year-old Honnold told Reuters, the day before a climb in the Patagonia region of Chile. "Competitive climbing is basically a whole different sub-sport."

"I'm more of an adventurer: lots of travel, lots of new routes outdoors, not so much training inside. I can't climb at nearly the level required for competition."

While Honnold enjoys scaling the famed El Capitan in California's Yosemite National Park or tackling Borneo's formidable Mount Kinabalu, he says a timed ascent of a manmade mountain does not interest him.

Sport climbing is one of five sports recommended for inclusion in the Olympics by organizers of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, along with skateboarding, surfing, baseball/softball and karate. Under new rules, Olympic host

cities can pick sports for possible inclusion at the Games in addition to the existing 28 core sports.

The International Olympic Committee must approve the addition of sport climbing and the

other recommended sports.

Competitive climbing, of which sport climbing is one of the disciplines, secured a foothold in Europe in the early 1980s and then gained traction in the United States a decade later.

Now, it is gaining a following in other parts of the world.

"It makes sense to put the sport into the Olympics, where it's more on the world's stage and people can get a really good idea of what this thing is," said Tyson Schoene, head coach of the five-time US champion Vertical World climbing team, based in Washington state.

"It's really popular right now, and not just with young kids. College-age kids also love it. And older. And here in the Seattle area, it's grown enormously in the last five years."

Schoene said the sport is appealing because it combines fun with a full workout.

"It has very little to do with hard training for climbing. It's something that gets your body active and uses all these muscle groups you've never really used before," he said.

"And it's different. It's not like putting on your running shoes and running around the lake, where you're bored to death. It's interesting, and that's why it's grabbing folks."—*Reuters*



Drew Ruana, 16, a competitive climbing national champion, trains at Stone Gardens rock climbing gym in Bellevue, Washington, on 20 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS