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in
Picture

Deputy ministers, JPN Ambassador visit Maungtau

Japanese Ambassador talks to returnees at Hla Pho Khaung Transit Centre during his visit to Maungtau yesterday. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY (NEWS ON PAGE-3)**

Lawmakers discuss fiscal deficit for interim period, foreign loans

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

loans by ministries.

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

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

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

The bill amending the Early

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

The Hluttaw also announced the putting on record of the discussion of the Hluttaw representatives on the 2017 annual report of the Myanmar National Human Rights Com-

mission and the explanation provided by commission chairman U Win Mra, in response to the Hluttaw representatives' discussion.

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

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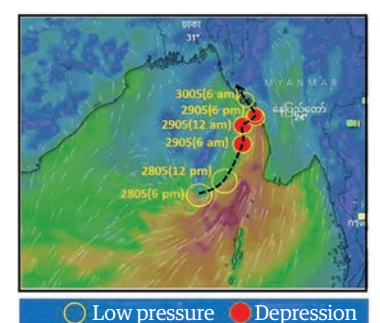
Low pressure area to intensify into depression

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

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

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

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



Lawmakers discuss fiscal deficit for interim period, foreign loans

FROM PAGE-1

MPs discuss fiscal deficit for six-month interim period

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

Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency, U Bo Gyi of Chauk constituency, U Nay Kyaw of Dagon Myothit (East) constituency, U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic) of Yangon Region constituency (4) and U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency took part in the discussion. Daw Cho Cho discussed about the government's plan to cover the 80 per cent of the deficit with treasury bonds and the remaining 20 per cent with loan from the CBM.

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

Ministry of Health and Sports explains foreign loans

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

Six foreign loans by Ministry of Planning and Finance

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



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA

Development Committee is operating the Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project (Asian Development Bank – ADB) and Mandalay Urban Services Improvement Project (Francaise de Development – AFD).

Ministry of Construction explain spending foreign loans on infrastructure projects

Similarly, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said that the Department of Roads is conducting seven projects with foreign loans. Although the first stage loan of US\$ 373.171 million from China EXIM Bank loan of Yuan 30 billion was approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the loan contract was not signed, since

an agreement was not reached on the loan. The Maubin-Kyauklat-Pyapon road, built with a US\$ 80 million ADB loan, was 92 per cent completed, while the Eindu-Kawka-reik road, constructed with a US\$ 120 million ADB loan, was 19 per cent completed. The upgrade of the Thandwe-Gwa road, financed with a US\$ 105 million World Bank loan was also underway, said the Union Minister.

The Department of Bridges is overseeing the Gyaing Kawka-reik Bridge, Gyaing (Zarthabyin) Bridge and Attaran Bridge projects, with a 33,869 million Japanese Yen loan. Bago Bridge (Thanlyin bridge 3) will be built with 31,051 million Japanese Yen, while an agreement for the US\$

137.833 million Korea-Myanmar Friendship Bridge (Dala) project was signed, and is being reviewed by the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Planning and Finance and Yangon Region government, as per instructions from the President's office.

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

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

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

Following his resignation, the President nominated U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance in the Pyidaungsu



U Soe Win.

Hluttaw. The appointment of U Soe Win as Union Minister for Planning and Finance will be discussed in upcoming Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session. — Myanmar Digital News ■

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear civil cases

CHIEF Justice of the Union U Htun Htun Oo, Supreme Court judges U Mya Thein and U Khin Maung Kyi of the Special Appellate Bench, convened court at Union Supreme Court room

number 1 yesterday morning and passed judgment on five (Certiorari) civil cases, and heard five other (Certiorari) civil cases. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar computer associations celebrate 20th anniversary

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

At the event, MCF President U Khun Oo delivered the opening speech, while Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung spoke of the importance of ICT in the country's economic development, requirement of the ICT associations country wide to put



Myanmar computer associations hold 20th anniversary in Hline Township, Yangon yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

in the best efforts toward ICT sector development, working to ensure that the country does not fall behind in the mobile industry, while reaching a level of success within 20 years. Also, speakers urged computer associations, professionals and enthusiasts to work to ensure the best for ICT development.

Following this, MCF Patron U Thein Oo, U Tin Win

Aung of MCIA, retired Computer University Professor Dr. Kyaw Thein, MCPA patron U Thang Tin, MCF President U Khun Oo, MCPA chairman U Thang Su Nyein, MCIA chairman U Tin Aung Khaing and MCF Secretary General U Zaw Min Oo discussed the 20th anniversary of the Myanmar computer associations. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Our country is still in poverty with necessities in every sector; which is why we need to carry on our struggle and work hard in all sectors. In the international arena, we are facing pressure, criticisms and misunderstandings. The challenges and difficulties our country and our people are facing today are many. Although every issue cannot be solved easily, we will have to make utmost efforts to solve these issues according to each priority sector.

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

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

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

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

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

During their meeting, a discussion was held regarding the children's rights bill, protecting the rights of children affected by armed conflict, and taking effective action against violators

of children's rights. Myanmar has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and cooperation between the UN and Myanmar on children's rights.

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



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo holds talks with the delegation led by UNSG Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Ms. Virginia Gamba yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Deputy ministers, Japanese Ambassador visit Maungtaw

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

The deputy ministers and Japanese Ambassador then traveled to the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, where they were welcomed by Maungtaw District Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut. U Ye Htut explained the situation on the border, the settling of people near the border, how Bangladesh monitors the Myanmar side of the border with CCTV surveillance, and how certain organizations were providing assistance illegally.

The group then inspected the border area from the border guard outpost at the Myanmar-Bangladesh border.

The Japanese Ambassador talked with those people settling near the border and asked them about their returning to Myan-

mar and whether they were aware that the government was issuing NV cards.

The group then traveled to a basic education high school in Northern Kyainchaung village and met with Rakhine, Maragyi, and Hindu people there. U Ye Htut explained about houses being built there and the peaceful coexistence of people from different communities.

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

The Ambassador then toured the two storey school building within Kyainchaung high school, which was donated as a symbol of Japan and Myanmar's friendship.

The group next traveled to the housing project in Southern Kyainchuang village, where U Ye Htut and CITF project engineer U Tin Soe explained about the projects' progress.

