State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives Indian Foreign Secretary

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. Vijay Gokhale at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, promoting bilateral relations, cooperation in regional and international arenas and development cooperation in all regions of Myanmar including Rakhine State were discussed.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, relevant departmental heads from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and responsible officials. — MNA

Low pressure area persists over Deltaic areas: DMH

ACCORDING to the observations at 6:30 pm yesterday, the low pressure area over Deltaic areas still persists, according to Meteorology and Hydrology Department yesterday evening.

General Caution

Due to the Low Pressure Area, rain will be fairly widespread to widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Shan, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, and Mon states with isolated heavy falls.

Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach 40 mph. Wave height will be about 9 to12 feet in Myanmar Coasts.

Advisory

Strong wind and heavy rainfall are cautioned. People from Gulf of Mottama, Deltaic area and coastal Rakhine. Trawlers, vessels and ships off and along Myanmar Coasts are advised to avert this condition.

Strong wind destroys houses in Maubin

A strong wind destroyed 22 houses and ripped roofs off 134 houses leaving 646 people homeless in Maubin Township on 21 October night while the low pressure system crossed the Deltaic area.

Maubin District Natural Disaster Management Department is planning to send aid to the areas as soon as possible. — DMH/Aung Khaing
Ministry of Health and Sports distributes mobile tablets to basic medical officers, township doctors in Kayah State

DR. MYINT HTWE, the Union Minister for Health and Sports, attended a ceremony held in Loikaw’s state hall in Kayah State on 21 October where the ministry distributed mobile tablets to the basic medical staff and township doctors in Kayah State.

Firstly, Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho delivered an address where he expressed the honor for having Kayah State chosen as the first place to receive mobile tablets for their basic medical staff and township doctors. He said the health sector in Kayah State has seen noticeable improvements which are in part due to the compassion and sense of duty the medical staff have in their work. He said the Kayah State government will continue working hand in hand with the Ministry of Health and Sports in providing further support.

Next, Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe gave his speech. He said the purpose of distributing the mobile tablets is to promote the public healthcare skills of the medical staff in addition to more effective dissemination of information relating to healthcare to the public and increasing the capability for medical treatment administered by doctors stationed in townships and settlements on the frontlines.

The Union Minister said future sustainable medical training and development of medical ethics will be performed using mobile tablets. He said the mobile tablets given to basic medical contain over 120 soft-copies of books, guidelines, handbooks and other documents distributed by the ministry. The mobile tablets given to doctors contain more than 400 documents on modern treatment procedures, guidebooks and references, he said. Additionally, the latest documents will be transferred or amended from the central command in real-time.

The Union Minister said the mobile tablets will be able to send guidelines and procedures in times of public health emergencies and symptoms of potential epidemics as they occur so that the disease can be treated in the shortest possible time. He said better quality of medical treatment can be administered in township and rural medical facilities, thus reducing the need for people from those areas to travel long distances to city hospitals.

The Union Minister said the mobile tablets will allow access to online lectures by professors and professionals from the medical field. He said the mobile tablets will help medical staff in facilitating public health talks and that medical training, discussions and treatment instructions could possibly be delivered through the mobile tablets in the future.

The Union Minister said 13,477 mobile tablets have been purchased with national funds and 650 more were donated by private organizations. He said GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance will support the purchase of an additional 14,000 mobile tablets. He concluded his speech saying that the amount of investment in the mobile tablets will bring greater benefits in healthcare.

Afterwards, the Union Minister handed over the mobile tablets to Kayah State Chief Minister U L Phaung Sho and State Minister for Development Affairs and Social Affairs Dr. Aung Kyaw Htay.

The mobile tablets were then distributed to 419 basic medical staff and 17 doctors of township-level hospitals, with the rest of the tablets to be distributed to the remaining medical officials soon.

Following this was an explanation of the documents and books contained in the mobile tablets by Dr. Aye Aye Sein, the Deputy Director-General of the Public Health Department. Additionally, Sagaing Region health ambassador Ma Mary Cole introduced the mobile tablets and Yangon Region health ambassador Dr. Soe Nyi Nyi Tun also performed a demonstration with medical staff. —MNA
Coordination meeting to hold “All who can read should read” event

COORDINATION meeting to successfully conduct “All who can read should read” campaign was held yesterday afternoon at Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun and officials from Ministry of Information, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Planning and Finance.

At the meeting Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint said the ministry is performing the works of issuing news, educating and entertaining. To disseminate knowledge to the public, learned and far-sighted people established Sarpay Beikman (Palace of Literature) under the theme of “remove darkness and bring forth light” and the ministry was continuing this implementation.

Ministry of Information is also conducting literature festivals as well as literature activities such as paper reading, discussion, literature circle, book selling book street programs. Children’s literature festivals were also jointly organized with Ministry of Education, related state/region governments, well-wishers and donors. Interactions were made between youngsters and children with literatures and books to instill in them the habit of reading. Arrangements are made so that they can be happy when visiting the children’s literature festivals. For university students, Youth All Round Development Festivals were conducted where reading as well as innovation is encouraged.

The State Counsellor likes reading and cherishes literature and had thought up and is implementing mobile library in the works of Daw Khin Kyi Foundation. Next, Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and Ministry of Information is cooperating on providing computer training and mobile library works in Information and Public Relations Department offices, libraries and community based centers.

Personnel from IPRD will play the main role for the people all over the country to cooperate and participate in a campaign based in Nay Pyi Taw to increase reading rate through a theme “All who can read should read.” All are urged to suggest and discuss in the meeting so that the event will include paper reading and discussion in addition to exhibitions on books and literature said Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint.

Following this, Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said Ministry of Education had cooperated with Ministry of Information in holding children youth festivals and youth all round development festivals. All who can read must read and the country and the people will progress only when that culture become established. Ministry of Education is opening 20 libraries in schools under a pilot programme to increase the reading rate. All need to work together toward successfully holding the “All who can read – should read” event said Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi.

Afterwards IPRD Director General U Ye Naing explained about the aim and location of “All who can read should read” event, arrangements made for conducting discussion, paper reading and prize presentation, exhibitions and book sales, status of setting up committees and sub-committees.

Sector wise discussions and explanations were then made by Ministry of Education and Training Director General Dr. Aye Myint, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture Department of Historical Research and National Library Director General U Aung Myint.

NATIONAL
23 OCTOBER 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

MoI holds 2nd coord meeting for 7th Media Development Conference

THE SECOND coordination meeting to discuss preparations for the 7th Conference on Media Development in Myanmar which will be conducted under the theme of ‘Building Effective Partnerships in Myanmar’s Media Development’, was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 10am yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun delivered the opening speech at the meeting. He said the upcoming Media Development Conference is the 7th one to be held, and the first one to take place in Nay Pyi Taw. He said the meeting will bring together experts from home and abroad, members of the media and individuals from relevant departments to discuss and find practical solutions to all the challenges present in Myanmar’s media sector.

He urged everyone in attendance to cooperate in ensuring the conference gets held on time.

The meeting discussed choices for the backdrop to be used at the forum and the list of discussion topics that will be brought up with the panelists and participants at the forum.

