**Soaked in Yangon**

An unexpected rainstorm yesterday in Yangon flooded some streets, snarled traffic and caught some pedestrians without umbrellas.

According to reports issued at 2:30pm yesterday by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology, a low pressure area over the southwest and southeast Bay of Bengal persisted throughout the day. The weather was generally fair over the north and west central Bay of Bengal, and partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

There is an 80 per cent chance of continued scattered showers today in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago Region, eastern and southern Shan State, Kayah State, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, and Kachin, Kayin and Mon states, according to the weather bureau. —GNLM

**Towards a future federal Union**

Central committee for organising Union Peace Conference holds meeting

A MEETING of the central committee for organising the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong was held yesterday afternoon in the meeting hall of the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor. At the meeting, Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe, Vice-Chairman of the central committee, said the second session of the Union Peace Conference was successfully held in Nay Pyi Taw MICC-II from May 26 to 29, 2017. It was made possible by the combined efforts and support of all the responsible officials, he added. He further stated that in the Second Session of the 21st Century Panglong, agreement was reached on 37 points from the Pyidaungsu Accord. This agreement had been reached only after long hours of debate among the delegates to the Conference. —SEE PAGE-3

**KBZ BANK**

*BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017*

Awarded by The Banker
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Chief of Defence Force of Singapore Armed Forces, Commander-in-Chief of Royal Thai Navy

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief, received Lt-Gen Perry Lim, Chief of the Defence Force of the Singapore Armed Forces with a Guard of Honour, in front of Zeyar Thiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief and Chief of Defence Force of the Singapore Armed Forces spoke about his understanding of the Tatmadaw’s role in protecting the nation in the Rakhine State affairs, the need for a timely response to terrorist attacks and his wish for peace in Myanmar and the region.

Next, they discussed and exchanged views on increasing friendly visits between officials of the two armed forces, such as sending the Myanmar Tatmadaw officers for training sessions in Singapore and increasing cooperation between the two armed forces.

Later in the afternoon, the Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief received Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Navy Admiral Naris Phatoomsuwan, who is visiting Myanmar under the invitation of Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San in Zeyar Thiri Beikman, Nay Pyi Taw.

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The two sides discussed matters related to increasing cooperation between their navies through friendly visits by naval vessels, working together to safeguard the territorial waters of both countries, exchanging sports and cultural troupes to enhance friendly relations between the two armed forces, and exchanging trainees.

— Myanmar News Agency

Hand-over ceremony of Assembled Board Houses (100) units held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE hand-over ceremony of the Assembled Board Houses (100) units was held at the Myanmar Industrial Port (MIP), Yangon, on Saturday morning.

Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing; Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye; Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin; Yangon Region Electric Industry, Transport Minister Daw Nilar Kyaw; departmental heads; and the Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar, Mr. Hong Liang, along with embassy staff, invited guests and the media attended the ceremony.

During the ceremony, the Chinese Ambassador handed over the Assembled Board Houses (100) units to Union Minister for Construction and Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing, and they inspected the units together.

Later, the Chinese Ambassador clarified the purpose of the handover and the process of humanitarian aid, on behalf of the People’s Republic of China, to the Rakhine State. Union Minister U Win Khaing said China had donated 232 Assembled Board Houses to Myanmar in 2016, and all these units will contribute to the development of a medical care system in the region. He acknowledged and expressed appreciation for the assistance of the Chinese government, as China has continually supported multiple sectors in Myanmar, including healthcare, to raise the standard of living in the region.

Next, they signed the handover agreements for the Assembled Board Houses (100) units and took group photographs. To cope with poverty-related problems, many projects such as Assemble Board Houses and medical units are being undertaken in Taung Pyo Letwe Village, Maungtaw region. Some 17 Assembled Board Houses, together with five rooms, are being constructed.—Myanmar News Agency

Rehabilitation course for drug addicts opened in Mandalay

A rehabilitation course for drug addicts was opened at a social rehabilitation center under the Department of Social Welfare in Mandalay yesterday.

The center will provide rehabilitation-focused medical treatment and counseling services for drug addicts. “We will offer physical and mental rehabilitation programs for drug users,” said U Zaw Htike Lin, manager for the center. Accommodation and Ks. 1000 daily allowance will be given to the trainees. Around 20 trainees will be allowed to attend 35 day course. About ten trainees from Mandalay, Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Kengtung have already arrived at the center. “I hope the course gives me a rest and clears my mind,” one of the trainees said. Nine drug rehab centers have been opened in Yangon, Mandalay, Myitkyina, Kawthoung, Tachileik, Kengtung and Lashio. Mandalay drug rehab center was repaired in December 2017 at a cost of more than Ks 60 million by Daw Khin Kyi Foundation.—MDN

Hand-over ceremony of Assembled Board Houses (100) units held in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw joint bill committee meeting held

A PYIDAUNGSU Hluttaw draft law joint committee met yesterday morning to discuss a 2017 bill, amending the Auditor General of the Union Law, which was sent by the President with a note.

The meeting, held in the second-floor meeting room, D Block, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, was attended by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw deputy speaker; Draft Law Joint Committee and Public Accounts Joint Committee Chairman U Aye Tha Aung; deputy chairmen, secretaries and members of the draft law joint committee and public accounts joint committee; legal affairs and special cases assessment commission members; and officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Union Attorney General office, the union auditor general office and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office. — Myanmar News Agency

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear cases

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, along with Supreme Court judges U Tha Hay and U Myo Tint of the Special Appellate Bench, sat at Union Supreme Court, room number 1, yesterday morning and passed judgment on two (Certiiorari) criminal cases and three (Certiiorari) civil cases, as well as heard five other (Certiiorari) civil cases. — Myanmar News Agency

Rehabilitation program for drug addicts opened by Department of Social Welfare in Mandalay. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS
State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaws receive PRC Buddhist delegation

State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Sayadaws, led by State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman Abhidhamma Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa, received a Buddhist delegation from the People’s Republic of China (PRC), led by the Buddhist Association of China Vice Chairman Abbot Huiming of Jing’an Temple, Shanghai, yesterday morning in Vijaya Mingalar Dhamma Hall on Kaba Aye Hillock.

The two sides discussed bilateral religious matters during the meeting, and the visiting delegation donated Ks2 million for medicines.

