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Union spirit is the source of building a democratic federal union

The following is the message sent by President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Htin Kyaw on the occasion of the 70th Anniversary Union Day.—*Ed*

> "It is very important for all the nationalities to equally participate in promoting national unity and keeping the Union in perpetuity.

Esteemed national brethren of the Union,

On this auspicious occasion of the 70th Anniversary Union Day, I would like to extend affectionate and respectful greetings to all the national brethren and wish them fulfillment and contentment.

Throughout the history, ancient Myanmar kings built a strong union through national unity. Under the rule of kings who built national unity, national sovereignty was widely established. In late Konbaung era, the country fell under the colonial rule. As a consequence, national brethren became disunited due to lack of unity.

Having founded the Myanmar Tatmataw under the leadership of Bogyoke Aung San, the national people fought against the invaders with the help of the Japanese. However, all the national people suffered from the bitter treatment of fascism. When the Second World War broke out, we, in cooperation with the Allies, fought against the fascists. However, the British colonists who came back to our country again were hesitant to give independence to our country. The colonists intended to give independence only to the main land but not the hilly regions. Bogyoke Aung San and national leaders held the Pang-Long Conference on 12th February, 1947, and they agreed upon claiming, in unison, for the independence of the whole nation and signed the Pang-Long agreement. The essence of the Pang-Long Conference was the equal independence for all ethnicities in the country at the same time. The day that proved and highlighted the unity of all national races was recognized as "The Union Day" of Myanmar and today is the 70th anniversary of our Union Day.

Esteemed national brethren of the Union,

After gaining independence, the social standards of our national people declined due to armed conflicts and lack of peace and stability in the country. Such long-lasting armed conflict only left our country's development behind other countries in the region. Only when we are successful in bringing desired peace in the State, we are sure that Myanmar will occupy a proud position in the world.

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Honouring the 70th Anniversary Union Day.

PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

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70th anniversary Union Day ceremony and Panglong peace talk to be broadcast live today

THE 70th anniversary of Union Day Ceremony (Panglong) and the Panglong Peace Talk programme in which the State Counsellor and ethnic people will participate in Panglong, Shan State will be broadcast live on MRTV, Myanmar Radio MRTV Facebook Page, MITV, MNTV, Up To Date and Indigenous races Channels and the Myanmar State Counsellor Office's Facebook Page starting at 9:15am today.

The Panglong Peace Talk will take place under a banyan tree, the same place where General Aung San read a book while he was attending the original Panglong Conference. Family members of the leaders who signed the Panglong Agreement, including State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, will attend the 70th anniversary of Union Day Ceremony, according to the State Counsellor Office's information committee.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Fire destroys four homes, one shop in Sittway

A fire broke out in Thachaung Village in Sittway Township, Rakhine State, yesterday, destroying four homes and one shop.

The fire caused by negligence happened at the house owned by U Zar Ki Yusan at 5.30 pm and engulfed the properties causing loss of K179,000.

The fire was put under controlled by firemen and villagers 15 minutes after it started.

U Zar Ki Yusan managed to escape and a file is opened on him at the Myoma Police Station in Sittway. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Firemen and villagers are working to control the fire. PHOTO: MNA

Over 1,000 tonnes of illegal timbers seized in Yangon during past three weeks

OVER 1,000 tonnes of illegal timbers were seized in Yangon during the past three weeks. The suspects have been charged, said a forestry department official.

Over 30 tonnes illegal teak were seized from inside the two containers at MIP yard, Yangon on 24 January. Connected information has led to the seizure of a total of over 1,000 tonnes of illegal timbers as of 8 February.

On 10 February, a combined team comprising officers and staff from the forestry department searched a house at the corner of Weatma Sut Wun Htauk and Seinta Kyaw Thu U Aw streets, ward 144, South Dagon Myothit and seized Padauk square logs weighing over 100 tonnes, sawn teak weighing 15 tonnes, eight CCTV, three chain saws, one motorbike and 10 accessories which were covered by empty water bottles and card boxes.

On the same day, the combined team searched a house at No. 35, Pyin Si Minthagyi road, East Dagon Myothit and found illegal Padought square logs weighing over 50 tonnes.

"Our combined team interrogated those suspected, and this has led us to seize other timbers in Mingladon, Shwepyitha, Hlaingthaya townships. The regional government also helps us. We seized the illegal timbers at South Dagon and East Dagon on 10 February when the public informed us," said U Thein Toe, director.

Forestry department seized teak logs weighing over 60 tonnes, Padauk weighing over 954 tonnes, Tanmalan weighing 25 tonnes, Kokko weighing over 5 tonnes, a total of 37 containers and six 10-wheel vehicles worth over Ks 3,000 million .

"We seized a big volume of illegal timbers in Yangon. It means there are many illegal timber extractions in other regions. Authorities should take deterrent action against those involved in illegal timber extraction so that we can prevent deforestation.

The forestry department is conducting more awareness courses concerning the forest depletion.—*Tayar*

Authorities inspect seized illegal timbers. PHOTO: TAYAR

State and Region Hluttaw staff expected to be separated from GA Department

STATE and Region Hluttaw staff who are under the legislative pillar are the staff of the General Administration Department under the Ministry of Home Affairs. So, State and Region Hluttaw staff should be separated from the General Administration Department as these of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw, said a Kachin state Hluttaw representative.

"Fourteen States and Regions Hluttaw staff including those from Kachin State are now under the form the General Administration Department. So, we are making effort to separate the Hluttaw staff from the General Administration Department in terms of organizational structure and budget. We have asked the all the Hluttaw staff if they want to work for Hluttaw or General Administration Department," said an advocate general from Kachin State government.

This kind of effort has already been make during the tenure of the first Pyithu Hluttaw but the effort came to in avail. —*Salai Mang Ngai*

Five suspects arrested in Maungtaw

SECURITY forces arrested five men in Maungtaw Township on suspicion of involving in the violent attacks in northern Rakhine.

Arji Durahman of Kyikanpyin (Middle) Village, Pharol of Kyikanpyin (South) Village, Shaungshu Arlaung of Kyikanpyin (West) Village, Mamauk Elsad of Kyikanpyin (Middle) Village and Shunar Hnmyar of Wabeik Village were arrested while they were walking from Kyikanpyin Village (South) to Kywetapyin Village in Maungtaw Township.

Measures are being taken to take action against them in accordance with the law. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Five suspects are seen at the Police Station. PHOTO: MNA

Union spirit is the source of building a democratic federal union

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For the development of our country, politics and economics go hand in hand and national reconciliation is one of the most important foundations in setting country's economic policy. To shape the future federal democratic union, the 21st Century Pang-Long Conference is being held. The essence of the 21st Century Pang-Long Conference is the emergence of the united democratic federal union. Also the solution to end up the long-lasting armed conflicts and to get national reconciliation is building a democratic federal union.

Union spirit is the source of building a democratic federal union. Union spirit means the strong determination of all the national people to live in unity, having negotiation in building a union. We are sure that there will never be a democratic federal union without strong and genuine union spirit.

Myanmar is a union composed of national races, having different cultures, traditions and religions. The national races living in respective geographical areas have been living together practising their traditions and cooperating affectionately. Therefore, all national races must conserve the cultural heritage and traditions of our nationalities.

Esteemed national brethren of the Union,

It is very important for all the nationalities to equally participate in promoting national unity and keeping the Union in perpetuity. Within the Federal System, it is essential to establish own legislation power that all ethnic groups have been craving for. Moreover to ensure national reconciliation, it is necessary not only to establish clear confidence between the nation and armed ethnic groups but also to create mutual trust among ethnic groups. As the essential need of peacekeeping process is trust, it is necessary to put strong effort in building clear confidence among national brethren. When we have gained national unity and national reconciliation, it is sure for us to be able to build a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Federal Union.

I would like to stress the cooperation and coordination among the government, Hluttaw, Tatmadaw, ethnic groups, armed groups, political parties, civil society organizations and every citizen in order to implement the National Reconciliation and State Peace process. On this auspicious occasion of the 70th Anniversary Union Day, I would like to urge each and every one to bring the successful implementation of the four objectives of the 70th Anniversary Union Day:

- to develop the Union Spirit;
- to strengthen the National Unity;
- to build a Federal Democratic State;
- to strive for the betterment of socio-economic development of the citizens.

Htin Kyaw
President

State Counsellor is welcomed by authorities at Taunggyi Airport. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor arrives Taunggyi to attend 70th Union Day Ceremony

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in Taunggyi in southern Shan State by air from Nay Pyi Taw to attend the 70th Anniversary of Union Day ceremony and peace talks programme.

The State Counsellor was welcomed at the Heho airport by Dr Lin Htut, Shan State Chief Minister, U Sai Long Hseng, Shan State Hluttaw Speaker, Shan State Ministers, Members of Parliament and officials.

The State Counsellor will attend the Union Day Ceremony in Panglong, Shan State, today together with Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Ye Aung, Dr Pe Myint, Dr Win Myat Aye, Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr Tin Myo Win, Lt-Gen Yar Pyae, State Chief Minister Dr Lin Htut and Deputy Ministers.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Ministry of Home Affairs issues press release

THE Ministry of Home Affairs issued a press release yesterday regarding the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)'s accusations of human rights violations in northern Rakhine

1.Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)'s February-3 report titled "Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016" accused the security forces carrying out operation in northern Rakhine of violating human rights.

2. The Ministry of Home Affairs has instructed Myanmar Police Force to follow, in use of force, the international standards such as proportionality, legality, accountability, necessity and to carry out its mission in accordance with the law and procedures. Regarding measures taken to arrest, detain and search suspects and to seize evidences, the security forces have been instructed to carry out their duty in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Codes and police manual.

3. Action is being taken in accordance with the Police Disciplinary Law against those members of the police who failed to follow the instructions/provisions while responsible personnel at different levels are overseeing the police forces to follow the instructions/provisions.

4. Hence, as part of efforts for investigation to find out whether the police forces have committed illegal actions including violations of human rights during their area clearance operations, the departmental enquiry will be conducted with the following persons.

(1) Police Brig-Gen Win Tun	Police Adjutant-General Chairman
(2) Police Brig-Gen Nay Win	Commander of Railway Police Member
(3) Police Col Nay Tun	Commander of Tourism Security Police Member

(4) Police Lt-Col Maung Maung Lwin Sub-Commander of the Special Branch (Sittway) Member

(5) Police Col Khin Maung Aye Deputy Commander of the Criminal Investigation Department Secretary

5. If the Departmental Enquiry Tribunal finds the police having violated human rights, deterrent action will be taken against those who are found guilty under the Police Disciplinary Law.—*Ministry of Home Affairs*

Investigation Commission launches probe into UN allegations of human rights violations in Maungtaw

MEMBERS of the Investigation Commission on Maungtaw began their fact-finding mission yesterday looking into United Nations allegations of human rights violations in northern Rakhine.

The mission including U Zaw Myint Pe, Secretary of the Commission and members U Thar Nyan, U Saw Thalay Saw, U Nyunt Swe, Dr Daw Thet Thet Zin, Daw Kyein Ngaik Man and U Aung Naing, was divided into groups and carried out probes door to door in villages into human rights violations including alleged rapes cases mentioned in a February-3 Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

The members of the independent mission visited Zinpaingnyar, Warbeik, Pharwutchaung, Kyeinchaung and Sedipyin villages in Laungdon Village-tract in Maungtaw Township yesterday. —*Myanmar News Agency*

Members of the Investigation Commission enquire about violation of human rights in northern Rakhine on 11 February 2017. PHOTO: MNA

Rakhine traditional carriage pulling festival attracts people in Maungtaw

RAKHINE traditional carriage pulling festival in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, has attracted local people on Friday night.

At the festival, artistees performed traditional group dances and songs.

Among the spectators were U Zaw Myint Pe, Secretary of the Investigation Commission on Maungtaw.

Local Rakhine people has taken pride in holding such kind of traditional festival, said Ma Khin Khin Aye.

Peoples of wards and villages pull the carriage as competition by shouting chorus songs. It is a traditional festival of Rakhine people with the aim of boosting production of crops.–*Maung Po Zaw (MNA)*

Artistees entertain the audience with group dance. PHOTO: PHO ZAW (MNA)

TRAVELOGUE

Road to Muse

Khet Zan

MANDALAY-MUSE Road linking Mandalay, the second capital city of Myanmar, and Muse located on Myanmar-China border plays a pivotal role in border trade between the two countries. The road was once notorious for its poor condition coupled with the then thriving insurgency. But nowadays, the situation has changed a lot as the country is moving towards a new society. Tens of thousands of small and large vehicles are plying daily on the road carrying passengers and goods. As the trade route contributes much to the country's development, maintenance of the road, abiding by the traffic rules of drivers of various kinds of vehicles, supervision of local authorities as well as the participation of local people become important.

