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Myanmar State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (L) smiles at Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan during a welcome ceremony for leaders attending the Belt and Road Forum, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China May 14, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

State Counsellor attends Belt and Road Forum in Beijing

STATE COUNSELLOR Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was one of the many political and economic heavyweights who attended the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held at the China National Convention Centre in Beijing yesterday.

The One Belt and One Road (OBOR) forum is an ambitious project by China to reopen, extend and re-energize the ancient sea and land trade routes originally used to sell spices and silk.

Under the OBOR initiative are the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road that will connect Europe and Asia.

Joining Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the forum's opening ceremony yesterday were Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, United Nations Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres, Managing Director of the International Monetary

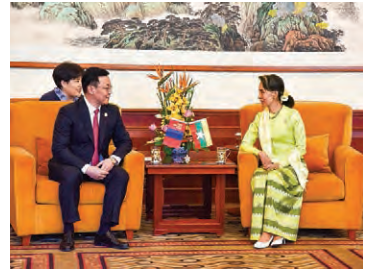
Fund Christine Lagarde, the heads of ASEAN countries such as Viet Nam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Cambodia, Lao PDR, heads of countries on the European continent including Greece and Belarus as well as leaders from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Korea and Ethiopia.

At the event, Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, gave an opening speech and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Turkey Recep Tayyip

Erdogan and United Nations Secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres gave speeches of greeting.

In the evening, the State Counsellor together with her entourage attended a dinner honouring the visiting Heads of State and organisations held at the Great Hall of the People and later viewed a play performed in honour of the forum attendees at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA).

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Freshwater fish ponds opened in Maungtaw

FRESHWATER fish ponds in villages in the Maungtaw District that will spur prawn and fish breeding were opened by the regional government using its own budget, according to the official of Fishery Department.

“Now we start freshwater fish and prawn breeding as the state government will provide monetary help to dig fish ponds at the rate of an acre per village in the region,” said U Tun Tin, Deputy Director of Maungtaw District Fishery Department. “Through freshwater fish and prawn breeding sites in the region established last year, we can give breeding methods, freshwater fingerlings; special training courses and other upgrading courses to the villagers as soon as possible. It is expected the freshwater fish breeding will attain remarkable development within three years will follow the breeding level of Yangon and Ayeyawady Regions soon.”

The fisheries department has already dug freshwater

breeding ponds in five villages including Kayemyine village, Shwebaho village, Nanyakine village, Myothit village and Oo Daung village among the eighty-two villages in the region. The ponds were 100 per cent finished and the breeding processes will start when the rain comes. The projects will be extended from five to 10 villages first and then to all villages, according to the local district fishery department.

River catfish, a variety of carp and fish of the Thai Burbus species have already been breeding in freshwater breeding sites in the Maungtaw District. Extended acres for the breeding ponds and new genetically modified species of fishes will be undertaken by the department, according to an official of the department.—Maung Sein Lwin (Myanma Alinn) ■



A worker checks the fish at the fish farm in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG THANT**

Operating room to be opened at Maungtaw hospital

A modern operation theatre in Maungtaw District Hospital, Rakhine State, will be opened in June, the first of its kind in the region, it is learnt from Maungtaw District Hospital.

The increased level of care will be a much-needed boost to the healthcare of the local people of Maungtaw District, medical officials said.

“Currently there is no patient of special case in this hospital. Only a few patients with common cases of ordinary illness, child-birth cases, cases of child asthma, malaria and tuberculosis are now taking treatment in the hospital”, said, Dr. Soe Aung Than, a surgeon at Maungtaw District Hospital. “We, the doctors here, are providing proper treatment regardless of race and religion. With the aid from the State and NGOs, patients are given necessary medicine free of charge as much as possible. Patients have to buy only medicines which we don’t have in the hospital. We provide care for patients without any prejudice or favouritism.”

Maungtaw District Hospital has one medical superintendent, five assistant doctors, a specialist surgeon, an anaesthesia specialist, an obstetrics and gynaecology specialist and 20 nurses giving 24-hour healthcare to the people of



Doctors gives treatment to a patient at Maungtaw District Hospital. **PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG THANT**

Maungtaw. There are also three hospitals at the village tract level at Alethangyaw, Kyainechaung and Aungthebye villages in Maungtaw District.

Since Thitagu Sayadaw Dr. Ashin Nyanissara has donated a generator and accessory instruments for a surgical theatre to the Maungtaw District Hospital, the operation theatre will be opened and advanced medical care will become available to the local people. Modern medical apparatus such as an anaesthesia machine and electronic surgical instruments has been handed over to the hospital. After some renovation of the building, the operation theatre will be opened in June.

“I have been referred to this hospital from Buthidaung hospital

just two days ago. The specialist doctor tells me that I need to undergo an operation. I don’t know when. The doctors are coming every day at 9am for inspection. Buthidaung hospital refers me to this Maungtaw District Hospital to get better administration if I need to undergo an operation.” said a patient.

Maungtaw District Hospital was designated as a 50-bed hospital, but the hospital has regularly handled incoming patients beyond the hospital’s capacity and it is planned to be expanded to a 100-bed hospital. The expansion of the four-storey building is also going to include housing for the hospital staff under the State budget.—Maung Sein Lwin (Myanma Alinn) ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife present donation to the Members of the Sangha. **PHOTO: MNA**

2nd donation for Buddha Image and a garden held in Kengtung

A CEREMONY to donate cash to establishing a Buddha garden and Abaya Mudra Buddha Image near Pan Kwe Village was held in Kengtung on 13 May.

After Venerable Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kawwida, had delivered a sermon at the ceremony, Commander-in-Chief Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla presented the donations through the commander of a military region.

The Senior General received the donations of Tatmadaw family (Army, Navy and Air), Kanbawza Company, Max Myanmar Company, IGE Company, Chan Hein Company and Shwe Than Lwin Company and other donors.

The total amount of donation was more than Ks 8497 lakh.

Afterwards, the Senior General and party viewed the model of the Abaya Mudra image and photos of the construction works.

At noon, the Senior General and wife attended the ceremony in Sasana Beikman in Kengtung where rice, cooking oil and money were donated to monks and nuns.

Presiding Sayadaw of Kyaingyin Monastery Venerable Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Kemasara and other Members of the Sangha attended the ceremony.

Afterwards, the Senior General and wife presented the donations to Kyaingyin Sayadaw and officials from Tatmadaw to other Sayadaw and Buddhist monks.

The ceremony ended with concluding remarks by the Samsara Aye Sayadaw preached and sharing merits for the donations. The total amount of donations for 74 monasteries was 316 rice bags, 504 viss of cooking oil and Ks 162 lakh from the Tatmadaw families.—Myanmar News Agency ■



A gale force wind hit Kani, Sagaing Region, killing two on Sunday. Sagaing Region Government and MPs rushed to the strong wind-hit areas and assisted in evacuation and supply aid to the victims of the disaster.—GNLM ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Mr. Jargaltulga Erdenebat, Prime Minister of Mongolia. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi holds talks with Mrs. Beata Szydlo, Prime Minister of Poland. **PHOTO: MNA**

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets separately with Swiss President, Prime Ministers of Mongolia, Poland and Sri Lanka in Beijing

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met separately with the President of Switzerland, Prime minister of Mongolia, Poland and Sri Lanka yesterday in Beijing.

The State Counsellor met with H.E. Mrs. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation at local standard time 10:30 a.m. in the InterContinental hotel and discussed cordially about cooperating for better relations and development.

Later at local standard time 11:30 a.m. in the same hotel, the State Counsellor met with H.E. Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and held discussions on promoting better relations, cooperating for development and ways to improve cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shakes hands with Mrs. Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation. **PHOTO: MNA**



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meets with Mr. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. **PHOTO: MNA**

Similarly, in Beijing Diaoyutai State Guest House, the State Counsellor met separately with H.E. Mrs. Beata Szydlo, Prime Minister of Poland

at local standard time noon 12:15 p.m. and with H.E. Mr. Jargaltulga Erdenebat, Prime Minister of Mongolia at local standard time 2:30 p.m. and had friendly

discussions about improving bilateral relations, cooperating in economic matters and multi-sector development.

Present at the meetings

were Minister of State for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Tin, Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thit Lin Ohn and officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

State Counsellor attends Belt and Road Forum in Beijing

FROM PAGE-1

China aims to connect European and Asian countries by combining road and maritime trade routes under the OBOR programme that is the extension of the “Silk Road” trading route.

The OBOR programme led by President Xi Jinping will bring about economic development to all the countries

through which OBOR passes.

The project will benefit regional economic cooperation, promote exchange and interaction among different cultures, and strive for world peace and development that will potentially benefit people in all the countries of the world. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Appointment of Cuban Ambassador to Myanmar agreed

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of H.E. Mr. Hector Conde Almeida as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Cuba to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr. Hector Conde Almeida was born in 1963.

He holds a Master's degree in European Law, Carlos III University in Madrid of Spain. He served as a Specialist on International Agen-

cies, Executive Secretariat for Nuclear Affairs, dealing with nuclear scientific affairs of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment from 1987 to 1995. He also served as the head of the International Cooperation Division under the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry from 1995 to 2006.

Afterwards, he served as the first secretary of the office for Economic, Commercial and Scientific/Technical Affairs at the Cuban Embassy in the Peo-

ple's Republic of China from 2006 to 2011. He also served as the Deputy Director General at the Department of International Relations of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment from 2011 to 2016. He can speak Spanish, English and Russian.

H.E. Mr. Hector Conde Almeida will be concurrently accredited as Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok. — Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Yangon MPs discuss implementation of safe school bus system

A PLAN to implement a safe school bus system for all government-run schools and private schools in Yangon this academic year was recently discussed among Yangon Region MPs and city authorities.

To reduce Yangon's worsening traffic congestion and improve safety, the Yangon Region Government is putting forth continuous efforts to develop a standardized system of school

bus transport service.

As part of the plan, negotiations were made in late April between the regional government and officials from 26 schools, which often experience the problem of school traffic jams.

Under the new system, the authorities will only allow the running of buses equipped with public safety facilities after inspection, according to Yangon Region Hluttaw representa-

tives. There is no order which says that school bus operators must buy new buses to replace their existing buses according to the new scheme, it is just a rumour, the MPs added.

