Eco-tourism underway in Chin State

VICE PRESIDENT U Henry Van Thio inspected the development undertakings in Falam and Haka townships of Chin State on 19 May. The vice president was accompanied by Chin State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Lwal, Chin State Hluttaw Speaker U Zo Bwe, Deputy Ministers Rear Admiral Myint Nwe, Maj-Gen Than Htut and U Soe Aung, Chin State cabinet members and other officials.

The vice president and his delegation visited the 200-bed hospital in Falam, where they met patients and provided them with cash assistance.

After viewing the sites for hospital staff quarters and the nurses training school, the vice president said the upgrade of hospitals and the extension of nurses training schools were being done to ensure effective public healthcare. Hence, officials should work systematically to prevent financial wastage.

Later, the vice president inspected the site near Talanzar Village in Falam Township, where the Laiva Dam will be built.

At the briefing hall, the vice president and his delegation heard a report on the lower Dam Laiva project that will supply water to Falam, presented by an official from the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department. The vice president said special attention must be given to the project to prevent financial wastage and ensure maximum public benefits.

The feasibility study found that in the area, a dam with a storage capacity between 162 million gallons and 216 million gallons could be built. It can have a 2.5-squaremile watershed area and a 4,820-acre-feet of water annual inflow. The dam can supply up to 800,000 gallons per day for a population over 25,000 residents in the township. The location of the Zeinhmutaung Mountain near the dam paved the way for the development of nature tourism in the area, where visitors can recreate and buy traditional goods, thus generating job opportunities for locals. Director U Win Naing of the Forest Department of the state explained plans to turn the Zeinhmutaung Mountain area into a national park.

The vice president studied the mountain and gave instructions on conducting field surveys to build a tourism destination, national park, and set up embankments and spillways to store water round the year at Laithili Lake on top of the mountain.

The Zeinhmutaung national park lies on the mountain, which is some 8,600 feet above sea level, and where Haka Township and Thantlang Township, Haka District and Falam Township, Falam District in Chin State meet.
Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung welcomes Mr. Wang Zhengwei and his good will delegation from China at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. PHOTO: KHAING HTOO (IPRD)

PRC delegation visits Myanmar

A goodwill delegation of the People’s Republic of China led by Mr. Wang Zhengwei, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference arrived in Nay Pyi Taw at 5.20 pm yesterday and was welcomed by Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and officials at the Nay Pyi Taw international airport. The Myanmar-China Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Association of the Amyotha Hluttaw hosted dinner to Mr. Wang Zhengwei and delegation at Horizon Lake View Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw at 6.30 pm the same day. —Myanmar News Agency

Cooperation required to meet target oil production

Union Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Kyaw inspected the applied research division of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) in Mingaladon and the Hlawga mechanical division of the Department of Hydropower Implementation (DHPI) in the Yangon region yesterday.

The union minister and his delegation first visited MOGE’s applied research division in Mingaladon Township, where the managing director of MOGE and officials explained their works.

At the meeting with the officials, the union minister discussed the building of a Data-Base and a Data Share system by combining the individual research results. He also pointed out the importance of dutifulness and cooperation among the staff to meet the targeted oil production of 10,000 barrels per day in three years. He then inspected the operating laboratories inside the research division and the Core Sample in the store.

The union minister also enquired and instructed the staff about the works. The union minister then visited the Hlawga mechanical division of DHPI in Mingaladon and inspected the machines and vehicles at the construction site and the equipment for the Tha Htay hydropower project. —Myanmar News Agency

Constitutional Tribunal member concludes Russia visit

Member of the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union U Myint Win and party arrived in St. Petersburg in Russia from 15 to 19 May and attended the 8th St. Petersburg International Legal Forum.

The delegation led by member of the Constitutional Tribunal U Myint Win arrived back to Yangon International Airport at 5.23 pm and they were welcomed by the officials from the Constitutional Tribunal of the Union, it is learnt. —Myanmar News Agency

Hong Kong listed company visits Bago Region for factory construction

Mr. Raymond Lee, Chairman of Lee & Man Manufacturing Co. Ltd, a Hong Kong listed Chinese private papermaking company, and his delegation were welcomed by Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein at the Chief Minister’s guest hall in the Bago Region Government’s office on 18 May. Mr. Lee and his delegation were here to find suitable area to construct a paper production plant in Bago Region.

At the meeting, Mr. Lee explained that their company has bamboo-based production plants in China and Vietnam that do not have wastage, their waste products are not disposed outside, and they do not harm the natural environment.

He said the waste from the production plants are used to fuel the electricity for the plant itself so they will not need to be connected to an external power supply.

He said the production plant requires 3,400,000 square metre and they will adhere to the government’s administration. If the permit for the plant construction goes through, the company will send 3,000 local residents of Bago to attend a one-year training course in China and the company will make investment in the project.

The Chief Minister then expressed his gratitude for the foreign investment venture as the lack of job opportunities in the area has resulted in local youths travelling to foreign countries to seek jobs. He said the government will provide full support in accordance with the law. —Tin Soe (Bago)
Eco-tourism underway in Chin State

Vice President U Henry Van Thio shakes hands with medical staff as he enters Falam General Hospital. PHOTO: MNA

The view from Chin State’s third highest peak on a sunny day stretches from the northern sector of Chin State to the Sagaing and Magway regions. On the mountain lies Laithili, which is also called a fairy lake. An earth dam will be built to turn Laithili into an all-weather natural lake, and the whole area will be developed into an ecotourism site without harming the natural environment. Laithili will be the first lake in Myanmar that is over 7,600 feet high.

The Forest Department is planning to build a 13.10-squaremile Kyeereyantaung national park and a 68.12-squaremile Bwabarantaung national park in Thantlang Township, Haka District, a 31.15-squaremile Zeinhmutaung national park in Haka Township, a 19.30-squaremile Mpiepitaung national park in Thantlang Township, a 2.20-squaremile Hmantaung national part in Haka Township, a 44.30-squaremile Sarhmontaung national park in Thantlang Township, and a 36.66-squaremile Laythitaung national park in Tiddim Township, Falam District, in Chin State. Regarding the Haka education college project, officials explained the progress in building the lecture halls and hostels, future programmes and academic matters. The vice president looked into the requirements and visited the worksites of the education college and the midwifery school projects.

He then inspected the building of a multi-purpose disaster shelter, where more than 650 can stay and a four-storey district-level public healthcare office.

The vice president said the facilities built with state funds should be beneficial to the public, adding, every project must be environment-friendly. At the project site to conduct sports and physical education institute in Haka, the vice president emphasised on the timely completion of the project and the upgrading of the roads. The project aims to train a new generation of athletes from among the youth talent in Chin State.

The vice president also inspected the work of turning a natural creek into a concrete channel, as a measure to prevent natural disasters; the 200-bed hospital where he visited the patients; the Chin State Hluttaw office project, which is up to 90 per cent complete; and the education college project in Haka.

