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## LIGHT FESTIVAL IN RIVER

### Floating lamps shine on the Shwegyin River

Aye Min Soe

DESPITE a sudden half hour downpour in the afternoon the annual festival of the floating of the lamps on the Shwegyin in eastern Bago Region on Thursday was a complete success, attracting thousands of local residents and visitors from afar.

On this day each year people are invited to float lamps on the Shwegyin River. The event takes place during the nine-day long festival and occurs after the Full Moon Day of the Thadingyut, in October marking the end of the Buddhist Rains Retreat.

Even before the lamp floating visitors were lining the bank of the river to enjoy boat rowing contests and spectacles such as dance performances by troupes on boats. The entertainment is known as the “festival on water”.

Meanwhile, shops and a traditional theatre are set up in town to complete the festival; this half is known as “the festival on land”.

On the final day the river bank is crowded with spectators, boats carry visitors up and down the river to enjoy the entertainment and to float their lamps.

When the sun sets a decorated barge, themed in the image of Ashin Uppa Gutta tours along the river for public observance whilst lights are set in the water on the bank.

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Locals float lamps in the Shwegyin River to mark the end of Buddhist Rains Retreat. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

## Myanmar sees increase in health care spending, British research firm says

Ye Myint

SPENDING on public health services in Myanmar has risen this year as the government moves ahead with its plan to provide health care coverage to all citizens by 2030, a UK-based research firm has confirmed.

In its recent news update the Oxford Business Group, a British company that produces detailed analysis of yearly finances in 32 countries stressed the need to significantly increase spending on health care and related infra-

structure in rural areas which are home to roughly 70 percent of the country’s total population of 51 million.

Higher budget allocation for health spending, US\$ 592.3 million, represents an almost 7 percent increase over last year’s budget. The increase is in line with the government’s planned funding increase for the financial year.

The Group quoted local media reporting that the increased funds are earmarked for the purchase of advanced medical

equipment like electro-surgical technology and the provision of free medical treatment for government employees.

The government plans to begin training some 5,600 medical professionals and 1,300 nurses over the course of the current budget cycle to address the disparity in the number of health-care professionals versus number of patients requiring care, it said.

The firm pointed out that the country currently has fewer doctors per capita than other nations in the region.

According to the World Health Organisation there are 6.1 doctors per 10,000 people in Myanmar compared to 11.9 in Vietnam, 19.5 in Singapore and 23 in Japan.

On private sector potential the report found that the demand for private health services is expected to rise in tandem with government health spending.

With the gradual emergence of a middle class that offers a wide pool of potential customers to advanced medical services and a rapid influx of foreign tourists

and expats there has been a growing demand on the country’s private health care sector, it said.

The group expects to see a reduced outflows of those seeking care overseas as domestic facilities and services improve and specialised treatment options expand.

According to sources at home health care expenditure, which is currently set at around \$30 per capita is expected to reach \$200 within the next decade as the provision of state health care funding increases in the future.

## Japanese solar lamps to help ballot count in the election



Union Election Commission Chairman U Tin Aye accepts solar lamps from Japanese Ambassador Mr. Tateshi Higuchi. PHOTO: MNA

A HANDOVER ceremony for solar lamps to assist in counting ballots for the election was held in the Union Election Commission (UEC) office in Nay Pyi Taw on Friday. Chairman of the UEC U Tin Aye and party, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Tateshi Higuchi, and country director of UNDP Mr. Toily Kurbanov along with officials from the commission office attended the ceremony.

According to the agreement the UNDP and UEC have opted to purchase materials such as solar lamps and indelible ink. The UEC has distributed 51,298 solar lamps

to polling stations lacking access to electricity across the country. The chairman of the UEC expressed appreciation for Japan's assistance.

"The attempt by the UEC to hold a free and fair election will be important not only to the Myanmar people but also the international community," the Japanese Ambassador said.

"Utilising the solar lamps is a kind of trust building exercise between candidates and local voters," the country director of UNDP said.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Union Minister receives French Ambassador

UNION Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Ko Ko greeted the French Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Olivier Richard and his party at the ministry office on Friday.

They discussed general election security and bilateral coop-

eration. Together with the union minister, deputy minister Maj-Gen Aung Soe, officials of the Myanmar Police Force and General Administration Department attended the meeting.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Three NLD members injured in sword attack in Yangon

THREE members of the NLD political party were hospitalised following a sword attack on the outskirts of Yangon Region on Thursday. The attack broke out at the party's campaign rally in Thakayta township, with the local police saying that the brawl originated at a betel shop in the township.

Zaw Latt, a local, had a quarrel with U Aung Kyaw Kyaw, secretary of the township's National League for Democracy (NLD), at the betel shop. The assailant left the scene before returning to the shop with two friends but was not able to find the NLD's secretary. They then spotted a crowd following the party's campaign rally and started to attack NLD

members at random.

The attack injured three NLD members including U Naing Ngan Lin, an NLD candidate of the local constituency. All injured victims were taken to Yangon General Hospital. The local police station has detained three assailants. Witnesses said attacker Zaw Latt was not a known member of any political party and that the attack was personal. Campaign rallies organised by different parties have intensified in the lead up to the election but until now had remained more or less peaceful.

Authorities have promised to do everything in their power to ensure stability and peace before, during and after the elections.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Political parties support UECs decision not to hold election in four townships

THE Union Election Commission announced on Friday that its decision to postpone the 8 November election in two townships and in several village-tracts of another two townships in Shan State is in conformity with the law.

Before making the decision the UEC reviewed the reports of the local authorities, local sub-election commissions, political parties and candidates of the townships for the upcoming election, said the announcement of the UEC.

The announcement was discussed at the meeting of the election negotiation central committee Thursday in Nay Pyi Taw by all parties. There was unanimous support of the the UEC's decision.

The UEC also announced on Tuesday that they will not hold the 8 November election in Mongshu and Kehsi townships nor in 50 wards and village-tracts of Tangyang and Hopang townships in Shan State on the grounds that the region lacks stability.

The UEC's stated that the commission instructed the Shan State Election Commissions in June 2015 to inform the local political parties that if someone lodged complaints about election results, the

UEC would legally probe them to judge the fairness of the election.

The Union Election Commission has already announced in June 2015 that it might cancel or postpone the election in the areas where the situation calls into question the freedom and fairness in which the upcoming election can be held as political parties in the areas reported the UEC that RCSS/SSA (South) armed groups threatened locals in regards to the upcoming 8 November election.

The Shan State Nationalities Democratic Party-SNDP and other candidates on 21 October requested that the UEC suspend the election in three townships – Mongshu, Kehsi and Tangyang in eastern Shan State due to fighting between the Tatmadaw and local armed ethnic groups.

The Shan State government requested the UEC to suspend the election in the areas due to fighting that lasted from 6 to 10 October 2015.

The government also assumed that armed groups might threaten voters and officials in charge of the polling stations, causing hindrances to the freedom and fairness of the election.

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 a free election was possible in their area as they are currently displaced by the fighting.

The UEC announced Wednesday that it would allow civil service personnel, who will be working on the day of the election, to cast advance votes as of this Thursday if they apply to do so with the relevant ward/village sub-election commissions.

Those who will be on duty on election day will be allowed to cast their votes for the upcoming election on 6 and 7 November, according to the UEC.

Two members of a ward/village sub-election commission will be sent to visit those who cannot get themselves to a polling station in order to collect advanced votes from them.

The UEC invited candidates' agents, observers and media personnel to observe the advance voting process.

The UEC's director, U Thaug Hlaing told the press Tuesday that the commission would take action against anyone caught attempting to block Myanmar citizens from voting in advance if they are entitled to do so.

The final voters' list will be made publicly available at sub-election commissions nationwide on 2, 6 and 7 November.—*GNLM*

## Light festival in River

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It is the 164<sup>th</sup> year of the festival but the number of contests such as boat rowing competitions are lower than that of 10 years ago said U Win Lwin, 54.

"No leaders of the country were present on this significant day of this year. Perhaps they are busy with the election" said a retired banking officer, "that's why we do not see as many traditional contests now as there were in previous years."

The festival, about 10

years ago, boasted at least 40 entertainment troupes performing on decorated boats and bamboo rafts in the river but this year the number was not more than 10, said U Hla Shwe, a retired education officer of the Shwegyin Township Education Department. His visit to the event brought back fond memories of festivals past, the 63-year old education officer said.

To see the performance of group dance on boats is exciting, fantastic! Those were the words of Ko Thet, 30 year old staff member of a private school in Bago.

He also appreciated how

locals have preserved the traditional festival, now for more than 160 years. Visitors witnessed the capsizing of a boat full of festival goers on Thursday, a rescue boat rushed to the scene and there were no reported injuries. U Aung Myo Min, a visitor and private teacher from Bago said they did not hear of anyone suffering injury during the capsizing though it was a serious concern for him.

"The river with all the floating lamps is very nice at night but darkness increases the risk of accident for boats on the river," a local man said.



Performance of group dance on the boat in the Shwegyin River. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

# President visits Mazin reservoir



President U Thein Sein cordially greets children and local people at Mazin reservoir in Bago Township. PHOTO: MNA

PRESIDENT U Thein Sein left Patheingyi for Yangon by aircraft together with Union Ministers U Thein Nyunt, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, U Ohn Myint and Dr Than Aung, Maj-Gen Aung Kyaw Zaw of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and deputy ministers on Friday.

The president and party were

welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Chief Minister U Myint Swe of Yangon Region and officials.

The president and party proceeded to Mazin reservoir in Bago Township where they were greeted by Chief Minister of Bago Region U Nyan Win, officials and local people. On the

way to the briefing hall of the reservoir the remaining locals welcomed the president by waving, some held miniature state flags.

At the briefing hall the president heard reports on the water storage and flood prevention capacity of the reservoir. The president urged officials to supply drinking water to Bago and irri-

gate farms in the region. He also told officials to hurry up the complete cooperation projects with Japan International Cooperation Agency ahead of schedule and to take into account future development and population growth in implementing projects such as Mazin and Zalathaw reservoirs which are located near Hantha-

waddy International Airport Project.

The President looked into the reservoir which is located 500 feet upstream of the confluence of Mazin Creek and Kyetthoung Creek and supplies 11 million gallons of water for drinking and factories as well as irrigating 650 acres of farmland in Zainganaingyi village tract whilst preventing floods in the region.

Bago, situated on a low-land plain on the bank of the Bago River is prone to floods but dredging Mazin Creek from Gaungsaykyun Bridge to the Bago River has helped prevent floods in Bago and on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

The president and his party stopped in at the training branch of the Irrigation Department by car and heard about human resource development and irrigation technology before inspecting the library, hostels, irrigation equipment, control labs and scale models of irrigation set ups at the facility.

The training branch was established in March 1988 with the assistance of the Japanese Government to enhance irrigation technologies and to study the benefits of irrigation facilities on which the government spent a large amount of money.

The president and party arrived back in Yangon in the afternoon.—*Myanmar News Agency*

## Vice President attends meeting for organising Independence Day

VICE President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attended the first meeting of the Central Committee for Organising the 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Day at the meeting hall of the Union Government on Friday. Also present were members of the central committee, union ministers, deputy ministers and senior military officers.

At the meeting the vice president said that the ceremony to mark Independence Day is held every year in two parts – the state flag raising ceremony, where the message sent by the president is read out and which is held in the morning and the

Independence Day dinner which is held in the evening.

