Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint’s statue unveiled

He was a key figure in developing English-language studies in Myanmar

The statue of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint was unveiled at a ceremony held at the University of Yangon’s Panglong Hall in Yangon yesterday morning.

First, former Head Professor of the English Department at the University of Education, Yangon, Sayagyi U Thiha (retd), former Head Professor of the English Department at the University of Yangon Daw Khin Lay Myint (retd), and Dr. Lwin Lwin Soe, a member of the National Curriculum Committee, cut the ribbon to open the ceremony.

Next, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Pyithu Hluttaw MP Daw Su Su Lwin unveiled the statue of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint (left).

Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and Pyithu Hluttaw MP Daw Su Su Lwin unveiling the statue of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint (left). PHOTO: MNA

Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint’s statue unveiled

He was a key figure in developing English-language studies in Myanmar

The statue of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint with an electronic switch.

Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi then delivered the keynote speech. He said Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint’s statue was erected to commemorate him as a role model for others to be as disciplined, outstanding and accountable as he was.

He said Sayagyi’s statue was erected in Panglong Hall because he was a key figure in developing English-language studies in Myanmar and Panglong Hall is where students pursue English education and is a training centre for teachers and administrators.

Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint not only helped the development of English in Myanmar; he also accomplished his responsibilities in every role he took on at the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, becoming a person the country could depend on, said the union minister.

The union minister said Sayagyi was an exemplary student for students, an exemplary teacher for teachers, an exemplary professor for professors, an exemplary head professor for head professors, and a priceless, exemplary leader for the Ministry of Education.

The union minister said he felt delighted that Sayagyi’s statue could be erected and unveiled with an elaborate ceremony in respect and admiration for his honesty, hardworking attitude, steadfast demeanor, good instructions and accomplishments.

He said Sayagyi was not only a teacher but also a writer, a poet and a philosopher, so his statue would stand as a lasting example.

The union minister expressed his gratitude, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, to everyone who helped in sculpting Sayagyi’s statue and erecting it in Panglong Hall, the Statue Accomplishment Committee, the organisers of the statue unveiling ceremony, Sayagyi’s colleagues, pupils, teachers and students who provided financial support and manpower, and Tampawadi U Aung Kyaw Tun, who sculpted the statue.

The union minister said Sayagyi’s influence, spirit and the rules, regulations, path and procedures he set would lead to the emergence of a new generation that would lead national development operations.

Next, Sayagyi U Thiha (retd) and Pyithu Hluttaw MP Daw Su Su Lwin delivered commemorative speeches for Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint.

Next, Dr. Lwin Lwin Soe read Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint’s autobiography and a documentary was shown to the audience.

Dr. Zaw Tun, Head of the English Department of the Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, read a poem written in honour of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint.

Next, Dr. Lwin Lwin Soe read Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint’s autobiography and a documentary was shown to the audience.

Dr. Zaw Tun, Head of the English Department of the Mandalay University of Foreign Languages, read a poem written in honour of Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint.

Sayagyi Dr. Myo Myint served as the deputy minister for foreign affairs, the deputy minister for education, the rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages and Chairman of the National Education Policy Commission.—Myanmar News Agency
Office of C-in-C (Army, Navy and Air) offers Waso robes

The Waso robe offering ceremony was attended by member Sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, led by Chairman Sayadaw Presiding Nayakaya of Bhamo Monastery of Mandalay Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa, Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Sayadaws, Ovadacariya Sayadaws of Uppatasanti Pagoda and invited members of the Sangha. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla also present at the ceremony together with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and their wives, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, and officers, other ranks and families of the offices and departments from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air).

They also listened to the recitation of Metta Sutta by members of the Sangha. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla offered Waso robes and alms to the Bhamo Sayadaw. Vice-Senior General Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe donated Waso robes and offerings to Secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Presiding Nayakaya of Minkyaung Pahtamapyan Monastery of Thanlyin in Yangon Region Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Candimabhivamsa.

Afterwards, the Union Ministers and their wives, the Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) and wife, the Commander-in-Chief (Army) and wife, and senior military officers and their wives presented Waso robes and provisions to members of the Sangha. Thanlyin Minkyaung Sayadaw delivered a sermon, and the congregation shared the merits gained. Later, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and those present offered day meals to those of the Sangha.

—MNA

Scouts can act as peace diplomats: MSF chair

The capital Nay Pyi Taw yesterday day held host to the Dialogue for Peace Facilitator’s Training, a gathering aimed at fostering international friendship and holding talks about values that can be sought and shared among the youth. Jointly sponsored by the Myanmar Scout Federation (MSF) and the Asia-Pacific Scout Region of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM), the training is set to cover a wide array of subjects, ranging from the nature and understanding of conflicts, peace building, individual and diverse views in dialogues, support for dialogues, and transparency in holding talks and negotiations for peace processes.

Professor Peter Bleich of the WOSM delivered an address at the opening ceremony of the training, which also aims to promote essential values for a better world and global peace by helping increase the number of talks on religion, culture, generations, and gender; building respect for humanity regardless of faith, race, gender, and age through constructive dialogues, disseminating knowledge and individual values, and promoting knowledge about the global peace process.

“We have opened this training to build peace amidst a diversity of languages, cultures and situations,” said Dr. Tin Nyo, Chairman of the MSF. “Experts at the training will give lectures to scouts from the Asia-Pacific Region. The young ones, aged between 18 and 26, will join hands with peace makers in the peace process.” “Scouts can act as peace diplomats,” he noted, adding that he believed the trainees will help the country by imparting their knowledge through the peace talks.

Mr. J. Rizal C. Pangilinan, director of the Asia-Pacific Scout Region, talked about the involvement of WOSM in global peace processes during the opening ceremony held at the Mawlamyine Hall of the Gold Camp, Myanmar’s main sports training centre in the capital city.

Chief instructor Mr. Anas Alababadi and Dr. Tin Nyo of the MSF said the purpose of the training was to organise talks on the hopes and statements of dialogues, the adoption of dialogue rules and principles, as well as country-wide and Asia-Pacific region-level talks. “This is the first of its kind in Asia,” said Dr. Tin Nyo about the training, which was attended by 51 trainees, of which 16 were scouts from the Asia-Pacific Region, 25 were from Myanmar, and 10 were scouting enthusiasts. The Dialogue for Peace Facilitator’s Training will run for four days, until 25 July.

—Myanmar News Agency
Union minister urges railroad staff to offer best services to passengers

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung travelled by an RBE train along the Nay Pyi Taw-Bago railway section on 21 July and inspected the train stations, bridges and railway sections undergoing upgradation.

The union minister and his entourage first arrived at the Pyi Win Station and Tharwehti Station and observed the passenger and cargo transportation systems, the staff organisation and checking out whether there were enough staff members and whether the staff residences required renovation to withstand the rainy season.

The union minister and his entourage then passed through Yauni, Myo Hla, Swar, Kone Gyi, Kyaytaw and Toungoo stations. There, they met with station officials and staff members and inspected the piles of stones to be used for paving roads and their size and quality. The union minister instructed officials to ensure there was no wastage of stones used in paving the road and that the staff were properly sheltered from the rain.

The union minister and his entourage then passed through Pyu, Tawkywe Inn, Penwegone and Nyaungpinthar stations and met with staff members. He encouraged them to work harder in upgrading the Yangon-Toungoo railway section. He instructed them to ensure the concrete sleepers, stones for paving the road and the railway tracks arrived on time so that laying/upgrading the railways, concrete sleepers and train signals would be duly completed. He told the staff to be cautious so that there were no delays in the railway schedule, as there would be changes to the schedule during the upgrading process. He also told them to offer the best services to passengers and respond to any issues.