—Myanmar News Agency

Japan-Myanmar Joint Committee meeting for promoting securities market

THE third meeting of the Myanmar-Japan Joint Committee, which was formed to promote the securities market, was held at the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) on 19 May.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance and Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission U Maung Maung Win and commission members, the YSX managing director and officials, officials from the Japanese Embassy, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) expert Takafumi Ueda, and officials from Japan’s Ministry of Finance, Japan Exchange Group, Department of Financial Services, and Daiwa Institute of Research Holdings Ltd.

During the meeting, they discussed topics such as forming a special working committee to promote company listing on the YSX, conducting educational workshops, field trips, seminars, exhibitions, and public information relations works for the YSX, the work progress of the Securities and Exchange Commission, results of monthly meetings with securities companies, accepting foreign investments, and short-, mid-term and long-term recommendations from the Japanese advisor. The Myanmar-Japan Joint Committee is formed with the Ministry of Planning and Finance, the YSX, Japan Exchange Group, the Department of Financial Services, and Daiwa Institute of Research Holdings Ltd. —Myanmar News Agency

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)
Jengkol beans see high demand in domestic market

MYANMAR'S export of forest products over the first 41 days in the current interim fiscal year reached US$16.8 million, decreasing by $8.2 million against the same period last year, the commerce ministry reported.

From 1 April to 11 May this year, the private sector exported $14.4 million worth of forest-based products to overseas trade partners, which saw a decrease in value by $9.9 million against last year. Despite a decrease in the export of forest products by the private sector, public sector exports of the same products increased to $2.4 million this year from $0.705 million last year, the period, including agro, forestry, and fisheries, accounted for 21.5% of the total exports.

Jengkol beans, also known as Danyinthee in the Myanmar language, are selling well in the domestic market, according to wholesalers in Paung Township, Mon State.

Jengkol beans are locally produced seasonal food that is popular among the Myanmar people, who use the fruits primarily in cooking. The baked or boiled or raw Jengkol beans are served with salty fish sauce and boiled rice.

The production of Jengkol beans decreased this season in Paung Township due to bad weather. However, growers reaped a handsome profit, as the demand for Jengkol beans is high in both the urban and rural markets, said Daw Kin Thi, a retailer in Paung Township.

Depending on their size and freshness, the raw Jengkol beans are sold for Ks15- Ks30 per fruit in the local market, whereas the salted Jengkol bean is sold at Ks40- Ks100 per fruit.

Usually, Jengkol beans can be harvested in early April. The powerful winds that hit the town this pollinating season triggered a decline in Jengkol bean production, said Ko Tun Zaw, a grower from the same township. Jengkol beans produced in Paung Township are mostly sent to the Yangon, Mandalay, Bago and Taninthayi regions, wholesalers said.—Ko Hein (Paung)

B4B Insights Forum to be held on 26-27 May in Yangon

The main objective of the new business forum is to raise collaboration between the government and private businesspersons by seeking solutions to overcome the challenges and difficulties they face. According to the schedule, the situation of the country’s current economy and future expectation, matters related to banking and finance, retail, construction, services, industry, agribusiness, trading and SMEs will be discussed openly on a panel discussion conducted by private businesspersons from the respective sectors.

In addition to this, legal experts and governmental officials will also share their knowledge and experience with the participants through the forum. Their topics will cover business laws and related rules, bylaws and procedures, the current Myanmar Companies Law, the Union Tax Law 2018 and easing of restrictions on the retail sector.

Enthusiasts may dial 01 2314344—49, Ext: 140 and 118, and 09450204480 of the UMFCCI and send mails to maw@umfcci.com.mm to confirm their participation.—Nyein Nyein

Exports of forest products continue to decrease in current FY

A B4B Insights Forum will take place on 26 and 27 May in Yangon to seek innovative business solutions for the development of local businesses.

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) will organise the forum at its headquarters on Minyekyawswa Road in Landmadaw Township.

The main theme of the new business forum is to raise collaboration between the government and private businesspersons by seeking solutions to overcome the challenges and difficulties they face. According to the schedule, the situation of the country’s current economy and future expectations, matters related to banking and finance, retail, construction, services, industry, agribusiness, trading and SMEs will be discussed openly in a panel discussion conducted by private businesspersons from the respective sectors.

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Women are preparing jengkol beans to sell in the market.  PHOTO: SUPPLIED

From 1 April to 11 May in the current interim fiscal year, the private sector exported $14.4 million worth of forest-based products to overseas trade partners, which saw a decrease in value by $9.9 million against last year.

Despite a decrease in the export of forest products by the private sector, public sector exports of the same products increased to $2.4 million this year from $0.705 million last year, the data showed.

The ministry’s statistics showed that the country earned some $992.7 million from overall exports during the period, including agro products worth $270.6 million, animal products worth $29.4 million, marine products worth $65.3 million, minerals worth $96.6 million, manufactured goods worth $409.3 million and miscellaneous goods worth $113.7 million.

The export of forest products in the last FY reached $212.1 million, decreasing by $34.9 million compared with the previous year’s total of $247 million.

According to the yearly report of the ministry, exports of forest products by the two sectors were $641.9 million in the 2011-2012 FY, $595.6 million in the 2012-2013 FY, $948 million in the 2013-2014 FY, $94.4 million in the 2014-2015 FY and $212.9 million in the 2015-2016 FY.—Swe Nyein
THE prices of dried freshwater shrimps have been rising in the domestic market, especially in Pyapon Township and the Ayeyawady Region, this fishing season, according to local fishermen.

Due to the late monsoon, the township saw a decline in the natural production of freshwater shrimps compared with the same period last year, resulting in an increase in the price of dried shrimps in the market. Dried shrimp producers are currently facing some difficulties due to low production.

Depending on their quality and size, dried shrimps were sold for Ks45,000-Ks60,000 per viss (3.6 pounds) on Sunday morning, 20 May, according to retailers.

The surging prices of dried freshwater shrimps are expected to decline in mid-June this year, when the heavy downpour would help raise the region’s natural shrimp production.

Marketable dried shrimps are usually exported to China, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Bangladesh and other countries.—Aung Win (Pyapon)

Private sector imports increase by $241mln in current FY

The total imports by private sector reached US$1.965 billion in the current transitional financial year, which saw an increase in value by $241.9 million as against the same period in the last year, the Commerce Ministry reported.

Between 1 April and 11 May this year, the private importers bought three major sorts of products from foreign trade partners, consisting of capital goods worth $614.5 million, intermediate goods worth $901.8 million and consumer products worth $449 million.

The ministry’s data showed that the overall imports from both public and private sectors were valued at $2.232 billion in total, including $267.4 million worth of goods imported by the government. The public sector imports also rose by $211 million than that of the similar period in the last year.

Myanmar conducts overseas trade with the world countries involving ASEAN member states, some European nations, Western countries and those from Asia and Africa, mainly through by sea routes.

The country also has export/import relations with the neighbouring China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh via land border points of entry. During the period, the country’s border trade with its neighbours was valued at $875.7 million, with $573.5 million in the exports and $302.1 million in the imports.—Khine Khant

Myanmar-India border trade exceeds $15 million within 41 days

The bilateral border trade between Myanmar and India totalled US$15.2 million in the current transitional fiscal year, an increase by $7.5 million compared with the same period last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 April and 11 May this year, Myanmar exported some $13.2 million worth of commodities to India, whereas imports from Myanmar’s second largest neighbouring country were worth $1.9 million.