Over the past five years, there was a plan to limit some types of cars such as mini light trucks, which are not suitable to use as a school transport vehicle. During this period, some schools replaced light trucks

with mini buses and super custom cars as a part of preparation for the new plan.

An agreement to purchase 200 new school buses from Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) and Posco Daewoo Corporation was signed by the Yangon Region Government on 10 May, with plans to support schools wishing to engage in school bus operations.—Hsu Hnin Lae ■

Housing projects in big cities to be exhibited on 19 May

LOW-COST apartments and condominiums will be sold at Myanmar's biggest property expo to be held this month in Yangon, according to iMyanmarHouse.com, an online property trading website.

This is the fifth time the iMyanmarHouse.com has organised the country's biggest

real estate expo in Yangon. The new event will start on 19 May and last until 21 May at Yangon's Tatmadaw Exhibition Hall, with plans to showcase a wide range of housing projects in big cities including Yangon, Taunggyi, Mandalay and Myeik.

According to the event organizer, prices for condomin-

ium apartments are starting from about Ks60 million.

All exhibited housing units and condominiums will be sold through an installment payment plan.

More than 50 construction companies will take part in the event to exhibit their housing schemes including flats as well

as land.

At the three-day expo, property experts will share their knowledge and experience to the visitors. For further information, visit www.imyanmarhouse.com/expo and dial hotline numbers 09 252605671~5 of the event organizer.—GNLM ■

About 6,000 heritage buildings exist in nine townships in Yangon

YANGON has about 6,000 heritage buildings in nine townships including downtowns,

according to a survey conducted by the Yangon Heritage Trust, a non-governmen-

tal organisation founded by historian U Thant Myint-U to conserve historic buildings

in the city.

Since 2013, the YHT has conducted a survey to collect data about heritage buildings across the city.

The numbers of heritage structures in Yangon reached about 6,000 after YHT finished the survey programmes in nine townships — Pazundaung, Botahtaung, Kyauktada, Pabedan, Lanmadaw, Latha, Kyimyindaing, Ahlon and Dagon.

The body is currently collecting heritage data in Bahan Township, gathering information about government offices and residential buildings that are more than 100 years old.

In cooperation with the Yangon City Development Committee and Royal Philips Corporation, the YHT will install a commemorative blue plaque at the Yangon Stock Exchange building located on Sule Pagoda Road in downtown Yangon on 16 May.—200 ■



The heritage building in downtown Yangon. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**



A staff of a gold shop waits for customers in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Stamp duties of Ks5,000 and Ks10,000 to be levied on gold purchases

STAMPS worth Ks5,000 and Ks10,000 will be required on gold purchases at domestic gold and jewellery shops starting on 1st June, according to the Internal Revenue Department.

According to 2017 Tax Law, one percent of tax will be levied on gold buyers, whereas the purchasers of platinum and highly purified gold foil have to pay five per cent, it is learnt.

Previously, gold and jewellery shop owners paid the tax negotiating with the tax officers.

Although a levy on gold purchases has been imposed since 1st April, there was no stamp duty available at the gold and jewellery shops.

The stamp is soon to be issued and the gold shops are asked to collect the tax and record it in a list before the stamp is issued, it is learnt.

Some shops have started to collect the tax before the stamp comes out while other owners have not yet started to collect the tax.—200 ■

Myawady border trade up by over US\$16million in April

THE value of trade through Myawady border camp from 1st to 28th April in the current fiscal year 2017-2018 was up by over US\$16million compared to that in the same point of last FY.

The country is conducting border trade with neighbouring countries via 16 border trade camps: trading with China through Muse, Lweje, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung, with Thailand through Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Htee Khee,

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

The border trade value between Thailand and Myanmar as of 28th April this FY increase by over US\$24million when compared to that in the similar period of last FY, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

Thailand-Myanmar border trade as of 28th April this FY fetched US\$83.273million, whereas the trade value of last FY amounted to US\$58.919million.

Border trade with neighbouring countries as of 28th April totalled over US\$425million, which is up from over US\$414million last FY. Meanwhile, normal trade with foreign partners hit over US\$ 1.4billion, according to the Commerce Ministry.—Mon Mon ■

Lab Lab bean price surges from foreign demand

THE price of Lab Lab beans has hit an all-time high because of the high demand from India and China, according to Mandalay pulses market.

Lab Lab beans, often used in soups and curries, fetched the formerly highest price of Ks100,000 per three-basket-bag in previous years. During the early harvest time, the opening price of beans was Ks90,000 per bag while the price ascended up to Ks110,000 a bag in the post-Thingyan period.

On 12th May, the Lab Lab bean price surged to Ks140,000, said U Soe Win Myint, the owner of Soe Win Myint depot from Mandalay. The demand of Lab

Lab beans is high when the yield is low, resulting in a record high price. The price is likely to remain on the rise. With the high price of Lab Lab beans, local businessmen chose other bean varieties to be used in roasted bean businesses, said U Soe Win Myint. The Lab Lab beans are mostly cultivated as a winter crop in the central Myanmar and delta regions. The beans are harvested in February. Pigeon pea prices, which dropped to Ks56,000 per three-basket-bag, rose to Ks62,000 per bag on 12th May, which caught the attention of those businessmen who store the beans.—Min Htet Aung (Mankopwar) ■

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Xi says China, Russia play role of “ballast stone” in world peace, stability

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Sunday that China and Russia have played their due role in safeguarding regional and global peace and stability.

The two countries, which have been committed to seeking political solutions to the Syrian conflict and the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue, have played the role of “ballast stone” in safeguarding regional and global peace and stability, Xi said while meeting with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. Hailing sound development of China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination, Xi said development and deepening bilateral ties are the strategic choice for the two countries.

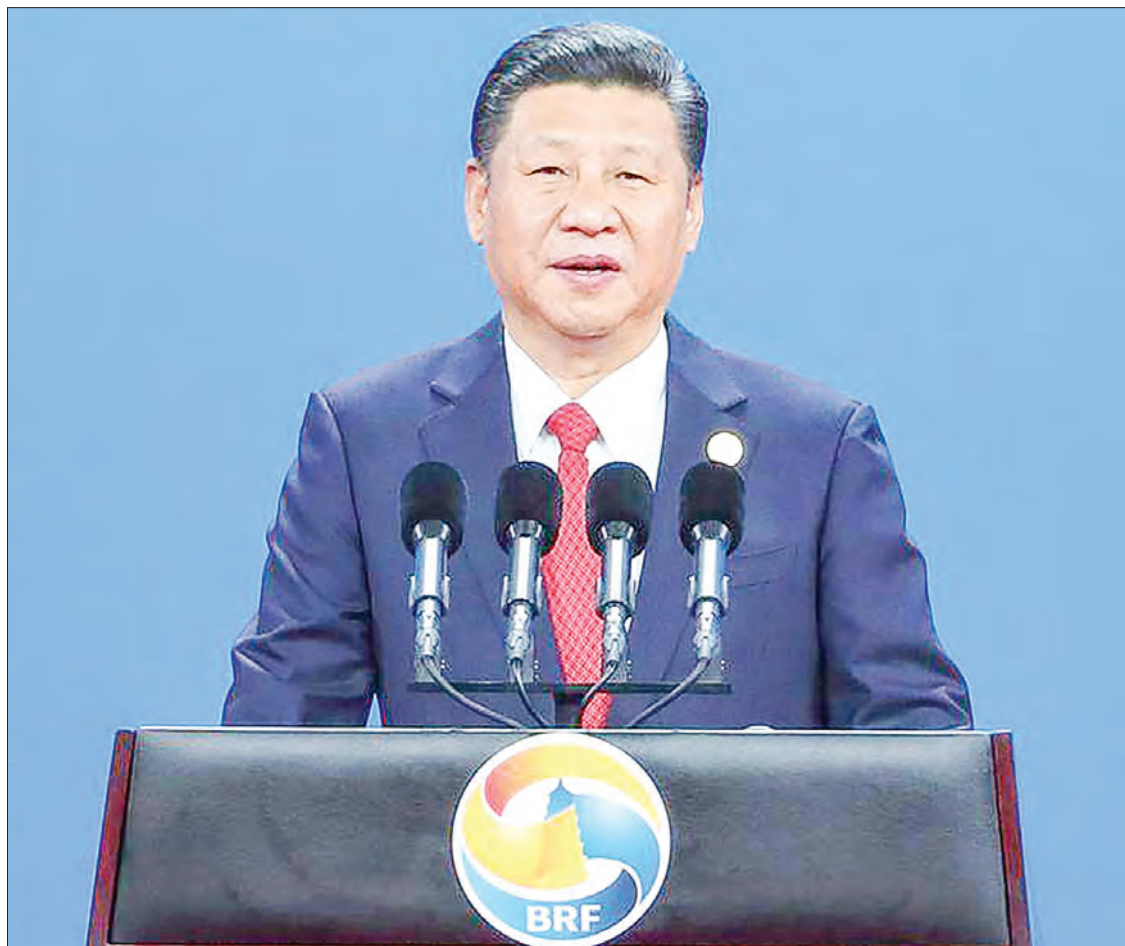
He called for all-out efforts

to promote and safeguard the bilateral relations despite changes in the international arena.

The two countries should deepen cooperation in economy and trade, energy and other traditional areas, while exploring new areas for cooperation, like innovation and technology, for higher-level pragmatic cooperation, Xi said.

He also said the two countries should enhance strategic coordination, jointly promote sustainable and stable growth in the world economy, work toward peaceful solutions for international and regional hot-spot issues, and improve international governance systems to inject “positive energy” into world peace and stability.

Progress has been made since China and Russia agreed to align development of the



Chinese President Xi Jinping delivers a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the Belt and Road Forum (BRF) for International Cooperation in Beijing, capital of China on 14 May, 2017. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Belt and Road Initiative with the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) two years ago, and pragmatic cooperation should be pushed forward for tangible outcomes, Xi said.

The two countries’ active

communication and coordination as well as mutual support on major international issues have become important stabilizing factors for the international community, Putin said.

