

FEATURES STORIES

Australia and East Timor sign historic maritime border deal



Australia and East Timor have signed a historic treaty on a permanent maritime border in the Timor Sea. The deal ends a decade-long dispute between the neighbours over rights to the sea's rich oil and gas reserves. East Timor, one of the world's poorest nations, will now gain the majority of any future revenue. The countries signed the deal at the UN headquarters in New York, after negotiations in the international court of arbitration. UN Secretary General António Guterres praised the "vision and determination" of both nations in achieving the agreement. **How did conflict arise?** After East Timor, also known as Timor-Leste, gained independence from Indonesia in 2002, no permanent maritime boundary was established between Australia and the new nation. Instead, the two sides agreed on a temporary boundary, but East Timor later argued that deal had been unfairly forced upon them. It believed its more powerful neighbour had an unfairly large share of access to oil and gas fields that are estimated to be worth tens of billions of dollars. In 2016, East Timor contested the arrangements in the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague. Mediation between the nations concluded last week. **What is in the new deal?** The landmark treaty sets out the maritime border at the midway point between the countries, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Australia had pushed for a border at the edge its continental shelf, which would have put the boundary closer to East Timor. The new deal means East Timor will receive at least 70% of the largest oil field, Greater Sunrise, which is worth an estimated \$40bn (£28bn; A\$51bn). Previously, revenue was to be split evenly between the countries. Australia will lose its jurisdiction in oil fields currently shared by both nations. **How did each nation react?** Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said her nation had an "enduring interest" in East Timor's prosperity, acknowledging the treaty as an important step. "As good friends and close neighbours, we want Timor-Leste to achieve its economic potential," she said. It was "momentous day" for East Timor, said Augusto Cabral Pereira, Deputy Minister of the Prime Minister for the Delimitation of Borders. **What will happen now?** The new deal is a big win for East Timor, which relies heavily on oil and gas for its economy, but had been running out of resources. The Greater Sunrise oil field is yet to be mined, with a consortium of miners blaming delays on the long-running border dispute. Canberra had faced accusations it was colluding with oil companies to have gas processed in Australia, according to media reports - an assertion Ms Bishop denied. Under the agreement, East Timor will receive a greater slice of revenue - 80% - if gas is processed in Australia. *BBC*

Rwanda church closures: Pastors arrested for defying order

Police in Rwanda have arrested six pastors they accuse of being the "masterminds" behind a plot to defy a government order closing churches. The suspects allegedly held "illegal meetings with bad intentions" following the closure of more than 700 churches and a mosque in the capital Kigali. The government says the structures all fail to comply with building regulations and noise pollution laws. Among those arrested was famous pastor Bishop Rugagiri Innocent. He was allegedly heard calling the decision to stop the churches from operating "abrupt", according to the BBC's Prudent Nsengiyumya. Rwandan police spokesman Theos Badege told news agency AFP on Tuesday the six Pentecostal preachers "conducted illegal meetings with bad intentions aimed at calling for the directives to be defied". "After the suspension of churches that did not meet required standards, some church leaders began illegal meetings intended to defy and obstruct the directive," he added. "Police began investigations to find the masterminds behind this illegal act." Most of the churches closed were small Pentecostal ones. Pentecostal churches, often run by charismatic preachers claiming to be able to perform miracles, have grown rapidly in many parts of Africa in recent years. Some are massive, attracting thousands of worshippers each Sunday, but others consist of tiny structures built without planning permission. A government official told the BBC that some of the more than 700 buildings shut down have already reopened after they were approved by inspectors. According to a proposed new law, all preachers must have theological training before opening a church. Government official Justus Kangwagye told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme that they simply required the churches to meet "modest standards". But President Paul Kagame has publicly questioned the need for the churches. "Seven hundred churches in Kigali? Are these boreholes that give people water?" he said last Thursday, the East African newspaper reported. *BBC*



Kansas man admits murder of Indian tech worker in sports bar



A Kansas man has pleaded guilty to killing a tech worker from India and injuring two others at a pub last year. Adam Purinton, 52, shot Srinivas Kuchibhotla and Alok Madasani at Austin's Bar and Grill in Olathe in February 2017. Witnesses said Purinton opened fire with a handgun after shouting: "Get out of my country!" Mr Kuchibhotla died and Mr Madasani was injured. Bystander Ian Grillot was shot and injured as he tried to intervene. Mr Kuchibhotla and Mr Madasani, both Indian nationals, were working as engineers at tech firm Garmin. After the attack, the gunman drove away before stopping at a restaurant in Missouri to tell a staff member he had just shot two Indians. Purinton, who is white, waived his right to a jury trial in state court on Tuesday. He admitted one count of premeditated first-degree murder in Mr Kuchibhotla's death. Appearing in Johnson County District Court, he also pleaded guilty to two counts of attempted premeditated first-degree murder in the shootings of Mr Madasani and Mr Grillot. His sentencing is scheduled for 4 May. Purinton still faces a federal case over the attack - including hate crime charges - that could carry a possible death sentence. Mr Kuchibhotla's widow, who was not in court, said after Tuesday's plea agreement that the outcome showed hate was never acceptable. "We must understand and love one another," Sunayana Dumala said in her statement to the Kansas City Star. "Let us continue to work for peace, understanding and love - the things Srinu stood for and will be his legacy." According to the newspaper, Purinton will spend the rest of his life in prison under his plea agreement. *BBC*