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

The Ambassador asked the Muslim residents of the village about their security, education, healthcare, aid from the Union Government, and peaceful coexistence among the residents, before viewing houses under construction in the village.

The deputy ministers and the Ambassador then traveled to Hla Pho Khaung transit centre via helicopter, where they were welcomed by Deputy Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin.

Deputy Commissioner U Ye Htut and project engineer U Tin Soe also explained about the transit centre's current and future construction plans.

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

The party led by deputy ministers and the Ambassador returned to Sittway in the evening. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Deputy Minister for the State Counsellor's Office U Khin Maung Tin and Japanese Ambassador Mr. Ichiro Maruyama visit Hla Pho Khaung transit centre in Maungtaw. **PHOTO: MNA**

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

MYANMAR Red Cross Society (Mandalay) is preparing a disaster and emergency management plan to assist 1,000 households in the Mandalay Region, according to U Kyaw Kyaw, an official from the supply and transport department of the Myanmar Red Cross Society (Mandalay).

Myanmar's monsoon season usually begins in April and May. In July and August, there will be heavy rains, which can cause flooding and strong winds. Therefore, the Myanmar Red Cross has prepared its disaster and emergency management plan.

"The Township Myanmar Red Cross Society conducted a survey, in co-operation with authorities in Mandalay, when the natural disaster began. There are a variety of types of damage caused by natural disasters. Our Red Cross Society provided tarpaulins when roofs were damaged, and other goods when household furni-



House damaged by strong winds. Myanmar Red Cross Society setting up to conduct disaster and emergency management plan in Mandalay Region. **PHOTO: AUNG THANT KHINE**

ture was damaged," he added.

The Myanmar Red Cross Society has already set aside disaster emergency items, including food and cleaning supplies.

Overall, the Myanmar Red Cross has provided emergency foods and items worth Ks 12,120,000 for 101 households.

"We will provide clothing, blankets and food, depending

on the disaster situation. We provided emergency foods and items to 72 household from Meiktila during the first week of May. Now, we have received a list of households to provide emergency aid," he added.

The disaster and emergency management plan is carried out with the assistance of the International Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent

Societies, Myanmar Red Cross Society and donors. Emergency disaster prevention trainings were also conducted.

"Our team has sufficient manpower and vehicles to provide assistance for people who were affected by the disaster. Our association will also accept donations," said U Aung Myint Oo from the Disaster Response Team.—Aung Thant Khine ■

HIV infection rate record high in Kachin State

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

"The HIV infection is prevalent among people who use injecting drugs and have multiple sex partners. Therefore, we are preparing a prevention and

treatment plan this year," said Dr. Tun Nyunt Oo, programme manager of the National HIV/AIDS programme. "Among the five states and regions in Myanmar, the infection rate is highest in Kachin State. We will conduct effective prevention and protection activities in Kachin State by using more manpower and money," he added.

In Kachin State, most of the young people who are drug

addicts are at elevated risk of contracting HIV. The Yangon, Mandalay and Sagaing regions and Northern Shan State are the four areas where most of Myanmar's HIV patients are found.

More than 80,000 people have contracted HIV by injecting drugs across the country. Some 26 per cent of the HIV patients are found in Kachin State. According to official statistics, the disease incidence rate has in-

creased in Kachin State, and the number of HIV patients has not significantly declined, according to the department.

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

Six passengers injured in Myawady bus accident

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

The accident occurred when a passenger bus hydroplaned and overturned due to rainwater. With 17 passengers aboard, the Myawady-bound vehicle was driven by Han Thu Aung, 34 years of age.

Approximately six pas-

sengers—four men and two women—were injured in the incident.

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

The driver has been charged under reckless driving by local police force, according to a source from the Information and Public Relations Department.—MDN ■



Myawady bus hits a cliff on Yangon-Myawady Road in Myawady Township. **PHOTO: MYANMAR DIGITAL NEWS**

Saudi Arabia to share import rules and regulations with local fishery businessmen

By May Thet Hnin

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

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

Additionally, some fish farming lakes will be inspected, in a bid to ensure long term export

opportunities with Saudi Arabia. They are also preparing to put in place Good Aquaculture Practices in fish farming.

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

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

Over 40 per cent of Myanmar's rohu and 30 per cent of farmed fish are exported to Saudi Arabia. "The breeders will face difficulties and production will decline if they lose this

market. This might also harm domestic markets", said U Win Kyaing, the secretary of Myanmar Fishery Federation.

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

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

Myanmar's external trade tops \$4.3bn

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

From 1 April to 18 May this year, the value of foreign trade rose \$709 million, compared to the same period last year. Imports were valued at \$2.675 billion, while exports were worth \$1.645 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of \$1.03 billion, an increase by more than \$200 million compared with the same period last FY.

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

border trade.

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

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



Employees work at the production line of a garment factory in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

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

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

"SME businessmen are faced with difficulties in accessing bank loans. Some of them are not used to preparing a business plan or proposal and need help. There-

fore, we came up with the idea to establish an SME unit to deal with their difficulties and link them with business experts," U Zaw Min Win noted. This SME unit is slated to be set up in early June to facilitate SME businessmen.

This B4B Insights Forum aims to overcome the businessmen's difficulties, develop public-private partnership and enhance domestic enterprises.

During the two-day forum, representatives and entrepreneurs from private sectors

discussed Myanmar's current economic conditions and panel discussions are conducted on specific topics such as banking and finance, retail, construction, services, industry, agribusiness, trading and SME entrepreneurship. The experts and businessmen exchanged ideas and discuss the challenges faced and the economic progress. Some facts will be submitted to the executive and legislative, said U Wai Phy, vice president of UMFCCI. —Nyein Nyein ■

Border trade value rises \$149 million this fiscal year

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

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

Myanmar conducts border trade with China through the Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung border points. The country carries out border trade with Thailand through the Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese border

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

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

The border trade value at the Lwejel, Chinshwehaw, Hteekhee, Maese and Reed stations decreased this FY.