He noted Russia is willing

to work with China to align the EEU with the Silk Road Economic Belt and deepen bilateral cooperation in areas including education, energy, manufacturing, sports, tourism and trade.

—Xinhua ■

Indonesia warns of more cyber attack havoc as business week starts

JAKARTA — The Indonesian government said the global cyber attack that takes computer data hostage is likely to cause more havoc when offices reopen for business on Monday.

A large hospital in Jakarta was struck by the “ransomware” unleashed on Friday, but there has been no evidence so far to suggest that Indonesia was one of the worst-hit countries.

Communication and Information Minister Rudiantara urged companies to update their security before connecting computers to local area networks when the week starts.

“This is crucial for businesses when reopening on Monday, please beware and anticipate, and take preventive steps against the WannaCry malware attack,” Rudiantara told a news conference.

Cyber extortionists tricked victims into opening malicious malware attachments to spam emails. The ransomware encrypts data on computers, demanding payments of \$300-\$600 to restore access.

The attack, which leverages hacking tools believed to have been developed by the US National Security Agency, has infected tens of thousands of computers in nearly 100 countries.

Globally, hospitals, companies, and universities have been affected, with the most disruptive attacks reported in Britain, where hospitals and clinics were forced to turn away patients after losing access to computers on Friday.

The Indonesian minister advised those hit by the malware against paying ransoms to regain access to encrypted

data, as there was no guarantee the virus spreader would decrypt files.

On Saturday, an official at his ministry said that at least two Jakarta hospitals, Dharmas and Harapan Kita, were affected by the attack.

Harapan Kita later denied it had been affected.

In Dharmas, a nurse reported at 5 am on Saturday that a computer unit was displaying a message demanding \$300, according to a hospital staff member, who only gave his name as Willy.

An hour later, many more computers were found to be infected and hospital staff said that data was locked on about 400 units in all at the hospital.

The attack has not affected critical health services but has caused bottlenecks in patient admissions process, Willy said. —Reuters ■

Top ASEAN military officials to meet in Manila

MANILA — The military chiefs from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) started arriving in Manila on Sunday to attend conferences to strengthen cooperation among ASEAN militaries in addressing common security challenges facing the region.

Col Edgard Arevalo, chief of the public affairs office of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), said in a statement that the military chiefs from the 10 ASEAN nations will attend the ASEAN Chief of Defence Forces Informal Meeting (ACDFIM) and related meetings that will run from 15 to 19 May.

He said regional issues such as maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, counter-terrorism, infectious disease management and peacekeeping will stay high in the agenda of the meeting.

He said General Eduardo Ano, the AFP chief of staff, will

chair the five-day meetings.

The ACDFIM is an informal networking and confidence building platform among ASEAN chiefs of defence forces. It has since developed into an important avenue for ASEAN militaries to build capacity and strengthen practical cooperation.

Before the ACDFIM, he said, ASEAN senior operations and intelligence officers will convene for this year’s ASEAN Military Operations Informal Meeting (AMOIM) and ASEAN Military Intelligence Informal Meeting (AMIIM). He said the meetings “encourage common perspectives and understanding for promoting and fostering strong relationships and security cooperation in the region.”

The Philippines is the chairman of ASEAN this year. The bloc groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.—Xinhua ■



People watch a news report on North Korea firing a ballistic missile, at a railway station in Seoul, South Korea on 14 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

North Korea fires missile days after new South Korea leader pledges dialogue

SEOUL — North Korea fired a ballistic missile on Sunday in defiance of calls to rein in its weapons programme, days after a new leader in its old rival South Korea came to power pledging to engage it in dialogue.

The US Pacific Command said it was assessing the type of missile but it was “not consistent with an intercontinental ballistic missile”. Japanese Defence Minister Tomomi Inada said the missile could be of a new type.

The missile flew 700 km (430 miles) and reached an altitude of more than 2,000 km (1,245 miles), according to officials in South Korea and Japan, further and higher than an intermediate-range missile North Korea successfully tested in February from the same region of Kusong, northwest of its capital, Pyongyang. North Korea is widely be-

lieved to be developing an intercontinental missile tipped with a nuclear weapon that is capable of reaching the United States. US President Donald Trump has vowed not to let that happen. An intercontinental ballistic missile is considered to have a range of more than 6,000 km (3,700 miles). Experts said the altitude the missile tested on Sunday reached meant it was launched at a high trajectory, which would limit the lateral distance it traveled.

But if it was fired at a standard trajectory, it would have a range of at least 4,000 km (2,500 miles), experts said. Kim Dongyub, of Kyungnam University's Institute of Far Eastern Studies in Seoul, said he estimated a standard trajectory would give it a range of 6,000 km.

Japan said the missile flew for 30 minutes before dropping

into the sea between North Korea's east coast and Japan. The North has consistently test-fired missiles in that direction.

“The launch may indeed represent a new missile with a long range,” said Jonathan McDowell of the Harvard Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, referring to the estimated altitude of more than 2,000 km. “It is definitely concerning.” In Washington, the White House said Trump “cannot imagine Russia is pleased” with the test as the missile landed closer to Russia than to Japan.

“With the missile impacting so close to Russian soil — in fact, closer to Russia than to Japan — the President cannot imagine that Russia is pleased,” it said.

The launch served as a call for all nations to implement stronger sanctions against North Korea, it added.—Reuters ■

India skips China's Silk Road summit, warns of “unsustainable” debt

NEW DELHI — India has not sent an official delegation to attend the “Belt and Road Forum” in Beijing and instead criticised China's global initiative, warning of an “unsustainable debt burden” for countries involved.

Chinese President Xi Jinping is hosting dozens of world leaders and senior officials on Sunday for the country's biggest diplomatic showcase of the year, touting his vision of a new “Silk Road” that opens trade routes across the globe.

Government officials from New Delhi did not travel, Indian officials said, although scholars from Indian think-tanks have flown to Beijing to attend some of the meetings at the forum.

Indian foreign ministry spokesman Gopal Baglay, asked whether New Delhi was participating in the summit, said India could not accept a project that compromised its sovereignty.

India is incensed that one of the key Belt and Road projects passes through Kashmir and Pakistan. The nuclear-armed rivals have fought two of their three wars over the disputed region.

“No country can accept a project that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity,” Baglay said.

He also warned of the danger of debt. One of the criticisms of the Silk Road plan is that host countries may struggle to pay back loans for huge infrastructure projects being carried out and funded by Chinese compa-

nies and banks.

“Connectivity initiatives must follow principles of financial responsibility to avoid projects that would create unsustainable debt burden for communities,” Baglay said.

New Delhi's criticism of the Belt and Road initiative came as Xi pledged \$124 billion to the plan, and called for the abandonment of old models based on rivalry and diplomatic power games.

Leaders from 29 countries and ministerial delegates from many more are attending the forum in Beijing, including India's smaller neighbours — not just Pakistan, but also Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Baglay said India supported greater connectivity across the region and listed the initiatives it was involved in, including highway projects and the North-South corridor in Central Asia, but he said these had to be developed in a transparent manner.

“We are of firm belief that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality,” he said in a statement.

As well as the corridor through Pakistan, India is worried more broadly about China's economic and diplomatic expansion through Asia, and in particular across countries and waterways that it considers to be its sphere of influence.—Reuters ■

China, Philippines to start South China Sea talks — ambassador

BEIJING — China and the Philippines will start bilateral consultations on the disputed South China Sea this week, the Philippine ambassador to Beijing said, as Manila looks to ease tensions with Asia's top economic power.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, who is visiting Beijing to attend a summit on China's ambitious new Silk Road plan, has opted to court China for its business and investment and avoid the rows over sovereignty that dogged his predecessors.

Philippine ambassador to China Jose Santiago Santa Romana told reporters late on

Saturday that the consultations between the two countries would take place in China.

He added that the dispute between the two countries “cannot be resolved overnight”. China has not publicly announced any such talks. Duterte has been accused by critics of taking a defeatist position on China and on defending Philippine sovereignty. He considers his approach to be pragmatic and says challenging China risks triggering war.

Santa Romana said Duterte's attendance at the Silk Road summit should not be seen as the Philippines abandoning or

“giving up” its claim of sovereignty in the South China Sea.

The previous Philippine government filed a case in 2013 with the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on maritime boundaries. Last year the tribunal invalidated China's claim to sovereignty over most of the South China Sea. Duterte has put the ruling on the back burner and said he will revisit it later in his term. China claims most of the energy-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and

Vietnam also have claims.

Ahead of the bilateral consultations, special envoy for intercultural dialogue Jose de Venecia proposed a three-way energy exploration effort at the disputed Spratly Islands between the Philippines, Viet Nam and China.

De Venecia said in Beijing that such an effort would promote peace and economic development. Duterte visited China last October after bilateral relations had soured over the South China Sea under the previous Philippine administration of Benigno Aquino.

The detente has seen China

commit to three infrastructure projects and pledge to donate two bridges, said Santa Romana, without giving an investment figure. China has also eased import curbs on Philippine bananas, he said.

“If you go around Beijing right now and you go to the market, you will see ... Philippine bananas. The Chinese are eating Philippine bananas again and Philippine pineapples,” he said.

“They have promised to buy over \$1 billion worth of tropical fruits from the Philippines and they are interested in buying more.”—Reuters ■

Everywhere we are seeing and hearing gridlock. Why?

Khin Maung Oo

EVERY individual is a selfish being by nature. But, people cannot live alone and they have to live in societies, to have a social life, to solve difficulties, dangers and natural disasters and to create our surroundings or our world as developed and pleasant places to live in. Every person has a different mind, hence in a society one differs from others in minds or desires or needs. We must accept that “Agreeing to differ is our inborn right.” The most important thing is to live in societies without any conflicts or altercations. As long as we always prioritize our self-interests, we will never reach our goal. So as to live in harmony with society, sometimes we have to concede our hopes and desires to others, as do others in

turn so that both sides can reach a compromise.

