Disaster, emergency management plan prepared for 1,000 households in Mandalay

Ministry, CBM, Nay Pyi Taw Council hold press conference on 2nd one-year performance

Local News

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National

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Low pressure area to intensify into depression

The LOW pressure area over the East Central Bay of Bengal is expected to intensify into a depression during next 18 hrs, according to the observation at 6.30 pm yesterday by the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

Further, as per local and foreign weathermen, the weather system is likely to move in north-northeasterly direction and cross near Kyaukpyu in central part of Rakhine coast.

Monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea, South Bay and East Central Bay of Bengal and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Tanintharyi regions, Chin State and widespread in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavy rainfall in Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Rakhine State, isolated heavy falls in Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Region and Kayin and Mon states. Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8 - 14) feet in off and along Myanmar Coasts. Monsoon entered the delta area yesterday and is advancing to the Central Myanmar areas today.—GNLM

Low pressure area to intensify into depression

The 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw held its fifth meeting for the eight regular session, inviting lawmakers to discuss nomination for Union Minister for Planning and Finance, putting on record the assignment of state minister, appointing members to the Joint Public Account Committee, putting on record the 2017 annual report of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, a discussion by lawmakers on borrowing loan from the Central Bank of Myanmar to cover the fiscal deficit from April to September and explanation about use of foreign loans by ministries.

President nominates U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Aung Than submitted to the Hluttaw the nomination of U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance, sent by the President.

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced the appointment of U Soe Htet as Chin State Development Affairs, Electricity and Industry Minister sent by the President.

The bill amending the Early Childhood Development Law, over which the two Hluttaws were in disagreement, was sought approval paragraph by paragraph. The approval of the Hluttaw was also obtained for the appointment of Brig-Gen Ye Naing Myo to replace Col. Ne Win as Tatmadaw representative member of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Public Account Committee.

The Hluttaw also announced the putting on record of the discussion of the Hluttaw representatives on the 2017 annual report of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and the explanation provided by commission chairman U Win Mra, in response to the Hluttaw representatives’ discussion.

Following this, a report on the findings and comments of the Joint Bill Committee on the bill amending the National Budget Law sent by the Union Government was read by committee member U Aung Kyi Nyunt, and an announcement was made to the Hluttaw representatives to enroll their names if they want to discuss the report.

Lawmakers discuss fiscal deficit for interim period, foreign loans
Lawmakers discuss fiscal deficit for interim period, foreign loans

FROM PAGE-1

MPs discuss fiscal deficit for six-month interim period

Lawmakers discussed the matter of borrowing Ks641.029 billion loan from the Central Bank of Myanmar to cover the fiscal deficit for the six-month interim period from April to September, sent by the President.

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Bo Gyi of Chaung constituency, U Nay Kyaw of Dagon Myothit (East) constituency, U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic) of Yangon Region constituency, and U U Khin Kyaw of Hlaingthwe constituency took part in the discussion, Daw Cho Cho discussed about the government’s plan to cover the 80 per cent of the deficit with treasury bonds and the remaining 20 per cent with loan from the CBM.

Later, the status of the project-wise utilisation of foreign loans, approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw up to 31 March 2017, was explained by members of union level organisation.

Ministry of Health and Sports explains foreign loans

Further, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe explained about obtaining US$ 100 million from the World Bank and US$ 12 million from ADB, of which Ks 68 billion has been used for health services.

Six foreign loans by Ministry of Planning and Finance

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win said that the six foreign loan projects conducted by the ministry included the Myanmar Modernization of Public Finance Management Project (MMPFM Project), SME (small and medium enterprise) development project phase 1, the Natural disaster rehabilitation project, Myanmar Financial Sector Development project, the Agriculture and Rural Development Two Step Loan project and the Development Policy Loan. The Yangon City Development Committee is conducting two water distribution development projects and Mandalay City Development Committee is operating the Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project (Asian Development Bank – ADB) and Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project (Francaise de Developement – AFD).

Ministry of Construction explains spending foreign loans on infrastructure projects

Similarly, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said that the Department of Roads is conducting seven projects with foreign loans. Although the first stage loan of US$ 372.711 million from China EXIM Bank loan of Yuan 30 billion was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the loan contract was not signed, since an agreement was not reached on the loan. The Maubin-Kyai-Klet-Pyapon road, built with a US$ 80 million ADB loan, was 92 per cent completed, while the Ein-Du-Kawkarek road, constructed with a US$ 120 million ADB loan, was 19 per cent completed. The upgrade of the Thandwe-Gwa road, financed with a US$105 million World Bank loan was also underway, said the Union Minister.

The Department of Bridges is overseeing the Gyaing Kawkarek Bridge, Gyaing (Zarthabyin) Bridge and Attaran Bridge projects, with a 33,869 million Japanese Yen loan. Bago Bridge (Thainyin bridge 3) will be built with 31,061 million Japanese Yen, while an agreement for the US$ 137.833 million Korea-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (Dala) project was signed, and is being reviewed by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Planning and Finance and Yangon Region government, as per instructions from the President’s office.

Roads and bridges maintenance and upgrading works will be conducted on 35 roads, totaling 240 km in length, and 29 bridges in 40 townships of five states and regions financed by World Bank loan of US$ 70 million, said the Union Minister. The 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw eighth regular session sixth day meeting will be held on 31 May. — Myo Myint, Aung Ye Thwin/MNA ■

U Soe Win nominated as new Union Minister for Planning and Finance

U SOE WIN, Country Managing Partner for Deloitte Touche Myanmar Vigour Advisory Co Ltd, will likely be the country’s next Union Minister for Planning and Finance. The President submitted a proposal to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw yesterday to appoint U Soe Win in the vacant post of the Union Minister for Planning and Finance. The President’s Office released a statement on 25 May, allowing Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Kyaw Win to resign of his own volition.

Following his resignation, the President nominated U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance in the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw. The appointment of U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance will be discussed in upcoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear civil cases

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Supreme Court judges U Mya Thein and U Khin Maung Kyi of the Special Appellate Bench, convened court at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning and passed judgment on five (Certiiorari) civil cases, and heard five other (Certiiorari) civil cases. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar computer associations celebrate 20th anniversary

THE 20th anniversary of the Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF), Myanmar Computer Professionals Association (MCFA), Myanmar Computer Industry Association (MCIA) and Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association (MCEA) was held at MICT (Myanmar Information & Communication Technology) Park in Hlin Township, Yangon yesterday morning. The event was attended by Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, Deputy Minister U Tha Oo, chairpersons of the Myanmar computer associations, professors, teachers, students and invited guests.

At the event, MCF President U Khun Oo delivered the opening speech, while Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung spoke of the importance of ICT in the country’s economic development, requirement of the ICT associations country wide to put in the best efforts toward ICT sector development, working to ensure that the country does not fall behind in the mobile industry, while reaching a level of success within 20 years. Also, speakers urged computer associations, professionals and enthusiasts to work together to ensure the best for ICT development. Following this, MCF Patron U Thein Oo, U Tin Win Aung of MCIA, retired Computer University Professor Dr. Kyaw Thein, MCF patron U Thaung Tin, MCF President U Khun Oo, MCF chairman U Thaung Su Nyein, MCIA chairman U Tin Aung Khaing and MCF Secretary General U Zaw Min Oo discussed the 20th anniversary of the Myanmar computer associations. — Myanmar News Agency ■
Our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector; which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. In the international arena, we are facing pressure, criticisms and misunderstandings. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

That is why in the coming year 1380, our Union Government has decided to keep in high regard the need for “collective strength” to overcome our country’s challenges.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

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**Union Attorney-General receives UNSG Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict**

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba and party, at the Union Attorney-General Office meeting hall yesterday morning.

