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Despite the damage to some school buildings, authorities have arranged to open the schools on 1st June for the 2017-2018 Academic Year.

Members of the Tatmadaw unloading aid and supplies for those affected by Cyclone Mora off a military plane at Sittway Airport in Rakhine State yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Authorities and military aid recovery in Mora-hit areas of Rakhine State

The Rakhine State Government took steps to provide aid to the people affected by Cyclone Mora in several areas in Rakhine State yesterday, a day after the cyclone

wreaked havoc in the northern part of the state.

Concurrently, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Command-

er-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win visited military command areas in Rakhine State affected by cyclone.

Union Minister for Social

Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye inspected the situation in Sittway, assisting in the delivery of aid to the victims and reconstruction and repair of

buildings.

He also presented more than K34 million to the Rakhine State Government to spend

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သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

MPs urge to speed up afforestation to avert impact of climate change

PYITHU HLUTTAW'S members discussed yesterday the motion to speed up afforestation and to fight illegal logging nationwide in attempts to avert the impact of climate change.

Following the discussion of 17 MPs, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation gave a nod to the motion.

Due to deforestation in forest-covered areas, Myanmar experienced the worst weather in 2015-2016, ranking 2nd among 187 countries in the global weather danger index. Hence, the motion urging the government to systematically implement Green Land Project in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay and Pyin Oo Lwin, as soon as possible by upgrading conservation of forests across the country and simultaneously expand the projects year by year in other regions was approved by the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting held yesterday.

As regards the motion, 17 parliamentarians seconded the motion and U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation submitted that the motion be approved.

U Bo Gyi of Chauk constituency discussed that suitable conservations should be made in the places of deforestation and in places of decreased status of forests and eradication of illegal



MPs arrive to attend the meeting of Pyithu Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

wood cutting should be carried out in cooperation with related departments and the public.

Daw Khin Than Nu of Min-don constituency discussed that forests of poor quality have been cleared away completely and new plants are being substituted, but the poor-quality forests have valuable wood and other bamboos and bushes in natural way, hence it has natural ecosystem. She presented that implementations may lead to false results, just by deciding upon maps without studying situations on the ground.

Afterward, U Nyan Lin of ShwePyiTha constituency discussed matters of deforestation in Myanmar and urgent need to get rid of gangs of smuggling woods illegally which will cause

deforestation.

U Nyan Hein of Thanbyu-zayat constituency also discussed that armed gangs of smuggling woods are inter alia the cause of deforestation, hence the need to assign duties to the special forces of eradication of smuggling woods comprising of police force and personnel from forest department.

Dr Win Aung of Khin-U constituency presented that rule of law on forest is of great need in protecting forests, and difficulties encountered by forest personnel should be promptly solved, especially their security due to the attacks of the armed gangs.

Regarding the motion, U Min Thaing of Bogale constituency, U Kyaw Myint of Taikkyi

constituency, Dr Daw Khin Si Thu of Loikaw constituency, U Myint Kyi of Katha constituency, U Myat Lay Oo of Htilin constituency, U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency, U Zaw Min Lwin of Madaya constituency, U Thant Zin Tun of DekkhinaThiri constituency, U Kyaw Min Hlaing of OttaraThiri constituency, U Tun Wai of Phaung Pyin constituency, U Zarni Min of Shweku constituency and Lt Col Min Thaw Aye of Tatmadaw representative took part in discussions respectively.

As regard the motion, U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation discussed that the Ministry would cooperate at the full capacity in carrying out civil development programmes, with

the distribution of young plants to locals and techniques and 10-year project for reforestation in Myanmar. Then the Union Minister presented that the motion be approved by the Hluttaw.

In the meeting, U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency raised the question as to situation of extraction of underground resources, which is a staple source of national income.

Concerning the question, U Ohn Win, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation replied, "Apart from industrial ore minerals and gold, extraction of other minerals has increased more than last year. Extraction of refined gold, jewels and jade decreased compared to that of last year. In the financial year 2016-2017, income from ore minerals increased more than last year with income from jade and jewels found to have fetched K 280000 million. It decreased compared to last year. In the financial year 2016-2017 off-shore natural gas projects fetched US\$ 2743.04 million, gaining less than last year. In the financial year, oil, natural gas, mineral jewels, forest and forest products and hydro-power product collected income tax amounting to Ks 276317.354 million, commercial tax amounting to Ks 151244.491 million and Ks 389437.558 million of special commercial tax." —Kyaw Thu Htet (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Ponnagyun-Yathedaung-Buthidaung Road to become all-weather road

THE seventh day of the fifth session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw was held yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall, during which questions on information and construction sectors were answered and a bill was tabled. In responding to the question of U Soe Moe of Ayeyawady Region constituency-1 on plans to explain to the public in a transparent manner the rules and details of the Yangon-Pathein Road B.O.T. agreement between a company and Ministry of Construction, the Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing said if the local public and relevant state and region governments want to know of the rules and details of the B.O.T. agreement between the Ministry of Construction and



Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing. PHOTO: MNA

Oriental Highway Co., Ltd., the Ministry of Construction will explain in a transparent manner.

A person permitted to conduct B.O.T. construction works under a B.O.T. agreement needs for the construction to meet set



Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint. PHOTO: MNA

technical standards. If the construction and maintenance of a bridge and a road is not up to standards or is not in accordance with the agreement, the Ministry of Construction can object and the company permitted to conduct

the B.O.T. must take remedial action at their own cost, said Union Minister U Win Khaing.

U Khin Maung Latt of Rakhine State constituency 3 asked about the completion day of Ponnagyun-Yathedaung-Buthidaung Road and whether there is any plan to accelerate the construction with international loans and aid. Union Minister U Win Khaing said in the FY 2017-2018, 10 miles, 3 furlongs long, 34-ft wide earth embankment, 8 numbers of R.C.C. box culverts were constructed while 190 ft. long Nga San Paw bridge, 280 ft long Ywa-haung creek bridge, 500-ft. long Thaung Dara bridge and 600-ft long Saidin creek bridge will be completed. There is no plan at the moment to obtain international

loans or aid in upgrading the Ponnagyun-Yathedaung-Buthidaung Road to an all-weather road and the bridges on the road. The Ponnagyun-Yathedaung-Buthidaung Road will be completed as an all-weather road with approved state budget by the end of FY 2018-2019, said the Union Minister.

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and Union Minister for Construction U Win Khaing then responded to questions by Daw Lhwee Za of Kayah State constituency 6 and U Zone Hle Tun of Chin State constituency 4. Afterward, Union Auditor-General U Maw Than tabled the bill to repeal the Oversight of People's Auditor Act for hluttaw's confirmation. —Thura Zaw (MNA)

State Counsellor to visit Canada

At the invitation of the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will pay an official visit to Canada in the near future. Afterwards, the State Counsellor

will also visit the Kingdom of Sweden at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) and H.E. Mr. Stefan Lofven, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden.—Ministry of Foreign Affairs ■



Nay Pyi Taw Municipal Committee start using e-office system

A ceremony was held in Nay Pyi Taw City Hall on 30 May on the occasion of Nay Pyi Taw Municipal Committee starting to use e-office system.

Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Dr Myo Aung, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission member U Win Htein, Pyithu Hluttaw Transport, Communications and Construction Committee Chairman U Tin Maung Win and secretary U Nay Phu Ba Swe, Pyithu Hluttaw Interna-

tional Relations Committee secretary U Bo Bo Oo and Hluttaw representatives from Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, Rakhine State minister for municipal affairs U Min Aung, Shan State minister for municipal affairs U Sai Son Sai and officials attended the ceremony.

At the ceremony, Mayor Dr. Myo Aung gave an opening speech, CTO U Ant Htoo Naing of CCD Co., Ltd explained the e-office system, Nay Pyi Taw Municipal Committee director U Zaw Win and staff explained and demonstrated the e-office system and Pabedan Township

Pyithu Hluttaw representative, U Nay Phu Ba Swe who tabled the motion in Pyithu Hluttaw for government to conduct its work with e-Gov system in Myanmar, discussed and suggested the work to be done.

Myanmar Computer Federation President U Khun Oo and U Nay Lin of Xerox Corporation gave additional suggestions, after which Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission member U Win Htein gave a concluding speech, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency ■

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor Press Release

ME 1379, 6th Waxing of Nayon
31 May 2017

Enquiry on accusation of human rights abuses and action to be taken according to the law

1. The Myanmar government respects human rights and an enquiry will be conducted if there is any accusation of human rights abuses. The government is resolutely determined to take action against the perpetrator(s) according to existing laws, procedures and regulations, if the enquiry discovers human rights abuses.

2. A social media website posted a 17-minute long video file on 27 May 2017 showing 4 persons in civilian clothes being physically abused by personnel in military uniform. Some international human rights organisations also released news about it on 28 May 2017.

3. The occurrence is being investigated and if any abuses are discovered, action will be taken against the perpetrators according to existing laws, procedures and regulations.

State Counsellor's Office
(Unofficial Translation)

Authorities and military aid recovery in Mora-hit areas of Rakhine State

FROM PAGE-1

on reconstruction and repair of damaged buildings in 10 townships.