In the past the road saw lorries each weighing 3 tons carrying just 3 tons of loads. Today, truck technology has increased unbelievably. A long truck can carry a large amount of weights on it. Moreover, its power is so great that it can easily destroy the surface of the road, but it cannot be said that damage on the road is the vehicle's fault. Its duty is to carry cargos from one place to another. The road itself must and can bear the loads on it. Here arises a question: Who will make the road good? To know the situation occurred on the road, we, news hunters, managed a trip from Mandalay to Muse.

The trip was quite interesting. We started our trip from Mandalay on one early morning of January this year, and when we reached the detour of Pyin Oo Lwin, it was dawn. The detour is twenty kilometers long and it is an asphalt road. A huge truck with a heavy cargo can run on the road smoothly and safely. We learnt that the Oriental Highway Company is responsible for maintenance and durability of the road. We left the road section behind, moved towards and made a stopover at Naungkion Toll Gate before reaching Gotetwin which is infamous for car jam. The gate is located at the top of the Gotetwin valley and run by the company. At the gate a huge LED billboard is erected to provide traffic information to drivers. It is written in Myanmar language which reads "In this moment, vehicles can pass through Gotetwin valley conveniently." The information is invaluable for drivers because if someone goes down into the valley without knowing the situation in it and sees traffic jam, it is difficult for both up- and down-traffic drivers.

With the aim of avoiding traffic accident, convex traffic mirrors are set up now by the road side at Gotetwin. When we reached the bottom of the valley, we met traffic police sergeant named Myo Thant Swe who leads a team to supervise the traffic flow there, and made an interview with him. He said, "Sometimes we meet traffic jam at Gotetwin due to indiscriminate driving and sometimes due to unfit vehicles. These days the number of trucks plying on the road has increased dramatically and thus if a car breaks down at Gotetwin, it takes at least three hours to ease the traffic jam. Our team has to discharge our duty shift by shift. At night or in day time, whether the weather is good or bad we are always stand by to ease the traffic. If the work load is too heavy for us to handle, we seek help from members of Myanmar Police Force and staff of the Oriental Highway Company. I opine that not to cause traffic jam, the cars need to be fit and the drivers need to be skilled plus following the traffic rules." It was very encouraging to see traffic police at such a place where traffic jams are very common.

The journey from Gotetwin to Kutkai seemed quite boring because we did not see any traffic jam on the road or any other interesting events till we reached Kutkai. But we saw very encouraging view on that trip. It was on the road section at Lashio detour. The road is as smooth as silk like Pyin Oo Lwin detour. In the past it was a dream for us to see a such good road on a rough terrain but thanks to the efforts made by the authority and the company people can travel smoothly on that road.

After our car passing through Kutkai and not very long we started to climb the Shukintha (View Point) Mountain Range. As there are many curves on the road in that area, it is very difficult for large vehicles to pass through. Only skilled drivers can steer their huge vehicles with excellent condition

Road section at Shukintha area is paved with Asphalt. (PHOTO: MYO AUNG- OHC)

to pass these curves. The driver is skilled but the condition of the vehicle is not up to the mark, it is sure that the car would break down on the road and the traffic be blocked. If the condition of the car is good but the driver is not skilled it is sure that his car would plummet into a deep ravine.

But, it is very encouraging to see that heavy machineries of the Oriental Highway Company are at work to expand the road. We also learnt from the staff of the company who said that they have a plan to lay asphalt on the road. Another encouraging scene was that a soldier from the security force helped drivers to move their cars properly. Besides his security duty, the young soldier, under the cold, windy night of Shan State holding his gun on his back ushered the vehicles to a convenient path. Through his ushering, the vehicle could move slowly but safely. Drivers are also praiseworthy because they are too patient to wait their turn to move ahead. Without their efforts, the exported goods could not reach their destination and so do the imported goods.

When we reached Muse it was 9 p.m. Before, reaching Muse, we saw a long queue of heavy trucks. They were waiting to enter the checkpoint for their cargoes to be checked before exporting to China. The night fell but the drivers cannot sleep as they are waiting for their turn to pass through the checkpoint. As for us we put up at Muse Motel and took a good rest.

When I saw the smooth road throughout the trip my mind went back around 1993 when I attended Korean Language Class at International Foreign Languages (now University of Foreign Languages) in Yangon. Our Korean Lecturer said, "When I was young our country (ROK) was under the reign of President Park Chung Hee. The government appointed strong men to build the country which arose from the ash of war. First, the government built a highway from Seoul to Busan stretching from the north to south. Then, it connected power lines across the country. Thanks to building of a highway from the north to south the areas from east and west parts along the highway saw development. And thanks to the power lines which are important for industrial development, the industrial sector has seen rapid progress."

That is right. We should follow the example shown by our Korean friends. The more roads are built, the better for goods transportation. Government alone cannot fulfill the needs of the country. All are to participate in nation-building endeavours. Avoiding pointing accusing fingers at each other we must try our best.

The following is the opinions of some people we met in Muse:

U Htay Lwin, leader of Agent team, Muse

"The demand of sugar and rice in China became high and traders eye to export their goods dumped in warehouse of the plain area of Myanmar. In addition to these goods, such item as fruits, maize and other goods are exported to China in this season. As a result the number of trucks plying on Mandalay-Muse road increased and traffic jams follow. To ease the traffic and to increase the income of the nation, all the staff at 105th Mile Border Trade Zone are trying their best to clear the goods. All the members of traffic police, Myanmar Police Force and soldiers from Myanmar Army including staff from the Oriental Highway Company give their helping hands to convenient flow of goods."

U Ye Soe Aung, driver from Mandalay

"Sometimes we have to wait for at least two or more days to pass through the checkpoint. This time I'm lucky because I had to queue for just two days. Now is an open season and the demand is high and most want to come to border with China. Some drivers who have never been to Pyin Oo Lwin try to reach Muse. Lack of experience they ignorantly cause traffic jam. Sometimes the road is blocked due to breakdown of cars, sometimes due to undisciplined drivers and sometimes due to accident. I have many experience on this northern highway as I have started my career since my salary was just 100 kyat. In the past, the road condition was too bad but now it has developed significantly, but the road is needed to upgrade to meet the standard of the current age.

U Kaung San Lin, Lashio District Administrator

"The Union Road from Mandalay to Muse is sometimes blocked due to various reasons. Especially accidents, car breakdowns, damages of roads and indiscriminate driving cause road blocks. When the road is blocked staff of the Oriental Highway Company rush to the scene to ease the traffic jam using cranes, excavators and loaders. Now, the company is engaging in paving asphalt on the road section at Shukintha area. Moreover, actions are needed to be taken against indiscriminate drivers and unauthorized vehicles and mobile traffic police team is needed to be set up to take such action."

LOCAL Business

Rumour of special goods tax for automobile market prompts car price rise

Cars are crawling on a busy road in downtown Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

THE rumour of a special goods tax levied on imported cars is spreading around the automobile market, resulting in car price hikes of up to Ks1million, said car dealers from the automobile market in Hlaing Township.

There is no official announcement concerning the special goods tax on imported cars yet, but the rumour nevertheless drove prices up.

The Cost, Insurance and Freight (CIF) values for imported automobiles with engines below 1350cc were set at US$5,000. However, those cars are needed to import with the slip, which could turn into an uneconomical deal for the importers, said a car broker.

The price of slip returned on deregistration of old cars was likely to decline. However, a widespread rumour in the automobile market predicts that a special goods tax will be levied on imported cars starting in April led the car price to surge, which made the slip price increase by Ks400,000 to 500,000. As a result of this, the car prices began an upward trend, it is learnt.—*Ko Htet*

Rubber testing laboratory in Hlegu expected to get global accreditation

A rubber-testing laboratory in Hlegu Township is expected to receive global accreditation, enabling it to issue recommendations on rubber based on international standards, ensuring quality assurance, it is learnt from the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.

Concerted efforts are being exerted for this laboratory to meet international criteria and get global accreditation with the assistance from Japan starting from 2015.

The local association hopes that International Rubber Association (IRA) will grant approval to the laboratory, showing that it meets international standards.

After the inspection by the IRA, the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association is trying to fulfil the requirements pointed out by the IRA. Samples of rubber will also be sent to rubber-buying countries and to laboratories which have been already approved by IRA to test the quality.

After that, the results from international laboratories will be compared with that from the Hlegu rubber testing laboratory. If results are similar, Hlegu rubber testing laboratory will be approved by IRA.

Myanmar's rubber price will be offered at a higher price in keeping with international market prices after this laboratory has achieved global accreditation, said U Khaing Myint, the secretary of Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.—*200*

Rakhine chili to be exported to Sri Lanka

THE chili grown in Rakhine state will be exported to Sri Lanka beginning this year, according to the Rakhine branch of the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producers and Exporters Association (MFVO).

An official from MFVO has announced a test run to export up to 8,000 tonnes of chili to Sri Lanka. A price will be fixed after calculating the street price and transportation costs.

"Sri Lanka has offered us to export Rakhine chili because Rakhine chili has a lower percentage of pesticide residues. We will export chili to Sri Lanka starting this winter," said a Rakhine chili exporter.

Sri Lanka will become the first international market for Rakhine chili. Rakhine chili exporters are also planning to export the Rakhine chili to India.

The Rakhine chili grows in all three seasons and is mostly grown in Kyauktaw, Mrauk U and Minbya.—*Min Min*

Production of duck eggs decrease for lack of safe pasture

ONLY about 200,000 duck eggs are currently entering the local market daily, said Ko Hla Win, a duck breeder. The reason is that duck breeders in Ayeyawady Region have stopped allowing ducks into the fields for feeding because the summer paddies being cultivated in the field use chemical fertilizer.

Currently, the egg depots receive 200,000 duck eggs, down from 500,000 in previous weeks. To fill the gap, Thailand exports about 300,000 duck eggs to Myanmar every day. In the Ayeyawady Region, the main source for eggs, the ducks are not bred on a commercial scale, only on a small, manageable scale.

"If we release the ducks into the fields, the ducks can eat natural food. But now we are worried about them feeding on the fertilizer and dying. Without natural food, the ducks do not produce as many eggs," said Ko Hla Win.

The duck eggs are distributed to local markets in Bogalay, Pyapon, Mawgyun, Myaungmya, Kyaiklatt and Dedaye townships.

A 17kg duck egg fetches Ks100 while a 19kg egg can get Ks110 or Ks120. The prices also vary depending on the township. — *200*

The price of fish paste doubles in Bago

THE price of fish paste has doubled in Bago Region within three years because of the scarcity of small fish, according to fish paste brokerages.

The small fish from lakes, rivers and creeks are becoming scarce because of the increase in the manufacture of dried, pickled fish and high demand from feed manufacturing factories. Therefore, the small fish used as the raw material for making fish paste are becoming less plentiful and more expensive in the local market.

In 2014, the price of small fish paste was about Ks 500 per viss and the big fish paste was Ks 1,000 per viss. Currently, the price of small fish paste has increased to Ks 1,000 per viss and big fish pastes fetches Ks 2,000 per viss.

"The small fish are becoming rare year by year. We have stored the raw materials for two years to manufacture the fish paste. Last year, we bought 2,000 viss of small fish. Now, we can buy only 500 viss. We cannot collect the raw materials to make fish paste as much as we want," said U Myo Aye, a fish paste broker from Waw town.

There are many kinds of fish pastes. The fish pastes are made of striped dwarf catfish, a variety of gourami and fish larvae.— *Myitmakha News Agency*

Three-storey fruit & vegetable wholesale market to be built in Amarapura

A three-storey fruit and vegetable wholesale market will be built on a 14.59-acre plot of land as the first phase and 30-acre plot of land as the second phase at Nge Toe village, Field No. 616, beside Sagaing-Mandalay road. The project will be completed in 2018, it is learnt.

The market will be jointly constructed by Shwe Moe Group Company and Mandalay fruit and vegetable depots. The market will be built with the aim of developing the city of Mandalay and reducing traffic problems caused by the fruit and vegetable street vendors. Another aim is to control the prices in the fruit and vegetable market. Shwe Moe Company has been conducting soil tests and measuring the land since January. The market will have 100 apartments measuring 20 feet in length, 40 feet in diameter and nine feet in height. Estimated cost of the project is Ks45 billion.

The wholesale market will have a proper sewage system using advanced technology.

Upon completion, the market will be a modern marketplace for consumers, local traders and exporters and will reduce transportation costs. The wholesale market does not allow customers and traders to stay overnight. — *Myanmar Alin*

Phiippines dismisses about 100 policemen for using drugs

MANILA — The Philippine police have sacked nearly 100 policemen since the start of the year because they were found to be drug users, a top official said on Saturday, in a clean-up of the ranks after President Rodrigo Duterte halted police anti-drug operations.

More than 7,700 people have been killed since Duterte unleashed his bloody war on drugs seven months ago, about 2,500 in police operations, while the rest are being investigated.

Duterte had been unwavering in defending the police in the face of international outrage over the toll, but his faith was shaken by the killing of a South Korean businessmen late last year by rogue officers.

Ninety police officers have been fired since the start of the year and nine were removed last year, Internal Affairs Service Inspector General Alfegar Triambulo said in comments broadcast on ANC TV.