The Chinese Buddhist delegation then met with the teaching and administrative Sayadaws from Theravada Buddhist Missionary University and discussed religious matters with them. They donated another Ks2 million for “soon” (food).

Next, the Chinese Buddhist delegation met with the teaching and administrative Sayadaws of State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon), led by Rector Sayadaw Dr. Bhaddanta Kumara, and studied their missionary works.—Myanmar News Agency

Central committee for organising Union Peace Conference holds meeting

“We have the main responsibility of holding the 21st Century Panglong Union Peace conferences, so that federal principles can be laid down for a future federal union,” he said.

The Joint Implementation Coordination Meeting meeting decided to hold the third session of the Union Peace Conference, to be organised by the 11 organising work committees formed for the second session.

All have been invited to discuss and offer suggestions on the tasks of the various work committees, based on the strengths and weaknesses of the tasks performed during the second session, so that the third session can be held successfully. “At the same time, the work committees have to prepare their tasks based on the outcome of today’s discussions,” stated U Kyaw Tint Swe.

Next, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, on behalf of the Invitation Work Committee chairman, Reception and Lodging Work Committee chairman Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung, on behalf of the Seating Arrangements Work committee chairman; chairman of Work Committee on Food Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung; Event Preparation Work Committee chairman Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo; Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung; on behalf of the Healthcare Work Committee chairman, Finance Work Committee chairman Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win; and Coordination Work Committee chairman Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin discussed the work processes and status of the work completed by the committees, as well as ways to improve these processes, based on last year’s experience. Later, Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe gave his views and comments relating to the discussions and views expressed at the meeting and then gave his concluding remarks. The meeting was attended by the Union Ministers, the Peace Commissioner, members of the central committee for organizing the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong, members of the work committees and officials.—Myanmar News Agency
Mandalay Zaygyo market to undergo repair

MANDALAY Zaygyo market, a main centre for marketing in the second capital of Myanmar will be renovated depending on budget available.

The facelift includes repainting of the whole building and repair of ceramic tile and its upper floors will be hired for those who want to run super markets.

A wide range of products and items are available at the unique market which is situated strategically in the upper capital of the country.—Myanmar Digital News

Cable car of Kyaikhtio Pagoda becomes popular among pilgrims

THE number of pilgrims who took cable cars plying between Rathetaung station and the precinct of Kyaikhtio Pagoda stood at 62,000, said U Myo Wai, the adviser of Sky Asia Co Ltd.

According to U Myo Wai, there were 62,000 pilgrims taking cable cars from 10 to 31 December 2017 including 600 foreigners at the rate of K3,000 per head for local people and of five US$ per head for foreigners. But it is free for monks and nuns.

The increase in the number of local and foreign pilgrims spending holidays makes the cable transportation systems popular among them.—Tin Htut (Mawlamyine)

Construction of grandstand seating is 50% completed

CONSTRUCTION of grandstand seating for spectators construction site at Myoma athletic field. PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS

1,590 hotels, guest houses operational in Myanmar

SOME 1,590 hotels and guest houses, renting out 63,978 rooms, were operational across the country, until the end of December 2017, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

To ensure tourists can travel in Myanmar conveniently, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has approved the licences to date.—Min Thu
Over 430 tonnes of avocados exported in first nine months of current fiscal year

MORE than 430 tonnes of avocados were exported to foreign countries in the first nine months of the current fiscal year (FY), according to a report in the Myanmar Alin yesterday.

Myanmar shipped 46 tonnes of avocados to China via the sea route and border gates, 400 tonnes to Thailand through its border checkpoints, 0.24 tonnes to Hong Kong and 0.2 tonnes to Russia.

Avocado is a potential marketable fruit for Myanmar. To penetrate the export market, Myanmar’s avocados must be relatively of the same size and of good quality, said an official from the Trade Department.

Besides being consumed, avocado is widely used as a value-added product in cosmetics and shower gels, among other things.

Avocado growers in Myanmar have been calling for financial assistance and specific avocado zones, said U Sai Soe Naung, an avocado grower from Shan State. A think tank of the Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association has been conducting educational courses for avocado growers. Avocado groups are also being organised to share knowledge on growing methods among the farmers.

Myanmar’s avocados are primarily grown in the Shan and Chin states, as well as the Sagaing region and Pyin Oo Lwin areas in the Mandalay Region. – Zar Lin Thu (AMIA)

Untimely rain triggers onion price rise in Yangon market

DRIVEN by the unseasonal rainfall in the upper Myanmar, onion prices have soared to Ks3,250 per viss (1.6 kg), according to a report in the Myanmar Alin yesterday.

More than 130,000 viss of onions have entered the Yangon market, but their prices are hovering on the high side.

The onion price in December was over Ks3,050 per viss. On 2 January, onion prices ranged from Ks1,800 to Ks3,000 per viss, depending on the varieties, while the price was up by Ks200 on 3 January, according to Bayintnaung commodity depot.

Evidences of rainfall hit the onion crop in April, October, November and December in 2017, but there was no increase in the price at that time. This time, it has surged exorbitantly and unreasonably, said Ko Kyaw Lwin, a wholesaler.

For the last five months, foreign onions have been flowing into the local market at a bargain price.

Locally produced onions fetch some Ks3,000 per viss, whereas the price of imported onions is some Ks1,000 per viss.

Despite the inferior quality, the price of imported onions is just one third the price of locally produced ones.

The onion price in the local market was on an upward trend between 2015 and early 2018. Thus, consumers expect the concerned authorities to tackle the now exorbitant price of onions. —Khin Saing

Workers pick avocados during harvest at a farm. PHOTO: MMAL
From H.E Mr. Petro Poroshenko
President of Ukraine
Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Ukrainian people and my own please accept my sincerest congratulations on the occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Ukraine is interested in strengthening cooperation and comprehensive development of the Ukrainian-Myanmar relations in the sake of welfare and prosperity of the peoples of our two countries.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I wish Your Excellency sound health, successes and new achievements in Your responsible state activity as well as peace, harmony and prosperity – to the friendly Myanmar people.

From H.E Mr. Andrzej Duda
President of the Republic of Poland
Your Excellency,

On behalf of myself, Polish Nation and the government of the Republic of Poland, I would like to convey to Your Excellency and People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The Republic of Poland attaches great importance to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as our partner in South-East Asia. Poland supports Myanmar’s transformation and achievements toward building a modern, democratic state of reconciliation and peace.