The 7th Conference on Media Development in Myanmar will be held at Park Royal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw on 5 December. The forum aims to pave a path for increasing cooperation between the democratic institutions and non-governmental entities in Myanmar, as well as empowering media reforms and media development processes.

The coordination meeting was attended by the heads of departments and enterprises under the Ministry of Information and officials and representatives from the Myanmar Press Council (MPC), UNESCO, IMS, Fojo, DW Akademie, JICA, Internews and Myanmar Police Project. —MNA
**MR to run Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay special trains during Thadingyut festival**

THE state-run Myanmar Railways said it will operate special trains for Yangon-Nay Pyi Taw-Mandalay journey for the convenience of commuters who will return to their residences during the period of Thadingyut festival of lights.

Under the schedules, the trains left the administrative capital Nay Pyi Taw at 9 pm on 22 October and it will arrive in Yangon at 7 am on 23 October. The train from Yangon will depart at 6 pm on 23 October and arrive in Mandalay at 8:45 am on 24 October.

The train from Mandalay will depart at 6:15 pm on 25 October and arrive in Yangon at 9 am on 25 October. The train will leave Yangon at 9:30 am and arrive in Nay Pyi Taw at 7 am on 26 October. The special trains will stop at every railway stations in Bago, Taungoo, Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw and Thazi.

Tickets are available at railway stations in Yangon, Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay starting on 21 October. Tickets are sold at a regular price, according to the railway authorities.

The Myanmar Railways is putting more efforts to offer better services to the commuters through several railway improvement projects, including repair of railroads, replacement of carriages and installation of modern signals and communication systems. The MR has been implementing the projects in cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

**New cargo terminal at MIA nearly complete**

The construction of a new cargo terminal near Mandalay International Airport nearly completed, which will bring about trade facilitation between Mandalay and Asian countries.

The project is conducted by Mc-Jalux Airport Services Co. Ltd and is coordinating with the Department of Civil Aviation under the Ministry of Transport and Communications. On 21 October, the new cargo terminal operation event was held at the meeting hall of Mandalay Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the fourth floor of Yadanapon Super Center on the corner of 78th and 34th streets in Chayanehtazan Township.

At the event, vice chair Daw Khin Lay Myint delivered an opening remark. Then, Mr. Futoshi Hiroi, vice president of Mc-Jalux Airport Services Co. Ltd explained about the construction of the cargo terminal that can provide smooth freight shipment service to and from Mandalay International Airport with the Asian countries—Thailand, Singapore and China. The terminal is 960 square meters.

**Illegal timber confiscated in Katha**

AUTHORITIES have confiscated illegal timber at saw mill near Manlwe Village, Katha Township, Sagaing Region on 21 October.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising of officials from the township forest department and members of the police force inspected the suspected forest area near Manlwe Village, Katha Township.

During the search, the police found a total of 30 timber logs weighing 3.82 tons. However, no person was found near the area.

Ongoing investigating has been made by the local police in an attempt to arrest those in connection with the case.

**Pedestrian killed in car accident in Yangon’s Ahlon Township**

A young man died on the spot after being struck by a container truck on Sunday early morning in Ahlon Township, Yangon Region, according to a police report.

The accident occurred near Summit restaurant on Strand Road in Lutlatye Ward in Ahlon Township at around 00:45 am on 21 October. The container truck being driven by 29-year-old Hein Lin Maung en route from Kyimyindaing Township to Ahlon Township crashed into the victim while the latter was crossing the road. The victim died from the wounds to his head at the scene.

Police filed charges against the driver for his careless driving under Section 304 (a) of the Penal Code. Investigations are continuing.

**Yaba seized in Buthidaung**

ACTING on a tip-off, authorities stopped a suspected vehicle carrying charcoal bags on the way to Ywama Village, Buthidaung Township on 21 October.

The authorities team led by the Myoma Ward administrator U Zaw Zaw Hlaing asked the vehicle driver for identification. The driver, Mohammad Haryaw was asked to drive to Buthidaung Myoma police station in order to check the vehicle. When the police searched the vehicle they found 1,911,000 Yaba tablets weighing 191.1 kilogram worth Ks195 million and Yaba tablets weighing 97.5 kilogram worth Ks3.8 billion from 55 charcoal bags. When interrogated, the driver Mohammad Haryaw admitted that these Yaba tablets were owned by Marmat Islam who asked him to bring those tablets. After that, the police searched the house of Marmat Islam and found 975,000 Yaba tablets weighing 97.5 kilogram worth Ks195 million and Ks30,000 from a purse. The police have filed charges against the suspects under sections 15, 19-A, 21 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Township IPRD
Pigeon pea plantation acreage remarkably drops from uncertainty of India’s market

By May Thet Hnin

FOLLOWING the Ministry of Commerce’s instruction to reduce plantation acres due to low market share of mung bean and pigeon pea to India, the number of pigeon peas plantations dropped by half in the current growing season.

“About 50 per cent of pigeon pea acres have dropped, primarily in the upper Myanmar, Shan State and Sagaing Region. Those areas which other beans can be easily grown did not choose pigeon peas this season”, said U Min Ko Oo, general secretary of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association.

Mung beans are started to be grown in October and November. Some mung bean growers reduced their acreage and conducted mixed-farming the crops with pigeon peas, cowpea (bocote), and soybean.

The prevailing price of pigeon pea remained stable at Ks480,000 per ton whereas mung bean price has increased to Ks600,000 per ton. Therefore, mung bean plantation acres are not lower than pigeon pea’s, U Min Ko Oo said.

“Mung bean price has risen back when growing season is approaching. We need to observe the growers’ choice. Those acreages may possibly decrease to a certain extent next year”, he said.

India set import quota on pulses from the importer countries including Myanmar with an attempt to protect their farmers’ rights, resulting in the price downfall of mung bean and pigeon pea. The prices were even lower than cultivation cost.

India announced import quota of 150,000 tons of mung beans and green gram each and 200,000 tons of pigeon peas. Myanmar’s mung bean export sounds secured as 70 per cent of India’s mung bean import.

Magway Region growers turned to black sesame seeds (samon variety), accounting for 75 per cent of overall growers. Some substituted mung bean with butter bean and green grams, said U Sein Lwin, executive member of Magway Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

“Magway Region witnesses lesser plantations of mung beans and pigeon peas. Most of the growers turned to black sesame seeds as they can boost export volume to China. Sesame is a profitable crop, allowing the growers to earn well”, he added.

At present, other various pulses are fetching a good price when the prices of mung bean and pigeon peas are the lowest.

Myanmar is endeavouring to proceed to trading under Government to Government agreement with India.
Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint receives Executive Director from Korea-ASEAN Friendship Association (KAFA)

UNION Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint received a delegation led by Executive Director Dr. Mr. Sung Ki Baik from Korea-ASEAN Friendship Association (KAFA) at the guest hall of the Ministry of Information at 12:30 pm yesterday.

In the meeting, Dr. Mr. Sung Ki Baik discussed the coordination for engineering, management, medical science and opening art schools in Nay Pyi Taw by organizations and businesses from South Korea, while the Union Minister shared his experience of visiting Busan and Seoul, Republic of Korea last month and also discussed the development of the film industry in Myanmar, including the emergence of the Film Studio and Film Art School in Nay Pyi Taw.