The vice president urged officials of subcommittees to make sure the Independence Day ceremony went smoothly by reviewing the ceremonies of previous years.

The secretary of the central committee explained the agenda of the ceremony and the formation of seven subcommittees before chairmen of the subcommittees reported to the central committee the arrangements for the ceremony. The meeting ended with concluding remarks by the vice president.—*Myanmar News Agency*



Vice President Dr Sai Mauk Kham addresses the meeting to organize 68<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence Day. PHOTO: MNA

## National NHRC requests Thai government protect human rights of two Myanmar prisoners

THE Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on 27 October sent a request to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand regarding the two Myanmar migrant workers arrested in a murder case in Thailand.

Thai police arrested two Myanmar brothers — Moe Zin Aung, 15, and Kyaw Ye Aung, 16, for their alleged involvement in the murder of an 18-year-old Thai schoolgirl in Ranong, southern Thailand, on 28 September.

The brothers are Myanmar

citizens who lived in Dawei before moving to Thailand for work.

In its request letter the commission called on the Thai authorities to ensure legal protection for the accused in accordance with the law of the Thailand, fair treatment on humanitarian

grounds and to allow them access to health services and lawyers as they are working in Thailand.

Even though they would have to face legal action if they were proven to have committed the crime the two boys, under 18, should have the right to a trial

in accordance with international standards of juvenile justice, the commission stated in its letter, requesting the Myanmar's MOFA and Thailand's NHRC to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to help the incarcerated brothers.—*MNHRC*

## Level Crossing Device at Kyansitthar Junction put into service

THE opening ceremony for level crossing device at Kyansitthar Junction between Toekyaunggalay Station and Ywathagyi Station was held in Yangon yesterday. The officials concerned from Myanmar Railways, Ministry of Rail Transportation, representatives from the Embassy of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and invited guests attended the ceremony.

U Aung Win, General Manager (Technical/Admin), Myanmar Railways, Ministry of Rail Transportation and Mr. Kazuyoshi Suzuki, Second Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Myanmar, delivered the opening remarks. Afterwards, U Aung Win, Mr. Kazuyoshi Suzuki, and U Htun Aung Thin, General Manager (Lower Myanmar), cut the ribbon to open the Kyansitthar Level Crossing.

The installation of the level crossing device at Kyansitthar Junction was the first component to have implemented under the project for installation of Operation Control Center System and Safety

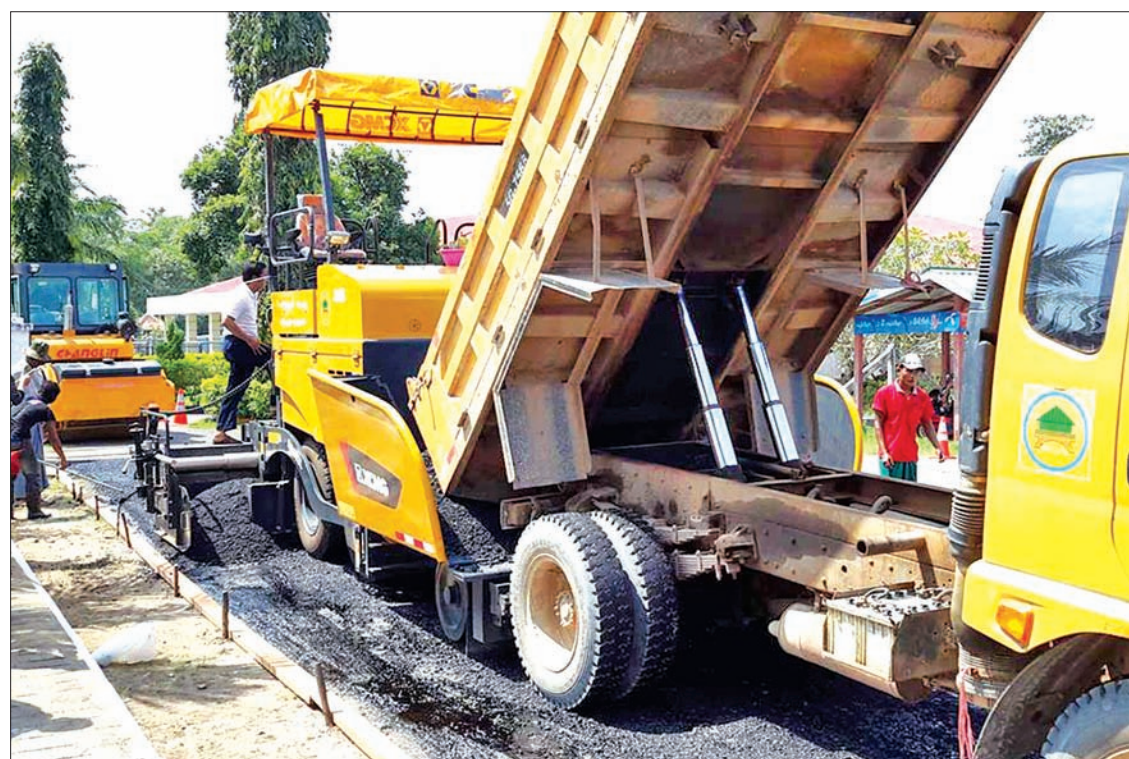
Equipment for which the Grant Agreement was signed between Myanmar Railways, Ministry of Rail Transportation and JICA on 24 March 2014. According to the said Grant Agreement, the Government of Japan provided maximum 4 Billion Japanese Yen to the Ministry of Rail Transportation to install related equipment for interlocking system, level crossing device, and centralized train monitoring system.

This Grant Aid Project aims to improve operation management and safety of Myanmar Railways, promote socioeconomic development and ensure safe and smooth travel and transport of the people of Myanmar. In this context, the project plays an important role in JICA's multi-scheme assistance to Myanmar Railways in modernizing Myanmar's railway development, particularly for Yangon Circular Line and Yangon-Mandalay Railway Line. The works for the remaining components of the Project are ongoing and expected to be completed in June 2017.—JICA



The newly installed level crossing device at Kyansitthar Junction. PHOTO: JICA

## Region govt upgrades local roads in Myeik



District Department of Highways places asphalt on local road in Myeik. Photo: Khaing Htoo (Myeik District IPRD)

THE Taninthayi Region government has provided K4.068 billion for the upgrade of a 6.75-mile asphalt road. Work on the road began last Monday according to the Myeik District Department of Highways.

The upgrade program includes the placing of asphalt concrete on seven local roads.

Region Chief Minister U Myat Ko inspected the placing of asphalt on Palemon-Airport Road on Wednesday and stressed

the importance of precision work to construction teams. The Palemon-Airport Road is being upgraded by engineers and skilled workers from the District Department of Highways.—Khaing Htoo (Myeik District IPRD)

## Electoral procedures for polling booth staff demonstrated

THE Ahlon Township Election Sub-commission and the Township Police Force have staged a joint demonstration on official procedures to polling booth officers and staff members in the 2015 general elections at the town hall in Ahlon Township, Yangon Region, yesterday.

The event was overseen by

police and staff of the General Administration Department.

The demonstration was attended by Township Administrator U Than Naing, Chairman of Township Election Sub-commission U Mya Tun, Commander of Township Police Force Police Major Tun Shwe and other officials.

—MOI Web Portal



Polling station staff and police participate in demonstration of electoral procedures in Ahlon Township. PHOTO: MOI WEB PORTAL

## Kalay region to grow more than 26,000 acres of cold season crops

LOCAL authorities are making arrangements for the cultivation of cold season crops on more than 26,000 acres of farmland in Kalay Township, Sagaing Region where monsoon paddy and other crops were destroyed by severe flash flooding this past raining season.

The Agricultural Mechanisation Department aided local farmers in clearing debris from farmland in 29 village-tracts of Kalay Township with the use of tractors. The teams ploughed more than 3,000 acres of farmlands for cold season use. The

department also ploughed farmlands in Kalewa Township and in Tamu Township with the aid of tractors.

The department ploughed the farmland of U Thein Aung in Insein village free of charge under an arrangement with the

chief minister of the region.

Chairman of Kalay District Management Committee U Maung Htoo and departmental officials inspected farmland preparation tasks within the township.

Local farmers from Nat-

myaung village have re-grown monsoon paddy on 1,826 acres of the 1,927 acres damaged by flooding. Local authorities provided seeds of cold season crops to farmers free of charge, enough to field 7,510 acres of farmlands.—Joe Net

## Mandalay Region's troupe to take part in performing arts competitions

A COORDINATION meeting took place for Mandalay Region's troupe in preparation for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Myanmar National Races' Performing Arts Competitions. The meeting took place at the hall of the region's government office on Thursday.

Region Minister for Finance Dr. Myint Kyu who chairs the committee for the victory of the region's troupe made a speech

while Head of the Information Department U Than Lwin of the Mandalay City Development Committee reported on preparations the troupe is undertaking.

Experts of the performing arts and officials of both universities and basic education departments discussed the participation of students at different levels in the competition.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*



Mandalay Region's coordination meeting on participation of artist troupe in performing arts competitions. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

## Ngwenan Tharyi dragon boat commissioned

A NEW dragon boat named Ngwenan Tharyi was commissioned into service on the Taninthayi River in Chaunggyi Ward, Taninthayi Region, on Tuesday.

Senior monks and officials in attendance sprinkled scented water on the boat.

A total of 42 boatmen led by Naung Than Soe Win rowed the river. They are currently undergoing training for participation in the traditional Dragon boat race in the township.

The new dragon boat is 75

feet long and four feet wide including a six-foot dragon figurehead. Six dragon boats will participate in skills demonstrations on the Taninthayi River this Sunday and pay homage to the ancient pagodas in the township.—*Htein Win (IPRD)*

## Sub-commissions discuss electoral procedures

UNION territory election sub-commission held a meeting with district and township sub-commissions at the hall of the Zabuthiri Township General Administration Department in Nay Pyi Taw Council

Area on Thursday.

Member of the Union Election Commission U Aung Myint spoke on electoral procedures and preparations before taking questions from officials of the various sub-commissions.—*District IPRD*

## Thai entrepreneurs showcase products at Thai Week 2015

THAILAND Week 2015 kicked off at Diamond Plaza in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay, on Thursday with region minister for planning and economy U Aung Zan, officials of Thai embassy, deputy director-general U Myint Lwin of Trade Promotion and Consumer Affairs Department

and Chairman of Mandalay Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Aung Than in attendance.

Minister Mr. Chainarong Keratiyutwong of the Thai Embassy and Region CCI Chairman U Aung Than made speeches.

The region minister and of-

icials formally opened Thailand Week and visited booths.

A total of 114 companies from Thailand showcase foodstuffs, beverages, cosmetics, household goods, textiles, household decorations and leather wares from 128 booths from 29 October to 1 November.—*Tin Maung (Mandalay)*

## Vocational course to improve livelihood of locals



Local women under training of making elephant figurines.

PHOTO: TUN TUN NAING (KYAUKSE)

A TRAINING course on the making elephant figurines for souvenir markets began in Indaing village, Kyaukse Township on Thursday with the aim of improving the livelihoods of local people.

"We receive offers from the businessmen of other townships for the manufacturing of souvenirs," Head of Township Rural Development Department U Soe Myint said.

Production cost is K300 per souvenir. Local people receive K4,000 per 10 souvenirs for their work. Altogether 32 trainees from six villages are attending the three-day course.