Border trade between the two countries is conducted mainly through the Tamu and Reed cross-border points. However, most bilateral imports and exports are delivered in ships.

The vast South Asian country’s imports from Myanmar include areca nuts, ginger, saffron, turmeric, bay leaves and other fruits and vegetables, besides human hair, fishery and forest products. It largely exports medicines, oil cakes, electronic products, motorbikes, cotton yarn, non-alloy steel and other construction materials.

Myanmar’s total border trade with China, India, Thailand and Bangladesh via the 16 land borders was valued at $875.7 million, including $573.5 million in exports and $302.1 million in imports.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), India’s investment in Myanmar at the end of the 2017-2018 FY was $10.993 million through three investment projects.—Shwe Khine

Ginger. Photo: Supplied
Government working to train outstanding youth

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing attended and delivered an address at the ceremony to honour marine and aviation youth held at Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The Senior General said countries were training the youth to help them overcome challenges. The government is working to ensure it can train outstanding youth who can display the national spirit and a strong sense of national duty. Efforts are being made to instil in the youth the importance of developing a human society with strong national unity and ensure constant human resource development to defend the country, he said.

The Senior General presented gifts to the trainees from the marine and aviation training courses and received the gifts presented by the youth. Later, Ma Khin Sai Aung from the marine youth training course and Ma Pyae Pyae Phyo from the aviation youth training course gave speeches thanking the Senior General.

Before attending the honouring ceremony, youth from the marine and aviation training courses viewed the weapons produced by the Myanmar military, the uniforms of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), communication devices, scale model of vessels made by the Tatmadaw (Navy), naval gear, scale models of planes and helicopters, pilot suits and gear, and the display of flight flying with the simulator. Officials conducted them around the booths.

In the evening, the youth trainees enjoyed a display of shows put up by the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air Force) at the Defence Services Museum in Nay Pyi Taw.

The Basic Marine Youth Training and Advanced Training Course No.1/2018 and Basic Aviation Youth Training and Advanced Training Course No.1/2018 were held at the naval headquarters and airbases, respectively, from 23 April to 18 May, 2018. In the last week of training, the camps held competitions and conducted study tours.

The training courses are being conducted since 2014. In 2015, the advanced courses were opened for those who have attended the basic courses. Since its inception, the courses have trained some 1,970 youth, including 1,444 in the basic marine training course and 526 in the advanced course, and 2,196 youth, including 2,036 in the basic marine training course and 160 in the advanced course.

—Myanmar News Agency

Foreign trade in midyear an increase from previous FY

As of April 2018, Myanmar’s exports have generated US$ 866 million and imports were at US$ 1.414 billion; reaching a total of US$ 2.280 billion in foreign trade. By April of Fiscal Year 2017-2018, Myanmar’s foreign trade reached US$ 1.980 billion; US$ 863 million in exports and US$ 1.117 billion in imports. Therefore, compared to last year, exports in Myanmar have increased by US$ 3 million, and foreign trade increased by US$ 300 million.

A comparison of imports between April of this year and April of FY 2017-2018 in US$ millions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agricultural Products</td>
<td>233,820</td>
<td>249,988</td>
<td>-16,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Animal products</td>
<td>18,946</td>
<td>12,209</td>
<td>17,737</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aquatic products</td>
<td>57,641</td>
<td>47,101</td>
<td>10,540</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mineral products</td>
<td>72,724</td>
<td>59,512</td>
<td>13,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Forestry products</td>
<td>15,313</td>
<td>23,599</td>
<td>8,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Finished industrial products</td>
<td>363,799</td>
<td>330,467</td>
<td>33,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other products</td>
<td>103,870</td>
<td>150,966</td>
<td>-47,096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>866,113</td>
<td>862,842</td>
<td>3,271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign imports as of April 2018 reached US$ 1.414 billion, an increase of US$ 297 million from the previous year’s import of US$ 1.117 billion.

A comparison of imports between April of this year and April of FY 2017-2018 in US$ millions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Products</th>
<th>2018 (April)</th>
<th>2017-2018 (April)</th>
<th>Comparison (+/-)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Investment products</td>
<td>441,062</td>
<td>397,407</td>
<td>43,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Raw materials</td>
<td>674,808</td>
<td>451,367</td>
<td>223,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Consumer products</td>
<td>297,909</td>
<td>267,711</td>
<td>30,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1413,770</td>
<td>1116,485</td>
<td>297,285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BY the provision of the Government of Thailand and RSKS Thai Foundation, Migrant Myanmar workers in Thailand received free medical checkup in Samut Sakhun Province, it is learnt.

The medical checks up include testing and screening of HIV Virus and other general health testing without any charge. The free medical checking is followed by the talks on health education and social encouragement conducted by the volunteers, according to the Thailand officials. —Kyaw Soe (Kawthoung)
Kyauktawgyi with unique design and murals

KYAUTAWGYI Pagoda where a large Buddha Image carved from a single alabaster boulder is placed has been an attractive tourism site for years.

Located near the famous teak bridge crossing Taungthaman Lake in Amarapura, Kyauktawgyi Pagoda is a showcase of exotic Myanmar traditional designs and murals.

Its design is a remake of Bagan’s renowned Ananda Temple whose design according to legend was created by arahants or the perfect persons who have attained Nirvana.

King Bagan and his royal family along with court ministers and regional administrators enshrined holy objects in the pagoda named “Maha Thatkyaranti” nearly 170 years ago. At the sacred umbrella hoisting ceremony held the same year, 41 male and female prisoners under death row were pardoned.

The rear archway of the pagoda known mostly as Kyauktawgyi for its large white Buddha Image has two doors. The left-side door is opened when the Image is under renovation, but the right-side door is always closed as it leads to maze.

So come, visit the pagoda and admire its unique architecture and murals.—Nway Nadi (Myitngi)

Myanmar Downhill Junior 2018 cycling contest held in Mandalay

THE Myanmar Downhill Junior 2018, a downhill cycling contest for young riders was held on Mandalay Hill in Mandalay yesterday morning.

A total of more than 30 young cyclists whose age range from 11 to 18 participated in the competition. “Cycling sport mainly relies on new generation. This is the reason why we organize the event,” said U Aung Win Tun, Vice-President of the Myanmar Cycling Federation.

The commissaries gave necessary instructions to the participants and the medical teams were ready to provide healthcare services for them.

The prize winners in the challenge were presented with valuable sports gears by officials. Arrangements are being made to observe similar events once a month or once every two months.—Ei Moh Moh Khaing

Slight earthquake strikes Sedoktara Township

NO immediate reports of damage or casualties were available following a slight earthquake which was recorded at 2:26 am Myanmar Standard Time today.

The earthquake with the magnitude of 3.8 on the Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar jolted about 18 miles south of Sedoktara Township, Magway Region, latitude 20.22°N, longitude 94.29°E, depth 15 kilometers about 78 miles southwest of Naypyidaw seismological observatory, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

Approximately 79 earthquakes—twenty six in Bago Region, eighteen in Sagaing Region, seven in Shan State, five in Magway Region, four each in Chin State and Mandalay Region, three each in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, Yangon Region and Rakhine State and two in Ayeyawady Region—hit Myanmar during the period from 1 January to 20 May this year.—MDN

Police seize guns and drugs in house search

MYANMAR Police Force confiscated guns, bullets, grenade and stimulant tablets from a suspected drug smuggler in Kayin State in the south-east of Myanmar yesterday.