Once the Yangon-Toungoo railway upgradation is completed, trains will be able to travel at 100 km/h, enabling passengers to reach their destinations in a shorter amount of time.

—Myanmar News Agency

Stanford involvement to uplift country’s emergency treatment system

MYANMAR’S emergency medical treatment and research could reach an international level through the involvement of one of the world’s leading institutions of higher learning, said a union-level official at a meeting, jointly organised by the country’s medical universities and the US-based Stanford University, held in Yangon.

In his address, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr Myint Htwe said, “The involvement of Stanford University will surely enhance the capabilities of the medical staff, including doctors and nurses, in cases of emergency, which can save the lives of patients who are in a critical condition.”

“Aside from short-term plans, long-term plans should also be set up in adopting a system for upgrading knowledge about emergency treatment,” said the union minister, who also expressed belief that the country’s medical treatment sector would see substantial progress with the collective involvement of experts of various medical professions and international experts.

The meeting at the University of Medicine 1 also saw the participation of its rector Dr Zaw Wai Soe, Professor Dr Daw Maw Maw Oo of the emergency treatment department, specialist physician Dr Than Latt Aung of a 1000-bed hospital in Nay Pyi Taw and Dr Thida Khin of the University of Nursing in Yangon.

Professor SV Mahadevan of Stanford University School of Medicine gave suggestions on upgrading Myanmar’s emergency treatment curriculum, in accordance with its needs, giving lectures on emergency treatment for pre-graduate and post-graduate course students through the social media network and conducting advanced courses and research and innovation programmes under the ministry’s coordination.

The union minister praised the specialists of the emergency treatment sector for their relentless efforts, hoping for big developments through the use of the online teaching system that can cover many parts of the country.

—Myanmar News Agency

Union minister inspects iodine salt grinding mills, plantations

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win visited iodine salt grinding mills in Pathein Township yesterday.

During his visit, the union minister inspected how the salt grinders worked step-by-step on the iodine salt-production processes, while their market and export processes were explained by the technicians present there. The union minister then gave instructions, as required. Later, the union minister also inspected 350 acres of the Pyinkado plantation near milepost (17/0) on the Pathein-Ngwehsaung Road, and officials explained the timber requirement of data collection under the fiscal year, followed by the union minister’s instructions over the requirement of data collection and keeping a regular check on the timber plantations; he also inspected the timber, which has already been sold out under the tender processes.

The union minister inspected an acre of the Pyinkado plantation area and provided instructions over the requirements.

—Myanmar News Agency

Union Minister U Ohn Win observes elephants, conserved in Thit Seik area and providing education to the public. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe takes part at a meeting for Myanmar’s emergency treatment and research. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung gives instructions to the railroad station staff. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister’s coordination over the requirements of the Pyinkado plantation. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung visited rail sections undergoing upgradation. PHOTO: MNA

The union minister’s coordination over the requirements of the Pyinkado plantation. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister’s coordination over the requirements of the Pyinkado plantation. PHOTO: MNA
WHO to provide medical aid for outbreak of snail fever

By Nyein Nyein

THE World Health Organization (WHO) will provide medical supplies and technical aid to prevent the outbreak of snail fever, which is an acute and chronic disease caused by parasitic worms released by freshwater snails.

In the meeting hall of the National Health Laboratory in Yangon on 21 July, Dr Stephan Paul Jost, country representative of World Health Organization in Myanmar, and his delegation spoke about snail fever and made a pledge to provide medical aid at a negotiation meeting over its outbreak in the Inle area of Shan and Rakhine states.

The disease is prevalent in contaminated dams, lakes, fields, and creeks, which have freshwater snails infesting the water.

Schistosomiasis or bilharzia, commonly known as snail fever, is an acute and chronic parasitic disease caused by blood flukes (trematode worms) of the genus Schistosoma.

People get infected when larval forms of the parasite cercariae released by freshwater snails penetrate the skin during contact with infected water. Transmission occurs when people suffering from schistosomiasis contaminate freshwater sources with their excreta containing parasite eggs, which hatch in water.

Symptoms of schistosomiasis include a rash, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, fever, headache, cough and body sores.

Haematuria (blood in urine), fibrosis of the bladder and ureter, and liver and kidney failure are diagnosed in advanced cases.

Detection by the polymerase chain reaction of Schistosoma mansoni DNA in human serum and faeces can be made. No vaccine is available yet, but treatment with praziquantel is known to be effective.

As a prevention measure, people need to avoid swimming in lakes or creeks, which are vulnerable to infection. It can be prevented when people live in a hygienic environment, with adequate sanitation. Those engaged in agricultural activities, which expose them to infected water, should wear agricultural gloves and farming footwear, according to the Ministry of Health and Sports.

According to WHO’s worldwide survey, schistosomiasis occurs in 78 countries. Experts from WHO headquarters, Southeast Asia WHO office and China Centers for Disease Control will conduct research over the outbreak of schistosomiasis. The prevention measures will be coordinated with related departments.

The Union Minister for Health and Sports and officials from Health and Sports Ministry and WHO representatives and delegation attended this meeting.
Mandalay sees 4,244 traffic violations within a week

WITHIN a week, from 15 to 21 July, 4,244 vehicles were caught violating traffic rules in Mandalay, the second largest city in Myanmar.

The installation of a 24-hour monitoring system at traffic lights has exposed a large number of traffic rule violations within a week in Mandalay, also known as the cultural city for its ancient heritage.

With regard to the Sydney Coordinated Adaptive Traffic System (SCATS) software, Mandalay Mayor Dr Ye Lwin said, “As the system can document every traffic rule violator, whether it is a motorcycle or a car, after automatically taking three or four photos, aside from video recording the whole incident at all times, there is no place for violators to hide.”

The system can track the route of a violator until they reach their destination, the mayor wrote on his Facebook page.

Each of the 32 traffic lights of the cultural city now have a SCATS, which is equipped with a 360-degree dome surveillance camera that has a zoom-in capacity of 20 yards.

“SCATS is a useful system both for traffic rules enforcement and security, as it can immediately report an accident,” said an official of the Mandalay City Development Committee.

Over 130 CCTVs, including 11 speed dome, 21 red-light and 117 licence plate recognition cameras, have been installed at a separate post near the SCATS-equipped traffic lights as a tracing device. —Thein Lin/MDN

Authorities to issue IDs to civil servants in Bago’s elephant camp

EFFORTS are being made to issue household registration certificates to civil servants at the Pussonseik Elephant Camp in Bago Yoma Mountain Range by next month, said U Kyaw Kyaw Khine, an immigration officer at the Gyobingauk Township Population and Immigration Department.

There are 68 staff-families at the remote elephant camp in the Zeegon timber production area, located in the Yonechaung Village-tract in Gyobingauk Township.

U Kyaw Kyaw Khine said the lack of IDs has caused members of the staff to lose some of their citizenship rights, including the right to vote during elections. Some staff members were not eligible to vote in the previous elections as they did not possess any NRC cards.

Members of the immigration department plan to go on a field trip to the target area in August. As part of its services, a mobile team composed of seven police and members of the Gyobingauk Township Population and Immigration Department visited the area on 20 July to issue household registration certificates. The department issued the certificates to 52 families there. —Zeyatu (Magway)

Two women arrested for human trafficking

POLICE arrested two women on Sunday after two young female victims of human trafficking were rescued in operations at checkpoints along the Myanmar-China border.