Camps for internally displaced persons were also damaged by the cyclone, and plans are underway to repair and reconstruct them.

The Union Minister, together with Chief Minister of Rakhine State U Nyi Pu, visited the buildings damaged by Cyclone Mora, including Sittway Hospital, Sittway University, IDP camps and an untold number of houses.

Local authorities and residents have carried out evacuations, cleared roads and started to compile a list of damaged buildings.

After making landfall early Monday morning, the cyclone weakened as it travelled north through Bangladesh yesterday.

During his visit, the Union Minister and party spoke words of encouragement to the people who sought shelter at several monasteries during the storm — Maha Zeya Theiddi Adihtan and Seitta Thukha. The minister subsidised one week's worth of ration money for the victims.



Officials inspect a school building damaged by Cyclone Mora in Sittway. PHOTO: YE HTUT

The Union Minister then handed over monetary aid amounting to Ks346.6 lakhs to 11 townships in Sittway, MraukU, Kyaukphyu and Thandwe districts for rehabilitation work, with the Chief Minister receiving the money.

At about the same time, the

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win visited military command areas in Rakhine State affected by Cyclone Mora yesterday morning.

The Deputy Command-

er-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) first inspected the cyclone-damaged areas in Sittway by car.

He then met cordially with teachers at the Basic Education Sub-Middle School (Kyay

Taw-b) in Kyay Taw Pike Sate Village, Sittway and coordinated to speedily repair the damaged roofs of the school rooms.

Later, he inspected the damage to the security command post office and battalion and regimental command post buildings and quarters in the Sittway military command area.

Afterward, he inspected the storm damage in the Buthidaung military command area.

Next, he visited and encouraged Tatmadaw personnel from the military command, Myanmar Police Force and Fire Services Department clearing trees felled by the cyclone on roads in Sittway and provided monetary presents.

Yesterday, Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) families sent aid items for cyclone affected areas to Sittway by Tatmadaw airplanes. In the afternoon, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice Senior General Soe Win presented cyclone-affected Tatmadaw personnel and families in Sittway airport with food and roofing materials.—Min Thit/ Myanmar News Agency ■

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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.

Fine increased for exceeding fishing period

THE fisheries department has increased the fine against those who are caught fishing at the sea beyond the prescribed period, it is learnt.

Fishing boats and their crews which are caught fishing beyond the prescribed period will be fined a minimum of Ks50,000, officials said. Starting this year, the fisheries department reduced the legal fishing period.

Fishermen will be fined Ks50,000 per day from one day up to five days, Ks100,000 per day from 6 days to 10 days and Ks 200,000 per day from 11 days to 14 days. The department will take legal action against the

fishing vessels that fish more than 15 days and above, regarding them as unlawful fishing vessels.

"Last fiscal year, the department fined only Ks30,000 for exceeding the fishing period. Previously, the fishing period was 90 days but now it has been reduced to only 60 days. Therefore, there will be more fishing boats which are fined for being far away from the shore. So we increased the fines, said an official from the fisheries department."

"Every fishing boat must pay the fine for exceeding the 60-day fishing period without giving excuse."— 200 ■

Dentons opens office in Myanmar

Dentons, the world's largest law firm, has expanded its presence within Southeast Asia with the addition of a new office in Yangon.

A high-calibre team of seven lawyers and staff, led by Mark Livingston, Resident Partner, joined Dentons Myanmar Limited from Livingstons Legal yesterday. Dentons new Myanmar office will work closely with Dentons Rodyk, one of Singapore's most established full-service commercial law-

firms.

"The economic development and democratisation of Myanmar has opened up a wealth of both inbound and outbound opportunities for our clients from within Asia and around the world," said Joe Andrew, Global Chairman of Dentons.

"Myanmar is an important developing market in the heart of one of the words most exciting regions. The provision of high quality, reliable legal ser-

Myanmar Gazette

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred U Ko Ko Lwin, Managing Director of the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industry, Ministry of Industry as Director- General of the Office of the Union Minister, from the date he assumes charge of his duties.
2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of the following persons shown below on the expiry of the one-year probationary period.

Name	Head of Department, Rank, Department
U Myint Oo	Director-General Department of Religious Affairs Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture
U Aung Soe	Director-General Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization Ministry of Commerce
Dr. Ko Ko Naing	Director-General Relief and Resettlement Department Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement



Business leaders discuss economic opportunities in Myanmar. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

vices are crucial to the successful functioning of any emerging economy, and I am delighted that Dentons will now have a presence in Myanmar and can contribute to the continued economic de-

velopment." With the addition of the Myanmar office, Dentons has more than 8,000 lawyers in over 150 offices across more than 60 countries around the world.—GNLM ■

Rock mining companies to receive license extension

ROCK mining companies working in the reserved forest areas are instructed to plant twenty per cent of new trees in their plots and if they fail to do so, their working licenses will not get an extension, according to an official from the Department of Forestry. The 13 companies

with the extension licenses have been working at Kalamataung reserved forest in Paung Township, Mon State since 2016.

Over 105,500 holes in ground were produced in the area of mining and the companies in need of license extensions will require a

report for Environmental Management Plan (EMP), a progress report of planting new trees, the suggestion paper from the head of township General Administration Department and the outlooks of the local residents.

Though there are now four companies that have submit-

ted the application forms for their extension licenses, none of them have been permitted yet.

They have been asked to quickly submit their Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and instructed to plant the new trees in the rainy season of 2017.—200 ■

MPT introduces new 4G/LTE service

MYANMAR Post and Telecommunications (MPT) introduced 4G/LTE service on Tuesday, it is learnt.

The 4G/LTE network will be deployed by MPT with the permission of the Telecommunications department. Initially, faster data speed will be made

available by MPT in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay in the first phase, with similar data service available in other cities very soon, officials said.

The 4G/LTE service will be automatically connected when it is available in MPT network area.

To be able to take advantage of the 4G/LTE services, MPT customers need a mobile device and a 4G SIM card. Currently, the GSM 2G/3G users can exchange their SIM cards with a new 4G sim card free of charge with the same phone number in every MPT office. —Min Thu ■



A woman using the internet with a tablet. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

The real estate sector receives FDI of over US\$3.7billion first month of this fiscal year. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**



Forty three foreign enterprises permitted as of third week of May

A total of 43 foreign investment businesses were given permits to operate from 1st April to third week of May in the current Fiscal Year 2017-2018, with investments of over US\$800million.

With foreign direct investment (FDI) increasing, over US\$920million of FDI has flowed into the country so far this year.

Investments of US\$19.5million were allowed in the Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Twenty Myanmar Citizen enterprises with investments of US\$242.849million were permitted as of the end of April this FY.

As of 30th April this FY, the

oil and gas sector ranked first in foreign investment with overall investments of US\$22.41 billion, followed by the power sector at the second place with investments of over US\$20.5billion. The transportation and communications sector and the manufacturing sector followed, each with investments of over US\$8.2billion.

The real estate sector received FDI of over US\$3.7billion, while the mining sector attained over US\$2.89billion so far. The hotel and tourism sector placed seventh with investments of US\$2.85 billion in 68 projects.

Foreign investments are also flowing into other sectors; livestock and fisheries, agriculture, industrial estate, construction and other services. The FDI flowing into the country in the previous FY 2016-2017 hit over US\$6.8billion, which exceeded expectations of US\$6billion, mostly into the industrial manufacturing and transport and communication sectors. Foreign direct investment of over US\$6billion is likely to flow into the country this Fiscal Year 2017-2018, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.—Ko Htet ■

SriLankan expands network to Myanmar with Myanmar Airways

SriLankan Airlines will expand its network to Yangon, the capital of Myanmar, from 1st June, with the commencement of a codeshare partnership with Myanmar Airways International (MAI), one of Myanmar's best-known airlines.

SriLankan will codeshare on flights operated by MAI between Bangkok and Yangon; and also Singapore and Yangon; while MAI will codeshare on flights operated by SriLankan between Colombo and Bangkok, and Colombo and Singapore. Passengers will enjoy the con-

veniences of the partnership, such as a single ticket itinerary and interlined luggage.

SriLankan Airlines' Chief Commercial Officer Siva Ramachandran said: "We are pleased to extend our network to Yangon, as part of our dynamic ongoing strategy of focusing on the Asia-Middle East region, which is the fastest growing market for global air travel. Myanmar is currently experiencing considerable growth in tourism, and we are confident that the addition of Yangon will strengthen our network and

help serve the needs of our customers."

SriLankan has in recent months expanded its codeshare agreements with several other airlines in order to strengthen its network and provide enhanced travel options for its customers. With the addition of Yangon, SriLankan's global network will span 101 destinations in 48 countries. SriLankan is also part of the oneworld global airline alliance network which serves over 1,000 cities in 160 countries.—Lanka Business Online ■

Border trade hits over US\$890million

The border trade value through 16 border gates from 1st April to 19th May this Fiscal Year 2017-2018 amounted to over US\$892million, which is up by over US\$94million compared with the same period last year, according to the statistics of the Commerce Ministry.

The country is conducting border trade with neighbouring countries via 16 border trade camps: trading with China through Muse, Lweje, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung; and 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 Maungtaung, while the country trades directly with India via the Tamu and Reed border gates.