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and officials were present at the meeting. — MNA

Myanmar Investment Commission’s work in August and September of 2018

Myanmar Investment Commission is permitting local and foreign investments according to Myanmar Investment Law.

Myanmar Investment Commission had permitted in August 2018 a total foreign investment including the increasing of investment totals US$ 436.921 million and in September 2018 a total foreign investment including the increasing of investment totals US$ 455.429 million.

Foreign investment permitted during August and September of 2018 are as follow.

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<tr>
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<th>Capital US$ million</th>
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<td>-</td>
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Increased number of jobs created by foreign investment during August and September 2018 are as follow.

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Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint meets with Executive Director Dr. Mr. Sung Ki Baik from Korea-ASEAN Friendship Association and his delegate at the Ministry of Information yesterday. — MNA

PHOTO: MNA

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<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>Hotel and tourism sector</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>Housing and building construction sector</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>e</td>
<td>Transportation and communication sector</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>Other service sector</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>794</td>
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</tbody>
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*Increase in the investment was included in the investment amount.

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint meets with Executive Director Dr. Mr. Sung Ki Baik from Korea-ASEAN Friendship Association and his delegate at the Ministry of Information yesterday. — MNA

PHOTO: MNA
Twenty-seven political parties held a meeting on 30 September and issued a joint statement urging authorities and the incumbent government to bring about stable and economic development as the people are facing social insecurity due to economic decline, and the joint statement was sent to Union Election Commission (UEC).

The Guiding Star Party, one of the parties mentioned in the joint statement, had said that its central committee chairman and central executive committee members were not notified for the joint statement.

The party informed the UEC that as the party was not formed for an individual, action will be taken against any party member(s) who conducted anything without the acknowledgement of the party and not following its policy.

Similarly, Confederate Farmers Party said that Party Chairman U San Lin signed the joint statement on his own accord without obtaining the decision of the party central executive committee and thus the party and the central executive committee is not involved in the joint statement.

The party informed UEC that it does not approve of the act. As per these two complaints, it appears that the joint statement was signed individually without the consent of the relevant party executive committee.

UEC has informed the 27 political parties to report back to UEC by 1 November on whether there was any confirmation made by CEOs of parties concerned over the statement.

— MNA

Ayeyawady dolphin conservation area extended

EXTENSION area for Ayeyawady dolphin conservation has been set between Hpyaing and Shwegu areas. The opening ceremony of extension area will be conducted on 27 October at Strand Road view point in Katha Town, said U Kyaw Hla Thein, the project manager from Ayeyawady dolphin conservation project.

“According to February 2017 statistics, there were 69 Ayeyawady dolphins, up from 65 dolphins which were surveyed in February 2016. At present, there are 76 Ayeyawady dolphins around protected area, according to February 2018 statistics. We have planned to conduct survey in February 2019 and we don’t know exactly how many dolphins will be numbered because there are new born dolphin and some are dead, said U Kyaw Hla Thein.

There are three phrases of Ayeyawady dolphin conservation area. At present, a total of 76 dolphins are naturally habitat including 26 dolphins from Mandalay to Shwebo townships along the Ayeyawady River, 37 dolphins from Malsee village to Shwegu townships and 13 dolphins from Ayeyawady Hsin kan bridge to Bhamo Town. This new conservation area is one of the second designated area for Ayeyawady dolphin. The first dolphin conservation area was set from Mingun to Kyaukmyaung in Mandalay in 2005, he added.—Myo Min Tun (Monywa)

Twenty huge paper boxes containing cigarettes confiscated in Maungtaw Township

TWENTY huge paper boxes containing illegal cigarettes readied for illegal export to another country was confiscated in Maungtaw Township, said local police.

While members the Myanmar Police Force from Tamantha Outpost in Maungtaw Township were conducting patrol on the evening of 20 October, they found 10 men carrying boxes along the Pyuama Creek. As they fled when asked to stop, two warning shots were fired. They managed to escape from the scene but left the boxes. Police found 18 boxes containing Marble brand cigarette and 2 boxes to contain Man San brand cigarettes. The contraband cigarettes are estimated to be worth about Ks 2.36 million and a case had been opened in Aung Zu police station.—MNA

Myanmar hosts 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports

THE 8th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS) and other relevant meetings were held at the Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw at 9am yesterday. Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Mya Lay Sein, who is also the Vice-Chair of Myanmar Olympic Committee, attended the meetings.

The Deputy Minister delivered an address at the meeting, saying ASEAN leaders made a promise to support the AMMS to increase cooperation in organizing sport activities so that the citizens of ASEAN countries will become healthier. She said the Joint Statement of the Fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Sports (AMMS-4), held in Nay Pyi Taw in 2017, contained ten points which basically outlined working towards healthier lifestyles, friendly coexistence, regional and national sports development and promoting good sportsmanship. She said the implementation of the ASEAN Physical Fitness Indicators (APFI) has contributed to increased sport skills.

The ministerial meeting then commenced. At the SOMS-7 meeting, Thailand discussed the proposals for Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar, among other countries, to cohost the 2034 World Cup. There were also discussions on Myanmar leading the ASEAN traditional sports; gaining approval for conducting fitness tests on children and the elderly, led by Thailand, after amassing public physical fitness indicators and information from ASEAN countries; increasing inclusion of women and youths in sports; and the topic of TV Games (E Sports).

An official from the ASEAN Secretary General’s office then led the discussion on completing the remaining 13 tasks out of 36 tasks to be performed related to sports between 2016 to 2020.

They also discussed the preparations for the ASEAN School Games to be hosted in Myanmar, ending use of banned drugs in sport competitions and raising awareness on the topic in the ASEAN Region, and the use of funds in combating international use of banned drugs.

In the evening, officials from the ASEAN Secretary General’s office read the decisions made at the SOMS-7, which were discussed by the ASEAN officials and whereby decisions were made.—MNA

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment and hear civil cases

CHIEF JUSTICE of the Union U Htun Htoo, Supreme Court judges U Myint Aung and U Aung Zaw Thein of Special Appellate Bench sits at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning and passed judgment on four (Certiorari) civil cases and heard five other (Certiorari) civil cases.—MNA
Withdrawal of EU’s GSP could hurt 2 million vulnerable people

The European Union said on 5 October that the bloc is considering the withdrawal of its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade status for Myanmar, a move that would strain relations between the two countries.

Regarding the allegations of widespread human rights violations in Rakhine State, the leader of Myanmar, who has been struggling to solve the conflict and ethnic unrest, will not take any action that can be construed as ethnic cleansing or genocide.

The statement failed to explain the root cause of the conflict and whose responsibility it is. It is sad to see the label of “disinformation” circulates on its social media.

The Office of the President issued Press Release No. 20/2018 on Monday, announcing the arrest of two rehabilitated drug addicts for crimes related to drug trafficking.

The Office of the President said in the release: "The Ministry of Home Affairs, acting on the information received, has been investigating the case of illegal drug cases, and has arrested two (2) persons for drug trafficking. These two persons were previously rehabilitated drug addicts."

The Office of the President then announced that the persons were being seized for illegal drug trafficking activities.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 24 October issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar.

**OPINION**

Economic sanctions and the democratically elected government is as in Myanmar. The consequences of the EU’s decision.