Following a tipoff, the local anti-drug squad together with eye witnesses raided the house of a suspected drug dealer in Naung Hta Lone Village, Hpa-an Township. The suspect identified as Saw Nyunt Thein, 42 years of age, attacked the police conducting an inspection in search of illicit narcotics with gun in his house and attempted to flee the scene but later he was arrested.

The police seized a carbine, a percussion-lock firearm, two bullets, a grenade and 72 stimulant pills from the suspect. Action has been taken against the suspected drug trafficker by local police.—Tun Tun Htwe (Hpa-an)
Myanmar will rise again

Myanmar is one of the most promising economies in the world. It is a country that has undergone significant changes over the past few decades and has emerged as a model for development in Southeast Asia.

The country has a young and energetic population, with a median age of 28.5 years. The government has made significant efforts to attract foreign investment, and the country has become a hub for local and international businesses.

The political situation in Myanmar has also improved significantly, with the country transitioning from a military dictatorship to a civilian government. The country has become a model for political stability and economic growth.

The government has also made significant efforts to improve education and healthcare, and the country has become a hub for international tourists. The country has become a model for sustainable development, with a focus on renewable energy and climate change mitigation.

In conclusion, Myanmar is a country that has undergone significant changes over the past few decades and has emerged as a model for development in Southeast Asia. The country has a young and energetic population, with a median age of 28.5 years. The government has made significant efforts to attract foreign investment, and the country has become a hub for local and international businesses.

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In conclusion, Myanmar is a country that has undergone significant changes over the past few decades and has emerged as a model for development in Southeast Asia.
African nations vow to recover stolen assets

ABUJA — Former British prime minister David Cameron two years ago was caught talking about an anti-corruption summit and calling Nigeria “fantastically corrupt.”

But meanwhile his country ranks among the top destinations for stolen assets from African countries.

Nigeria and ex-British colonies in Africa hope to change that by working together to repatriate billions of dollars in offshore accounts from London and beyond.

At a regional conference held this week in the Nigerian capital of Abuja, the heads of anti-corruption agencies from across Africa met to discuss strategies to overcome bottlenecks in the recovery of stolen assets.

“Concerned about the heavy losses that Africa suffers as a result of illegal transfers of proceeds of corruption and crime out of Africa,” the anti-corruption representatives vowed on Friday to “strengthen cooperation and partnership in the tracing, recovery and return of assets.”

They further pledged in a joint statement to encourage African countries to commit to greater corporate transparency and called for investment in anti-corruption agencies to “trace, recover and return assets.”

Fight this tsunami

Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland said Africa is losing tens of billions of dollars annually to corruption, urging the anti-graft tsars to lead the “fight against this tsunami”.

“We all know that the difference between the money we need to deliver the hopes and aspirations of our people...and the money we have, is the sum equivalent to that which is egregiously siphoned off by corrupt practices,” Scotland said.

Nigeria, the continent’s largest oil producer, is ranked among the most corrupt countries in the world by anti-graft group Transparency International.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has promised to continue his war against corruption as part of his 2019 re-election campaign. Buhari’s anti-graft chief Ibrahim Magu claimed earlier this year that his agency has recovered over 500 billion naira ($1.3 billion) in illicit funds.

But the government’s fight against corruption has been accused of being politically motivated.

Mafia of leaders

Commonwealth adviser Roger Koranteng told AFP that leaders at the summit want a regional approach to recovery of stolen assets.

“There is strength in unity. If you go as a single country, you will have a problem because the countries outside the African countries are together,” he said.

Sustaining the momentum however may be difficult. Ghana’s independent prosecutor Martin Amidu said the will to tackle graft comes in ebbs and flows on the continent.

“For me, for the past decades, Africa has had a mafia of leaders who speak of corruption as if they are against it but internally didn’t attempt to fight it,” Amidu said.

Still, countries stand to gain huge amounts of money should they streamline asset recovery.

Nigeria announced in April it received over 300 million dollars from Switzerland as part of money seized from the family of ex-dictator Sani Abacha, who ruled the country from 1993 until 1998. Buhari said the money will be spent on a welfare scheme targeting the “poor-est of Nigerians”, in a country where poverty is widespread and unemployment is rampant.

Yet it is difficult to trace how the repatriated money is being spent, with some critics voicing concerns that stolen money gets repatriated to Nigeria only to be looted again.

“There is a need for robust oversight mechanisms as well as continuous monitoring of the use of recovered assets to ensure that they are used properly and efficiently for development outcomes and poverty alleviation,” said Marie Chene of Transparency International in a 2017 report.

‘Global effort’

Greater global attention on the issue is helping reforms, say anti-corruption activists.

“It took the publication of the Panama Papers to expose many government officials with offshore accounts,” said Debo Adeniran of the Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders lobby group.

“The decision to sign mutual legal assistance with several countries is helping the (Nigerian) government in its loot recovery efforts,” Adeniran said.

In January, Nigeria signed a deal with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on asset recovery.

Buhari’s anti-corruption sweep and banking reforms are acting as a deterrent, Adeniran added: “When you steal and cannot keep the money in the banks, you will stop stealing,” he said.—AFP

Six bodies recovered after east China ship sinking

FUZHOU — Rescuers have found the bodies of six people who went missing after a ship sank in waters off Fujian Province on 16 May, authorities said Sunday.

Early Wednesday morning, a cargo ship with 11 crew members on board sank off the coast of Tanyu Island, near Fuzhou. Five people were rescued, the other six were missing.

As of 9 p.m. Saturday, rescuers have found the bodies of six crew members, according to Fujian Maritime Safety Administration. Investigation into the cause of the accident is underway, and efforts have been taken to prevent pollution from leaking fuel oil.—Xinhua

Five killed in house fire in C China

CHANGSHA — Five people died in a residential house fire in central China’s Hunan Province on Sunday, local authorities confirmed.

The fire broke out in Shijiang Town, Dongkou County in the early morning. One person fell from the building and died in hospital due to the injuries. Rescuers found three bodies, and another person died on the way to hospital, according to the county government. The cause of the fire is under investigation.—Xinhua

UK to donate 1.35 mln USD to UAE-led fund against rare tropical diseases

DUBAI — Britain has decided to contribute 1 million British pounds (1.35 million U.S. dollars) to a United Arab Emirates (UAE) fund to help contain rare tropical diseases, UAE state news agency WAM reported Saturday.

The announcement to donate to the Reaching the Last Mile Fund was made by visiting British Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt during his meeting with Reem bint Ibrahim Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State for International Cooperation.—Xinhua

400 mln-year-old marine animal fossil found in SW China

GUIYANG — Scientists from the Chinese Academy of Sciences have recently found a fossilized body piece of an extinct class of marine animal known as Cystoides or cystoids in southwest China’s Guizhou Province.