The Township Rural Development Department is running the vocational course on figurine making to locals from villages in the western part of Kyaukse Township.—*Tun Tun Naing (Kyaukse)*



People visit booths at Thailand Week 2015. PHOTO: TIN MAUNG

## Tawam bridge of Myitkyina Tsp nearing completion

TAWAM Bridge, a construction project located on Myitkyina-Namti-Tanai-Shinbweyan-Pansawng road in Kachin State is nearing completion. Work began on 1 June 2013 and is ongoing; the structure will be 1,260 feet long and 24 feet wide upon completion.

The final estimation of the construction cost is K4.32 billion. Work on the bridge is 70-percent complete as of this week.

The Union fund will be accessed in order to meet the project completion target which is set in

the 2015-16 fiscal year, Staff Officer Daw Tin Moe Khaing of the Department of Bridges said.

Completion of the bridge will allow the Myitkyina-Namti-Tanai-Shinbweyan-Pansawng road to become a Myanmar-China-India economic corridor.

For the 2015-16 fiscal year Kachin State intends to build 23 bridges that are 50 feet long or longer. So far eight bridges have been completed and 15 are under construction.—*Min Yazar (Myitkyina)*



Tawam Bridge under construction on Myitkyina-Namti-Tanai-Shinbweyan-Pansawng road.

PHOTO: MIN YAZAR (MYITKYINA)

# China child policy change doesn't herald surge in infant food demand

CHICAGO — Stock prices for baby food makers, which climbed after China pledged on Thursday to ease family planning restrictions, may have surged too soon, with analysts and one leading company predicting little chance of a significant bump in demand from the policy change.

Shares for milk-powder maker Danone SA (DANO.PA) hit a five-month high and Mead Johnson Nutrition Co (MJN.N) reached a two-month high after China's ruling Communist Party said it will allow all couples to have two children after decades of a strict one-child policy. The announcement comes at a time when sales for baby food and milk formula companies have weakened due to China's economic slowdown and its campaigns to promote breastfeeding. Global prices for whole milk powder fell in July to levels not seen since 2009, according to the US Department of Agriculture.

But no baby boom is not expected to be forthcoming soon as small families are an engrained part of Chinese culture and adding more children is too expensive for many. Analysts note that an easing of policy in late 2013, allowing couples to have a second child in



A boy leans on a sack of cabbages at a vegetable wholesale market in Jinan, Shandong Province. PHOTO: REUTERS

situations where one spouse was only child has only had a minor impact. As of June, only 1.5 million of the 11 million eligible couples had applied for second child.

Mead Johnson, one of the top five international baby formula brands in China, said it did not expect the policy adjustment to "significantly impact births or birth rates in China, consistent with

what we have seen in previous rounds of relaxation."

ANZ analysts added that a huge impact on milk powder demand for New Zealand, the top dairy exporter to China, was unlikely.

"It is primarily in the richer Eastern seaboard cities where consumers can afford formula based on New Zealand powders," they

wrote in a note to clients.

"Here, the policy has been less binding — particularly after the policy was relaxed somewhat in 2013, but also because wealthier people generally want fewer children. But it all helps at the margin."

New Zealand has seen its shipments of whole milk powder slide 65 percent in the first five months of 2015, according to the

USDA. Shares in the shareholder's fund of New Zealand's Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd (FCG.NZ), the world's biggest dairy exporter, made only modest gains on Friday morning.

Retail sales of baby food in China in 2011 totaled 68 billion yuan, or about \$10.7 billion, with sales of baby milk formula accounting for about 90 percent of the value, the USDA said in a report last month, citing data from Euromonitor. Fred Gale, a senior economist for the USDA, said he did not expect a detectable impact on dairy demand from the change in policy due to the expense of raising a child in China — a sentiment echoed by Chinese citizens posting to microblogging site Weibo.

But Bunge Ltd (BG.N), a top global agricultural trader, is predicting the change will add millions more babies to China's population over the long term. The change is "good for demand, but it's not necessarily steaks," Bunge Chief Executive Soren Schroder told Reuters.

"It's the whole spread of basic food, starting with infant nutrition and then working its way up to poultry, pork, processed foods of various types," he said.—Reuters

## THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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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.

## Korea's Park says 'comfort women' central to Japan summit



South Korean President Park Geun-hye. PHOTO: REUTERS

TOKYO — South Korean President Park Geun-hye said the emotional issue of "comfort women", who were forced into prostitution at Japanese wartime brothels, would be central at this weekend's bilateral summit and key to stable ties with Japan.

Park and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe are set to hold their first two-way talks since taking office, an effort to mend ties chilled by what South Korea sees as repeated failures by leaders in Tokyo to properly atone for wartime atrocities.

In an interview published in the *Asahi Shimbun* daily on Friday, Park said efforts by Japan to resolve long-festering issues such as the "comfort

women", as the mostly Korean women forced into prostitution are known, was needed for a "stable relationship".

"For that to happen, more than anything, some kind of progress on the important issue of victims of the Japanese military comfort women (system) is essential," Park was quoted as telling the *Asahi* in written replies to questions.

"I hope that this summit will be a chance to set a goal for a solution of this issue and that there will be no further hurt for either side on this."

Japan says the matter of compensation for the women was settled under the 1965 treaty setting diplomatic relations. In addition, then-Chief Cabinet

Secretary Yohei Kono apologized in a 1993 statement acknowledging authorities' involvement in coercing them.

In 1995, Japan created a fund to make payments to the women from donations, budgeted money for their welfare support and sent letters of apology from successive premiers.

South Korea has said that was insufficient because it was not official.

Park told the *Asahi* that steps must be taken soon, perhaps even within this year, given that most of the surviving women are around 90-years-old.

"It's extremely important that the Japanese government expresses, as soon as possible, a solution that the victims can accept and our citizens can understand," she said.

"I hope that the Japanese government will take this opportunity to express a healing solution that meets these expectations."

Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Hagiuda told a news conference that Japan's stance on the matter remains unchanged.

"There are many difficult issues between our nation, but that should mean no conditions are put on a leaders' meeting beforehand — as we have said repeatedly," he added.—Reuters

## Two Nobel laureates among year's 7 Order of Culture recipients

TOKYO — The government said Friday it has chosen Nobel Prize laureates Satoshi Omura and Takaaki Kajita as well as five other prominent figures as this year's recipients of the Order of Culture, Japan's top award for contributions to the development of culture.

Omura, 80, was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine, and Kajita, 56, was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in physics earlier this month.

Among the other five is Tatsuya Nakadai, 82, one of Japan's leading actors who has starred in many movies, including the 1980 film "Kagemusha" by director Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998).

The seven will receive their awards from Emperor Akihito at the Imperial Palace on the Cultural Day national holiday next Tuesday.

The government also said it has selected Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, an actress known for her best-selling childhood memoir "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window," Japan Football Association Supreme Advisor Saburo Kawabuchi, 78, and 14 others for this year's Person of Cultural Merit awards to be bestowed on 4 November.

Kajita will receive both awards this year.—Kyodo News

## Indonesia now looks at land-burning laws in effort to halt haze

JAKARTA — Indonesia is reviewing laws that allow farmers to burn up to two hectares (five acres), forestry officials said, the latest in so-far unsuccessful efforts to halt fires that have sent choking smoke across much of Southeast Asia.

Indonesia is also considering declaring a national emergency over the fires, which this week caused President Joko Widodo to cut short an official trip to the United States and pushed the country's greenhouse gas emissions above the daily average from all economic activity in the US.

A 2009 law allows smallholder farmers to use slash-and-burn

practices to clear land for agricultural purposes, and has been cited by green groups and plantation firms as a key cause of the annual fires when the burning gets out of control.

"The problem is that some people take advantage of this exception," Indonesia's environment and forestry minister, Siti Nurbaya Bakar, told reporters when asked about the law.

"In our last cabinet meeting, the president assigned us to review a regulation that allows land burning for two hectares."

Revising the law may need parliamentary support which could delay changes until 2016,

said Bakar, adding that the government was therefore considering an emergency regulation.

Forestry experts say the best way to clear forested areas is by tractors, chainsaws or hand tools. These methods are more expensive and time-consuming than fires.

The haze has caused pollution levels across the region to spike to unhealthy levels, and forced school closures and flight cancellations. Warships are on standby to evacuate infants and other vulnerable residents of haze-hit areas, while other countries have been asked for help to tackle the fires.—*Reuters*



Police tape is seen on land recently burned and newly-planted with palm trees and now under police investigation west of Palangkaraya, Central Kalimantan, Indonesia on 30 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## APEC declares multiple forestry priorities to achieve Asia Pacific's economic development-goals

SYDNEY — Increasing forest cover by up to 20 million hectares throughout the Asia Pacific by 2020, eradicating illegal logging and improving multi-lateral cooperation are among APEC's priorities for sustainable forestry practices.

The third APEC forestry ministers meeting has come to a close in Papua New Guinea, highlighting the importance of sustainable forest management in achieving the region's long-

term socio-economic development, local media reported on Friday.

The ministers also recognise role of appropriate policy frameworks to support private and cross-sector engagement including agricultural, forestry and other land use sub-sectors, the communique from the meeting said.

Papua New Guinea will host the APEC leaders summit in 2018.—*Xinhua*

## Cambodian parliament fires opposition vice president Kem Sokha

PHNOM PENH — The National Assembly voted on Friday to remove opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) vice president Kem Sokha from the post of the parliament's first vice president after a proposal from a majority of the lawmakers.

All 68 lawmakers from the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP), including Prime Minister Hun Sen, voted to remove him during a parliamentary session as all 55 CNRP lawmakers boycotted the session.

"I would like to announce that Kem Sokha was removed from the post of the National Assembly's first vice president successfully by the National Assembly," National Assembly president Heng Samrin said after the confidential vote.

He said the vote was made

at the request of 63 lawmakers.

On Monday, thousands of protesters, loyal to the CPP, also rallied outside the parliament to urge Kem Sokha to resign from the post of the parliament's first vice president. They accused Kem Sokha of inciting unrest and racial hatred.

Kem Sokha has become the parliament's first vice president after the ruling CPP and the opposition CNRP struck a political agreement on 22 July 2014. Under the deal, the CNRP ended its 10-month long boycott of the parliament following the disputed 2013 elections in exchange for parliamentary power sharing and electoral reform.

In the elections, the CPP won 68 parliamentary seats against 55 seats for the CNRP in the 123-seat parliament.—*Xinhua*

## China naval chief says minor incident could spark war in South China Sea

BEIJING — China's naval commander told his US counterpart that a minor incident could spark war in the South China Sea if the United States did not stop its "provocative acts" in the disputed waterway, the Chinese navy said on Friday.

Admiral Wu Shengli made the comments to US chief of naval operations Admiral John Richardson during a video teleconference on Thursday, according to a Chinese naval statement.

The two officers held talks after a US warship sailed within 12 nautical miles of one of Beijing's man-made islands in the contested Spratly archipelago on Tuesday.

China has rebuked Washington over the patrol, the most significant US challenge yet to territorial limits China effectively claims around its seven artificial islands in one of the world's busiest sea lanes.

"If the United States continues with these kinds of dan-

gerous, provocative acts, there could well be a seriously pressing situation between frontline forces from both sides on the sea and in the air, or even a minor incident that sparks war," the statement paraphrased Wu as saying.

"(I) hope the US side cherishes the good situation between the Chinese and US navies that has not come easily and avoids these kinds of incidents from happening again," Wu said.