Should the EU decide to withdraw GSP on Myanmar, it will shrink, workers and their families will be the victims who suffer from the EU’s decision.

It has pledged repeatedly that it will take action against of -

**ABHIDHAMMA DAY**

By Ashin Adesthavamsa (Sasana University)

Abhidhamma Day marks the eleventh day of the astrological month Tatiyasa (October 16) according to the Thai Buddhist calendar. This day is considered by Buddhists to be the day on which the Buddha preached the Abhidhamma to Venerable Sariputta, the first of the Buddha’s 1250 disciples, in the city of Sankassa in 500 BCE.

The Abhidhamma Day is observed to commemorate the day when the Buddha preached the Abhidhamma, a profound teaching on the nature of reality, consciousness, and mental processes. This teaching is considered to be the most important and profound of all Buddhist teachings.

There are seven treatises in Abhidhamma (554 BC) in the present and the Sixth Buddhist Council (Dhàtus) in the ancient. The first one is Dharmasåmi (Classical Monastic Literature, and Clitas (Concise), Cetasika (Mental State), and Bhavas (Matter), etc. are also among the seven treatises in Dharmasåmi. Analysis and method of presentation in Dharmasåmi are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and methods of presentation in the Indian literature in Dhammasåmi are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and methods of presentation in Dhaññusa (Elements), and Analyses and presentations in Dhammasåmi are also analyzed and further studied in Dhammasåmi. They are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and method of presentation in Dhammasåmi is therefore further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas. The Abhidhamma was preached at Tatiyasa (seasonal) in seventh rainy season (6 October) after His enlightenment as a mark of gratitude to His mother Deva (His mental power)

- The Buddha, while preaching Abhidhamma

The Buddha, while preaching Abhidhamma, continued usually the whole three months. When it was time to leave, He created another Buddha by His mental power. Thereafter He preached Abhidhamma (454 BC) in the present and the Sixth Buddhist Council (Dhàtus) in the ancient. The first one is Dharmasåmi (Classical Monastic Literature, and Clitas (Concise), Cetasika (Mental State), and Bhavas (Matter), etc. are also among the seven treatises in Dharmasåmi. Analysis and method of presentation in Dharmasåmi are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and methods of presentation in the Indian literature in Dhammasåmi are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and presentations in Dhammasåmi are also analyzed and further studied in Dhammasåmi. They are further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas, Analysis and method of presentation in Dhammasåmi is therefore further analyzed and thus studied in treatises in Bhavas. The Abhidhamma was preached at Tatiyasa (seasonal) in seventh rainy season (6 October) after His enlightenment as a mark of gratitude to His mother Deva (His mental power)
Israel advances bill tying cultural funding to ‘loyalty’

JERUSALEM — A ministerial committee in Israel’s parliament voted on Sunday to advance a bill that would cut subsidies to cultural organizations accused of not showing “loyalty” to the state, the culture minister said.

The proposed legislation, denounced by artists and freedom of speech activists, was proposed by Culture Minister Miri Regev.

“The text of the bill must be voted on in three parliamentary readings before becoming law,” she said. “It would give the finance and culture ministries the power to slash subsidies to any institution presenting work that denies Israel’s existence as a democratic and Jewish state or that marks the state’s independence day as a national day of mourning.

For Palestinians, the anniversary marks the Nakba, or “catastrophe”, when more than 700,000 fled or were expelled during the war surrounding Israel’s creation.

The draft law would also see funding cut over work that attacks the state flag, or incites racism or terrorism.

“I am very happy that this law has been passed by the Ministerial Committee on Legislation,” Regev wrote on Facebook. “It will then be presented to the Knesset to be adopted, God willing, next month... Yes to freedom of culture, no to provocations!”

Regev, a member of Israel’s ruling right-wing Likud party, is no stranger to controversy and has repeatedly clashed with the country’s largely left-leaning cultural elite.

Last year she slammed the Israeli drama “Foxtrot”, which won the Venice Film Festival’s second highest prize, for spreading untruths about the Israeli army.

She was not invited to September’s Ophir Awards —Israel’s version of the Oscars — where “Foxtrot” won the best picture prize.

She instead appeared live on her Facebook page to criticise the movie and members of Israel’s Film and Television Academy.—AFP

Crowds protest latest deadly rebel raid in DR Congo

Beni (DR Congo) — Crowds protested in the streets of Beni, eastern DR Congo, after rebels killed at least 11 people and abducted 15 others, including children, in an overnight raid, local officials said.

The attack, thought to have been carried out by members of the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), targeted Beni, the regional army spokesman Captain Mak Hazukay told AFP.

Local sources said they recorded the bodies of three of the civilians killed in the attack, took to the streets following the attack, said Aloys Bwarara, the mayor of the district of Ruwenzori.

Other people, furious at the attack at set fire to the post office and a town hall, he added, “...which I deplore because we are doing everything to keep the population safe”.

“We went down with three bodies as far as the town hall,” said one local man, motorbike-taxi driver Pahiku Thaiswi.

The police came to break it up because another group of young people had burnt down the post office and two annexes of the town hall,” he added.

Law student Guillaume Saliboko said some local people had set up road blocks in the town’s main street to make their anger known.

“We can’t understand how the ADF rebels can kill us in the middle of the town every time,” he added.

Police recovered the bodies of 11 civilians killed in the town of Matete north of Beni, Beni police chief Colonel Safari Kazingufu told AFP. The missing civilians were from five to 10 years old, he added.

Army spokesman Hazukay said: “We repulsed the attack but unfortunately, there were deaths among the civilians and soldiers.”

He did not say how many soldiers had been killed, but one local resident told AFP he had seen the bodies of two uniformed men at the site of the fighting.

Earlier, a spokeswoman for the UN peacekeeping mission MONUSCO told AFP they had been involved in an exchange of fire lasting several hours with suspected rebels near Beni.

The ADF, which US authorities designated a terror group in 2001, is a militia created by Muslim rebels to oppose Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, but which also operates in the DRC.

They are held responsible for a string of attacks in the region and are thought to have killed at least 700 civilians — and 15 Tanzanian peacekeepers in a December assault last year — in a string of attacks carried out since 2014.

Uganda accuses the group of links to Somalia’s Al-Shabaab Islamist insurgents.

Kizito Din-Hangi, the chairman of a local community association, said residents had taken to the streets in a spontaneous expression of anger at the repeated bloodshed in their region.

“Nobody called for a rally — (this is) a protest against repeated killings in Beni,” Din-Hangi said.

The Lucha (Struggle For Change) protest group tweeted that the protest was “not particularly the solution — but understandable for a population so shattered and scorned” by the authorities.

MONUSCO, whose mission is now 17,000 strong and is among the UN’s largest, have been in the DRC since 1999 with an annual budget of $1.153 billion.

On Tuesday, MONUSCO head Leila Zerrougui told reporters that eventual “negotiations” were envisaged with the ADF without giving details of what they might entail.

—AFP

Egypt arrests economist after critical book: lawyer

Cairo (Egypt) — Egyptian police on Sunday arrested economist Abdel Khalek Farouk after the publication of his book critically analysing the country’s economic and social crises, a lawyer said.