The fossil, that dates back some 400 million years, was discovered in Tongzi County while the scientists were studying a geological section in the area, according to the county government.

With an egg-shaped body, cystoids are echinoderms, marine invertebrates that existed during the Paleozoic Era, the Ordovician and Silurian Periods, and became extinct during the Devonian Period.

Guizhou boasts a rich store of prehistoric treasures. Fossils of various extinct invertebrate marine species have been discovered in the area. Tens of thousand of vertebrate fossils have also been found there.—Xinhua

PHOTO: AFP

African nations have vowed to recover billions of dollars held in offshore accounts.

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PHOTO: AFP

African nations have vowed to recover billions of dollars held in offshore accounts.
World’s first floating nuclear barge to power Russia’s Arctic oil drive

MURMANSK (RUSSIA) — To meet its growing electricity needs in its drive to develop oil resources in remote Arctic regions, Russia has built a floating nuclear power station, a project that detractors deride as a “Chernobyl on ice.”

Built in Saint Petersburg, the Akademik Lomonosov is currently moored in Murmansk where it is being loaded with nuclear fuel before heading to eastern Siberia.

On Saturday, head of state nuclear power firm Rosatom unveiled the brown-and-mustard-painted facility in the city’s estuary as an orchestra played the national anthem.

Rosatom chief Alexei Likhachev hailed the new power station as “a new world first,” which he said “underlines the agenda.” Rosatom and the Russian nuclear facilities, mobile facilities, in countries along the Baltic Sea.

Jan Haverkamp noted that the Akademik Lomonosov is being fuelled near Murmansk, a city of 300,000, before being towed across the Arctic.

“Weapons in the tough environment of the Russian Arctic,” Likhachev said. “We will be able to make available power at Rosatom, said such units would “supply electricity and heat to the most remote regions, supporting also growth and sustainable development.”

He said use of such floating reactors can save 50,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. The Akademik Lomonosov is set to replace an ageing nuclear reactor and a coal-fired power plant which are both located in Chukotka.

Nuclear Titanic

Trutnev, who is in charge of the construction and operation of floating nuclear power stations at Rosatom, said such units would “supply electricity and heat to the most remote regions, supporting also growth and sustainable development.”

He said use of such floating reactors can save 50,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. The Akademik Lomonosov is set to replace an ageing nuclear reactor and a coal-fired power plant which are both located in Chukotka.

Whale lovers find paradise at Boston Harbor

BOSTON (UNITED STATES) — Take a boat out to sea an hour from Boston and whale lovers are in for a treat.

The vast Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary is one of the best whale-watching spots in the world, with a high concentration of humpback, sei and minke whales, as well as the endangered fin whales.

The humpbacks are the most popular, easily identifiable by their long fins that generate easy maneuverability and see them loved for their acrobatics.

More than 40 feet (12 meters) long and weighing 20,000 pounds, the humpback whale is a majestic creature that can weigh up to 40 tons. Its wide mouth opens to reach 20 feet (6 meters) across.

Greenpeace nuclear expert Jan Haverkamp noted that the Akademik Lomonosov is a floating nuclear power plant that can be fuelled near Murmansk, a city of 300,000, before being towed across the Arctic.

Its use in the tough environment of the Russian Arctic will pose a constant threat for residents of the north and the Arctic’s pristine nature,” said Haverkamp. The barge had initially been scheduled to be fuelled in Saint Petersburg, but that work was moved to Murmansk instead due to concerns.

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Three killed, over 8,000 affected by severe weather in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO — Three people were killed and over 8,000 affected as heavy rains and strong winds lashed out across Sri Lanka since Saturday, prompting disaster management officials to be on alert for possible evacuations, the Disaster Management Center said on Sunday.

The three deaths, caused by lightning, were reported from the Eastern District of Trincomalee and in the lower central hills of Badulla.

At least 252 people had been evacuated to safer locations since last week while over 200 houses were partially or fully damaged due to the severe weather. Sri Lanka is facing its annual southwest monsoons with the Meteorological Department in its latest weather report warning of more rains in several districts across the country in the coming days.

The “Southwest monsoon conditions are getting established over the island. Very heavy falls, about 150 millimeters can be expected at some places in Sabaragamuwa province while heavy falls, above 100 millimeters can be expected at some places, particularly in Western Central and Uva provinces and in Galle and Matara districts,” the latest weather report said. The Meteorological Department further warned the public to take adequate precautions to minimize damage caused by lightning. Over 200 people were killed and 78 people missing when the southwest monsoons caused severe floods and landslides across Sri Lanka last year.

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Officers ‘did what they could’ in Texas killings: chief

SANTA FE (UNITED STATES) — Two officers “did what they could” when a teenager opened fire and killed 10 inside a Texas school, their chief said Saturday, tight-lipped about a probe into the latest US mass shooting.

Friday’s massacre in the rural community of Santa Fe High School, is being held on two charges: aggravated assault to a public servant and capital murder, which means he could face the death penalty.

The FBI raised the number of wounded to 13, from 10 earlier.

Walter Braun, chief of the Sante Fe Independent School District police, told reporters that one of his officers was in a critical but stable condition.

He and another officer had “engaged” the shooter, Braun said.

“We drill all of the time with the students and staff and they’re prepared to go into action. That was reflected by the two officers that engaged him right away,” Braun said, declining to give further details.

“Our officers went in there and did what they could.”

Braun refused to discuss any investigative matters, such as how many rounds his officers may have fired, deferring to the FBI and Texas Rangers, a statewide law enforcement agency. The two agencies are leading the probe.

Galveston County Judge Mark Henry, who found “probable cause” to deny bond for the suspect Friday, told reporters that the wounded school officer “ran toward danger... He’s a hero in my book.”

Henry noted that the suspect “said in his statement he acted alone,” and the case will go before another judge on Monday.

The gunman apparently carried out the attack with a shotgun and a .38 revolver that were legally owned by his father, according to Governor Greg Abbott.

Early Saturday, FBI agents were seen at a blue trailer home believed to be connected to the suspect.

The school remained sealed by police tape and an official said all campuses in the district will be closed Monday and Tuesday.

Officers escorted students and staff back onto school property, but only to collect valuables, as people stopped to leave flowers outside.

Among the visitors was Allie Sybert, 12, who arrived with her parents and little sister.

“You just feel so stressed right now,” said Sybert, of Lake Jackson, Texas, told AFP.

“I just don’t understand why anybody would want to do that to people,” she said, expressing hope schools would consider boosting security.

Grief counselors and comfort dogs were on hand at a local church where the Red Cross opened a family assistance center for those affected by the shooting.

The New York Times cited an affidavit written by one investigator as saying the suspect had confessed and said he spared “students he did like so he could have his story told.”

-Suspect seemed ‘nice’ - A survivor, first-year student Evan San Miguel, said he was in art class when the gunman burst in and yelled “Surprise!”

Then the shooting started.

San Miguel and fellow student Bailee Sobnosky were among hundreds at a vigil Friday night in the community near Houston.

Sobnosky said she did not know the shooter, but had seen him around school. “He seemed like a nice kid,” she said, although she believed he did not have many friends. US media have identified all the victims, who included two teachers and an exchange student from Pakistan.