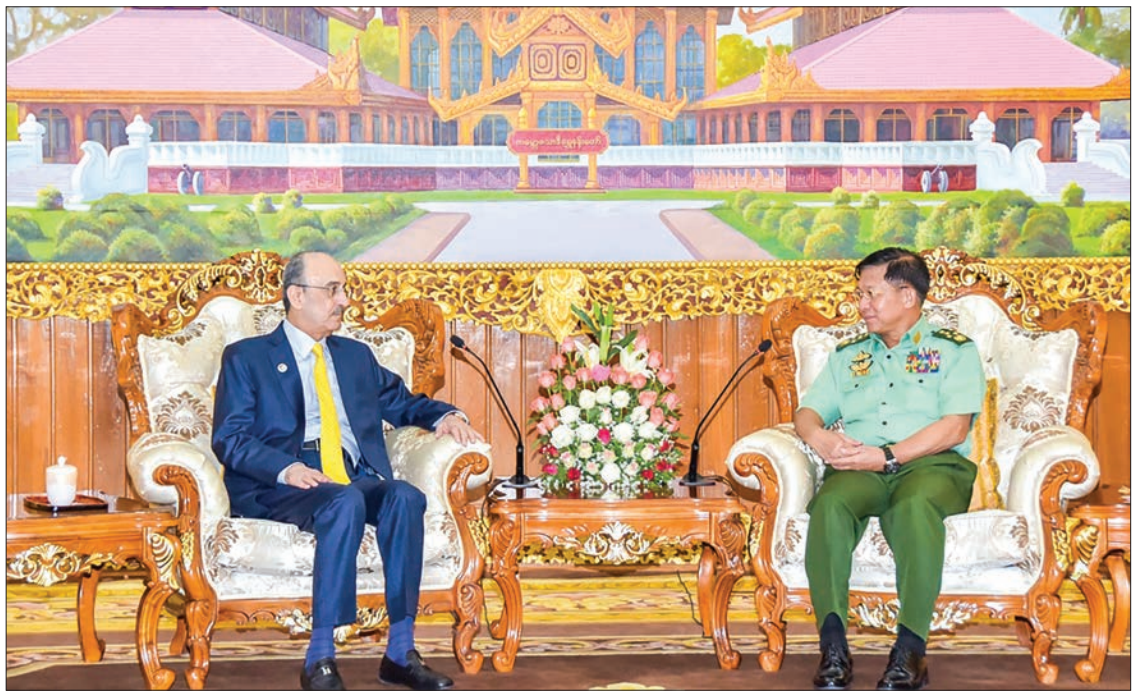
Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, as well as forest products, minerals, fishery products and manufactured goods, among other things, while capital goods, raw industrial materials and consumer products are imported into the country. —GNLM ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Qatar Ambassador

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received H.E. Mr. Hassan Bin Mohamed Rafei Al-Emadi, Qatar Ambassador to Myanmar, who is concluding his tour of duty, at the Bayintnaung guesthouse in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday

afternoon.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters relating to increasing bilateral relations, and the assistance of Qatar to Myanmar's peace and development sector. —Myanmar News Agency ■



C-in-C Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with Qatar Ambassador Mr. Hassan Bin Mohamed Rafei Al-Emadi in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday **PHOTO: MNA**

Twenty nine dolphins from Upper Myanmar dead during thirteen years



Baby dolphins are seen jumping in the Ayeyawady River. **PHOTO: WCS (MYANMAR)**

AS many as 29 dolphins were dead at the Mandalay-Bhamo Dolphin Conservation Area in thirteen years according to U Maung Maung Lay, headman of the villages from the community based tourism at Dolphin Conservation Area.

U Maung Maung started dolphin conservation activities with 72 dolphins handed over by his parents in 1984.

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

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

Dolphin conservation was carried out in cooperation with Myanmar Wild Birds Conservation Group starting from 2014. In

2017, community based tourism was introduced and tradition of fish harvesting with the help of dolphins and fishermen is shown to foreign visitors.

"Local fishermen traditionally caught fishes with the help of dolphins. Now the Department of Fisheries and locals are jointly carrying out dolphin conservation but some did not abide by the rules" he added.

There were three newly born dolphins in Mandalay-Kyaukmyaung Dolphin Conservation Area, two in the Htigyaing-Shwegu Area and one in the Katha-Bhamo Area.

There were twenty-six dolphins in the Mandalay-Kyaukmyaung Area, 13 dolphins in Htigyaing-Shwegu Area and 37 in Bhamo-Katha Area totaling of 76 dolphins in the Upper Myanmar.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House)/Myanmar Digital News ■

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

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

At the meeting, they discussed matters related to preventing children from participating in armed conflicts, final works to be conducted to conclude the Plan of Action in cooperation with UNCTFMR (United Nations Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting) to be delisted from countries using child soldiers, works conducted according to the action plan af-



Vice Senior General Soe Win meets with UNSG Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Ms. Virginia Gamba. **PHOTO: MNA**

ter signing the agreement on the Plan of Action, Tatmadaw conducting training and information works to prevent the recurrence of using child sol-

diers, and works conducted by the government and Hluttaw representatives to ensure the speedy enactment of the Children's Rights Law. — MNA

First day of tenth regular session of Shan State Hluttaw

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

Also, twelve MPs asked 17 questions which were answered by the respective state ministers. State Minister for Finance U Sai Shen Tip Lone submitted the Shan State's budget for FY



2018-2019 and the speaker announced that MPs interested in discussing the budget may sign up for the discussion on 30 May. U Aung Thu of Lashio constituency (2) submitted a condolence

motion for the 27 people injured and others who died during the armed attacks at the border security gate and inside Muse on 12 May. The motion was then put on record. —District IPRD ■

Dr. Win Myat Aye, U Nyi Pu, Japanese Ambassador discuss Rakhine State

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister U Soe Aung, and state ministers held a meeting with Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama at the Rakhine State government building yesterday.

The Ambassador said he understood that the repatriation process was difficult and talked of his meeting with returnees at the Hla Pho Kaung transit centre. He added that the returnees told him their main concern was verification of citizenship, freedom of move-

ment, enrollment in education facilities and security.

The Union Minister replied that they were working, in accordance with the 1982 Citizenship Law, to swiftly and accurately issue citizenship status to the returnees.

He said the returnees would have the freedom to legally travel in Maungdaw District, and students would be able to enroll in universities when they have received their NV (National Verification) cards. He added that they were working to ensure there was no discrimination in healthcare and that officials were focusing



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu hold talks with Japanese Ambassador Mr. Ichiro Maruyama in Rakhine yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

on the rule of law to ensure the overall security.