Farouk announced last week that the security forces had confiscated copies of his latest book entitled “Is Egypt Really a Poor Country?”.

“He was officially arrested and will be presented to the state security prosecutor tomorrow because of this book,” said Gamal Eid, a lawyer who heads the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information.

The prosecutor would specify the main charges against Farouk on Monday, Eid told AFP.

Following his detention, police had verbally informed him that the book was the reason they had taken him in, the lawyer added.

Since President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi came to power in 2014, human rights groups have accused Egyptian authorities of muzzling all dissent.

The authorities say they aim to fight against terrorism and the “spreading of false information” —AFP

Saudi royals offer condolences to missing journalist’s family

RIYADH — Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz have called the son of Jamal Khashoggi to express condolences to the family of the missing Saudi journalist over his death, state-run Saudi Press Agency reported on Sunday.

Saleh Khashoggi, the son, thanked the royals for their condolences.

Khashoggi, a columnist for The Washington Post, has been missing since he entered the Saudi consulate in Turkey’s Istanbul on 2 October.

The kingdom said early Saturday that Khashoggi had died in a “brawl” in its consulate but did not explain the cause of his death.—Xinhua

PHOTO: AFP

Israel Culture Minister Miri Regev.
Trump says ‘full efforts’ under way to stop migrant caravan

WASHINGTON (United States) — President Donald Trump said on Sunday that “full efforts” were under way to halt the progress of thousands of Honduran migrants toward the United States.

“Full efforts are being made to stop the onslaught of illegal aliens from crossing our Southern Border,” Trump tweeted.

“People have to apply for asylum in Mexico first, and if they fail to do that, the US will turn them away. The courts are asking the US to do things that are not doable!”

“The Caravans are a disgrace to the Democrat Party. Change the immigration laws NOW!” Trump has warned that he would cut aid to the region, deploy the military and close the US-Mexican border if authorities do not stop them.

Mexico has vowed to detain any migrants who cross without visas, though it has also said it will process their asylum requests, and has asked for the UN refugee agency’s help in doing so.

Trump has made curbing illegal immigration a keystone of his presidency. Barely a week goes by without him warning about the danger posed by ultra-violent Central American gangs like MS-13, while chants of “build the wall” are a staple of his pre-midterm elections campaign rallies.

—AFP

Norway mourns WWII resistance fighter who halted Nazis’ nuclear drive

OSLO (Norway) — Norwegian World War II hero Joachim Ronneberg, who led a major sabotage operation against the Nazis in his occupied homeland, died on Sunday, aged 99.

Ronneberg’s daring operation was given the Hollywood treatment in 1965 in the film “The Heroes of Telemark” starring Kirk Douglas.

“Ronneberg is probably the last of the best known resistance fighters to pass away,” Norway’s Prime Minister Erna Solberg told the NTB news agency.

Ronneberg trained with the Norwegian resistance in Britain and in February 1943 led a six-man team on a secret mission called Operation Gunnerside.

They sabotaged a plant in southern Norway that produced heavy water, a component in early nuclear energy research, putting a halt to the Nazis’ nuclear weapon ambitions.

Situating near the city of Rjukan, the Vemork plant at the time was the only one in the world that produced significant quantities of heavy water.

After the war he turned to journalism and for a long time was reticent about his wartime experiences.

Then in the 1970s he broke his silence, and became known for his involvement with young people to make them aware of the dangers of war.

“Those growing up today need to understand that we must always be ready to fight for peace and freedom,” he said.—AFP

Nationalists on top in Poland’s local polls, but lose in Warsaw

WARSAW (Poland) — Poland’s governing nationalists came out on top in regional elections on Sunday, but were losing to opposition centrists in mayoral races in large cities including the capital Warsaw, exit polls showed.

Sunday’s ballot was the first since a 2015 parliamentary election that handed the Law and Justice (PiS) party an unprecedented parliamentary majority and was seen as a key test for the nationalists as they gear up for EU and legislative elections next year.

The local elections also took place as the PiS has put Poland on a collision course with the European Union by introducing a string of controversial judicial reforms that the bloc has warned pose a threat to judicial independence, the rule of law and ultimately to democracy.

Exit polls by the IPSOS pollsters showed the PiS winning 52.3 per cent of the vote in elections to regional councils across Poland, beating a centrist-liberal coalition headed by the opposition Civic Platform (PO) with 24.7 per cent.

Powerful PiS leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski hailed his party’s victory as a “good sign” for next year’s parliamentary elections, despite the exit poll result suggesting that the PiS is unlikely to be able to govern alone in regional councils.

The PiS currently controls only one of Poland’s 16 regional councils.

Exit polls also showed the Polish Peasants’ Party (PSP), traditionally strong in rural areas, winning 16.6 per cent of the vote, a result likely to turn it into a kingmaker in coalition-building.

The party has previously teamed up with the PO liberals to govern at the national level.

But the PiS nationalists have failed to top in mayoral races in any major city.

PO liberal Rafal Trzaskowski, a 46-year-old former minister and member of the European Parliament, appeared to have won in Warsaw in the first round of voting with the IPSOS exit poll showing him on 54.1 per cent against 30.9 per cent for PiS candidate Patryk Jaki.

PO candidates also dominated in the first round vote in Lodz, Poznan, Lublin and Wroclaw.

Mayoral races in Gdansk and Krakow will likely be decided in a second round of voting on 4 November.

Full official election results will be made public on Tuesday evening at the earliest.—AFP

Norwegian World War II hero Joachim Ronneberg, seen here in 2013 at a London ceremony in his honour for leading an operation to destroy the German occupied Heavy Water Plant in Vemork, Norway. PHOTO: AFP
In Delhi, walk with Gandhi in the President’s House

NEW DELHI (India) — With a moon rock, a chunk of Mount Everest and the chance to stroll with Gandhi, the President’s House in Delhi is lifting the veil on its treasures in its new museum.

The President’s House, a classical palace with an Indian twist, is one of the grandest buildings in India, built by the British as the Viceroy’s House.

Storeys not opened for decades — some because of superstition — were unlocked in a treasure hunt to put together the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum’s collection.

It recreates moments from India’s independence struggle such as Mahatma Gandhi’s landmark protest march against the salt tax in 1930 and the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre of civilians by troops under British command.

South Korea, DPRK, UN Command hold 2nd consultation on disarming JSA in border area

SEOUL — South Korea, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the United Nations Command held the second consultation on Monday on disarmament of the Joint Security Area (JSA) in the inter-Korean border area, Seoul’s defence ministry said.

The closed-door consultation started at 10 am local time (0100 GMT) in the Freedom House, a building controlled by South Korea in the border village of Panmunjom inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

The first one was held on 16 October. The consultation was made to discuss the disarmament of the JSA, which was agreed upon by defence chiefs of the two Koreas during the Pyongyang summit in September between South Korean President Moon Jae-in and top DPRK leader Kim Jong Un.

Soldiers from the two Koreas conducted a 24-hour operation to remove landmines inside the JSA from 1 October. The JSA was set up right after the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice.

The two Koreas planned to withdraw troops, firearms and guard posts from the JSA.