During their meeting, a discussion was held regarding the children’s rights bill, protecting the rights of children affected by armed conflict, and taking effective action against violators of children’s rights. Myanmar has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and cooperation between the UN and Myanmar on children’s rights.

Along with the Union Attorney-General, those present included Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin and Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw Naing. — Myanmar News Agency

**Deputy ministers, Japanese Ambassador visit Maungtaw**

A DELEGATION led by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, U Soe Aung, and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama, along with Deputy Minister for Construction U Soe Aung, and Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, U Soe Aung, and Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw Naing, went by a helicopter from Sittway to the Taung Pyo Letwe Town in Maungtaw District.

The deputy ministers and Japanese Ambassador then traveled to the Myanmar-Bangladesh border; where they were welcomed by Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut. U Ye Htut explained about houses being built there and the peaceful coexistence of people from different communities.

The Japanese Ambassador explained that he was visiting so he might learn about the true situation in Maungtaw District, and encouraged people to tell him their true stories concerning violent attacks. The local residents spoke about their immediate needs and the Ambassador continued asking questions.

The group then toured the construction site and later traveled to Pan Taw Pyin village to meet with Muslim residents.

The group then toured the construction site and later traveled to Hla Pho Khaung transit centre by helicopter, where they were welcomed by Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin. Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and project engineer U Tin Soe also explained about the transit centre’s current and future construction plans.

The group then traveled to Hla Pho Khaung transit centre via helicopter, where they were welcomed by Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin. Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and project engineer U Tin Soe also explained about the transit centre’s current and future construction plans.

The Ambassador then met with those who had returned voluntarily and asked about the living conditions in the neighboring country, Myanmar’s repatriation process, the transit centre’s security and healthcare services.

The party led by deputy ministers and the Ambassador returned to Sittway in the evening. —Myanmar News Agency
Disaster, emergency management plan prepared for 1,000 households in Mandalay

THE HIV infection rate was the highest in Kachin State, which is one of the five states and regions with a high HIV/AIDS incidence in Myanmar, according to Kachin State’s National HIV/AIDS programme under the Public Health Department.

“The HIV infection is prevalent among people who use injecting drugs and have multiple sex partners. Therefore, we are preparing a prevention and treatment plan this year,” said Dr. Tun Nyunt Oo, programme manager of the National HIV/AIDS programme. “Among the five states and regions in Myanmar, the infection rate is highest in Kachin State. We will conduct effective prevention and protection activities in Kachin State by using more manpower and money,” he added.

In Kachin State, most of the young people who are drug addicts are at elevated risk of contracting HIV. The Yangon, Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Northern Shan State are the four areas where most of Myanmar’s HIV patients are found. More than 80,000 people have contracted HIV by injecting drugs across the country. Some 26 per cent of the HIV patients are found in Kachin State. According to official statistics, the disease incidence rate has increased in Kachin State, and the number of HIV patients has not significantly declined, according to the department.

Myanmar has one of the highest HIV infection rates in Asia. The HIV virus was found in Myanmar in 1988. The HIV virus can be transmitted from one person to another through contaminated blood, sex and through a mother to her baby.—U Min Min Oo ■

Six passengers injured in Myawady bus accident

Six people were injured after a passenger bus skidded out of control and hit a cliff on the Yangon-Myawady Road in Myawady Township in Kayin State yesterday morning.

The accident occurred when a passenger bus hydroplaned and overturned due to rainwater. With 17 passengers aboard, the Myawady-bound vehicle was driven by Han Thu Aung, 34 years of age. Approximately six passengers—four men and two women—were injured in the incident.

Of them, one passenger identified as Min Min Soe was seriously injured and was receiving medical treatment at a public hospital in Myawady.

The driver has been charged under reckless driving by local police force, according to a source from the Information and Public Relations Department.—MDN ■
Saudia Arabia to share import rules and regulations with local fishery businessmen

By May Thet Hnin

INSTRUCTION teams from Saudia Arabia will come to Myanmar to assist in resuming fishery exports, after Saudia Arabia imposed an embargo on seafood imports last month.

Rules and regulations that fishery processing factories need to abide by will be distributed to 24 cold storage factories from which seafood are exported to Saudia Arabia. The inspection teams note that those factories that adhere to their regulations will be listed for import to Saudia Arabia, while those that fail to follow them will be delisted, said U Tun Win Myint, the director of Yangon Region Fishery Department.

Additionally, some fish farming lakes will be inspected, in a bid to ensure long term export opportunities with Saudia Arabia. They are also preparing to put in place Good Aquaculture Practices in fish farming.

After Myanma learned of the presence of white tail disease found in Myanmar’s freshwater prawn to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) in early 2017, Saudia Arabia reportedly placed embargoes on fishery products. This disease is not currently found in prawns.

Regarding the trade embargo problem, the two countries conducted a series of negotiations and Saudia Arabia chose to conduct an inspection tour of Myanma.

Over 40 per cent of Myanma’s rohu and 30 per cent of farmed fish are exported to Saudia Arabia. “The breeders will face difficulties and production will decline if they lose this market. This might also harm domestic markets”, said U Win Kyaing, the secretary of Myanma Fishery Federation.

That suspension of fish imports affected not just Myanma, but also Viet Nam, Bangladesh and India.

At present, Myanma mainly exports fishery products to China. Although European Union countries and the United States are interested in buying Myanma’s fishery products, they are screening them to determine whether they are in compliance with their import criteria. Myanma has more than 480,000 acres of fish and prawn farming lakes, with US$717.7 million in revenue earned from Myanma’s fishery exports during the last fiscal year. Myanma’s seafood export worth $500 million in 2015-16 FY.

UMFCCI to set up SME unit to resolve difficulties of SME entrepreneurs

A SMALL and medium enterprise (SME) unit will be set up by the Republic of the Union of Myanma Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) to tackle the difficulties faced by SME businessmen, said U Zaw Min Win, president of UMFCCI, during the B4B Insights Forum held on 26th May.

“SME businessmen are faced with difficulties in accessing bank loans. Some of them are not used to preparing a business plan or proposal and need help. Therefore, we came up with the idea to establish an SME unit to deal with their difficulties and link them with business experts,” said U Zaw Min Win. This SME unit is slated to be set up in early June to facilitate SME businessmen.

This B4B Insights Forum aimed to overcome the businessnessmen’s difficulties, develop public-private partnership and enhance domestic enterprises.

During the two-day forum, representatives and entrepreneurs from private sectors discussed Myanma’s current economic conditions and panel discussions are conducted on specific topics such as banking and finance, retail, construction, services, industry, agribusiness, trading and SME entrepreneurship. The experts and businessmen exchanged ideas and discuss the challenges faced and the economic progress. Some facts will be submitted to the executive and legislative, said U Wai Phyo, vice president of UMFCCI.