Today, we are seeing and hearing gridlock everywhere, especially on roads or in meetings. Being an overcrowded city, Yangon is facing problems of traffic jam almost every day. It is annoying for the government itself and city dwellers. Much as a great numbers of motor vehicles are increasing in the city, we will never meet such a big problem to that extent if the drivers obey traffic rules. Some may claim that this is attributed to power failure and shortage of traffic police and traffic lights in crowded areas. If it is asserted so, I will deny it because many undisciplined drivers tend to drive without abiding by any rules and laws. Some drive without noticing or caring about the red lights. A driver himself must keep in his mind

that lives of passengers are in his hand. And, those on board must warn him not to do so. But, instead, people fail to warn him to avoid quarrels. Undisciplined parking may cause gridlock. Had all the vehicles followed traffic rules, we would not have gridlock.

In meetings as well, especially in the meeting in which public opinions or desires are gathered, such kinds of gridlock are found. Every individual has his own right to express his idea or mind or choice. But, sometimes we must concede our desires to others to bring about benefits for the majority, against our wishes. Here, I would like to express the two words—bargaining chip and bargaining power. Bargaining’s literal meaning is discussion of prices, etc. with the aim of reaching an agreement that is acceptable. A person

or a group of people can use a bargaining chip to get an advantage for themselves when they are trying to reach an agreement with another group. A person or a group of people has bargaining power when trying to reach an agreement with another group in a business or political situation.

The said bargaining chip and bargaining power may bear fruit in the short term. But, they are based on one’s personal gain. Especially in implementing national peace which will bring about the eternal benefit for our future generations, we must remember the following noteworthy words of our State Counselor. She said “what we can give must be considered more than what we can get.” And, it will be a recipe for solving the problem of gridlock in all situations. ■

Myanmar Heritage in “Memory of the World”

Maung Thar (Archaeology)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has started the program “Memory of the World” in 1992 to do assessment on the heritages of the countries and select the heritages that meet the required criteria to be registered in the “Memory of the World” UNESCO had issued the list of heritages that went as far back as 1700 AD registered in the “Memory of the World”. Those heritages registered in “Memory of the World” included both tangible objects and intangible culture.

The aims and objectives of the “Memory of the World” program is primarily to promote the conservation works on historical and cultural heritages of the respective countries.

104 countries in cooperation with 5 organizations had carried out the program and could have registered 338 heritages in the “Memory of the World.” till 2015. Out of 338 heritages which won the registration in “Memory of the World”, 3 heritages were from Myanmar. UNESCO usually makes the assessment on the heritages submitted and issues the list of winner biennially. The three winners from Myanmar are Pitakas Stone Slabs in the Maha Lawka Marazein Pagoda of Mandalay, Gold Leaf letter of Alaung Mintaya U Aung Zeya, Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription.

Pitakas Stone Slab

UNESCO has put the 729 stone slabs with inscription of Pitakas on both side of it in the list of “Memory of the world” in June, 2013. Those 729 stone slabs with Tripitakas texts inscribed on

both side of each slab is metaphorically coined as the World Biggest Book.

The stone tablets with inscriptions of Tripitakas text in Pali were the merit of King Mindon and the inscriptions had been done from 1860 to 1869 taking 7 years 6 months and 14 days to finish the inscription. One stone slab measures 5 ft.in length, 4.5 ft in breadth, 0.5 ft. in thickness and 1 ft. underground.

King Mindon convened a fifth Buddhist Synod from April 15 to 12 September in 1871 with 2400 revered monks discussing and citing the Pitaka texts and after five months of deliberation a new authorized version was agreed on. Those agreed version of Tripitakas were inscribed in Pali on the 792 stone tablets. The texts were also published in 38 printed books, each book having 400 pages. If the Pitakas books are read 8 hours a day, it will take 1 year and 3 months to finish all the books.

Maha Lawka Marazein (World Biggest Book Pagoda) is the one among seven primary buildings which were built contemporaneously with the Yadanabon City (Mandalay city) and it has three wallings around it and the small stupas housing the Pitakas Stone Slabs were set up in the spaces between the walls. The Maha Lawka Marazein pagoda and its world biggest book were built in 1871 and hence the age of the structures is 146 years old.

King Mindon had his men inscribe the Pitakas on the stone slab with intent to safeguard the Pitakas from damage and to make them last till the end of the world, otherwise the scriptures were highly vulnerable as they were traditionally recorded on the palm leaves. Trip-

itaka consists of 5 treatises on Vinayas recorded on 111 stone slabs, 7 treatises on Buddha Abhidhamma recorded on 208 stone slabs, 5 treatises on Nikaya and 3 treatises on Sutta recorded on 410 stone slabs. The space inside the inner wall had 42 slabs, inside the middle wall had 168 slabs and inside the outer wall had 519 slabs. Total cost of this work was kyats 22 crores and 6 millions.

Maha Lawka Marazein pagoda is also known as Kuthodaw Pagoda of King Mindon (Kuthodaw means merits of royal king) as the Pitakas stone slabs were set in the precinct of Maha Lawka Marazein pagoda at the expense from King’s treasury. A memorial stone slab with records of event was fixed at the south-east angle of the pagoda. Those pitakas stone slabs are the memory objects of Myanmar with full record of Buddha’s Teaching on them. We, Myanmar people have to take pride in the vision and farsightedness of King Mindon.



Gold Leaf Letter

The gold leaf Letter of King Alaungphaya, a phenomenal documentary heritage which has been selected to

include in the register of “Memory of the World” in 2015 is now in a foreign country. Alaung Mintaya U Aung Zeya, who founded Konbaung Dynasty sent the gold leaf letter to King of Great Britain, Jorge II in 1756. It is also a prominent historical landmark in 18th century between Myanmar and Great Britain.

The gold leaf letter had been in the underground chamber of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Library of Hanover, Germany for over 250 years. It had emerged and gained attention of public thanks to the effort of Dr. Friedrich Hulsmann. After keeping the code number Ms IV 571a of the letter at the library, he sent the gold leaf letter to Dr. Jacques Leider, an expertise in history and oriental linguistics from Institute of Asian and African Affairs, Hamburg University in July 2006 with request to disclose the meaning and language of the alphabets written on the gold leaf. Dr. Jacques Leider studied the ancient history of the Gold Leaf Letter and distinct political characteristics of Britain and Myanmar. Then, he could discover the fact in 2007 that the gold leaf letter was the authentic one that had been considered being lost for many years. Dr. Jacques Leider wrote a paper in 2009 under the title “Letter from King Alaung Phaya to Jorge II of England” containing 141 pages. The paper described that King Alaung Phaya sent the letter (gold leaf letter) to the British King, Jorge II through the East India Co., with the intention to foster friendly relation between the two countries. The king had his minister, Letwe Nawrahta write the letter on the gold leaf.

SEE PAGE 9



Volunteers from governmental departments in An Township deliver water to villagers of Latkwardwe Village. **PHOTO: AN TOWNSHIP IPRD**

Fighting water shortage in Rakhine

FOR some, the dry season means escaping the oppressive heat by wearing lighter clothing and staying in air-conditioned buildings.

But for many others, it means a months-long, life-saving search for safe drinking water until the rainy season begins.

Across the country, especially in rural areas, communities are receiving aid from the

government, philanthropic organisations, university officials and students to help survive the dry season, during which there is infrequent rain and high temperatures.

Local governmental departments in An Township, Kyaukpyu District, delivered drinking water yesterday to Latkwardwe Village, one of many communities

facing water shortages.

About 1,900 gallons of drinking water were delivered to 665 villagers from 162 households in the village yesterday. Local departments plan to send water to the remaining villages which are facing a water shortage, according to An Township Information and Public Relations Department.—An Township IPRD ■

Help for fighting drought

AS part of efforts for speeding up the fight against drought, the Emergency Rescue and Social Support Development Organization in Yangon was provided with a 3,000-gallon water bowser on 12th May by the KBZ's Brighter Future Myanmar foundation.

The tanker is the 40th one provided by the BFM to philanthropic associations to fight the water shortage nationwide.

A volunteer group in

Kyaukpadaung Township was also provided with a 3,000-gallon bowser on 11th May.

The foundation has provided water bowsters to philanthropic groups nationwide to help them supply water to areas that face a chronic scarcity of water during the dry season.

The foundation also donated a 3,000-gallon bowser to Saytanna Shin Philanthropic Group in Tada Oo Township on 9 May.—Thura Lwin (Eco) ■



The 300-gallon tanker handed over to the Emergency Rescue and Social Support Development Organization in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Myanmar Heritage in "Memory of the World"

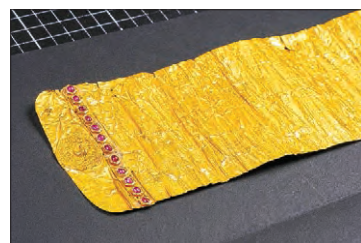
FROM PAGE 8

The gold leaf letter is rectangular in shape having length 55cm and breadth 12cm. The manuscript itself is pure gold leaf on which the letter has been written in Myanmar language. 12 pieces of ruby has been embedded on each end of the gold leaf. King Alaungphaya sent the gold leaf letter to king of Britain on 8 May 1756. The gold leaf letter was put in the ivory casket together with the translated version in English and sent to London, a royal capital of United Kingdom of Great Britain. It had to take about two years to reach the destination and King Jorge II accepted the letter in 1758 and transferred it to the Library of Hanover which, then was the region under the jurisdiction of Great Britain. Hanover was the native land of King Jorge II, that is why he sent gold leaf manuscript to his native land Hanover.

The letter begins with lavishing the glory and epithet of the king describing the splendor and great wealth of the King's State, vast lands of vassal states, immense power of armed forces fortified with great elephant and horse forces and etc. and the letter was ending with strong urging to his own progeny to sustain the amicable and friendly relation

with Great Britain.

According to the golden leaf letter, Myanmar had to allow the East India Co., to open the port station at Patheingyi Port. Before that East India Co., had to station at Haingyi Island a bit isolated from the main land where inclement weather was more liable to occur. It was expected British owned East India Co., was highly satisfied with the provision, but no reply had been received from British government.