After the disarmament, South Korea and the DPRK would station a patrol of 35 soldiers each, including five officers, with no weapon inside the JSA. —Xinhua

Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Japan, EU to work toward early ratification of FTA

TOKYO — Japan and the European Union agreed Monday to complete respective domestic procedures before year-end to ratify a free trade agreement by March as planned, at a time when both sides are facing tough trade talks with the administration of US President Donald Trump pushing his “America First” policy agenda.

At the inaugural meeting of a high-level dialogue on trade, investment and energy, both parties also agreed to cooperate on infrastructure building in third countries.

“The Japan-EU EPA (economic partnership agreement) is strategically important,” Foreign Minister Taro Kono said at a joint press appearance after the meeting.

“We agreed to make efforts to end domestic processes before the year ends so both parties can feel the benefits as soon as possible,” the minister said alongside industry minister Hiroshige Seko, who also represented Japan.

The inaugural meeting in Tokyo signaled a joint push by Japan and the European Union to counter protectionism as trade tension spikes between the United States and China, the world’s two largest economies.

The two sides agreed to launch the high-level dialogue

Indian state on high health alert for Zika outbreak

NEW DELHI — Indian authorities have put the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh on high health alert in the wake of Zika virus outbreak in Rajasthan.

A senior health official said Monday all hospitals in Uttar Pradesh have been asked to be extra vigilant on people suffering from fever as the northern state could be the next after Rajasthan where over 100 cases have been reported so far.

Meanwhile, the state’s director of communicable diseases, Mithilesh Chaturvedi, has said there was a need to keep strict watch on people suffering from fever as Aedes aegypti, the mosquito that spreads Zika virus, “is widely prevalent” in the northern state.

Chaturvedi has asked airports to take preventive measures particularly in dealing with passengers from Rajasthan.

“‘There should be proper examination of passengers complaining of fever, maculopapular rash or any other associated symptom,’” he told the media.

In Rajasthan, the number of Zika cases has crossed 100, and most are from state capital Jaipur. The Indian Ministry has already set up a control room at the National Centre for Disease Control to undertake regular monitoring of the situation in Rajasthan.

Zika virus disease is spread by daytime-active Aedes mosquitoes. Its symptoms include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, and headache.

This is the third Zika virus outbreak in India since January 2017.

The first outbreak of Zika was reported in India in January 2017 in the western state of Gujarat, while the second outbreak was reported in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in July 2017. Both these outbreaks were contained. —Xinhua

Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS at their summit in Tokyo in July, during which they also signed a free trade accord following five years of negotiations.

The trade pact will eliminate tariffs on most products. Japan and the European Union together account for about a third of the world economy.

“This is just a beginning for closer, very tangible, concrete cooperation between Japan and the European Union,” Jyrki Katainen, vice president of the European Commission in charge of jobs, growth and investment, told the press conference.

Katainen said the current challenge to multilateralism was the biggest in years, adding both parties shared the importance of “rules-based, free trade.”—Kyodo News

Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Hiroshige Seko. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Mr. Akihisa Nishizawa, head of the Finance Ministry’s international economic division, said Monday'S

Mr. Akihisa Nishizawa, head of the Finance Ministry’s international economic division, said Monday'S
Grain pain: Japan’s ageing rice farmers face uncertain future

KAZO (Japan) — A crop once deemed so important it served as a form of currency, Japanese rice has fallen out of favour with younger, westernised consumers, in a shift that has left ageing farmers struggling for survival.

Rice consumption has nearly halved over the past 50 years, and as the older generation of farmers and consumers dies out, some fear the industry will be unable to hold its own in a competitive global market.

Kazuo Ogura, a 66-year-old farmer, is one of the lucky ones. His son Yuichi decided to follow him into the family business.

Ogura senior looks on proudly as his 38-year-old son uses a specially designed machine to plant this year’s harvest, splashing through golden paddy fields that stretch as far as the eye can see.

Surviving in this tough environment is all about “producing quality food at a reasonable price” and harnessing economies provided by large-scale production, Ogura told AFP.

The future of his establishment in Kazo, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of Tokyo, looks assured as Yuichi follows in his father’s footsteps but farms all over Japan are dying as farmers age — the average age of a rice farmer is now 67.

“I was the only one out of 220 students at my local school who went into farming,” Yuichi said. “There are not many people in their twenties who go into farming.”

Even existing farms have been forced to close when their machinery breaks down because farmers cannot afford to replace the costly equipment.

“Machines get more expensive every year. To replace them requires a certain level of profit but that’s difficult when you are farming a small plot,” Yuichi said.

The Oguras have managed to stay competitive so far by joining forces with two other families to farm around 100 hectares of rice fields — nearly 100 times the size of the average plot.

They sell their rice — which belongs to the leading Koshihikari variety — at 300 yen ($2.66) per kilogram.

At a turning point

Although rice consumption in Japan has been falling for more than half a century, the crop’s exalted status in Japanese culture — where it even serves a religious purpose in Shinto rituals — has ensured its survival until now.

Generous subsidies aimed at controlling supplies and prices have made rice farming one of Japan’s most protected industries, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s government scrapped the policy this year, urging farmers to become more competitive.

Japanese agriculture is “at a turning point”, Ken Saito, who was farm minister until a reshuffle this month, told reporters.

“Farmers have to think about producing food that sells. More than ever, they have to be attuned to the market,” he added.

And as Abe prepares for potential trade negotiations with US President Donald Trump, analysts say he may have to concede some ground on agriculture — which could include Japan’s customary high tariffs on imported rice — in order to avoid getting whacked with US duties on automobiles and other key exports.—AFP

Delhi holds breath as burning farms herald pollution season

ISHARGARH — Harpal Singh struck a match and watched his fields burn, the acrid smoke drifting toward New Delhi where a lethal smog cocktail is once again intensifying over the world’s most polluted megalopolis.

Every November, air pollution in northern India reaches levels unimaginable in most parts of the world, forcing schools shut and filling hospital wards with wheezing patients.

As winter descends, cooler air traps car fumes, factory emissions and construction dust close to the ground, fomenting a toxic brew of harmful pollutants that regularly exceed 30 times the World Health Organization safe limit. The scorge is compounded as farmers like Singh rush to ready their fields for next season’s wheat crop — use fire to quickly and cheaply clear their land.

He knows slash-and-burn farming is illegal and that doing so, year after year, helps sicken millions in the Indian capital and beyond. But local authorities appear powerless to stop it and looming health crisis or not in Delhi — the narrow window to plant for the winter harvest is closing.

“We have no other choice but to burn the straw,” Singh told AFP in Ishargarh, a village in Haryana state, about 120 kilometres (75 miles) northwest of Delhi.

“We know the smoke pollutants the air. But it is the cheapest and easiest way to get rid of the (crop) residue,” the 65-year-old farmer told AFP, as burning straw crackedled and popped behind him.

Delhi’s State Pollution Control Board, said 300,000 rupees ($4100) in fines had been issued and fines were down 40 percent in some areas.

“But our intention is not to take punitive action, but to educate the farmers,” he told AFP.

Farmers represent powerful voting blocs in rural states like Haryana and Punjab, and local authorities are reluctant to upset them. Efforts to persuade farmers, many living below the poverty line, to adopt alternative methods of land clearance have fallen on deaf ears.—AFP

Hydro dam threatens world’s rarest orangutan

JAKARTA — A billion-dollar hydropower dam development in Indonesia that threatens the habitat of the world’s rarest great ape has sparked fresh concerns about the impact of China’s globe-spanning infrastructure drive.