The State Chief Minister then said that his government was collaborating with the Union Government and hoped that the international community

would see the true situation in Rakhine State. He added that there were wrong and potentially harmful rumors going around among the people who fled to Bangladesh, and that there will be continued complications in

the repatriation process if the international community does not relay true and accurate information. He also said the returnees had the right to be free from terrorist threats. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar leading figures, Chinese scholars discuss future of bilateral relations

A SEMINAR on “The China-Myanmar Economic Corridor” was held yesterday at LOTTE Hotel in Yangon, to discuss the future of China-Myanmar relations in the changing world.

During a day-long seminar, a series of panel discussions dealt with topics that include transport connectivity, energy cooperation, and ways to improve people-to-people relations between China and Myanmar. The relationship between economic growth and other priorities, including peace and environmental protection, were also discussed.

Panel discussions were lead by speakers Professor Zhai Kun, Peking University; Professor Li Chenyang (Yunnan University, Head of Institute of Myanmar Studies); Shi Guoqing (Hehai University); Dr. Thant Myint-U, DICA Director-General U Aung Naing Oo; U Win Myo Thu (Managing Director, EcoDev); Dr. Thant Thaw Kaung (Daw Khin Kyi Foundation); and Daw Pyone Kathy Naing (MP, Lower House).

Dr. Thant Myint-U said, “Myanmar’s biggest long-term challenge, together with climate change, will be managing well its relationship with



China-Myanmar Economic Corridor panel discussion held in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

China. This is not a technical issue. It’s about having a vision of how Myanmar can best benefit from being next to the greatest rising power in the world, economically, politically, and culturally.”

Some 35 participants, including 14 Chinese scholars from Beijing, Kunming, and other Myanmar participants, including a mix of scholars, leading business people, government officials, and Members of Parliament, were present at the seminar.

In late 2017, China Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed to build the economic corridor during his meeting with Myanmar’s State Coun-

sellor and Foreign Minister Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with the hope of maximising revenue for both countries and contributing to the stability of Myanmar and the China-Myanmar border.

The proposed economic corridor will start in China’s Yunnan Province, extend to the central Myanmar city of Mandalay, and then east to Yangon and west to the Kyaukpau special economic zone, forming a three-pillar giant cooperation pattern.

The event is co-hosted by U Thant House and the Yunnan University Institute of Myanmar Studies.—Nanda Win ■

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population releases performance in April

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

The Department of Labour signed a total of 19,494 labour employment agreements for 7,453 men and 12,041 women. Township-level dispute settling teams were formed to settle employee/employer disputes and in April 2018; 94 cases were accepted, of which 21 cases were settled amicably, 21 cases were transferred to state-/region-level dispute settling teams and 52 were wage/salary cases and 605 workers were provided with Ks160,885,413.

The Factory and General Labour Laws Inspection Department was able to provide more than Ks2,200 million in benefits to workers for working on public holidays, cash entitlement in lieu of earned leave, ensuring the earning of leftover wages, and obtaining cash benefits during

casual, medical and maternity leaves. Inspection officials from the department also conducted occupational/worksite safety and health talks with employers and employees from 461 factories and work sites and 257 talks on general knowledge about legal matters.

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

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

Alarm bells ring over corruption

FREEDOM from corruption is the sine qua non for building a clean government and for good governance, and it is also connected with foreign investments and the image of our country. Fighting corruption is one of the priorities of the incumbent government. As the Hluttaw approved the four bills on amending the Anti-Corruption Law, the Anti-Corruption Commission would step up its efforts to increase the reach of anti-corruption investigations.

Corruption and bribery are crimes, which should not be tolerated in our country. The Anti-Corruption Commission's aim is to lift the moral standard of our citizens while they are still young.

The commission said in its report on 13 May that it has not made the cases, which are under investigation, public.

It is learnt that 88 judiciary officials and 50 employees from the Immigration and Population Department have been punished under the civil service law, ringing alarm bells among the commission and bringing about a resolve to wipe out corruption in our society.

It is the duty of the Anti-Corruption Commission to point out the weaknesses and combat this malpractice with a conscientious spirit. The President has urged the commission to openly report about possible interference by those in authority in anti-corruption cases and any abuse of power in defending the accused.

The mission of the commission is to prevent corruption across the nation and to investigate complaints. Meanwhile, the work of the commission must be implemented ethically, with accountability and transparency. The making of rules and regulations for investigations is essential for the commission to be able to implement its works with accountability.

Combating corruption needs an all-inclusive approach with long-term plans and it starts with educational efforts to change attitudes towards bribery and malpractice, especially among young people.

The commission is making many systematic moves, such as giving educative lessons, improving morality and taking preventive measures across the country.

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

Corruption can be eradicated only when the integrity of people is raised. It cannot be done solely by the Anti-Corruption Commission or a single responsible organization. That is why cooperation and education are playing a key part in fighting corruption. ■

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

Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja,
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

MYANMAR people are literate since the beginning of their civilization. They have had writing materials such as metallic stylus, slate pencils and ink brush to scribe on hard pages like stone slabs, metal plates to write on slate board and to brush with ink on folding papers called Parabike. They already reached the alphabetical stage of writing. As to whether they passed through the pictorial and phonetic stages prior to alphabet stage is still unknown which calls for serious research. Their alphabets number are 33, including vowels and consonants. Early Roman Catholic missionaries were quite amazed to find Myanmar advance in writing and writing materials. "Alphabetic Brimanic" was a good work on Myanmar writing, the original work which the writer had seen in the museum of the Holy City Vatican in Rome when he hitch hiked from Geneva to Italy in 1957.

Myanmar alphabets are closely related to Sanskrit, Pali and South Indian script and not with Chinese writing, though China, like India, is close neighbour. This is perhaps due to Buddhism which we received in the same year Gotuma Buddha became enlightened in Maha Sakarit year (Buddhist Era) 103 of the fourth arrivals of Buddhism to Myanmar; the fourth arrival from Sri Lanka was the only written form of Buddhism became the Fourth Buddhist Council held in Sri Lanka produced the edited and corrected Buddhism and Buddha's Teachings (Dhamma) in written form in Magada Language. Later Mon missionary monk Ashin Buddha Gosa brought home a copy and all commentaries and sub-commentaries from Maha Vihara where he stayed for many years for learning and re-ordinating in the Sima of Kalayani Ordination Hall on the bank of the Kalayani River.