"Those caught using illegal drugs, according to the civil service rules, must be dismissed...that is a grave offence," he said, adding that he had promised the chief of police that he would quickly resolve outstanding cases. Triambulo said he would recommend next week the dismissal of 40 more policemen to the chief of police. Last month, Duterte denounced the police as "corrupt to the core" and suspended their role in anti-drug operations, although he vowed to forge ahead with the drug campaign. Human rights groups suspect many of the killings being investigated were committed by vigilantes or hitmen supported by the police.—*Reuters*

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte speaks before soldiers during a visit at a military camp in Awang, Maguindanao in southern Philippines on 27 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

India's PM Modi faces election test as voting begins in Uttar Pradesh

KAIRANA (India) — More than 13 million Indians voted in the first stage of state assembly elections on Saturday, the biggest electoral test for Prime Minister Narendra Modi since coming to power in 2014.

The world's biggest election this year began in Uttar Pradesh, the first of six stages that will elect an assembly to govern the impoverished state of nearly 220 million people.

Modi's nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to victory in Uttar Pradesh three years ago, and the election in the state that follows the shore of the river Ganges will set the tone for the 2019 national elections.

More broadly, voters will deliver a mid-term verdict on Modi and his nationalist party after his decision to withdraw 86 per cent of the cash in circulation.

The banknote ban was launched by Modi three months ago to purge the economy of untaxed income and the proceeds of crime and corruption, and has disrupted daily life and commerce, and caused the economy to slow.

On the campaign trail, Modi has said he had the interests of the poor at heart in making the move — his biggest gamble yet.

"The results will tell us whether Modi continues to enjoy unquestioned support or if it has started to erode," said RK Mishra, an independent political analyst based in the state capital, Lucknow.

Amid tight security, voting was conducted in 73 constituencies of western Uttar Pradesh, where violence has erupted frequently over the last few years. Fighting between Hindus and Muslims killed about 65 people in 2013.

In the town of Kairana, where residents came to blows last year when the local BJP MP accused Muslims of driving out Hindus, voters from both communities turned out in large numbers. By noon, nearly half of those eligible had cast their vote. The BJP polled 42 per cent of the vote in Uttar Pradesh in the 2014 election, winning 71 of 80 seats on its way to claiming India's biggest national mandate for three decades.

But people have shown growing impatience that Modi's campaign promises of development and "better days" to come have failed to deliver new jobs in a state where per capita income averages less than $750 a year and many communities lack access to power, clean water and basic medical services.

"It is the Godzilla of states," said BJP national spokesman Nalin Kohli, as he looked out over the darkened streets of Lucknow one evening this week.

People tend to vote along traditional caste and religious lines, and successive governments have exploited communal divisions to fire up their power base and poach voters. "The situation gets very bad here sometimes — there is fighting between groups, between Hindus and Muslims," said Bhagwati Prasad, who sells material for Hindu cremation ceremonies outside a temple in Lucknow.

"I am a Hindu. If there is a Hindu-Muslim fight I have to stand with the Hindus." The complexity of such politics makes it hard to predict outcomes in India's first-past-the-post system. Any party scoring significantly more than 30 percent can win by a landslide.—*Reuters*

A woman gets her finger inked before casting her vote at a polling station during the state assembly election in Hapur, in the central state of Uttar Pradesh, India, on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Thousands gathered at Jakarta mosque urged to vote for Muslim governor

JAKARTA — Thousands of Indonesians gathered on Saturday at a mosque in central Jakarta, where religious leaders urged them to support a Muslim candidate during next week's contentious election to select the capital's governor.

Millions of Jakarta residents head to the polls on Wednesday to pick the next governor of the sprawling city, in a contest analysts say has shaped as a proxy fight ahead of a presidential election in 2019.

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population but recognizes six religions and is home to hundreds of ethnic groups and adherents of traditional beliefs.

In Jakarta, the Christian and ethnic Chinese incumbent, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, faces two Muslim contenders — Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, the son of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and former education minister Anies Baswedan.

Purnama is in the extraordinary situation of campaigning for election while he is on trial for blasphemy, making weekly court appearances to defend himself against charges of insulting the Muslim holy book, the Koran.

"On 15 February, we are happy to vote for a Muslim leader," one speaker, Maulana Kamal Yusuf, told a crowd of men and women in white robes who had poured into the vast Istiqlal mosque from the early hours for mass prayers.

"Jakarta will be led by a Muslim leader who submits to the will of Allah," he added, urging his listeners to choose Yudhoyono or Baswedan. "Jakarta will be a religious city."

Security around the mosque was tight, with armed military and police officers standing guard.

Saturday is the last day before a 'quiet period' in which candidates and their supporters are barred from canvassing for votes. Yusuf also asked his audience to support Habib Rizieq, the head of hardline Muslim group Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), who has been reported to the police for allegedly insulting the state ideology, Pancasila, and state symbols.—*Reuters*

Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, candidate for Jakarta governor and son of former Indonesia president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, speaks to the media after a meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 1 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Job Vacancies At The Global New Light of Myanmar

The Global New Light of Myanmar, the country's oldest continuously published English-language daily newspaper, is looking for experienced journalists to join its expanding editorial team. Applications should be sent no later than **21 February, 2017**.

The GNLM currently has openings for a chief editor, two editors, five translators and reporters for its newsroom in Yangon.

1. **Candidates for the chief editor (Male, Myanmar national) position must have the following qualifications.**
   - He must have extensive editorial experience with editing and must possess at least an MA English degree.
   - He must have at least 15 years experience with print media in positions at the senior management level and possess good computer skills.
   - He must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
   - He must be aged between 40 and 60.
   - Salary is negotiable.

2. **Candidates for two expatriate editors (Male/ Female) must have following qualifications.**
   - He/she must be a native English speaker and must be a university graduate with a specialisation in journalism.
   - He/she must have editing experience at newspapers or online publications.
   - He/she must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
   - Age should be under 40, but those over 40 will be considered if he/she possesses excellent skills.
   - Salary is negotiable.

3. **Candidates for two senior translators (Male) must have the following qualifications.**
   - He must be a university graduate.
   - He must be able to quickly translate and rewrite multiple stories from Myanmar to English, with at least 10 years experience in translation.
   - He must be in good health and willing to work night shifts.
   - Salary is negotiable.

4. **Candidates for three junior translators (Male/ Female) must have following qualifications.**
   - He/she must be a university graduate.
   - He/she must be able to translate from Myanmar to English, with at least five years experience in translation.
   - He/she can work night shifts.
   - Salary is negotiable.

5. **Candidates for three senior reporters (Male/ Female) must have following qualifications.**
   - He/she must be a university graduate.
   - He/she must be fluent in Myanmar and be able to write clear and concise copy in Burmese. Those who can write news stories in English will be preferred candidates.
   - He/she must have experience with writing for an English-language newspaper or online publication. This will be a major advantage.
   - He/she must have at least three years experience in print or online media.
   - Salary is negotiable.

6. **Candidates for junior reporters must have following qualifications.**
   - He/she must be a university graduate.
   - He/she can write news stories clearly in Burmese.
   - Salary is negotiable.

For further information, please call or email the following contacts. Applicants should send a cover letter and CV to No.150 Nga Htat Gyi Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, or email: **gnlmdaily@gmail.com, dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** or **call (01) 8604529, 09-428120086, 09-49445545**.

Elections official asks Trump for evidence of voter fraud

WASHINGTON — A member of the Federal Election Commission on Friday called on President Donald Trump to share any evidence he has to support a statement that voter fraud caused him and former Senator Kelly Ayotte to lose in New Hampshire in the 2016 US election.

"The scheme the President of the United States alleges would constitute thousands of felony criminal offences under New Hampshire law," FEC Commissioner Ellen Weintraub said in a statement.

Trump blamed voter fraud for his and Ayotte's losses in New Hampshire in November's election while speaking on Thursday with a bipartisan group of US senators, saying that Ayotte's re-election bid was spoiled by "thousands" of people from neighbouring Massachusetts voting in New Hampshire, according to media reports.

Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton narrowly won New Hampshire's four electoral votes by nearly 3,000 votes, while Ayotte, a Republican like Trump, lost by only 743 votes.

Weintraub, who was appointed by former Republican President George W Bush, asked Trump to "immediately share his evidence with the public and with the appropriate law-enforcement authorities so that his allegations may be investigated promptly and thoroughly."

Trump said on Sunday he would put Vice President Mike Pence in charge of a special commission to investigate voter fraud, despite numerous studies showing that such fraud is rare in the United States.

Trump has said that fraud may account for his loss nationwide in the popular vote to Clinton by nearly 3 million votes. —*Reuters*

US President Donald Trump listens to a translation during a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the White House in Washington, US, on 10 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Germany says US demand for more NATO burden-sharing is 'fair'

WASHINGTON — The US call for NATO partners to step up funding for the transatlantic alliance is "a fair demand," German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday after what she called a positive first meeting with Defence Secretary James Mattis.

Germany and other European powers were unnerved when President Donald Trump during the election campaign accused NATO allies of failing to pay their way, and described the alliance shortly before he took office last month as "obsolete."

Trump offered some reassurance this week when he told US forces: "We strongly support NATO."

Von der Leyen said Germany, which spends less than the NATO target of 2 per cent of economic output on defence, understood it needed to increase that amount.

"I think it's a fair demand," von der Leyen said. "If we want to jointly master the crises in the world, namely the fight against terrorism, and also put the alliance on solid footing, then everyone has to pay their share."

She told reporters she welcomed an offer from Mattis to deepen the strategic dialogue between the two countries. He had also reiterated his clear and deep commitment to NATO.

Admiring comments from Trump about Russian President Vladimir Putin have raised concerns among some European countries that the United States might relax sanctions imposed against Moscow over its 2014 annexation of Crimea and its support for violent separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Von der Leyen said it was critical that NATO members remained unified. "It is ... very important that we speak with one voice."

She said she and Mattis agreed that many global problems, including the war in Syria, could not be solved without Russia, but Moscow needed to respect international law and the borders of other sovereign countries.

They had agreed it was important to "continue to act from a position of strength to extend an outstretched hand to Russia and work out our mutual problems at the negotiating table and then solve them."

The Pentagon said in a statement that Mattis thanked von der Leyen for Germany's leadership in NATO and acknowledged the role it plays in fighting terrorism, specifically in the coalition fighting Islamic State. Both look forward to working together at the NATO Defence Ministerial and Munich Security Conference next week, the statement said. Von der Leyen's meeting with Mattis lasted for about an hour, twice as long as planned. She was the first European defence minister to visit him at the Pentagon.—*Reuters*

German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen attends a meeting with US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis at the Pentagon in Arlington, US, on 10 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Opinion

Write for us

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

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

For lack of a nail!

Dr. Nu Nu Win

There's a saying: .. For the lack of a nail, a shoe was lost;
For the lack of a horse, a rider was lost;
For the lack of a rider, a battle was lost;
For the lack of a battle, a country was lost;
And it all happened for lack of a horseshoe nail."

As we can see from this saying, it means very big things can be lost just because of a very very small thing which is ignored as if it were unimportant.

Nowadays, not only in our country, but also all over the world, such kinds of losses have happened. Just because of a small malfunction in the radar system of an aircraft, it crashed into a mountain and lost the whole crew. Just because of the lack of a nut, the car lost its brake and crashed into another car or crashed down into a stream or a valley and lost many lives. Just because of a weakness in the security arrangements at the airport, a valuable man was easily assassinated by an assassin at close range.

But, think of all these happenings very carefully. All these events happened because the persons who had responsibility were lacking in the performance of their duty in one way or the other, just because they thought it was just an unimportant thing.

We, Myanmar people also have a proverb in the same meaning, "The pavilion caught fire because of a fire which started from trash".

And all of Myanmar had a very big loss of many of our great leaders of the Cabinet in 1947, when we were so near to gain our Independence. It is a great heart-breaking story of Myanmar, just because the security arrangements were not good enough.

We can also take a good lesson from a housewife who was careless enough to go out and gossip while her pot was still cooking on the stove. Due to her carelessness and lack of proper precautions a fire broke out at her house which spread from house to house so that in the end the whole quarter was burnt to the ground with many innocent lives lost.

Sometimes, for a student, just because he did not study one or two lessons before he sat for the examination, he could fail in the examination if the lessons that he did not study were included in the question paper. Failure in an important examination could mean a huge loss for him and his career. Sometimes a student can fail in his viva-voce examination (oral exam), if he could not recall an important formula because he did not make adequate preparations. This student could have failed to get distinction marks or lose a very important scholarship. He might have studied diligently the whole year round but carelessness or lack of proper preparations before the oral exam resulted in his great loss.

So, all of us should learn from these events and examples stated above. As they say "the devil is in the details". No detail is so small that we should neglect it. In life big problems do not crop up overnight. When we are not vigilant enough to take care of the small problems, one day they can become so big that it would be very difficult to solve it. An avalanche began as a small mass of snow sliding down a mountain slope. We should never forget this phenomenon.