The site of the dam in the Batang Toru rainforest on Sumatra island is the only known habitat of the Tapanuli orangutan, a newly discovered species that numbers about 800 individuals in total.

The $1.6 billion project, which is expected to be operational by 2022, will cut through the heart of the critically endangered animal’s habitat, which is also home to agile gibbons, siamangs and Sumatran tigers.

Indonesian firm PT North Sumatra Hydro Energy is building the power plant with backing from Sinohydro, a Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE) that insures overseas investment projects, and the Bank of China, company documents show.

Chinese SOE Sinohydro, which built the mammoth Three Gorges Dam, has been awarded the design and construction contract for the project.

The development is one of dozens being pushed by the government to improve electricity supply throughout the sprawling archipelago, parts of which are regularly plagued by blackouts. But the Chinese-backed project has sparked fierce resistance from conservationists, who say the potential environmental risk has already seen the World Bank Group shay away from involvement. Its Chinese backers appear undeterred, however, something critics say underscores the troubling environmental impact of Beijing’s trademark “Belt and Road Initiative”, which seeks to link Asia, Europe and Africa with a network of ports, highways and railways.

“This issue is becoming in some ways the face of the Belt and Road initiative,” Professor Peter Lasarow, director of the Centre for Tropical Environmental and Sustainability Science at James Cook University in Australia, told AFP.

“I think this crystallises in a way that people can understand what a tsunami of 7,000-plus projects will mean for nature.”

—AFP
Bollywood star couple announce wedding dates

NEW DELHI (India) — Bollywood superstars Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh announced Sunday that they are tying the knot, ending months of speculation about their relationship.

The pair confirmed they will be married next month in a statement posted on their official Twitter accounts in Hindi and English.

“With the blessings of our families, gives us immense joy in announcing our plans to take the wedding journey together,” Padukone, 33, and Singh 32, reportedly started dating in 2013 but had kept details of their relationship largely out of the public eye. Padukone is one of Bollywood’s highest-paid stars and one to break into Hollywood, starring in “Avengers: Endgame.”

Padukone played a legendary Hindu queen and Singh a medieval Muslim ruler in the flick, which angered hardliners, some of whom burned down cinemas and made threats towards the two stars. Singh debuted in 2010 and has worked in 14 films. Padukone has acted in about 40 movies since 2006. — AFP

Easter Islanders hope to swap a copy for iconic statue in UK museum

SANTIAGO (Chile) — For 150 years, the British Museum has housed one of the iconic, heavy-browed stone figures that Chile’s Easter Island is famous for.

Now the islanders are hoping desperately to get it back.

They plan to build a copy of the four-ton monolith and, potentially swap it for the real thing.

The statue, known as a “moai” and named the Hoa Hakananai’a, is one of hundreds originally found on the island. Carved by Polynesian colonizers somewhere between the 13th and 16th centuries, each of the big-headed figures was considered to represent tribal leaders or deified ancestors.

About a dozen have been removed from the island over the years. Now Camilo Kapu, president of the island’s Ma’u Henua community, said it’s time Hoa Hakananai’a was returned. The Ma’u Henua community, with Chilean government support, launched a campaign in August to persuade the British Museum and Queen Elizabeth II to return the famous moai — in exchange for an exact replica to be carved on Easter Island. — AFP

‘Halloween’ scares up big box-office numbers in North America

HOLLYWOOD (United States) — North American moviegoers really like to be scared, and Universal gleefully accommodated them this weekend as its new release “Halloween” registered an impressive $77.5 million in estimated ticket sales, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations reported on Sunday. That strong three-day number gave the film the second-best opening ever for an October, trailing only “Vendom,” which earlier this month booked an $80-million opening, according to HollywoodReporter.com.

Universal executives could be excused for a bit of gloating — they produced “Halloween” for a microscopic $10 million.

“Halloween” recounts the return of a homicidal masked figure (Nick Castle) 40 years after he set off on a bloody Halloween night killing spree. Jamie Lee Curtis again stars as Laurie Strode, sole survivor of that spree.

Holding tight in second spot was Warner Bros.’ musical drama “A Star Is Born,” with ticket sales of $19.3 million.

The film, the third remake of a 1937 movie, was directed by Bradley Cooper. He plays a hard-drinking musician who falls in love with a young singer (Lady Gaga), only to see her star rise as his plunges.

Sony’s “Vendom” was not far behind, taking in $18.1 million as it approaches $500 million globally. Tom Hardy stars as a journalist who becomes the superpowerful host for an alien creature.

In fourth was another sequel, based on the RL Stine children’s book, stars Wendi McLendon-Covey and Madison Iseman.

Fifth spot went to Universal’s astronaut drama “First Man,” at $8.6 million. The film, directed by Oscar winner Damien Chazelle and starring Ryan Gosling, recounts Neil Armstrong’s historic journey to the moon in 1969.

Rounding out this weekend’s top 10 were:

“The Hate U Give” ($7.5 million)

“Smallfoot” ($6.6 million)

“Night School” ($5 million)

“Bad Times at the El Royale” ($3.3 million)

“The Old Man & The Gun” ($2.1 million). — AFP

I’m really excited for her: Priyanka Chopra on Meghan Markle’s pregnancy

LOS ANGELES — Priyanka Chopra is really excited about good friend Meghan Markle’s pregnancy.

Chopra said she hopes this new phase of motherhood will be “amazing” for the Duchess of Sussex.

“I would, as a friend, just say that I’m really excited for her. I think this is a new phase in every woman’s life and I hope hers is as amazing as she wants it to be,” Chopra told People magazine at JBL Fest in Las Vegas.

Chopra, 36, and Markle, 37, have been close friends for several years. In May, the “Quantico” star attended Markle’s wedding with Prince Harry in England.

Last month, Chopra said that Markle is “doing amazing” after taking on the role as the Duchess of Sussex. — PTI
AI robots may lend hand in Japan’s English classes

SAITAMA (Japan) — Schools in Japan are exploring ways to take advantage of robots equipped with artificial intelligence in the teaching of English as the country plans to make the language a formal subject to be taught at elementary schools from the spring of 2020.

Inside an elementary school classroom in the city of Toda, Saitama Prefecture, a sixth-grade boy was speaking to a small white robot with cat-like ears and long arms standing on two feet on top of his desk.

“How was...?” the boy att- ended Toda Daini Elementary School started out speaking in English, dropping off in the middle of the line not knowing what word should follow.

“Try again,” the robot re- sponded in English.

“I got it!” the boy said in Japanese and gave the correct English answer: “How was it?”

“Very good,” the robot re- plied, making him exclaim, “Yes!”

The city, not far from Tokyo, is known for its efforts to facilitate English teaching, launching language classes in 2004 ahead of the national schedule.

The Musio X robots have been introduced at some of the city’s public elementary and junior high schools on a trial basis, the first such case in the country.

Some students who interacted with the robots said it was more comfortable to talk with them than teachers, while others said it was easier to practice speech.