Speaking earlier, a US official said the naval chiefs agreed to maintain dialogue and follow protocols to avoid clashes.

Scheduled port visits by US and Chinese ships and planned visits to China by senior US Navy officers remained on track, the official said.

"None of that is in jeopardy. Nothing has been canceled," said the official. Both officers agreed on the need to stick to protocols established under the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES).

"They agreed that it's very

important that both sides continue to use the protocols under the CUES agreement when they're operating close to keep the chances for misunderstanding and any kind of provocation from occurring," the US official said.

Indeed, Wu said he believed the Chinese and US navies had plenty of scope for cooperation and should both "play a positive role in maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea".

**"I hope the US cherishes the understanding between the Chinese and US navies. It does not always come easily and can help avoid these kinds of incidents."**

Admiral Wu Shengli

A US Navy spokesman stressed Washington's position that US freedom of navigation operations were meant to "protect the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace guaranteed to all nations under international law".

Chinese warships followed the USS Lassen, a guided-missile destroyer, as it moved through the Spratlys on Tuesday. The US Navy is operating in a maritime domain bristling with Chinese ships.

While the US Navy is expected to keep its technological edge in Asia for decades, China's potential trump card is sheer weight of numbers, with dozens of naval and coastguard vessels routinely deployed in the South China Sea, security experts say.

China has overlapping claims with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei in the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes every year.

Next week, Chinese Presi-

dent Xi Jinping will visit Vietnam and Singapore, while Chinese Defence Minister Chang Wanquan will attend a meeting of Southeast Asian defence ministers in Malaysia that US Defence Secretary Ash Carter is also due to attend.

Separately, China suffered a legal setback on Thursday when an arbitration court in the Netherlands ruled it had jurisdiction to hear some territorial claims the Philippines has filed against Beijing over the South China Sea.

The court said additional hearings would be held to decide the merits of the Philippines' arguments. China has not participated in the proceedings and does not recognize the court's authority in the case. Manila filed the case in 2013 to seek a ruling on its right to exploit the South China Sea waters in its 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) as allowed under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).—*Reuters*

## OPINION

### Revitalising education by adopting pedagogical innovations

Kyaw Thura

**T**HE transformation of Myanmar teaching and learning has become a central focus of reform in the educational sector of our country with an inch-by-inch shift from the teacher-centred to learner-centred approach. Simply put, the student-centred approach places children at the heart of the learning process.

All the educational institutions need to encourage their teaching staff to go with the tide of

the reform process by encouraging changes to the formal schooling system and vocational standards. A large number of educators in the system remain reluctant to embrace the reform.

Transforming the state educational approach involves ensuring that pedagogical practices meet the needs of learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These challenges require teachers and parents alike not to derive satisfaction from the achievement of their children in the old fashioned exam-oriented learning setting. The time is ripe for educators to revolutionise their methods and affect a dynamic change from exam-based results to a focus on the entire learning process.

As part of the educational reform effort the government has announced its plan to introduce a shift in basic education from K+10 to K+12 as of the 2016 academic year. This initiative brings welcome change but careful consideration should be given to the fact that curriculum renewal without pedagogical

innovations in the process of teaching and learning will not yield the desired outcome. It will at the very least yield a poor return on their investment.

A shift of the assessment system from summative to formative functions is another important point in helping children acquire the learnability based on experiential knowledge. The onus is on all educators to revitalise our education system. Children, after all, are the future of the nation.

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## Nationalism, Patriotism, Racism and Religionism

Khin Maung Myint  
(MPT Retired)

**D**URING the struggles for freedom, or in other words, Independence of a nation, it was seen that every country's national leaders promote the **nationalist** spirit or the **nationalism**. It proved to be very effective in rallying the people for the cause. Without **nationalism**, the people wouldn't be united or dedicated. **Nationalism** is the foundation of **patriotism**, a very noble and honorable spirit born of one's love for one's country and always prepared to sacrifice or to give one's life for the country. However, if misguided, **nationalism** could turn into **racism**, which is undesirable. Extreme **racism** had been seen to breed undesirable behaviours, such as arrogance, discrimination, hatred and could eventually lead to ruthlessness and end up in **terrorism**.

During our struggles for independence, our national leaders had promoted the **nationalism** and guided it, in the right directions that achieved their goals. Likewise, other nations in Asia, which struggled or in some cases, fought for their independence also promoted the **nationalism** to the peak and achieved their goals. However, once their missions were accomplished, they tone down the **nationalism** and guided their people not to hate the colonists who once ruled over them. Most remarkable examples are those of Singapore and Vietnam.

Singaporeans in their struggle for independence nurtured the nationalist spirit or **nationalism** and stood up against the British rulers. Once they

gained independence, they bore no grudge to their former rulers, but maintained friendly relations and spoke no ill of them. The Vietnamese, who had to wage war against their colonialist rulers, the French for independence and also had to fight the Americans who sided with the South, tried to forget and forgive and moved on. Those two countries are prospering today.

Other former colonies in Asia also maintained good relationships with the British and remained in the Commonwealth as members until today. I am citing this to make my point that **nationalist spirit** or the **nationalism** should not turn into **racism**. **Racism**, if pushed to the extremes, as in the case of the Nazis, could turn into hatred. **Nationalism**, if channeled in the right direction would turn into **patriotism**, which is a great asset in building a nation.

Today if we observe the other countries around the world, we are bound to find that, the present day wars or armed clashes are either **racially** or **religiously** motivated. The old concept or the definition of war was, if an issue or a dispute between two nations couldn't be settled on the table, i.e, politically or by negotiations, they could lead to armed conflicts or wars. However, in my opinion that concept had changed. Look everywhere in the world today, and we are bound to see that the armed clashes and the wars are **racially** or **religiously** motivated. In extreme cases, there are armed conflicts between different sects belonging to the same **race** or **religion**. In my personal views, **racially** motivated conflicts rarely flared up into armed conflicts but mostly into riots, which could lead to bloodsheds. Even in a democratic country

like the US and South Africa of the past, almost all the riots are instigated by **racism**. The **supremacism** or in other words, the **race supremacy** mentalities or attitudes are behind those conflicts. All these mindsets had taken root since the birth of those nations.

At one point, it had taken a dangerous turn. Not only the **race** but the colour of the skins is being discriminated. In many public places in the US in the sixties, I had come across signs that read: "**Whites Only**" or "**Blacks Not Allowed**" or "**No Coloured**". By the term "**coloured**", they included the Asians, especially those of East and South East Asian origins. In their opinion we

would be the **religionism** that would lead to a global war.

The bloody riots that took place in our country were the results of the extreme **racisms** that got out of control. In my view, extreme **racism** could sometimes turn into **religionism**, which could lead to undesirable and dangerous situations that should be avoided at all costs. Such developments should not be tolerated and those who instigate hatred between **races** and **religions** should be put under control before they could create further mistrusts and misunderstandings among the different races and religions. These situations should not be created or exploited and used for

(NCA) had successfully been endorsed. Those remaining armed groups should settle their differences and discard their mistrusts and misunderstandings once and for all and join hands with the other national races and participate in signing the NCA as soon as possible and move our Union forward.

I would like to humbly remind all the concerned parties that there is no religion in the world, which teaches hatred, ruthlessness or terrorism to their followers. Every religion teaches: love, compassion, empathy, and consideration towards others. All religious leaders of all faiths should also avoid condemning other religions that could create controversies and lead to conflicts. Such activities are neither productive nor desirable. It is time for us to nurture and embrace **patriotism** instead of **racism** or **religionism**, which could create division and disunity among our people that could hinder our democratic process.

Today, it is an undeniable fact that we are trailing behind the other ASEAN nations, though we are supposed to be endowed with resources that most countries in the grouping lacked. Also as the geostrategic location of our country put us in a geopolitically important position that gave us an edge over others, we should be in the lead, instead of trailing behind others. It is high time that we abandon our negative attitudes, grievances, differences, mistrusts and misunderstandings between our national races. Let us overhaul our rusted **mindsets** and leave those that have passed in the past and move on towards a harmonious, united, peaceful, prosperous and democratic future.

\*\*\*\*\*

**"Nationalism is the foundation of patriotism, a very noble and honorable spirit born of one's love for one's country and always prepared to sacrifice or to give one's life for the country".**

are "**yellow skinned**". However, that **racial supremacy** mindsets have diminished somewhat, but still alive on both sides of the divide, evident from the recent developments in the US.

I am mentioning these things, not to condemn or to demean any one, but to point out to our countrymen that **racism** and **religionism** are harmful and should not be embraced. We should not forget the lessons learned from the **Nazi supremacist** policies that triggered the two world wars. However, this time around, it

any groups' or parties' advantage. Here, the term parties doesn't necessarily meant the political parties.

The armed conflicts are the results of the negative **racist** and **religionist** mentalities that stemmed from the mistrusts and misunderstandings between the different **races** and **religions**. These are the outcomes of the divide and rule practices that our country was once subjected to. Today, thanks to the unrelenting endeavours of the government and the various armed groups, the Nationwide Ceasefire Accord



# Creating a sustainable democracy in Myanmar

(This article by Union Minister U Soe Thane was originally published in NIKKEI ASIAN REVIEW, Japan, on 23 October 2015 and is reproduced here with the permission of the author. Editor)

Soe Thane



**A**S Myanmar heads toward a historic general election in November, many will be judging the pace and scope of the country's democratic reforms.

We need first to compare the Myanmar of today with the Myanmar of just four or five years ago, when the country was under military dictatorship, with severe restrictions on the media and on Internet access; when gatherings of more than five people were prohibited; when international trade was tightly controlled; and only a tiny fraction of people had access to mobile telephones.

Now there is a substantial political freedom, to a degree unparalleled over the preceding half century. People's living standards are rising; a peace process with the country's many ethnic armed groups is underway; and mobile telecommunications are spreading faster than anywhere else in the world.

The difference between now and then is stark, and the big changes that have taken place are all pointing in the right direction. A fundamental shift away from authoritarian rule has taken place in Myanmar's politics and economy, without bloodshed and without the descent into chaos we have seen in other countries such as Syria and Libya.

## Don't judge too soon

We must judge where we are now against global experience, and not hold an idealized or romanticized view that expects democracy to appear overnight in Myanmar.

Some are not satisfied with the progress so far. Many set their hopes very high. I am also not satisfied. And I know that President U Thein Sein also wishes that change could come faster. We all want a genuinely peaceful country; we want more rapid improvement in basic living conditions; the creation of more jobs and an increase in incomes. We want everyone, particularly women, children, the disabled, the elderly and war veterans, to enjoy greater and equal opportunities. We

want an end to racial and religious discrimination, economic inequality and corruption, and we want shared prosperity. But these things are not all going to happen overnight. A tree that has just been planted will not produce fruit immediately. We need patience and practical ideas on how to move forward, not negative thinking because miracles did not happen.

I believe we are on a sustainable path to peace, prosperity and democracy, and that some of the hardest shifts away from authoritarianism and a closed economy have already taken place. That those shifts occurred owes much to brave decisions and leadership by the president.

## Just the beginning

After four years of pushing reform in all directions, we understand well the challenges ahead. Foremost are issues of institutional capacity and mindset — people not knowing how to break free of the habits of a lifetime under authoritarian rule. The government, along with nongovernmental organizations and international parties trying to help Myanmar, have all had to grapple with this constantly since reforms began in 2011. Many more years of work lie ahead.