Daw Ywe Nu, 37, was held at the Seinlon checkpoint in Momauk Township, where a 17-year-old victim was rescued. According to investigators, the suspect planned to sell the girl to a Chinese man for marriage in exchange for Ks4 million. The suspect and the victim both reside in Momauk Township.

The suspect then told investigators that she was working with a partner named Daw Ja Nhaung, also known as Khun Ya, who was subsequently held at Lweje at the Myanmar-China border. The two suspects confessed to the police that they had trafficked a 24-year-old woman to a Chinese man for 6,600 Chinese yuan in April this year. After the follow-up investigation, the victim said she managed to escape from the Chinese man after two months. The two suspects were charged with human trafficking, in violation of the existing Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. —Win Naing (Kachinmyay)
Mandalay to host international gems expo in 2019

AN international gems expo is scheduled to be hosted in Mandalay next year, according to U Thein Win, Secretary of Mandalay Yadanar Mall Gems Entrepreneurs Development Committee.

The aim of the event is to penetrate the international market through the exhibition of Myanmar’s gems. “Our intention is to showcase Myanmar’s products to others,” he added. The expo will be held at Yadanar Mall in Mandalay in 2019. The finished jade products, pearl, amber and jewellery will be displayed at the expo, the first of its kind in Mandalay. “Myanmar gems entrepreneurs used to take part in gems emporiums held in other countries. They realised how much gems are booming in the international market,” said Ma Lun Lun, a gems entrepreneur from Mandalay. The Yadanar Mall, consisting of over 380 stalls, was launched on 1 January 2017.—Thurein/MDN

Myanmar’s export earnings reach $4.5 billion in current FY

MYANMAR earned a total of US$4.524 billion from overall exports of domestic products during the first three-and-a-half-month period this fiscal year, according to a report released by the Ministry of Commerce.

The figure represented a $974 million increase from the same period last fiscal year.

Between 1 April and 13 July this year, public sector exports exceeded $1 billion, while private sector exports stood at nearly $3.5 billion. The country usually exports six major groups of products to other countries, including manufactured goods, forest-based products, minerals, as well as agricultural, aquaculture, and animal products, and other miscellaneous items.

Data from the ministry showed Myanmar exported $808 million worth of agricultural products, $80.927 million animal products, $173 million marine products, $440 million minerals, $2.495 billion manufactured goods, and other products worth $466 million.

During the same period, the export value of both agricultural and forest products continued to decline. Compared to the same period last year, the export value of agricultural products decreased by over $140 million, while forest products declined to $13.73 million from $68.017 million.—Swe Nyein

Public sector imports of consumer goods drop by half

IMPORTS of consumer products by the public sector in three and a half months of the current fiscal year dropped by half against the same period last year, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

Between April and mid-July this year, the government’s import of consumer goods was US$13.610 million, which saw a decrease by $13.829 million from this time last year, when the sector’s imports reached $27.439 million. Despite the decrease in consumer goods by the public sector, private sector imports of the same products exceeded $1.2 billion, an increase in value by $61.651 million over the same period last year. Myanmar imports three major groups of products, including capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods from foreign trade partners.

The ministry’s latest statistical report shows that the country’s total imports of the three groups of products was valued at $5.614 billion, consisting of capital goods worth $2.022 billion, intermediate goods $2.315 billion and consumer goods $1.278 billion.

When compared with the same time last year, the total import figures went up by $427 million.—Swe Nyein

India-Myanmar border trade increases by over $27 million

BORDER trade between Myanmar and India, in the current financial year, topped nearly US$47.6 million, an increase in value by $27.8 million over this time last year, according to a report from the Ministry of Commerce.

During the same period last year, India-Myanmar bilateral trade was $19.728 million, in total.

Myanmar’s exports to the Republic of India are greater than its imports.

Having the world’s second largest population, India imported a wide variety of marketable products, worth $42.069 million, from Myanmar over the first 104 days of this fiscal year. Its exports to Myanmar were valued at $5.521 million during the period.

Over $1.1 billion in trade deficit reported this FY

MYANMAR’s overseas trade value for the current financial year topped US$10.165 billion, with a trade deficit of $1.1 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce’s weekly statistical report issued this Friday.

Between 1 April and 13 July this year, the country’s imports were $4.524 billion and exports were $5.414 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of $970 million.

The current trade value included $2.265 billion from border trade and nearly $7.9 billion from non-border trade. Roughly, 89 per cent of the country’s international trade is conducted mainly through sea ports. The country’s marketable products, including agricultural, animal, mineral, marine and forest raw materials and manufactured goods are exported to foreign nations monthly, from both the cross-border and the maritime routes.

At this time last year, the export sector was worth US$3.549 billion, while the import sector was valued at US$5.213 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of $1.663 billion in total.

The country suffered a total trade deficit of US$3.97 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, a decrease by over US$1.4 billion over that of the 2016-2017 FY. The country’s import value is always greater than its exports, causing a trade surplus. Efforts are being made by trade authorities to seek the best available solutions to reduce the trade gap.—Shwe Khine

Customers viewing jade stones at a gems and jewellery shop in Mandalay. PHOTO: THUREIN
Myanmar has potential to be Asia’s maritime hub

By Khin Maung Myint

Promoting digital literacy and combating fake news

THANKS to modern technology, virtually everyone has access to information from all over the world. The number of people who use digital platforms has also increased. But due to the proliferation of fake news, the number of people who take advantage of the digital platform for information is still limited.

Since the beginning of digital literacy to date, we deliberately carried news and articles to gather news in Rakhine State freely. Up to now, there was permission to media personnel, including local and foreign journalists, to visit media personnel from local and foreign agencies.

Starting from 19 December, 2016, the State Government granted visa permission to media personnel, including local and foreign journalists, to visit media personnel from local and foreign agencies.

Before that, talks on digital literacy were being conducted by the Ministry of Information and Public Relations departments of the Ministry of Information at the national and local levels. From the beginning of digital literacy to date, we deliberately carried news and articles to gather news in Rakhine State freely.

During the British colonisation in 1833, just before the war between the British and the Japanese broke out, a strategic route through Burma and China was built. That road was used as the main line for the Chinese and British in the mid-1980s to transport goods and people from our offshore fishing grounds, and it remains in service today.

It is a strategic route. It has been in use for a long time. In the 1930s, being one of the main lines of communication, it has been used as a route for goods and people.

Talks on digital literacy are being conducted by the Ministry of Information and Public Relations departments of the Ministry of Information at the national and local levels. From the beginning of digital literacy to date, we deliberately carried news and articles to gather news in Rakhine State freely.

In 1985, the British East India Company, the trading powerhouses of the twentieth century, was granted permission to media personnel, including local and foreign journalists, to visit media personnel from local and foreign agencies.

In doing so, the pending Dawei Deep Sea Port Project would be the last candidate for development. Taking into consideration that Japan and India had teamed up to counter the Chinese initiative, the EU, and are giving priority to the development of the ASEAN Economic Zone Project, which would surely be a success. These facilities would create job opportunities for our citizens, generate foreign exchange, and boost our economy.

The BRI project is to establish a new modern port facilities to cope with the ever increasing volumes of traffic passing through and set our country on course for rapid and robust developments.

The deductions which I'm making will avoid passing through the Malacca Strait, and would definitely be diverted to us, away from the Malacca Strait, in the future.