Golden Leaf Manuscript sent by King Alaung Phaya U Aung Zeya to the British King 261 years ago was very momentous and invaluable historical evidence for not only Myanmar but also for Britain. The gold leaf letter is of outstanding aesthetic value and it is considered a unique attestation in world history as well as in the history of Myanmar and Europe. The digital copy of the Gold Leaf letter is now shown at National Museum in Yangon. This manuscript is considered to be the only one that has been left undamaged, out of many gold

leaf letters issued by Myanmar Kings.

Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription

Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription is also known as Myazedi Stone Inscription. The Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription have won the entry in 2015 to the list of the documentary heritage of world significance known as "Memory of the World Programme." Out of many stone inscriptions of Bagan Period, Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription, a prominent documentary evidence of cultural heritage of Bagan was found in two places, one in the precinct of Myazedi Pagoda and another one in the Bagan Archaeological Museum. One of the two stone inscriptions was found near Myazedi Pagoda of Myingabar village, one and half mile away in the south of Bagan. It was in good condition and now had been placed in the Archaeological Museum (Bagan). Another one found near Gubyaukyi Pagoda was broken into three parts, but fixed them intact again and placed in the precinct of Myazedi Pagoda. As the inscriptions on both stones were the same, Professor U Pe Maung Tin considered the one is the copy of the other one.

Yaza Kumar prince, son of King Kyansittha had his men

engrave the letters on the stone in four languages, Pyu, Mon, Pali and Myanmar. The inscription was believed to have been engraved in 1112 AD. The stone was rectangular pillar in shape, hence having four faces that accommodate one language on each face of the stone.

There was a controversy among the historians whether Yaza Kumar was Kyansittha's own son or not, however, most of the historians believed Yaza Kumar was son of King Kyansittha.

The Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription described the same historical account in different four languages on four sides of the stone. It manifested the significant value in linguistics and also the historical accomplishment of King Kyansittha. Moreover, it records the administration, social and economic affairs, literary works of religion, construction of pagodas, the enslavement of villages by royal princes and princesses, respect for parents and meritorious deeds of Bagan Period. Dr. Bladdin of London University had translated the stone inscription into English and published in 1919. U Pe Maung Tin also translated it into Myanmar and published in 1955.

Yaza Kumar Stone Inscription is a quadrilingual

document that rendered the historical, religious and cultural account of Bagan period in four languages, Pyu, Mon, Pali, Myanmar and it was the oldest of all stone inscriptions of that type. Therefore, it has won the recognition to be included in the "Memory of the World" register.

Now, the letter on Bayinnaung Bell which is located on the platform of Shwezigon Pagoda is submitted to be listed in "Memory of the World." The richness of the archaeological heritages indicates the cultural standard of a nation. Therefore, all people have the obligation to passionately love, take value and conserve the nation's cultural heritages that have already been discovered across the country.—(Translated by Khin Maung Win) ■



France's Macron takes power, vows to overcome division

PARIS — Emmanuel Macron took power as president of France on Sunday in a solemn ceremony heavy with tradition at the Elysee Palace and he pledged to work to heal divisions in society—a nod to the bitter campaign he fought to defeat a far-right leader.

His inauguration marked a first for the world's fifth largest economy and founding member of the European Union, installing a 39-year-old centrist newcomer unknown to the wider public three years ago and who stands outside any traditional political grouping.

The former investment banker becomes the youngest post-war French leader and the first to be born after 1958 when President Charles de Gaulle put in place the country's Fifth Republic.

In his first word in office, he addressed himself to the fraught and fiercely contested election campaign in which he overcame the National Front's Marine Le Pen but which was a disappointment for almost half of France's 47 million voters.

Many people feel dispossessed by globalization as manufacturing jobs move abroad and as immigration and a fast-changing world blur their sense of a French identity.

"The division and fractures in our society must be overcome. I know that the French

expect much from me. Nothing will make me stop defending the higher interests of France and for working to reconcile the French," Macron declared.

A convinced European integrationist unlike Le Pen and other candidates, Macron went on: "The world and Europe need more than ever France, and a strong France, which speaks out loudly for freedom and solidarity."

Macron took power formally after an hour-long private meeting with outgoing President Francois Hollande in which official access to France's nuclear missile launch codes was handed over. Macron then accompanied his political patron, for whom he once worked as economy minister, down the red carpet to a waiting car in which the Socialist leader departed to applause from VIP guests and his former household staff.

In a ceremony conducted with all the pomp and glitter of high state occasions in France, Macron was presented with what is effectively his chain of office—a heavy golden necklace mounted on a red cushion that makes him Grand Master of the National Order of the Legion d'Honneur—an honours system for servants of the Republic.

But he also appeared determined to create an impression of personal modesty at the start of his rule. Aides went out of their

way to emphasise that the dark suit he wore to stride up the red carpet to power cost about 450 euros or just under \$500. The Vuitton lavender blue costume worn by his wife Brigitte, who was at his side, was on loan from the fashion house, journalists were told.

But he also displayed youthful vigour during the televised proceedings—at one point racing up the stairs to meet a protocol requirement, something not all previous French presidents might have managed.

The arrival in power of Macron, which was marked by a 21-gun salute at the Esplanade des Invalides behind the Eiffel Tower, signalled at least a pause in the anti-globalisation trend that brought Donald Trump the US presidency and led British voters to pick a future outside the European Union.

Departing from past tradition, he chose to be driven by military jeep rather than civilian limousine up to the Arc de Triomphe in driving rain to light the flame in tribute to France's war dead at the tomb to the unknown soldier—a potent reminder of France's role in the NATO defence alliance.

Macron also showed determination in the fight against terrorism since the Arc is not far from where a policeman was shot dead by a gunman acting for Islamic State shortly before

the 7 May second round of the election.

In coming parliamentary elections in June he must try to win a majority for his start-up Republic on the Move (REM) party that has blown apart traditional French political boundaries.

Macron, once an aide to Hollande and who rose to prominence as his economy minister between 2014 and 2016, might therefore struggle to get the country behind him.

In the first round of voting, more than 45 per cent chose either Le Pen or other candidates who promised the opposite of Macron's medicine—that they would close the wealth gap by rolling back globalisation, closing borders and unravelling the institutions of the European Union.

The business-friendly labour reforms in Macron's programme will push on with an effort Hollande started and which killed his chances of a second term by failing to ease unemployment. They helped make Hollande the least popular French president in modern history.

But the timing of France's youthful new leader is good—the economy, in the doldrums for years, is beginning to show signs of recovery.

Union power has waned in the Hollande years, even though workers rights are still held dear. And until a financial scandal ruined his campaign at the start of this year, Macron's mainstream conservative rival Francois Fillon had won wide electoral support for a far more aggressive set of pro-business measures.

Macron has already forged close ties with EU anchor nation Germany, and will head for Berlin on Monday to meet Chancellor Angela Merkel and ram home the message that the bloc is resilient despite Britain's "Brexit" vote.

More than 230 people have died in attacks claimed by Islamic State in France over the past two years as the country has taken part in military action against the militant group that controls parts of Syria and Iraq.

Fifteen hundred police were mobilised to ensure security for Macron's inauguration while a large section of Paris was closed to traffic all morning.—Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Britain will argue with EU over role of European court — Brexit minister

LONDON — Britain is against the EU's desire for the European Court of Justice to oversee the rights of EU citizens living in Britain after the country leaves the bloc, Brexit minister David Davis said on Sunday. "There will be arguments over fine detail ... like whether the European Court of Justice oversees these rights after we've left," Davis told ITV's Peston on Sunday show. "We'll have an argument about that ... The simple truth is that we are leaving, we are going to be outside the reach of the European court." — Reuters ■

Norht Korea missile test posed no threat to Russia — Russian defmin

MOSCOW — The flight path of a ballistic missile fired by North Korea on Sunday was a considerable distance from Russian territory and posed no threat to Russia, the Russian defence ministry said. Russia's missile alert systems detected the launch at around 2330 (2000 GMT) on 13 May and tracked the missile for 23 minutes before it crashed into the Sea of Japan some 500 kilometres (310.69 miles) off the Russian coast, a ministry statement said.—Reuters ■

Scotland needs choice on independence at end of Brexit — Sturgeon

LONDON — Scotland must have a choice on independence at the end of Britain's divorce with the European Union when the exit terms are clear, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said on Sunday. In an interview with the BBC's Andrew Marr Show, Sturgeon called on voters to back her Scottish National Party at an election on 8 June to strengthen her hand and make sure that Scotland's voice is heard in the Brexit negotiations. "For me this is a question of, at the end of the Brexit process, does Scotland get a choice about our future," Sturgeon said. "At the end of the Brexit process, I believe people in Scotland should have a choice over our future." —Reuters ■



French President Emmanuel Macron waves to the crowd as he leaves the Elysee Palace to ride in a command car on the Champs Elysee after a handover ceremony in Paris, France on 14 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS



A member of Iraqi Federal Police prepares to fire a mortar during clashes with Islamic State militants in western Mosul, Iraq on 11 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Iraqi forces attack Islamic State in Mosul as battle approaches endgame

BAGHDAD — US-backed Iraqi forces pushed deeper into the last pocket of Mosul controlled by Islamic State militants on Sunday as the battle for the city approaches an end after seven months of gruelling urban combat.

The militants have now been dislodged from all but a handful of districts in the western half of Mosul including the Old City, where Islamic State is expected to make its last stand, taking advantage of narrow streets and its dense population.

Brigadier General Yahya Rasoul said the area controlled by Islamic State was no more than 9 percent of west Mosul, which is bisected by the River Tigris.

"It's a very small area," he told Reuters. "God willing, this is the final phase."

The elite Counter Terrorism

Service (CTS) stormed the Urei-bi and Rifaie districts at dawn on Sunday, according to a statement from the Joint Operations Command.

At the same time, the army's ninth division and the Interior Ministry's elite Emergency Response Division attacked the Islamic State bastion of 17 Tam-mouz.

"Daesh (Islamic State) is drawing its last dying breath," the commander of the ninth division, Lieutenant General Qasim Nazzal, told state television on Sunday. "Daesh fighters are broken and quickly retreating from fronts."

Vastly outnumbered by the forces arrayed against them, the militants are fighting back with suicide car bombs and snipers embedded among hundreds of thousands of civilians they are

effectively holding hostage.