J.J. Watt, a defensive end with the National Football League’s Houston Texans, has told authorities he will pay the funeral expenses of those killed, NFL officials confirmed.

“Right now, this is the time for grief,” Congressman Randy Weber told reporters.

He bristled at suggestions that maybe it would be safer if guns were not so readily available. “Don’t forget what state you’re standing in. There’s more guns in Texas than in any other state. And if I’ve got my facts right, my district has more concealed handgun licenses than any other,” he said.—AFP

German top diplomat favors more intense dialogue with Russia

BERLIN — The dialogue with Russia, including on problem issues, should continue and needs to be intensified, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in an interview with the Saarbruecker Zeitung newspaper on Saturday.

“We have always said that we want to maintain dialogue with Russia in order to solve major international conflicts,” he said. “To that end, we need to clearly identify problem issues, otherwise no progress will be made.”

Maas visited Moscow in May and met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The German official said the crisis in Ukraine was among issues raised during the meeting.

“As you can see, our approach produces unequivocal results - while some are talking about dialogue, I take care to have it intensified again,” he said. The minister evaded the question on whether he was going to visit the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, saying that the participation of German goalkeeper Manuel Neuer was more important than his attendance.

Six policemen killed after Naxalite rebels trigger blast in C India

NEW DELHI — At least six policemen were killed and one was wounded Sunday after Naxals triggered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast, targeting their vehicle in central Indian state of Chattisgarh, police said. The vehicle was blown up at Cholmar Village of Dantewada, about 383 km south of Raipur, the capital city of Chhattisgarh.

“Today a police vehicle moving from Cholmar to Kirandul was targeted with an IED blast by Naxals,” a senior police official P Sunder Raj told media.

“The attack left six policemen dead and one wounded.”

According to officials, the blast left five policemen dead on spot, besides wounding two others. However, the injured policeman was in critical condition.

The attack left six policeman dead and one was wounded Sunday after Naxals triggered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast, targeting their vehicle in central Indian state of Chattisgarh, police said. The vehicle was blown up at Cholmar Village of Dantewada, about 338 km south of Raipur, the capital city of Chhattisgarh.

“Today a police vehicle moving from Cholmar to Kirandul was targeted with an IED blast by Naxals,” a senior police official P Sunder Raj told media.

“The attack left six policemen dead and one wounded.”

According to officials, the blast left five policemen dead on spot, besides wounding two others. However, the injured policeman was in critical condition.

Reports said the wounded policeman has been airlifted to Raipur for treatment.

Following the attack, reinforcements of police and paramilitary were rushed to the area to take on Naxals there, officials said. In March, at least nine para-military troopers of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were killed and two others wounded in a similar attack in adjacent Sukma district.

New Delhi has deployed several companies of its paramilitary forces to take on Naxals in their strongholds.

The insurgency reportedly has claimed more than 6,000 lives and rendered thousands of poor inhabitants homeless.

—Xinhua

A family brings flowers to a makeshift memorial at Santa Fe High School in Texas, where the latest US mass shooting occurred. PHOTO: AFP

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German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. PHOTO: TASS

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Cuba plane crash: What we know

HAVANA — This is what we know about the Boeing passenger plane crash that happened in Cuba on Friday, as the aircraft was taking off from Havana to a city on the east of the island nation.

Among the 110 people killed were 99 Cubans, the six-person Mexican crew and five foreign passengers — an Argentine couple, a Mexican woman and two people from Western Sahara, according to Cuba’s Transport Minister Adel Yzquierdo. There were five children among the dead.

Three Cuban women survived the crash and are hospitalized in critical condition, according to state media. A medical source told AFP that each of them has undergone at least eight operations.

The aircraft was a Boeing 737-200 leased to Cuba’s state airline Cubana de Aviacion by Mexican company Global Air, also known as Aerolineas Da-moj. It was a “wet lease,” meaning Global Air supplied the plane, its crew of two pilots, three flight attendants and a maintenance technician, as well as the insurance.

Built in 1979, according to law, the plane last passed inspection in November 2017.

The accident happened at 12:09pm (1608 GMT). The plane crashed in a potato field close to Havana’s airport. Witnesses and airport officials told AFP that the aircraft, which had been headed toward the eastern Cuban city of Holguin 670 kilometers (420 miles) away, plunged as it was making its first turn after take-off. Almost of what remained of the plane was a mangled carcass of burned metal, according to an AFP journalist at the crash site. It came down just 200 meters (yards) from houses between the Boyeros and Santiago de Las Vegas districts south of Havana.

National mourning in Cuba was being observed Saturday and Sunday. After the accident, Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel — who only took power last month — ordered an investigation be started. Mexican civil aviation authorities sent a team of experts to help Cuban officials, and Boeing said it had a technical team on standby to assist if needed.—AFP

US, China agree to abandon trade war

BEIJING — Washington and Beijing have agreed to abandon any trade war and back off from imposing tariffs on each other, Chinese state media reported Sunday.

The announcement came after high-level talks in the US capital and followed months of tensions over what President Donald Trump has blasted as an unfair commercial relationship between the two economic giants.

Vice-Premier Liu He, who led Chinese negotiators in Washington, said: “The two sides reached a consensus, will not fight a trade war, and will stop increasing tariffs on each other,” state-run news agency Xinhua reported Sunday.

Liu called the agreement a “necessity”, but added: “At the same time it must be realised that unfreezing the ice cannot be done in a day, solving the structural problems of the economic and trade relations between the two countries will take time.”

An earlier joint statement issued in Washington said Beijing would “significantly” increase its purchases of American goods, but offered few details.

The apparent detente comes after months of increasing tensions that have set markets on edge over fears of a damaging trade war.

Trump has repeatedly railed against his country’s trade deficit with China, describing it as a danger to US national security and threatening to impose tariffs on billions of dollars’ worth of Chinese goods.

US levies on $60 billion of Chinese imports could have come into effect as early as next week.

The talks in Washington were between delegations led by US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Liu, who also met Thursday with Trump.

The sides had met earlier in Beijing.

“There was a consensus on taking effective measures to substantially reduce the United States trade deficit in goods with China,” the joint statement said.

“To meet the growing consumption needs of the Chinese people and the need for high-quality economic development, China will significantly increase purchases of United States goods and services.”

—AFP

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Akira Products Kabushiki Kaisha (also trading as Akira Products Co., Ltd.), a company registered under the laws of Japan, which is located at 3-11, Higashi Nihonbashi 3-chome, Chuou-ku, Tokyo, Japan, is the sole owner of the following trademark:

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Reg. No. 5586/2012
In respect of Class 28: Golf related goods.

Akira Products Kabushiki Kaisha (also trading as Akira Products Co., Ltd.) claims the trademark rights and other relevant intellectual property rights for the mark as mentioned above. Akira Products Kabushiki Kaisha (also trading as Akira Products Co., Ltd.) reserves the rights to take legal measures against any infringer who violates its intellectual property or other legal rights in accordance with the concerned laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Daw May Thwe Hlaing. LL.B., LL.M., (H.G.P.)
For Akira Products Kabushiki Kaisha (also trading as Akira Products Co., Ltd.)
Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd.
No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

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Trademark Registration No. Reg. No.4356/2018 abovementioned has been filed in Japan under the Application No. 2017-156490 on November 28, 2017.