—Nyein Nyein

Myanmar’s external trade tops $4.3bn

Myanmar’s external trade exceeded US$4.321 billion in the current transitional fiscal year, with a trade deficit of more than $1 billion, according to the commerce ministry’s weekly report issued on 25 May.

From 1 April to 18 May this year, the value of foreign trade rose $709 million, compared to the same period last year. Imports were valued at $2.675 billion, while exports were worth $1.965 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of $1.03 billion, an increase by more than $290 million compared with the same period last year.

Myanmar conducts overseas trade with international trade partners mainly through sea ports. The value of the nation’s current trade included more than $3.308 billion via non-border trade and more than $1.012 billion through border trade.

According to the ministry’s yearly report, the country’s trade deficit was $3.973 billion in the last financial year. The ministry’s statistics showed that the country had a trade deficit of more than $91 million in the 2012-2013 FY. The trade deficit increased to $2.5 billion in the 2013-2014 FY. It continued to rise to $4.1 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, $5.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY and $5.5 billion in the 2016-2017 FY.

The country chiefly imports capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer products, and exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals and forest products. Trade authorities are seeking to implement the best available solutions, in collaboration with private businesspersons, to reduce the trade gap.

—Swe Nyein

Border trade value rises $149 million this fiscal year

THE value of border trade reached US$1.012 billion between 1 April and 18 May this fiscal year, recording an increase of $149 million compared with the same period last FY, according to figures released by the commerce ministry.

The total border trade value, as of 18 May this FY, included $642 million in exports and $371 million in imports. Compared with the last FY, the export earnings went up by more than $125 million, while the import value increased by $23 million. This time last year, the border trade was valued at $864 million.

Myanmar conducts border trade with China through the Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinswehaw and Kengtung border points. The country carries out border trade with Thailand through the Takkie, Myawady, Kawthoun, Myeik, Hteejee, Mawtawung and Maese border gates.

The cross-border trade camps between Myanmar and Bangladesh are Sittway and Maungdaw, whereas the country trades directly with India via the Tamu and Reeder border gates.

Among all the gates, the Muse border gate sees the largest volume and value of border trade, with an estimated value of more than $660 million this FY, followed by Myawady with $112 million and Kanpikete with $53 million.

The border trade value at the Lwejel, Chinswehaw, Hteejee, Maese and Reeder stations decreased this FY.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, as well as forest products, minerals, fishery products and manufactured goods, among other things, while capital goods, raw industrial materials and consumer products are imported into the country.

—GNLM
Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Qatar Ambassador

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received H.E. Mr. Hassan Bin Mohamed Rafei Al-Emadi, Qatar Ambassador to Myanmar, who is concluding his tour of duty, at the Bayintnaung guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon. During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters relating to increasing bilateral relations, and the assistance of Qatar to Myanmar’s peace and development sector. —Myanmar News Agency

Twenty nine dolphins from Upper Myanmar dead during thirteen years

AS many as 29 dolphins were dead at the Mandalay-Bhamo Dolphin Conservation Area in thirteen years according to U Maung Maung Lay, headman of the villages from the community based tourism at Dolphin Conservation Area. U Maung Maung started dolphin conservation activities with 72 dolphins handed over by his parents in 1984.

A total of 29 dolphins died between May 2005 and May 2018, of them 21 died of electric shock.

“My parents did make a list of dolphins' death but a record made since 2005 showed that the number of dead dolphins 29. Out of them, I experienced 21 dead dolphins. Most died of electric shock, others died due to trapping in a net and aging” said U Maung Maung Lay.

Dolphin conservation was carried out in cooperation with Myanmar Wild Birds Conservation Group starting from 2014. In 2017, community based tourism was introduced and tradition of fish harvesting with the help of dolphins and fishermen is shown to foreign visitors.

Vice Senior General Soe Win receives UNSG Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

DEPUTY Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win received the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba, and party yesterday afternoon at Bayintnaung Guest House in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, they discussed matters related to preventing children from participating in armed conflicts, final works to be conducted to conclude the Plan of Action in cooperation with UNCTFM (United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting) to be delisted from countries using child soldiers, works conducted according to the action plan after signing the agreement on the Plan of Action, Tatmadaw conducting training and information works to prevent the recurrence of using child soldiers, and works conducted by the government and Hluttaw representatives to ensure the speedy enactment of the Children’s Rights Law. —MNA

First day of tenth regular session of Shan State Hluttaw

DURING the Shan State Hluttaw session held yesterday, six Tatmadaw MPs took the oath of office in the presence of the speaker and Shan State Chief Minister, then delivered speeches to the assembly.

Also, twelve MPs asked 17 questions which were answered by the respective state ministers. State Minister for Finance U Sai Shen Tip Lone submitted the Shan State’s budget for FY 2018-2019 and the speaker announced that MPs interested in discussing the budget may sign up for the discussion on 30 May.

U Aung Thu of Lashio constituency (2) submitted a condolence motion for the 27 people injured and others who died during the armed attacks at the border security gate and inside Muse on 12 May. The motion was then put on record. —District IPRD
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population releases performance in April

UNDER the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, labour-related matters were conducted by the Department of Labour, Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department, Labour Relations Department and Social Security Board. During the month of April, they conducted the following labour-related matters.

The Department of Labour signed a total of 19,494 labour employment agreements for 7,453 men and 12,041 women. Township-level dispute settling teams were formed to settle employee/employer disputes and in April 2018, 94 cases were accepted, of which 21 cases were settled amicably, 21 cases were transferred to state/region-level dispute settling teams and 52 were wage/salary cases and 603 workers were provided with Ks160,885,413.

The Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department was able to provide more than Ks2,200 million in benefits to workers for working on public holidays, cash entitlement in lieu of earned leave, ensuring the earning of leftover wages, and obtaining cash benefits during casual, medical and maternity leaves. Inspection officials from the department also conducted occupational/worksite safety and health talks with employers and employees from 401 factories and work sites and 257 talks on general knowledge about legal matters.

The arbitration council of the Labour Relations Department resolved 7 arbitration cases and provided more than Ks11 million in benefits to 313 workers.

The Social Security Board ensured the rights of workers in social and medical matters and helped towards providing Ks600 million in social matters and more than Ks57 million as reimbursements for medical treatments. For medical treatments, a total of 7,161 workers (6,580 out-patients and 581 in-patients) were treated in three workers’ hospitals, while 59,117 workers were treated in 151 social security clinics. Doctors from the three workers’ hospitals conducted five field trips to treat 1,480 workers, while doctors from social security clinics conducted 82 field trips and treated 1,618 workers, it is learnt. — Myanmar News Agency
Alarm bells ring over corruption

Widespread corruption in a country could result in poverty. Anti-corruption is the duty of every citizen. Our citizens are also obliged not to neglect or forgive the act of taking bribes.

The tradition of religious examination festival in nayone

The tradition of religious examination festival in Nayone is Myanmar’s largest and most popular event. It is held at intervals of one or two years and attracts thousands of visitors from around the country.

The examination festival is held in honor of the Buddha’s enlightenment and is believed to bring good luck and prosperity to those who participate. The festival includes a variety of activities, such as religious ceremonies, processions, and performances.