The Global New Light of Myanmar

The Global New Light of Myanmar

The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(First published on 21st July 2018)

Flood Bulletin

(First published on 21st July 2018)

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested young writers are welcome to submit their works to the Myanmar Global New Light of Myanmar at P.O. Box 150, Ngwe Kyaw Pagoda Road, Thakat Township, Yangon or by email to dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).

Degree of certainty is (100%).
Trade accords on Xi’s agenda during Senegal swing

DAKAR (SENEGAL) — China’s President Xi Jinping inked a clutch of trade accords Saturday on the first visit by a Chinese leader to Senegal in almost a decade.

Senegalese President Macky Sall welcomed his counterpart to Dakar for afternoon talks before Xi continues a tour of the region Sunday, heading to Rwanda, then South Africa on Tuesday ahead of a BRICS summit of developing nations starting Wednesday.

Although details of the accords signed were not immediately forthcoming, Sall told reporters both leaders held talks on “bilateral cooperation, Sino-African relations and international current affairs”, hailing China as “one of the great economies of the modern era.”

He said China’s progress along the development path was a “message of hope” showing that “under-development is not fatal and the battle for progress is above all won by (having) a combative spirit.”

Xi responded in kind, telling Sall: “Every time I come to Africa I can measure the great dynamism of this continent.”

He added he had great faith in the future of Beijing’s cooperation with its African partners as it becomes a primary investor on the continent.

A report last year by Ernst and Young named China the single largest contributor of foreign direct investment with 293 projects embarked upon since 2005 for an outlay of $66.4 billion.

One piece of Xi’s business Saturday involved the formal handover to his host of the keys to a Chinese-built wrestling venue, the sport being hugely popular in the west African nation.

China is already Senegal’s second-biggest trading partner behind France, its firms have embarked on a slew of major infrastructure projects.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza truce holds after Israeli strikes over soldier death

GAZA CITY — A ceasefire announced by Hamas largely held Saturday after a wave of deadly strikes across the Palestinian enclave sparked by the death of an Israeli soldier shot near the border.

Israel did not confirm the deal announced by Gaza’s Islamic rulers Hamas, which went into effect around midnight Friday.

Since then there have been no reports of Israeli air strikes on the blockaded enclave or of mortar fire from Gaza toward Israel.

“With Egyptian and UN efforts, we reached (an agreement) to return to the previous state of calm between the (Israeli) occupation and the Palestinian factions,” Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhoum said in a statement.

He gave no details of the deal.

Israel’s army and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office declined to confirm a truce was reached.

“All we can say is that there have been no incidents or Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip since the last wave of air strikes on Friday night,” a military spokes-

woman told AFP.

On Friday, three Hamas militants were killed as air raids sent fireballs exploding into the sky over Gaza, while Israeli said rockets had been fired back at its territory. A fourth Palestinian was shot dead in protests near the border.

The United Nations urged all sides to step “back from the brink” after months of increasing tensions.

The soldier, shot dead along the border in southern Gaza, was the first to be killed in and around the Palestinian enclave since a 2014 war between Israel and Hamas.

Friday’s flare-up is the latest as demonstrations and clashes on the frontier since March have seen at least 149 Palestinians killed.

The Israeli army said they struck 68 Hamas sites including weapon manufacturing sites, a drone warehouse and a military operations room.

The ceasefire is the second since in a week.

Last weekend saw the most severe exchange of fire between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza since the 2014 war.

AFP

Morocco’s litter-strewn beaches kick up a stink

RABAT (MOROCCO) — Blessed with a coastline that stretches for hundreds of kilometres across flat sandy expanses and rugged coves, Morocco’s beaches should be a magnet — but a litter crisis risks repelling sun seekers, citizens say.

On a small beach in the capital Rabat the words “Keep your city clean” are daubed across largely empty bins, seemingly mocked by the debris on the ground.

The litter “spoils the pleasure,” says 22-year-old Said, who has come to Oudayas beach for a dip with friends to cool off on a hot day.

“Unfortunately, people don’t realise the importance of keeping beaches clean,” he laments, surrounded by cigarette butts and other trash, just a few steps from the edge of the old city.

Some feel they are fighting a losing battle.

“Rubbish collectors clean the beach from top to bottom every morning, but in the evening, bathers leave it even dirtier,” says a local official.

“Megaphones should be used”

“Perhaps megaphones should be used to sensitise the people and embarrass the polluters,” the official adds.

The state of this small beach in the capital is far from unique.

Every summer, Morocco’s media publish reports lambasting the condition of sands stretching from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.

A nationwide ban on plastic bags imposed in 2016 appears to have done little to stem the tide of rubbish piling up on beaches, despite authorities strictly enforcing the measure.

The problem is in part generated outside Morocco — Greenspeace estimates that the equivalent of a truckload of plastic enters the world’s seas every 60 seconds.

And the activist group said in June it had found microplastics in samples collected in Antarctic waters.

But volunteers who take part in beach clean-ups say far too many Moroccans dump refuse without a second thought.

“In recent years we’ve seen water pollution increase due to a lack of awareness,” says 45-year-old Mohammed el Machkour, president of the Al Marjane sporting association.

Only 21 out of 40 beaches nominated nationwide for the coveted international “Blue Flag” status have met criteria, due to litter, poor water quality and other issues. — AFP
Mnuchin pushes for EU, China concessions amid trade stalemate

WASHINGTON — The United States and its European Union allies were locked in a trade stalemate on Saturday after Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin refused to budge on demands for concessions.

In his opening salvo at the Group of 20 summit in Buenos Aires, Mnuchin urged China and the EU to respect “free, fair and reciprocal trade” amid talk of an escalating global trade conflict, but his French counterpart fired back that the US must “return to reason.”

Mnuchin was infeasible in his approach to the EU following a series of tit-for-tat measures that began with US President Donald Trump’s decision to slap tariffs on steel and aluminium imports.

“My message is pretty clear; it’s the same message the president delivered at the G7: if Europe believes in free trade, we’re ready to sign a free trade agreement with no tariffs, no non-tariff barriers and no subsidies. It has to be all three,” said Mnuchin.

US must ‘de-escalate’

That brought a firm response from French finance and economy minister Bruno Le Maire at the G20 meeting, which brings together finance ministers and central bank governors from the world’s 20 leading economies.

“We refuse to negotiate with a gun to the head,” he said.

“It must be the US that takes the first step to de-escalate.”

He said he expected “a change of attitude” from Trump, otherwise “there will be no choice other than to retaliate.”

International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde opened the summit by reiterating her fears that increasing trade restrictions would hurt global GDP.

Lagarde said that taking into account “current announced and in process measures,” an IMF simulation indicates that in a worst-case scenario, a half point would be cut from global GDP, amounting to some $430 billion.

But Mnuchin showed no signs of a US willingness to back down.

Asked about Trump’s threat to hammer China with punitive tariffs on the entirety of the $500 billion in goods it exports to the US, Mnuchin said:

“It is definitely a realistic possibility, so I wouldn’t minimize the possibility.”

He added: “We share a desire to have a more balanced relationship and the balanced relationship is by us selling more goods (to China).”

Mnuchin said China must “open up their markets so we can compete fairly,” although he insisted that to do so would be “a tremendous opportunity for us and a tremendous opportunity for China.”

The brewing global trade conflict was always expected to dominate talks in the Argentine capital and Brazilian finance minister Eduardo Guardia said many delegates had spoken of “threats on the economic horizon” that “impact on economies, particularly emerging ones.”