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Fraudulent or unauthorised use or actual or colourable imitation of the Marks shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw Khin Myo Myo Aye. H.G.P
For Astellas Pharma Inc.,
C/o Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.,
Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),
Corner of Mahabandoola Road and Thein Phyu Road,
Bohtahtawang Township, Yangon,
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
Dated 21st May 2018
kmma@kcyangon.com

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Red carpet looks that dazzled Cannes

CANNES (France) — With two powerful protests by female stars calling for equal pay and treatment, the red carpet at the Cannes film festival — which ends Sunday — was about much more than fashion statements.

But that did not dim the glamour of the gala premieres. We look back on 12 days and nights of glitz, as well as the occasional wardrobe malfunction, on the French Riviera.

The Cannes red carpet has seen a lot in 71 years. But few nights will live longer in the memory than the one when female stars led by jury president Cate Blanchett protested about the festival’s epic fail when it comes to women directors. All but 82 of the 1,700 films screened at Cannes over the years have been by men.

This was also possibly the best-dressed demo in history, with Kristen Stewart rocking a white Chanel trouser suit and many others following #MeToo protests elsewhere by dressing in black. This was a Cannes where women wore the trousers — once frowned upon by the fashion world — with Blanchett killing it with a black Givenchy jumpsuit for the premiere of “Cursed,” Queen Cate

No one does regal better than Blanchett who made her name playing British monarch Elizabeth I. Her intelligence and poise gave the festival a new sheen, from her speech at the protest to her insistence that the jury will choose the best film, not the one that best fits the political narrative.

Her wardrobe choices were equally impeccable at more than a dozen galas. Two black Armani numbers contrasted with an intricate avant-garde Iris van Herpen dress. And she brought the house down with a spectacular blue Mary Katrantzou ball gown that took six months to make. The dress also delivered the cutest protest on the red carpet about stereotyping they have suffered. Dressed in Balmain they lit up Cannes on the wettest night of the festival and were clapped up the carpet by jury member René Zellweger.

Childish Gambino: America’s new favorite Donald?

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood’s latest sensation Donald Glover, whose droll voice arches with the detached insouciance of a rockstar but the poise of a chess grandmaster, is trying to guess which surname Google auto-suggests when his first name is typed.

“You? Me? Glover? I mean, are we going in order? Trump, Duck and then Glover,” he asks.

Whisper it in Alabama, Kentucky or Oklahoma — shout it in his home state of Georgia — but the answer is Glover, not Trump, and entertainment’s latest Renaissance man looks pleasantly surprised.

An accomplished actor, Glover is better known to rap teenagers the world over as US hip hop phenomenon Childish Gambino. He has been a fan favorite pretty much from the moment the first “Solo” trailer dropped, and Lucasfilm has said that a standalone Lando movie might happen one day — but not any time soon. Glover — who divides his time between Atlanta, a couch and Lucasfilm has said that a standalone Lando movie might happen one day — but not any time soon. Glover — who divides his time between Atlanta, a couch and

It has been quite a week for the 34-year-old actor, writer, producer, director, rapper, singer, DJ and comedian as he sits down with AFP to discuss his role as a young Lando Calrissian in “Solo: A Star Wars Story.”

At the time of the interview, Glover’s latest graphic music video “This is America” had racked up 100 million views in a week on YouTube, with its powerful takes on gun violence, racism and police brutality.

Every entertainment publication worth its salt has contributed to the white noise on what the enigmatic Glover could possibly have meant and how to interpret his edgy imagery.

“I haven’t been on the internet since last Thursday,” the normally prolific Twitterer laughs, adding that he prefers just to enjoy the moment and leave the navel-gazing to others.

Galaxy’s sexiest gambler

As the awards roll in, Glover guards against reveling too much in past successes or daydreaming of possible future glory because a showbusiness career is “kind of like surfing.”

“You just take that wave and that pulse and you just let it carry you,” he says in his phlegmatic, not-quite-Southern drawl.

“Because it’s like freestyling in any art form: the second we start thinking, ‘Man, I’m really doing it, you’ll start to mess up.’”

Glover has tried his hand at sketch and stand-up comedy, been a writer on “30 Rock,” an actor on “Community” and head writer, occasional director and star of acclaimed FX comedy “Atlanta.”

Previously just a promising actor with small but impactful parts in “The Martian” and “Spider-Man: Homecoming,” Glover’s turn as the galaxy’s sexiest gambler in “Solo” has elevated him to global superstardom.

Next up is another huge, iconic movie role, as Simba in Jon Favreau’s live-action version of “The Lion King,” not to mention a fourth and final Childish Gambino album.

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There are two of the most photograped dresses — for very different reasons. The train of the Bollywood’s star’s peacock buttock-ishly Michael Cinco dress was the longest seen on the red carpet for many a year, while Rezai’s was a spectacularly modest shimmering tulle number channeling the most gothic of fairytales.

It’s a slight snag...

And you have to feel sorry for the super chic Japanese actress Erika Karata who had to be rescued not once but twice by her co-stars from “Asako 1 & 2” when she got her heel stuck in her dress on the famous Cannes red carpet. — AFP
Slovenia, a land with beekeeping in its genes

MOČNA (Slovenia) — It was a Slovene who wrote the world's first modern beekeeping manual. And Slovenia has gone on to lead the way in raising awareness of the plight of bees, as concern has grown over the health of the world's bee population in recent years.

Beekeeping is a cherished national tradition in Slovenia, with colourful beehives to be found dotted throughout fields, on the edge of forests, in gardens and on city rooftops.

The bee can be spotted as a symbol of industriousness above the doorways of banks and museums, and now even on a special two-euro coin issued by the country’s central bank to mark the first World Bee Day on Sunday, an initiative launched by Slovenia and backed by the United Nations.

“Once you start keeping bees, it’s like an addiction,” Bostjan Noc, head of the Slovenian Beekeepers’ Association tells AFP, adding that his family boasts several generations of apiarists.

“We have beekeeping written in our genes,” Noc says.

Farmer’s logic

Some 10,000 people are estimated to have their own beehives in Slovenia, a nation of just over two million people.

That’s 10 times more beekeepers per head than in Spain, Europe’s biggest producer of honey.

The Alpine nation’s love affair with the bee stretches back to the 18th century when Slovene Anton Jansa (1734-1773) wrote the first modern beekeeping manual.

At that time much of modern Slovenia made up the Habsburg province of Carniola, and Empress Maria Theresa appointed Jansa as one of the first teachers at the beekeeping school in the imperial capital, Vienna.

Anton Jansa laid the foundations of beekeeping that are still in force today, despite technological advances,” Noc says, lauding Jansa’s “clear farmer’s logic” that has stood the test of time.

And indeed, 20 May was chosen as the date for World Bee Day as it’s Jansa’s birthday. Jansa was also a painter and contributed to another aspect of Slovenian beekeeping heritage – the decoration of beehive panels with colourful works of folk art depicting an array of themes, from the religious to the everyday, such as the country woman dragging her errant husband back from a cafe.