Myanmar: A Land of Ethnic Affinity

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja Sithu
Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

[The 18th Anniversary of the Union Day 12 February 1965, was held in Hpa-an, the capital of Kayin State of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, at the foot of Zwegabin Hill, a vast area of jungle was cleared for the celebration of that great event. The writer, then head of the Department of Modern History and Political Science, Mawlamyaing Collage, was chosen the master of ceremony and assigned to participate in the discussions of Myanmar ethnic nationalities and to contribute articles to the locally produced Dailies-The Guardian and the Working People's Daily.

It has been five decades and 2 years [1965-2017], today that 18th Anniversary of the Union Day was held at the capital of Kayin State and the article "Myanmar: A Land of Ethnic Affinity" which the writer contributed to the then two English Language Dailies. For three year 1965, 1966 and 1967, the entire country was peaceful as all ethnic nationalities ceased fightings. The 19th and the 20th Anniversaries of that great day were held successively and successfully at Taunggyi the capital of Shan State and Myitkyina the capital of Kachine State. But peace was not durable as armed conflicts re-emerged across the country. Therefore the next anniversaries of the Union Day could not be held by turn at the capitals of constituent states and divisions such as Loikaw, Mawlamyine, Sittway and Haka.

Today, we, all Myanmar ethnic nationalities are working relentlessly for a durable peace under the leadership of a new democratic civilian Government to accomplish the unrealized task of Panglong Conference of 1947, started by Bogyoke Aung San and his A.F.P.F.L.Party [Anti. Fascist People's Freedom League] at the present 21st Century Panglong Conference.

The Article "Myanmar: A Land of Ethnic Affinity reproduced as follows was based upon the writer's academic research and field studies in almost all constituent States and Divisions, with the assistance and co-operation of our ethnic national brethren. Though five decades and 2 years old, the Article is as relevant as it was in 1965.—The writer]

A Land of Ethnic Afinities

Myanmar has often been described by most casual visitors as "a rag-bag of races" or "as a hotch potch of nationalities". To justify their metaphoric descriptions they tried to find out points of difference among its inhabitants so as to classify them under separate ethnic groups. But the more they study them the less clear becomes their racial distination and the criteria by which the identity of ethnic groups are to be established weaken in the face of linguistic semblances, likeness in physical features, similarities in social systems and overlapping of cultural habits. Even the most serious scholars of Myanmar's anthropology often fall into a puzzlement in regard to the racial differentiation of her indigenous peoples. "We shall never be able to trace the people who now inhabit Myanmar", says C.C. Lowis, Superintendent of Ethnographical Survey of Myanmar in 1949, "back fully to their original seats or say precisely where they had their beginnings as separate racial units and when they left their primeval homes…" Hence not infrequently theories put forward by the preceding generation of scholars are either partly amended or entirely overthrown by those of the succeeding ones, and generalisations of one school of thought are vitiated by the discovery of specific factors by another school.

Nevertheless nothing is more interesting than tracing the genesis and the line of ancestry of our Union nationalities as far back as possible into the past and to deduce out of the available data a conjecture at the whereabouts of the original homes of their progenitors. To start with, we have certain known factors upon which our enquiry into the known field has to be worked. These are geology, geography, philology, anthropology and folklores. Although not one of them can be relied upon as absolute standard test, they guide us in our quest for data, and assist us in corroborating our hypotheses. Geology of Myanmar has shown us that there had been human settlements in Myanmar long before the time of our ancestors. Certain strangely shaped stones believed to be the artifacts of the early man, excavated along the banks of the Ayayawady River in the Dry Zone are evidences upon which the archaeologists established the theory of the existence of the historic Stone Ages, both Palaeolithic and Neolithic types, in Myanmar during the geological period between the early and middle Pleistocene Age. But more research is needed for better authority of this theory. As of regards the ethnic identity of these early settlers an opinion has been formed on the basis of certain anthropological data, such as negrito characteristics which sometimes reveal in the physical appearances of some highlanders and the existence till today of the negrito races on the Andaman Islands off the Myanmar coast, that the earliest inhabitants of Myanmar were of negrito race. To support this theory references are made to the ancient Chinese records which mentioned the existence in Myanmar of certain types of people with short and stout built, black skin and woolly hair. But without further evidences and stronger data, this theory seems far-fetched.

If there had been early dwellers, the inference is that the ancestors of the present inhabitants must be the new comers. If so, where they came from and why they came in to Myanmar are the logical questions to be answered. Geography of Myanmar provides us some clues to the possible direction of the influx of the new comers. The physical features of Myanmar follow a single pattern running from the northerly to the southerly direction. Almost all mountain ranges, valleys, rivers, plains and the result that in Myanmar north means 'upper portion' and south means 'lower portion'. These north to south directed rivers and valleys are the Nature's gifts for Myanmar's waterways and land routes. So it is not unreasonable to figure out the streams of human movements along the line of the physical pattern. This is not to say that there had never been human inflows, either from the east or the west. But such human inflows took place only at a later date after they had taken the usual north-to-south routes. The possibility of immigration from the direct south has been ruled out by the difficult barrier of the ocean in the prehistoric days. Had there been any comers from across the sea they would be too limited a number to be able to populate the whole of Myanmar. Hence the en masses influx must be from the north. "There is every reason to believe", opines John Stuart, who was a student of Prehistoric Myanmar," that the numerous races inhabiting the country now known as Myanmar are aliens, who poured down from Western China, from Tibet and perhaps from North-Eastern India in prehistoric times. This influx probably began long before the commencement of the Christian era, and was continued through centuries…"

In support of the above view the pattern of ethnic distribution shows us traces of immigration lines along the rivers, valleys and watersheds. Enclaves of human settlements which have ethnic affinities with the Kachins, Kayahs, Karens, Chins and Shan and Burmese are found in the upper reaches of the Ayeyawady, the Salween and the Chindwin rivers. They are the descendants of our forebears, left on the waysides of the movement lines, losing contact with the main body of the immigration waves, but have remained intact and unchanged through many centuries. We have been able to find out the remnants of these ancient human lakes and their ethnic connection by the help of philology. Comparative study of their languages and those of our six main nationalities, the Kachins, the Kayahs, the Karens and Chins, the Shans and the Burmese not only reveals our basic linguistie similarities but also points out that the languages of our indigenous races are akin to those of Central and High Asia. Thus the conclusion, so far unchallenged, is that the original home of our ancestors must be somewhere in Tibet-China land. "It is an undoubted fact that whenever we have a realiable clue of speech or tradition to follow, it leads us up northward in the direction of this prehistoric breeding ground which shed in the dim past its tribes… over the whole of South Eastern Asia. The chain may seem to break here and there, the treads may show signs of crossing and recrossing, but the general trend is eventually the same and the conclusion ever identical."

So far it has not been able to form a specific idea the date and time of the coming of these tribes. But as regards the causes of their immigration suggestions have been advanced by scholars such as a search for Lebensraum, wars in

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Myanmar: A Land of Ethnic Affinity

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Central Asian plateau and sheer wander lust. Of these the first seems the most plausible, for "through out world form congested areas or colder region men who are generally more virile and adventurous migrate to tracts more flourishing and sparsely populated. These migrations are due to more then one cause. It is sometimes cupidity, and sometimes ambition but generally it is due to economic pressure. "In ancient days the whole of northern Myanmar and a large part of southern Myanmar were vast wilderness of almost uninhabited forest country, an immense 'Eldorado waiting for colonization, therefore quite naturally the envy of more populous neighboring states… The existence of these empty spaces facilitated large migrations from the earliest known times, out of the mountainous territory in the north into Myanmar 7" Folklores, songs and proverbs which most of our kinsmen share in common have many references to our quest for new land and constant move to "where water is clear and grass is tender". Besides the system of shifting cultivation which our hill folks practice till today clearly explains the mobility of our ancestors. The immigrations were not continuous and speedy but intermittent and gradual. It took the immigrants centuries to reach inside Myanmar and on the way many generations were bred and human settlements were spilled over the immigration lines.

The ethnologists have first classified the people of South East Asia, including Myanmar, according to their physical features and skin and hair complexion, height, the size of skull, etc. and by grouping the affinities together they get three divisions:

1. The Negriods- those with either too tall or too short in height and black skin and wooly hair.
2. Austroloid- those with a medium height, high forehead, large jaw and wavy hair.
3. Mongoloid- those with a medium height, yellow or brownish complexion, smooth skin and straight and soft hair.

The peoples of Myanmar, the ethnologists generally agree, belong to the third division i.e. the Mongoloid, although some characteristics of the first two types occasionally appear in them. Even among the Mongoloids there are many variations due to the influence of different climatic and environmental conditions. The same is true of other two types. So this classification does not seem satisfactory.

Philological method is then applied for identifying the races. By a comparative study of languages spoken in the South East Asian countries, factors which are generally common or basically common and close affinities are sorted out and classified into groupings. The conclusion reached is that almost all languages of South East Asia, including . Myanmar, belong to either (1) Austric group or (2)Tibeto-Chinese group. The Austric group has two branches, namely the Austro-nesian, that is, those languages spoken by the peoples living on the coast lines, islands and archipelago and the Austroasiatic, that is those languages spoken by the peoples in the main lands. The Tibeto-Chinese group also has two branches viz. the Tibeto-Myanmar and the Tai-Chinese. It is found that Myanmar has representatives of all these for branches of linguistic groupings. But the majorities are the Tibeto - Myanmar, the Tai-Chinese and the Mon-Khmer (the Austro-Asiatic group). Hence the indigenous races of Myanmar conveniently classified into these three linguistic branches of the same Mongoloid stock. Taking these three linguistic branches as the basis, the possible immigration routes taken by our ancestors are traced as far as reliable linguistic data permit and how far they journeyed together, where their ways diverged and where they first settled down in 'Myanmar are also reasonably conjectured.

Research has established the theory that the native place of the Tibeto-Myanmar group was somewhere in the Eastern portion of the Central Asian Tableland. From there this group sent out its off shoots, century after century, along the valleys and mountain ranges into Indo-China and Myanmar. In the course of their long and difficult journey they diverged into two ways the one taking the western route and the other the eastern route. The parting point was at the foot of "a crescent of mountains" in the extreme north of Myanmar" "which forms the watershed between the Salween and the Bhramaputra, from the southern edge of which spring the sister streams, the N'maikha and the Malikha, which combine to form the Ayeyawady". That crescent of mountains is practically an inpassable barrier preventing a straight line penetration into Myanmar. Therefore the Tibeto-Myanmar immigrants had either to come out east and follow the Salween River to continue their outward movement, or to turn west and take a circuit towards Assam and the Bhramaputra and from there to proceed pursuing their southerly course. They took both alternatives some following the east-turn and others the west-turn route. The present distributions of the Tibeto-Myanmar and the linguistic study have proved it.

We have thus a twofold classification of the Tibeto-Myanmar the Eastern (N'maikha-Salween-Mekong) Tibeto-Myanmar and the Western (Bhramaputra-Chindwin-Malikha) Tibeto-Myanmar Eastern Tibeto-Myanmar entered Myanmar by following the valleys of the N'maikha the Taping the Shweli, and the Myitnge, which are the tributaries of the Ayeyawaddy river and the Salween and the Mekong rivers. As they moved southward some of them settled down in the N'maikha - Salween region which now form part of the Kachin State. Some proceeded further south and settled down in the Salween-Mekong and Salween- Ayeyawaddy regions which are now partly constituted in the Shan State and partly in the Kayah State, and mostly the Ayeyawaddy plain lands. At a later date they proceeded from the plains to the Arakan coastal strip and settled there. Some moved to further south and settled down in the Salween-Sittang-Ayeyawaddy regions which now partly form Kawthoolei (Karen State) and partly the delta and lower Myanmar. The southernmost limit of the Eastern Tibeto-Myanmar movement in Myanmar is the Tenasserim Division. The Western Tibeto-Myanmar entered Myanmar mostly from the north-western corner where there are mountain passes and easily accessible mountains and valleys. Some crossed the Chindwin and the N'maikah rivers, transversing their regions castward to join their kinsmen of the Eastern branch. Some moved straight southward following the mountain ranges on the western bank of the Chindwin and in the course of their journey they left on their ways settlements of their folks. These mountain ranges now form the Chin Special Division [now Chin State].

The southernmost limit of Western Tibeto-Myanmar movement in Myanmar is the Arakan Division [Rakhine State]. Some western Tibeto-Myanmar moved down to the plain land and settled down at a number of places on both banks of the Chindwin and the Ayeyawady.