“Global trade cannot be based on survival of the fittest,” Lagarde said.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has taken over the investigation, which follows previous fatal accidents involving duck boats. In 2002 the agency recommended that amphibious vehicles provide “reserve buoyancy” such as through watertight compartmentalization, to keep them afloat in the event of flooding.

The advisory followed the 1999 sinking of the Miss Majestic, a former US Army landing vehicle, with the loss of 13 lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas, because of “inadequate maintenance.”

Until reserve buoyancy retrofits were completed, the NTSB urged other safety measures including the removal of canopies, or installation of canopies that would not restrict passenger escape. It also found that, at that time, the US Coast Guard lacked uniform, nationwide inspection policies for duck boats.

Argentina making progress in monetary policy, says IMF chief

BUENOS AIRES — Argentina is making progress in monetary policy aimed at improving its economic indicators, International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde said Saturday.

Measures taken by the central bank in Argentina have reestablished and generated a much better situation, with less volatility and more transparency, Lagarde said at a press conference in Buenos Aires.

Argentine President Mauricio Macri requested a loan in May amid a rapid devaluation of the Argentine peso. The IMF agreed to a loan of $50 billion US dollars.

Under the agreement, Argentina has pledged to pursue several unpopular measures, including curbs on government spending to lower the public deficit, which has sparked protests by working-class groups.

In support of those measures, Lagarde said the joint program “has clearly had results,” adding that she has confidence Argentina would reach the target fiscal deficit of 2.7 per cent GDP for 2018 and 1.3 per cent for 2019, with the deficit eliminated by 2020.

High inflation remains a concern, reaching a year-on-year rate of 29.5 per cent at the end of June, according to Finance Minister Nicolas Dujovne on Thursday.

The government aims at a lower inflation rate next year, falling 10 points compared with this year.

“The inflation target must be met,” Lagarde said. “The authorities have said so and that is what we have discussed and agreed.”

Lagarde was in the capital to attend a two-day meeting of finance ministers and central bank chief from G20 countries.

Argentina making progress in monetary policy, says IMF chief

Nine family members among 17 dead in US ‘duck boat’ tragedy

CHICAGO — Nine members of one family were among 17 people killed when an amphibious US tourist boat capsized during a sudden storm on a Missouri lake, a tragedy which raised renewed questions on Saturday about the safety of the craft known as “duck” boats.

The hybrid vessels, with wheels allowing them to drive on city roads but which can also travel on water, are popular with tourists in many cities. The accident occurred Thursday night in full view of witnesses, at least one of whom captured video of the vessel bobbing in rough waters on Table Rock Lake near the city of Branson, a vacation destination popular for its theaters and country music.

“My heart is very heavy. Out of 11 of us there’s only two that’s surviving, that’s me and my nephew” Tia Coleman, her voice breaking, told Fox59 from her hospital bed.

“I lost all of my children. I lost my husband. I lost my mother-in-law and my father-in-law,” along with other relatives, she told the Indianapolis TV station.

Coleman said the boat’s captain had told passengers earlier in their trip that they “won’t need” life jackets.

“He said it when we were in the water,” she told Fox9. “When it was time to grab them, it was too late and I believe that a lot of people could have been spared.”

She added that the water “didn’t look ominous at the very first.”

‘Let me die’

Coleman told CNN affiliate KOLR of her own near-death by drowning: “I was yelling. I was screaming, and finally I said, ‘Lord, just let me die, let me die.’ She eventually floated to the surface.

Early Saturday, the Stone County Sheriff’s Office confirmed to AFP the identity of the 17 victims — nine of whom had the name Coleman. They ranged in age from one-year-old Arya Coleman to the oldest victim Ervin Coleman, 76. Five of the dead were aged 15 or younger. Police said 31 people were aboard the vessel, which was covered by a canopy and was seen struggling to reach shore against strong winds before it succumbed to the waves and began to sink.

The dead included the boat’s driver, according to the sheriff’s office.

The other crew member, who survived, was in charge when the craft took to the water. US media reported Several people were injured.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has taken over the investigation, which follows previous fatal accidents involving duck boats. In 2002 the agency recommended that amphibious vehicles provide “reserve buoyancy” such as through watertight compartmentalization, to keep them afloat in the event of flooding.

The advisory followed the 1999 sinking of the Miss Majestic, a former US Army landing vehicle, with the loss of 13 lives in Hot Springs, Arkansas, because of “inadequate maintenance.”

Until reserve buoyancy retrofits were completed, the NTSB urged other safety measures including the removal of canopies, or installation of canopies that would not restrict passenger escape.

It also found that, at that time, the US Coast Guard lacked uniform, nationwide inspection policies for duck boats.
UK to refuse Brexit bill without trade deal

LONDON — Britain will only pay its EU divorce bill if the bloc agrees the framework for a future trade deal, the new Brexit Secretary warned in an interview published Sunday.

Dominic Raab, who replaced David Davis after he quit the role earlier this month in protest over the government’s Brexit strategy, said “some conditionality between the two” was needed.

He added that the Article 50 mechanism used to trigger Britain’s imminent exit from the European Union provided for new deal details.

“Article 50 requires, as we negotiate the withdrawal agreement, that there’s a future framework for our new relationship going forward, so the two are linked,” Raab told the Sunday Telegraph.

“You can’t have one side fulfilling its side of the bargain and the other side not, or going slow, or failing to commit on its side.

“So I think we do need to make sure that there’s some conditionality between the two.”

The British government has sent mixed signals so far on the divorce bill. Prime Minister Theresa May agreed in December to a financial settlement totalling £35 to £39 billion (€46-51 billion, 39-44 billion euro) that ministers said depended on agreeing future trade ties.

But cabinet members have since cast doubt on the position.

Finance minister Philip Hammond said shortly afterwards he found it “inconceivable” Britain would not pay its bill, which he described as “not a credible scenario”.

The country is set to leave the bloc on March 29, but the two sides want to strike a divorce agreement by late October in order to give parliament enough time to endorse a deal.

Raab met the EU’s top negotiator Michel Barnier for the first time on Friday, where he heard doubts over May’s new Brexit blueprint for the future relationship.

But Barnier noted the priority in talks should be on finalising the initial divorce deal.

A hardline stance by the British government on the financial settlement could complicate progress, with Raab insisting on the link with the bill and a future agreement.

“Certainly it needs to go into the arrangements we have at international level with our EU partners,” he told the Telegraph.

“We need to make it clear that the two are linked.”

May’s plans, initially unveiled in early July envisaged a customs partnership for goods and a common rulebook with the EU. It has faced severe criticism in Britain, including from within her own cabinet and Conservative Party.

Former foreign secretary Boris Johnson and Davis both resigned in opposition.

A new YouGov poll published by the Sunday Times showed just 12 per cent of people backed the proposals as “good” for Britain while 43 per cent thought they were “bad”.

In move to right, Spain’s conservatives pick Casado to lead party

MADRID — Spain’s Popular Party (PP) on Saturday picked arch-conservative Pablo Casado to replace ousted prime minister Mariano Rajoy as leader, in a move seen as a lurch to the right. The 37-year-old lawmaker inherits the helm of a party which lost three million voters between the 2011 and 2015 elections in May 2019. —AFP

The appointment of Casado, a known conservative who has promised “hope” with a generational revamp of the party, will be seen as a lurch to the right for the party.