The festival is also an important opportunity for young people to demonstrate their knowledge and dedication to the Buddhist faith. Students from local schools and universities take part in the examination, which tests their understanding of Buddhist teachings and their ability to recite the sacred texts.

The festival is a celebration of the rich cultural heritage of Myanmar and a reminder of the importance of education and religious devotion.

The global new light of myanmar

29 May 2018

The Global New Light of Myanmar

OPINION NATIONAL

M YANMAR people are literate since the beginning of their civilization. They have had writing materials such as metallic styli, slate pens, and brushes which are written on hard paper like stone slabs, metal plates to write on slate board and to harass with ink on silk when the writing was done by the Paralaks. They already reached the alphabetic stage of writing. As to whether they passed through the pictorial stage is not a question since the alphabetic stage is still unknown which calls for serious research. Their alphabets number is 33, including vowels and consonants. Early Roman Catholic missionaries were quite amazed to find Myanmar advances in writing and writing materials. “Alphabetica Brinamica” was a good work on Myanmar writing, the origin of which the writer had seen in the museum of the Holy City Valaram in Rome when he hitch hiked from Geneva in Italy to 1970.

Myanmar people are alphabetically related to Sanskrit. Pali and Sanskrit are one script and one with Chinese writing, though China, like India, is also neighbour. This is pertinent to the Buddhist which we received in the same year Gotuma Buddha became enlightened in Maha Sakya’s year (Buddhist Era 1) of the fourth arrivals of Buddhism to Myanmar; the fourth arrival from Sri Lanka was the only written form of Buddhism became the fourth Buddhist Council held in Sri Lanka produced the edited and corrected Buddhism and Buddhism’s Teachings (Dhamma) in written form in Magula Language. Later Non monastic monk Asho Buddha Goen has brought home a copy and all commentaries and sub-commentaries from Maha Vihara where he studied the whole of the learning which was dawning in the Sin of Kalayani (Ordination Hall on the bank of Kalayani River).

Written Dhama known as Tipitaka (literally Three Basket) Books (Babas) were multiplied and distributed to monastic centres across the Kingdom. Later King Anawarahta of Bagan brought to his capital all Tipitakas, literatures and missionary works to his Capital.

Sd/ Win Myint

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Office of the President

Order 27/2018

14th Waxing of Nayon, 1380 ME

28 May, 2018

Appointment of Deputy Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 234 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 2(7) of the Union Government Law on Appointment/Transfer of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) it has been appointed as the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs.

Sd/ Win Myint

President

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Defence Ministry, CBM, Nay Pyi Taw Council hold press conference on 2nd one-year performance

A press conference related to the second one-year performance of the teachers of the President of Myanmar and Nay Pyi Taw Council is held in Office No.7, Ministry of Information building, Nay Pyi Taw, at 1 p.m. on 29 May.

M ORE and MORE freedom from corruption is the sine qua non for building a clean government and for good governance; and it is also connected with social hygiene and the image of our country. Fighting corruption is one of the priorities of the incumbent government. As the Blattf鹩 ap- proved the four bills on amending the Anti-Corruption Law, the Anti-Corruption Commission would step up its efforts to increase the priority of the incumbent government. As the Hluttaw ap-}
Investigations underway to apprehend elephant poachers

POLICE forces from Okkan, Taikkyi Township in Yangon Region, captured three out of five suspected elephant poachers on 27 May. Maung Kyaw alias Kyar Lone, 45, from Hmawbi Township, Tun Naing, 45; and Tun Naing’s brother Maung Myint, 42, from Mindon Town, were apprehended for their involvement in elephant poaching and evading law enforcement, and specifically for violation of Section 37 (a) of the Protection of Wildlife and Conservation of Natural Areas Law.

Upon interrogation, police discovered that the three arrested men had traveled with two other suspects, Kyaw Kyaw, 30, and Maung Nge, 40, with four homemade guns to forest reserve No. 76 in Okkan area on January 2017 to hunt wild elephants. There, they killed a female elephant and sold forty viss of the elephant’s parts to Aung Aung (suspected) in Yangon. The group killed two more elephants in October 2017 and March 2018 and reportedly sold the elephants’ parts to Aung Aung again. Authorities have formed a joint force with officials in areas where high elephant poaching cases were reported to prevent the illegal killing of the animals.—MNA

Tourists visit Myanmar via Tachilek check point

INTERNATIONAL tourists are continuously entering and exiting Myanmar through international gateways and cross-border gateways, in order to visit Myanmar’s natural landscapes, scenery, tourist attractions, and observe various traditions, customs and lifestyle of local residents.

Of note, there is now a culture-based tourism in which tourists can observe the traditions and cultures of ethnic people.

There were 15,279 visitors, including those from Thailand and third country visitors, who entered through the Tachilek border gate on day-return trips from 18 May to 24 May 2018. There were also 105 tourists who visited Mongphyat and Kengtung, and 113 tourists who visited with visas from 18 May to 24 May 2018.

Tourists who travelled on day-return trips visited Tarlot to 24 May 2018.

Tourists who travelled on day-return trips visited Tarlot to 24 May 2018.

Two people injured in bus accident in Yangon

TWO people were injured in a YBS-85 accident near Simmalike shipyard bus stop on Bayintnaung Road in Kamayut Township in Yangon at 9.30 a.m. on 27 May, according to a police report.

The YBS-85 passenger bus with number plate-YN 4N-8797 was speeding towards Tachileuang village of Dagon Ayar Township when it veered out of control and hit a man working along the roadside platform and an electric pole.

Ma Khin Kyu Kyu, 37, a passenger from Kyuchaung Village in Hlantabin Township, sustained injuries to her head, while Ko Aung Myo Khaing, 29, from the shipyard housing, broke his right calf.

Ward Administrator U Naing Win and his delegation, and officials from the Sanchaung Fire Services Department and social organisation rushed to the scene to help take the injured persons to the hospital nearby.

The Kamayut Township police have filed a case of hit-and-run and recklessness against the driver. Collaborative efforts are being made by the traffic police to arrest the driver.—Khin Aung Hlaing (Nyaunglebin)

2018 matriculation exam results on 2 June

RESULTS of the 2018 matriculation examination will be announced at 6 a.m. on Saturday, 2 June, according to the Department of the Myanmar Board of Examinations.

The results will be simultaneously announced at all township examination centers. Arrangements will also be made to view the examination results on the website of the Department of Myanmar Board of Examinations at www.myanmarexam.org starting at 6 a.m. on Saturday, 2 June.

—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar delegation attending bridge technology conference in China

A MYANMAR delegation led by Deputy Minister for Construction (retired) U Tint Swe left by air from Yangon International Airport on 26 May to attend the bridge technology conference in China that will be held from 26 May to 3 June.

The delegation was seen off at the airport by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin and Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang.

At the reunion of Chinese and Myanmar engineers who constructed the Yangon-Thanlyin Bridge (1) that was opened in 1993, a bridge technology conference will be held and a total of 20 Myanmar representatives are attending the conference, it is learnt.—MNA

Nearly 160,000 acres of sugar cane to be planted in Sagaing Region

THE Regional Agricultural Department has targeted to cultivate some 159,930 acres of sugar cane in six townships of Sagaing Region from April to September 2018.