Conditions in the shrinking area under militant control are increasingly desperate as civilians resort to eating weeds and many are killed under heavy bombardment.

The number of people fleeing Mosul has more than doubled to about 10,000 a day since Friday, according to Iraqi government figures.

Defence analyst and former general Jasim al-Bahadli said the strategy adopted by Iraqi commanders was to splinter the remaining militants into smaller groups and attack them on multiple fronts to disrupt their command and control.

"By taking back all the districts surrounding the Old City, the militants will have no chance to receive any back-up or reinforcements," he said.—Reuters ■

Mutinous soldiers allow access to Ivory Coast city

ABIDJAN — Mutinous soldiers in Ivory Coast opened up access to the West African nation's second-biggest city, Bouake, a leader of the uprising said on Sunday, as public opposition to the three-day nationwide revolt over bonus payments gained momentum.

"We have decided to open the corridors to allow the population to do their work. We have nothing against the population," Sergeant Seydou Kone told Reuters.

Witnesses and a local lawmaker confirmed that traffic was circulating in an out of the city, which sits on the main road axis between Abidjan, the commercial capital — one of the region's largest ports - and

landlocked neighbours Mali and Burkina Faso.

Soldiers searched vehicles and checked the identity documents of bus passengers.

However, in the city centre, they fired shots in the air to disperse residents who were attempting to organise a march against the mutiny, which began on Friday and spread rapidly to cities and towns across Ivory Coast, the world's top cocoa grower.

"The population rose up, but the mutineers quickly dispersed the march with shots," said Bouake resident Simon Guede. "Everything is closed. No one is in the streets except the soldiers and a few protesters."—Reuters ■

Egyptian colonel killed in bomb attack on armoured vehicle

CAIRO — A colonel in the Egyptian military was killed and three recruits injured on Sunday when their armoured vehicle was hit by an explosion in the Sinai peninsula, security sources said.

The attack in the northern Sinai was the latest in an area where security forces have been battling the local affiliate of Islamic State, which authorities say has killed hundreds of members of the security forces.

The militants have also extended their campaign to other parts of Egypt, most recently attacking churches in Cairo and other cities with the loss

of dozens of lives.

In a further escalation of the conflict in Sinai, militants last week opened fire on members of a Sinai tribe, the Tara-been, which has been armed by the army, and killed 12 of them, according to security and tribal sources.

Islamic State said on Sunday a member of the group drove a motorcycle packed with explosives into a gathering of the tribesmen and detonated it, killing 15 and damaging military equipment.

No immediate comment was available from the army.—Reuters ■

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Pope says will be “sincere” with Trump at Vatican meeting

ABOARD THE PAPAL PLANE — Pope Francis said on Saturday he would be “sincere” with US President Donald Trump over their sharp differences on subjects such as immigration and climate change when the two hold their first meeting at the Vatican later this month.

But the pope also told reporters aboard a plane returning from Portugal that he would keep an open mind and not pass judgement on Trump until first listening to his views at their meeting on 24 May.

“Even if one thinks differently we have to be very sincere about what each one thinks,” Francis

said in a typically free-wheeling airborne news conference.

“Topics will emerge in our conversations. I will say what I think and he will say what he thinks. But I have never wanted to make a judgement without first listening to the person.”

The pope’s meeting with Trump could be potentially awkward given their diametrically opposed positions on immigration, refugees and climate change, which he told reporters on the plane “are well known”.

Last year, in response to a question about then-candidate Trump’s views on immigration and his intention to build



Pope Francis speaks to reporters as he flies back to Rome following the visit at the Holy Shrine of Fatima in Portugal on 13 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

a wall along the US border with Mexico, Francis said a man with such views was “not Christian”.

Trump, who grew up in a Presbyterian family,

shot back saying it was “disgraceful” for the pope to question his faith.

The two men also disagree strongly about climate change.

Trump signed an executive order dismantling Obama-era environmental legislation.

Francis has made defence of the environment a key plank of his papacy, strongly backing scientific opinion that global warming is caused mostly by human activity.

Still, Francis said he was willing to find common ground with Trump.

“There are always doors that are not closed. We need to find the doors that are at least partly open, go in, and talk about things we have in common and go forward, step by step,” he said.

Trump will visit the Vatican during a tour of the Middle East and Eu-

rope that will also include a meeting in Sicily of the leaders of the Group of Seven leading economies.

The pope is a head of state as well as being leader of the world’s 1.2 billion Roman Catholics. Such meetings allow for an exchange of views on world affairs and a chance for the pope to encourage ethical solutions to world problems.

About 21 per cent of Americans, or 70 million people, are Catholic. Washington has had full diplomatic relations with the Vatican since 1984, when President Ronald Reagan saw Pope John Paul, a Pole, as a crucial ally against communism.

—Reuters ■

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE
INTERNAL REVENUE DEPARTMENT
OPERATION MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE
NOTICE FOR FURNISHING COMMERCIAL TAX ANNUAL
RETURNS FOR 2016-2017 FINANCIAL YEAR

- This is to notify that any persons chargeable under the Commercial Tax Law within the financial year from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, including the economic enterprises of the Union Government, State-owned mills and factories, trading and service enterprises, development committees, cooperative societies, individuals, organizations or associations formed by individuals, companies, partnerships and joint-ventures, carrying out the following economic activities are required to furnish their annual returns of production or services, properly filled in, signed in accordance with the instructions mentioned in the returns to the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office (1),(2) and (3) or Large Taxpayer Office in person or by registered mail. A receipt will be issued by the respective offices in the case of returns being filed in person.
 - Domestic Production
 - Import
 - Trading
 - Service
- The total proceeds of sale or the total receipts from service, which are not chargeable to commercial tax, of goods and services in the Cooperative and Private Sectors, other than exempted goods and services under the Union Taxes Law, 2016, are as follows;
 - The total sale proceeds of Kyat 20,000,000 for the domestic production of goods in a financial year.
 - The total receipt from service of Kyat 20,000,000 for the rendering of services in a financial year.
 - The total sale proceeds of Kyat 20,000,000 for the trading business in a financial year.
- Deadline for furnishing of returns -**
30th June 2017 (Friday)
- Penalty for late filing and non-filing of returns -**
A penalty of 10 % on the tax due shall be charged if there is a failure to furnish the return without a sufficient cause within the stipulated time.
- How to get return forms -**
The forms are available free of charge at the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office (1),(2) and (3) or Large Taxpayer Office or on the IRD website <http://www.irdmyanmar.gov.mm>.
- Enquiries**
Enquiries may be made at the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office(1),(2) and (3) or Large Taxpayer Office or Tax Service Unit, No. 59/61, Ground Floor,Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon or the Tax Service Unit, 65th Street, between 22nd and 23rd Streets Mandalay.

Director
Operation Management Directorate

MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FINANCE
INTERNAL REVENUE DEPARTMENT
OPERATION MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE
NOTICE FOR FILING RETURN OF INCOME

- All taxpayers, including companies, partnerships and joint-ventures, cooperative societies, association of collective farming, individuals (excluding salary-earners), associations formed by individuals, organizations or associations registered and formed under any existing law,chargeable under the Income Tax Law within the financial year from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, are required to file their returns of income if they made profit or not in this financial year, properly filled in and signed in accordance with the instructions mentioned in the returns, to the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office (2) and (3) in person or by registered mail. A receipt will be issued by the respective offices in the case of returns being filed in person.
- Those taxpayers registered with the Large Taxpayer Office and Medium Taxpayer Office (1) are required to make their own tax assessments and file a return of income to the Large Taxpayer Office and Medium Taxpayer Office (1) in person or by registered mail. In filing a return of income, instructions mentioned in the return should be carefully followed and there is no need for filing annual financial statements.
- Those taxpayers who earned income from “Salary” within the income year are not required to file a return of income. However, their employers are required to file the Annual Salary Statement to the respective Township Revenue Office.
- Requirement For Attachment :**
Taxpayers are also required to submit, together with the return, a financial report prepared in connection with taxpayers’ books of account kept in accordance with the Income Tax Regulations for the relevant income year.
- Deadline for Filing of Returns-**
30th June 2017, (Friday)
- Penalty for late filing and non-filing of returns of income**
A penalty not exceeding 10 % of the tax due may be charged if there is a failure to file a retrun of income.
- Where to get return forms-**
The forms are available free of charge at the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office (1), (2) and (3) or Large Taxpayer Office or on the IRD website <http://www.irdmyanmar.gov.mm>.
- Enquiries**
Equiries may be made at the respective Township Revenue Offices or Medium Taxpayer Office(1),(2) and (3) or Large Taxpayer Office or the Tax Service Unit, No. 59/61, Ground Floor,Pansodan Street, Kyauktada Township, Yangon or the Tax Service Unit, 65th Street, between 22nd and 23rd Streets, Mandalay.

Director
Operation Management Directorate

Small Tokyo firm aspires to craft unique dream-inspiring planes

TOKYO — Olympos, a small Japanese aircraft maker known for its unique products such as a real-life version of a fictional glider from popular animation, is now working on recreating a defunct classic trainer aircraft used by the former Imperial Japanese Army, aiming for its maiden flight next year.

Satoru Shinohe, who heads the four-member company that creates small aircraft and gliders from the stage of designing and building to test flights, said in a recent interview that the motivation for his work is to create unique “dream-inspiring” planes that major companies would never manufacture.

Olympos drew a spotlight in 2009 when it succeeded in creating a jet-equipped glider that resembles the “Mehve” glider flown by the heroine from the anime classic “Nausicaa of the Valley of



Provided photo shows the defunct Type 95 model 1 trainer aircraft, used by the former Imperial Japanese Army. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

the Wind.” The 1984 film, directed by Hayao Miyazaki, memorably features Nausicaa, the heroine, lying on the glider’s body to pilot it.

Last year, Olympos, based in Ome, western Tokyo, carried out Japan’s first short-distance manned flight with a propeller aircraft powered by solar energy.