He has taken a hardline stance on the Catalan independence crisis, calling for the addition of measures such as illegally calling a referendum to the criminal code to boost Spain’s legal response to the secession threat.

“Dialogue doesn’t work with those who want to break the law,” he said this week.

Casado is also against decriminalising euthanasia as promoted by the Socialist government and wants to lower income and corporation taxes.

He will have to breathe life into a party which lost three million voters between the 2011 general elections, when Rajoy won an absolute majority, and the last polls in 2016.

Many have migrated to Ciudadanos, a centre-right party, angry over the series of corruption scandals that hit the PP in recent years. Casado beat Soraya Saenz de Santamaría, who served as Rajoy’s deputy, to become head of Spain’s conservatives.

Rajoy’s ousting in a no-confidence vote in June was partly seen as a censure for his handling of the Catalan independence crisis, and a perception that he was weak on rooting out graft.

After an acrimonious campaign that saw mystery videos released attacking both candidates, 3,082 delegates cast their ballot for the successor of Rajoy, who spoke for the last time as PP leader on Friday.

In a long, emotional speech, the 63-year-old who had been a major figure of Spanish politics over the past 14 years asked PP members to “be responsible in carrying out your duties”.

**Looming elections**

Rajoy, who has long been one of Spain’s great political survivors — he even walked away from a 2005 helicopter crash with just a broken finger — oversaw the country’s economic recovery, though unemployment has remained stubbornly high during his tenure.

In May, a court announced it had sentenced former PP officials, businessmen and their spouses to a total of 351 years in jail for their role in a vast bribery scheme known as the Gürtel case. It proved to be one corruption scandal too many for the PP, which has been hit by a series of graft accusations, and Rajoy was gone a week later.

“We’re an honest party, there’s no room here for a single corrupt individual,” Casado said after his election. Santamaría, 47, emphasised her experience ahead of the vote, painting herself as the only candidate with sufficient gravitas to defeat current Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez in 2020 elections.

The PP, which still holds the most seats in parliament even if it lost its absolute majority, will have to rapidly prepare for municipal, regional and European elections in May 2019. —AFP

Casado acknowledges delegates after being chosen as the next leader of Spain’s Popular Party (PP) at the end of a party meeting in Madrid on 21 July 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Macedonia, Montenegro sign MoC against illegal migration, human trafficking

SKOPJE — Macedonia and Montenegro signed a memorandum of cooperation on Friday between national committees and bodies against illegal migration and human trafficking.

The memorandum of cooperation was signed during the meeting of the two respective interior ministers of Macedonia and Montenegro, Oliver Spasovski and Mevludin Nuhodzic in the city of Ohrid. The meeting between the two ministers focused on the reforms of security services, the enhancement of capacities for financial investigations and property confiscation and the fight against corruption and all forms of crime. Spasovski mentioned the importance of using Montenegro’s experiences regarding NATO accession talks and the opening of European Union negotiating chapter. Meanwhile, Nuhodzic praised the friendly bilateral ties between the two countries.

Xinhua
At least 11 dead Saturday as heat wave continues to grip Japan

TOKYO — At least 11 people died Saturday from suspected heat-stroke across Japan as a heat wave continued to grip the country, with a record number of ambulances dispatched in Tokyo after many people fell ill amid scorching temperatures.

On Sunday, the mercury hit 32.0°C as of 7:30 a.m. in central Tokyo, with the weather agency issuing a warning for high temperatures in most areas of the country.

As of 11 a.m., 601 of the agency’s 927 observation spots had recorded 30°C or higher temperatures. Readings surpassing 35°C were taken in 57 locations, including Tottori city, Gunma’s Maebashi city and Mie’s Kameyama city.

The Tokyo Fire Department said Sunday that 3,091 ambulances were dispatched in the capital the previous day, the largest on a single-day basis since the department started emergency medical operations in 1936.

Ambulance dispatches have been surging in Tokyo since Tuesday, pushed up by requests for transporting people hit by heat to hospitals, the department said.

Almost all of the 11 victims were senior citizens, including two couples in their 70s who were found dead in their respective homes in Tokyo and Osaka.

Among calls made to emergency services Saturday were those reporting junior high school and senior high school students falling ill while playing sport in Shizuoka and Ibaraki prefectures. — Kyodo News

Five dead, hundreds of thousands affected by monsoon rains in Philippines

MANILA — At least five people died and more than 700,000 were affected by days of heavy rains, which have lashed the Philippines since last week, authorities said on Sunday.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said it has received reports that a resident of Luisa Pelew died in a landslide while a resident of Negros Oriental Angello Jipulan drowned.

The disaster agency said it is verifying reports that one remains missing while another was injured.

Police have also reported at least three more deaths, including a Negros Occidental resident who reportedly drowned and two children from Antique province whose house was buried by a landslide.

The NDRRMC said the affected population of 158,596 families or 728,003 persons are from 585 villages in the National Capital Region (NCR), and several provinces in the Philippine main Luzon Island, including Ilocos region, Pampanga, Batan, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Pangasinan, and some provinces in the central Philippines.

“Of which, a total of 33,743 families or 229,240 residents are being served inside and outside evacuation centers,” the NDRRMC said. Most of the displaced population, 51,326 families or 217,393 residents, are from Central Luzon, the agency said, adding that only 20 families or 78 persons are listed as displaced in NCR, all from Valenzuela City.

The NDRRMC said a total of 334 areas in Ilocos, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, CAR, and NCR were flooded, though many of them have already seen water subside.

At least three tropical cyclones battered the Philippines in recent weeks. The latest cyclone, locally named Josie, is the Philippines’ 10th tropical cyclone for 2018.

Tropical depression Josie continued to move north-northeastward over Bashi Channel on Sunday afternoon as it began making its way in the Philippines.

But the state weather bureau PAGASA said Josie, which still packs maximum winds of 60 kilometers per hour and gustiness of up to 78 kilometers per hour, continues to enhance the southwest monsoon which is affecting Luzon and the Visayas region in the central Philippines.

Rainy season in the Philippines occurs from June to October. The Philippines is a tropical country and experiences around 20 typhoons every year. —Xinhua

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Bilz Werkzeugfabrik GmbH & Co. KG of Vogelsangstrasse 8, 73760 Ostfildern, Germany is the owner and sole proprietor of the following Trademarks:

MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

As the wharves, warehouses and chambers of Yangon Port will be closed on the 27th JULY 2018 (FULL MOON DAY OF WASO), Loading, Unloading and delivery for Goods will be received on Payment as Holiday Fees.

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V AS SOPHIA VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-7-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T/T.MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANNA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: MS MCC TRANSPORT (S’PORE) PTE LTD

Dated 23 July 2018
Manila’s ‘Golden Gays’ sing for their supper

MANILA — Al Enriquez sheds his threadbare street vendor clothes like dead skin and dons a gauzy gown and wig of tight blond curls.

He’s 82 years old and is one of the stars in a beauty pageant for elderly and poor gay men that’s about to start in a banquet hall on a rundown Manila street.

But this is not a rowdy, hooting drag show for tourists — instead it is part of the decades-long work of a collective of men like him to take care of their own.

They call themselves the Golden Gays and they mean it.

“When I’m dressed like this I feel ecstatic and I feel that I don’t have any sadness in me,” Enriquez told AFP. “I’m gay and I’m not embarrassed that I’m gay.”

The Philippines has a reputation of openness toward homosexuality, but experts say legal protections are lacking and the nation’s weak social safety net especially fails older gay people.