Thailand-Myanmar border trade as of 19th May this FY fetched over US\$156million, which is up by over US\$21million against that of last FY.

Meanwhile, trade through China-Myanmar border trade gates hit over US\$720million, which is an increase of US\$75mil-

lion compared to that of last FY.

The Tamu border gate saw a decline of over US\$6million, whereas the Reed border gate showed a slight increase of US\$2million in border trade value.

Similarly, border trade values at Sittway and Maungtaung gates rose a bit.

Border trade values with the use of the Individual Trading Card (ITC) reached over Ks5.6billion, with an export value of over Ks326million and an import value of over Ks5.2billion from 1st April to 19th May in the current FY.

The Trade Department issued 292 cards from 21st Nov 2012 to 31st March 2013, 261 cards in 2013-2014 FY, 317 cards in 2014-2015 FY, 146 cards in 2015-2016 and 248 cards in 2016-2017 and 23 cards this FY, according to an announcement released by the aforementioned ministry.

A businessman can trade Ks3million a day with an ITC, and the trade department granted trade up to Ks15million a day, which amounted to a five-day-trade-value.—Ko Khant ■



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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

သတင်းစာများကို ဤဆိုင်များတွင်ဝယ်ယူဖတ်ရှုနိုင်ပါပြီ

- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegoneline

Ocean City City Mart Supermarket



The Changchun Ziyou Bridge is seen after a controlled explosion in Changchun, capital of northeast China's Jilin Province on 31 May, 2017. Based on investigation and calculation, the explosion was designed to demolish only the deck of the bridge. Its pillars were preserved. After the explosion, a new bridge will be built in the next 5 months. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Small, medium-sized cities to drive China's consumption growth: economist

BEIJING — Small and medium-sized cities will play a major role in driving China's consumption growth in the coming decade, according to a Morgan Stanley economist.

Robin Xing, the investment bank's chief China economist, predicted on Wednesday that national annual consumption will rise to 9.7 trillion US dollars in 2030 from last year's 4.4 trillion dollars on the sidelines of the Morgan Stanley China Summit in Beijing.

"Third- and fourth-tier cities will contribute nearly two thirds of the increase," Xing said.

The proportion outshines the 9 per cent from megacities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and the 21 per cent for sec-

ond-tier cities. Consumption in rural areas is expected to reach 400 billion US dollars, accounting for 7 per cent of the total.

Personal consumption in such cities will grow the fastest at 8.7 per cent year on year from now to 2030, according to Xing.

The economist, who has headed Morgan Stanley's research team in China for a year, said the promising prospects are based on the rapid population growth in smaller cities and a closing income gap with large cities.

"In contrast with dawdling first-tier cities, the number of permanent residents in smaller cities will see robust growth thanks to higher birth rates, relaxed household registration

control and cheaper living expenses," Xing said.

The combined registered population in smaller cities is predicted to rise 2.5 per cent each year throughout the 2017-2030 period, faster than 2 per cent and 0.6 per cent in second- and first-tier cities, respectively.

Xing also expects people living in smaller cities will have deeper pockets as the rapid urban development will boost incomes. Moreover, tame home prices and an improved environment will allow diminished precautionary savings and more money to be used for consumption, he added. The rise of small and medium-sized cities is likely to push China's ongoing economic shift from industry to

services and from investment to consumption. In the first quarter, consumption contributed 77.2 per cent of the GDP increase.

Xing remained bullish on the outlook for the world's second-largest economy, predicting continued growth momentum and ruling out the possibility of a hard landing or a cash crunch in the money market.

He cited more flexible regulation on the yuan's exchange rate, well-managed financial tightening, robust exports, recovering private investment, and a more stable property sector.

However, he believes the GDP growth has peaked after a strong start in 2017, and the slowdown will likely resume in the next quarters.—Xinhua ■

Indonesia proposes regional talks to counter IS threat

JAKARTA — Indonesian Defence Minister Ryamizard Ryacudu said on Wednesday that he would hold a meeting with his counterparts from the Philippines and Malaysia to discuss a strategy to face the danger of IS group in the region.

Minister Ryacudu disclosed that one of the goals of the planned dialogue is to prevent the spread of the members of militant groups affiliated with the global terrorist IS group from the southern Philippines to other parts of the region.

"I have a strategy to address it. This planned meeting is very useful," Ryacudu said at the Defence Ministry.

However, he did not elaborate further on the precise time of the meeting.

He said that the security authority would hold patrols at sea, land and air to prevent the militants fighting in Marawi city of the Philippine from entering Indonesia's territory.

"We have a plan to prevent the entry of IS militants. At the forefront, in Borneo, the measure must be intensive. Patrol will be carried out in waters, land and air. I have been designing this operation," said Ryamizard. Borneo Island and Sulawesi Island border the southern Philippines.—Reuters ■

CO2 concentration levels in Japan hit record highs in 2016

TOKYO — The average concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere hit record highs at all observation points in Japan in 2016, the Japan Meteorological Agency said on Wednesday, underscoring the continuing upward trend in levels of the global warming-causing greenhouse gas.

Data collected in Japan show the CO2 concentration levels hit record highs every year since

1997 when the nation increased the number of observation points to three. The concentration increase last year was larger than the average growth over the past decade.

The record readings are believed to be due in part to a fall in CO2 absorption by forests due to factors related to an El Nino climate cycle spanning from the summer of 2014 to the spring

of 2016.

The agency said levels of CO2 concentration rose 3.8 parts per million from a year earlier to 407.2 ppm in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture, up 3.4 ppm to 404.9 ppm in Minamitori Island in the Ogasawara island chain and up 3.2 ppm to 407.1 ppm in Yonaguni Island, Okinawa Prefecture.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said in

order to limit the global temperature increase to 2 C above preindustrial levels, it is necessary to keep CO2 concentration to below 450 ppm in 2100.

Global CO2 emission levels have largely remained the same but concentration of the greenhouse gas has been on the rise. Even if emissions are cut and abatement efforts are improved, it is estimated that it will take

around 10 years for the concentration reduction measures to take effect.

The international climate accord agreed in Paris in 2015 aims to effectively reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero in the second half of this century. Japan, the world's fifth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, ratified the agreement last November.—Kyodo News ■

Philippines' Duterte uses Lewinsky affair to hit back at critical Clinton

MANILA — Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte on Wednesday denounced the daughter of former US president Bill Clinton for criticising him over a joke about rape, and questioned whether she was just as outraged by her father's affair with a White House intern.

Duterte was incensed by Chelsea Clinton tweeting at the weekend that he was a "murderous thug with no regard for human rights".

Duterte's rape remark came during a speech on Friday aimed at reassuring soldiers that he would take full responsibility for any backlash to martial law, which he imposed last week on Mindanao island.

He said he would not tolerate abuses but joked that if any soldier was to rape three women, "I will admit it, that's on me".

The firebrand leader is notorious for comments that are deemed offensive by some, but are taken lightly by many Filipinos. Referring to Bill Clinton's involvement with intern Monica Lewinsky in the 1990s, he hit back at Chelsea Clinton and said he was speaking sarcastically about rape and it was not a joke.

"I was not joking, I was being sarcastic," Duterte said in a speech to navy officers.

"I will tell her, when your father, the president of the United States, was screwing Lewinsky ... the girl there in White House, how did you feel? Did you slam



Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte (C), flanked by military and police officials, talks to troopers during his visit to Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Jolo, Sulu, Philippines on 27 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

your father?"

The affair led to Bill Clinton being impeached by the House of Representatives in 1999. He was later acquitted by the Senate and completed his second term in 2001. It was not the first time Duterte has made a joke about rape. He caused outrage in the lead-up to his presidential election win last year when he recalled a 1989 prison riot in which an Australian missionary was killed, and inmates had lined up to rape her. In what was intended as a joke, Duterte said the victim

was "beautiful" and as mayor of Davao city where the riot took place, he should have been first in line. He later apologised and said he meant no disrespect to women or rape victims.

Duterte is known for his informal, no-nonsense style and his speeches are often loaded with hyperbole, profanity, threats and jokes about taboo subjects.

Duterte said American military servicemen had committed rape overseas, including in the Philippines, recalling a 2005 incident involving a marine who

escaped a 40-year jail term by settling a case out of court.

"It is a crime actually committed by soldiers, mostly Americans in Okinawa," he said, referring to several rape cases involving US servicemen stationed in Japan, most recently last year.

"But, we never heard of a Filipino. But I am just warning them that anything they do, I have to answer for it. I take full responsibility for your foolishness. I speak sarcastically." —Reuters ■

Singapore to open applications for presidential election on one June

SINGAPORE — Singapore's presidential candidates can start applying for the September presidential race from Thursday, Channel NewsAsia reported.

According to the Elections Department, the applications will close five days after the writ of election is issued in August, ahead of the elections in September.

Applicants will be notified whether they qualify before Nomination Day.

Incumbent President Tony Tan Keng Yam will complete his term of office on 31 August. In the interim period from 1 September to the date of new President taking office, an acting President will assume the role of President according to the law.

Application forms of candidates who are successfully nominated will be made public after the close of nomination proceedings, in line with recommendations of the Constitutional Commission.