About 159,930 acres of sugar cane will be planted in Monywa, Shwebo, Kanbalu, Katha, Kalay and Mawlaik districts in Sagaing Region. Also, according to the Sagaing Agricultural Department plan, the department will plant 51 acres of sugar cane in Monywa, 17,649 acres in Shwebo, 20,566 acres in Kanbalu, 2 acres in Kalay and 12 acres in Mawlaik district. In fiscal 2017-2018, The Sagaing Agricultural Department targeted some 182,000 acres of sugar cane in Monywa, Shwebo, Kanbalu, Katha, Kalay and Mawlaik districts, though the department harvested only 159,930 acres of sugar cane.

—Win Oo (Zayyartino)
Oil prices dive but Trump-Kim hopes boost Asian equity markets

HONG KONG — Oil prices extended losses in Asia on Monday after Saudi Arabia and Russia signaled they could raise output, but indications that Donald Trump’s summit with Kim Jong Un would be back on supported equity markets. Both main contracts tanked on Friday after Saudi oil minister Khalid al-Falih said his country could open the taps wider in the second half of the year to insure against any supply shocks.

His Russian counterpart Alexander Novak said they had talked about a two-year-old deal capping production, adding that OPEC and other members of the pact would discuss raising limits next month. The comments come as supply worries increase, with major producer Venezuela hit by economic uncertainty, Iran facing painful export sanctions and demand seen picking up.

On Friday Brent sank three percent and WTI fell four percent, and the two contracts fell more than one percent further in Asia.

The losses come after crude earlier this month hit levels not seen since November 2014, and led to sharp selling in Asian energy firms. Sydney-listed Woodside Petroleum ended 3.5 percent down and Impex dived 2.6 percent in Tokyo.

CNOOC lost 0.9 percent in Hong Kong, but Sinopec rebounded in the afternoon and PetroChina surged more than six percent, boosted by news that Chinese authorities had given firms freedom to raise and lower gas prices based on supply and demand. PetroChina is the country’s biggest gas supplier.

Broader markets were mostly up on renewed hopes for the Trump-Kim summit after the US president appeared Friday to do a U-turn 24 hours after cancelling the meeting.

Euro strengthens

Markets fell in Asia Friday after Trump said he had pulled out of the 12 June gathering, citing “open hostility” from Pyongyang. However, a flurry of diplomacy — led by South Korea, whose President Moon Jae-in met Kim on Saturday — has put it back on track. And on Sunday Trump tweeted that a US team “has arrived in North Korea to make arrangements for the summit”.

He added: “I truly believe North Korea has brilliant potential and will be a great economic and financial Nation one day. Kim Jong Un agrees with me on this. It will happen!” Tokyo finished 0.1 percent higher, Hong Kong added 0.7 percent and Singapore put on 0.4 percent, while Seoul rallied 0.7 percent. Wellington, Jakarta and Taipei were also up but Sydney slipped 0.5 percent and Shanghai closed 0.2 percent off.

On currency markets, the euro edged up despite political uncertainty in Italy, with investors welcoming news that President Sergio Mattarella had vetoed the nomination of fiscus eurocratic Paolo Savona as economy minister.

While the decision sparked the resignation of prime minister-elect Giuseppe Conte and could lead to fresh elections, it was seen as a positive move for the euro.

However, Ray Attrill, head of foreign-exchange strategy at National Australia Bank in Sydney, said: “We may now be in for an extended period of heightened uncertainty ahead of fresh elections — assuming that’s where we’re headed. “For now it’s more relief that Italy will not — for now at least — have an avowed eurocratic finance minister.”

The single currency’s gains are also being limited by the prospect of upheaval in Spain, where Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy could face a no-confidence vote after his party was found guilty of benefiting from illegal funds in a massive graft trial.

In early European trade Paris rose 0.5 percent and Frankfurt was up 0.6 percent, while Milan rose 1.8 percent as traders welcomed Mattarella’s decision.

- Key figures around 0810 GMT
  - Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 0.1 percent at 22,481.09 (close)
  - Hong Kong - Hang Seng: UP 0.7 percent at 30,792.26 (close)
  - Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.2 percent at 3,135.08 (close)
  - London - FTSE 100: Closed
  - Pound/dollar: UP at $1.1711 from $1.1661 at 2100 GMT on Friday
  - Dollar/yen: DOWN at 109.45 yen from 109.53 yen
  - Oil - West Texas Intermediate: DOWN $0.28 at $66.00 per barrel
  - Brent North Sea: DOWN 91 cents at $75.53
  - New York - Dow: DOWN 0.2 percent at 24,753.09 (close) —AFP

Nigeria told to end security ‘slush funds’

LAGOS — Campaigners on Monday urged Nigeria to stop handing out millions of dollars to tackle insurgency in the northeast to a resurgence of violence in a long-running dispute over land and resources in central states.

At the same time troops have been deployed to curb rising crime from cattle rustling and kidnapping gangs in the north, as well as to stop attacks on oil and gas infrastructure in the south.

Nigeria’s defence budget is estimated to be some $1.2 billion (1.03 billion euros) this year but Transparency International (TI) estimated more than $670 million extra is handed out annually without proper oversight. Known as “security votes,” the funds comprise cash payments made to designated federal, state and local government officials for discretionary spending.—AFP

Nigeria is facing widespread unrest, from Boko Haram’s Islamist insurgency in the northeast to a resurgence of violence in a long-running dispute over land and resources in central states. PHOTO: AFP

Israeli army raids West Bank Palestinian camp after soldier death

RAMALLAH — The Israeli army raided a Palestinian refugee camp in the occupied West Bank on Monday, AFP journalists said, in an apparent hunt for suspects in the killing of a soldier.

Dozens of Israeli troops entered the Amari Refugee Camp in Ramallah in the early hours of Monday, closing off all the entrances, AFP journalists said.

At least 13 Palestinians were lightly or moderately injured during the raid as clashes broke out, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, with soldiers firing tear gas and bullets.

Residents said a number of Palestinians were arrested, though there was no immediate confirmation or statement from the army.

Israeli forces later withdrew from the camp.

It came days after an Israeli soldier was killed during a raid inside the camp.

Sergeant Ronen Lubarsky, 20, of the Duvdevan special forces unit, was struck on the head by a stone block thrown during an arrest raid Thursday and died early Saturday.

Israeli media said the block was a granite slab dropped from a third-floor window.

Those responsible were not arrested at the time.

Amari is located inside Ramallah, seat of the Palestinian Authority; in an area theoretically under the full control of the Palestinian government.

Israeli forces regularly carry out night raids in Palestinian- governed parts of the West Bank to arrest suspects they accuse of militant activities against Israel.

Amari, home to around 6,000 Palestinians according to the United Nations, is a regular flashpoint where Israeli raids have sparked fierce clashes in the past.—AFP

20 killed in suspected jihadist attack in Mali

BAMAKO (Mali) — Around 20 people including civilians were killed in a suspected jihadist attack in northeastern Mali near the border with Niger, sources said.

The deaths came after more than 100 people including many civilians, particularly from the Fulani and Touareg communities, died in recent months as a result of attacks by rival armed groups in the region.

A local official in the town of Talataye — where Saturday’s attack took place — said late Sunday that the assailants arrived in three vehicles and on a motorcycle.