The representative of the Eastern Tibeto-Myanmar living in Myanmar may be classified into four major groups;

1. The Pyu group who have now become totally extinct, but whose capital cities in ruins are now being excavated near Prome, Taungdwing and Shwebo;
2. The Myanmar group in which are included the Lashis, the Maingthas and the Hpons of the Eastern Kachin State, the Marus and the Szis of the Northern Shan State, the Inthas, the Taungyoes the Danus of the Myelat area of the Southern Shan State, the Yaws of the Pakokku District, the Chaunthas of the southern part of the Chin State, the Arakanese of the Arakan State, the Tavoyams and the Merguians of the Tenasserim Special Division and the Burmese themselves;
3. The Kayan group in which are included Kayari of both plains and hills, the Padaungs, the Pa-Os, of Taungthus, the Kayahs, the Bres etc, whose range of distribution covers from the southern part of the Shan State, the Kayah State, the Kayin State, the Delta, the Topngoo District and the Tenasserim Division. The classification of the Kayan group under the Eastern Tibeto-Myanmar was quite recent. It was Professor G.H Luce, a well-known research man in the field of ancient history of Myanmar, who after years of comparative study of languages of Myanmar has said with no uncertain voice that the "Kayan language is Tibeto-Myanmar" but previous scholars from Sir Arthur Phayre, Mr. Taw Sein Ko, Sir J.G. Scctl, H.N.C Stevenson to C.C. Lowis & have placed the Kayans under the Tai-Chinese group. Since both Tilbeto-Myanmar and Tai-Chinese are the two offshoots of the same branch Tibeto-Chinese the discrepancy between these two schools is one of degree rather than of kind;
4. The Lolo group is which are included the Lisaws, Lisus or Yawyins of the Kachin and Shan States, the Lahus of the Kengtung District, Kokang and the Wa area, and the Akhas or Kaws of the Kengtung District, the Wa area and the Tachilek, area.

The representatives of the Western Tibeto-Myanmar living in Myanmar may also be classified into four groups;

1. The Sak or Thet group in which are included the Kadus of the Katha District, the Tamans of the Upper Chindwin District and the Sak or Thet of the Akyab District;
2. The Naga group in which are included the Nagas of the Naga Hills in Myanmar;
3. The Chin group in which are included all Chin nationals of the Chin State, the Chins of the Arakan State, the Chins of the Pakokku, Magwe, Minbu, Thayet and Prome Districts and eastern side of the Pegu Yoma;
4. The Kachin group in which are included Theinpaws or Singphos and Kachins of the Kachin State. The Rawans and the Darus are also inhabitants of the Kachin State.

It has been commonly accepted by scholars that the historic breeding ground of the Mon-Khmer was to the east of that of the Tibeto-Myanmar i.e. in the region between Yunnan and Indo-China. From there waves of immigration spread out into North and South. The northern wave took the westward route via the Yunnan and Shan plateaus, crossing the northernmost of Myanmar until they reached the Assam and the Bhramaputra regions and the Ganges valley which was their westernmost limit. The southern wave on the other hand, moved down to North Vietnam and the delta of Tongking river from where they spilled over to the southern part of Mekong delta, and the Menan valley from where they moved westward leaving settlements all along the Salween and the Sittang valleys and deltas till they reached the Ayeyawaddy which was their westernmost limit. The representatives of the Mon-Khmers of the Northern wave living in Myanmar are the Palaungs and the Pales of the northern and southern parts of the Shan State, the Was or La Was or Las of Kokang and Kunlong Districts and Wa area, the Riangs of the southern part of the Shan State, the Miaotzus of the Kokaag, Kunlong and Kengtung Districts. The representatives of the Mon-Khmer of the southern wave living in Myanmar are the Mons of the Tenasserim Division, the deltas, valleys of the Salween, the Sittang and the Irrawaddy and the Kamus (Khmers) or Kamits or Lamets of the Thaton and Moulmein Districts.

Regarding the original homeland of the Tai-Chinese, no final authority can yet be established. But the most likely place is in South China. For some centuries there existed the powerful Tai Kingdom called "Nan-Chao" which occupied West and North West of Yunnan. From there the Tais or Shans spread out to the South and West. The south-ward move left their settlements all along the Menan, Mekong. Salween rivers up to Laos and Siam. The westward move entered Myanmar from the North East corner via the Shweli, the Taping, the Myitnge and the Salween rivers. They then crossed northern Myanmar moving still westward until they reached Assam and Bhramaputra region which was their westernmost limit. Enclaves of Shan settlements are thus found in the Kachin State and Upper Chindwin valley, but their main Land in Myanmar being the Shan State. The representatives of the Tai-Chinese living in Myanmar are the Shans in which are included the Maw Shans of Saweli valley, the Khuns of the Lengtung District, the Lus and the Lems of the eastern bank of the Salween, the Yuns of the Tachilek and Mengsak areas, the Shan-Burmese and Shans, the Khampti Shans of the Kachin State and the Tai-Chinese and Chinese of Kokang in northern Shan State.

Besides these three linguistic branches mentioned above Myanmar has the representatives of the Austronesian branch. They are the Salons and the Malays (in very limited numbers) of Beshoos of the Tenasserim coast and the archipelago. The Austronesians were sea-faring people who must have crossed the China Sea before they eventually came to settle down along the coast lines of the South East Asian main lands and the Indonesian archipelago. From Malay Peninsula they gradually moved into Mvanmar's territory in the remote past.

The classification thus described shows a well balance between unity above and diversity below- the unity in the common Mongoloid origin and the diversity in the linguistic variations-a balance upon which "the Myanmar people many years ago were formed into a nation by the Union of Mongoloid tribes, who then occupied the land which is still the home of their race". For centuries the Union races have chosen Myanmar as their home and lived in it, assimilating whatever is worth assimilating and retaining those which are worth retention, but sharing alike the common weal or woe that befalls them. No doubt there is difference among them but "much of this difference is due to the nature of the physical environment, since heavy jungle and mountainous country do not make for good communication and isolation has had its usual effect of enhancing regional development on individual lines. This development is for the same reason, along the lines of economic and social divergences rather than along the lines of racial division". But now the trends are towards assimilation and with the speedy launching of the States' Development Programme such divergencies will disappear soon and the gap of progress will narrow down. It is not racial identity that matters much for the making of a nation but it is the desire to live together and to aspire to the common goal that makes its sinews and spirit.

"A nation is a conglomeration of peoples whose interests coincide closely, who have experienced the same vicissitudes of life and history together and who regard . themselves as having been of the same kind for a long stretch of time. Although race, religion and language play a part, nationalism essentially is based on the tradition of living and the desire to live together in the same community of interests and experiences"-Bogyoke Aung San.

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Energy stocks look for catalyst out of doldrums

NEW YORK — Buoyant oil prices since Donald Trump's election have provided no lasting halo effect for energy stocks as the sector's profit rebound has lacked vigour, but that could change in the week ahead with a fresh crop of quarterly scorecards.

Helped by OPEC output cuts, oil prices are up roughly 20 per cent since Trump's victory, and US crude CLc1 has held above $50 a barrel since mid-December. US Commodity Futures Trading Commission positioning data shows hedge funds and other speculators hold near-record-high net long positions in US crude futures and options.

But the S&P energy index .SPNY, one of the key drivers to the stock market rally in the early days following the 8 November election, has not kept pace. It has slumped nearly 4 per cent for the year.

"We are seeing a little bit of a difference of opinion between equity investors and commodity investors," said David Lefkowitz, senior equity strategist at UBS Wealth Management Americas in New York.

"Equity investors seem a little bit more worried about the outlook for the commodity and the actual commodity investors themselves don't seem to be reflecting that."

Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) shortly after the opening bell in New York, US, on 31 January, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Should those opinions converge and energy stocks rebound, stocks could see more pronounced moves than have been seen in recent weeks, with the S&P 500 .SPX unable to register a move of more than 1 per cent in either direction since 7 December.

The relationship between the energy sector and US crude has also tightened recently, with the 10-correlation at 0.61, its highest in three weeks. Part of the underperformance in the sector looks to be attributable to a disappointment in quarterly results. Energy companies were expected to benefit from easy comparisons with last year, when the price of oil sank below $30 a barrel, but so far they've under-delivered against those expectations. Thomson Reuters data through Friday morning shows energy sector earnings for the fourth quarter are on pace for a fractional decline. A month ago they were seen rising by nearly 5 per cent. Moreover, the group has so far posted a beat rate of only 58 per cent, as measured by the number of companies in the sector posting better-than-expected results, well below the 68 per cent rate for the S&P as a whole.—*Reuters*

Ford to invest $1 billion in autonomous vehicle tech firm Argo AI

SAN FRANCISCO — Ford Motor Co plans to invest $1 billion over the next five years in tech startup Argo AI to help the Detroit automaker reach its goal of producing a self-driving vehicle for commercial ride sharing fleets by 2021, the companies announced on Friday. The investment in Pittsburg-based Argo AI, founded by former executives on self-driving teams at Google and Uber, will make Ford the company's largest shareholder.

Ford Chief Executive Officer Mark Fields said the investment is in line with previous announcements on planned capital expenditures. Argo AI, which focuses on artificial intelligence and robotics, will help build what Ford calls its "virtual driver system" at the heart of the fully autonomous car Ford said last year it would develop by 2021.

"With Argo AI's agility and Ford's scale we're combining the benefits of a technology start up with the experience and discipline we have at Ford," Fields said at a press conference.

Once the technology is fully developed for Ford, it could be licensed to other companies, executives said.

While Ford will retain a majority of the start-up's equity, the potential for an equity stake as Argo AI hires 200 more employees will be an advantage in recruiting talent, executives said. "They have the opportunity to run it pretty independently with a board, but because it is a separate company or subsidiary, it has the opportunity to go out and recruit with competitive compensation packages and equity," Fields said. Until now, Ford's investments in future transportation technology have been relatively modest, compared with those of General Motors Co and others. One of Ford's largest such investments in the past year was $75 million to buy a minority stake in Velodyne, a manufacturer of laser-based lidar sensing systems for self-driving cars.—*Reuters*

Amazon warns that trade protectionism could hurt business

LONDON — Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) warned on Friday that government actions to bolster domestic companies against foreign competition could hurt its business, in a possible reference to US President Donald Trump's "America First" agenda.

In a routine description of regulatory risks in its 2016 annual filing, the world's largest online retailer said "trade and protectionist measures" might hinder its ability to grow.

That language has not appeared in Amazon's warning about government regulation in at least the past five annual filings with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

However, the Seattle-based company has cited trade protection in those filings as a risk to its international sales and operations specifically.

The new Republican president has made job creation a cornerstone of his policies, threatening to impose tariffs on imports so companies produce and hire within the United States.

Republicans in Congress also have a plan to target imports while excluding export revenue from US corporate income tax, known as a border adjustment tax.

The proposal in the US House of Representatives has divided corporate America.

Major exporters like Boeing Co (BA.N) have thrown their weight behind it, but a retail association has said it would raise prices for shoppers.

It was not clear what kinds of protectionist measures — whether tariffs or other actions — concerned Amazon the most, or from which countries Amazon saw the greatest risk.

Amazon so far has declined to comment on Republican lawmakers' border tax plan.

It declined comment on the new language in its annual filing, which appeared under the header, "Government Regulation Is Evolving and Unfavorable Changes Could Harm Our Business."

The filing did not mention the change in leadership of the White House.

Separately, Amazon said in the filing that it may face penalties for having delivered consumer products to entities covered by the Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, between 2012 and 2016.

Products included apparel, consumer electronics, software and books. Amazon said it processed goods worth about $2,400 for an entity controlled or owned by Iran's government, for example.

"We do not plan to continue selling to these accounts in the future," Amazon said.