For now, this dual dynamic still exists: Many in public office still have a mindset formed under authoritarianism and believe they have all the answers, while those accustomed to being in political opposition, without any experience of government, are happy to simply criticize and offer no real analysis or practical recommendations.

We should remember what Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in a eulogy to his late father, Lee Kuan Yew, in reference to his efforts at nation-building:

"In many countries, anti-colonial fighters and heroes would win independence and assume power, but then fail at nation-building because the challenges of building a nation and growing the economy and improving peoples' lives are very different."

In Myanmar, the culture of opposition is strong, while efforts at practical policymaking and implementation are weak. Building a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Myanmar will take time, especially because it must be done not only peacefully but in a way that leaves no one behind. In every sector, we simply do not have adequate numbers of people to build such a society. Working with what manpower we have, grappling with limited capacity and mindsets, has been challenging to say the least.

People need to connect their desire for a democratic system with their own daily actions. We should



The gate to the massive compound of Myanmar's parliament building in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: REUTERS

**"For the elections to succeed, it will be crucial for all parties and individuals to follow relevant laws and regulations."**

note what former Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam said: that people tend to blame those in office but "rarely connect the state of the country to their own actions." Indeed, the same people who are generous with their blame may be the same ones who throw rubbish on the streets, avoid taxes and ignore traffic rules, for example. We need broad societal reform, a cultural change, and that will take a generation.

Much has already been achieved. We are in the midst of a peace process not just with one but with at least 16 ethnic armed groups. This is a process that is attempting to build trust not after a few years of war but after 60 years of armed conflict. The Oct. 15 signing of a historic nationwide ceasefire agreement with eight of the groups has paved the way for political talks that will build on this precious momentum.

## Economic challenges

All the while, we are working to reform the economy and improve living standards for Myanmar's entire population of at least 51 million people. During the past four years, according to the International Monetary Fund, gross domestic product per capita has increased by more than 20% from \$1,000 to

\$1,270. We have taken numerous steps, from currency reform to public-sector financial reform, to bring about greater macroeconomic stability.

Before, few in Myanmar had ever heard of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, a global standard for accountable management of natural resources. Now, after meeting stringent criteria, Myanmar has become a candidate for full membership. Before, even fewer knew of the Open Government Partnership, a multilateral initiative to promote transparency and greater civic participation in government. Now we are working to join. Similarly, ideas about responsible investment and corporate social responsibility were entirely alien in the "old" Myanmar, now they are integrated into our day-to-day policy work.

Corruption is still a major problem but we are making inroads. We are attracting billions of dollars in new investment, not least because of the successful and transparent awarding process for licenses for telecoms and oil and gas exploration. All this is helping us set the foundations for future growth. We owe much to the lifting of Western sanctions, as well as to the hard work of many in government and across society to improve economic relations with the outside world.

A major challenge ahead, in creating a truly democratic Myanmar, is the weakness of institutions including but not limited to those of government. These are institutions that developed under 26 years of the "Burmese Way to Socialism" and 24 years of military-controlled administration. There is a need to fix

virtually everything in every sector.

On Nov. 8, we plan to hold free and fair elections. For the first time ever, international observers have been invited. It is consistently said that these elections will be critical for the success of Myanmar's democratic transition. We have seen many challenges, not least problems with voter rolls, arising from a lack of experience and technical capacity.

For the elections to succeed, it will be crucial for all parties and individuals to follow relevant laws and regulations. The elections will not be perfect but they must be credible and reflect popular will. Everyone must then accept the results.

Holding free and fair elections and ensuring that the results are respected is an unqualified responsibility of this government. I know our place in history will be decided in the coming weeks.

We have come this far because of the work, often jointly, between the government, our civil society and our international friends. Democratic Myanmar is like a child who has just started to walk. We need to remember where we have come from and how far we have come, and we welcome constructive criticism. But we also need the world to be patient with us if this transition is to be sustainable, and we need the stamina to see through what will still be many years of hard work ahead.

## About the author

U Soe Thane is a Union minister in the Office of the President of Myanmar and a key economic adviser.

## Greece says twenty-two migrants drowned off Aegean islands, 144 rescued

ATHENS — Greece rescued 138 refugees and recovered the bodies of 19 after their boat capsized off the island of Kalymnos, the coastguard said on Friday, in the second major deadly incident this week.

The death toll from drownings at sea has mounted recently as weather in the Aegean has taken a turn for the worse, turning wind-whipped sea corridors into deadly passages for thousands of refugees crossing from Turkey to Greece.

In a second incident off the island of Rhodes, three people, including a child and an infant, drowned and three were missing. Six people were rescued at sea, the coastguard said.

Some 16 people were confirmed dead and 274 people were rescued when a wooden boat they were on literally fell apart in rough seas off the Greek island of Lesbos late on Wednesday.

Greece has been a transit point for more than 500,000 refugees and migrants fleeing conflict in the Middle East and beyond this year, triggering bickering among European nations at odds on how to deal with one of the biggest humanitarian crises in decades.

Refugees have reported smugglers offering ‘discounts’ of up to 50 percent on tickets costing between 1,100 to 1,400 euros to make the journey on inflatable rafts in bad weather, UN refugee agency UNHCR said on Thursday.—Reuters

# Bike shortage stems flow of migrants using Arctic route to Europe

MOSCOW — The flow of Middle Eastern migrants trying to reach Europe via the Russian Arctic slowed dramatically on Thursday, partly due to a shortage of bicycles to cross the border, a source who deals with them told Reuters.

People seeking asylum in Norway have taken to using bicycles to cross the border from Russia because pedestrian traffic is banned and drivers of vehicles are fined if they carry passengers across without the proper documents.

The numbers making that journey, many of them Syrians fleeing civil war, had increased dramatically in the last few weeks after governments in southern Europe cracked down on people trying to enter by that route.

The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said would-be asylum seekers were collecting in the Russian town of Nickel, the nearest big settlement to the border post, now they cannot cross into Norway.

“There are more than 500 of the Syrians here. They are continuing to flow into Nickel,” said the source.

“The local shops are empty of bicycles. No bus or taxi would take the Syrians to Norway because they do not have valid visas and the drivers would be fined by



Refugees and migrants gather outside a local hotel in Nickel settlement next to bicycles often used to reach the Norwegian border, in Murmansk region, Russia, on 29 October, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

the Norwegians and stripped of their permits to work on international routes.”

Migrants were staying in hotels and dormitories in Nickel, where the temperature was around zero degrees Celsius and a snowstorm has moved in, the source said.

Some tried to cross illegally at some distance from the crossing point, but were caught and fined.

The Arctic route is a more roundabout way of reaching Europe than crossing the Mediterra-

nean, but the migrants taking the route think it is safer.

About 1,200 people made the journey this year, up from a dozen in 2014, Norway’s government said earlier this month.

According to officials, many Syrians obtain business or study visas to enter Russia and then travel through Moscow and Murmansk to Nickel, a town of some 12,000 population named after the metal mined there.

They then buy bicycles, bring them in taxis to the frontier and

hop on the two-wheelers to travel the short distance between the Russian and Norwegian border posts. Stacks of discarded bicycles have accumulated on the Norwegian side.

At Norway’s Storskog border post, an official said asylum seekers had crossed the border today but gave no number.

A Norwegian foreign ministry spokeswoman said Russian authorities had not informed Oslo of any change in activity at the border.—Reuters

## Britain seeks “emergency brake” for non-euro countries

LONDON — Britain is seeking an “emergency brake” to allow countries which are in the European Union but outside the euro zone to delay decisions that could threaten their interests, the Financial Times reported.

Britain, which is not a member of the 19-member single currency bloc, is seeking to renegotiate its membership of the EU before a membership referendum

that Prime Minister David Cameron has promised to hold by the end of 2017.

The FT, citing unnamed European ministers and officials, said Britain was seeking protections which would allow non-euro members close to being overruled in areas key to the single market to delay a vote and trigger additional consultations at the level of EU leaders.

However, British finance minister George Osborne has told his EU peers that London will not seek any veto or special carve-out for Britain’s large financial services industry, the newspaper said.

A spokesman for Britain’s finance ministry declined to comment on the FT report.

Cameron is due to spell out his proposals for changing Britain’s relationship with the EU next

month. Britain is also seeking measures to protect financial firms against discrimination based on where they are based, and guarantees that non-euro countries will not be forced to bear the costs of bailing out euro zone nations, the FT said.

A call for EU cash to tide Greece over until a euro zone bailout angered London earlier this year.—Reuters

## US Navy scrambled jets as Russian warplanes approached carrier



A US Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter lands onto the deck of the USS Ronald Reagan, a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered super carrier, in the West Sea, South Korea on 29 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

WASHINGTON — The USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier scrambled four fighter jets to intercept approaching Russian warplanes as it carried out a military exercise on Tuesday in the Sea of Japan, US military officials said on Thursday.

The two Russian TU-145 “Bear” jets came as close as a nautical mile from the carrier and were flying at a low-altitude, about 500 feet (152 m) above sea level, the officials said.

TU-145 Bear is a long-range anti-submarine warfare plane and a variant of the TU-95 Bear strategic bomber.

The incident, although unusual, was characterized by the

Pentagon as “safe.”

“There was nothing to indicate they were posing a direct threat,” said Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis.

The US Navy was carrying out an exercise with South Korean ships in international waters at the time of the incident.

At the White House, spokesman Josh Earnest noted that the United States had previously raised concerns about unprofessional conduct by Russian military aircraft, including incursions into Turkish airspace in recent weeks.

“This was a little bit different than that. These are international waters,” Earnest said.—Reuters

## Iran backs six-month Syria 'transition' ahead of peace talks

VIENNA — Iran signalled on Friday that it favoured a six-month "transition" period in Syria followed by elections to decide the fate of President Bashar al-Assad, an apparent concession ahead of the first peace conference Tehran was permitted to attend.

Although sources who described the proposal said it amounted to Tehran dropping its insistence on Assad remaining in power, it was not immediately clear whether it would actually include steps that would remove him.

Assad's government held an election as recently as last year, which he easily won. His opponents have always rejected any proposal for a transition unless he is removed from power and barred from standing in any election that followed.

Nevertheless, a commitment to a defined time limit for a transition would amount to an important new undertaking by Assad's closest ally, providing a potential basis for future diplomacy at a time when Assad's position has been strengthened by Russia's decision to join the war on his side.

"Iran does not insist on keeping Assad in power forever," Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian, a member of



Television cameras are set up in front of Imperial hotel, the site of international talks on Syria, in Vienna, Austria on 30 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Tehran's delegation at the Syria talks on Friday, was quoted by Iranian media as saying. A senior official from the Middle East familiar with the Iranian position said that could go as far as ending support for Assad after the transition period.

"Talks are all about compromises and Iran is ready to make a compromise by accepting Assad remaining for six months," the official told Reuters. "Of course, it will be up to the Syrian people to decide about the country's fate."

Four weeks after Russia tipped the balance of power on the battlefield back towards Assad's gov-

ernment by launching a campaign of air strikes against his enemies, Iranian officials were invited to attend an international peace conference for the first time.

All previous efforts to find a diplomatic solution to Syria's civil war have collapsed over the insistence of the United States, European powers, Arab states and Turkey that Assad agree to leave power.

In the past, Iranian delegations were excluded for refusing to sign up to UN-backed proposals that called for a transition of power in Damascus. Tehran has long said it was not committed to Assad as an individual,

but that it was up to Syrians to decide his fate, a position that amounted to an endorsement of election results that confirmed him in office.