Khalil Toure, a teacher, added: “They opened fire on a group of people resting under a tree, killing five people on the spot and wounding two.”

Jihadists have also ramped up their activities in central Mali in recent months, targeting domestic and foreign forces in violence once confined to the country’s north.

France intervened militarily in Mali in 2013 to help government forces drive Al-Qa’eda-linked jihadists out of the north.

But large tracts of the country remain lawless despite a peace accord signed with ethnic Touareg leaders in mid-2015 aimed at isolating the jihadists.

The violence has also spilled over into both Burkina Faso and Niger.

The French military has said the jihadist group Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is using the border region as a haven.—AFP
‘Hero’ Malian who saved child to get French citizenship

PARIS — A Malian migrant who saved a four-year-old child hanging from a fourth-floor Paris balcony after scaling the building with his bare hands was honoured by French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday and offered citizenship.

Two days after his daring Spiderman-style rescue — viewed millions of times online — Mamoudou Gassama was received by Macron at the presidential palace.

“All the (Gassama’s) documents will be put in order,” Macron told the sporty 22-year-old who has become a national hero, referring to his immigration status.

In the meeting, live footage of which was carried on the president’s Facebook page, Macron gave Gassama a medal for bravery and also proposed that Gassama join the French fire service.

“I was not thinking of anything. I went straight up”, Gassama, who wore jeans and a short-sleeved patterned shirt, told Macron, recounting the episode.

“Bravo,” Macron replied.

“I’m pleased because it’s the first time I’ve received a trophy like that,” Gassama, who arrived in France in September 2017, said after receiving his medal.

Gassama leaped into action Saturday evening on seeing a child dangling in mid-air from a balcony half-way up an apartment block in the multi-ethnic 18th district of the French capital.

The video shows him pulling himself up from balcony to balcony as a man on the fourth floor tries to hold on to the child by leaning across from a neighbouring balcony.

On reaching the fourth floor Gassama, who lives in a hostel for immigrants, throws one leg over the balcony before reaching out with his right arm and grabbing the child.

Firefighters arrived at the scene to find the child had already been rescued, with a spokesman saying that “luckily, there was someone who was physically fit and who had the courage to go and get the child.”

Praising Gassama, government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux tweeted: “This incredibly brave act, which is true to the values of solidarity of our Republic, must open the doors of our national community to him.”

His story instantly drew comparisons with that of another Malian migrant who was feted as a hero, and given citizenship, for helping save lives during a January 2013 terror attack.

Lassana Bathily helped hide hostages in the freezer during an Islamist jihadi attack on a Jewish supermarket, in which four people were killed.

Dream of a better life

Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo also lauded Gassama, who arrived in France in September 2017, for his “act of bravery” as well as phoning him personally to “thank him warmly.”

“He explained to me that he had arrived from Mali a few months ago dreaming of building his life here. “I told him that his heroic act is an example to all citizens and that the city of Paris will obviously be very keen to support him in his efforts to settle in France,” she added. “I tracked down by reporters 24 hours after the heroic rescue, Gassama said he had acted without thinking. “I saw all these people shouting, and cars sounding their horns. I climbed up like that and, thank God, I saved the child,” he said. “I felt afraid when I saved the child... when we went into the living room, I started to shake, I could hardly stand up, I had to sit down,” he added.

According to initial inquiries by the authorities, the child’s parents were not at home at the time.

The father was held for questioning by police for having left his child unattended. The child’s mother was not in Paris at the time.

President Emmanuel Macron (left) offers Mamoudou Gassama, 22, from Mali, French citizenship after he scaled a Paris building to save the life of a four-year-old child dangling from a balcony. PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — Britain must be “fully out” of the EU customs union after Brexit in order to be a global trading nation, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said on Monday, piling further pressure on Prime Minister Theresa May.

“We are our moment not to be less European — we can do a great trade deal with the EU that will benefit both sides — but to be truly global again,” Johnson wrote in the Daily Telegraph.

Speaking after a long tour of South America, Johnson said countries in the region had been “emphatic” and told him: “If this is to work, we must come fully out of the EU customs union”. 

For Britain to be a “valid trading partner; then we must take back control — as the PM has said — of our tariff schedules, and do deals that are unhindered and uncomplicated,” he said. “I had just one month to go until a critical European Union summit, the British government is deeply divided over its plans for future trade ties with the bloc after Britain’s withdrawal.

Johnson and some other ministers have advocated a clean cut with what is currently Britain’s biggest trading partner that would enable it to sign free trade deals with third countries. But moderates have put forward a plan whereby Britain would collect tariffs on behalf of the EU for goods heading to the bloc and setting its own, separate tariffs for goods that do not.

The EU has instead proposed a “backstop” solution to avoid a border in Ireland under which Northern Ireland would remain aligned with and de facto still under the bloc’s rules, but Britain says that would effectively create a border between the province and the rest of the UK.

A senior EU official last week said: “We have to do away with the fantasy that there is an all-UK solution.” – AFP

UK must ‘fully’ leave EU customs union: Johnson

President Emmanuel Macron (left) offers Mamoudou Gassama, 22, from Mali, French citizenship after he scaled a Paris building to save the life of a four-year-old child dangling from a balcony. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
MLV SPLIT V-1802

Consignees of cargo carried on M V SPLIT V-1802 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIPL where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M S BRIGHT SAIL SHIPPING LTD.
Phone No: 23011928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M.V MCC BOX ENDURANCE VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M V MCC BOX ENDURANCE VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MI.T.M/L.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M/V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1817-1818)

Consignees of cargo carried on M V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1817-1818) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MI.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M S MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185
DPRK says dismantling nuclear test site shows will to work for nuclear free world

PYONGYANG — The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) said on Monday its dismantlement of the Punggye Ri nuclear test site last week has shown its will to work for a nuclear-free world.

The official Rodong Sinmun said on Monday that the two peoples must be promoted even as the South Korean government handles historical issues in accordance with its “principles.”

Concerned over a decrease in the number of Japanese tourists to South Korea amid diplomatic spats between the two countries, Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha had become embroiled in a massive financial scandal.

“We need to do away with some of the unnecessary projects, for example the high-speed rail, which is going to cost us 110 billion ringgit ($28 billion) and will not earn us a single cent,” the 92-year-old told the Financial Times in an interview.

TPL

S Korea launches task force to promote ties with Japan

SEOUL — The South Korean Foreign Ministry launched on Monday a task force for promoting cultural and people-to-people ties with Japan at a time when bilateral relations remain tenuous due to wartime history and territorial issues.

The group, composed of several private-sector members and ministry-related individuals, is expected to come up with a set of proposals that would boost cultural and social exchanges between the two countries.

The task force is led by Lee Hoon, a tourism professor at Hanyang University in March, Kang and her Japanese counterpart Taro Kono agreed at a meeting in Washington to expand bilateral exchanges in various ways, with 2018 marking the 20th anniversary of a partnership declaration issued by then South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and then Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, according to the ministry.

The issue of “comfort women” who were forced to work in wartime brothels for the Japanese military and a territorial row over a pair of islands controlled by South Korea in the Sea of Japan are among the chief areas of contention that continue to strain bilateral ties.