"Our review is ongoing and we are enhancing our processes designed to identify transactions associated with individuals and entities covered by the (act)."—*Reuters*

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS SCHEDULE

YANGON TO BANGKOK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-304	09:50	11:45	Daily
TG-302	15:00	16:55	Daily
TG-306	19:50	21:45	Daily
PG-706	6:00	8:15	Daily
PG-702	10:30	12:25	Daily
PG-708	15:30	17:25	Daily
PG-704	18:20	20:15	Daily
8M-335	7:30	9:15	Daily
8M-331	16:30	18:15	Daily
UB-017	17:45	19:15	Daily
UB-019	8:00	9:30	3,5,7
UB-019	8:55	10:25	1,6

BANGKOK TO YANGON

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
TG-303	8:00	8:45	Daily
TG-301	13:15	14:00	Daily
TG-305	18:05	18:50	Daily
PG-701	8:45	9:40	Daily
PG-707	13:45	14:40	Daily
PG-703	16:45	17:35	Daily
PG-705	20:30	21:45	Daily
8M-336	10:15	11:00	Daily
8M-332	19:20	20:05	Daily
UB-020	10:35	11:10	3,5
UB-018	21:05	21:35	Daily
UB-020	11:30	12:05	1,6

YGN TO DMK

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
FD-252	8:30	10:20	Daily
FD-256	12:55	14:40	Daily
FD-254	17:35	19:25	Daily
FD-258	21:40	23:30	Daily
DD-4231	08:00	9:45	Daily
DD-4235	12:00	13:45	Daily
DD-4239	21:00	22:55	Daily
SL-201	11:00	13:35	Daily
SL-207	19:45	21:45	Daily

DMK TO YGN

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

YGN TO CAN

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

CAN TO YGN

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

YGN TO SIN

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

SIN TO YGN

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
8M-232	13:45	15:15	Daily
SQ-998	07:55	09:20	Daily
MI-522	11:30	15:30	4,6
MI-518	15:15	16:40	Daily
MI-516	12:00	13:25	1,3,5
MI-533	11:30	12:45	2
3K-583	17:30	19:00	Daily
3k-581	09:10	10:40	Daily
TR-2822	7:20	8:45	1,2,4,5,7
UB-002	13:00	14:30	Daily

YGN TO NRT

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

NRT TO YGN

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

YGN TO ICN

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

ICN TO YGN

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

YGN TO KUL

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

KUL TO YGN

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

YGN TO KMG

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

KMG TO YGN

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

YGN TO TPE

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

TPE TO YGN

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

YGN TO PEK

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

PEK TO YGN

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

YGN TO HAN

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

HAN TO YGN

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

YGN TO SGN

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

SGN TO YGN

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

YGN TO HKG

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

HKG TO YGN

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

YGN TO DOH

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

DOH TO YGN

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

YGN TO CNX

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

CNX TO YGN

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

YGN TO DAC

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

DAC TO YGN

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

MDL TO DMK

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

DMK TO MDL

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

MDL TO SIN

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

SIN TO MDL

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

MDL TO BKK

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

BKK TO MDL

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

MDL TO KMG

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

KMG TO MDL

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

NYT to BKK

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

BKK TO NYT

Flight no.	Dep	Arv	Days
PG-721	17:20	19:20	1,3,4,5,6,7

AIRLINE CODES

8M	=	Myanmar Airways International			
BG	=	Biman Bangladesh Airlines			
MH	=	Malaysia Airlines			
MU	=	China Eastern Airlines			
NH	=	All Nippon Airways			
SQ	=	Singapore Airways			
PG	=	Bangkok Airways			
UB	=	Myanmar National Airlines			
VN	=	Vietnam Airline			
3K	=	Jet Star	AK	=	Air Asia
AI	=	Air India	CA	=	Air China
CI	=	China Airlines	CZ	=	China Southern
DD	=	Nok Airline	FD	=	Air Asia
KA	=	Dragonair	KE	=	Korea Airlines
MI	=	Silk Air	QR	=	Qatar Airways
TG	=	Thai Airways	TR	=	Tiger Airline

DAY					
1	=	Monday	4	=	Thursday
2	=	Tuesday	5	=	Friday
3	=	Wednesday	6	=	Saturday
			7	=	Sunday

Genetic study may make ancient Incas quinoa a grain of the future

WASHINGTON — Quinoa, the sacred "mother grain" of the ancient Inca civilization suppressed by Spanish conquistadors, could become an increasingly important food source in the future thanks to genetic secrets revealed in a new study.

Scientists on Wednesday said they have mapped the genome of quinoa and identified a gene that could be manipulated to get rid of the grain's natural bitter taste and pave the way for more widespread commercial use.

Quinoa (pronounced KIN-wah) already grows well in harsh conditions such as salty and low-quality soil, high elevations and cool temperatures, meaning it can flourish in locales where common cereal crops like wheat and rice may struggle. But the presence of toxic and bitter chemicals called saponins in its seeds has been one of the impediments to extensive cultivation.

Plant scientist Mark Tester of King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia said the research pinpointed a gene that guides production of saponins in quinoa. This knowledge could enable breeding of quinoa without saponins, to make the seeds sweeter.

A seller shows Quinoa to a photographer at her stand at a market in Lima's Surquillo district in Peru on 25 February, 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

Currently, quinoa grain must be processed through washing and drying after harvest to remove saponins.

"Quinoa is currently greatly under-utilized," said Tester, who led the research published in the journal Nature. "It is highly nutritious, with a high protein content that, importantly, has a very good balance of amino acids, which is unusual for our major grains. It is gluten free and high in vitamins and minerals, too."

Increased quinoa production could improve food security on a planet with unrelenting human population growth, Tester said.

There are potential disadvantages to reducing saponins, perhaps increasing susceptibility to fungal infections or bird predation, Tester added.

Quinoa, which boasts a nutty flavor, can be used the same ways as rice and wheat. It can be cooked and served on its own, turned into pasta, put in soups, eaten as a cereal or fermented to make beer or chicha, a beverage of the Andes.

The crop was sacred to the ancient Incas, who called it "chisoya mama," or the "mother grain."

During their South American conquest 500 years ago, Spaniards suppressed quinoa cultivation because of its use in indigenous religious ceremonies. They forbade quinoa cultivation for a time, with the Incas forced to grow wheat instead.

Quinoa is still a minor crop globally, grown mostly in Peru and Bolivia. It has become fashionable in the West in recent years, primarily as a health food.—*Reuters*

China gets an early win off Trump, but many battles remain

Ben Blanchard

A combination of file photos showing Chinese President Xi Jinping (L) at London's Heathrow Airport, on 19 October, 2015 and US President Donald Trump posing for a photo in New York City, US, on 17 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

BEIJING — Combining public bluster with behind-the-scenes diplomacy, China wrested a concession from the United States as the two presidents spoke for the first time this week, but Beijing may not be able to derive much comfort from the win on US policy toward Taiwan.

Several areas of disagreement between the superpowers, including currency, trade, the South China Sea and North Korea, were not mentioned in public statements on Thursday's telephone conversation between Presidents Xi Jinping and Donald Trump. In getting Trump to change course on the "one China" policy, Beijing may have overplayed its hand.

Trump had upset Beijing before he took office by taking a call from Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, then casting doubt on the "one China" policy, under which Washington acknowledges the Chinese position that there is only one China and Taiwan is part of it.

Trump changed tack and agreed to honour the "one China" policy during the call, prompting jubilation in China. Beijing had been working on diplomatic ways to engage Trump's team and largely blaming Taiwan for stirring things up.

Laying the foundation for that call had been the low-key engagement of China's former ambassador to Washington and top diplomat, the urbane and fluent English-speaking Yang Jiechi, with Trump's national security adviser Michael Flynn.

"China was pragmatic and patient. It made every effort to smooth out the relationship, and it paid off," said Jia Qingguo, dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University, who has advised the government on foreign policy.

But China also made very clear Taiwan was not up for negotiation, unleashing state media to threaten war and punishment for US firms if that bottom line was breached.

China has long described self-ruled Taiwan, claimed by Beijing as its sacred territory, as the most sensitive issue in Sino-US relations.

Its military had become alarmed after the Trump-Tsai call and was considering strong measures to prevent the island from moving toward independence, sources with ties to senior military officers told Reuters in December.

A source familiar with China's thinking on relations with the United States, speaking to Reuters last month, said China had actually not been too bothered with Trump's Taiwan comments before he took office as he was not president then and was only expressing his personal view.

"If he continues with this once he becomes president then there's no saying what we'll do," the source said.

Despite the US concession, military tensions remain.

On Saturday, the overseas edition of the ruling Communist Party's People's Daily placed a picture on its front page of Chinese warships about to embark on a new round of drills in the South China Sea, right next to an upbeat commentary about the Xi-Trump call. The paper's WeChat account took a harsher line, saying that with Trump getting back with the program on "one China", Taiwan had better watch out.

"The heart of that Madame Tsai on the other side of the Taiwan Strait must at this moment be chilled to the core," it said.

One senior Western diplomat said China had been redoubling its efforts to win over the Vatican, one of a handful of countries to retain official ties with Taiwan.

Taiwan says it hopes for continued US support, and one ruling Democratic Progressive Party official told Reuters that the "one China" policy had not affected previous US arms sales to Taiwan, even as US presidents' commitment to the island have waxed and waned.

Xi has put great personal political capital into seeking a solution over Taiwan, an issue that has festered since 1949 when defeated Nationalist forces fled to the island after losing the civil war to the Communists. China has never renounced the use of force to bring Taiwan under its control. But in its relations with Washington, the risk for Beijing remains that its diplomatic win over "one China" will be short lived, as Trump will not want to be seen as having caved in.

"What he's shown the Chinese is he's willing to touch the 'third rail' of US-China relations," said Dean Cheng, China expert at the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington.

"Beijing can't predict what he'll do next — and he's only been in office three weeks. What is he going to do on trade and other economic issues?" US officials said the affirmation of the "one China" policy was an effort to get the relationship back on track and moving forward.

But Trump's change of tack may be seen by Beijing as a climbdown, said Tom Rafferty, the China Regional Manager for the Economist Intelligence Unit.

"Mr Trump is erratic and will not appreciate the suggestion that he has been weak."—*Reuters*

France watches skies for Russian wargames, domestic drone threat

LYON-MONT VERDUN AIRBASE, (France) — From close-up encounters with Russian warplanes to the threat of attacks from lightweight drones, France's air force is on alert on two fronts as it confronts a return to Cold War shadow-boxing and heightened domestic security concerns.

In the latest alert involving European airspace, the French air force said on Thursday two Mirage combat jets and one Rafale had escorted the two bombers down the French coast before handing over to Spanish military planes.

Britain said it had also scrambled Typhoon jets to monitor two Russian Blackjack bombers which flew near British airspace.

Despite daily cat and mouse games between Western and Russian warplanes over the Baltic Sea, and regular reports of attempts by Russian jets to test reaction times of UK defences, such contacts remain less frequent around France airspace.

A French official said the incident was the fourth time Russian fighters had been intercepted on the French coast over the past two years, a period of tension between Russia and western Europe related to the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

At a command centre deep under Mount Verdun in southeastern France, French air force officials are monitoring what is happening further North and are ready to respond.

"We detect the Russian planes relatively early because we are integrated in the NATO military structure," Brigadier General Pascal Delerce told Reuters inside the control room, reached through a warren of tunnels protected by thick doors.

"We know at least five or six hours before they have any chance of reaching the French coast, which allows us to deploy our resources accordingly," he said.

According to French officials, Russian bombers take a different route each time: sometimes flying as far south as Gibraltar before turning back, or drawing a wide circle from St Petersburg through Scandinavia, the west of Ireland, Gibraltar, Syria and back to Russia over the Caspian Sea.

France has eight Rafale or Mirage fighters and five helicopters deployed 24 hours a day on Quick Reaction Alert.

At the same time, the French air force carries out regular simulations and monitors potential threats from private planes or drones in its domestic airspace, amid heightened security in the country since the Paris attacks of 2015.

"The goal is to create a web of surveillance so that no aircraft be either inside French airspace or approaching it without being identified and having its posture checked," said Yannick, a captain who can only be identified by his first name.

Recent reports that Islamic State has used drones to scout targets or launch attacks in Iraq or Syria have heightened awareness of the threat from unmanned vehicles.

"The fact that they can take off close to the actual target which they could be aiming gives you a short reaction time, even if the threat is a small-scale one," said Philippe Adam.

France says it is ready to use jamming or GPS blocking equipment, and even a squadron of four specially trained golden eagles, to neutralise drones.—*Reuters*

New Zealand rescuers form human chain to help stranded whales

SYDNEY — Whale rescuers in New Zealand linked arms in neck-deep water on Saturday to try and prevent about 200 pilot whales from stranding themselves again in a remote bay, where 300 of the animals died this week.

The incident, in the shallow muddy waters of Golden Bay, at the northwest tip of South Island, was New Zealand's largest known whale stranding since 1985, when 450 of the animals were stranded in Auckland, and the third largest on record.

A group of about 100 volunteers, supported by three boats, successfully turned the whales away from shore by blocking their path, conservation officials said in a statement.

By mid-afternoon, the whales had moved offshore and were being monitored by boat as the tide dropped. "Emotionally, it's quite stressful, because you can hear the whales calling, which is really quite strong," one volunteer told broadcaster TVNZ.

Although about 100 whales stranded overnight were floated just after dawn, a fifth of that number beached themselves again in the afternoon.

"These whales are not in good condition and will be euthanised to relieve their suffering," the department of conservation said in its statement.

Since a conservation worker spotted the whales washed ashore on Thursday evening, rescuers have spent two days pouring water over the beached whales to try and keep them cool, while waiting to catch high tides to carry them out to sea again.

School children have sung to soothe the distressed animals.

The scale of the latest event "was a shock," even for a country with the most whale strandings in the world, said Darren Grover of Project Jonah, a marine environmental group.

The precise cause was not known, though beached whales are not uncommon at Golden Bay, whose murky low-lying waters Project Jonah says can confuse the marine mammals' sonar, leaving them vulnerable to stranding when the tide ebbs.

Pilot whales are not listed as endangered, but little is known about their population in New Zealand waters.—*Reuters*

Australia battles 50 fires in heat wave, sparking warning, blackout fears

SYDNEY — Australian emergency services were bracing against "potentially catastrophic" fire conditions on Saturday, as firefighters battled nearly 50 blazes in the state of New South Wales, sweltering in a heat wave sweeping the country's east coast.