Russia's participation in the conflict on Assad's behalf creates a new incentive for a diplomatic push to end a war that has killed more than 250,000 people and driven more than 10 million people from their homes.

With Moscow fighting on Assad's behalf, Western countries that have called for his removal from power appear to have accepted that he cannot be forced out on the battlefield.—Reuters

## Rockets land near Baghdad airport, reportedly killing 23

BAGHDAD — About 15 rockets landed on Thursday near a camp next to Baghdad International Airport holding members of an exiled Iranian opposition group, an Iraqi military spokesman said, and a spokesman for the group said 23 of its members had been killed.

It was not immediately clear whether the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran (PMOI), based in Iraq since the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s, was the target of the attacks. So far 23 residents, including at least one woman, had died in the attack and doz-

ens more were injured, Shahin Gobadi, spokesman for the PMOI in Paris, said in a statement. He said at least 80 missiles hit the camp.

The rockets were fired from the Bakriya neighbourhood, about 6 km (4 miles) northeast of the airport, joint operations command spokesman Brigadier General Yahya Rasool said.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said in a statement that residents of the camp were killed and injured in the attack, but he did not say how many.—Reuters

## At least 40 killed in missile attack on Syrian town

BEIRUT — At least 40 people were killed and about 100 wounded after Syrian government forces fired missiles into a market place in a town near Damascus, a conflict monitor and a local rescue group said on Friday.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said government forces fired 12 missiles at Douma, 10 miles (15 km) northeast of Damascus. Douma has suffered intense bombardment in recent months in a wave of strikes the Syrian army has said targets insurgent groups that

launched attacks on nearby government-held areas.

The Syrian Civil Defence group posted a picture on its Facebook page of about a dozen bloodied bodies laid on the ground on plastic sheeting and said more than 45 had died in the attack, which it said used guided missiles.

Many of Douma's residents have fled the four-year-old conflict, moving to nearby rural areas. Medics say they have struggled to cope with large numbers of wounded in the intensified strikes.—Reuters

## New Zealand pushes for UN action to break Middle East deadlock

UNITED NATIONS — New Zealand has drafted a United Nations Security Council resolution that calls for Israel to stop building settlements in occupied territories and for the Palestinians to refrain from referring cases to the International Criminal Court.

The two-page draft, seen by Reuters on Thursday, also asks both sides to avoid provocative acts and not to question the "integrity or commitment of the other party or its leaders."

The text was circulated this week to the 15-member council, Israel, the Palestinians and other countries in the region to gauge reaction.

New Zealand UN Ambassador Gerard van Bohemen told reporters the aim was "to try and get the council to speak with a united voice even if in a relatively modest way."

"There's been a worrying deterioration on the ground and we're stuck with nothing happening in the peace process and no commitment in the council to do anything," van Bohemen said. "We have to find a starting point and that's what we're trying to do."

The Security Council is generally deadlocked on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which UN diplomats say is due to the United States' determination to protect its close ally Israel. The last council resolution adopted on the conflict was in 2009.

"This is not about New Zealand trying to assert ownership or leadership of the Middle East peace process," van Bohemen said. "We do feel as a member of a council that's been unable to do anything on this front for a long time, we at least ought to try."

Palestinians seek a state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, lands Israel captured in 1967. Settlements that Israel has built on territory captured in 1967 are considered illegal by the United Nations under international law.

US-mediated peace talks collapsed in 2014. The draft resolution declares that stalled talks were "unacceptable and calls on all parties to take the necessary steps to rebuild trust ... and to prepare to return to negotiations."

In frustration at the stalemate, the Palestinian Authority joined The Hague-based International Criminal Court in April, a move opposed by Israel.

Violence flared again in the past month, partly triggered by Palestinian anger over what they saw as Jewish encroachment on Jerusalem's al-Aqsa

mosque compound, which is also revered by Jews as the site where two biblical Jewish temples once

stood. The draft "demands that both parties take the necessary steps to end the violence, avoid incitement

and protect civilians, including publicly urging restraint in their own communities."—Reuters



A Palestinian protester hurls back a tear gas canister fired by Israeli troops during clashes in the West Bank town of Al-Ram, near Jerusalem on 22 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Ukraine calls deadly depot blast a terrorist act

KIEV — Explosions in a Ukrainian ammunition depot that killed two civilians overnight is being investigated as a terrorist act, the Defence Ministry said on Friday.

On Thursday, a series of blasts ripped through the military complex in Ukrainian-controlled Svatove, a town around 100 km (62 miles) from the front line with pro-Russian separatists in eastern Luhansk region.

The fire was started by “the release of a flare that fell onto the territory from outside the base,” the ministry said in a statement, and said the incident was being investigated as a “terrorist act.”

It did not say who it suspected was be-



A woman looks on at a local kindergarten, which was damaged by explosions at a military depot in Svatove in Luhansk region, Ukraine, on 30 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

hind the alleged attack.

Nighttime video footage showed huge clouds of smoke billowing up from the depot, which contained 3,500 tonnes of ammunition. Occasional explosions shot fireballs

into the sky. In addition to the two casualties, four civilians and four servicemen were wounded, the Ukrainian military in Luhansk said.

The incident comes as a lull in violence on

the front lines and the withdrawal of weapons by both sides raise hopes for a fragile peace process aimed at ending a conflict that has killed over 8,000 since April 2014.—Reuters

## Most Catalans reject ruling separatists' plan to split from Spain

MADRID — Most Catalans reject the region's ruling separatist parties' plan to start a political process that would lead to full independence from Spain within 18 months, a survey by pollster Metroscopia showed on Friday.

The separatists in the wealthy northeastern region launched their so-called roadmap for independence on Tuesday when they offered a declaration in the regional parliament to split from Spain. The local assembly has yet to approve it.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said his government would ensure the declaration would have no effect as Spain's constitution does not allow any region to break away.

The Catalan parliament still has not formed a government due to differences between the pro-independence parties about

who should be head of the regional government. Elections may have to be held again if they cannot agree to compromise.

In the election in September, the parties won a majority of seats in the assembly but not a majority of the vote.

Opinion polls have shown most Catalans would like to remain within Spain if the region were offered a more favorable tax regime and laws that protect its language and culture.

Friday's poll, published in El Pais newspaper, showed a fall in support for the acting head of the region, Artur Mas, who tried and failed to hold an official referendum on independence last year. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed no longer want him to lead the regional government.—Reuters

### Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Finance

#### Modernization of Public Finance Management Project (MPFMp)

#### Request for Expressions of Interest for Individual Consultant — National Landscaping Expert

REOI No. MPFMp/E1-C125

Closing Date: 16 November 2015

The Project is seeking to recruit a national Landscaping expert to assist in the landscaping and the refurbishing of the premises identified by the Government in the Ministry of Finance. The building requires refurbishing to convert it in to a facility with: class rooms, faculty rooms, computer laboratory, language laboratory, library, and a project office. The national technical expert to be recruited will work directly with the Chair of the appointed committee to oversee the renovations under the Leadership of the Permanent Secretary of the MoF and Project Director of the MPFMp.

This work will specifically include: *Design, Technical support, and Implementation.*

The Consultant is required to demonstrate the following as a minimum:

- BSc or MSc Degree (or equivalent) in Architecture or Civil Engineering.
- At least 5 (five) years of experience in Architectural design and landscaping in Myanmar.
- Experience and familiarity with the materials for interiors available in the local market and with the flora in Myanmar.
- Excellent communication skills in Myanmar (Essential) and English (Desired).

The assignment is for an estimated duration of 50 days (intermittent input) over a six month period. The location of the assignment is in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar.

MPFMp now invites eligible individual consultants to indicate their interest in providing the above mentioned services. Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services (in addition to the educational qualifications, experience of similar assignments and country of work etc. should be incorporated in the CV to be submitted along with expression of interest/application).

Interested consultants may obtain a copy of the Terms of Reference for the assignment at the address below during office hours [i.e. 1000 to 1600 hours] or by sending an E-Mail to: [mohmohthwe774@gmail.com](mailto:mohmohthwe774@gmail.com), [zawnaing652011@gmail.com](mailto:zawnaing652011@gmail.com), [budget410530@gmail.com](mailto:budget410530@gmail.com), [pcaumm@mptmail.net.mm](mailto:pcaumm@mptmail.net.mm).

Expression of interest must be delivered to the address below by 1600 hours on 16 November 2015 to:

**Mr. Zaw Naing,**

Chair Procurement Coordination and Advisory Unit  
Modernization of Public Finance Management Project  
Ministry of Finance

**Director (Administrative Section)**

Budget Department

Building No 26, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Tel: 95-67-410530, 410158, 410575

Fax: 95-67- 410530, 410575

E-mail for applications: [mohmohthwe774@gmail.com](mailto:mohmohthwe774@gmail.com), [pcaumm@mptmail.net.mm](mailto:pcaumm@mptmail.net.mm)  
copied to [sukumarshp@gmail.com](mailto:sukumarshp@gmail.com)

## Argentina's Fernandez rallies voters for 22 November run-off

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina's outgoing leader Cristina Fernandez gave an emotional campaign speech on Thursday in her first public address since a surprisingly weak performance by her party's candidate in the first-round presidential election on Sunday.

Without mentioning allied candidate Daniel Scioli by name, the leftist president implicitly backed him by calling for her progressive social policies to go on after she hands the presidency over to her successor in six weeks.

“Who is the candidate who can guarantee our policies continue?” Fernandez asked in a clear reference to Scioli.

“What's important is that our policies are carried on. Names are not important,” she said at a televised rally before thousands of applauding and chanting supporters.

Scioli, who did not attend the event, is running against opposition leader Mauricio Macri in the 22 November run-off vote.

Macri defied opinion polls on Sunday by getting enough votes to easily force a second round.

At stake is the future of Latin America's No. 3 economy at a time of dwindling foreign reserves and high inflation left by eight years



Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner.

PHOTO: REUTERS

of free-spending populism under Fernandez.

“I am not a candidate for anything,” said Fernandez, who is barred by law from seeking a third consecutive term this year.

“But when I leave, please God, I don't want to see ruined what it took us years to build!” she said, her voice breaking with emotion while some listeners at the rally wept.

Loved by many of the country's poor for strengthening Argentina's social safety net, Fernandez could return as a presidential candidate in 2019.

Macri promises a sharp turn toward free-market policies while Scioli vows to continue the programmes that are working for the poor while gradually changing macro-economic policies where a more orthodox approach is needed.

Fernandez took a few shots that appeared to be aimed at Macri, although she did not name him, alluding to him changing his position earlier this month regarding Fernandez's nationalisation of Argentina's main energy company YPF and airline, Aerolineas Argentinas.

“We, with all our errors and defects, are who we are. We are not one thing one day and something else another,” she said.

When first elected in 2007, Fernandez was helped by high prices for soy and corn, the country's main cash crops, which helped her fund subsidies and generous welfare programmes.

But the grains boom has ended, leaving her government short on cash and without access to the international debt market due to an ongoing sovereign bond default.—Reuters

## PICTURE OF THE DAY



A young patient enjoys her "Trick or Treat" fun at the BC Children's hospital in Vancouver, Canada, on 29 October 2015. About 100 young patients in BC Children's hospital participated in a "Trick or Treat Treasure Hunt" event. Health care staffs dressed up to cheer up the sick children in order to ease their pain under the joyful atmosphere of Halloween. PHOTO: XINHUA

## Sri Lanka's investment environment very good: leading hotelier

COLOMBO — Sri Lanka now maintains a very good investment environment and has attracted many international investors in recent months, a top hotelier has said.