That’s why the Golden Gays have recruited corporate and private sponsors who pay for their members to get a decent lunch and a few days’ worth of groceries after the pageants they hold at least once a month.

“The show is just our way of saying thank you,” says the group’s 68-year-old organiser Ramon Busa, known as Monique de la Rue once in heels and make-up.

‘My mother was angry’

Most of the 48 members are in their 60s and are among the millions of Filipinos who survive on less than five dollars per day. In real life they are dishwashers, street hawkers or scavengers, but for the afternoon the door will be closed on reality.

Ahead of the performance, the air in the room smells of perfume and the fried food that will be served for lunch. The men tug their dresses into place and scrutinise themselves in handheld mirrors.

The show starts with music firing at distortion volume from battered speakers as the 18 performers shimmy down the catwalk and strike poses — or land on the laps of the dozen or so friends and supporters in the audience. The shows have been going on for years, but the Golden Gays’ roots are even deeper.

Back in the mid-1970s they got their start in Manila’s urban sprawl as the Home for the Handicapped, a house where homeless or poor older gay men could spend the night.

However, the home belonged to their founder, activist and columnist Justo Justo, and when he died in 2012 his family evicted the group within days.

This setback did not break up the group, which serves as the family that many of its members don’t have. Federico Ramasamy, a long-time Golden Gay, was rejected by his parents once they learned of his sexuality. He made his way to Manila and never looked back.

“I was born in the late 50s, so family values were very high,” he said. “My mother was very, very angry at me when she learned that I was a gay. She sent me away.”

‘Hand to mouth’

The Golden Gays became his family and a refuge from the real life in which he makes about two dollars a day for a 15-hour shift as a dishwasher.

“But I feel good, especially when it comes to what happened today, the Golden Gays. We all get together,” said Ramasamy, 60, after the pageant.—AFP

Now, box office war between Kangana and Hritihk next January

MUMBAI — Actors Kangana Ranaut and Hritihk Roshan, who have been engaged in a public war of words over their alleged affair, will battle it out at the box office as their films are scheduled to hit the cinema houses in January next year.

Kangana’s one of the most ambitious projects “Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi” is set to clash with Hritihk’s “Super 30” on January 25, 2019.

“Manikarnika” was apparently set to release this year in April and was later pushed to August 15 and then to September. But today, Zee Studios and the film’s producer Kamal Jain took to Twitter that it would release during the Republic Day weekend.

Directed by Krish, the film will see the “Queen” star in the role of Rani Laxmibai.

Hritihk’s “Super 30”, helmed by Vikas Bahl, is a biopic on Patna-based mathematician Anand Kumar, who trains a batch of 30 aspiring IIT candidates every year.

The two actors have been at loggerheads since the time Kangana hinted at Hritihk being her “silly ex” in an interview in 2016. Their feud turned nasty after they slapped legal notices on each other.—PTI

Warner Bros. superheroes swoop into Comic-Con

SAN DIEGO — Warner Bros. closed the final full day of the Comic-Con International fanfest on Saturday as the belle of the ball, bringing its roster of superheroes to take a bow in San Diego.

The studio took over the 6,500-seat main arena at the world’s largest celebration of fan culture for two star-studded hours, serving up tantalizing teasers for its DC Extended Universe series of comic-book movies.

With Disney-owned Marvel Studios and Lucasfilm both bowing out this year, it was Warner’s chance to shine and the studio obliged with a line-up of the world’s biggest stars, including Johnny Depp, Chris Pratt, Jude Law, Elizabeth Banks and Eddie Redmayne.

One of the most eagerly-awaited presentations of the week, it was a chance for WB to show it is back on track after poor reviews for its DC Extended Universe movies “Batman vs. Superman: Dawn of Justice,” “Suicide Squad” and “Justice League.”

The studio set out its stall with extensive looks at James Wan’s upcoming “Aquaman” and “Wonder Woman: 1984,” a follow-up to 2017’s “Wonder Woman,” the DCEU’s only unqualified success.

“The way we look at this is not a sequel, it’s a new chapter, it’s a new story,” said Israeli actress Gal Gadot, who was shown as Wonder Woman saving a young girl from grummen in rough early footage.

Director Patty Jenkins described the era of the sequel — out in November next year — as “mankind at its best and worst.”

‘Half-naked’

“We’re aware of things now that we weren’t in the 1980s,” she told the crowd. “There were some incredible and beautiful things in the 80s but at the same time... it’s us at our most extreme.”

The presentation also unveiled the first trailer for “Shazam!” — an altogether more light-hearted entry in the DC universe starring Zachary Levi that is due out in April next year.

But the undoubted star of the show was “Aquaman,” which raised the roof as a shirtless Jason Momoa appeared onscreen in a new trailer as half-human, half-Atlantean hero Arthur Curry.

“You’re in armor or you’re half-naked in tattoos and it was a bad choice looking back to wear denim,” Momoa recalled of the production which required him to be wet most days.

“They look like leather pants, but they’re not.”

There was a second preview for the Christmas release that unveiled Aquaman’s nemesis, Black Manta, as well as more underwater action, a rooftop chase and a final view of the Momoa in his superhero threads.

Warner’s first exclusive of the session gave Harry Potter fans a look at the legendary battle between Professor Dumbledore and Gellert Grindelwald in “Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald,” which hits theaters on November 16.

Troubled star Johnny Depp was a surprise appearance onstage, missing “Aquaman” actress Amber Heard, his wife before last year’s acrimonious divorce, by less than an hour.—AFP
Aussie researchers identify new dinosaur species

SYDNEY — A new dinosaur species has been discovered and named by Australian researchers, a decade after the fossil was unearthed.

The dinosaur remains belong to “Akaainacephalus johnsoni,” a herbivore about 5 meters long with spiked armor, four legs and club-like tail that belongs to the Ankylosaurid family and lived more than 75 million years ago, local media quoted James Cook University researcher Jelle Wiersma as saying on Friday.

The name is derived from Greek, referring to thorn or spike and head. The dinosaur remains were uncovered in Utah in the United States a decade ago and paleontologists have since been studying the find.

About 76 million years ago, Utah was hot, humid, criss-crossed by slow-moving rivers and streams and swamps, with large cypress-like conifer trees, said Wiersma, who led a report on the new species.

“It had a whole host of plants and animals living on land and in the water that are very different from today’s flora and fauna.”

“We gain more insight into the diversity of life during that time... and it helps us to better understand modern environments as well.”

The Akaainacephalus skeleton is set for display at the Natural History Museum of Utah this week. — Xinhua

Global scientific team creates new method of predicting properties of organic compounds

MOSCOW — An international research team, together with scientists from the Skolkovo Institute of Science and Technology (Skoltech), has created a neural network to predict complex properties of organic substances using a minimal set of input data, Skoltech’s press office reported.

The results of the study were published in the Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter.

“Our newly developed method will make it far simpler to predict the environmental impact of any substance. Later on, our development can also be used to forecast the properties of exotic molecules and principally new compounds for which the existing tools of searching for the structure-property relationship do not work,” the study’s first author, Skoltech PhD Sergey Sosnin stated.

The essence of the method is carrying out a physical-chemical calculation and using this data to define 3D densities of hydrogen and oxygen around a molecule under study. Then an analysis of the obtained information with 3D convolutional neural networks is conducted.

Sosnin also noted that the main achievement of their scientific work is the creation of “a universal way to describe a molecule for further transmission of its “image” to a 3D convolutional neural network.” The convolutional neural network is a special architecture of artificial neural networks aimed at efficient image recognition.