AKA Corp, the Japanese unit of the robot’s US developer, said Musio X robots have modes for practicing sample sentences and freeform conversation at different levels of English proficiency.

While the robots were originally developed for home use, they were first introduced at a private junior high school in Kyoto in 2016 and have since been introduced at about 30 schools nationwide.

The company said it hopes to enhance the robots’ conversational ability and improve other functions.

In 2011 Japan made English compulsory for fifth and sixth graders as part of extracurricular foreign language activities.

As the country is slated to make English a formal subject for elementary school students in their third year and over from fiscal 2020, what role AI robots will play is in focus.

Toshiyuki Kanamaru, a Ky- to University associate profes- sor, said teachers at elementary schools in particular should be given support through seminars and training, expressing hope that robots will help their efforts.

“Robots can supplement teachers’ roles as conversation partners,” Kanamaru said. “The government, industry and aca- demia must coordinate in con- ducting research to clear qual- ity and cost issues.” —Kyodo News

NEC, Samsung to team up on 5G mobile network systems

TOKYO — NEC Corp and Sam- sung Electronics Co will tie up in the development and global marketing of next-generation telecommunication base sta- tions for mobile phone carriers, sources close to the matter said on Sunday.

The Japanese and South Korean companies are initially developing 5G mobile network systems for mobile phone carriers, launching projects for mobile phone carriers, including Samsung and NEC, and are considering making 5G equipment in the country.

Their plan to expand the network equipment business globally comes after US reg- ulators proposed a ban on network operators’ purchase of equipment from companies receiving government funding, a move seen as an attempt to block Chinese manufacturers from selling 5G equipment in the country.

US lawmakers have voiced concerns about using Chinese network products which they say could open a path for espionage and intellectual property theft in the United States.

—Kyodo News

Japan, Europe launch space probes to survey Mercury

KOUROU (French Guiana) — An Ariane 5 rocket carrying two robotic explorers, separately de- veloped by the Japanese and European space agencies, was launched on Friday from the Kourou space centre in French Guiana on a seven-year journey to Mercury.

The explorers developed by the Japan Space Exploration Agency and the European Space Agency will travel 9 billion kilo- metres to the planet closest to the sun, and orbit around it for about a year collecting data.

The joint Japan-European mission, named BepiColombo after Giuseppe “Bepi” Colombo, a mathematician who played a vital role in planning the multiple fly-bys of the first-ever probe to the planet, is intended to reveal the mysterious history of Mercury’s formation and its internal structure.

JAXA’s Mercury Magneto- sphere Orbiter Mio, a 1.8-meter wide and 2.4-meter high octag- onal column-shaped probe with an antenna capable of extending 15 metres, is designed to survey the planet’s magnetic field and thin atmosphere.

Osamu Shimomura, Nobel laureate in chemistry, dies at 90

TOKYO — Scientist Osamu Shimomura, a 2008 Nobel laureate in chemistry known for his research on the mysterious green glow of jellyfish, has died at age 90, Nagasaki University said on Sunday.

Shimomura, a graduate of the university, died on Friday in Nagasaki, southwestern Ja- pan. He won the Nobel Prize with Martin Chalfie and Roger Y’Tsien of the United States for the discovery and development of green fluorescent protein.

—Kyodo News
Myanmar to host Badminton International Series in 2019

MYANMAR is going to host Badminton International Series in October in 2019, said a source of Myanmar Badminton Federation.

Myanmar Badminton Federation is participating in international tournaments later years while it is hosting tournaments at Asian level.

In partnership with the World Badminton Federation, Asia Badminton Federation and Southeast Asia Badminton Federation, Myanmar is hosting international badminton tournaments in a row.

The MBF held Asian Youth Badminton Tournament at National Indoors Stadium-1 in Yangon in 2017 and at Mandalay Thiri Sports Center in Mandalay in 2018. The badminton sports training hall was built on Anawrahta Road in Yangon, but it is not wide enough for holding the international tournaments. Therefore, the badminton tournament was held at National Indoors Stadium-1 in Yangon. The MBF submitted a plan holding international badminton tournaments to be held in Yangon to the Ministry of Health and Sports with the purpose of winning the support of the fans.

The MBF scheduled to hold Badminton International Series in Yangon during October in 2019. The athletes from European countries in addition to the ones from Asia and Southeast Asia are taking part in the international tournament. The MBF has already planned to participate in other international badminton tournaments next year. —Htut Htut (Twantay)

Pre-press conference on Asian U-19 Women’s Qualification to be held on 23 October

A pre-press conference on Group-F of the 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Qualification to be hosted by Myanmar will be held in Yangon on 23 October, said a source of Myanmar Football Federation.

The pre-press conference will take place at Inya Lake Hotel on 23 October. The captains and the chief coaches of host Myanmar, Iran and Lao will attend the pre-press conference.

The Group-F qualification matches will be held in Thuwunna Stadium, Yangon from 24 to 28 October. Host Myanmar will play against Lao on 26 October and Iran on 28 October within last two days of the qualification tournament. All qualification matches will be held only in Thuwunna Stadium at 6 pm.

Myanmar is likely to advance the next round of the qualification because the opponents’ teams are weak in football tactics.

Myanmar U-19 women’s football squad is comprised of 23 players. Daw Thet Thet Win will act as the head coach. —Htut Htut (Twantay)

Myanmar U-16 women’s football squad to demonstrate friendly matches early 2019

AS part of preparation for taking part in second round of the 2019 Asian U-16 Women Qualification, Myanmar U-16 women’s football squad has planned to warm-up matches early 2019, said a source of Myanmar Football Federation.

Myanmar U-16 women’s has begun a camp training starting from 8 October. It submitted its plan to the MFF before the qualification. Myanmar U-16 women’s will go on a foreign training tour in January. It submitted a plan to hold the international football tournament in Myanmar to MFF.

The second round qualification was held in September. Myanmar was in the Group-E together with Nepal, Malaysia and the Philippines. It was hosted by Nepal. Myanmar won Malaysia with 3-0, Nepal with 11-1 and Philippines with 5-1 and advanced the second round qualification.

The second round qualification will be held from 23 February to 3 March in 2019. It will be divided into two groups. The first round qualified teams are Myanmar, Australia, China, Viet Nam, Philippines, Iran, Lao and Bangladesh. —Htut Htut (Twantay)

Westwood cuts Garcia lead before storms return

SOTOGRANDE (Spain) — Former world number one Lee Westwood cut Sergio Garcia’s lead to three strokes at the Valderrama Masters on Sunday, before thunderstorms returned to push the event into a fifth day.

Already cut to 54 holes after several interruptions through the week, tournament host Garcia started his third and final round with a four-shot lead on 10-under par.

But the 45-year-old Westwood, playing with his son Sam as caddie this week, poured in four birdies in eight holes before being forced from the course to ignite hopes of an unlikely 24th European Tour title and first since April 2014.

Garcia, though, remains in control as he looks for a third straight victory in the tournament, after following a birdie on the par-five fourth hole with a bogey on the next to sit par for his round through seven holes heading into Monday’s finish.

Irishman Shane Lowry and Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano both made bright starts to their front nines to sit tied third on six-under overall. — AFP

PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar U-16 women’s players are seen in a training session. PHOTO: MFF