Harry Jayawardena, chairman of Sri Lanka's leading hotel group Aitken Spence, in a recent interview with Xinhua, said that Sri Lanka has the potential to attract a large number of tourists and investors and is on the right track to become a world class destination for tourism and investment.

He said that as tourism has increased, especially since the end of a 30 year civil war, his hotel chains are now gearing up to attract more visitors, espe-

cially from countries such as China.

China has become the No. 2 market for the highest number of tourist arrivals in the island nation and has helped boost the industry which was once heavily scarred by the civil conflict. "Now the investment environment of Sri Lanka is good as we have very big inquiries. Everyday many companies want to come to Sri Lanka. Our tourism is also doing very well," Jayawardena said.

The Aitken Spence group is also constructing Sri Lanka's largest hotel in the south of the island nation. The hotel is being constructed by the China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC), in the

famous tourist town of Ahungalla and it will comprise of 500 rooms.

"We are one month ahead of target. CHEC did a good job. All the rooms are sold already, back to back," Jayawardena said.

In August, 25 percent of the total number of tourist arrivals were from China and September fared even better, Jayawardena said, adding that China is a vast market which Sri Lanka wants to attract.

"Last September we exceeded the target. Because China celebrated its New Year so a majority of people went out for a holiday. Earlier Chinese used to stay only in China but now they have started going out to all parts of the

world," he said.

"It is a very good market," he further said.

In addition to building star class hotels in the island nation, Aitken Spence has also earned international fame with many of its hotels being opened in other parts of the world. Recently the group purchased a hotel in Oman with 100 percent ownership.

Although the group does not have immediate plans to open up its hotels in China, Jayawardena said that in the future they would consider it.

In addition to hotels, the group also has ventured into other field of business including shipping and port management.—Xinhua

### INVITATION FOR OPEN TENDER (TENDER NO. 4(T)MPE/MIXED LPG (1)/2015-2016)

1. Open Tender is invited for the Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise the Ministry of Energy for the supply of Mixed LPG (1,800 MT ± 5%).
2. Tender Closing Date : 1.12. 2015 at (12:00) noon.
3. Tender Opening Date : 1.12. 2015 at (13:00) hrs.
4. Delivery Time : Within 14<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> February 2016
5. Tender Documents and details information are available at the Department of Finance, Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise, Nay Pyi Taw, during office hours commencing 5.11.2015 on payment of the Myanmar Kyat One Hundred Thousand (Kyat 100,000) per set.
6. Only bid from tenderer who has purchased tender document officially from Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise will be accepted for evaluation.

Managing Director  
Myanmar Petrochemical Enterprise

Contact Phone no. 067-411108/411193

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

#### MV THAI BINH 28 VOY NO (07/15)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV THAI BINH 28 VOY NO (07/15) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.11.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (2) where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S G LINK EXPRESS PTE LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

### CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

#### MV COS PROSPERITY VOY NO (74B)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV COS PROSPERITY VOY NO (74B) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.10.2015 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-3 where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING

LTD.

Phone No: 2301186

### WEATHER REPORT

**BAY INFERENCE:** According to the observations at (05:30)hrs M.S.T on Friday, the low pressure area over Southwest Bay of Bengal has become unimportant. Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

**FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF THE 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015:** Weather will be partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions, Shan, Chin, Rakhine and Kayah States and isolated in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**STATE OF THE SEA:** Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

**OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:** Increase of rain in Shan, Chin and Rakhine States.

**FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2015:** Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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## Famous skateboarding dog Tillman dies at age 10 in California

LOS ANGELES — Tillman, the English bulldog who in 2009 set a Guinness World Record as the fastest skateboarding canine and starred in videos that demonstrated his four-wheeled prowess, has died in Southern California at age 10, his owner said on Thursday.

Tillman, who suffered from an irregular heartbeat, died on Tuesday night after lapsing into a sudden bout of labored panting, according to his owner, Ron Davis, 46.

Davis, who lives in the coastal town of Oxnard just northwest of Los Angeles, said he rushed Tillman to a veterinary hospital and performed cardiovascular resuscitation in a failed attempt to revive his beloved pet.

“He was my best friend, my brother and my shadow, and when it was show time, it was amazing. He made millions and millions of people smile throughout the world,” Davis said of his pooch. “He was a little 60-pound (27.2 kg) butterball of inspiration for a lot of people.”

Tillman gained legions of fans with his appearance in a 2007 YouTube video that showed him pushing his skateboard with his paws and riding around a concrete path at a beachside park, tilting his body to steer.

The video has been seen more than 20 million times on

YouTube and was featured in an early commercial for Apple Inc’s iPhone to demonstrate the video-playing abilities of the device.

Recognised for his light brown coat, white face and white chest, Tillman also appeared in the Hallmark channel’s reality television series “Who Let the Dogs Out.”

In 2009, Tillman’s talents landed him a Guinness World Record as the fastest skateboarding dog after he rolled across 100 metres (yards) in 19.678 seconds at the X Games in Los Angeles.

Tillman’s Guinness World Record was narrowly eclipsed in 2013 by a dog named Jumpy who posted a time of 19.65 seconds.

Davis said that as part of Super Bowl festivities in Phoenix earlier this year he had Tillman try to reclaim his record, but rainfall made the rubber-like surface chosen for the event too slow.

Tillman, aside from skateboarding, enjoyed snowboarding, surfing and riding in his special seat in an all-terrain vehicle, Davis said.

Davis said he never managed to teach Tillman traditional canine tricks such as to roll over or beg, but the English bulldog took naturally to skateboarding.

Even so, it took hundreds of hours of training for him to master it, Davis said. —Reuters



Surfer Dog Tillman rides a wave at the Surf City surf dog contest in Huntington Beach, California on 28 September 2014. PHOTO: REUTERS

## One Direction to perform at 2015 American Music Awards



Boy band One Direction. PHOTO: PTI

LOS ANGELES — Boy band One Direction will perform at the 2015 American Music Awards, which will take place on 22 November at Los Angeles’ Microsoft Theater.

The band will perform its new song “Perfect” at the ceremony, reported Billboard.

This time, the four member boy band comprising Niall Horan, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and

Louis Tomlinson, are nominated in two categories, including artist of the year.

“Perfect” is from the group’s forthcoming fifth studio album “Made In The AM”, which is scheduled to release on 13 November.

The group (then a five piece) won three trophies at last year’s ceremony — artist of the year, favourite duo or group, pop/rock

and favourite album, pop/rock.

They have won a further two trophies from previous editions.

ABC will air the AMAs, which Jennifer Lopez will host for the first time.

The Latin pop icon will also perform on the night, along with Aussie pop-punk outfit 5 Seconds of Summer, pop star Selena Gomez and celebrated country artist Carrie Underwood. —PTI

## Jennifer Lopez’s NBC drama to premiere on 14 January

LOS ANGELES — Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez’s NBC drama “Shades of Blue” will premiere on 14 January next year.

A production partnership between Lopez and her American Idol pal Ryan Seacrest, the show will air with a two-hour premiere episode, said The Hollywood Reporter. The show is centred on Harlee Santos (Lopez), a single mom and detective working in Brooklyn, who’s suddenly pitted against her own precinct when the FBI catches her doing something illegal.

“We’re so excited to have locked in a premiere date and can’t wait to show audiences what Jennifer and the rest of this incredible cast delivers in this compelling new drama series.

Her role as Det Santos is a tour de force. She carries herself with incredible grit and tough-

ness, yet at the same time heart-breaking vulnerability,” said NBC Entertainment president Jennifer Salke.

The network is playing up this conflict in a slightly ’80s-looking poster and the tagline: “Between good cop and bad cop, there are... Shades of Blue.”

“From a marketing perspective, the 14 January date takes advantage of both solid Sunday Night Football games and strong holiday programming through the first week of January,” said Jeff Bader, network president of program planning, strategy and research.

“Also, in one of the most-watched weekends of the year (9-10 January), we have the NFL Wild Card game and Golden Globes, both of which make for great promotional opportunities.” —PTI



PHOTO: REUTERS

## Justin Bieber storms out of a concert in Norway

OSLO — Canadian pop singer Justin Bieber, who made a triumphant return to the European stage at the MTV Europe Music Awards in Milan on Sunday, abruptly canceled his concert in Oslo on Thursday night after performing just one song.

The singer, who found fame

at 13 and went on to become a global pop phenomenon, scooped five prizes in Milan, including Best Male and Biggest Fans, and next month is to release his first album in three years, during which bad behavior offstage risked damaging his family-friendly teen heartthrob image.

“I’m done, I’m not doing the show,” he told his fans, known as “beliebers”, after complaining that they did not listen to him while he was trying to wipe up spilled water, a video from the concert posted on the website of Norwegian daily VG showed.

“Sadly it’s been a rough week

for me, long days, no sleep, while having to be ‘on’ as they would say for cameras fans etc...,” he later said in a post on Instagram, apologising.

“In no way did I mean to come across mean, but chose to end the show as the people in the front row would not listen.”

His private jet took off from Oslo’s airport just after midnight, leaving his fans shaken, and some in tears, VG said.

Bieber is extremely popular in Norway, with some schools even having rescheduled exams in the past so their students could attend his concerts. —Reuters

**Daw Zan Zan Mar @ Baby Zan  
@ Rita Goldberg  
63 Years**

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Daughter of (U Kyaw Zan - Daw Khin May Yi), daughter-in-law of (U Hla Myaing - Daw Myint Myint) of No (86) Lett-wel Thondara Road, 32 - Ward, North Dagon Township, Yangon, beloved wife of U Aung Thu Myaing (Myanmar Journalists Association) and beloved mother of Ma May Oo Myaing (Gold Horizon Engineering & Services Co., Ltd), Mg Shwe Po Myaing (Supreme Group of Companies) - Ma Ni Ni Hlaing, sister of (U Soe Win) - Daw Htay Htay Zan, U Kyaw Seynn Hlaing (National Consultant - ADB) - Daw Thwe Thwe Oo, U Aung Kyaw Zan @ Sonny (U.K), U Kyi San - Daw Tin Tin Aye, Professor Dr. Myint Thu Myaing (Law Department, Yangon University), passed away at 00:40 a.m on 29 October, 2015 (Thursday) at Asia Royal Hospital in Yangon.

Funeral will be held at Yeway Cemetery at 3 : 00 p.m on 31 October, 2015 (Saturday).

**Bereaved Family**

## Gondola rides on offer at Chinese's Venice-like city

DALIAN — With a canal, European-style architecture and frescoes reminiscent of renaissance-era Italy, a development project bearing a resemblance to Venice has started offering gondola rides in the northeast Chinese port city of Dalian.

Named "East Montage", it is not an exact building-by-building copy of the famed Italian city but developer Dalian East District Corporation says it took Venice as its blueprint.

Construction began in 2011. East Montage now draws crowds of tourists, many of whom, such as Dalian resident Zhang Juan, queue up for a gondola ride.