Singapore's presidential election is reserved for Malay candidates according to the Constitution amended last November.

Thus, the prospective candidates must apply to the Community Committee for a Malay community certificate.

The Singapore parliament passed the bill to amend the Constitution to raise bar for presidential candidates and ensure multiracial representation in the Presidency last November.

Under the new constitution, an election will be reserved for a particular racial group if no one from that group has been president for five continuous terms.

Since Wee Kim Wee became the first elected president in 1991, Presidents in Singapore have come from the Chinese and Indian community.—Xinhua ■

South Korea defence ministry 'intentionally dropped' THAAD units in report — Blue House

SEOUL — South Korea's Defence Ministry "intentionally dropped" mentioning that four more launchers had been deployed for the controversial US THAAD anti-missile system in a report to President Moon Jae-in's top aides, his office said on Wednesday.

Moon has ordered a probe at the defence ministry, saying it was "very shocking" the launchers had been brought in without being reported to the new government or to the public, presidential Blue House spokes-

man Yoon Young-chan said on Tuesday.

The Defence Ministry intentionally omitted details about the Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system battery (THAAD) in a report last week, when the new government was preparing for Moon's summit with US President Donald Trump next month, Yoon told a briefing.

"The Blue House has confirmed that the Defence Ministry has intentionally dropped the introduction of four more launch-

ers in its report," Yoon said.

Moon took office on 10 May without a transition period because a snap presidential election was held just two months after his predecessor, Park Geun-hye, was ousted in a corruption scandal. Moon inherited his defence minister along with the rest of his cabinet from the previous administration.

The THAAD battery was initially deployed in March in the southeastern region of Seongju with just two of its maximum load of six launchers to counter

a growing North Korean missile threat.

An earlier version of the defence ministry report specified the total number of launchers being prepared for deployment and the name of the US military base where the four were being kept, but the reference was removed in the final version delivered to the Blue House, Yoon said.

The Pentagon said it had been "very transparent" with South Korea's government about THAAD deployment.—Reuters ■

Analysis of Success or Failure, Progress or Regression

Khin Maung Oo

IN setting out on a journey, we must have a destination. Similarly, in running a business, in operating a system or in implementing a project, we must have a target. Until we reach the destination or target, we must march on. On our way to the destination, we may find difficulties, hardships, dangers and hindrances, which will delay our efforts. Only if these can be overcome, can it be said that we win or succeed. In case, we were completely exhausted so that we cannot proceed, it must be said that our efforts have been in vain.

In launching a journey or a plan, first of all, we must be well aware that it would take time. Just after the start, we cannot get to our goal suddenly. Depending upon the kinds of conveyance we choose, like a plane, a train, a bus or on foot, the time taken will be different. And, we must choose the conveyance depending on the nature of the journey. Supposing that we could make the journey by train or by plane, and we had to choose the train as our budget did not allow us to go there by air.

Accordingly, we need not feel remorse and we need not take care of any criticism for being late. In other

words, we succeeded in going to our destination. The most important thing is for us to move on to the destination, regardless of natural disasters or man-made problems. Otherwise, our arduous efforts will become attempted ones, automatically.

There is one condition that we need to assess as to why we delay in implementing our plans. The delay may be attributed to lack of knowledge, insufficiency of time or labor, destruction of subversive elements or our feeble-minded attitudes. "Where there is a will there is a way," as the saying goes. If we really want to do something then we will find a way of

doing this. And, another well-known saying, "Nothing venture, nothing win" is a tonic for us to commit ourselves to implementing our aim. Once, a wise man named "Franklin Field" said that the great dividing line between success and failure could be said in five words, "I did not have time." Never mind about unnecessary things such as gossips, blames, criticisms and pessimistic allusions. Through tolerance and firm resolution, we will get worthwhile results, ultimately. It would be ironical enough if I claim that we need to regard the mischievous deeds of others to be a big round of applause for us. ■

Khakaborazi ----- a high potential to become a First Natural World Heritage

Mann Thit Nyein

MYANMAR is a beautiful country adorned with natural features such as mountain ranges, rivers of different size and shape, huge natural lakes and wet lands with sorts of migrated birds, tropical forests replete with trees of valuable wood, rich fauna and flora and fertile plains home of different seasonal crops.

Myanmar is also a country rich not only in lands of cultural heritage but also in natural heritage. Much as Myanmar is late to expose its heritage to the world, it can now have achieved in registering 3 distinguished cultural heritage of Myanmar which are old Pyu cities of Sri Kestra, Beikthano and Hanlin in the UNESCO Cultural Heritage List. Though 3 cultural heritage of Myanmar has been in the UNESCO list, there still is no natural heritage of Myanmar registered in the list of UNESCO's World Natural Heritage. Now, Forest Department has submitted the nomination of 7 Myanmar Wildlife Sanctuaries to the UNESCO for the assessment and selection to be registered in Natural World Heritage. Out of those 7 nominated places, Khakaborazi Wildlife Sanctuary will likely be the first to be listed in UNESCO's Natural World Heritage. The organization that spares no effort in striving relentlessly for the Khakaborazi to be registered in the Natural World Heritage is no other than the Forest Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.



Mt. Khakaborazi in Putao, Kachin State.

7 places nominated for the registration in Natural World Heritage include Khakaborazi Region, Hukong Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, Indawgyi Wildlife Sanctuary, Natma Taung (Chin State) National Park, Tanintharyi Region and adjoining forest area, Ayarwaddy Basin Corridor and Myeik Archipelago Region, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

UNESCO has accepted Myanmar's nomination of 7 places and had their expertise and professionals make the first ground inspection on the Khakaborazi area together with the local professionals in 2014 whether the area meets the required criteria set by UNESCO. Khakaborazi region includes Khakaborazi Mountain, Hponkan Razi National Park and Southern extension of Khakaborazi National Park that all are situated in Putao District of Kachin State. UNESCO will undertake the final stage inspection for Nomina-

tion Dossier in September 2017 and after securing the approval of Union Government, the case will be submitted to UNESCO not later than February 2018. It will be decided at the 2018 UNESCO conference.

An Indian survey team led by European Surveyor, Mr. Petta had surveyed the Khamtilaung area reaching northern upstream part of Ayarwaddy. Even though the survey team could not reach the summit, they could have measured the summit of the Khakaborazi Mountain as the summit was visible from three directions, east, west and south.

A prominent botanist, Mr. Kingdom Ward wrote a book under the name "Myanmar's Ice Mountains" in which he described the fact that a survey team led by Mr. Petta was the very first person who had discovered the Khakaborazi and could have surveyed it. In 1955 Yein Nwe Par Sit Tagun (Yein New Pa Military Roving Group) led by colonel Saw Myint made

an official long journey of exploration study around the China-Myanmar border area. In that journey when they got to Pandin village, they inquired the local hunter and sherpas about the Khakaborazi, the highest mountain in Myanmar that was locally called Ahtan Bwan Mountain. They got the information on the location of the summit of the mountain and the way to it.

In 1956 Yein New Par had climbed the ice-capped highest mountain of Myanmar with the help of the local guides and hunters and they could have reached the point of 12000ft. defeating many snags and obstacles. After the country's independence the Yein Nwe Par group including exclusively Myanmar citizens was the first team that could find the 20,000 ft high Khakaborazi mountain and they were the first climbers reaching altitude of 12000 ft. of an ice-capped virgin mountain. Another 40 years later in August 1996 Myanmar Hiking and

Mountaineering Association sponsored the mountaineering trip of a prominent Japanese mountaineer who had many experiences of climbing mountain all over the world and a Myanmar citizen Nama Johnsen of Tahoudan village. The two climbers had accomplished the task and reach the top of the mountain. Khakaborazi is the highest mountain in Asia and situated in the north-western part of Myanmar near the border of Tibet and Myanmar. Khakaborazi is the part of Himalaya Mountain Range with height of 5881 meters (19296 ft., 19314 ft. in some records). Khakaborazi is located between 28 degree 18 minutes North Latitude and 97 degree and 32 minutes East Longitude, 80 miles away in the north-west of Machanbaw which is only 2 miles away from Myanmar-Tibet border.

Out of 7 wild life sanctuaries, if Khakaborazi becomes listed in UNESCO's Natural World Heritage, much more foreign tourists as well as local people will be attracted to visit the place. Nature-based tourism will also attain a quick development and as a consequence the socioeconomic condition of the people of that area will get boosted within a short period. Local handicraft, hospitality business and related job opportunities will also be promoted. We, Myanmar people should take pride in having those invaluable natural heritages in our country and safeguard those heritages from destructive environmental impacts.—Translated by Khin Maung Win ■

Who's your mummy? Genetic secrets of ancient Egypt unwrapped

WASHINGTON — DNA from mummies found at a site once known for its cult to the Egyptian god of the afterlife is unwrapping intriguing insight into the people of ancient Egypt, including a surprise discovery that they had scant genetic ties to sub-Saharan Africa. Scientists on Tuesday said they examined genome data from 90 mummies from the Abusir el-Malek archaeological site, located about 70 miles (115 km) south of Cairo, in the most sophisticated genetic study of ancient Egyptians ever conducted.