Its current project is to reproduce the defunct Type 95 model 1 trainer aircraft, developed in 1934 and used by the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II, for client Tachihi Holdings Co, formerly Tachikawa Aircraft that produced the aircraft and other battle planes. The trainer aircraft, nicknamed “Akatombo”

(Red Dragonfly) due to its orange-coloured body with two-tiered main wings, is a “rootstock of made-in-Japan aircraft for both military and private use,” said Shinohe, the 55-year-old president of Olympos.

“The plane was made at a time when Japan was pulling out of creating aircraft by copying imported

ones,” he said.

Tachihi Holdings, based in Tokyo’s Tachikawa, asked Olympos to make a full-scale model of the trainer as its main operation has already shifted to real estate business and no longer possesses aircraft manufacturing skills.

Shinohe was not satisfied with the order and instead offered to reproduce the real one, although neither the aircraft body nor its designs existed any longer.

“An airplane must fly. It’s a question of which you want to show to children — a living bird or a stuffed one?” he said.

Olympos has redesigned the old trainer aircraft by using old documents as a reference and is now engaged in the process of using wooden materials to create the framework of a main wing.

Shinohe studied under the late Hidemasa Kimura,

a Nihon University professor who created the YS-11, the first domestically produced passenger aircraft since the end of World War II.

Many of his classmates at the university got jobs at big manufacturing companies but Shinohe founded Olympos in 1985.

“I thought it would be impossible to create aircraft that I like if I work for a large company,” he said.

It was hard to get the company’s business on track initially by manufacturing aircraft and Olympos sought to raise working capital through other means, such as software development.

The company became eligible to focus on aircraft production in around 2000.

“We want to create aircraft that inspire dreams of children and make them tempted to become an engineer in the future,” Shinohe said.—Kyodo News ■

German army needs to remove WW2-era names — defence minister

BERLIN — The names of German military barracks honouring a handful of World War Two officers should be changed to show that the country’s post-war armed forces have made a clean break from their Nazi past, Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen said on Sunday.

Having come in for criticism herself after accusing the Bundeswehr armed forces of “weak leadership” amid a national debate over whether there are right-wing extremists in the military, von der Leyen told Bild am Sonntag newspaper the barracks should no longer be named after Nazi-era officers.

“The Bundeswehr has to send signals both internally and externally that it is not rooted in the tradition of the Wehrmacht,”

she said, referring to the World War Two-era name for the German army. The Bundeswehr was created in 1955.

“It needs to confidently put more of an emphasis on its own 60-year history. Why not rename those barracks? In light of the recent developments, it’s time for a new discussion on that.”

The Bundeswehr removed the names of many Wehrmacht soldiers, who were seen by and large as honourable soldiers not tied to any war crimes, during reform carried out in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet about a half dozen barracks remain named after Nazi-era figures, the most prominent of which is General Erwin Rommel, who killed himself in 1944 after a failed attempt to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

“We’ve got to tackle

the issue of renaming barracks,” von der Leyen said, adding that such a move should be undertaken as part of efforts to modernise the armed forces.

In a related move, the Bundeswehr academy in Hamburg recently removed from a student dormitory a portrait of former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt wearing a Wehrmacht uniform. Schmidt, who died in 2015 at the age of 96, served in a tank division on both the eastern and western fronts.

“It’s absurd and outrageous — as if Schmidt had something to do with the incidents of right-wing extremism,” said Johannes Kahrs, a member of the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) that share power with von der Leyen’s conservatives.—Reuters ■

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အမှတ်(၃၁)၊ အခန်း (၅)၊ ၇မိုင်၊ ပြည်လမ်း၊ ရန်ကုန်။



Actress Priyanka Chopra. PHOTO: REUTERS

Priyanka Chopra, Adriana Lima get touchy-feely on Miami beach

LOS ANGELES — Actress Priyanka Chopra and her model friend Adriana Lima flaunted their stunning physique in two piece as they hit the Miami beach.

The “Quantico” actress was spotted cuddling the Brazilian beauty as they soaked up the sun on the beach, reported AceShowbiz.

Adriana showed off her body in a monochrome triangle

string two-piece.

The 35-year-old diva completed her look with red lipstick and hooped earrings, while Priyanka wore stylish dark blue bikini.

The actress covered her arms with a thigh length Khaki shirt.

The ladies seemed to be having a blast when Priyanka, 34, climbed onto Adrianas back for a piggyback. —PTI ■

Melissa McCarthy motors through New York dressed as Sean Spicer

NEW YORK — Actress Melissa McCarthy took her impersonation of Sean Spicer, the White House press secretary, to the streets of New York City on Friday, rolling through midtown traffic on a motorized lectern in an apparent shoot for “Saturday Night Live.”

McCarthy is due to host the NBC television show on Saturday, when she is expected to revive her portrayal of Spicer as a gum-chewing shouter who

berates and threatens journalists for asking probing questions.

The hour-long skit show has been broadcast live since it began in 1975.

Cellphone videos posted on social media showed McCarthy suited up shouting at cars to get out of the way as she cruised through traffic.

Spicer said in an interview with the news magazine show Extra in February that the impression was “funny,” although

he also suggested she “could dial back” the performance somewhat. He has also referred to McCarthy’s tendency, when dressed as Spicer, to drive a motorized lectern rapidly toward a reporter who asks an aggravating question.

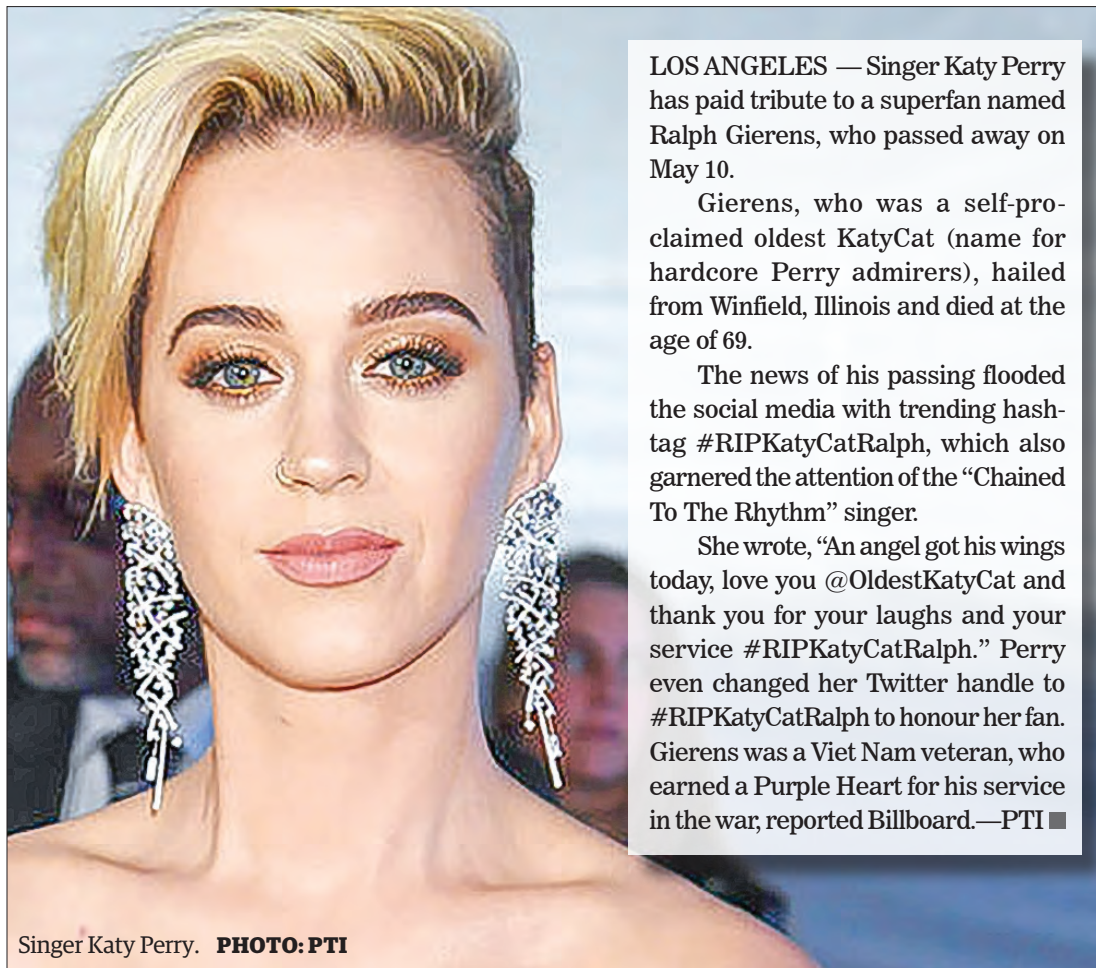
“Don’t make me make the podium move,” he said to laughter at a news briefing in March in response to a pointed question about the latest employment figures.—Reuters ■

Rare Harry Potter prequel stolen in British burglary



Writer JK Rowling poses as she arrives for the European premiere of the film “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them” at Cineworld Imax, Leicester Square in London, Britain on 15 November, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Katy Perry pays tributes to a fan



Singer Katy Perry. PHOTO: PTI

LOS ANGELES — Singer Katy Perry has paid tribute to a superfan named Ralph Gierens, who passed away on May 10.

Gierens, who was a self-proclaimed oldest KatyCat (name for hardcore Perry admirers), hailed from Winfield, Illinois and died at the age of 69.

The news of his passing flooded the social media with trending hashtag #RIPKatyCatRalph, which also garnered the attention of the “Chained To The Rhythm” singer.

She wrote, “An angel got his wings today, love you @OldestKatyCat and thank you for your laughs and your service #RIPKatyCatRalph.” Perry even changed her Twitter handle to #RIPKatyCatRalph to honour her fan. Gierens was a Viet Nam veteran, who earned a Purple Heart for his service in the war, reported Billboard.—PTI ■

LONDON — A rare Harry Potter prequel handwritten by author JK Rowling on a postcard has been stolen during a burglary in central England, police said on Friday as they appealed for help from fans of the wizard across the world.

The 800-word story, set three years before Harry Potter is born and which sold for 25,000 pounds at a charity auction in 2008, was stolen from a property in Birmingham between 13 and 24 April.

“Please don’t buy this if you’re offered it,” Rowling wrote on Twitter: “Originally auctioned for @englishpen, the owner supported writers’ freedoms by bidding for it.”