Written Dhamma known as Tipitakas (literally Three Baskets (Bodies) were multiplied and distributed to monastic centres across his Kingdom. Later King Anawrahta of Bagan brought to his capital all Tipitakas, religious literatures and missionary works to his Capital Pauk-kan Arimadana and founded Buddhist centers in his kingdom.

On the model of Mon monastic centre Teaching schools, monk residences, ordination halls, libraries and meditation caves and tunnels were constructed in the monastic complex.

Buddhism is literate. Unless a person is literate he could not learn Buddha's teachings neither could he practice and propagate it. So since those times religious examinations already existed in Myanmar.

Three stages of Buddhist learning — Pariyatti, Palipati and Pariveda learning, practising and promoting must begin with literal education Kyaung (ကျောင်း) is Myanmar word for school and



Myanmar word Kyaung stands for teaching schools as well as monks' residences (Viharas).

Tipitakas are (1) Pariyathi (2) Palpati and (3) Pativeda and each has its own set of canonical texts (1) Three Sudanta (Discourses) (2) Five Viniya (Monks' disciplines and rules) and Seven Abhidhamma (Samatha and Vipassana Mediatato for concentration of mind and Insight Meditation).

To be able to master that amount of learning, one must have intelligence, perseverance, courage and physical and mental capabilities plus obedience to the senior teacher monks. Monastic schools are open to all regardless of race, status, creed and faith. Royal children and farmer's children attended the classes, sitting on the floor to receive 3 R's education first_ Reading, Writing and Arithmetic and moral lessons instructions in civics from the senior monk teachers.

There pupils receive free education and free messing and lodging. Royal patronage and public support for satupyitsa (Four Basic needs— Food, clothing, shelter and medicine) constantly kept monastic education.

But examinations at every level sorted out the pupils smart, intelligent, studious from dull,

lazy and undisciplined guys for promotion to higher level. The rejects are either repeated or sent back to their parents to work hard labour in the fields.

At the beginning there seemed to be no date for religious examination. Each monastery might have its own date for religious examination. In course of time the month Nayone (June) came to be fixed for holding religious examinations. Suggestions are made by some scholars that the month Nayone is the fixed month of agricultural activities of Myanmar farmers. So before their busy time begins they hold religious examination festivals. It is also convenient for the teachers and pupils to hold religious examinations just before Buddhist Lent arrives in Waso July.

Some scholars opine that holding religious examinations and festivals began fixed in the reign of King Tha Lun of Nyaung Yan Dynasty. But in the Treatise called Loka Bya ha (Inyone Sandan) complied by Minister of Inyone in the Period of Inwa, Religious Examination Festival in Nayone was vividly described.

Later periods, religious examinations were held not only in Nayone but also other months such as Tabaung, Tazaungmon and Nattaw. There are state Pariyatti Examinations, Shwe

Kyi Pariyatti Examination, Mingyun and Mandalay Setkyathiha Examinations that are held at their convenient times.

There are (1) Palthamange (Primary) examination (2) Palthama Latt (middle) Examination (3) Pathamagy (Upper Examination) and (4) Palthama Kyaw (Highest select Examination). All these examinations are oral and written and interview very tough and strict.

In the days of Myanmar Kings, graduates of monastic education were employed in royal services. Royalty, Military Civil, Legal, Judicial, Foreign Relations and Diplomatic services recruited products of monastic education.

Thanks to monastic education and tough and disciplined examined literacy rate of Myanmar people is always high. The British Colonial Government was quite amazed and appreciated much to find the Myanmar literacy was much higher than their own country of that time.

Today Myanmar Government is promoter monastic education ဘုန်းတော်ကြီးကျောင်းပညာရေး and monks are opening Dhamma Schools not only for literary education but also for training in moral and civics. ■

The Tradition of Religious Examination Festival in Nayone

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

A press conference related to the second one-year performances of Ministry of Defence, the Central Bank of Myanmar and Nay Pyi Taw Council is held in Office No. (7), Ministry of Information building, Nay Pyi Taw, at 1 p.m. on 29 May. —Myanmar News Agency

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Order 26/2018

14th Waxing of Nayon, 1380 ME
(28 May 2018)

Reassigned to perform original military duties

Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Major-General Aung Soe has been reassigned to perform his original military duties.

*Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar*

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Order 27/2018

14th Waxing of Nayon, 1380 ME
28 May, 2018

Appointment of Deputy Minister

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 234 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 17 of Union Government Law, Major-General Aung Thu from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) has been appointed as the Deputy Minister for Home Affairs.

*Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar*

Invitation to young writers for Sunday section

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their works to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon or by email to **dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com** with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Real name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar news office

Investigations underway to apprehend elephant poachers

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

Upon interrogation, police discovered that the three arrested men had traveled with two other suspects, Kyaw Kyaw, 30, and Maung Nge, 40, with four home-



Photos show the elephant carcass and parts of elephant skin. PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY

made guns to forest reserve No. 76 in Okkan area on January 2017 to hunt wild elephants. There, they killed a female elephant and

sold forty viss of the elephant's parts to Aung Aung (suspected) in Yangon. The group killed two more elephants in October 2017



and March 2018 and reportedly sold the elephants' parts to Aung Aung again. Authorities have formed a joint force with officials

in areas where high elephant poaching cases were reported to prevent the illegal killing of the animals.—MNA ■

Tourists visit Myanmar via Tachilek check point

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

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

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

Tourists who travelled on day-return trips visited Tarlot market, Bayintnaung Statue,

Maha Myatmuni Pagoda, Wan Kaung market, Koe Myo Shin Nat Nam, Shwedagon Pagoda, the national landmark garden, the Chinese monastery and Kyauktan market, which are famous locations in Tachilek.

Tourists who stayed overnight went to well-known pagodas, such as the Buddha Footprint Pagoda and Maha Myatmuni Pagoda at Mong-

phyat town and Kengtung town.

From 1 April to 24 May 2018, there were 119,716 day trip tourists who entered via the Tachilek border gate, 1,514 visitors who traveled to Mongphyat and Kengtung. Tourist arrivals for those with a visa who traveled by air through Tachilek totalled 1,153.