The DNA was extracted from the teeth and bones of mummies from a vast burial ground associated with the green-skinned god Osiris. The oldest were from about 1388

BC during the New Kingdom, a high point in ancient Egyptian influence and culture. The most recent were from about 426 AD, centuries after Egypt had become a Roman Empire province.

"There has been much discussion about the genetic ancestry of ancient Egyptians," said archeogeneticist Johannes Krause of the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Germany, who led the study published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

"Are modern Egyptians direct descendants of ancient Egyptians? Was there genetic continuity in Egypt through time? Did foreign invaders change the genetic makeup: for example, did Egyptians become more 'European' after Al-

exander the Great conquered Egypt?" Krause added. "Ancient DNA can address those questions."

The genomes showed that, unlike modern Egyptians, ancient Egyptians had little to no genetic kinship with sub-Saharan populations, some of which like ancient Ethiopia were known to have had significant interactions with Egypt.

The closest genetic ties were to the peoples of the ancient Near East, spanning parts of Iraq and Turkey as well as Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Egypt, located in North Africa at a crossroads of continents in the ancient Mediterranean world, for millennia boasted one of the most advanced civilizations in antiquity, known for

military might, wondrous architecture including massive pyramids and imposing temples, art, hieroglyphs and a pantheon of deities.

Mummification was used to preserve the bodies of the dead for the afterlife. The mummies in the study were of middle-class people, not royalty.

The researchers found genetic continuity spanning the New Kingdom and Roman times, with the amount of sub-Saharan ancestry increasing substantially about 700 years ago, for unclear reasons.

"There was no detectable change for those 1,800 years of Egyptian history," Krause said. "The big change happened between then and now." —Reuters ■



Scientist Verena Schuenemann is shown examining the lower jaw bone of an ancient Egyptian mummy at the Palaeogenetics Laboratory at the University of Tuebingen in Germany in this undated handout photograph obtained by Reuters on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Beer-loving Czechs stub out cigarettes as pubs go smoke-free

PRAGUE — Pubs in the Czech capital Prague filled up on Tuesday night and some held special events as smokers lit up for the last time before a ban on smoking in bars and restaurants took effect.

The ban, which started at midnight, gives the beer-loving nation some of the strictest cigarette-use laws in the European Union.

Most welcome it but some fear the new rules add to the list of regulations for bar owners and will harm the country's pub culture, marking the end of an era.

At the U Svary Svine (The Old Swine) pub, Petr Samek, a patron for two decades, said the ban went against a way of life long ingrained in Czech culture.

"The Czech nation is about what?" Samek asked. "Beer. People have always smoked in pubs. My granddad, my uncle used to go to the pub, smoke cigars, pipes, play cards."

The nation of 10.6 million — home to the original Pilsner beer — has the highest beer consumption per capita in the world at around 140 liters annually. A world-topping 40 per cent of that is draught beer in pubs.

About 28 per cent of Czechs smoke, just above the EU average.

Jara Zahradnik, who has



A man smokes a cigarette in a pub on a last day before a smoking ban comes into effect in Prague, Czech Republic on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

worked at U Svary Svine since it started in the 1990s, said most customers who come to the small pub smoke while sipping their beers.

He says the ban impinges on his freedom — a feeling echoed by many Czechs including President Milos Zeman, a smoker who has flouted other nations' smoking laws while on state visits.

"I have no idea how many people who don't smoke will

start coming here but even if the number of people doubles I don't agree because it is interference in freedom — not of the smokers but the pub owners," Zahradnik said while pouring a beer for one of the pub's six tables.

Lawmakers approved the ban following years of wrangling. Some conservatives fought it, saying the measure would put smaller pubs out of business, especially in villages where they

often represent a meeting point.

Critics also say pubs are already under pressure from tougher gambling restrictions and a new online sales reporting system mandated by the government that raise operating costs.

Still, three out of four Czechs supported the smoking ban, polls showed last year. Health Minister Miloslav Ludvik said the ban would open restaurants to the "silent majority". —Reuters ■

Bird flu outbreak in Shaanxi province kills 20,000 chickens

BEIJING — More than 20,000 chickens died from an outbreak of H7N9 bird flu in northwest China's Shaanxi province, official media said on Wednesday citing a local government statement.

The outbreak occurred at an egg farm run by Lvxiangyuan Ecology Co based in Yulin, a city of more than 3 million people.

A three-kilometer-radius area has been closed for disinfection, said the Xinhua report, and all poultry in the area will be culled. Poultry trading sites have been shut down.

The H7N9 bird flu has claimed the lives of more than 200 people in China in the first four months of this year, almost three times higher than the fatalities from the strain for all of 2016.

Around 400,000 birds have been culled in China since last October following outbreaks of bird flu and live poultry markets around the country have been shut down. —Reuters ■

Trump pulling US out of Paris climate deal -Axios report

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump has decided to withdraw from the Paris climate accord, Axios news outlet reported on Wednesday, citing two unidentified sources with direct knowledge of the decision.

Trump, who has previously called global warming a hoax, refused to endorse the landmark climate change accord at a summit of the G7 group of wealthy nations on Saturday, saying he needed more time to decide. He then tweeted that he would make an announcement this week.

Fox News also cited an unidentified source confirming the pullout.

The decision will put the United States in league with Syria and Nicaragua as the world's only non-participants in the Paris Climate Agreement. It could have sweeping implications for the deal, which relies heavily on the commitment of big polluter nations to reduce emissions of gases scientists blame for sea level rise, droughts and more frequent violent storms.

The accord, agreed on by nearly 200 countries in Paris in 2015, aims to limit planetary warming in part by slashing carbon dioxide and other emissions from the burning of fossil fuels. Under the pact, the United States committed to reducing its emissions by 26 to 28 per cent from 2005 levels by 2025.



US President Donald Trump. PHOTO: REUTERS

Axios said details of the pullout are being worked out by a team that includes EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. The choice is between a formal withdrawal that could take three years or leaving the UN treaty that the accord is based on, which would be quicker but more extreme, according to Axios.

The decision to withdraw from the climate accord was influenced by a letter from 22 Republican US senators, including Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, calling for an exit, Axios reported.

Former President Barack Obama, who helped broker the

accord, praised the accord during a trip to Europe this month.

The United States is the world's second-biggest carbon dioxide emitter behind China.

Supporters of the climate pact are concerned that a US exit could lead other nations to weaken their commitments or also withdraw, softening an accord that scientists have said is critical to avoiding the worst impacts of climate change.

Canada, the European Union, and China have said they will honor their commitments to the pact even if the United States withdraws. A source told Reuters that India had also indicated it would stick

by the deal.

Trump had vowed during his campaign to "cancel" the Paris deal within 100 days of becoming president, as part of an effort to bolster US oil and coal industries. That promise helped rally supporters sharing his skepticism of global efforts to police US carbon emissions.

After taking office, however, Trump faced pressure to stay in the deal from investors, international powers and business leaders, including some in the coal industry. He also had to navigate a split among his advisers on the issue. —Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

US withdrawal from climate deal would be "big setback" — Finnish PM

HELSINKI — If the United States withdraws from the Paris climate deal, it would be a big setback, Finland's Prime Minister Juha Sipila told parliament on Wednesday.

"If this is true, it is a big setback. Then, we must find partners to continue, because this work must not stop," Sipila said. Climate change was a priority for Finland in the Arctic Council as well as the European Union, he said.

US President Donald Trump is expected to make an announcement on whether he will stay in the agreement this week, with media reports on Wednesday suggesting he had made up his mind to withdraw.—Reuters ■

Turkey says embassy staff unharmed in Kabul blast, but building damaged

ANKARA — Turkey's foreign ministry said on Wednesday its embassy building in the Afghan capital Kabul was damaged in an explosion that killed at least 80 people, adding that its staff at the mission were unharmed.

The bomb, one of the deadliest in Kabul and coming at the start of the holy month of Ramadan, has also wounded hundreds of people.—Reuters ■

Merkel says expects Britain to remain a partner post-Brexit

BERLIN — Germany will approach negotiations on Britain's departure from the European Union on the understanding that the country will continue to be a partner, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Wednesday.

"We will conduct departure negotiations in the spirit of Britain remaining a good partner," she said in the southern city of

Nuremberg. "But we must also look to things that strengthen the EU, and not be focused exclusively on EU exit talks."

British Prime Minister Theresa May said earlier this week that Britain would leave the EU without an agreement if it was unable to achieve a satisfactory agreement with the bloc. —Reuters ■



German Chancellor Angela Merkel attends the weekly cabinet meeting at the Chancellery in Berlin, Germany, May 31, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Man fires shots inside Saudi school, no students present —US embassy

RIYADH — A man fired shots inside the Kingdom School in Saudi Arabia's capital Riyadh on Wednesday but there were no students present, the US embassy in Riyadh said.

No mention was made of any casualties.

The gunman was still inside, the embassy tweeted, but gave no further details. —Reuters ■



Afghan officials inspect outside the German embassy after a blast in Kabul, Afghanistan on 31 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Huge bomb in sewage tanker kills at least 80, wounds hundreds in Afghan capital

KABUL — A powerful bomb hidden in a sewage tanker exploded in the morning rush hour in the centre of the Afghan capital on Wednesday, police said, killing at least 80 people, wounding hundreds and damaging embassy buildings.