HOROSCOPE - APRIL 2018

ARIES: BIRTHDAYS FROM 21 MARCH to 20 APRIL

General Highlights: April 2018 will be good in that now every decision taken will turn out to be a very important one in hindsight. Putting it plainly, the way you are working now will define typical patterns of your working sphere for the whole upcoming year, so you have to put in some effort. Fortunately, thanks to its interstellar position, Eris, which in its usual position is not that favorable towards Aries, will give up on its devious plans and will move onto the right side. We can't help but be happy about it, and in its conjunction with Sun it will turn any situation into a favorable one within a very short period of time. The main thing is to retain the enthusiasm that will fire up in you during the first days of the period. Despite the fact that the majority of the month will be inclined towards the resolution of personal matters, your sign can serve as the exception to this rule. But please pay attention to the caveat that it can, not necessarily will, serve as the exception.



TAURUS: FROM 21 APRIL to 21 MAY

General Highlights: Because of Venus and Moon's successful position, Taurus representatives will undergo an extremely successful period in a lot of life aspects. First thing first: this month is perfect from the perspective of some financial investments. It doesn't mean that you have to dive into any venture that happens to appear along your way. First think and then act; everything else is just a piece of cake. Circumstances will play in your favor in practically any outcome unless you choose acting dumb. Uranus's position is not straightforward, and because this planet is usually responsible for Taurus's descent, it is really hard to tell how mistakes might end up affecting you. It is clear though that with a certain level of effort you can get out of any situation, but it will require the substantial utilization of energy and resources. It is much better to keep yourself away from complications. It is a very active period, to say the least.



GEMINI: BIRTHDAYS FROM 22 MAY to 21 JUNE

General Highlights: The equally bright and extraordinary Eris (usually responsible for the signs retrograde) will support Mercury that is the main heavenly patron of Gemini in April 2018. As a result of such an unusual combination, Gemini representatives can really expect some coincidences, and this month can definitely have a lot of peculiarities for them. For example, it should be noted right away that in contrast to expectations, April will be moderately dynamic for you, and there will be no bright take-offs for now. An exception may come in the form of some special event, but this is an individual aspect that is beyond the scope of this horoscope. In addition, it makes sense to take a look at another thing: this month for your sign is especially good in terms of gaining knowledge. It can be about continuing your education through skills, upgrading courses, or pursuing an additional or alternative specialty.



CANCER: BIRTHDAYS FROM 22 JUNE to 23 JULY

General Highlights: In April 2018, the zodiac sign of Cancer will receive special bonuses from its main celestial patron Moon, which at this stage will also act as an assistant to all Water element representatives. It cannot be said that everything will be easy for you to obtain, but this month will definitely differ in a flattering way from the previous ones. The high point of the spring will be actively looking for you, but not particularly obvious, so try to remember right away that spontaneous behavior will remain a priority. On the other hand, uncertainty will become your worst enemy. In the field of love affairs sincerity will help, and in the field of work: the desire for optimization. At this stage it is logical to strive for comfort. That is, you should try to make sure that the conditions around you are as convenient as possible, ideally not only for yourself. But, in general, let it be the way it will be. This will determine your overall well-being and performance, as well as your motivation. April will be very sensitive to such things. In a bad mood, you can hardly achieve anything.



LEO: BIRTHDAYS FROM 24 JULY to 23 AUGUST

General Highlights: For Leo, who is under the protection of the Sun, April 2018 will prove to be a fairly successful time. Jokes aside, luck will now really accompany you, but you will have to do a lot as well. After all, it still takes some effort to catch your bluebird of happiness; it will not fly right into your hands that easily! In general, at this stage, try to initiate as much action as possible, don't spend too much time remaining on one spot, move around more. There are not any fundamentally new aspects of life to be foreseen, although... is it possible to consider a healthy way of living a fundamentally new aspect of your life? Of course, you do not have to adhere to these principles, but the stars (in particular - Pluto, which, let's note, is not the one to say no to) highly recommend that you do so. Yes, that's right: April 2018 will be an ideal time for you, if you decide to give up bad habits and take care of yourself.



VIRGO: BIRTHDAYS FROM 24 AUGUST to 23 SEPTEMBER

General Highlights: For the Virgos, April 2018 can be a rather difficult time, at least because of Ceres' special relationship to this sign. At the same time, Mercury's position will definitely be favorable, so from the financial point of view, the second spring month should do you good. It is difficult to say which strategy will be the most acceptable and truly beneficial one. At certain moments you will probably have to focus on your work and strive for maximum dynamics. In other situations, it is better to look at the area of personal relationships, because your crush might start thinking that you are losing your interest towards them. Of course, it is not like this at all. But it's from your point of view, and from the outside point of view it might look different. In general, the Virgo will be in a situation where a competent comparison of the subjective and objective principles will allow solving vital problems in a quick and qualitative fashion.