The proceeds of the auction were donated to English PEN, an organisation which champions freedom of expression, and to Dyslexia Action.

“The only people who will buy this unique piece are true

Harry Potter fans. We are appealing to anyone who sees, or is offered this item for sale, to contact police,” said Constable Paul Jauncey from West Midlands Police.

Handwritten over two sides of an A5 postcard, the untitled prequel features the characters Sirius Black and Harry’s father James. It opens with a youthful Sirius and James cornered by two irate policemen at the end of a high-speed motorcycle chase.

After an exchange of words with the policemen, the two teenagers make their escape using a touch of magic.

The card concludes with the words “From the prequel I am not working on — but that was fun!”

More than 450 million copies of the seven original Harry Potter books have been sold worldwide in 79 languages. The movie franchise has grossed more than \$7 billion worldwide.—Reuters ■

Egypt uncovers chamber of mummies, sees life for tourism

MINYA, (Egypt) — Egypt has unearthed an ancient burial site replete with at least 17 mummies, most fully intact, the latest in a string of discoveries that the country’s antiquities minister described as a helping hand from the crypt for its struggling tourism sector.

The funerary site, uncovered eight metres below ground in Minya, a province about 250 km (150 miles) south of Cairo, contained limestone and clay sarcophagi, animal coffins, and papyrus inscribed with Demotic script.

The burial chamber was first detected last year by a team of Cairo University students using radar.

The mummies have not yet been dated but are believed to date to Egypt’s Greco-Roman period, a roughly 600-year span that followed the country’s con-

quest by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, according to Mohamed Hamza, a Cairo University archaeology dean in charge of the excavations.

Egypt is hoping recent discoveries will brighten its image abroad and revive interest among travellers that once flocked to its iconic pharaonic temples and pyramids but which have shunned the country since its 2011 political uprising.

“2017 has been a historic year for archaeological discoveries. It’s as if it’s a message from our ancestors who are lending us a hand to help bring tourists back,” Antiquities Minister Khaled Al-Anani told a news conference announcing the find on Saturday.

Salah Al-Kholi, a Cairo University Egyptology professor who led the mission, said as many as 32 mummies may be in the



A number of mummies inside the newly discovered burial site in Minya, Egypt on 13 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

chamber, including mummies of women, children and infants.

Archaeologists have excavated a slew of relics in recent months that include a nobleman’s tomb from more than 3,000 years ago, 12 cemeteries that date back about 3,500 years, and a giant colossus believed to

depict King Psammetich I, who ruled from 664 to 610 BC.

Tourism Minister Yehia Rashed said last month the new finds could boost tourist arrivals this year to about 10 million, an improvement from the 9.3 million visitors that came in 2015 but still far below the 14.7 million

from 2010. No 2016 figure is yet available.

The tourism sector, a crucial source of hard currency, has struggled to regain ground amid a growing number of militant attacks, including two Islamic State church bombings last month. —Reuters ■

Ancient Japanese tomb mural with restored beauty open to the public

KASHIHARA, (Japan) — Tourists and history buffs on Saturday flocked to the village of Asuka in Nara Prefecture for a glimpse of a mural from an ancient tomb, which is on display through Fri-

day. The “Asuka Bijin” (Asuka beauties), a richly colored depiction of beautiful women, is undergoing the final stage of restoration to remove black stains caused by mold.

It is among other national treasure murals discovered in 1972 inside the stone chamber of the Takamatsuzuka tomb in Nara Prefecture, which was built between the late 7th century and

the early 8th century.

The stone blocks removed from the burial chamber, which was demolished in 2007, are now on display at a restoration facility in the village. Visitors can see the

slabs through the glass.

“That blackened mural has become much whiter and clearer. It is great repair technique,” said Shigeo Takano, 62, who visited from Yokohama. —Kyodo News ■

MRTV

Programme Schedule
(15-5-2017, Monday)

6:00 Am	4:20 Pm
♦ Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw	♦ University of Distance Education (TV Lecture) Fourth Year (Myanmar)
7:00 Am	4:40 Pm
♦ Breakfast News	♦ Analysis For Myanmar Movie
7:35 Am	5:05 Pm
♦ MRTV Travelogue	♦ This Week's Special Intrest
8:35 Am	5:20 Pm
♦ Women in Myanmar Society	♦ Referee of Football
9:10 Am	5:30 Pm
♦ World Heritague "Sukhothai" (Thinland)	♦ Yes or No Talks Show
9:30 Am	6:16 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ Football Magazine
10:30 Am	6:30 Pm
♦ Documentary (Agriculture)	♦ Law Affairs
11:10 Am	7:15 Pm
♦ Documentary (Asean)	♦ TV Drama Series
11:35 Am	8:00 Pm
♦ MRTV Youth's Programme	♦ News / International News / Weather Report
12:50 Pm	8:35 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ Documentary (Mandalay Palace)
1:15 Pm	9:15 Pm
♦ Fine Arts- Bosom of Dramatic Performance	♦ TV Drama Series
2:15 Pm	10:00 Pm
♦ TV Drama Series	♦ Unity Melody
3:10 Pm	
♦ TV Drama Series	

mitv

Myanmar International

Programme Schedule

(15-5-2017 07:00am ~ 16-5-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News	(11:00 Am ~03:00 Pm)-Sunday Repeat(07:00 Am~11:00 Am)
07:27	Am	Myanmar Sculpture-work of Art	(03:00 Pm ~ 07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am~11:00 Am)
07:42	Am	Dhamma School	
07:54	Am	Myanmar Traditional Art Bronze Casting	
08:03	Am	News	
08:25	Am	The Writer: Chit Oo Nyo (Part-1)	
08:52	Am	Chaung Tha Souvenir Business	
09:03	Am	News	
09:26	Am	A Lucky Boy	
09:42	Am	Strolling Along A Memory Link - U Pein Bridge	
10:03	Am	News	
10:26	Am	Crab Business (Part-I) Mud Crab	
10:41	Am	MOYINGYI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY	

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-8) (Part-1)
07:53	Pm	My Life & My Art
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Sons of the lake
08:48	Pm	A Simple And Peaceful Life

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) -Today Repeat (09:00 Am~11:00 Am)

(11:00 Pm~03:00 Am) - Sunday Repeat(07:00 Am~11:00 Am)

(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am~11:00 Am)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)



Chelsea manager Antonio Conte is thrown in the air by his players as they celebrate winning the Premier League title after the match with West Bromwich Albion at The Hawthorns on 12 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Conte to stay and improve Chelsea next season

LONDON— Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said he wants to stay at Stamford Bridge and improve the squad next season after lifting the Premier League in his first season in English football.

With reports in local media saying Italian club Inter Milan wants to bring the former Italy and Juventus coach back home, Conte believes there is more to come from his Chelsea squad that has now adapted to his tactical plans.

Asked if he would be at the club next season, Conte told reporters: "Yeah, and we have to improve next season.

"We have to improve in the next season, to find the right solution to improve. We are working for only nine months together.

"Now they know my idea, I know them, the characteristics of my players."

Conte faces a challenge to hold on to key members of the squad with striker Diego Costa

reportedly a potential target for several Chinese Super League clubs, while Real Madrid are linked with winger Eden Hazard.

"The club want to fight to win every competition. We have the same ambition," Conte added. "For this reason, we try to keep the best players."

Chelsea could add another piece of silverware this month when they face Arsenal in the FA Cup final on 27 May. —Reuters ■

Leverkusen to part ways with coach Korkut at season end

BERLIN — Bayer Leverkusen will not extend coach Tayfun Korkut's contract at the end of the season, the German club said on Saturday after their 2-2 draw against Cologne on Saturday made sure they would stay up.

Korkut took over in March from Roger Schmidt but instead of leading them up the table and onto a European spot, the former Turkey international saw them sink deeper down into relegation trouble.

Leverkusen had to dig

deep to come back from a two-goal deficit against Cologne and earn the crucial point that will keep them in the Bundesliga with a game left in the season.

"We are thankful to Tayfun Korkut for having taken over at a difficult time," said club CEO Michael Schade. "But football is a result sport and unfortunately the results were not right."

Leverkusen are on 12th spot, three points above the relegation playoff spot.

—Reuters ■



Bayer Leverkusen coach Tayfun Korkut. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Nadal ends Djokovic hoodoo to reach another Madrid final

MADRID — Rafael Nadal ended a seven-match losing streak against Novak Djokovic in emphatic fashion by thrashing the world number two 6-2, 6-4 on Saturday to reach the final of the Madrid Open and move within a step of a third consecutive clay-court title.

The Spaniard and four-time winner in Madrid got off to a dream start in the 50th meeting between the two great rivals, winning every point in the first game to break Djokovic, with the home crowd wildly celebrating his first point — a potent return which the Serbian could only hit into the ground. Defending champion Djokovic, who broke with long-time coach Marian Vajda and his



Rafael Nadal of Spain. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

staff the week before the tournament in a bid to reverse his downward trajectory of results

in the last year, surrendered his serve again in the third game, and Nadal held to go 4-0 up. Real

Madrid great Raul and all-time top scorer Cristiano Ronaldo were among those watching in the stands in the Caja Majica on a scorching day in the Spanish capital in as Madrid fan Nadal continued his rampant start to the year. The Spaniard finished off the first set in 40 minutes and again broke the struggling Djokovic in the opening game of the second. The world number two broke back in the fourth to tie the set at 2-2 and celebrated by punching the air. It proved to be just a brief respite for the Serbian, however, as Nadal broke him again in the next game and held to restore his two-game lead. He missed two match points on his serve and then had

to save a breakpoint before taking the contest at the third time of asking to reach the Madrid final for the eighth time. Nadal will play either Austrian Dominic Thiem or Uruguayan Pablo Cuevas in Sunday's final, where he will look to add to his recent triumphs in the Monte Carlo Masters and the Barcelona Open.

"I knew I'd have to play very well and I thought I did very well in the first set. Then in the second I got the typical nerves from playing Djokovic," Nadal told Television Espanola.

"I couldn't be happier. To reach another final in Madrid means everything to me." —Reuters ■