—GNLM ■



Tourists are seen near the Tachilek border gate. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Two people injured in bus accident in Yangon

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

The YBS-85 passenger bus with number plate-YGN 4N-8797 was speeding towards Tuchaung gate of Dagon Ayar Highway Station from Thakayta when it veered out of control

and hit a man working along the roadside platform and an electric pole.

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

Ward Administrator U Naing Win and his delegation, and officials from the Sanchaung

Fire Services Department and social organisation rushed to the scene to help take the injured persons to the hospital nearby.

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

2018 matriculation exam results on 2 June

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

The results will be simultaneously announced at all town-

ship examination centers. Arrangements will also be made to view the examination results on the website of the Department of Myanmar Board of Examinations at www.myanmarexam.org starting at 6 a.m. on Saturday, 2 June.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar delegation attending bridge technology conference in China

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

The delegation was seen off at the airport by Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin and

Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang.

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

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

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

About 159,930 acres of sugar cane will be planted in Monywa, Shwebo, Kanbalu, Katha, Kalay and Mawlaik districts in Sagiang Region. Also, according to the Sagaing Agricultural Department plan, the department will

plant 51 acres of sugar cane in Monywa, 17,649 acres in Shwebo, 20,566 acres in Kanbalu, 2 acres in Kalay and 12 acres in Mawlaik district. In fiscal 2017-2018, The Sagaing Agricultural Department targeted some 182,000 acres of sugar cane in Monywa, Shwebo, Kanbalu, Katha, Kalay and Mawlaik districts, though the department harvested only 159,930 acres of sugar cane.—Win Oo (Zayyartine) ■

Oil prices dive but Trump-Kim hopes boost Asian equity markets

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

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

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

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

cent in Tokyo.

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

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

Euro strengthens

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

He added: "I truly believe North Korea has brilliant potential and will be a great economic and financial Nation one day. Kim

Jong Un agrees with me on this. It will happen!" Tokyo finished 0.1 per cent higher, Hong Kong added 0.7 per cent and Singapore put on 0.4 per cent, while Seoul rallied 0.7 per cent. Wellington, Jakarta and Taipei were also up but Sydney slipped 0.5 per cent and Shanghai closed 0.2 per cent off. On currency markets, the euro edged up despite political uncertainty in Italy, with investors welcoming news that President Sergio Mattarella had vetoed the nomination of fierce eurosceptic Paolo Savona as economy minister.

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

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

The single currency's gains are also being limited by the pros-

pect of upheaval in Spain, where Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy could face a no-confidence vote after his party was found guilty of benefiting from illegal funds in a massive graft trial.

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

- Key figures around 0810 GMT -

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 0.1 per cent at 22,481.09 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng: UP 0.7 per cent at 30,792.26 (close)

Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.2 per cent at 3,135.08 (close)

London - FTSE 100: Closed for public holiday.

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.1711 from \$1.1661 at 2100 GMT on Friday

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.3330 from \$1.3312

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 109.45 yen from 109.55 yen

Oil - West Texas Intermediate: DOWN \$1.28 at \$66.60 per barrel

Oil - Brent North Sea: DOWN 91 cents at \$75.53

New York - Dow: DOWN 0.2 per cent at 24,753.09 (close)—AFP

20 killed in suspected jihadist attack in Mali

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The French military has said the jihadist group Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is using the border region as a haven.—AFP ■

Nigeria told to end security 'slush funds'

LAGOS — Campaigners on Monday urged Nigeria to stop handing out millions of dollars to tackle unspecified security issues with no questions asked, arguing the practice fuels corruption and conflict. Nigeria is facing widespread unrest, from Boko Haram's Islamist insurgency in the northeast to a resurgence of violence in a long-running dispute over land and resources in central states.

At the same time troops have been deployed to curb rising crime from cattle rustling and

kidnapping gangs in the north, as well as to stop attacks on oil and gas infrastructure in the south.

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



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

Israeli army raids West Bank Palestinian camp after soldier death

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

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

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

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

Israeli forces later withdrew from the camp.

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

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

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

Those responsible were not arrested at the time.

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

Israeli forces regularly car-

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

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

‘Hero’ Malian who saved child to get French citizenship

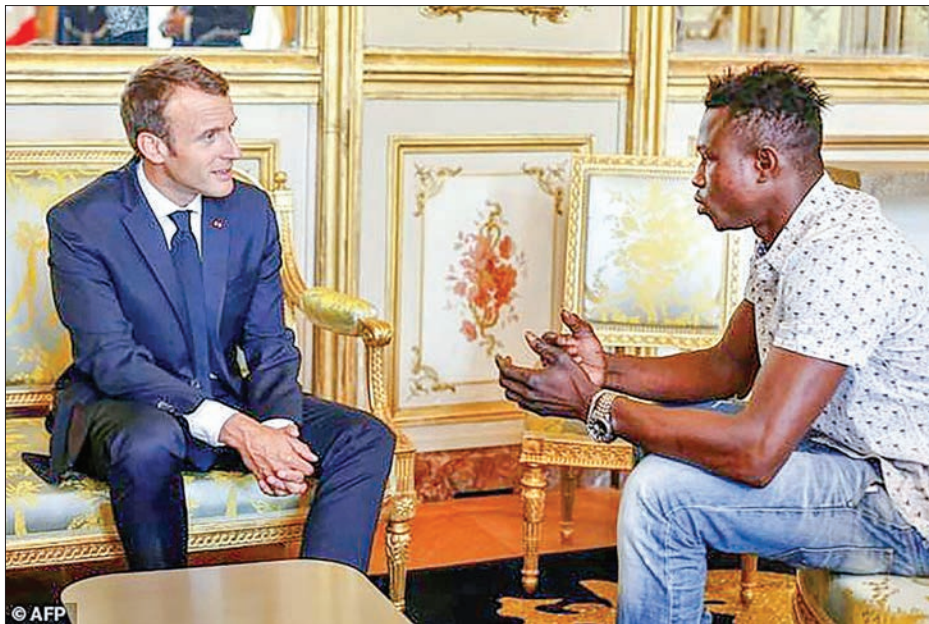
PARIS—A Malian migrant who saved a four-year-old child hanging from a fourth-floor Paris balcony after scaling the building with his bare hands was honoured by French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday and offered citizenship.

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

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

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

“I was not thinking of anything. I went straight up”, Gassama, who wore jeans and a short-sleeved



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

patterned shirt, told Macron, recounting the episode.