—Kyodo News ■

Malaysia’s Mahathir vows to drop Singapore rail link

Kuala Lumpur — Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad pledged on Monday to scrap an ambitious high-speed rail link with Singapore as he seeks to improve the country’s battered finances, a report said.

Mahathir, who won a surprise election victory this month against Najib Razak’s long-ruling coalition, has said the country’s debt has ballooned under the last government which had become embroiled in a massive financial scandal.

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TPL

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TPL
Boyband BTS make K-Pop history topping US album charts

SEOUL — Korean boyband phenomenon BTS have become the first K-Pop group to top the US album charts, a vivid illustration of the genre’s growing global appeal.

Known for boyish good looks, floppy haircuts and meticulously choreographed dance moves, the septet has become one of South Korea’s best known and most lucrative musical exports.

On Sunday, they passed a new milestone — becoming the first K-Pop group to top the Billboard 200 music charts which ranks albums via sales, downloads and streams.

“It’s the first No 1 for the seven-member group, and the first K-pop album to lead the tally,” Billboard wrote in its online report detailing the latest chart ranking.

While plenty of older music listeners in the West might be asking “who?”, it’s hard to underestimate the popularity of BTS and their seven stars Suga, J-Hope, Rap Monster, Jimin, V, Jungkook and Jin.

According to one data analysis, they were the most talked about phenomenon on Twitter in 2017, with nearly double the number of mentions on the social media platform than US President Donald Trump and Canadian badboy heartthrob Justin Bieber combined.

Throw in their similarly massive appeal across the globe — they have huge social media followings in Japan, China, Southeast Asia and parts of Latin America — and you have a truly global supergroup.

Their new album “Love Yourself: Tear” topped “Beerpong and Bentleys” by rising hip-hop star Post Malone, whose facial tattoos are the very antithesis of BTS’ wholesome, meticulously manicured image.

While BTS sing in Korean, their style successfully fuses the catchy earworms of K-Pop with hip-hop and R’n’B.

Last year, their previous release “Love Yourself: Her” became the first K-Pop album to make it into the top 10 US album charts, rising to number seven, and hit the number one spot on iTunes in more than 70 countries.— AFP

‘Solo: A Star Wars Story’ struggles to take off in opening weekend

LOS ANGELES — “Solo: A Star Wars Story,” the latest prequel in the hugely popular film franchise, struggled to achieve escape velocity this holiday weekend, with an estimated $101 million four-day take falling far below expectations.

Analysts had predicted the Disney/Lucasfilm project — directed by Ron Howard and with Alden Ehrenreich as a young version of the swashbuckling Han Solo — would reach $130 million, possibly setting a Memorial Day weekend record.

But the film, with a cast including Donald Glover, Woody Harrelson and Emilia Clarke, was falling short not only in North America, box office tracker Exhibitor Relations predicted, but also abroad.

“Deadpool 2” from 20th Century Fox and Marvel, took second spot this weekend, with a four-day estimate of $53.5 million.

That movie stars Ryan Reynolds as the foul-mouthed, irreverent title character as he forms an X-Force team to protect a young mutant from evil Cable (Josh Brolin).

Third place went to Disney/ Marvel collaboration “Avengers: Infinity War,” which took in $20.1 million in its fifth weekend out. It stars Robert Downey Jr, Benedict Cumberbatch, Scarlett Johansson and Chris Hemsworth.

In fourth, with $12 million in ticket sales, was a movie featuring no superheroes or interplanetary battles, and with a sedate sounding title — “Book Club” — that belies its racy story line.

The Paramount film tells the story of four aging friends — Jane Fonda, Diane Keaton, Candice Bergen and Mary Steenburgen — who decide to read the steamy book “Fifty Shades of Grey” and find it stimulating more than just their intellects.

And in fifth was Warner Bros. comedy “Life of the Party,” at $6.5 million. It stars Melissa McCarthy as a newly divorced mother who returns to college, only to find herself in class with her (deeply embarrassed) daughter.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

- “Breaking In” (5 million)
- “Show Dogs” (4.2 million)
- “Overboard” (4.1 million)
- “A Quiet Place” (2.7 million)
- “RBG” ($1.4 million).

Daniel Craig to get 50 mn pounds for final 007 film

LONDON — Daniel Craig will reportedly receive a fat pay cheque of £50 million pounds for his last outing as James Bond in the next 007 film.

The 50-year-old actor will also get an executive producer credit, along with endorsements and profits, according to Mirror.com. Craig previously received £37 million pounds for 2013’s “Spectre”. The film is likely to have a run time of around two hours and 20 minutes, meaning the actor will get £37,000 pounds per minute of screen time.

If paid 50 million pounds, Craig’s earnings will exceed that of his predecessors’ with Sean Connery making 7 million pounds for six official Bond movies.

George Lazenby made? 72,000 pounds for one outing, Roger Moore bagged 17 million pounds for his seven films as the iconic spy.

Timothy Dalton churned 4 million pounds from two appearances followed by Pierce Brosnan raking in 13 million pounds in four films.

Craig starts shooting for the film in December, which will go on till five months. An autumn release is planned for next year.

The actor had earlier said he would rather “slash his wrists” than return as Bond.

But after constant denials, he confirmed his comeback in the 25th Bond movie. Oscar-winner Danny Boyle, who is set to direct the as-yet-untitled film, will earn about 7 million pounds.

A film source in Los Angeles said, “Daniel is raring to go out with a bang alongside Danny. They have been talking already about their visions and the practicalities once the cameras start rolling in December at Pinewood.— PTI
Europe’s largest wooden building awaits salvation off Istanbul

ISTANBUL — Looking up at the giant wooden edifice looming over him, Erol Baytas shakes his head.

“I don’t think it will survive another winter,” he says, broken tiles and boards strewn at his feet.

Built at the end of the 19th century on an island off Istanbul, this unique six-storey structure once served as a home for Greek Orthodox orphans until it was shut down in the early 1960s.

And more than five decades later, the now dilapidated Prinkipo Greek Orthodox orphanage is at risk of collapse.

To try and save this architectural treasure — described as the largest wooden construction in Europe and the second largest in the world — cultural heritage NGO Europa Nostra has listed it as one of the continent’s seven most endangered sites.

“It’s a miracle it still stays standing,” said Baytas, who spent more than 30 years guarding it.

Situated atop a hill on Buyukada, one of the Princes’ Islands in the Sea of Marmara, it is about 90 minutes by ferry from central Istanbul. Originally conceived as a luxury casino hotel, the building was commissioned by the Compagnie des Wagons-Lats, the travel firm which historically operated the Orient Express. The aim was to attract well-heeled European travellers who were flocking to Istanbul in great numbers at the height of the Belle Époque, many arriving on the famous long-distance train.

Designed by Alexandre Vallaury, the Franco-Ottoman architect behind Istanbul’s Pera Palace hotel, the hotel was completed in 1898 — but never managed to get an operating licence from Sultan Abdulhamid II on grounds its gambling activities would be immoral.

With its grand plans floored, the timber-framed structure was sold to the wife of a rich banker from the city’s Greek minority who gave it to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

And in 1903, the patriarchate turned it into an orphanage, which took care of nearly 5,800 Greek Orthodox orphans until its closure in 1964.

‘What happened to my house?’