The victims appeared mainly to have been Afghan civilians.

The bomb, one of the deadliest in Kabul and coming at the start of the holy month of Ramadan, exploded close to the fortified entrance to the German embassy, killing a security guard and wounding some staff, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said on Twitter.

“Such attacks do not change our resolve in continuing to support the Afghan government in the stabilization of the country,” he said.

Basir Mujahid, a spokesman for city police, said the explosives were hidden in a sewage tanker. He suggested that the German embassy might not have been the target of the blast, which sent clouds of black smoke into the sky near the presidential palace.

“There are several other important compounds and offices near there too,” he told Reuters.

The blast, which shattered windows and blew doors off their hinges in houses hundreds of metres away, was unusually strong.

The Taliban, seeking to reimpose Islamic rule after their 2001 ouster by US-led forces, denied responsibility and said they condemned attacks that have no legitimate target and

killed civilians.

Islamic State, the other main militant group active in Afghanistan, has carried out high profile attacks in Kabul, including an attack on a military hospital in March that killed more than 50 people. The NATO-led Resolute Support (RS) mission in Kabul said Afghan security forces prevented the vehicle carrying the bomb from entering the heavily protected Green Zone that houses many foreign embassies as well as its headquarters, also suggesting it may not have reached its intended target. A public health official said at least 80 people had been killed and more than 350 wounded. Germany cancelled a planned flight deporting migrants to Afghanistan after the blast, its ARD broadcaster

said, citing the interior minister. Germany began carrying out group deportations of Afghans in December, seeking to show it is tackling the high number of migrants by getting rid of those who do not qualify as refugees.

The French, Turkish and Chinese embassies were among those damaged, the three countries said, adding there were no immediate signs of injuries among their diplomats. The BBC said one of its drivers, an Afghan, was killed driving journalists to work.

Four journalists were wounded and treated in hospital. Video shot at the scene showed burning debris, crumbled walls and buildings, and destroyed cars, many with dead or injured people inside. —Reuters ■

Russia fires cruise missiles at Islamic State targets from Mediterranean

MOSCOW — A Russian warship and submarine have fired four cruise missiles from the Mediterranean at Islamic State targets near the Syrian city of Palmyra, the Defence Ministry said on Wednesday.

The strike, which Russian news agencies said was the first of its kind since November, was carried out by the frigate “Admiral Essen” and the submarine “Krasnodar,” and targeted militants and equipment in an area east of Palmyra.

The defence ministry said the hardware and forces struck had previously been deployed by Islamic State in Raqqa.

“All targets were destroyed,” it said in a statement.

Russia had warned the United States, Turkey and Israel before launching the missiles, the ministry said.

It did not say when the strike took place, but Russian news agencies quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu had personally told President Vladimir Putin about the military action late on Tuesday.

The last time Russia fired Kalibr cruise missiles from its ships at militant targets in Syria was in November last year, the RIA news agency said.

Separately, photographs published on Wednesday by Turkish bloggers for their online Bosphorus Naval News project showed a Russian Syria-bound ship passing through the Bosphorus carrying a consignment of military trucks. —Reuters ■

South Africa’s utility head dismissed in setback for Zuma

CAPE TOWN — South African cabinet ministers on Wednesday ceded to pressure from senior politicians and the public by dismissing the head of state power utility Eskom, Brian Molefe, an ally of President Jacob Zuma who has been accused of mismanagement.

Opposition parties and some members of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) heavily criticised the decision to reinstate Molefe two weeks ago, given he resigned last year amid allegations of graft in the award of Eskom contracts.

Molefe denies any wrongdoing

and said he resigned in the interest of good governance and stability.

An inter-ministerial committee said it was “in the best interests of government, Eskom and the country” for Eskom to rescind the decision to bring back Molefe.

An interim chief executive officer would be chosen within 48 hours, it said.

Molefe’s reinstatement opened up an increasingly bitter divide within the ANC ahead of a conference in December when a successor to Zuma as party president will be chosen. Zuma

can remain as head of state until elections in 2019.

Zuma’s camp is expected to back his ex-wife and former African Union Chairwoman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, while another ANC faction will support Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa. —Reuters ■

Philippines says Islamists keep up week-long fight with prisoners, looted guns

MARAWI, (Philippines) — A week-long assault by Islamist rebels in a southern Philippine city is being fuelled with stolen weapons and ammunition and fighters broken out of jails, the military said on Wednesday, as troops battled militants resisting ground and air attacks.

The pro-Islamic State Maute group has proven to be a fierce enemy, clinging on to the heart of Marawi City through days of air strikes on what the military called known rebel targets, defying expectations of a swift end to their occupation.

The military deployed for the first time SF-260 close air support planes to back attack helicopters and ground troops looking to box rebels into a downtown area. The army said the rebels hold about a tenth of the city.

The hardline Maute had kept up the fight with rifles and ammunition stolen from a police station, a prison, and an armoured police vehicle, and were using them to hold off the troops, said military spokesman Restituto Padilla.

The militants had freed jailed comrades to join the battle and opted to engage in urban warfare because the city had stocks of arms and ample supplies of food.



Black smoke coming from a burning building is seen as government troops continue their assault of insurgents from the so-called Maute group, who have taken over large parts of Marawi City, Philippines on 31 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

“Yes indeed, there was planning involved,” Padilla said.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is alarmed by the strength of the Maute and intelligence reports suggesting it has teamed up with other extremist groups and has recruited foreign fighters.

He last week declared martial law on Mindanao island

where Marawi is located, in a move to quell movements he said he had long warned would mushroom into what is now an Islamic State invasion.

“I specifically warned everybody there is more dark cloud ahead of us. I was referring specifically to the contamination of ISIS slowly creeping towards our shores,” Duterte told navy

personnel in Davao City.

“In Marawi now, I have to tell you we have suffered tremendous losses because we are the invading force and they have been waiting for a long time for the forces of the republic to come.” Eighty-nine militants, 21 security forces and 19 civilians have so far been killed during clashes.—Reuters ■

Indian navy rescues 33 Bangladesh nationals hit by Cyclone Mora

NEW DELHI — India said on Wednesday that its navy has rescued at least 33 Bangladesh nationals hit hard by Cyclone Mora. Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Gopal Baglay said in a tweet that Indian Naval Ship Sumitra has rescued 33 people, including children, women and elders, off coast of Chittagong city.

“33 BD (Bangladesh) nationals rescued. INS Sumitra continuing search and rescue of more survivors,” the spokesperson tweeted.

Meanwhile, the search and rescue operations by Indian Navy are in full swing, following destruction caused by Cyclone Mora. However, Indian Navy spokesperson Captain DK Sharma said the operations were being hampered by the prevailing rough weather in the area.

Indian navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba has said that a second ship was sent to Bangladesh to help stranded Bangladesh nationals.

“Indian Navy is ready for all types of natural emergencies in the Indian Ocean Region,” he told the media.—Xinhua ■

Abe calls for China to play greater role in tackling N Korea issue

TOKYO — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called on Wednesday, when meeting with the top diplomat from Beijing, for China to play a “more constructive role” in addressing provocative acts by North Korea, the Foreign Ministry said.

“To solve the problem of North Korea peacefully and diplomatically, Japan wants to cooperate with China, which has a great influence (on Pyongyang),” Abe said when meeting State Councilor Yang Jiechi at the prime minister’s office. A portion of the meeting was open to media.

The ministry said Abe underlined the importance of intensifying pressure on Pyongyang, which just days earlier launched

a ballistic missile, the third in three weeks.

At the outset of the talks, Yang said, “We expect other countries to play constructive roles” to maintain peace and stability and realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Yang occupies a post equivalent to deputy prime minister and is superior to the foreign minister in the Chinese government.

Abe expressed a willingness to improve Japanese-Chinese relations as this year marks the 45th anniversary of the normalization of the diplomatic ties and as next year will fall on the 40th anniversary of the Japan-China Treaty of Friendship and Peace.

Abe and Yang agreed on

the significance of promoting “high-level” exchanges between the two countries, including between the leaders, according to the ministry. Abe and President Xi Jinping are expected to hold talks on the sidelines of the Group of 20 leaders’ meeting in Germany in July.

Monday’s ballistic missile from North Korea flew about 400 kilometres and is believed to have fallen in Japan’s exclusive economic zone in the Sea of Japan.

As Pyongyang continues to develop nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in defiance of UN resolutions, Tokyo has been eager to strengthen cooperation with Beijing over threats from North Korea.—Reuters ■

Parents have no right to dead child’s Facebook account, German court says

FRANKFURT — A German court rejected a mother’s demand on Wednesday that Facebook grant her access to her deceased daughter’s account.

In the ruling, which overturned a lower court’s decision, the Berlin appeals court said the right to private telecommunications extended to electronic communication that was meant only for the eyes of certain people. Privacy remains a sensitive issue in Germany due to extensive surveillance by Communist East Germany’s Stasi secret police and by the Nazi era Gestapo. Memories of espionage were stirred anew by Edward Snowden’s 2013 revelations of prying by the United States.