I would like to convey to Your Excellency my best wishes of personal well-being and success to Your Excellency and to the Myanmar People my best wishes of success and prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

From H.E Mr. Alexander Lukashenko,
President of the Republic of Belarus
Excellency,

Let me express my sincere congratulations to You on the occasion of the National holiday – Independence Day.

Would like to stress out my hope for further deepening of all round cooperation between Belarus and Myanmar. I am confident that only through the joint efforts we would fully implement existing potential of the Belarusian-Myanmar cooperation.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my wishes of strong health, longevity and success to You, prosperity and wellbeing to the friendly people of Myanmar, as well as the assurance of my highest consideration.

From H.E Mr. Mateusz Morawiecki
Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland
Your Excellency,

On behalf of myself and the government of the Republic of Poland, I would like to convey to Your Excellency congratulations and best wishes for success in political and economic transformation.

The Republic of Poland attaches great importance to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as our partner in South-East Asia. Poland wishes to strengthen and expand bilateral relations on many platforms such as economic, scientific and cultural.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

From H.E Mr. Witold Waszczykowski
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland
Your Excellency,

On the occasion of National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend to Your Excellency congratulations and best wishes.

Poland observes and fully supports the democratic and economic transformation that has been taking place in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Poland understands from its own experience, that this process is challenging and requires a lot of time. Myanmar has become a crucial partner of Poland on the Asian continent. We would like to wish the Republic of the Union of Myanmar a lot of success in political and economic transformations.

We do hope that 2018 will bring an optimistic development in reconciliation process and contribution to peace.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration and wishes of personal good health and well-being.

From H.E Dato Sri Anifah Aman
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia
Your Excellency,

I wish to extend my warmest greetings and heartiest congratulations to Your Excellency on this memorable occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Malaysia values highly its relations with Myanmar and considers Myanmar as a key partner in ASEAN in the pursuit of growth, peace and security in the region. In conjunction with the 60th anniversary of Malaysia-Myanmar bilateral relations, I believe that the future will bear witness to new areas of cooperation and opportunities between the two countries, as Myanmar develops further with visions of a better future.

In this regard, I look forward to working closely with Your Excellency to further enhance the existing close bilateral relations between Malaysia and Myanmar. At the same time, we look forward to the just, humane and equitable resolution of issues in the Rakhine State and beyond.

Please accept Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From H.E Mr. Mohammed Bin Abdulrahman Al Than, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar
Her Excellency,

On the occasion of the National Day – the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I am pleased to communicate to Your Excellency my sincerest congratulations joined with my hearty wishes for you and your friend country to have an ample health and well-being, besides more of prosperous and development, since we are looking forward to working together in order to enhance and develop the bilateral cooperation between our friendly countries.

Kindly accept my deepest regards and respect.

From H.E Mr. Vladimir Makei,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus
Excellency,

I have the honor of addressing Your Excellency in order to extend my warmest congratulations to you on the occasion of the commemoration of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. I would like to take this opportunity to express my vows for the permanent progress of your noble People, as well as for the personal happiness of Your Excellency.

While renewing the bonds of friendship and cooperation that unite our two countries, allow me to express to Your Excellency the assurance of my highest and most distinguished consideration.

From H.E Mr. Victor Ricardo Luna Mendoza,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Peru
Your Excellency,

Let me express my sincere congratulations to You on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Hope that due to the mutual unification of the efforts, all the agreements existing between Belarus and Myanmar in trade and economic spheres, scientific and technical cooperation, political and military-technical fields will only develop, thereby creating a solid foundation for further successful deepening of relations between our countries.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my wishes of strong health, happiness, wellbeing, as well as the assurances of my highest consideration.
UNFC willing to seek ways for reaching agreement on remaining points

THE United Nationalities Federal Council-UNFC would keep on seeking other ways for holding a meeting between the leaders of the two sides as part of efforts for signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement-NCA.

UNFC made this remark in its announcement released following the two-day meeting of the committee which ended yesterday in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

“...regarding the peace process, the DPN and the Peace Commission held negotiations over the nine points, and to achieve answers for the remaining points, UNFC would continue to seek ways for holding a meeting between the leaders of the two sides,” said the statement.

During the meeting, they reviewed the works of UNFC and current measures taken by the Delegation of Peace Negotiation of the UNFC and discussions between the DPN and the Peace Commission over nine points proposed by the UNFC.

“The nine-points proposed by UNFC were aimed at signing the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement. We review outcomes of every meeting. UNFC and Peace Commission also reviewed the latest development of the nine-points,” said U Tun Zaw, Member of the Central Committee of the UNFC.

“New Mon State Party (NMSP) and its central committee made a decision to sign the NCA. But, they did not say definitely when they will implement the decision. NMSP is a member of the UNFC. They made the remark to sign the NCA under the flag of UNFC,” he added.

The nine-points proposed by the UNFC have been discussed for more than 17 months between the DPN and the PC.

— Ye Khaung Nyunt

Rakhine State Chief Minister conducts field visit

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, along with Rakhine State Minister for Social Affairs Dr. Chan Thar and Rakhine State Minister of Agriculture, U Kyaw Lwin, as well as state level and Maungtaw district level officials, made a field visit to the villages and police stations in Maungtaw Township to assess the regional peace, stability and development works in the area.

The Rakhine State chief minister and officials first visited Manyawaddy Village, where they instructed the farmers to sell their harvested rice to buyers as soon as possible.

Next, they met with ethnic villagers in Thinbawkwe for whom they had some words of encouragement. They then went to Inndin Village and instructed the officials concerned on area security, regional peace and development.

Later, they inspected the Angumaw-Maungtaw road section being constructed under the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development programme.

The chief minister and his party then visited the Thawunchaung Police Station and Kotankaik Police Station, inspected the houses built in Kotankaik Village and met and encouraged the local populace, after which they left for Sittway via Angumaw. — Ne Win Tun, Zeya

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye receives Bangladesh Ambassador

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye received Bangladesh Ambassador Mohammad Sufiur Rahman. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye received Bangladesh Ambassador to Myanmar Mohammad Sufiur Rahman in Mayhkhalar Hall at the Union Minister’s office yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, matters related to preparation for the systematic repatriation of returnees; the construction of modular houses with the assistance of Japan and China; and the status of the shutdown of three relief camps for displaced persons in Kyaukphyu, Yanbye and Pauktaw Kyennipyin were discussed. Myanmar also shared information on discussions held with camp leaders at the Sittway Thakkaypyin and Myebon relief camps regarding the closure of the camps, coordination with the Rakhine State government, and reductions in the legal and social limitations to allow freedom of movement for people staying in relief camps.