“It was without a doubt the most beautiful place in Istanbul,” says Yani Kalamaris, who lived and worked at the orphanage as a teacher between 1955 and 1961.

Sitting in a leather armchair in the lobby of a large Istanbul hotel, he reaches into his bag and pulls out a photo album with a worn cover, its pages filled with sepia photos of what he fondly remembers as his “house”.

“This was after the end-of-year ceremony,” says Kalamaris, now 83, showing a picture of him standing in the middle of a group of children on a large terrace overlooking a garden with a breathtaking view of the sea.

Today, all that’s left there are a few twisted beams.

Since the orphanage closed, the building has taken on the air of a haunted house, with staring empty windows and crows perching in the many holes that pock its dull brown facade.

With no-one to care for it, the structure has been ravaged by Istanbul’s ferocious winds, its blistering summers and frigid winters.

Despite its dilapidated exterior, some of the 220 rooms inside still retain vestiges of splendour, such as the ballroom with its boxes and balconies, its columns and its once-lustrous parquet floors.

“One, an old man came who was an orphan here and who lives in Greece today and we went inside together,” Baytas said.

“He collapsed and was constantly whispering, ‘What happened to my house?’”

“I had to take him in my arms and we cried like kids.”

Experts are assessing how much work needs to be done to restore the old Prinkipo Greek Orthodox orphanage and how much it would cost. PHOTO: AFP

‘Must be protected’

The orphanage was closed down by the Turkish authorities in April 1964, officially on grounds of sanitation at a time of political tension between Ankara and Athens over Cyprus — a dispute which would eventually see Turkey invading the island a decade later.

Today, Istanbul’s Greek Orthodox minority, who only number around 3,000, are determined to save the dilapidated structure before time runs out. “This building belongs to all of Turkey, the people of Istanbul, the local culture,” says Apostolos Poridis, the patriarchate’s chief architect. “Its architecture is a matter of memory, you have to protect this building, to pass it on,” he told AFP.

In April, the Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I asked for Ankara’s help during talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. But the plea comes at a time of fresh tensions between the two nations over an array of issues, including the protection of Byzantine and Greek heritage in Istanbul.

Restoring its splendour

“We have lost a lot of time. But it is not too late,” said Piet Jaspaert, vice president of Europa Nostra.

This summer, a team of experts will visit the site to assess how much work needs to be done to renovate the building — and the likely cost, a figure the Turkish media suggest could be as high as $50 million (42.3 million euros).

“The main frame is solid, but the big problem comes from the roof,” said Poridis.

Before the work starts, experts say the installation of an internal roof is urgently needed before the onset of winter.

“I would like to see the building (restored to) the splendour of yesteryear, one last time,” says Kalamaris. —AFP

South African firm sells “insect milk” as next superfood

CAPE TOWN — A South African company is selling what it calls “Entomilk”, a special milk made from farmed insects, as the next superfood.

“Think of Entomilk as a sustainable, nature-friendly, nutritious, lactose free, delicious, guilt-free dairy alternative of the future,” Gourmet Grubb said on its website.

According to the company, one of the most pivotal benefits of Entomilk is that it has a high protein content and is rich in minerals such as iron, zinc and calcium.

Entomilk entered the market two years after the debut of the so-called “cockroach milk,” a milk made from the viviparous cockroach named Diploptera punctata.

This particular kind of cockroach, which is usually found on Pacific islands like Hawaii, is the only known cockroach that gives birth to their babies, as opposed to laying eggs.

Their milk is a crystal of proteins, fats and sugars, which are important for the growth of baby cockroaches.

A study carried out by Indian researchers in 2016 found that the cockroach milk is estimated to contain over three times the energy of the equivalent mass of cow milk.

However, scientists did not expect the cockroach milk to be found in supermarkets anytime soon. Besides its unappealing name, it’s also unclear if the milk is safe to consume.

“We have no evidence that it is actually safe for human consumption,” said Subramanian Ramaswamy, the lead author of the 2016 study. —Xinhua
Balotelli has matured, says Italy skipper Bonucci

MILAN — Italy captain Leonardo Bonucci said on Sunday he believes that Mario Balotelli has matured as the Nice striker prepares to make his first appearance for the Azzurri in four years.

New Italy coach Roberto Mancini will oversee his first game in charge of the four-time world champions against World Cup-bound Saudi Arabia in a friendly on Monday night in Saint Gallen, Switzerland.

Mancini has called up 27-year-old Balotelli for three upcoming friendlies after the striker was sidelined by Italy by injury and behavioural problems in recent years.

“I’ve found him (Mario) changed compared to the past, matured,” 31-year-old AC Milan defender Bonucci told a press conference ahead of Monday’s game. Balotelli has scored 13 goals in 33 appearances for the Italian.

Mancini has said that he had not yet decided on the lineup for Monday’s game with the only certainty that AC Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma would start.

“It’s the first game so it’s important to start well, which does not just mean winning,” said Mancini. “The most important thing is that the lads play carefree and that they can have fun, even at the cost of making mistakes.”

Bonucci, meanwhile, said he was relishing his role of captain even if he missed the presence of veterans Gianluigi Buffon and Daniele De Rossi.

“There’s a strong sense of responsibility, but what surpasses everything is pride. I want to be a true example for the rest of the lads,” said Bonucci. Italy play a third friendly against the Netherlands, who also failed to qualify for the World Cup, in Turin on 4 June.—AFP

Maclaren called up to Australia World Cup squad

SYDNEY — In-form striker Jamie Maclaren has joined Australia’s World Cup training camp in Turkey as injury cover after being a surprise omission from the squad, Football Federation Australia said on Monday.

The Germany-based player was selected in coach Bert van Marwijk’s 32-player preliminary squad before being axed when it was reduced to 26, despite scoring plenty of goals during a loan spell with Scotland’s Hibernian this year.

He joins the squad in Antalya amid injury doubts over forward Tomi Juric.

Jamie Maclaren has been called up by Australia as injury cover and has a chance to make their final World Cup squad. PHOTO:AFP

China’s Wang takes revenge on Venus Williams into French Open 2nd round

PARIS — China’s Wang Qiang revenge her two previous losses to Venus Williams by beating the American veteran 6-4, 7-5 in women’s first round of French Open on Sunday.

Wang lost both matches to the 37-year-old American at Grand Slam tournaments last year, the French Open and Wimbledon respectively.

Wang, who made into the main draw at Roland Garros for the fourth time, finished her first break after both players had several deuces in the 12-minute first game, before Williams made timely response in the following game.

Both sides shared the first eight games of the opening set, before Wang grabbed the chance of wrapping up the set on Williams’ forehand flaw.

Williams, seven-time Grand Slam singles winner, built a 3-0 lead early in the second set, but resilient Wang made her comeback into contention collecting three games in a row.

Wang surrendered her leads in both sets when facing Williams at the same phase last year, but the 91st-ranked Chinese refused to let her chance slip away this time. After the two players shared the next four games for a 5-5 tie, Wang broke Williams’ service and recorded her stunning victory over William.

Wang Qiang of China serves during the women’s singles first round match against Venus Williams of the United States at the French Open Tennis Tournament 2018 in Paris, France on 27 May, 2018. Wang Qiang won 2-0. PHOTO: XINHUA