“Bravo,” Macron replied.

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

Gassama leaped into

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

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

balcony.

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

Firefighters arrived at the scene to find the child had already been rescued, with a spokesman saying that “luckily, there was

someone who was physically fit and who had the courage to go and get the child.”

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

His story instantly drew comparisons with that of another Malian migrant who was feted as a hero, and given citizenship, for helping save lives during a January 2015 terror attack.

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

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

“He explained to me that he had arrived from Mali a few months ago dreaming of building his life here. “I told him that his heroic act is an example to all citizens and that the city of Paris will obviously be very keen to support him in his efforts to settle in France,” she added. Tracked down by reporters 24 hours after the heroic rescue, Gassama said he had acted without thinking. “I saw all these people shouting, and cars sounding their horns. I climbed up like that and, thank God, I saved the child,” he said. “I felt afraid when I saved the child... (when) we went into the living room, I started to shake, I could hardly stand up, I had to sit down,” he added. According to initial inquiries by the authorities, the child’s parents were not at home at the time.

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

UK must ‘fully’ leave EU customs union: Johnson

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

“Now is our moment not to be less European —

we can do a great trade deal with the EU that will benefit both sides — but to be truly global again,” Johnson wrote in the Daily Telegraph.

Speaking after a long tour of South America, Johnson said countries in the region had been “emphatic” and told him: “If

this is to work, we must come fully out of the EU customs union”.

For Britain to be a “valid trading partner, then we must take back control — as the PM has said — of our tariff schedules, and do deals that are unhindered and uncomplicated,” he said. With just one month to

go until a critical European Union summit, the British government is deeply divided over its plans for future trade ties with the bloc after Britain’s withdrawal.

Johnson and some other ministers have advocated a clean cut with what is currently Britain’s biggest trading partner

that would enable it to sign free trade deals with third countries. But moderates have put forward a plan whereby Britain would collect tariffs on behalf of the EU for goods heading to the bloc and setting its own, separate tariffs for goods that do not. The EU has instead proposed a “backstop” solution to avoid a border in Ireland

under which Northern Ireland would remain aligned with and de facto still under the bloc’s rules, but Britain says that would effectively create a border between the province and the rest of the UK.

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

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DPRK says dismantling nuclear test site shows will to work for nuclear free world

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

The official Rodong Sinmun said on Monday in a commentary stated that the positive measures taken by the DPRK for

the dismantlement of the nuclear test ground have “evoked a tremendous response from the world.”

It said that by inviting international media to cover the event, the DPRK has shown transparency in stopping nuclear tests.

“The DPRK is advancing along the path taken by itself according to its timetable no matter whatever others may say

and wherever wind may blow from,” it said.

The ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) said last month in a plenary session that DPRK would halt its nuclear and missile tests and concentrate all its efforts on economic construction to improve the lives of its people.

“The whole course of dismantling the northern nuclear test ground elo-

quently proves the DPRK government's unshakable peace-loving stand to join the aspiration and efforts of the international community for a total stop to nuclear tests,” said the newspaper of the WPK.

DPRK dismantled the Punggye Ri nuclear test site last week and it invited foreign journalists to cover the event. —Xinhua ■

S Korea launches task force to promote ties with Japan

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

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

Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha said at an event marking the group's launch that exchanges between

the two peoples must be promoted even as the South Korean government handles historical issues in accordance with its “principles.”

Concerned over a decrease in the number of Japanese tourists to South Korea amid diplomatic spats between the two countries, Kang asked the group to prepare “bold proposals” that could not be conceived of by ministry bureaucrats.

The task force is led by Lee Hoon, a tourism professor at Hanyang University. In March, Kang and her Japanese counterpart Taro Kono agreed at a meeting in Washington to



South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

expand bilateral exchanges in various ways, with 2018 marking the 20th anniversary of a partnership declaration issued by then South Korean President Kim Dae Jung and then Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, according to the ministry.

The issue of “com-

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

—Kyodo News ■

Malaysia's Mahathir vows to drop Singapore rail link

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

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

massive financial scandal.

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

“That will be dropped.” Singapore's transport ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

His remarks are likely to alarm the neighbouring

city-state as they watch anxiously to see whether the return of Mahathir — whose relationship with Singapore was famously fractious during his first stint as premier — might cause ties to deteriorate.

Malaysia and Singapore signed a deal in 2016 to build the project.

Companies had started submitting bids for the 350-kilometre (217-mile) bullet-train line between Kuala Lumpur and the city-state, which was scheduled to be completed

by 2026. Mahathir said Malaysia did have an agreement with the city-state on the train line but added: “We have to talk with Singapore about dropping that project.”

The train line was expected to slash travel times to 90 minutes from the five or more hours by road today.

Chinese companies were seen as having a high chance of landing a chunk of the project as ties had warmed with Malaysia under Najib. —AFP ■

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Boyband BTS make K-Pop history topping US album charts

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

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

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

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

While plenty of older music listeners in the West might be asking "who?", it's hard to un-



K-Pop boyband BTS is one of South Korea's best known and most lucrative musical exports. PHOTO: AFP

derestimate the popularity of BTS and their seven stars Suga, J-Hope, Rap Monster, Jimin, V, Jungkook and Jin.

According to one data analysis, they were they most talked about phenomenon on Twitter in 2017, with nearly double the

number of mentions on the social media platform than US President Donald Trump and Canadian badboy heartthrob Justin

Bieber combined.

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

Their new album "Love Yourself: Tear" toppled "Beer-pong and Bentleys" by rising hip-hop star Post Malone, whose facial tattoos are the very antithesis of BTS' wholesome, meticulously manicured image.

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

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

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

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

Analysts had predicted the Disney/Lucasfilm project — directed by Ron Howard and with Alden Ehrenreich as a young version of the swashbuckling Han Solo — would reach \$130 million to \$150 million, possibly setting a Memorial Day weekend record.

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



Donald Glover, Emilia Clarke and Alden Ehrenreich (left to right) at the recent New York premiere of 'Solo: A Star Wars Story,' which has opened in North America with ticket sales far below expectations. PHOTO: AFP

"The news is grim overseas," said Hollywood Reporter, saying the film was heading for barely

half the \$300 million global take many had predicted.