Weather officials fear temperatures could hit 48 degrees C (118.4 F) in some areas, setting a record for the state's hottest February day ever. People have been banned from setting fires, and some major sports events have been cancelled.

"It's not just another summer's day. This is as bad as it gets," Shane Fitzimmons, rural fire chief in the state, which was already battling 49 bush or grass fires by midafternoon, told reporters.

"The catastrophic ratings are what we could describe as beyond the conventional scale." Thousands of people flocked to Sydney's beaches to cool off, prompting warnings from lifeguards to stay close to shore and take precautions against the sun. "We want people to be aware of signs of heat stress," a spokesman for the state's lifeguard service told Reuters. "The number one message for people is to stay hydrated, it's crucial on a day like today."

A man lays in a pool of sea water he dug into Sydney's North Cronulla Beach as Sydneysiders take refuge from sweltering conditions during a heatwave along Australia's east coast, on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

The extreme heat roiling out of Australia's desert interior will also push temperatures in the northeastern state of Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), home to the capital, Canberra, to uncomfortable levels on the weekend.

Temperatures hit 47 C (117 F) in parts of New South Wales and ACT on Friday, putting pressure on the electricity grid and prompting plans by authorities to suspend supply in some areas. Late on Friday, the Australian Energy Market Operator said the prospect of blackouts had been averted as the state cut back consumption.

But with similar gruelling weather expected over the weekend, residents cannot relax vigilance on power use, a spokeswoman for the body said on Saturday.

Businesses that halted operations to conserve energy included a paper mill, water treatment operations and Australia's largest aluminum smelter, Tomago. Many industrial users have contracts requiring them to take such action.

Racing officials in Sydney, Australia's largest city, postponed the Royal Randwick Race Meeting over fears for the animals' wellbeing in the heat.

New South Wales sports officials cancelled some Rugby League junior representative matches and all grades of cricket matches.

A weather change on Sunday may offer a breather, said Peter Zmijewski, a senior forecaster at the Bureau of Meteorology.

"For quite a few weeks, nights have been coming warmer and we haven't had any changes to blow the heat away," Zmijewski told Reuters. "We may break this pattern tomorrow and Monday." —*Reuters*

Earthquake in southern Philippines kills four, damages infrastructure

MANILA — Four people died and more than 100 were injured after a powerful earthquake struck the island of Mindanao in the southern Philippines late Friday, damaging some structures and cutting power in many areas, local officials said. The 6.7 earthquake occurred at a depth of 10 km and the epicentre was about 13 km east of the city of Surigao, the US Geological Survey reported.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said there was no tsunami threat from the earthquake.

Renato Solidum, head of the Philippines' seismic agency, said on radio on Saturday morning 89 aftershocks had been recorded and more could be expected but they were unlikely to cause significant damage.

Friday's quake was the strongest since the city was rocked by a 6.9 quake in 1879, Solidum said.

People rushed to open spaces and spent the night in parks and shelter areas, according to radio reports.

Power-lines were down, water supply was interrupted, a bridge and a hotel collapsed and some homes were damaged, Surigao City Councilor Rise Recabo told DZRH radio.

Officials closed Surigao's airport because of cracks on the runway.

The Philippines is on the geologically active Pacific Ring of Fire and experiences frequent earthquakes.—*Reuters*

Vehicles pass cracks on a road that appeared along the National Highway at Rizal town after an earthquake hit Surigao city, southern Philippines on 11 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HARTA VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GSS YANGON VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to 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 NEW GLODEN SEA PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV XETHA BHUM VOY. NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P/M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

MV NOBLE CORAL VOY. NO (95)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV NOBLE CORAL VOY. NO (95) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12.2.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ECL (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301191/2301178

Grammy Awards shape up as clash of pop titans Beyonce and Adele

LOS ANGELES — The Grammy awards are shaping up to be the ultimate showdown between pop's two biggest female stars as Beyonce and Adele go head-to-head for song, record and album of the year on Sunday.

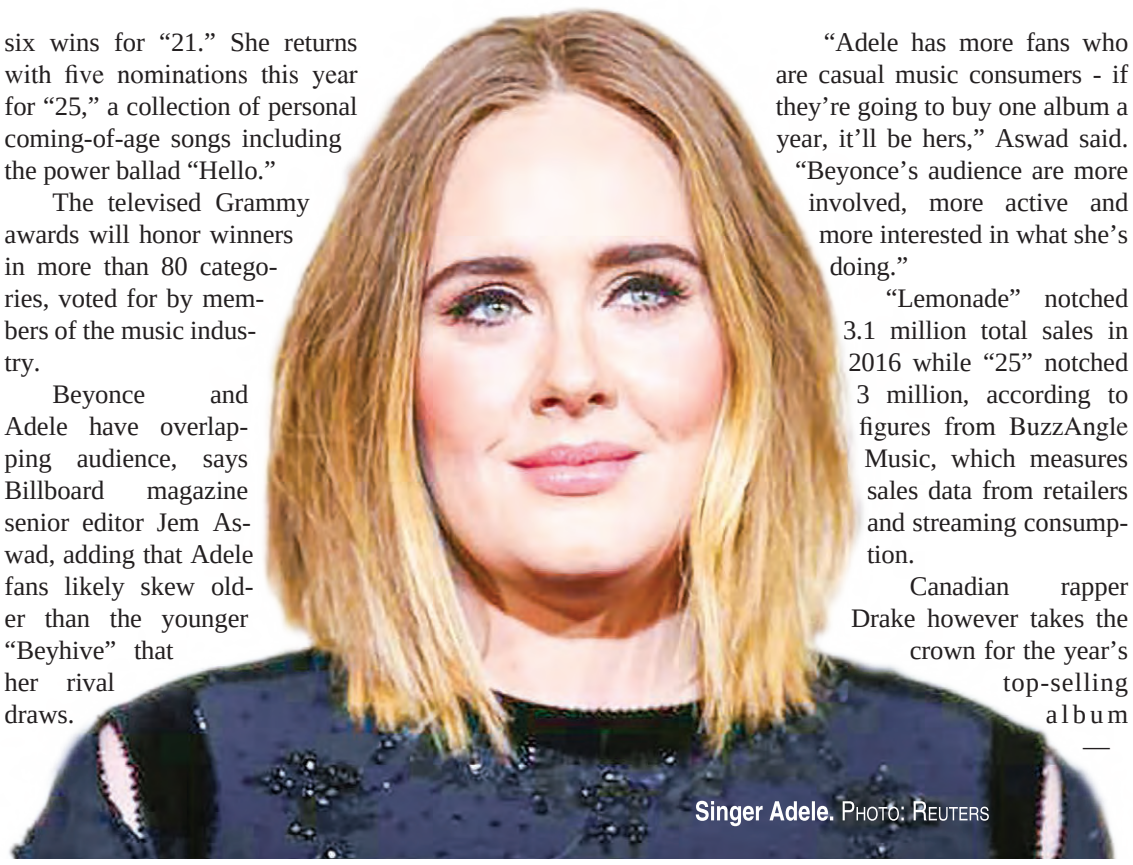
Despite 62 total Grammy nominations and 20 awards, Beyonce, 35, has never won the coveted album of the year, despite topping the charts with all six of her studio records.

With nine nominations, many fans are hoping Beyonce will overcome her Grammys' curse with "Lemonade," the personally and politically charged album many believe to be about the artist's troubled marriage to rapper Jay Z, layered with themes of black and female empowerment.

Standing in her way, however, is Britain's Adele, 28, who swept the Grammys in 2012 with six wins for "21." She returns with five nominations this year for "25," a collection of personal coming-of-age songs including the power ballad "Hello."

The televised Grammy awards will honor winners in more than 80 categories, voted for by members of the music industry.

Beyonce and Adele have overlapping audience, says Billboard magazine senior editor Jem Aswad, adding that Adele fans likely skew older than the younger "Beyhive" that her rival draws.



Singer Adele. PHOTO: REUTERS

"Adele has more fans who are casual music consumers - if they're going to buy one album a year, it'll be hers," Aswad said. "Beyonce's audience are more involved, more active and more interested in what she's doing."

"Lemonade" notched 3.1 million total sales in 2016 while "25" notched 3 million, according to figures from BuzzAngle Music, which measures sales data from retailers and streaming consumption.

Canadian rapper Drake however takes the crown for the year's top-selling album — "Views," nominated for eight Grammy awards including album and record of the year.

High sales do not necessarily translate into a Grammy win, as Beyonce learned in 2014 when her self-titled album, which had clocked more than 350,000 total sales units, lost out to a record with less than a tenth of the sales, Beck's "Morning Phase."

Among music heavyweights Beyonce, Adele, Drake and Justin Bieber's "Purpose" are competing for album of the year, along with Americana singer Sturgill Simpson, who is "unquestionably" the dark horse in this year's race with "A Sailor's Guide to Earth," Aswad said. The joke is not lost on Simpson, nominated for album of the year and best country album, who is selling T-shirts with slogans questioning who he is on his website ahead of the ceremony.—*Reuters*

'Fifty Shades Darker' a darker film, says author and producer E L James

Jamie Dornan and his wife Amelia Warner. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — "Fifty Shades Darker", the sequel to the 2015 hit "Fifty Shades of Grey", promises to be a darker experience for viewers, both the cast and producer of the film agreed at the film's premiere in Britain.

"It does have darker elements," said producer E L James. "We have people trying to split up the couple, we learn about why Christian is the way he is, so, yes, it is darker."

James is also the author of the trilogy of erotic romance books on which the films are based, which were wildly popular when published in 2011 and 2012.

In "Fifty Shades Darker", protagonists Anastasia Steele and Christian Gray reconcile and start their relationship afresh. However, the couple are forced to confront Christian's inner demons and other people threatening to tear them apart. "Fifty Shades Darker" began its global rollout on 8 February. —*Reuters*

Ten Warhol Monroe prints go up at British Museum to flag Pop show

LONDON —Ten screenprints by American pop artist Andy Warhol of Marilyn Monroe were put on display at London's British Museum this week to flag a spring headline exhibition "The American Dream: Pop to the present".

The prints, created after the actress's death in 1962, hang side by side. More than 200 works by 70 artists will go on show in "a comprehensive survey of printmaking across six decades of turbulent US history", according to the museum.

The exhibition opens on 9 March.—*Reuters*

Gere faults Trump for blurring meaning of 'refugee' and 'terrorist'

BERLIN — Actor and activist Richard Gere said on Friday that US President Donald Trump has managed to merge the meaning of the words "refugee" and "terrorist" in the minds of many Americans.

Gere also told a news conference at the Berlin Film Festival just before the world premiere of his new film "The Dinner" that he found it discouraging to see term "refugee" go through such a dispiriting change of meaning in the United States.

"The most horrible thing that Trump has done is conflated two words — refugee and terrorist," Gere, 67, told more than 100 journalists. "It means the same thing in the US now. That's what he's accomplished to a large segment of our population."

Trump ordered a travel ban on refugees and citizens from seven Muslim-majority countries on 27 January. A US appeal court in San Francisco refused to reinstate a temporary ban on the order. Trump criticized the court decision.

"A 'refugee' used to be someone that we had empathy for ...someone we wanted to help who we wanted to give refuge to," Gere said.

"...Now we're afraid of them and this ...is the biggest crime in itself: conflating these two ideas."

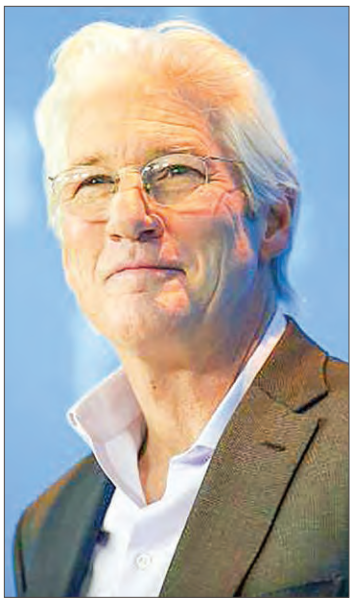
Gere met Chancellor Angela Merkel this week while in Berlin for the festival. She told Trump in a phone call two weeks ago the global fight against terrorism was no excuse for banning people from Muslim-majority countries.

In the film "The Dinner", Gere plays a famous politician who meets his wife and his brother at a hip restaurant to discuss a horrible crime committed by their sons.

In an interview with Reuters before the news conference, Gere said he was encouraged by protests in the United States against Trump's policies.

"I am essentially an optimist so I am seeing this as an opportunity for people to show up the day after he was inaugurated," Gere said. "There were millions of people in the streets in New York. It wasn't angry demonstrations. It was positive demonstrations that were kind of a unity of purpose."

More than a million migrants, many of them fleeing conflict and persecution, have arrived in Germany over the last two years.