"(This) is a good thing. This is an opportunity for people who could not go abroad to enjoy the same scenery as that in foreign countries, and expand their visions to know more about foreign customs and practices," Zhang said.—Reuters

**mitv Myanmar International**

(31-10-2015 07:00 am~ 1-11-2015 07:00 am) MST

### Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:26	Am	Great Shwedagon: The Prayer Halls And Buddha Images (Part-2)
07:52	Am	Black Gold (Part- 1)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Traditional Festival
09:03	Am	News
09:27	Am	"Myanmar's Beauty and Nature" Beach
09:51	Am	Myanmar General Election 2015 (Ambassador of European Union)
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Sons of the lake
10:49	Am	Farming: Duck Breeder

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

### Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax
07:45	Pm	The Storytellers
07:52	Pm	Today Myanmar "Food Safety"
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Sai Htee Hseng Or An Exceptional Music Star From Shan Plateaus (Ep-2)
08:57	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Portraiture

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

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

# Remember the Alamo because it's getting a facelift



Visitors stand near the entrance as men use a lift to repair and restore stonework along the curved facade of the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, on 26 October 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

SAN ANTONIO — The man who long-headed San Antonio's Chamber of Commerce has grown tired of the reaction he receives from the visitors he takes to the Alamo, the highly recognisable monument to Texas independence and the state's most-visited tourist site.

"Underwhelmed," is how Joe Krier, also a city councilman, sums up many of the reactions.

The clamor of city traffic, the modern hotels and office towers rising up around the surprisingly small building have diminished the stature of the white stone-walled structure with its distinctive curved facade. An often-used derision is that it looks like a tourist trap.

The state of Texas has also heard the complaints and the legislature has

set aside \$32 million to transform the Alamo and the plaza in front of it for the first time in more than a century. It is planning a facelift that will preserve its history and restore dignity to the square where a momentous event in state history unfolded.

"The problem is, it doesn't look like John Wayne's movie set," said Richard Bruce Winders, the long-time official Alamo historian, referring to the iconic 1960 film where Wayne played Alamo defender and famed frontiersman Davy Crockett.

The structure began life as a Spanish colonial mission in the mid 1700s.

In the 1836 battle between Texian and Mexican forces, the Alamo's vastly outnumbered defenders were routed by Mexican forces in a 13-

day siege. But the battle became a rallying point for the Texas forces, who defeated the Mexican Army a few weeks later.

For most the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, an underfunded heritage organisation, has managed the building ever since it prevented a portion of the grounds from being sold to a hotel developer in 1905.

But over the past three years, the state wrestled control from the group, and has looked to a brighter future thanks in part to musician Phil Collins, who fell in love with the Alamo watching the Davy Crockett TV show in England in the 1950s and collected pieces of its history.

Last year Collins, who has earned the status of honorary Texan for his

largess, donated the largest privately held collection of Alamo artifacts to the state, on the condition that a world class museum be built to house it.

An Alamo Endowment, headed by some of the state's best fundraisers, has vowed to raise as much as \$300 million to help with the project, on top of the money set aside by lawmakers.

The United Nations also weighed in earlier this year by declaring the Alamo and the four other San Antonio Spanish missions to be World Heritage Sites, the first in Texas.

"All of the pieces have finally come together," said Alamo Director Becky Dinnin.

"We finally have the ability to do things that have to be done to better tell this story."—Reuters

## China, Vietnam see intensified cultural exchanges

HANOI — China and Vietnam have been witnessing intensified exchanges in cultural areas, with the organisation of various activities, including forums, seminars, visits and exchanges, contributing to strengthening the friendship and mutual understanding between the two peoples.

During the visit of General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong to China in April 2015, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and

Chinese President Xi Jinping said the two countries should further cooperate in areas of culture, education, healthcare, tourism, press and media exchanges, among others, in order to nurture a new generation of successors for bilateral relations.

After talks, the two leaders attended the 15<sup>th</sup> Friendship Meeting between youths of China and Vietnam. At the meeting, Xi expressed his hope that young people of the two countries will become inheritors of the

China-Vietnam traditional friendship and contribute to strengthening mutual understanding between the two peoples and promoting bilateral cooperation. So far this year, the two countries have organised numerous activities for young people, including the "Chinese Bridge" Chinese proficiency competition for foreign college students, and speech contests. Earlier in October 2015, a study room on Chinese language and culture was inaugurated at Hung Vuong University

in Vietnam's northern Phu Tho Province. Liu Sanzhen, Cultural Counselor of the Chinese Embassy in Vietnam, said the number of Chinese volunteer teachers in Vietnam has increased in the past years. Previously, Chinese volunteer teachers were sent only to the Vietnamese capital Hanoi and border province of Lao Cai.

Meanwhile, Chinese volunteer teachers have currently been assigned to northern and central areas across the country, Liu told Xinhua.—Xinhua



A contestant taking part in Windsurfing event.  
PHOTO: YE KHAUNG NYUNT

## Second day competition of Myanmar Wave Rider Cup & KTA Race Open 2015

MYANMAR Wave Rider Cup & KTA Race Open 2015 continued for the second day at Ngwe Saung Beach in Patheingyi District, on Friday.

The second day tournament included windsurfing and open Stand Up Paddle (SUP), racing, alongside the kite racing. In the SUP club tournament, under-18 male and female junior contestants competed as well as tournament for under-18 female contestants. In the windsurfing event, a rider from Singapore withdrew from the tournament and so the Myanmar contestant continued. Myanmar contestants were awarded a gold and a bronze medal in the 2013 SEA Games.

Kiteboarding club event will continue on 31 October.—Myanmar News Agency

## Federer inflicts more pain on Kohlschreiber in Basel

LONDON — Philipp Kohlschreiber must be sick of the sight of Roger Federer after the Swiss maintained his perfect record against the German with an 11<sup>th</sup> straight victory to reach the Basel International quarter-finals on Thursday.

The world number three and 17-times grand slam champion was made to work hard before bat-

ting through to the last eight with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 win.

Federer, who has reached the final in Basel every year since 2006, will next face Belgium's David Goffin, who he beat to clinch the title in Switzerland last year.

The 34-year-old top seed claimed the first set after breaking in the fifth game, but dumped a backhand into the net when serv-

ing to stay in the second at 4-5. Federer broke again in the ninth game of the decider and served out the match, having clocked up 13 aces and won 87 percent of first-serve points.

Fifth seed and 11<sup>th</sup>-ranked Richard Gasquet kept alive his hopes of reaching the ATP Tour Finals by beating Dominic Thiem 7-6(1), 6-4.—Reuters

## I would not enjoy playing for Van Gaal's United: Scholes

LONDON — Former Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes has said he would not enjoy playing in manager Louis van Gaal's current side.

Scholes, who was an integral part of Alex Ferguson's dominant United teams for almost two decades, was quoted by the BBC as saying there was a "lack of creativity and risk" in Van Gaal's team.

United exited the League Cup on penalties to second tier

Middlesbrough on Wednesday, having failed to score in 120 minutes at Old Trafford.

"It's a team now you wouldn't want to play against because they're tightly organised," Scholes told the BBC.

"But it seems he (Van Gaal) doesn't want players to beat men and it's probably not a team I'd have enjoyed playing in."

United, who are fourth in the Premier League, failed to score for the second straight

game against Middlesbrough after also drawing a blank against rivals Manchester City at home on Sunday.

Van Gaal's side have scored 15 goals in their 10 Premier League games this season, fewer than any other team in the top four.

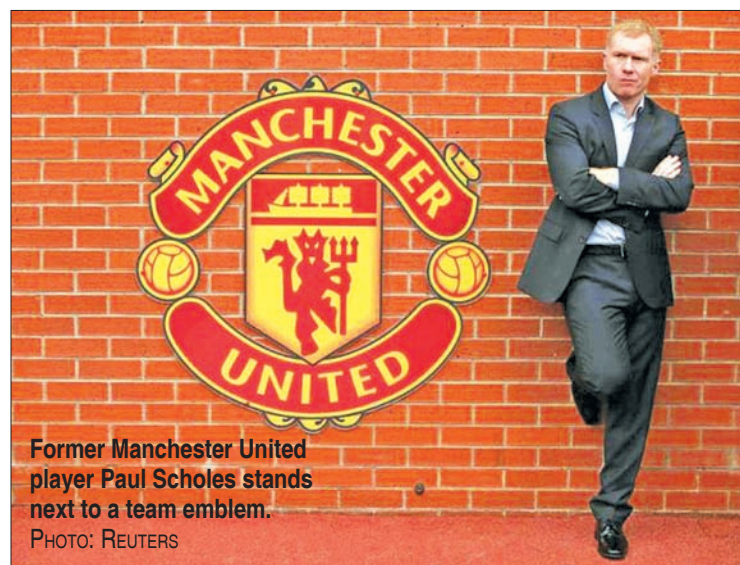
Captain Wayne Rooney has scored only two Premier League goals this season, but Scholes defended his former team mate and said any striker would struggle in Van Gaal's team.

"The hardest thing to coach is scoring goals and creativity," he said.

"I was at the derby on Sunday and Rooney's movement was brilliant but when he's playing in that team there's no one prepared to pass to him. I think after 20 minutes you'd be tearing your hair out.

"I played with some brilliant centre forwards and I don't think they could play in this team — the likes of Ruud van Nistelrooy, Andy Cole, Dwight Yorke, Teddy Sheringham."

"You don't get crosses into the box or midfielders looking for runs."—Reuters



Former Manchester United player Paul Scholes stands next to a team emblem.  
PHOTO: REUTERS

## Sharapova surprised by impressive form during comeback



PHOTO: REUTERS

MARIA Sharapova is used to having to rebuild from scratch after suffering a string of debilitating injuries throughout her career, but the Russian is still surprised at how well she is playing in her latest comeback at the WTA Finals.

Sharapova arrived in Southeast Asia having failed to complete a match since July because of leg and arm injuries, but the five-time major winner has looked in ominous form since setting foot on the Singapore Indoor Stadium court on Sunday.

Round-robin wins over Agnieszka Radwanska and Simona Halep were followed by a classy 7-5, 6-1 victory over US Open champion Flavia Pennetta on Thursday as the 28-year-old advanced to the semi-finals, top of the Red Group with a perfect record.

The Russian could afford to lose that final rubber, having already qualified for the semis, but she told reporters: "Every match for me just counts at this point in the season in the last tournament.

"I wanted to try to play a high-quality three matches and I didn't know the results would have gone the way that I have expected," the world number four added.

"I'm actually also a little bit surprised that I've been able to win three matches, as physical as some of those matches were.

"Knowing that I qualified allowed me to be a little bit more aggressive today. I played quite aggressively in the second set and had a good ratio of winners and unforced errors (and) was quite solid."

Sharapova's career has been punctuated by three major shoulder operations since her breakthrough triumph as a 17-year-old at Wimbledon in 2004, and the latest injury break has provided her with the opportunity to compete in the Fed Cup final next month for the first time since turning professional 14 years ago.

"The layoff gave me a chance to look through my schedule and understand that I had an opportunity to be part of an event that I've never played before, such as the Fed Cup final," she said of Russia's showdown against the Czech Republic in Prague on 14-15 November.

"So that changed a little bit, because I think if I (had) had a full season I would really have to reconsider playing."

Sharapova also admitted being a bit of a tennis television junkie and may tune in on Friday to watch the conclusion of the White Group and her possible semi-final opponent.

"I know I always say that's the last thing I want to be doing but when I'm at a tournament I do enjoy watching," she laughed.—Reuters

Editorial Section — (+95) (01) 8604529, Fax — (01) 8604305  
Advertisement & Circulation — (+95) (01) 8604532

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. 00623.  
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