“Beekeeping means rediscovering knowledge that our ancestors already knew but we’ve forgotten in so-called modern life," he says, opening a door to one of the hives with no protection to put a stranded bee back into the honeycomb.

Vogrinic’s interest lies not so much in the amount of honey produced but in the possibilities of “apitherapy” — the use of bees and bee products in alternative medicine.

As well as the chance to enjoy a honey massage, visitors are invited into a small wooden cabin to take in bee vibrations, apparently beneficial for lung conditions.

Entering the interior of the cabin, one is engulfed by a dense, soporific buzzing emanating from the more than 20 hives inlaid into one of the walls.

An armchair is on hand in a quiet corner — or you can even take a nap on a bunk on top of the hives.

'Grounds for optimism'

But even while coming up with new ways of celebrating its beekeeping heritage, Slovenia hasn’t been spared the trends that have led the UN to warn that 40 per cent of invertebrate pollinators — particularly bees and butterflies — risk global extinction.

Bees help pollinate 90 per cent of the world’s major crops, but in recent years many have been dying off from “colony collapse disorder”, a mysterious scourge blamed partly on pesticides. Bees are also threatened by pollution, diseases and changes to the climate that have reduced their numbers.

“We will have to reduce the use of pesticides. If we build roads, we have to replace the destroyed habitat,” Noc said, but added that the advent of World Bee Day showed that awareness of bees’ importance was increasing. “There are grounds for optimism,” Noc concluded. — AFP

Slovenia, a land with beekeeping in its genes

THE Yangon Alley Garden was developed in the back alley between the upper block of 29 street and Shwe Pyone Thar Street Pabedan Township, Yangon.

Officials led by Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe cut the ceremonial ribbon for the opening of the ceremony. The park will provide a resting place for the public. Many visit the park for recreation.

The flowers and small gardens provide many benefits to the public, said U Maung Maung Soe.

“Earlier, Yangon’s back alley was a dirty place. However, it has been turned into a beautiful recreational space and a game centre for children. We need to conserve this project,” he said.

The opening ceremony was followed with speeches from officials. The project is the second one in Pabedan Township, Yangon.

The first project was also launched in the same township between the middle block of 31st and 32nd Street, Pabedan Township, on 2 July 2017.

Altogether, some five projects were set up. — Aye Min Thu

Over 20,000 enter Myanmar from Tachilek in 9 days

OVER 20,000 tourists entered Myanmar from Tachilek at Myanmar-Thai border in eastern Myanmar from Tachilek at Myanmar under visa.

They included 134 foreign tourists — particularly bees and but-

"South Okkalapa Township Artists" is written above the drawing of three apples on a wall in the reclaimed back alley in Pabedan Township, Yangon. PHOTO: AYE MIN THU

"Modest and gentle"

Noc points out that the second most common honeybee in the world — the Carniolan honeybee — owes its name to the region.

“The Carniolan bee is very much like Slovenians used to be: modest and gentle,” 69-year-old beekeeper Karl Vogrinic told AFP in his garden, in the village of Mocna in northeastern Slovenia.

Vogrinic has more than 40 years of beekeeping under his belt and says it’s “a matter of love rather than anything else”.

“Beekeeping means rediscovering knowledge that our ancestors already knew but we’ve forgotten in so-called modern life,” he says, opening a door to one of the hives with no protection to put a stranded bee back into the honeycomb.

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Bees help pollinate 90 per cent of the world’s major crops, but in recent years many have been dying off from “colony collapse disorder”, a mysterious scourge blamed partly on pesticides. Bees are also threatened by pollution, diseases and changes to the climate that have reduced spring and autumn, the periods when bees are most active.

“We will have to reduce the use of pesticides. If we build roads, we have to replace the destroyed habitat,” Noc said, but added that the advent of World Bee Day showed that awareness of bees’ importance was increasing. “There are grounds for optimism,” Noc concluded. — AFP
Myanmar national women’s team play friendly in Taunggyi

IN preparation for the AFF Women’s Championship 2018, the national women’s football team of Myanmar trained and played friendly matches with the local boys’ teams in Shan United Home Stadium in Taunggyi.

The women’s team arrived in Taunggyi on 14 May and underwent physical exercises and football training on 15 and 16 May. On 17 May at 4 p.m., they played the first friendly match with the Ho Pong Youth football team at Shan United Home Stadium.

The Myanmar women put in a brilliant performance with a big win over the Ho Pong Youth team.

The friendly match was played in three sessions of 30 minutes each, and during the first session, the Ho Pong Youth team led 1-0; however, during the second and third sessions, the Myanmar women’s team beat the opponents 2-0 and 1-0.

In the second friendly football match, the Myanmar women’s team played a friendly with the Taunggyi new generation team at 7 p.m. on 19 May.

This match was also played in three sessions, and the Myanmar women’s team beat the Taunggyi new generation team with a score of 2-0.

“We are very happy to play with the Myanmar women’s football team. The team possesses a unique style of play with great tactics,” said Chan Nyein Aung, a young footballer from the Taunggyi new generation team.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Yangon United beat GFA in 2nd round of MNL season

YANGON United registered a win in their second round match of the MNL season by beating GFA 4-0 at Thwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

The big win for Yangon was made possible by the two goals of Kosuke and one goal each from Emmanuel and Sylla.

Yangon United used power play tactics and maintained a good positioning right from the kick-off. Yangon made the first goal at the 18th minute with Kosuke scoring after getting support from team stars Mg Mg Lwin and Emmanuel.

Yangon persisted with its counter attacks and managed to score the second goal through Emmanuel with an assist by Sylla. Kosuke scored again for his team just before the end of the first half, and Yangon managed to take a 3-0 lead.

Both the teams implemented some tactical changes in the second half. Yangon United, however, did not relent and scored the fourth goal through Sylla, who made a tricky pass to beat the defenders with Min Kyaw Khant assisting from the right side near the goal area. At the final whistle, Yangon United won 4-0 over GFA.

Yangon United is leading the Taunggyi new generation team.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Stevenson draws with Jack to keep light-heavyweight crown

MONTREAL — Haitian-born Canadian Adonis Stevenson retained his World Boxing Council light-heavyweight title on Saturday after fighting Sweden’s Badou Jack to a majority draw in which no judge scored him a winner.

Stevenson, a 48-year-old southpaw, kept the title after two judges scored the bout 114-114 and the third saw Jack as a 115-113 winner in the title bout at Toronto. In a fight nobody lost, both fighters saw themselves as winners. “I thought I definitely won the fight,” Jack said. “No judge had him winning.” Stevenson’s record went to 29-1-1 while Jack settled for his third career draw against 22 wins and a lone defeat.

“I feel I win the fight,” Stevenson said. “I hurt him in the body. He got slowed down. I keep pressure on him. He moved slick but I touched him more all the time. I think I won this fight.”

All three judges awarded Jack the 12th round to lift him into the draw, which could set the stage for a title rematch. “I feel I win this fight but Badou is a good fighter, two-time world champion,” Stevenson said. “I can give him a rematch if he needs one.”—AFP ■