LIBRA: BIRTHDAYS FROM 24 SEPTEMBER to 23 OCTOBER

General Highlights: Eris, which is the patron of Libra, will be significantly strengthened because of the favorable interstellar combinations in April 2018. As a result its beneficial effect will be more powerful and more intense. This means that at a given life stage you can get lucky in practically anything. Someone can find his "soulmate" (which, by the way, is a separate topic to cover). Someone else will finally be able to implement a large-scale project. In general, the key characteristics will be sincerity and non-acceptance of injustice, which is a typical trait of practically all Libra representatives. Otherwise, this period is unlikely to surprise you with anything, but you are capable of surprising all the people around you, not so much by the decisions that have been made but rather by the way your thinking arrived at those decisions. This is a good time in the sense that it can bring you and your loved ones (in particular the closest ones) a lot of joy and positive emotions.



SCORPIO: BIRTHDAYS FROM 24 OCTOBER to 22 NOVEMBER

General Highlights: In addition to Mars and Uranus, the Moon will also assist Scorpio, which is usually responsible for this sign's retrograde behavior. In general, the current period for your sign, as the representative of the Water element, will turn out to be ambivalent and dynamic. In the workplace there will be an opportunity to manifest oneself, while in the field of private affairs there are some clear and definite prospects. It is important to note that at this stage, not everything will depend on you: your decisions, of course, will be of primary importance, but it definitely makes sense to seek the opinion of those ones who are with you. This does not mean that it is necessary to obey, being led in this or another way. On the contrary, try to dominate, but not over the others, but over the circumstances. It will probably be good for you; you can even use some of your less-appealing talents, like manipulation and covert intrigues. If the end justifies the means and does not harm anyone, you will be the winner.



SAGITTARIUS: BIRTHDAYS FROM 23 NOVEMBER to 23 DECEMBER

General Highlights: For Sagittarius, which is patronized by Eris, April 2018 will be a time generously filled with warmth and some truly delicate, tender feelings. Yes, strangely enough, this applies to the work sphere too. Although this statement is unlikely to scare you, it may instead provide some food for thought. At this stage it will be important not to succumb to emotions to the fullest, but it is also not good to be closing yourself off from them. Be careful: it is likely that something like workplace relationships might take place, but you must clearly understand that you might not be able to cope with the consequences. Actually, this is not a warning, but only a reasonable representation of how things are in relation to the actual position of the objects in the Solar system against your zodiac sign's position. After all, figuratively speaking, not everything will be on your side. And in spite of the fact that many key events will unfold according to your plans, some difficulties are possible.



CAPRICORN: BIRTHDAYS FROM 22 DECEMBER to 20 JANUARY

General Highlights: At this stage of life, Capricorns can sometimes end up with nothing. It's hard to say what will be discussed, because in general April 2018 will be really good, and most importantly, you will be able to realize some of the relevant prospects already in this month, without waiting for the completion of long-term projects. Mars and Saturn are on your side, acting as a friendly tandem, which means that it's time to grab the bull by its horns. Now the most dynamic actions are definitely welcome, but, of course, it is not worth spreading yourself too thin and taking on too much. Moreover, you should understand this: the status quo will not always be preserved, but the consequences of your decisions made now can have far-reaching results. Basically, think everything over, decide on what to do and do not forget to act! Unfortunately, not everything will go according to your plans; for example, in the field of personal relations.



AQUARIUS: BIRTHDAYS 21 JANUARY to 19 FEBRUARY

General Highlights: April 2018 can turn out to be quite an interesting life stage for Aquarius representatives. There will be a place for some intrigues as well as for some vivid impressions. Because of Ceres's unfavorable position, some conflict situations might take place, but a powerful tandem of Saturn and Neptune will be on your side, also supported by Pluto, the "celestial leader" of the Water element representatives. So do not worry in advance, and try not to start whining: this type of behavior is unacceptable, which will definitely lead to very unfavorable results, obviously not to those ones expected by you. Now, it is necessary to concentrate on purely communicative aspects. First, there will be a real need for neutralizing the issues related to misunderstandings. This applies to both the sphere of personal relations and the sphere of work. Of course, the areas you are looking at are far from being identical in all respects. For example, the love direction will look much more vivid in your perception, and you will need to participate more actively in what is happening.



PISCES: BIRTHDAYS: 20 FEBRUARY to 20 MARCH

General Highlights: For Pisces April 2018 will be colored by sensuality and sensitivity tonalities. Or, roughly speaking, you can actually experience more feelings than usual, and this will be regarded as something positive, although only in some situations. In fact, there is nothing unusual or outstanding, because of the rather unusual arrangement of Venus (which patronizes your sign in its usual position), a lot of other people will now be in a similar situation. This is a good time, but a very special one at the same time. For example, you will understand many peculiarities long before other people in your surroundings start understanding them. The information obtained for yourself or someone else cannot be used in any future situations. In such situations, it is necessary to simply remain unaffected, otherwise your nervous system will collapse. Meanwhile, single Pisces are definitely waiting for some new discoveries to be made, including discoveries of some very important and significant events.



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