Skoltech is a non-governmental scientific and educational institution established in 2011 under the participation of Northwestern University (NU) and Russian Foundation for Basic Research.

Long non-coding RNA may play role in fat metabolism

CHICAGO — Researchers at Northwestern University (NU) have identified that thousands of lincRNAs, long non-coding RNA molecules produced by so-called “junk DNA”, may in fact play an important role in fat metabolism.

In a study, the researchers examined the RNA content of fat tissue from 25 healthy and lean participants.

They discovered that thousands of lincRNAs in human fat cells are not found in mice, and that many of these human adipose-specific lincRNAs share features that suggest they play a role in fat metabolism.

The researchers also looked closely at the most prevalent molecule, linc-ADAL, which is not expressed in mice, and found that linc-ADAL plays an important role in how fat cells develop and store fat.

Long intergenic non-coding RNAs (lincRNAs) are transcribed from what was previously known as “junk DNA”, portions of the human genome that do not code for proteins and were originally thought to be non-functional.

“We are still in the early stages of figuring out how lincRNAs function in human disease, but what used to be considered ‘junk’ in the genome may actually point us towards the jackpot of developing effective therapeutic approaches for cardiometabolic diseases,” said Jennie Lin, assistant professor of Medicine in the Division of Nephrology and Hypertension and a co-author of the study. The study demonstrates the importance of taking a human-centric approach to studying pathways relevant to fat metabolism, suggest the clinical significance of lincRNAs and other human-specific molecules that aren’t found in animal models, and could lead to novel treatments for obesity and related diseases in the future.

The findings have been published in Science Translational Medicine. — Xinhua
Neymar: “I couldn’t look at a football” after the World Cup

PRAIA GRANDE (BRAZIL) — Brazil superstar Neymar admits that after his nation’s quarter-final defeat to Belgium at the World Cup he couldn’t look at a ball and didn’t want to see any of the remaining matches.

“I wouldn’t go as far as to say I didn’t want to play again but, I didn’t want to see a ball, or to see any more football played,” 26-year-old Neymar told AFP in an exclusive interview on Saturday.

The Paris Saint Germain forward was talking at his Neymar Praia Grande institute where the Red Bull Neymar Jr Sr’s (five-a-side soccer) tournament was being played.

Dressed in a sleeveless t-shirt, with his six-year-old son Davi Lucca sat upon his knee, the striker was however in a relaxed mood as he explained his post-World Cup blues.

“I was in mourning. I was really sad about it, but sadness passes, I have my son, my family, my friends and they don’t want to see me moping around. I’ve got more reason to be happy than sad,” said Neymar, reflecting on his team’s 2-1 quarter-final defeat to Belgium.

Asked about reports in Spain linking him with a transfer to Real Madrid the forward said “that’s all speculation from the press.”

“The guys who come up with these stories seem to know more about my life than I do. I won’t respond to this type of question because nothing happened,” he scoffed. The Brazilian superstar, who moved to PSG for a world record 222 million euros ($264 million) last year, insists that the burden of expectation on his shoulders — whether with his club or country — does not weigh heavily.

“No, all the great players feel pressure,” he said.

“It’s true that when it comes to me, there are double standards. I have been aware of this responsibility, not only for Brazil, but also in club football, since I was 17, 18 years old.

“I have prepared myself to handle this pressure and I know that when the results are not what they should be then that pressure increases.”

Neymar has been hit by a barrage of criticism for theatrical rolling around after being fouled at the World Cup, but says he should have been better protected.

‘Criticism of me exaggerated’

“People were faster to criticise the one being fouled than the one doing the fouling,” he insisted.

“I went to the World Cup to play, to beat the opposition, not to get kicked. The criticism of me was exaggerated, but I’m a big boy, I’m used to dealing with this kind of thing.

“And I can’t be the referee and play at the same time, but there are times I wish I could,” he said.

Earlier this week, Neymar took a swipe at his critics with a tongue-in-cheek video in which he teaches children how to fall to the ground.

“One, two, three, go!” shouts Neymar on the Instagram video as around a dozen youngsters fall to the ground of a parking lot.

“That’s a free-kick!” screams the Brazilian breaking into fits of laughter.

The video was released with a hashtag #ChallengeDAFALTA, the free-kick challenge in Portuguese.

Meanwhile, Neymar described PSG’s new coach Thomas Tuchel as a great addition to the club.

“He’s a great coach and we’re hoping for a great season,” he said. “I’m really looking forward to it.”

Neymar said of his second season in Paris.

“We have signed a football legend (Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon) who will bring with him all his experience and that will be a great help for this coming season.”

Spieth aims to retain British Open title but Woods lurks

CARNOSTIE (UNITED KINGDOM) — Jordan Spieth is hoping to join the elite group of golfers to have retained the British Open title as he goes into the final round at Carnoustie on Sunday in a share of the lead.

The American star sits level on nine under par alongside compatriots Xander Schauffele and Kevin Kisner as he aims for a repeat of his victory at Royal Birkdale 12 months ago, although there is a large chasing pack ready to pounce, with Tiger Woods right in the mix.

Spieth shot a superb six-under-par 65 in benign conditions on Saturday to catapult himself up the leaderboard as he aims to follow in the footsteps of Padraig Harrington, the last player to retain the Claret Jug a decade ago.

There would be a sense of symmetry if Spieth does win on Scotland’s North Sea coast — Harrington’s double came at Carnoustie in 2007 and then Birkdale in 2008.

“I’ve made a lot of progress over the year that’s been kind of an off year, a building year,” said Spieth, who came third at the Masters in April but then missed the cut at the US Open.

“I feel like my game’s in good shape. It’s progressed nicely. We’ve got pretty much a new tournament tomorrow (Sunday).”

Spieth has his work cut out though, with the leaderboard so closely packed that at least 20 players will start Sunday believing they can win the Claret Jug.

Schauffele and Kisner are both bidding to win a first major, with the latter hoping to avoid a repeat of last year’s US PGA Championship, when he led going into the final day but finished in a tie for seventh.

With trickier, windy conditions expected for the last round, Kisner feels it could be an unpredictable day, and a harder one. “Judging by the conditions and what’s going to be going on, I would imagine it’s going to be more of a grind all day,” said Kisner, who has been sharing a house with Spieth and several other American stars in Scotland this week.

Kisner will go out with another American, Kevin Chappell, who is seven-under, in the penultimate pairing of the day at 2:35pm (1335 GMT), before Spieth and Schauffele tee off 10 minutes later. —AFP

Mawlamyine to host mountain bike race

A COMPETITIVE off-road terrain mountain bike race, under the supervision of the Sports and Physical Education Committee of Mon State, will be held in Mawlamyine on 27 July, according to Bicycle Network Myanmar (BNM). The race, aimed at raising public awareness about biking, will start at Taung Yoe Dan Street in Mawlamyine at 7am and will end some two hours later at the starting point, said an official.

The race will feature three categories—an under-20 competition, an over-20 competition, and a professional men’s competition.

The winners in all three categories will be awarded Ks130,000, while Ks100,000 will be awarded to the first runners-up, Ks80,000 to the second, Ks60,000 to the third, and Ks40,000 to the fourth. A further Ks20,000 will be given out as consolation prize in each of the categories, according to BNM. Those who are interested in taking part in the race can access detailed information through the Bicycle Network Myanmar’s Facebook page, said an official. —Lynn Thit(Tgi)