Last weekend's No 1 film,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rounding out the top 10 were:

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

— AFP ■

Daniel Craig to get 50 mn pounds for final 007 film

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

The 50-year-old actor will also get an executive producer credit, along with endorsements and profits, according to Mirror.com. Craig previously received 37 million pounds for 2015's "Spectre". The film is likely to have a run time of around two hours and

20 minutes, meaning the actor will get 357,000 pounds per minute of screen time.

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

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

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

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

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

But after constant denials,

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

A film source in Los Angeles said, "Daniel is raring to go out with a bang alongside Danny.

They have been talking already about their visions and the practicalities once the cameras start rolling in December at Pinewood.—PTI ■



Daniel Craig. PHOTO: PTI

Europe's largest wooden building awaits salvation off Istanbul

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

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

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

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

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

"It's a miracle it still stays standing," said Baytas, who spent more than 30 years guarding it.

Situated atop a hill on Buyukada, one of the Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara, it is about 90 minutes by ferry from central Istanbul. Originally conceived as a luxury casino hotel, the building was commissioned by the Compagnie des Wagons-Lits, the travel firm which historically operated the Orient Express. The aim was to attract well-heeled European travellers who were flocking to Istanbul in great numbers at the height of the Belle Epoque, many arriving on the famous long-distance train. Designed by Alexandre Vallaury, the Franco-Ottoman architect behind Istanbul's Pera Palace hotel, the hotel was completed in 1898 — but never managed to get an operating licence from Sultan Abdulhamid II on grounds its gambling activities would be immoral.

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



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

Patriarchate of Constantinople.

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

'What happened to my house?'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He collapsed and was constantly whispering, 'What happened to my house?'

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

'Must be protected'

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

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

In April, the Archbishop of Constantinople and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I asked for Ankara's help during talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. But the plea comes at a time of fresh tensions

between the two nations over an array of issues, including the protection of Byzantine and Greek heritage in Istanbul.

Restoring its splendour

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

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

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

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

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

South African firm sells "insect milk" as next superfood

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

"Think of Entomilk as a sustainable, nature-friendly, nutritious, lactose free, delicious, guilt-free dairy alternative of the future," Gourmet Grubb said on

its website.

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

Entomilk entered the market two years after the debut of the so-called "cockroach milk,"

a milk made from the viviparous cockroach named *Diploptera punctata*.

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

Their milk is a crystal of pro-

teins, fats and sugars, which are important for the growth of baby cockroaches.

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

However, scientists did not

expect the cockroach milk to be found in supermarkets anytime soon. Besides its unappealing name, it's also unclear if the milk is safe to consume.

"We have no evidence that it is actually safe for human consumption," said Subramanian Ramaswamy, the lead author of the 2016 study.—Xinhua ■

Balotelli has matured, says Italy skipper Bonucci

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

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

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

"I've found him (Mario) changed compared to the past, matured," 31-year-old AC Milan defender Bonucci told a press conference ahead of Monday's game. Balotelli has scored 13 goals in 33 appearances for the Azzurri but has not been se-

lected since Italy's humiliating group-stage exit from the 2014 World Cup.

But he may have to wait until the second friendly against France on June 1 to make his return.

"As for Balotelli, we'll see if he plays or not (against the Saudis). Mario wants to play in front of his fans in Nice. Let's see if we deploy him immediately or in the second game," said Mancini.

"He'll be one of the strikers and we hope he can give us something good for the future because he's still young."

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

"It's the first game so it's important to start well, which does not just mean winning," said Mancini. "The most impor-



Italy's striker Mario Balotelli (C) and Italy's forward Lorenzo Insigne (L) take part in a training session on 24 May, 2018 at Coverciano's training camp near Florence. **PHOTO: AFP**

tant thing is that the lads play carefree and that they can have fun, even at the cost of making mistakes."

Bonucci, meanwhile, said he was relishing his role of

captain even if he missed the presence of veterans Gianluigi Buffon and Daniele De Rossi.

"There's a strong sense of responsibility, but what surpasses everything is pride. I want to

be a true example for the rest of lads," said Bonucci. Italy play a third friendly against the Netherlands, who also failed to qualify for the World Cup, in Turin on 4 June.—AFP ■

Maclaren called up to Australia World Cup squad

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



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

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

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

Dutchman van Marwijk said he will use this week to assess Maclaren's form ahead of naming his final 23-man squad by 4 June. "Tomi Juric has had a knee issue over the last three weeks which is being monitored by our medical team," said van Marwijk. "We hope that Tomi will be able to train and play this week, but his recovery might also take longer."

"That is why we have decided to bring in Jamie Maclaren now so that he also has a fair chance to display his qualities before the final squad must be announced," he added.—AFP ■

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

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

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

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

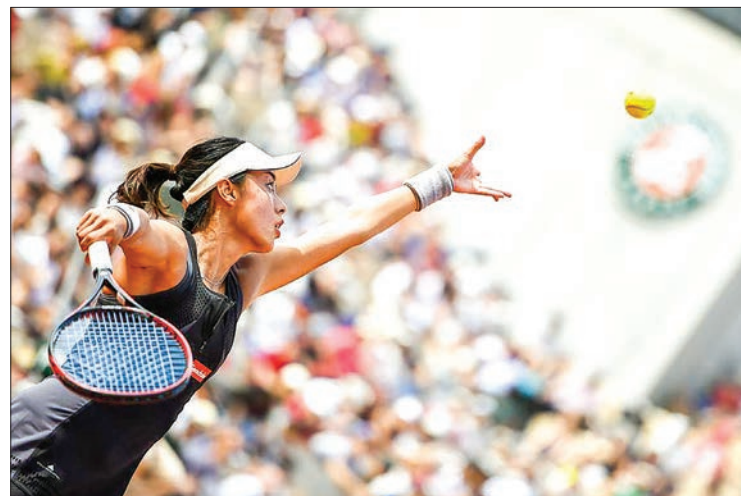
Both sides shared the first eight games of the opening set, before Wang grabbed the chance of wrapping up the set on Williams' forehand flaw.

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

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

Williams suffered disastrous 35 unforced errors despite notching 28 winners, also inferior to Wang in terms of points on first and second serves.

Wang will next face Croatia's Petra Martic, who eliminated Wang's compatriot Wang Yafan in an earlier match-up.—Xinhua ■



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