— Myanmar News Agency

Technical Training School (Hpa An) conducts courses

THE Ministry of Border Affairs’ Education and Training Department and Bridge Asia Japan (BAJ) are jointly conducting construction course no. 7, electrical course no. 7, vehicle and engine repair course no. 6 and welding course no. 5 for ethnic youths at the Technical Education and Training School in Hpa-an.

An opening ceremony for the courses was held at the school yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Kayin State Minister of Security and Border Affairs Col. Myo Min Naung and Ministry of Border Affairs’ Education and Training Department Director General U Thein Htay Oo delivered opening speeches, and BAJ country representative Akiko Mori explained the courses.

The ceremony was attended by state government members, department heads, BAJ staff and trainees. Of the 90 trainees, 20 had signed up for the construction course, 20 for the electrical course, 30 for the vehicle and engine repair course and 20 for the welding course. The courses started yesterday and will be held until June 22. Training uniforms and accessories, board, lodging and a travel allowance for the trainees will be provided free of cost by the department. — Myanmar News Agency
State Counsellor’s address on Youth Policy

Motor Vehicle Policy of Great Importance for the Nation

As noted by the State Counsellor, he who shares knowledge gains knowledge. Our education is effective in mind as they participate in various youth projects and activities. Highly educated youths are expected to share their knowledge with those youths who have access to vocational training, as stressed by the State Counsellor. By doing so, it will upgrade not only an individual but also the qualities and skills of all the youths in Myanmar. This will also enable them to take an active part in nation building.

As the Global NewLight of Myan NM aropinion opinion

By Ty Kyi Maung

K INC the time when motor vehicles were invented on the planet humans have been using every more and more, until now. With the advancement of technology, motor vehicles, production and utilization of vehicles are increasing significantly being a sector of importance for every nation, emergence of strengthened laws, rules and policies on motor vehicles as well as very important in the economy. Starting from 2012 when Myanmar entered the Era of the Myanmar Democratic Transition, policies on imported vehicles were remarkably alleviated, and as a result a myriad of various kinds of vehicles have been imported into Myanmar car markets, making prices of cars plunge rapidly down.

Many, people from different classes of the society managed to drive their own cars. Yet, on the other hand, it is a great need to uptake the release of the Myanmar Youth Policy, which one third of the population was said to be youths between the ages of 15 to 35. The role of youths in the country is of great importance in creating a society that is vibrant, modern and innovative. The talents, energy and long-term potential of the youths in Myanmar must be upheld, the release of the Myanmar Youth Policy aims to tap up, the release of the Myanmar Youth Policy aims to tap the qualities and dignity but also the potential of the youths in Myanmar.

By doing so, it will upgrade not only individual education and dignity but also the qualities and skills of all the youths in Myanmar society. To sum it up, the release of the Myanmar Youth Policy will go a long way to tap the talents, energy and innovative ideas of all youth in Myanmar. This will also enable them to take an active part in nation building.

Cooperation to curb Asia’s climate risks still too rare - scientists

By Saleem Shaikh and Sughra Tunio

KATHMANDU—When heavy monsoon rains triggered unprecedented flooding last August in the area around west- ern Nepal, the worst flooding in a century, millions of flood waters crossed the border into India within a few hours.

But swift warnings from Nepali authorities to the downstream Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh allowed officials there to move people to safety, Indian officials say.

Without that advice from Nepal’s Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, “there would have been no possibility for the Indian authorities to ensure timely evacuation of the people who would otherwise have been lost,” said Anand Sharma of the Indian Meteorological Department.

As climate change increases the risk of flooding, glacial lake outbursts and cyclones, as well as droughts and heat waves, experts say that sharing information across borders is crucial to save lives and ensure economic stability in Asia’s Hindu Kush-Himalaya (HKH) region.

The region, which stretches from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east, includes over 1.3 billion people in eight countries.

The region, which stretches from Afghanistan in the west to Myanmar in the east, includes over 1.3 billion people in eight countries.

They are connected by river basins, including the Indus, Brahmaputra, Ganges, Irrawaddy and Yangon, and some of the world’s largest mountain ranges, the Karakoram, Hindu Kush and Himalayas, which contain over 54,000 glaciers covering more than 6,000 square kilometres (2,300 square miles).

But the cooperation seen between India and Nepal remains too rare in the region, regional officials say.

Although countries face similar climate-related risks, political disagreements between countries, and a lack of legal arrangements for sharing information, are increasing the risk of vulnerability to natural disasters, they say.
Third day of Children’s Literature Festival continues in Yangon

By Zaw Gyi

The third day of Children’s Literature Festival was attended by a large numbers of visitors including parents, teachers and school children at No.6 Botataung High School, Yangon, yesterday.

The festival opens at 9 a.m and closes at 8 p.m. Some 90,000 visitors participated in this festival.

Many interesting games and programs such as story-telling, impromptu talks, poem recitations, drawing pictures, coloring papers and jigsaw puzzles are being conducted in it.

Daw Mu Mu, a staff officer of Education office, Yangon Western District, explained, “They display booths on education and learning aids for the school children who are very interested in this festival. I think that it can enhance their education and general knowledge as well.”

Ma El Ei Moe, a student of No.4, Basic Education Middle School, Mayangone, added that they exhibit booths on Science laboratory, which is mainly shown ozone depletion, in this festival. I have seen other booths which exhibited from other schools. It is amusing to see a variety of entertainments and other school children. We gained a lot of knowledge by watching these programs, and can apply to use it in our studies.

Daw Soe Soe Win, a parent form Pazundaung Township, said, “I’ve brought my son to see this festival with the aim of gaining general knowledge. It is very interesting to see many booths on education and other science laboratories. I suggest that the authority should hold this kind of festivals very often.”

Many students and parents including some 80,000 school children in the first day, and some 90,000 visitors in the second day participated in this festival.