Actor Richard Gere poses during a photocall to promote the movie 'The Dinner' at the 67th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, on 10 February, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

"The Dinner" is one of 18 films at the 'Berlinale', competing for Golden and Silver Bears. The festival runs until 19 February. —*Reuters*

LeBeouf's anti-Trump New York exhibit shuttered over safety concerns

NEW YORK — A New York City museum has shut down an exhibit protesting US President Donald Trump co-created by actor Shia LaBeouf, saying the installation titled "HEWILLNOTDIVIDE.US" had triggered threats of violence and endangered public safety.

LaBeouf and two artists had set up a live-streaming camera outside the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens on 20 January, the day that Trump was inaugurated, and encouraged members of the public to repeat "he will not divide us" into the camera. The exhibit was intended to continue through Trump's four-year term.

Cast member Shia LaBeouf poses during a photocall for the film 'American Honey' in competition at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, on 15 May 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

LaBeouf was arrested on 26 January after getting into an altercation with a 25-year-old man at the museum, according to police. The actor allegedly pulled the man's scarf, scratched his face and shoved him, police said.

In a statement on Friday, the museum said the camera had "created a serious and ongoing public safety hazard."

"While the installation began constructively, it deteriorated markedly after one of the artists was arrested on the site of the installation and ultimately necessitated this action," the museum said. "Over the course of the installation, there have been dozens of threats of violence and numerous arrests, such that police felt compelled to be stationed outside the installation 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The New York City Police Department confirmed it had assigned a foot post to the location 24 hours a day. Police said only one other person had been arrested outside the museum since LaBeouf: a 21-year-old man on 2 February accused of throwing eggs at another person.

On Friday morning, the live stream showed the words, "The museum has abandoned us," in capital letters, an image that LaBeouf shared on Twitter.

A message about the project on its website said, "On 10 February, 2017, the Museum of the Moving Image abandoned the project. The artists, however, have not."

A representative for LaBeouf did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Friday. —*Reuters*

Artwork on sex, passion and sensuality up for sale at Sotheby's

LONDON — Love, sex and passion — in all their forms — have inspired a new sale collection at Sotheby's in London.

Titled "Erotic: Passion & Desire," the auction lots feature art works from across the centuries and the world, including pieces by Pablo Picasso, Sarah Bernhardt and Helmut Newton.

"We've put together 107 works of art ranging from antiquity to contemporary," said Sotheby's senior director, Constantine Frangos. "It covers passion, desire and the appreciation of the human form."

Some works are explicitly carnal in nature, showing moments of intimacy, lust and pleasure. Both heterosexual and homosexual acts as well as masturbation are represented. According to Sotheby's, the sale has attracted interest from an array of buyers in North America, Europe and Asia. The exhibition encompasses diverse media, from photographs and pen sketches to ornate wood carvings and marble busts. One item generating buzz is a recreation of a table that was supposedly delivered to Russia's Catherine the Great. The painted plywood table has details of breasts and penises. It is priced between 15,000 and 20,000 pounds.—*Reuters*

Combined photo shows Iyo Matsumoto (L) and Yu Hayami, Japanese TV personalities known as "mama-dols," or former pop idols continuing their show-business careers even after becoming mothers. They jointly trespassed onto a railway track in Kyoto in January 2017, with Matsumoto posting a photo of them on tracks on her blog. Papers on their suspected violation of the railway business law were referred to prosecutors by the Kyoto police on 10 February. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Fashion show kicks off Brussels chocolate fair

BRUSSELS — From floor-sweeping gowns to eye-catching shorter dresses, models strutted down a Brussels catwalk in an array of unusual designs on Thursday night — all adorned with chocolate.

The daily fashion show, which sees teams of chefs and designers working together to create chocolate outfits, is a highlight of the "Salon du Chocolat" chocolate fair in the Belgian capital, which this year runs from 10-12 February.

The sweet-toothed can see chocolatiers or chocolate makers at work and taste samples. Belgian chocolate makers are known for their pralines. At the fair's Thursday night opening, specially designed dresses were showcased under the theme "Back to the Future".

Different kinds of chocolate in all shapes and sizes were used to decorate the dresses. One short red frock had small balls of chocolate attached while another, longer gown was decorated with chocolate leaves. Even accessories, such as hats, bore the sweet.

Some 80 chocolatiers are presenting their work at the fair, which also has versions in other cities around the world.— *Reuters*

A model dressed in an outfit made with chocolate presents a creation at the 'Le Salon du Chocolat — Chocoladesalon' chocolate fair, in Brussels, Belgium, on 9 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Middle-aged Japanese "idol" women trespassed onto railway track

KYOTO — Iyo Matsumoto and Yu Hayami, Japanese TV personalities known as "mama-dols," or former pop idols continuing their show-business career even after becoming mothers, drew flak from the police after jointly trespassing onto a railway track.

Papers on their suspected violation of the railway business law were referred Friday to prosecutors by the Kyoto police, after a photo of the two middle-aged women on tracks, posted by Matsumoto on her blog, gathered critical comments last month.

According to the police, Matsumoto, 51, and Hayami, 50, walked on the tracks of JR San-in Line in Kyoto on 13 January during their trip to the western Japanese city for shooting for a television programme.

The following day, Matsumoto posted on her blog a photo of them walking on the tracks with a caption saying the two heard the crossing starting to sound an alarm and quickly ran away.

As the entry immediately drew criticism, Matsumoto offered an apology on the blog on 15 January and has since deleted the article. Hayami also apologized on her blog.

The police questioned the two in late January, and said both admitted to walking on the tracks and regretted it.

Matsumoto and Hayami, who were both top idols in the 1980s, have been members of a "mama-dol" group called Cutie Mommy for around 10 years.—*Kyodo News*

mitv Myanmar International
Programme Schedule

(12-2-2017 07:00am ~ 13-2-2017 07:00am) MST

06:40	Am	Live: The 70th anniversary of Union Day Flag Salute Ceremony
07:26	Am	19 Hours
07:51	Am	Licuala Palm Leaf
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Myanmar Union Day
08:40	Am	Discovering Tribes: Tai Khun (or) Gon: their life and customs (Part 2)
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	A Visit to Kyauk Kyi
09:44	Am	Myanmar Traditional Thatched Roofs: IN-LEAF
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	The World's Largest Book
10:50	Am	Toddy Palm Product Shop

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Bagan: The Land of Pagoda
07:52	Pm	Today Myanmar: CBT in Kampetlet Township
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Hanthawaddy U Win Tin "A Fearless Man" (Episode - 2)
08:44	Pm	Myanmar Masterclass: Artist Zay Yar Aye

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

Remarks

09:15 Am Live: Panglong Peace Talks
06:00 Pm Live: The 70th anniversary of Union Day Dinner

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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India captain says Asian Cup key to development

MUMBAI— India's hopes of developing as a soccer-playing nation are reliant on regular participation in tournaments like the Asian Cup, captain Sunil Chhetri told Reuters.

Chhetri will be hoping to lead India to the 2019 Asian Cup finals in the United Arab Emirates after the world's second-most populous nation missed out on the last edition of the tournament in Australia two years ago.

India, who have only reached the finals on three previous occasions, have been drawn alongside Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Macau in Group A of the last round of qualifiers, with the top two teams advancing to the expanded tournament.

The Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) decision to increase the number of finalists from 16 to 24 has given the country a better chance of qualifying and Chhetri believes it is an opportunity India should not pass up.

"To be honest, we should be playing at the Asian Cup every time. That's the parameter we need to use to judge if we are doing well or not," Chhetri said in an interview.

"We have to keep playing in the Asian Cup which will mean rubbing shoulders with the best in the region. You know the quality you are playing against and then you know how much you have improved."

Cricket-loving India may have a population of 1.3 billion but it is a massive under-achiever as far as soccer is concerned, with the national side 130th in the FIFA rankings and yet to make a single appearance at the World Cup finals.

A quick glance at India's group opponents shows that Kyrgyzstan are ranked six places above them, Myanmar are 159th and Macau are a further 25 places adrift, yet Chhetri is refusing to read too much into those numbers.

"As far as our hopes are concerned, I have played enough to understand that you cannot think about the chances yet," India's most-capped player with 92 appearances said.

"The way the rankings work is if you do well in the last six-to-eight months, your ranking can rise to an extent that you can't even imagine," he added.

"That's why when I face teams in Asia, I don't look too much into rankings. (Qualification) is not going to be easy."

India's Sunil Chhetri holds off the challenge of Australia's Lucas Neill during their 2011 Asian Cup Group C soccer match at Al Sadd stadium in Doha on 10 January, 2011. PHOTO: REUTERS

India, who did qualify for the 1950 World Cup in Brazil but withdrew ahead of the tournament, open the final round of Asian Cup qualifiers away to Myanmar in Yangon on 28 March.

In the past, India coach Stephen Constantine has spoken of giving opportunities to youngsters to create a bigger pool of talent for the national side but Chhetri, also the country's most prolific scorer with 52 goals, prefers continuity.

"If you ask me, I would love to have a stable 11 or a stable 14," the 32-year-old said. "It's a personal thing. If the team keeps changing then everything has to keep changing.

"But we will only have a stable 11 if the players take their chances and make the spots their own."

Chhetri is also an advocate of leading by example on the pitch as the best lesson a captain can give his team mates to earn their respect and develop bonds.

"I have been a youngster and I know speeches are boring," Chhetri said, adding that the first thing he does after learning India's opponents was to check their recent match statistics.

"If I do the right things on and off the field that's how a player is going to learn.

"I was also a junior and I know how you learn from seniors, that's how you follow. Speeches don't work."—*Reuters*

Willett on target for first win since US Masters triumph

KUALA LUMPUR — Englishman Danny Willett moved into position to claim a first title since his dramatic US Masters win last April after the Briton forged a three-stroke lead going into Sunday's final round at the Maybank Championship in Kuala Lumpur.

England's Danny Willett. Photo: Reuters

The 29-year-old has struggled to replicate the play that led him to a first major triumph at Augusta National but Willett has shone this week at the Saujana Golf and Country Club and a five-under-par third round 67 took him to 16-under on Saturday.

After offsetting a single bogey with six birdies, Willett sits three clear of American David Lipsky and four ahead of Frenchman Alexander Levy in the co-sanctioned European and Asian Tour event.

"It was up and down, I'd have taken a 67 at the start of the day, it spreads the top five and top six guys out a bit more and further away," Willett told reporters.

"I'm probably going to go hit a few (on the practice range) and make a few little minor tweaks here and there, and try to get the driver to where it's been most of the week.

"I'm not sure what will win it to be honest, depends on if we pitch up and it's flat calm. I think there's a few guys that can go low if it's windy like this.

"One or two under par is a good knock out there so I think it all depends on the weather tomorrow."

Willett's round had a lone blemish on the par-three fifth and he finished strongly with back-to-back birdies on the last two holes.

Lipsky recorded five birdies against one bogey for a 68 to stay ahead of Levy, who hit a blemish-free 67.

Overnight leader Bernd Wiesberger slipped down to a five-way share of fourth place following a one-over-par 73. —*Reuters*

Real boss Zidane hopes to have Bale back for Napoli return

MADRID — Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane says he hopes to have Wales forward Gareth Bale back from an ankle injury before the second leg of their Champions League last-16 tie at Napoli on 7 March.

The 27-year-old damaged tendons during Real's 2-1 Champions League victory at Sporting Lisbon in November and underwent surgery in London.

"I hope he will be back before then (7 March)," Zidane told a news conference on Friday.

"He has been working well. He is enthusiastic and the only thing left is for him to train with the rest of the team, which is the most important thing."

Bale scored seven goals and set up three more in 16 appearances in all competitions for Real before getting injured.

He is the only Real player currently out and will miss the first leg of their Champions League clash against Napoli on 15 February.

Real, who are one point clear of Barcelona at the top of La Liga, with two games in hand, play at Osasuna on Saturday, two weeks after their last encounter, a 3-0 triumph over Real Sociedad.

Their league match at Celta Vigo was postponed last week after bad weather in Galicia caused damage to the Balaidos stadium.

"We always want to play so 15 days without playing is a lot," Zidane said. "I don't know if it will affect us. We shall see tomorrow. We have trained well, we are physically well."

Second place Barcelona took advantage of Real's postponement by beating Athletic Bilbao 3-0.

Zidane is attempting to steer the club to its first La Liga crown since the 2011-12 campaign.

Real Madrid's coach Zinedine Zidane. PHOTO: REUTERS

Osasuna have just one victory from 21 games and are rooted to the foot of the standings. —*Reuters*

Angola's president orders inquiry into stadium stampede that killed 17

LUANDA — Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos has ordered an investigation into the cause of a stampede at a football match in which at least 17 people were killed.

Scores of people were injured in the stampede at a stadium in the northern city of Uige on Friday when hundreds of supporters stormed the venue's gates.

"I express my solidarity with the families of the deceased and have instructed the Provincial Government of Uige to provide all necessary assistance to the injured and have given guidance to the competent authorities to open an inquiry that will establish the cause of this serious incident," dos Santos said in a statement late on Friday. State news agency Angop said the Ministry of Sports has also asked the local football association and provincial authorities to investigate the cause of the incident.—*Reuters*

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