In the Facebook case, the mother of a 15-year-old who was hit and killed by a subway train in Berlin in 2012 had sought access to her daughter’s account to search for clues as to whether the girl had committed suicide.

Facebook had refused access to the account, which had been memorialized, meaning it was effectively locked and served as a message board for friends and family to share memories.

A regional court in Berlin had ruled in favour of the mother in late 2015, saying that the daughter’s contract with Facebook passed to her parents according to German laws on inheritance.—Reuters ■

Pentagon successfully tests ICBM defence system for first time

WASHINGTON/VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, (Calif) — The US military on Tuesday cheered a successful, first-ever missile defense test involving a simulated attack by an inter-continental ballistic missile, in a major milestone for a program meant to defend against a mounting North Korean threat.

The US military fired an ICBM-type missile from the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands toward the waters just south of Alaska. It then fired a missile to intercept it from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Experts compare the job to hitting a bullet with another bullet and note the complexity is magnified by the enormous distances involved.

The Missile Defence Agency said it was the first live-fire test against a simulated ICBM for the Ground-based Midcourse Defence (GMD), managed by Boeing Co, and hailed it as an “incredible accomplishment.”

“This system is vitally important to the defense of our homeland, and this test demonstrates that we have a capable, credible deterrent against a very



The Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) element of the US ballistic missile defense system launches during a flight test from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, US on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

real threat,” Vice Admiral Jim Syring, director of the agency, said in a statement.

A successful test was by no means guaranteed and the Pentagon sought to manage expectations earlier in the day, noting that the United States had multiple ways to try to shoot down a

missile from North Korea.

“This is one element of a broader missile defence strategy that we can use to employ against potential threats,” Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis told reporters.

Prior to Tuesday’s launch, the GMD system had success-

fully hit its target in only nine of 17 tests since 1999. The last test was in 2014. North Korea has dramatically ramped up missile tests over the past year in its effort to develop an ICBM that can strike the US mainland.

The continental United States is around 9,000 km (5,500

miles) from North Korea. ICBMs have a minimum range of about 5,500 km (3,400 miles), but some are designed to travel 10,000 km (6,200 miles) or farther.

Riki Ellison, founder of the Missile Defence Advocacy Alliance, described the test as “vital” prior to launch.

“We are replicating our ability to defend the United States of America from North Korea, today,” Ellison said.

Failure could have deepened concern about a programme that according to one estimate has so far cost more than \$40 billion. Its success could translate into calls by Congress to speed development.

In the fiscal year 2018 budget proposal sent to Congress last week, the Pentagon requested \$7.9 billion for the Missile Defence Agency, including about \$1.5 billion for the GMD programme. A 2016 assessment released by the Pentagon’s weapons testing office in January said that US ground-based interceptors meant to knock out any incoming ICBM still had low reliability, giving the system a limited capability of shielding the United States.—Reuters ■

Pro-unification group demands Taiwan’s Tsai accept “one China”

TAIPEI (China) — A pro-unification group in Taiwan asked President Tsai Ing-wen on Wednesday to recognize the so-called “1992 Consensus” on “one China,” in accordance with Beijing’s demands. Hu Da-gang, of the China Unification Promotion Party, said Tsai is pushing Taiwan to the brink of war with China because she and her party, the Democratic Progressive Party, do not recognize the consensus.

The reference is a tacit understanding reached in that year between Taiwan’s then ruling Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Communist Party of China that there is only “one China,” with each side free to interpret what “one China” means. The two political parties regard that as the political foundation for cross-strait talks that flourished under Tsai’s predecessor Ma Ying-jeou between 2008 and 2016, following eight years of DPP rule marked by cross-strait tensions. Critics argue that since the consensus was reached between the ruling

parties of the two sides and not at an official level, the independence-leaning DPP is not obligated to accept it.

Since Tsai came to power in May last year, Beijing has been pressuring her government to recognize the consensus. Beijing unilaterally suspended official communication channels with the island the following month.

By refusing to recognize that both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to “one China,” Tsai is “leading Taiwan into a mud pit,” with the economy bearing the brunt of cross-strait tensions, Hu said.

“If she recognizes the ‘1992 Consensus,’ there won’t be any war with China and Taiwan will not become a battlefield like it did during World War II,” Hu said, referring to airstrikes carried out by the US-led Allied forces on the island which was a Japanese colony at the time. Hu said his group picked Wednesday to stage a protest outside the DPP headquarters for a reason. Specifically, it marks the 77th anniversary of

the Taipei Air Raid which Hu said was the direct result of Japan’s ambition of using Taiwan as a base for its military aggression. Toward the end of World War II, the United States conducted regular airstrikes on the island. Dubbed by some historians as the most devastating, the US bombing on 31 May, 1945, killed between 3,000 and 4,000 people in the capital Taipei. Official records show that between October 1944 and August 1945, US airstrikes killed more than 5,500 people and wounded 9,000 more. More than 45,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged, including the Governor General’s Office, which currently serves as the Presidential Office. The China Unification Promotion Party is the same party to which belongs a radical pro-China activist who last month decapitated a statue of a late Japanese civil engineer in southern Taiwan and who this week vandalized stone lion-dog statues in Taipei dating back to the Japanese colonial period.—Kyodo News ■

Serbia’s conservative leader sworn in as president

BELGRADE — Conservative politician Aleksandar Vucic was sworn in as Serbian president on Wednesday, cheered by thousands of supporters, some of whom briefly clashed with opposition protesters who accuse him of being an autocrat.

An hour before the ceremony in Serbia’s parliament was due to start, a group of opposition backers and Vucic’s loyalists arrived for the ceremony and brawled in an underground passage. No one was seriously injured.

Vucic, who had been prime minister of the Balkan country since 2014, won April’s presidential election in a landslide.

He is the first president to take an oath of office not only on the constitution, but also on the 12th century Miroslav Gospel, the first document ever written in the Serbian language. The new ceremony is aimed at demonstrating the

longevity of Serbian statehood.

In an address to parliament and to dignitaries Vucic pledged to work on regional stability and take the country closer towards a membership in the European Union. But he also said he would continue to foster close ties with Russia and China.

Vucic also pledged he would strive to resolve outstanding issues with Kosovo, Serbia’s former province that declared independence in 2008, nine years after NATO bombing drove out Serb forces fighting an Albanian insurgency.

Serbia, which considers Kosovo a cradle of its mediaeval state and Orthodox Christianity, refuses to recognise its independence and is blocking Pristina in efforts to join international institutions including the United Nations.

“We need to reject myths and look towards the future,” he said.—Reuters ■

Grande, Bieber, Katy Perry to top concert for Manchester victims

LOS ANGELES — Ariana Grande, Justin Bieber and Katy Perry will headline a star-studded concert in Manchester, England, on Sunday to benefit victims of the suicide bombing at Grande's 22 May concert there, organizers announced on Tuesday.

American artists Miley Cyrus, Pharrell Williams and Usher will also perform at the June 4 concert, along with Britain's Coldplay, One Direction singer Niall Horan and the Manchester-based band Take That.

The benefit will take place at the Old Trafford cricket ground. Proceeds will benefit victims of last week's suicide bombing at Grande's show at another venue in the northern English city, the Manchester Arena.

Islamic State claimed credit for the bombing, which killed 22 people and took place moments after Grande fin-

ished playing. All proceeds from Sunday's "One Love Manchester" concert will go to the We Love Manchester Emergency Fund which was set up by the Manchester City Council in partnership with the British Red Cross.

The fund has already raised more than 5 million pounds (\$6.4 million), organizers say.

Grande, 23, is offering free tickets to the charity concert to all of those who were at her Manchester show on 22 May.

The suicide bombing injured more than 100, many of them members of Grande's large, young female fan base. Grande was unharmed but she later canceled several concerts scheduled in London and Europe through June 5.

Sunday's show will be broadcast live by BBC television and radio, Tuesday's statement said.—Reuters ■



Singer Ariana Grande performs on ABC's 'Good Morning America' show in Central Park in New York City, US 20 May, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Boyzone confirms reunion plan for 25th anniversary

LONDON — Irish boy band Boyzone has confirmed a reunion plan to celebrate their 25th anniversary. In a post shared on the Boyzone Instagram page, the quartet, Ronan Keating, Mikey Graham, Shane Lynch and Keith Duffy, shared their plans to release new music and embark on a tour next year. "2018 will see Boyzone celebrate their 25th anniversary! That's something that Ronan, Keith, Mikey & Shane are incredibly proud of. Plans are being hatched for new music and lots of touring throughout the year. "But next year still seems a long way off, so in case you can't wait, the Boyz are hitting the road for some exclusive UK shows later this summer. Dates and ticketing details will be announced here soon... #boyzone2017," the post read.

The band split in 1999 but have reunited a number of times over the years. They were left devastated when bandmate Stephen Gately tragically passed away in October 2010 at the age of 33 from a congenital heart defect.—PTI ■

Ex-Oasis singer Liam Gallagher honours bomb victims at emotional Manchester gig



Liam Gallagher performs with his band Beady Eye during the Glastonbury music festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset on 28 June, 2013. PHOTO: REUTERS

LONDON — Former Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher paid homage to the victims of a suicide bombing in his home town, telling the crowd "Manchester I love you" on a stage lit up by 22 candles, British media reported.