In the individual competition, there are some 56,127 children took part in the game-playing, along with 16,628 children on 6th January, 22,648 children on 7th January and 16,851 yesterday totalling 56,127.
Prize awarding ceremony for sports competition winners in Children’s Literature Festival (Yangon)

By Zaw Gyi

A FOOTBALL and tote-see-toe (a traditional children team game) competitions were held as part of the sports competitions in the Children’s literature festival, exhibition and book sales Yangon jointly organized by Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education and Yangon Region Government. A prize awarding ceremony for the winners of the competition was held yesterday afternoon at the festival venue Basic Education High School No. 60 Botataung (Saint Paul) football ground.

The ceremony was attended by Yangon Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Information and Public Relations Department Director General U Ye Naing, Yangon City Development Committee secretary Daw Hlaing Maw Oo, Botataung Township Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Myint Myint Soe @ Daw May Soe, officials and invited guests.

Winner, runner-up and third placed teams of high school level under-16 football competition Yangon West District Team (A), Yangon South District Team (B) respectively were presented with prizes by Yangon Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint.

Winner, runner-up and third placed teams of middle school level under-13 football competition Yangon East District Team (A), Yangon South District Team (B) and Yangon West District Team (B) respectively were presented with prizes by Information and Public Relations Department Director General U Ye Naing.

Winner, runner-up and third placed teams of high school level under-16 tote-see-toe competition Yangon West District Team (B), Yangon North District Team (A) and Yangon North District Team (B) respectively were presented with prizes by Yangon City Development Committee secretary Daw Hlaing Maw Oo.

US Embassy condemns ARSA attack on Myanmar security forces

US Embassy is learnt to have issued a statement yesterday on the ARSA attack on Myanmar security forces in northern Rakhine State Maungtaw region on 5 January.

The statement says: We condemn ARSA’s January 5 attack on Myanmar security forces in northern Rakhine State, and we express condolences to the injured and their families.

This act of violence only serves to further undermine peace and security in northern Rakhine State and the region.

We continue to urge all parties to ensure their rhetoric and their actions contribute to establishing the conditions for the safe, voluntary, and dignified return of all those who have been displaced by violence to their places of origin.

According to a news release by Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief Office a vehicle carrying a sick patient from Taungpyo to Maungtaw was attacked by about 20 ARSA extremists terrorists from a hill between Kyun Pauk Su Village and Trane (Mro) Village with IED and small arms around 10:10 a.m. on 5 January.

Two security personnel and a civilian were wounded and it is learnt, — Myanmar News Agency.

Long-term upgrading of Twantay Canal project to cost Ks9,000 million

THE long-term upgrade work on the Twantay Canal will cost Ks9,000 million, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

Erosions occur on the banks of the canal every year, especially in winter, destroying houses and farmlands, according to the local residents.

“arization’’ said U Myint Lwin, a Pyithu Hluttaw representative from Twantay Township.

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) will designate 15 townships in the Yangon Region municipal area as high-rise construction zones, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

A master plan has already been drafted. Although the canal is temporarily being conserved with gravel-filled retaining walls, it does not work well. Therefore, the Township General Administration Department and MPs are discussing a plan to temporarily upgrade the canal.—GNLM

Construction zones to be established in 15 townships

A master plan has already been drafted. Although the canal is temporarily being conserved with gravel-filled retaining walls, it does not work well. Therefore, the Township General Administration Department and MPs are discussing a plan to temporarily upgrade the canal.—GNLM

Construction zones to be established in 15 townships

The Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) will designate specific zones as high-rise construction areas after it found that high-rise projects were not abiding by the law and had poor security and low quality.

Some five- to seven-storeyed buildings are being built in wards with 18-foot wide streets in some townships. In a bid to carry out the systematic designation of high-rise construction zones, the YCDC conducted surveys on land utilisation, in cooperation with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency.—GNLM

The Global New Light of Myanmar
Eleven dead after gun battle erupts outside Mexican beach resort

MEXICO CITY — The aftermath of a gunfight on the outskirts of the Mexican seaside resort of Acapulco that pit residents of a small town against members of a local, self-appointed community police force has left 11 dead, state officials said on Sunday. The exchange of gunfire took place in the farming community of La Concepcion, just south of Acapulco, after elements of the community police detailed a young man for disorderly conduct during town festivities early Sunday morning. Eight local residents were killed in that exchange. After Army soldiers and state police later moved into the town, three members of the community police were shot dead after resisting them, Roberto Alvarez, a state security official, told reporters. Another 30 members of the local police, which had been authorized by state officials to operate in the small town, were arrested in the operation. Acapulco is the biggest city in the southern state of Guerrero, one of Mexico’s most lawless and a center of opium poppy production. Violence in the state has also been fed by turf wars over the distribution of drugs like cocaine and methamphetamine. The beach resort is one of Mexico’s most famous and for decades served as a playground for Hollywood stars. In recent years, however, Acapulco has been roiled by vicious gang warfare and is now ranked one of the most murderous cities in the world. —Reuters

Rescue crews wrestle to tame China oil tanker fire; body of mariner found

BEIJING/SEOUL — Rescue crews wrestled to bring a blaze on an Iranian oil tanker off China’s east coast under control on Monday as fire raged for a second day following a collision with a grain ship, while the body of one of the 32 missing crew members was found on board.

Concerns were growing that the tanker, which hit a freight ship on Saturday night in the East China Sea and burst into flames, may explode and sink, the official China Central Television (CCTV) said on Monday, citing experts on the rescue team.

Poor weather continued to hamper the rescue work, Lu Kang, a spokesman at China’s foreign ministry, told a regular news briefing.

The extent of the environmental harm and size of the oil spill from the ship were not known, but the disaster has the potential to be the worst since 1991 when 260,000 tonnes of oil leaked off the Angolan coast.

The remains of one of the 32 mariners on board was found on Monday afternoon, Iranian and Chinese officials confirmed.

Mohammad Rastad, head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization, was quoted by the ISNA news agency as saying that the body had been sent to Shanghai for identification.

The fate of the remaining 31 sailors is not known.

The Sanchi tanker (IMO:9556688) run by Iran’s top oil shipping operator, National Iranian Tanker Co, collided with the CF Crystal (IMO:9407059) on Saturday evening about 160 nautical miles off China’s coast near Shanghai and the mouth of the Yangtze River Delta. — Reuters
India sparks outcry over press freedom by naming reporter in probe on database breach

NEW DELHI — The Indian government named a reporter in a police complaint last week by The Tribune newspaper, which said access to the identity database of more than 1 billion citizens was being sold for just 500 rupees, or $8 (6 pounds), on social media.

The Editors Guild of India condemned UIDAI’s action, saying it was designed to “browbeat a journalist.”

“It is unfair, unjustified and a direct attack on the freedom of the press,” the Guild said in a statement on Sunday.

The UIDAI said in a statement on Sunday that it respects freedom of press, adding that it was duty bound to name everyone involved in the incident, including the reporter.

“It does not mean that those who are named in the report are necessarily guilty,” the authority said.

The Tribune newspaper said it regretted the decision of the authorities.

India last year slapped three places to 136th in the World Press Freedom Index of 180 nations, compiled by Reporters Without Borders.

Journalists in India have increasingly become targets of online smear campaigns, with prosecutorial actions being used to gag journalists who are overly critical of the government, the group said.

The Tribune newspaper last week reported that it was able to buy login credentials to the government’s Aadhaar database, allowing it to acquire information under the names, telephone numbers and home addresses of millions of people.

The alleged breach is the latest in the Aadhaar programme which is facing increasing scrutiny over privacy concerns.

After the report was published, the UIDAI said the “case appears to be an instance of misuse.”

The Aadhaar scheme was introduced in 2009 to streamline welfare payments and reduce wastage in public spending. Since then, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been keen to mandate the use of Aadhaar for everything from filing income taxes to the registration of mobile phones and booking railway tickets.

—Reuters

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Peacemakers head to Asia

YOKOHAMA — A ship chartered by Japan-based Peace Boat, a nongovernmental organization working closely with last year’s Nobel Peace Prize winner the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, left Yokohama Port on Monday to promote nuclear disarmament.

The boat will visit eight countries through March including the Philippines and Australia. Terumi Tanaka, co-chair of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, is among the people on board. “Grassroots lobbying is an important activity. I am looking forward to meeting people of various towns in the countries we will visit,” said Tanaka, who is participating in the Peace Boat tour for the first time.

The boat carries on its side the logo of ICAN, a coalition of NGOs that involves about 470 groups in more than 100 countries. Akira Kawasaki, an ICAN international steering committee member, told a press conference, “We must work towards realising the goal of putting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons into effect.”

The treaty was passed by 122 UN members in July last year but has not come into force. None of the nuclear weapon states or countries relying on nuclear deterrence, including Japan, endorsed the treaty.

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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR
MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION
DEPARTMENT OF BRIDGE
Invitation for Bids

Date: 9th January, 2018
EDCF Loan Agreement No.: MYA-10

Contract Title: Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge Construction Project

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Construction has received a Loan from the Export-Import Bank of Korea from the resources of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Republic of Korea in the amount of 137,833,000 US Dollars towards the cost of the Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge Construction Project (hereinafter referred to as the “Project”) and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to payments under the contract for which this Invitation for Bids is issued.

2. The Project Executing Agency now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the construction of the Korea-Myanmar Friendship (Dala) Bridge.

• Cable Stayed Bridge: 690m
• Dala Approach Bridge: 450m
• Yangon Approach Bridge: 576m
• Ramp A: 467m, Ramp B: 526m

3. Bidding will be conducted through Competitive Bidding (CB) among the bidders who have achieved the required standards that are specified in the Guidelines for Procurement under EDCF Loans and is open to all eligible bidders that meet the following minimum qualification criteria.

(i) General construction experience in Bridge and Road field for 5 years.
(ii) Specific experience in construction; satisfy the minimum requirement of having built cable-stayed bridges including access bridges and access roads with main spans of 200 meters or more, with a value of at least 80 million US Dollars that are completed.
(iii) A minimum average construction turnover of 100 million US Dollars for the last 3 years.
(iv) Average Net Worth for last three years (2014, 2015, and 2016) and Net Worth in 2016 shall be positive.

The Bidders must also show that it has the personnel for key positions, key equipment and financial resources in line with its latest years with working capital and lines of credit to meet the requirements of the contract bid and other work commitments, as given in detail in the bidding documents.

In case of JV, refer to the qualification requirement specified in the bidding documents.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from Department of Bridge under the Ministry of Construction and inspect the bidding documents at the address below from 10:00 A.M. (Myan. Time) to 4:00 P.M. (Myan. Time) from 16th January, 2018 to 29th February, 2018 (Myanmar Local Time).

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by any interested Bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee of 1000 US Dollars. The payment will be made by cash.

The document will be delivered directly to the Bidders from the Department of Bridge’s office.

Attention: U Shwe Lay, Director General, Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction
Telephone: +95 67 407069, +95 67 407465
+95 67 407734 (International Relation and Legal Sub Division)

DEPARTMENT OF BRIDGE
Building No. 11, Naypyitaw, Myanmar
U Shwe Lay, Director General
Telephone: +95 67 407069, +95 67 407465
+95 67 407734 (International Relation and Legal Sub Division)

6. Bids must be submitted to the address below at or before 10:00 A.M. 29th February, 2018. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of 1,000,000 US Dollars. Late bids shall be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders’ representatives, who choose to attend at the address below at 10:30 A.M. 29th February, 2018 (Myanmar Local Time).

7. The Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Bidders in connection with the preparation or delivery of Bids.

6. The address referred to above is:
Department of Bridge, Ministry of Construction
U Shwe Lay, Director General
Building No. 11, Naypyitaw, Myanmar
Telephone: +95 67 407069
Facsimile: +95 67 407734

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Passengers on a Peace Boat ship, including survivors of the 1945 US nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, pose for a photo at Yokohama Port on 8 January, 2018, before leaving for an eight-nation tour of Asia and Oceania. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Peace Boat ship leaves Yokohama for Asia, Oceania tour

PASSAGERS ON A PEACE BOAT SHIP, INCLUDING SURVIVORS OF THE 1945 US NUCLEAR BOMBINGS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI, POSE FOR A PHOTO AT YOKOHAMA PORT ON 8 JANUARY, 2018, BEFORE LEAVING FOR AN EIGHT-NATION TOUR OF ASIA AND OCEANIA. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS
‘Three Billboards’ wins big as Golden Globes power through sex scandal

LOS ANGELES — Dark drama “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” was the big winner with four Golden Globes awards on Sunday on a night marked by scathing jokes about sexual harassment and passionate odes to those breaking their silence.

Mother-daughter comedy “Lady Bird” was named best comedy film and the indie A24 movie’s star Saoirse Ronan won for comedy actress.

Gary Oldman was named best drama movie actor for his role as British wartime leader Winston Churchill in Focus Features’ “Darkest Hour” and Frances McDormand took home the award for drama actress for her role as an angry mother seeking vengeance in Fox Searchlight’s “Three Billboards.”

James Franco won the comedy actor award for his cult movie homage “The Disaster Artist,” also from A24. Mexican director Guillermo del Toro won for best director for magical fantasy movie homage “The Disaster Artist.”

Universal’s supernatural horror film “Insidious: The Last Key” opened surprisingly in second place with an estimated 29.2 million dollars in its debut. The fourth installment of the “Insidious” series from Blumhouse Productions was directed by Adam Robitel and stars Lin Shaye, Angus Sampson and Leigh Whannell. The film follows a brilliant parapsychologist, Elise Rainier, as she investigates a haunting in her childhood home.

Disney’s release of Lucasfilm’s “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” landed in third place in its fourth weekend with an estimated 23.3 million dollars, pushing it total to a whopping 572.5 million dollars in North America to date. The film passed “Beauty and the Beast” as the top grossing film in North America in 2017 after only half a month of its debut. The eighth installment in the “Star Wars” saga has grossed around 1,205.2 million dollars worldwide through Sunday.


Akshay not bothered with possible clash of Padman, Padmavati

MUMBAI — There is a buzz that Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s “Padmavati” may hit the theatres the same day as “Padman,” but actor Akshay Kumar is hopeful that both the movies do well in the holiday weekend.

“Padmavati,” which missed its 1 December release date due to controversy over its plot, has been finally given a go ahead by the censor board and according to grapevine the producers are planning 25 January release — the same day as R Balki-directed “Padman”.

The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) recently gave UA certification along with some modifications and suggested to change its title to ‘Padmanvati’. Akshay said, “It is not about competition, it is a very big day, a big week, so all the films can come. Both the films can release on that day.

“Every film has the right to release whenever they (makers) want, and I am happy for them,” he told reporters.

Viacom18 Motion Pictures and Sanjay Leela Bhansali Productions are yet to announce the official release date of the film.

Akshay’s “Padman” co-star Sonam Kapoor said she would wait for an official announcement from the team of “Padmavati”.

Sonam said, “It is not announced officially, isn’t it? If it is, it is good. There is a need for competition when it comes to films and (it is ) high time that the film releases.

Good cinema is good cinema, I don’t believe in competition. — PTI
Thousands of Belgians brave cold to take dip in wintery North Sea

OSTEND (Belgium) — Thousands of people braved the biting cold of a Belgian winter on Saturday to take a dip in the North Sea in Ostend's traditional New Year's plunge.

Undeterred by air temperatures of 6 degrees Celsius (43 degrees Fahrenheit) and equally chilly water, 4,500 people, many clad in fancy dress, ran down the beach in front of the city's neoclassical Royal Galleries.

While some did little more than wet their ankles, others took advantage of the presence of many lifeguards to take a proper dive into the chilly waves.

“When you go in, it’s cold but once you are in longer, it’s very good, very nice,” said Joris, wearing a caveman outfit.

Organisers said the 27th edition of the New Year’s plunge was average in terms of temperature and attendance, following an exceptionally cold 2017 edition when brisk winds pushed temperatures well below freezing.

“It’s our fifth year now. We had to skip last year because it was on New Year’s day and we would have been a little drunk from the day before,” said Jordy Volders from the Flemish town of Lokeren, who, like his friends, was dressed up as a penguin.

— Reuters

A participant holds a Belgian flag during the annual New Year’s plunge event in Ostend, Belgium on 6 January 2018. PHOTO: REUTERS

John Young, ‘most experienced’ US astronaut, dies at 87

NEW YORK — US astronaut John Young, who walked on the moon in 1972 and even smuggled a corned beef sandwich into orbit during a career that made him the only person to fly with three NASA space programmes, has died at age 87, officials said on Saturday.

Young, who went to space six times, died on Friday night at his home in Houston following complications from pneumonia, National Aeronautics and Space Administration spokesman Allard Beutel said in an email.

The former US Navy test pilot was the ninth person to set foot on the moon, an experience shared by three others after Young. He eventually became one of the most accomplished astronauts in the history of the US space programme.

He flew into space twice during NASA's Gemini program in the mid-1960s, twice on the Apollo lunar missions and twice on space shuttles in the 1980s. He was the only person to fly on all three types of programs. “Astronaut John Young’s storied career spanned three generations of spaceflight. We will stand on his shoulders as we look toward the next human frontier,” NASA Administrator Robert Lightfoot said in a statement.

Young, described in a NASA tweet as “our most experienced astronaut,” retired in 2004 after 42 years with the US space agency. The Apollo 16 mission in April 1972, his fourth space flight, took Young to the lunar surface.

As mission commander, he and crewmate Charles Duke explored the moon’s Descartes Highlands region, gathering 200 pounds (90 kg) of rock and soil samples and driving more than 16 miles (26 km) in the lunar rover to sites such as Spook Crater. — Reuters

Looking aft toward the cargo bay of NASA’s Space Shuttle Orbiter 102 vehicle, Columbia, Astronauts John Young (L) and Robert Crippen preview some of the intravehicular activity expected to take place during the orbiter’s flight test, at Kennedy Space Center, on 10 October 1980. PHOTO: REUTERS

Japanese security firm finds success with ninja-clad guards

OTSU, (Japan) — A security firm in a western Japanese city known as the birthplace of a prominent ninja school is enjoying success by providing guards dressed as the medieval martial arts warriors.

SCC Co in Koka has tapped into the city’s growing fame for ninja tourism since its ninja-clad security guards debuted in a traffic control mission at the opening of a coffee franchise in the city in 2016.

The company’s special ninja squad has continued to be hired for new jobs and its head, Maya Miyoshi, is now hoping to gain a contract to work for the 2020 Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo.

“Ninja are world-class icons and we want people to feel familiar with security at sports facilities,” said Miyoshi, who was dressed in the guise of a kunoichi, or female ninja.

Wearing a dark red judo-style uniform and armed with toy shuriken (ninja throwing blades) and a samurai sword-shaped truncheon, the 36-year-old said, “I’ve always liked to do something different. I want to make a change in the security industry which appears to be old-fashioned and sober.”

Miyoshi has surprised many in the industry since taking over SSC, a spinoff from a security unit of her husband’s company, in 2011. Her experience of studying design in high school inspired unorthodox ideas such as dressing the security guards in yellow uniforms. SSC’s ninja-clad security guards have been popular with the public, including high school students and foreigners, who have asked for photos.

Miyoshi’s dream is to take her security ninjas to the 2020 Games in Japan’s capital. “We want to contribute to the Tokyo Olympics. If we draw attention, it will cheer the industry as well.”

The All Japan Security Service Association said the industry bloomed in the country after its success at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, when its work in guarding the athletes’ village was widely acknowledged by the public and in the business sphere. — Kyodo News

Maya Miyoshi, head of security firm SCC Co. in Koka, Shiga Prefecture, poses in her ninja-style uniform on 20 November 2017. SCC is enjoying success by dressing its security guards in the outfits in the city known as a birthplace of ninja. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS
Versatile Coutinho will be great asset for Barca, says coach

Barcelona's new signing Philippe Coutinho. PHOTO:REUTERS

BARCELONA — Philippe Coutinho’s versatility makes him a great acquisition for Barcelona, coach Ernesto Valverde said on Sunday as the Brazilian made his first public appearance at the Nou Camp following his 142-million-pound move from Liverpool.

“I think he will give us many things — he has a good goal-scoring record, he gives assists, he’ll be able to help us a lot in attack and can play in the middle or on the wing,” Valverde said.

The coach has yet to decide where the new signing will fit into his fluid side, who are unbeaten in the Liga and Champions League.

“He’s versatile and we can make the most of that. We’re going to see how he trains first and then we’ll decide,” Valverde said.

“Vie seen him play in a lot of positions for Liverpool and for his country, although I don’t imagine we’ll be putting him in goal.”

Barca beat Levante 3-0 at home on Sunday with goals from Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Paulinho, to stay nine points clear at the top of the La Liga standings and after the game Coutinho put on a club tracksuit to pose for photographs at the Nou Camp.

Coutinho, who will sign his five-year contract with Barca and be officially presented to the media on Monday, is the third most expensive transfer ever after Neymar Jr and Kylian Mbappe, both at Paris St Germain, and ahead of new Barca team mate Ousmane Dembele, who cost the Catalans 105 million euros ($126.35 million).

We feel like we are sinking, says Real’s Marcelo

VIGO — Real Madrid players feel like their La Liga title hopes are “sinking” into a black hole after they let a 2-1 lead against Celta Vigo slip through their fingers in the final eight minutes, leaving them 16 points adrift of leaders Barcelona.

Real were leading with eight minutes to go against Celta after Gareth Bale’s quickfire double had overturned Daniel Wass’s opening strike.

But Maxi Gomez’s headed goal in the 82nd minute ensured the match finished with a 2-2 draw and piled more pain on Zinedine Zidane’s side, who had lost 3-0 to arch rivals and runaway leaders Barca in their last Liga outing.

“It is how it looks from the outside — we are sad, angry and we feel like we are sinking,” Brazilian defender Marcelo told reporters.

“It is one of the worst situations I’ve experienced here,” added the 29-year-old who has been with the club for over a decade.

“We’ll try to work hard and fight so we can win our next game but we don’t like this situation at all, it’s difficult because the more games you draw or lose the more pressure you are under.”

“The last time Real were 16 points behind the Liga leaders was during Jose Mourinho’s tension-filled final campaign in 2012-13, when they finished 15 points adrift of Barca.

“There’s nothing else we can do other than keep our heads up and fight and do our best to start winning again,” added Marcelo, who has won four La Liga and three Champions League titles since joining Real in 2007.

“We can’t do anything more, we’re trying to play good football, to move the ball around and score goals but it’s not coming off.”

Real coach Zidane usually leaps to the defence of his players after negative results but he was not in a forgiving mood on Sunday.

“The main thing we lacked today was we didn’t play the second half,” said the Frenchman, who last season guided Real to their first Liga and European Cup double since 1968.

“We played very well in the first 45 minutes but not in the second half and a game lasts 90 minutes.” Zidane also refused to comment on whether or not his side were out of the title race. “We’re not going to talk about the league every weekend. If we keep losing points we’re not going to get there. We have to focus on each game now and try to win them,” he said.—Reuters  

Matsuyama drops to 12th at Tournament of Champions

KAPALUA, HAWAII — Japan’s Hideki Matsuyama slid down the leaderboard into a five-way tie for 12th in Saturday’s third round of the Sentry Tournament of Champions in Kapalua, Hawaii during the third round of the Tournament of Champions in Kapalua, Hawaii on 6 January, 2018. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Hideki Matsuyama of Japan hits an iron from the fourth-hole rough during the third round of the Tournament of Champions in Kapalua, Hawaii on 6 January, 2018. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Matsuyama, who started the round four strokes off the lead and tied for eighth, had an up and down round featuring four birdies and three bogeys, leaving him to card a 1-under-par 72. He sits tied for 12th at 7-under after 54 holes at Kapalua Resort’s Plantation Course in Maui.

“THERE were some times when my putting felt good, but I didn’t get what I expected,” Matsuyama said. “Of course, they won’t go in if you’re anxious.”

Matsuyama missed a putt to drop a shot on No 2 and gave up a golden chance for eagle when he missed a 4-foot on the fifth, settling for a birdie instead. He struggled on the 13th, bogeying after spraying his tee shot right, and again on No 16, where he narrowly missed an 11-foot attempt after consecutive birdies on 14 and 15.

“It’s still a long (season) from here, the last day will be an important round. I want to finish strong,” Matsuyama said.

The 25-year-old is currently nine strokes behind the leader; world No 1 Dustin Johnson of the United States, who shot an equal Saturday best 7-under 66 for a 16-under three-round total. His compatriot Brian Harman is two strokes behind, and Spain’s Jon Rahm is two shots further back in third after matching Johnson’s 66.—Kyodo News