Britain's worst militant at-

tack in 12 years targetted an Ariana Grande pop concert in the northern English city last week.

Gallagher ended his first solo concert on Tuesday with an acapella version of "Live Forever", one of the biggest hits of the 90s group he fronted alongside brother Noel.

Gallagher will donate the proceeds from the performance to a fund supporting the victims and applauded when the crowd chanted "Stand up for the 22."

"In total shock and absolutely devastated about what's gone down in MANCHESTER sending Love and Light to all the family's involved LG x" he tweeted after the attack.

Grande will return to Manchester on Sunday to headline a star-studded concert, including Justin Bieber and Katy Perry, to benefit victims. —Reuters ■

Singer Olivia Newton-John says breast cancer has returned

LOS ANGELES — "Grease" actress and singer Olivia Newton-John said on Tuesday that her breast cancer has returned and spread to her lower back.

Newton-John, 68, who became an advocate for healthy living and medical research after her first bout with breast cancer in 1992, will undergo radiation treatment and is confident of returning to work later this year, her representatives said in a statement.

"I decided on my direction of therapies after consultation with my doctors and natural therapists and the medical team at my Olivia Newton-John Cancer Wellness and Research



PHOTO: REUTERS

Centre in Melbourne, Australia," Newton-John said. The statement said the "Physical" singer was postponing her June US and Canadian tours.

"The back pain that initially caused her to postpone the first half of her concert tour,

has turned out to be breast cancer that has metastasized to the sacrum," Tuesday's statement said.

British-born and Australian-raised Newton-John started her career as a singer with pop hits like "If Not for You" and "I Honestly Love You."

She shot to international fame in the 1978 movie adaptation of musical "Grease," playing goody-goody teenager Sandy opposite John Travolta's wild boy Danny Zuko.

Newton-John was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1992, and has raised funds for research and treatment as well as campaigning against animal cruelty.—Reuters ■

—Reuters ■

After Bruges, the show moves to Istanbul, then Dubai before further six-month stops across Asia and the United States. —Reuters ■

 Programme Schedule (1-6-2017, Thursday)	
6:00 Am	1:00 Pm
♦ Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	♦ Myanmar Movie (Part-2)
7:00 Am	2:00 Pm
♦ Breakfast News	♦ Documentary (Part-2)
7:35 Am	2:10 Pm
♦ NRC Programme	♦ TV Drama Series
8:40 Am	3:15 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ TV Drama Series
9:10 Am	3:45 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ “Myanmar National League (NLM (1) (2017) (LIVE Broadcast) (Magwe FC Vs Yangon United FC)
9:30 Am	6:20 Pm
♦ Beautiful ASEAN	♦ Football Magazine
9:45 Am	6:35 Pm
♦ ASEAN Sportlight (12)	♦ Current Affairs
10:30 Am	7:15 Pm
♦ MRTV Worker’s Pro- gramme	♦ TV Drama Series
11:15 Am	8:00 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ News/ International News/ Weather Report
11:30 Am	9:15 Pm
♦ Documentary	♦ TV Drama Series
11:40 Am	10:00 Pm
♦ Real Story Real Movies	♦ Talk on Old Film(Part-3)
12:30 Am	
♦ TV Drama Series	



Unfazed Murray clears Kuznetsov hurdle in Paris

PARIS — Top seed Andy Murray cleared a potentially tricky first round hurdle at the French Open on Tuesday, downing in-form Russian Andrey Kuznetsov 6-4, 4-6, 6-2, 6-0.

After a regulation first set that he won in 45 minutes, the world number one lost his

bearings midway through the second, dropping four games in a row to allow his 73rd-ranked opponent to square the match.

The Scot then moved through the gears and breezed the third and fourth sets with the loss of just two games. —Reuters ■

Wenger signs new two-year deal with Arsenal

LONDON — Arsene Wenger has signed a new two-year deal with Arsenal that will keep him at the Emirates Stadium until 2019, the Premier League club announced on Wednesday.

The 67-year-old Frenchman's contract was due to end at the conclusion of the current season and his future had been the source of speculation for months.

Arsenal came a disappointing fifth in the Premier League this season, the first time they have finished outside the top four since Wenger took over at the club in 1996.

However, Wenger was giv-

en a boost by Saturday's 2-1 win over champions Chelsea in the FA Cup final and was given the backing of the club's board at a meeting on Tuesday.

"Our ambition is to win the Premier League and other major trophies in Europe.

It's what the fans, players, staff, manager and board expect and we won't rest until that is achieved," said majority owner Stan Kroenke in a statement.

"Arsene is the best person to help us make that happen. He has a fantastic track record and has our full backing." —Reuters ■

Officials discuss holding 19th ASEAN University Games in Yangon



Officials pose a documentary photo after bilateral meeting between ASEAN University Sports Council and Myanmar University Sports Federation. PHOTO: SAW THEIN WIN

A BILATERAL meeting between ASEAN University Sports Council-AUSC and Myanmar University Sports Federation-MUSF on holding 19th ASEAN University Games in Myanmar in December 2018. The meeting held at University of Yangon's Diamond Jubilee Hall of the Yangon University was opened with a key note address by Union Minister for Education, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi.

He expressed his delight for including the Myanmar's traditional rowing race in the games which had not held on Myanmar's soil for decades.

Following the opening ceremony, the bilateral meeting was held and Professor Dr Thazin Lwin, Head of the Chemistry Department of the Yangon University. Chairman and officials of ASEAN University Sports Council-AUSC, officials from Singapore and Thailand Universities, a member of the ASEAN University Sports Council Dr. Hla Tint and Higher education department director-general Dr. Thein Win participated in the discussion. At least sixteen sports including athletic, soccer;

volleyball, canoeing and swimming will be concluded during the game according to the discussion meeting.—Saw Thein Win ■

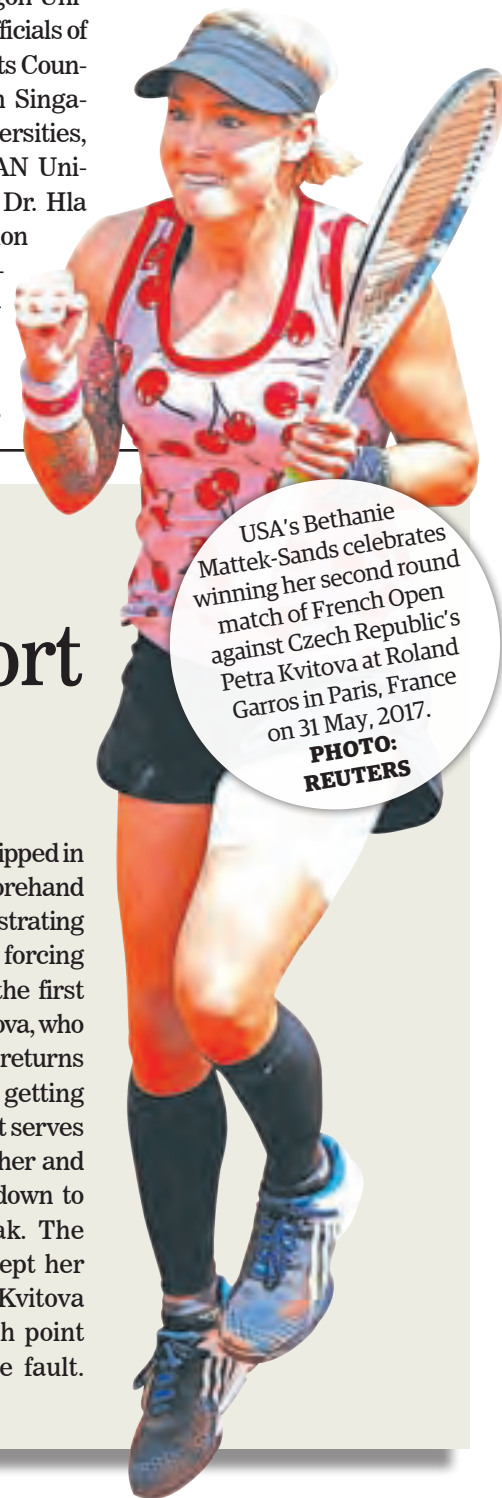
Erratic Kvitova's comeback cut short by Mattek-Sands

PARIS — Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova's comeback was cut short on Wednesday when she was dumped out of the French Open in a second round straight-sets defeat to doubles world number one Bethanie Mattek-Sands.

The 15th seed, who had only returned this week after a five-month injury absence following a stabbing by a burglar last year, littered the court with errors to lose 7-6, 7-6.

The 32-year-old American, doubles winner in Paris in 2015, refused to buckle when Kvitova

went 4-2 ahead. She whipped in a series of ferocious forehand winners while also frustrating the Czech, constantly forcing her to the net to win the first set with a tiebreak. Kvitova, who had struggled with her returns despite the American getting less than half of her first serves in, pulled herself together and rallied back from 3-1 down to force another tiebreak. The American, however, kept her cool and watched as Kvitova surrendered on match point with her ninth double fault. —Reuters ■



USA's Bethanie Mattek-Sands celebrates winning her second round match of French Open against Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova at Roland Garros in Paris, France on 31 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS