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Firefighters remove debris left by Cyclone Mora as it brushed past Maungdaw, Rakhine State yesterday on its way to Bangladesh. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

Cyclone Mora wreaks havoc, cuts power in Maungdaw

By Min Thit

CYCLONE Mora wreaked havoc in Maungdaw Township in northern Rakhine State, leaving transportation and communications in chaos and causing a loss in power to the township as it crossed into Bangladesh early yesterday morning.

The cyclone had intensi-

fied in the Bay of Bengal and travelled north, making landfall in Bangladesh but affecting northern Rakhine State in western Myanmar.

"We have removed the debris in the roads since the storm made landfall. I'm not sure if the storm killed people or not in villages because the storm has affected communica-

tions," said U Thant Zin, head of the Maungdaw Township Fire Services Department.

The wind reached its maximum sustained speed at about 4am with heavy rain, cutting communications around 6am, he added.

"Security has also been tightened and departmental offices are also urged to be on

alert due to the lack of communications and power supply since early morning," said U Ye Htut, Maungdaw District Commissioner.

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

The cyclone weakened in Bangladesh by late morning.



NATIONAL
Natural disaster management committee discusses 2016 survey
PAGE-3



NATIONAL
Senior General holds talks with Turkish Ambassador
PAGE-9

NATIONAL
Parkland rental fees in Yangon to be examined
PAGE-3



NATIONAL
India Myanmar Thailand highway: Project is likely to start from next month, says Nitin Gadkari
PAGE-6

LOCAL BUSINESS
Over Ks56,000 million earned from four types of insurance policies
PAGE-5



သဒ္ဓါထက်သန် မြန်မာအားမန် ကမ္ဘောဇဘဏ်

Pyithu Hluttaw

2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 5th regular session holds its 6th day meeting

At the 6th day meeting of 2nd Pyithu Hluttaw 5th regular session, held on 30 May, as regards the motion put forward by Daw Aye Aye Mu (a) Daw Sharmie of Kalay constituency, titled "Urging the government to lay down orders, rules, regulations on taking arrests with a view to controlling frequent changes of hearing the cases without relevant reasons for the convenience of relation between the public and government offices and to drop down the bribery and corruption", the Hluttaw decided to put it on record, with the motion seconded by 6 representatives.

Daw Soe Nwe Aye, of Tada-U constituency discussed that the government should effectively take action against service personnel who violated civil service rules such as the cases of violating service rules, failure to perform the duties for the people, delaying time and submitting false reports to authorities concerned for the government to go astray, if the public made a complaint with evidences over these cases.

Dr Daw Kyi Moh Moh Lwin of Singaing constituency discussed that there were some intermediaries who were intentionally made to arrange in dubious ways and means for convenient communication between the departments and the public instead of helping by giving necessary guidance, especially administrative offices, land records offices, immigration offices, road and transport offices, police stations and courts of justices.

U Than Tun Myint of Kalewa constituency said they still needed to systematically solve the problems of bribery and corruption among service personnel, and simultaneously it is necessary to instill character building by organising, educating and discussing, plus exercising the carrot-and-stick approach.

In addition, U Min Thaing of Bogale constituency, U Soe Aung Naing of Kyonpyaw constituency and Daw San San Ei of Mohnyin constituency seconded the motion. U Mya Win, chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commis-

sion said, "To reduce events of inducing to practise bribery and corruption, delaying cases and annoying the public by making frequent changes of hearing cases, arrangements are under way in some departments to reduce unnecessary steps, to keep service records and to issue orders and instructions transparently. But it is necessary for the departments and organisations which are directly communicating to carry out depending upon the nature of the work, to notify the time to perform and particulars which must be brought together in noticeable places, to announce respective complaint centers if there are some persons who would to complain and to take actions against those who violated malpractices if found guilty."

Afterward, Dr Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation replied to the questions raised by U Maung Maung of Htigyaing constituency as to whether there has been any plan to pave the way of Myaybaungtin-Kyaukchaw, by U Tin



Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Myint. PHOTO: MNA

Hla of Danubyu constituency, U Kan Myint of Thayet constituency, U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency and U Saw Tun of Mudon constituency, respectively.

In today's meeting, the report submitted by the Government's Guarantees, Pledges and

Undertaking Vetting Committee of the Pyithu Hluttaw and government & embankment law (bill) submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation were discussed by parliamentarians and approved by Hluttaw. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session holds its 6th day meeting

Six day meeting of 2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session was held at the meeting hall of the Amyotha Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am yesterday.

Maj-Gen Myint Nwe, Deputy Minister for Defence, replied to the question raised by U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 as to whether there have been any plans to abandon the ownership of the confiscated land 15 acres situated at field No 847 (A) in Chaungtha (North) of Zinkhar-chay village in Kyauktaw township, that the land 15 acres had been ordered to be cancelled from the list of pasture land by Rakhine State General Administration Department, but it would be abandoned in accord with procedures due to being about 10 miles far away from the headquarters of the battalion and being unable to grow monsoon paddy on account of floods every rainy season.

U Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister for Transport and Commu-



Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

nications replied to the question raised by U Kyaw Than of Rakhine State constituency 10 as to whether there have been any plans for building stone embankment which would protect landslide in Pyargyi village of Hmyawtaung U village-tract in Manaung Township, Kyaukphyu district from erosion of tides.

Deputy Minister said, "Due to construction of 150 ft-long 6 stone embankments with the State Cabinet's added fund of K 126.422 million in the financial

year 2014-2015, and 150 ft-long 6 stone embankments with the State Cabinet's initial budget fund of K 126.422 million, tide-induced erosion was relieved to the considerable extent. But, it was not sufficient for tide-affected length of 7000 ft, the budget allotment was submitted to be granted for further construction and conservation of embankments in the added fund of Rakhine State Cabinet for the fiscal year 2017-2018. Depending upon the fund, construction

of embankments will be implemented with the technical aids of transport and communications ministry."

Afterward, U Aung Htoo, Deputy Minister for Commerce replied to the question raised by U Maung Maung Latt of Sagaing Region constituency-9 as to whether there have been any arrangements for consulting with the Indian Government to carry out policy reforms by reviewing situations on Myanmar-India border trade.

U Aung Htoo explained, "With a view to the improvement of trade between Myanmar and India, bilateral trade joint-committee meetings, border trade committee meetings between high-ranking officials from both sides and border-market joint committee meetings were held in cooperation.

In the Myanmar-India bilateral trade joint committee meeting, increasing items of tradable goods was carried out. And, the trade zone was

managed to be opened in Htantalan in Myanmar. In addition, Myanmar has demanded to open a new trade zone in Pan Khwar, Mizoram State in India. Besides bilateral banking services, matters on cooperation in agriculture, fishery, medicine, textile sectors were cordially discussed. 6th Myanmar-India trade joint committee meeting is to be held in New Delhi, India during the month of June, 2017, hence negotiations to be emphasized over the queries raised by the Hluttaw representatives."

Then, Deputy Minister for Defence and Deputy Minister for Transport & Communications clarified the questions raised by U Wai Sein Aung of Rakhine State constituency 1 and U Tet Tun Aung of constituency 2, U Kyaw Thaung of Sagaing Region constituency 1.

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw 5th regular session's 7th day meeting will be on 31st May. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Natural disaster Management Committee discusses 2016 survey

A work coordination meeting on a 2016 natural disaster survey was held yesterday morning in the meeting room of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, who is also the Chairman of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee, delivered the opening speech at the workshop.

At the meeting, the Vice President explained that the 2016 survey contained data on the causes of loss and the needs to be fulfilled. He went on to explain that the job of his committee included discovering the causes of natural disasters and participating in rehabilitation after the disaster had struck.

“Looking at the survey, we can see there is a lot of work to be done before and after a natural disaster. These jobs include reforestation, relocation of households, constructing sluice gates, levees, bridges, digging sandbanks so rivers and other watercourses can flow smoothly, building dykes, dams and causeways, building shelters, embankments, repairing roads connecting villages, dealing with shortage of drinking water and



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the attendants of the work coordination meeting on a 2016 natural disaster survey in the meeting room of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

other problems dealing with water”, he said.

“Of utmost importance are developing villages so that they can better withstand natural disasters as well as reducing losses sustained from natural disasters. However, since doing both of them simultaneously is difficult, the various tasks that need to be done are categorized in order of importance. Thus, it is important that there is collaboration between region and state

ministries in drawing up annual project plans.”

The Vice President said that if preventive measures for natural disasters are implemented, then a strong society that can withstand and properly react to natural disasters will be formed. He also urged the various working committees working on the 2016 natural disaster survey to participate in discussions.

In the rest of the meeting, chairmen of the various work-

ing committees presented and discussed their completed objectives and future plans for their sector.

Attending the workshop were Vice Chairmen of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe and Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chairmen of the working committee Union Ministers U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, Dr. Myint Htwe, U Win Khaing, Deputy Minister

U Maung Maung Win, heads of departments and other responsible officials.

The working committees included the Working Committee for Search and Rescue with Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe as Chairman, the Working Committee for National Natural Disaster Management and the Working Committee for Searching and Maintaining Funds with Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye as Chairman, the Working Committee for Relief and Resettlement with Union Minister U Win Khaing as Chairman, the Working Committee for Transport and Communications with Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung as Chairman, the Working Committee for Environmental Conservation with Union Minister U Ohn Win as Chairman, the Working Committee for Management of Health Protection with Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe as Chairman, and other working committees dealing with collecting surveys, reviewing and verifying of losses, dissemination of information, providing vocational training and rehabilitation. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Parkland rental fees in Yangon to be examined

By Ko Moe

The current rental fees of all parkland in Yangon should be re-examined, said U Htay Aung, a former committee member of Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

“Some parkland projects are under the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) and some are under the Department of Forestry. The parkland rentals are very low and should be examined over,” said U Htay Aung at the Press Conference at the M3 Restaurant on Monday.

To amend the parkland rental fees, respective ministries and the rental companies should be work on negotiation, he added.

Parkland was renting at Ks65 per square foot to the Natural World Company under a

25-year terms.

“The buildings in the Mya Kyun Thar Garden, which were not in agreement with the contract, would be demolished and YCDC was drafting a master plan,” said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe at the regional parliament on 22 May.

The Mya Kyun Thar parkland was renting in 2013 at Ks25 per square foot to Magic Land Company, Rya Ja Company, Mandalay Golden Win Company, Nay La Pwint Company, Edin Company, Golden Shan Brother Company, Myanmar Golden Star Company and Max Myanmar Company under 60-year terms.

Among these companies, Edin, Golden Shan Brother, Myanmar Golden Star and Max Myanmar have not constructed any buildings to date. ■

JMC opens office in Shan State

THE new office of the Joint Monitoring Committee on ceasefire in Shan State (JMC-S) was inaugurated yesterday at this office in Kholan, Southern Shan State, attended by member of the Union Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC-U) Lt-Gen. Tun Tun Naung, Chairman of

JMC-S, commander of the Middle East Command Maj-Gen. Than Hlaing and members, officials from the state cabinet, members of JMC-S and invited guests.

Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung unveiled the signboard of the new office at the ceremony and the

commander and vice chairmen addressed speeches at the 7th meeting of JMC-S.

Afterwards, members of JMC-S explained the ongoing projects of the committee and Lt-Gen Tun Tun Naung gave instruction. — Myanmar News agency ■

Visa, AYA Bank launch international credit cards

AYA Bank and VISA launched three types of credit cards yesterday, offering credit services locally and internally. The three cards: Gold, Silver and Platinum cards allows cardholders to enjoy the service at more than 40 million shops around the world and more than 7,000 shops in Myanmar.

“We will not collect any interest within 50 days of purchase. If people can not pay back their balance on time, they will incur one per cent interest fee and two percent for late-payment fees,” said Managing Director U Myint Zaw of AYA Bank. —GNLM ■



An official delivers a speech at the credit card launching ceremony in Yangon. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

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Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda floor to be replaced with heat resistant tiles

HEAT resistant floor tiles will be used to replace marbles sheets on the platform of Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda during the closing season of pilgrimage.

The cost of replacing new floor tiles will be incurred by pagoda funds, supporting fund of the Mon State government and donations.

Estimation of costs will be calculated by making surveys to implement this project.

The works of fitting heat resistant tiles will be carried out in the closing season of pilgrimage to avoid inconvenience to the visitors.

"We are going to use heat resistant tiles instead of marbles tiles by the suggestion of the travellers.



Pilgrims praying to Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda also known as the Golden Rock Pagoda. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Pilgrims can also visit the pagoda platform with no fear of the absorbed heat", said a

trustee from the Kyaikhtiyo pagoda.

Visitors to Kyaikhtiyo pa-

goda are currently increasing and most of the foreign visitors are from Thailand.—200 ■

Affordable residences constructed, real estate market steadily declines

THE Department of Urban and Housing Development is implementing the affordable housing project in Chanmyatharzi Township in Mandalay Region for the retirees and low income residents.

The residents were increasing due to the construction of concrete passages, car parking and a small park for the chil-

dren at the affordable housing in Myanandar ward.

The Construction and Housing Development Bank (CHDB) is selling the apartments with the priority to those who have 30pc of the value of the apartment in their bank saving account. The apartments were sold with a transparent system of drawing lots to the government

staffs, company staffs and low income public. The apartments for the public who submitted the application forms are also being constructed. The prices of the units were set at Ks90 lakhs for 400 square ft, Ks115 lakhs for 500 square ft, Ks140 lakhs for 600 square ft, Ks170 lakhs for 750 square ft and Ks200 lakhs for 900 square ft. These low-

cost and affordable units are sold through an installment system that ranges from 5 to 15 years. As low-cost residences are being constructed in Chanmyatharzi Township and Pyigyitagon Township, real estate markets are declining steadily and transactions are stable, according to the real estate agents.—Maung Pyi Thu (Mandalay) ■

Rising crude oil prices good news for laborers

PRICES of crude oil in Magway Region rose from Ks40,000 to Ks100,000.

Between November 2015 and January 2016, prices dropped as low as US\$30 and Ks40,000.

The reason behind the falling prices was due to the production of shale in the US, resulting in abundance of crude oil, thus effectively lowering the prices.

After investment in shale production declined, crude oil prices rose back up to US\$40. The member countries of Organization

of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to reduce the production of crude oil in Nov 2017 and after reducing the production of crude oil in Dec 2017, the prices of the crude oil steadily increased.

The labors from the crude oil mine are in good business in this year than last year due to the prices of the crude oil increased up to Ks100,000 in local market and US\$ 50 in global market, said U Win Ko, a person of crude oil mining.—Min Htee (Magway) ■

Stimulant tablets seized in Hpa-an, Tachilek

Hpa-an district anti-narcotics squad searched the house of Saw Kyaw Pi at Htoogon Village, Sanfari village-tract in Hpa-an Township on 28 May and found 28,000 stimulant tablets and a phone handset from his house.

Similarly, a local border guard force and a Tachilek anti-narcotics squad searched a house owned by Arr Mae at Parkhar Village, Lwal Taw Kham village-tract in Tachilek on 29 May. Police discovered 218,400 stimulant tablets and 7 kilos of powdered stimulant drugs together with Arr Jay and Ma Mar Hta.

Border guard police have taken action against them under the Anti-narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Saw Kyaw Pi. **PHOTO: MPF**

Lotus robe price rises by Ks200,000

The high price of lotus fibre this year hiked up the prices of lotus robes, the clothing worn by Buddhist monks, increasing by about Ks200,000, according to Myint Myat Htwe, a lotus robe and traditional clothes shop in Inle.

A viss of fibre fetched around Ks400,000 in 2016, whereas the prevailing price of fibre this year is around Ks500,000 per viss.

Lotus robes are in de-

mand by both domestic and foreign markets.

“A lotus robe used to sell for Ks1.6million, but the price jumped to around Ks1.8million this year. We uses traditional ways to dye the fibre. Singapore and Thailand place purchase orders”, said a labourer engaged in this weaving industry. Making a lotus robe takes 20 days with 12 steps and one garment needs over three viss of lotus fibre.—YCDC ■

Shwe Zabu River View Complex sales expo to be held

A two-day expo of the Shwe Zabu River View Complex will be held on the ground floor of the complex on 3rd and 4th June from 9 am to 5 pm.

The Shwe Zabu River View Complex is located at Strand Road in Ahlon Township in Yangon. It was built on 1.5 acres of land on Strand Road in Ahlon Township with the use of technology from Singapore.

The complex includes four towers with a total of 104 apartments, providing facilities such as a 24-hour electrical supply with two generators, CCTV cameras, gym, car parking, swimming pool, playground,

24-hour security, eight Schindler lifts, a mini mart, automatic fire protection system, centralised water system, cinema, karaoke and meeting halls, according to iMyanmar.com.

Those who purchased condominium apartments with a Shwedagon Pagoda view and river view can establish an installment payment plan with a 30 per cent down payment and the remaining 70 per cent paid off in installments over three to-15 years.

Construction of the Shwe Zabu River View Complex was begun in 2012 and completed in April 2015.—200 ■

Rice seed production under contract farming system to commence in early July

A rice seed production project on 600 acres and quality paddy production on 5,500 acres under the contract farming system will kick off in early June in Ayeyawady Region, said U Ye Min Aung, director of MAPCO Golden Lace.

The contract farming system will be carried out in other regions and states with the designation of zones, officials said.

A pedigree rice seed production plan will be conducted on 300 acres in Kyaiklat, and on 100 acres each in Dedaye, Pyapon and Bogale.

Meanwhile, quality paddy

will be produced on 3,000 acres in Kyaiklat, 1,000 acres in Dedaye, 1,000 acres in Pyapon and 500 acres in Bogale, said U Ye Min Aung.

A total of 1,850 farmers from Kyaiklat, Dedaye, Pyapon and Bogale will participate in contract farming system. A basket of rice seed will be purchased at Ks6,000 while a quality paddy will be offered Ks4,500 a basket.

MAPCO Golden Lace will buy 36,000 baskets of rice seed and 238,150 baskets of quality paddy from the farmers engaged in contract farming.—200 ■



A man looks at the LED board showing the stock exchange rates at YSX, in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

MTSH stock trading volume rose with all-time low price

Stock trading of Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH) on Yangon Stock Exchange hit 19,352 shares on 30th May when the share price hit a low for this year of Ks3,700, according to statistics of YSX.

First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB) and FPB are currently trading their shares

on YSX.

A total of 20,188 shares worth over Ks53million were traded on 30th May 2017, with trading volumes of 618 shares from FMI, 19,352 shares from MTSH, 30 shares from MCB and 188 shares from FPB. The share prices are Ks15,500 for FMI, Ks3,700 for MTSH, Ks8,900 for MCB and Ks27,500 for FPB at the closing time.

After a split of shares, MTSH traded its shares at Ks5,100 per unit. The share price slipped downward and hit a record low of Ks3,900 on 15th May. The price remained on the decline and reached an all-time low of Ks3,700 on 29th and 30th May.

With an all-time low price, 13,771 shares of MTSH were traded on 29th and 19,352 shares on 30th May.—Mon Mon ■

Over Ks56,000 million earned from four types of insurance policies

Myanma Insurance, the state-owned insurance company, earned over Ks56,000million last year from the sale of four types of insurance policies — comprehensive motor insurance, fire insurance, life insurance and marine cargo insurance, according to Myanma Insurance.

The earnings exceeded the expected amount, with an increase of over Ks20,000million in premiums.

Myanma Insurance will reportedly introduce a new service

system for health insurance offering more benefits and is planning to get more compensation for third-party liability insurance policies.

Myanma Insurance will also make efforts for the benefits of health insurance to be widely known among the public.

Among all the type of insurance provided by Myanma Insurance, fire insurance, seaman's life insurance, aviation liability insurance, marine insurance and defence services personnel life

insurance are the most popular, according to Myanma Insurance.

Myanma Insurance is currently exerting efforts to provide more facilities against the private insurers.

There is still no permit for foreign-based companies to enter the Myanma insurance industry.

However, Manulife Company is gearing up to enter the Myanmar market once foreign companies are granted licences, it is reported.—Htet Myat ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Turkish Ambassador to Myanmar

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint received Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Myanmar, at the Pyithu Hluttaw Hall in the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw, at 2:00 pm yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to democratic transition, human-

itarian aids and friendship and cooperation between the two governments and the two parliaments.

Deputy Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office were also present at the meeting. — Myanmar News Agency ■



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint shakes hands with Turkish Ambassador Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Ngapali, Myeik Island and Chin State to be promoted at JATA Tourism EXPO Japan

Myanmar will display Ngapali Beach, Myeik Island and Chin State at JATA Tourism EXPO Japan, organized by the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) which will be held in the last week of September, to attract more visitors, according to Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

In 2016, Ngapali was the top beach in Asia by the selection of the largest travel website, Trip Advisor and Myeik Island will also be created as a new travelling destination as travellers increase in this year.

The tourism businessmen considered that though tourists entering Chin State are currently lessening, Natma Mountain near Mindat Township, Rih Dil, the heart-shaped lake and the cultures of the ethnic people can attract many tourists.—200 ■



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than discusses with Turkish Ambassador Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than meets Turkish Ambassador

AMYOTHA Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than received Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Myanmar, at the hall of Amyotha Hluttaw in Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday at 3:30 pm.

During the meeting, they

discussed promoting bilateral friendship and cooperation.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Aye Tha Aung and officials of the Amyotha Hluttaw Office. — Myanmar News Agency ■

India -Myanmar -Thailand highway: Project likely starts next month

MUMBAI — To strengthen connectivity with Southeast Asia, the government is likely to kickstart work on highway from Meghalaya to Myanmar, as part of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral pact, from next month.

To strengthen connectivity with Southeast Asia, the government is likely to kickstart work on highway from Meghalaya to Myanmar, as part of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral pact, from next month. “We will probably start work on Meghalaya to Myanmar project from next month.

The cost of the project is Rs 5,000 crore,” Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari told reporters here. India, Thailand and Myanmar are working on a 1,400 km long highway that would link the country with Southeast Asia by land for the first time in decades, a move which would give a boost to trade, business, health, education and tourism among the countries.

Further, addressing the conclave on green ports and

oil spill management here, the Union minister said the government is planning a waterway connectivity up to Myanmar via Bangladesh using Brahmaputra river, and expects the project to be completed soon.

“Waterways are more cost effective than roads and railways and so any goods required to be traded to Myanmar or Bangladesh could be done in a very cost effective manner. This will finish before 2018,” Gadkari said.

With the Cabinet approving Rs 2,000 crore from a central fund for development of water transport, operationalising at least 10 of the 111 national waterways by next year is on top of the government’s agenda. Massive work worth Rs 5,000 crore is already underway on Ganga (1,620 km), with World Bank assistance, which is the National Waterway No 1. The work includes development of three multi-modal hubs at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Haldia in West Bengal and Sahebganj in Bihar. Pitching for environ-



To strengthen connectivity with Southeast Asia, Indian government is likely to kickstart work on highway from Meghalaya to Myanmar, as part of the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral pact, from next month. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

ment-friendly initiatives, Gadkari also said that the country could be flooded with electric commercial and passenger vehicles by December, as a move to curb dependence on crude oil

and cut emissions.

He noted that India needs to encourage electric as well as bio-diesel and ethanol-fuelled vehicles.

On concerns on lack of in-

frastructure for charging electric vehicles, the minister said, “In Nagpur we started electric vehicles now we have 10 electric charging stations... so the technology is there and if we have more vehicles we will get more charging stations.”

Nagpur today earned the distinction of becoming the country’s first city with a fleet of 200 electric vehicles, including taxis, buses, e-rickshaw and autos.

Gadkari also suggested that shipping corporations should explore use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as an alternative source of fuel to save on costs. The minister also told reporters that he would discuss lowering the goods and services tax (GST) rates on hybrid vehicles with the finance ministry. Under the GST rates, hybrid cars, which are considered eco-friendly, are slated to attract a 15 per cent cess over and above peak rate of 28 per cent, same as those of large luxury cars and sports utility vehicles (SUVs).—PTI ■

“Shocked” S Korea leader Moon orders probe into US THAAD additions

SEOUL — South Korean President Moon Jae-in has ordered a probe after the Defence Ministry failed to inform him that four more launchers for the controversial US THAAD anti-missile system had been brought into the country, his spokesman said on Tuesday.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system battery was initially deployed in March in the southeastern region of Seongju with just two of its maximum load of six launchers to counter a growing North Korean missile threat.

During his successful campaign for the May 9 presidential election, Moon called for a parliamentary review of the system, whose deployment has also infuriated China, North Korea's lone major ally.

“President Moon said it was very shocking” to hear the four

additional launchers had been installed without being reported to the new government or to the public, presidential spokesman Yoon Young-chan told a media briefing.

Moon had campaigned on a more moderate approach to Pyongyang, calling for engagement even as the reclusive state pursues nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions and threats of more sanctions.

The US military in South Korea did not have immediate comment on Moon's comments. The South Korean military also did not immediately comment.

Moon's order of a probe into the THAAD launchers came amid signs of easing tensions between major trading partners South Korea and China.

South Korea's Jeju Air said on Tuesday China has approved a plan to double its flights to the Chinese city of Weihai from 2 June.

China has been incensed over the THAAD deployment, fearing it could give the US military the capability of seeing into its own missile systems, and could open the door to a wider deployment of the system, possibly in Japan and elsewhere, military analysts say.

China has denied it had discriminated against South Korean companies, which have faced product boycotts and bans on Chinese tourists visiting South Korea.

A Korean-Chinese joint drama “My Goddess, My Mom” starring South Korean actress Lee Da-hae, whose broadcast had been indefinitely delayed in



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un reacts during a ballistic rocket test-fire through a precision control guidance system in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



A ballistic rocket is test-fired through a precision control guidance system in this undated photo released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

China, was told by its Chinese partner recently that it will soon be aired, according to JS Pictures, Lee's agent.

An official at South Korean tour agency Mode Tour told Reuters it hoped China may lift a ban on selling trips to South Korea, which had been in place since 15 March, as early as the second week of June.

Although there have been no official orders from the Chinese government to lift the ban, a few Chinese travel agencies have sent inquiries about package tours, he said.

However, Lotte Group has yet to reopen any of the 74 retail stores in China it was forced to close in March after the group allowed South Korea to install the THAAD system on land it owned.

The United States, which has

28,500 troops stationed in South Korea, has a mutual defence treaty with Seoul dating back to the end of the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in a truce that has left the peninsula in a technical state of war.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said on Tuesday it had conducted a joint drill with a US supersonic B-1B Lancer bomber on Monday. North Korea's state media had earlier accused the United States of staging “a nuclear bomb dropping drill”.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe talked to Moon by phone on Tuesday, Japan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement, and both agreed that North Korea's continued provocations were unacceptable.

Abe told Moon that dialogue for dialogue's sake with North

Korea would be meaningless, and that China's role in exerting pressure on the North was important.

The North's KCNA news agency reported leader Kim Jong Un supervised Monday's test of a missile equipped with a new precision guidance system and an improved pre-launch automated sequence and a new mobile launch vehicle.

Kim said North Korea would develop more powerful weapons in multiple phases in accordance with its timetable to defend North Korea against the United States.

“He expressed the conviction that it would make a greater leap forward in this spirit to send a bigger ‘gift package’ to the Yankees” in retaliation for American military provocation, KCNA quoted Kim as saying.—Reuters ■

Abe admits having received salary from scandal-hit friend's school

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Tuesday he had been listed as an executive member of a school operator run by his friend and received a salary, as opposition parties intensified their offensive against him alleging he favoured the operator in connection with a plan to establish a new university department.

The fresh revelation came

after a former education ministry bureaucrat admitted last week the authenticity of documents indicating Abe was involved in a government decision to approve the heavily subsidized construction of a veterinary medicine department at Okayama University of Science in western Japan's Ehime Prefecture.

Abe told an upper house

committee that for several years more than 20 years ago, he had received a salary of 140,000 yen annually from Kake Educational Institution, whose chairman Kotato Kake is a close friend of his.

“I was in charge of auditing or something else (at the institution) for a couple of years after I was first elected” to the House of Representatives in 1993, Abe said in the House of Councillors

Judicial Affairs Committee, adding it was “a long time ago.”

Later Tuesday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga denied that Abe had influenced the decision on the university project. “Is there anything wrong?” with the prime minister having served as an executive member of the school operator and been compensated for that role, he said at a press confer-

ence. During the parliamentary session, Abe turned down a request from Toshio Ogawa, a lawmaker of the main opposition Democratic Party, to summon to the Diet as a sworn witness Kihei Maekawa, former vice minister of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, to testify over the documents in question.—Kyodo News ■

New academic year, students and urgent needs to be done

Khin Maung Oo

WITH the advent of the new academic year 2017-2018, parents, teachers and students are eagerly preparing for the heavy workload ahead of them. Students will be excited with meeting new friends and encountering new experiences at school, chatting and having fun, while ambitious ones will be getting ready to vie for the attainment of exceptional educational achievements. Parents across the country will have waited for this day with the hope that their offspring's brighter futures are becoming near. Due to the support to be provided by the government, all parents, especially those who do not belong to the well-to-do class will be relieved of burdens of expenses faced at school-opening season. Yet, they will still have to worry about pocket-money to be paid to their children during the

school term.

Authorities concerned will also be busy with the new academic year. It is still a great problem for the authorities to arrange for school-age children to be in basic primary schools. Especially, with the Yangon city-dweller boom, the Yangon Region Government has to deal with urban problems including traffic jams. The traffic situation has improved a little because of the YBS – Yangon Bus System launched by the Yangon regional government but much still remains to be done. We cannot expect that the problems can be solved in a short period of time. It will take considerable amount of time to smoothen out the administrative problems as well as to give proper training to the bus drivers and spares.

As regards the role of teachers, people do not pay much attention. In fact, most people think that they

have done their duty the moment their children board the school ferry buses on weekdays. This is tantamount to leaving all other duties of teaching and taking care of their children during school hours to teachers. Parent-Teacher-Associations (PTAs) have been established with the intention of helping students with their education by working hand in hand between parents and teachers. At the same time, parents need to be in touch with teachers. That is, they are required to inquire as to whether their children are doing well in the class or not.

Nowadays, gambling houses and game stations are ubiquitous in the city. These places are not only destroying the lives of adults but also threatening to harm the future of our children. Had surveys been made as to how many youths are wandering on roads or other places, it would be beneficial

for us. Authorities should not condone its dangers of depriving us of our precious time, labor and moral values. In our surroundings, there are many youths who have become drug-addicts by spending most of their time in game shops. As for him, he has lost his future. But, his family lost their edifices of hope. The debauched person with moral bankruptcy will never become a leader or a reliable member of the work force for the country.

We accept that no government can solve all problems overnight. The incumbent government was left with a bad legacy of problems and difficulties. Instead of being sandwiched between problems, it has been dealing with them gradually. We, parents and authorities concerned should save the future of our country, by joining with our teachers at schools, without any delay. ■

World No Tobacco Day 2017

Dr Aung Tun
(Ministry of Health and Sports)

The World Health Organization designed 31st May of each year as the annual World No Tobacco Day (WNTD). World No Tobacco Day was first observed in 1987, after a cabinet of the WHA (World Health Assembly) passed a motion supported by the WHO, with guidelines to manage and curb tobacco consumption. The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2017 is "Tobacco-a threat to development". Specific Goals of the World No Tobacco Day 2017 campaign are as follows:

- Highlight the links between the use of tobacco products, tobacco control and sustainable development.
- Encourage countries to include tobacco control in their national responses to 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- Support Member States and civil society to combat tobacco industry interference in political processes, in turn leading to stronger national tobacco control action.
- Encourage broader public and partner participation in national, regional and global efforts to develop and implement development strategies and plans and achieve goals that prioritize action on tobacco

control.

- Demonstrate how individuals can contribute to making a sustainable, tobacco-free world, either by committing to never taking up tobacco products, or by quitting the habit.

The campaign will demonstrate the threats that the tobacco industry poses to the sustainable development of all countries, including the health and economic well-being of their citizens. It will also propose measures that governments and the public should take to promote health and development by confronting the global tobacco crisis.

The toxins in Tobacco

Tobacco is a plant the leaves of which are used to make smoking, smokeless, dental and gargled tobacco products. According to Myanmar's "The Control of smoking and consumption of Tobacco law", Tobacco products means any material prepared for the purpose of smoking or consumption of the whole or part of the tobacco plant, leaf or stalk of the same.

Processed Tobacco contains at least 2550 chemicals, and tobacco smoke contains tar, carbon monoxide, nicotine and thousands of other chemicals, many of which are toxic, addictive, carcinogenic

and damaging to the coronary arteries that supply the heart. The use of any tobacco product can cause disease and other adverse health effects. The most obvious effects of these ingredients are heart diseases and cancers. The adverse health effects of tobacco use are also experienced by non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke. Long term exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, coronary heart disease and respiratory problems. Tobacco product is safe.

The Global Tobacco Death Toll and the Development Goals

Tobacco use kills nearly 7 million people every year, including the 890,000 who are killed by the effects of exposure to second-hand smoke. Globally, 12% of all deaths among adults aged 30 years and over are attributed to tobacco use. Tobacco use is a threat to any person, regardless of gender, age, race, cultural or educational background. It brings sufferings, disease, death, impoverishing families and national economics.

Tobacco use costs national economies through increased health-care costs and decreases productivity. It worsens health inequalities and exac-



erbates poverty, as the poorest people spend less on essentials such as food, education and health care. Low- or middle-income countries face increased challenges to achieving their development goals as some 80% of premature deaths from tobacco use occur in these countries. An extra US\$ 190 billion could be raised for development if cigarettes taxes increase worldwide by US\$1.

Current Situation of Tobacco Use in Myanmar

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) was conducted in 2016 by the Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health, Myanmar, in collaboration with School Health Division and Ministry of Education, with the support of WHO. The GYTS is a nationally representative school-based survey of students in grades associated with age 13-15 years and is designed to produce cross-sectional esti-

mates for each country. According to the 2016 Myanmar GYTS, 14% of students (26% boys and 4% girls) used tobacco (smoked and/or smokeless) while 8.3% (17% boys and 1.5% girls) were current cigarette smokers. 5.7% (11% boys and 1.5% girls) were current smokeless tobacco users.

Seven in one current cigarette smokers bought cigarettes from a store, shop or street vendors while 63% of cigarette buyers below the permitted age were sold tobacco products. 1 in 3 students are exposed to tobacco products at home while 3 in 10 students are exposed to tobacco smoke inside closed public places. 7 in 10 current smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months. 2 in 5 students noticed anti-tobacco messages in the media while 2 in 5 students noticed tobacco advertisements on point of sale.

SEE PAGE 9

Senior General holds talks with Turkish Ambassador

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received Turkish Ambassador Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu in Bayinnaung Retreat in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the Ambassador expressed his interest in the culture of Myanmar and upon his visit to the Defense Services Museum discovered that Turkey and Myanmar have had relations since the time of King Anawratha

about a thousand years ago. He then went on to discuss matters relating to airways between the two countries, the development of education and economic sector, cooperation with the Tatmadaw, problems Turkey is facing with national security and democracy.

The Senior General talked on the friendly relations between the two countries and the advanced civilization of the ancient Turkey Empire. He said there are

many areas of cooperation available between the two countries' militaries such as cooperation for counter-terrorism as one country alone cannot effectively combat terrorism. Later on, they discussed about Myanmar's Peace Process, which included the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, development efforts in Rakhine State with importance on compiling statistics. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Turkish Ambassador Mr. Kerem Divanlioglu in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

World No Tobacco Day 2017

FROM PAGE 8

Regarding Knowledge attitudes, more than 3 in 5 students thought other people's smoking is harmful to them while more than 9 in 10 students favour banning smoking inside enclosed public places.

Myanmar has been participating in the global tobacco surveillance system and has conducted Global Youth Tobacco Surveys in 2001, 2004, 2007, 2011 and 2016. Comparing the GYTS surveys done in 2011 and 2016, the smoking prevalence become increases among Myanmar students (6.8% to 8.3%).

According to the Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) 2015-2016, it was found that most women age 15-49 (96%) do not smoke or use other tobacco products in Myanmar. Two percent each of women smoke cigarettes and pipes or cheroots. By contrast, 32% of men age 15-49 smoke cigarettes and 14% smoke pipes or cheroots. About 1 in 6 male cigarette smokers reported smoking 10 or more cigarettes in the 24 hours prior to the interview. 18% of women and 59% of men age 15-49 chew betel quid (contains betel leaf, areca nut, and slaked lime, and may contain tobacco). Among those who chew betel quid, more than 1 in 5 women and about 2 in 5 men chewed 10 or more pieces in the 24 hours before the interview.

Regarding Patterns by background characteristics,

- Cigarette and pipe or cheroot smoking and betel quid chewing rises with age in women.

Among men, cigarette smoking is most prevalent (37% to 38%) in younger age groups (age 20-29) while pipe or cheroot smoking is mostly

found (21% to 22%) in older age groups (age 40-49).

- Smoking does not vary among women by maternity status, and betel quid chewing also remains as high among pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers as among other women (18-22%).

- Tobacco use is slightly more prevalent among rural women than among urban women (5% versus 1%). Men in urban areas are more likely to smoke cigarettes (35%) than men in rural areas (30%), whereas rural men are more likely to smoke pipes or cheroots (16%) and use other tobacco products (3%) than urban men (11% and 1%, respectively).

The prevalence of betel quid chewing is higher among rural women (20%) and rural men (60%) than among their urban counterparts (13% and 57%, respectively).

- Among women, cigarette smoking is highest in Kayin State (10%), smoking pipes or cheroots is highest in Rakhine State (11%), and use of other tobacco products is highest in Chin State (15%). Among men, cigarette smoking is most prevalent in Tanintharyi Region (51%), followed by Kayin State (49%) and Rakhine State (48%); pipe or cheroot smoking is most prevalent in Bago Region (28%); and use of other tobacco products is most prevalent in Sagaing Region (12%).

- By state and region, women in Rakhine State are most likely (50%) to chew betel quid, followed by those in Kayin State (41%) and Kayah State (36%). Among men, betel quid chewing is most prevalent in Rakhine State (79%), followed by Bago Region (75%) and Ayeyawady Region (68%).

Tobacco Control Activities in Myanmar

Myanmar became a signatory to the FCTC in October 2003 and became a Party to the Convention in April 2004. Myanmar proudly hosted the 4th Inter-country Consultation Meeting of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in August 2002, where the countries of South-East Asia Region issued the "Yangon Declaration". The National Programme on Tobacco Control was officially launched in January 2000 with the drafting and approval of the National Policy on Tobacco Control and Plan of action. The National Tobacco Control Committee was formed in March 2002. The Control of Smoking and Consumption of Tobacco Product Law was adopted on 4th May, 2006. In accordance with new administrative structure, the National Tobacco Control Committee was reformed in January 2011, headed by the Minister for Health and Sports and included heads of related departments and chairpersons of several national NGOs as members. The Committee set guidelines for the tobacco control measures to be implemented in the country.

A new partner organization for Tobacco Control, People's Health Foundation is formed during April, 2013. Myanmar also attended the 5th session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC (COP 5), held in Seoul, Korea from 12th to 17th November, 2012. At COP 5, Myanmar has signed the Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products on the day of the opening ceremony on 10th January, 2013 at Geneva, and it was the 1st country of signatories in South

East Asia Region.

A new legislation to print warning messages and illustrations of the health risks of tobacco use on all tobacco packages was announced by the Ministry of Health and Sports on February 29, 2016. According to the legislation, the new packaging will feature images of the health consequences of tobacco use across 50 percent of the surface area, and text warnings in local language across 25 percent. Old packaging will be illegal from 28 February 2017. The pictorial health warning will be rotated every 12 months.

Parliament has announced new commercial tax rate for tobacco products through 2017 Union tax law on March 1, 2017. 20-cigarette packs with a market price of 400ks will be taxed 4ks for each piece. Taxes will rise gradually, depending on price. Taxes for other tobacco products such as cigars, pipes and tobacco products for betel preparation increased 80% from 60% (2016).

The Way Forward

In Myanmar, tobacco use has been socially and culturally accepted since ancient times. It is being used as a well-wishing gift to house guests and at weddings and donation ceremonies. This social and cultural context of tobacco use as a social norm greatly challenges tobacco control programmes and calls for widespread education and information activities to promote community awareness on dangers of tobacco use.

Myanmar is trying to prioritize and accelerate tobacco control efforts as part of our country response to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, the Tobacco control infrastructure is still in its infancy in Myanmar. Although the Tobacco Control section under Department of Public Health has been established, the necessary technical capacities are not yet fully developed and the section is understaffed. In parallel with the need to strengthen the infrastructure technically, there is also need to ensure its sustainability through funding as the national tobacco control programme is currently underfunded. Direct financial support are needed until the programme is able to develop indigenous mechanism for sustainable funding.

Enforcement and Implementation are major challenges that require a clear, pragmatic and action oriented approach. Although the authority to enforce has been delegated to the Ministry of Health and Sports through the existing law, the workforce needed to enforce the law has yet to be expanded. As well, sub-national infrastructure needs to be developed and sustained in order to implement the law and the enforcement workforce must be trained on their roles and responsibilities.

Finally, you can participate to making a sustainable, tobacco-free Myanmar, either by committing to never taking up tobacco products, or by quitting the habit.

- Ref: 1. WHO WNTD package 2017
2. Tobacco Atlas, American Cancer Society, 2015
3. WHO Myanmar GYTS Factsheet 2017
4. Myanmar Demographic and Health Survey (MDHS) 2015-2016, MOHS

UK PM May's election lead narrowing, sixth poll since Manchester attack shows

LONDON — British Prime Minister Theresa May's lead dropped to six percentage points in a poll published on Tuesday, the latest major poll since the Manchester bombing to indicate the 8 June election could be much tighter than previously thought.

A total of six polls carried out since the 22 May Manchester attack have shown May's lead over the opposition Labour Party narrowing, suggesting she might not win the landslide predicted just a month ago.

A poll conducted by Survation for ITV's Good Morning Britain programme showed May's lead had dropped to 6 percentage points from 9 points a week ago and 18 points two weeks ago.

Sterling showed little reaction to the poll, steadying against the dollar after plunging around 2 cents last week.

Sterling is likely to be sensitive to any additional polls showing a tightening race. An ICM poll for the Guardian newspaper will be published later on Tuesday.

May called the snap election in a bid to strengthen her hand in negotiations on Britain's exit from the European Union, to win more time to deal with the impact of the divorce and to strengthen her grip on the Conservative Party.



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May arrives at an election campaign event in Wolverhampton on 30 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

But if she does not hand-somely beat the 12-seat majority her predecessor David Cameron won in 2015, her electoral gamble will have failed and her authority could be undermined just as she enters formal Brexit negotiations. Strategists at JPMorgan said the pound could be boosted if a centre-left coalition that supports a "soft Brexit" — whereby Britain maintains a close rela-

tionship with the European Union — takes power.

The Survation poll was conducted on 26 and 27 May in the aftermath of a suicide bombing which killed 22 people in Manchester last Monday and following a government U-turn on unpopular proposals to make elderly people pay more towards their care. It is still unclear how much Britain knew about suicide

bomber Salman Abedi before he carried out the deadliest militant attack on British soil for 12 years.

May was interior minister from 2010 to 2016. The poll found just over half of the 1,009 respondents thought May would make the best prime minister, whilst support for Labour's Jeremy Corbyn stood at just 30 percent, albeit higher than in previous surveys. — Reuters ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Russia says concerned contacts with Trump team lack positive shifts — TASS

MOSCOW — Russia's deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov said Moscow was concerned that contacts with the Donald Trump administration had not yet led to positive shifts in the relations between the two nations, Russian news agencies quoted him as saying on Tuesday.

He also said that as nuclear powers Russia and the United States can not afford to keep their relations at such a low level. —Reuters ■

China's top diplomat wants peaceful resolution over North Korea

TOKYO — China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi, on Tuesday said his country insisted on a peaceful resolution in the wake of a series of North Korean missile tests.

"China's stance (on North Korea) is clear and has been consistent," Yang, China's state councillor, said at the start of a meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida.

"We insist on a political resolution through peaceful means." —Reuters ■

Vucic: I believe in Serbia, it will be good place to live in

BELGRADE — I believe in Serbia, and it will be a good place to live in, Serbia's President-elect Aleksandar Vucic said on Tuesday.

"I believe in Serbia. I have always believed in Serbia and I will always believe in it," Vucic said at his farewell press conference as PM, urging the citizens and the government to believe in themselves and, above all, in their Serbia. —Tanjung ■

Russia's Putin to meet powerful Saudi prince in Moscow

DUBAI/MOSCOW — Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman will hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on issues of mutual interest, Saudi state news agency SPA reported on Tuesday.

Both Putin and bin Salman have been instrumental behind

a successful global deal which saw oil production curtailed by 1.8 million barrels per day as part of efforts to prop up prices and reduce bloated inventories.

Last time they met in China in September on the sideline of the G20 summit. Al Arabiya TV said they will discuss the Syrian conflict, while four cooperation

agreements are expected to be inked between Saudi Arabia and Russia. Earlier on Tuesday, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak met his Saudi counterpart Khalid al-Falih and discussed situation on global oil markets.

The meetings take place after last week the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Coun-

tries and other large global oil producers led by Russia agreed to extend oil output cuts by another 9 months.

The markets were disappointed that the producers have to undertake more drastic measures to bring back the balance between oil supply and demand. — Reuters ■

Spain's Rajoy called to testify in corruption trial on 26 July

MADRID — Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has been called to testify at a trial of members of his conservative People's Party (PP) on 26 July at a court outside Madrid, the High

Court said on Tuesday.

The trial follows a long-running investigation into an alleged party slush fund, centered around allegations that public contracts were awarded in exchange for

kickbacks. Business people and former PP members are among the defendants. Rajoy has not been accused of any wrongdoing in the case but has been called as a witness. The prime minis-

ter, who is in his second term in power at the helm of a minority government, had asked to testify via videoconference. The court said Rajoy would have to appear in person. — Reuters ■

Iran-backed Iraqi force says takes Islamic State villages near Syria

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi Shi'ite force backed by Iran said it pushed Islamic State out of several villages on the border with Syria on Monday, potentially re-opening a supply route to send Iranian weapons to President Bashar al-Assad.

The manoeuvre could also be the prelude to a connection with the Assad's Iranian-backed forces, although they are yet to reach the Iraqi border from the Syrian side.

Syrian rebel sources have warned of advances by the Syrian army and Iranian-backed militia to reach the border.

The territory taken by the Popular Mobilization force on Monday is located north of the Islamic State-held town of Baaj.

For Popular Mobilization, it is a step towards achieving a linkup with Assad forces, giving him a significant advantage in fighting the six-year rebellion against his rule.

But the territory is connected with land held by US-backed Syrian Kurdish groups on the Syrian side, who are more focused on fighting Islamic State than Assad.

It is not known whether the Syrian Kurds would allow the Iraqi Shi'ite force to use their territory to reach Assad's troops, deployed further south

and further west.

In a statement on its website, Popular Mobilization described its advance to the border with Syria as "a Ramadan miracle", referring to the Muslim fasting month which started over the weekend.

Popular Mobilisation is taking part in the US-backed Iraqi campaign to defeat Islamic State in the city of Mosul and the surrounding province of Nineveh.

Iraqi government armed forces are focusing their effort on dislodging insurgents from the city of Mosul, Islamic State's de-facto capital in Iraq.

While reporting nominally to Iraq's Shi'ite-led government, Popular Mobilisation has Iranian military advisers, one of whom died last week fighting near Baaj.

Iran has helped to train and organize thousands of Shi'ite militia fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the Syrian conflict. Fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah are also working closely with Iranian military commanders in Syria.

Eight months into the Mosul campaign, Islamic State fighters have been dislodged from all of the city except an enclave by the western bank of the Tigris river.—Reuters ■



A wreckage of a car is seen at the site of car bomb attack near a government office in Karkh district in Baghdad, Iraq on 30 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Car bombs kill 23 in central Baghdad, hit Ramadan crowds

BAGHDAD — Two car bombs killed at least 20 people in Baghdad and wounded about 80 others early on Tuesday, security sources said, one targeting the late-night crowds typical of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan who shop and eat ahead of the next day's fast.

Islamic State, the Sunni hardline group that controls parts of Iraq and Syria, claimed both attacks in statements on its Amaq news agency. A car packed with explosives blew up near a popular ice cream shop in the

commercial Karrada district, killing at least 13 people and wounding 40 just after midnight (2100 GMT on Monday).

A few hours later, a second bombing killed ten people and wounded 44 more near a government office in Karkh district.

During Ramadan many Muslims stay up until the early hours, going out to spend time with their families, shop and eat before dawn breaks and the next day's fast begins.

Karrada was hit by a massive truck bomb in July 2016

that killed at least 324 people, the deadliest attack in Iraq since the US-led invasion of the country in 2003. Islamic State has been retreating in Iraq since the end of 2015 in the face of US-backed government forces and Iranian-backed Shi'ite paramilitary groups.

It is now besieged in an enclave in the northern city of Mosul, which it has used as its de facto capital in Iraq. Islamic State declared from Mosul a "caliphate" over parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014.—Reuters ■

Egypt issues NGO law, cracking down on dissent

CAIRO — Egypt issued a new law on Monday that regulates the work of non-governmental organisations, a measure seen by rights groups as the latest sign of a growing crackdown on dissent against President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Human rights groups and activists say the law in effect bans their work and makes it harder for charities to operate.

The measure restricts NGO activity to developmental and social work and introduces jail terms of up to five years for non-compliance.

It gives Egypt's 46,000 NGOs one year to comply or face being dissolved by a court.

Parliament passed the bill in November but it had to be ratified by Sisi.

Egyptian rights activists say they face the worst crackdown in their history under Sisi, accusing him of erasing freedoms won in the 2011 Arab Spring uprising that ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule.

The government had been working for years on a new law regulating NGOs, which rights groups feared would be more restrictive than Mubarak-era rules, but the bill drafted by lawmakers was so restrictive even cabinet ministers objected.

Mohamed Zaree, Egypt programme director at the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, told Reuters the new law on NGOs was "the worst in history" and would practically ban NGOs from carrying out their work.

"The state is operating with

no strategy or vision," said Zaree, whose organisation will be one of those affected. He is already banned from travel and has been charged with "receiving funds from foreign entities to harm national security".

Lawmakers say the measure is necessary to protect national security. The government has long accused human rights groups of taking foreign funds to sow chaos and several are facing investigation over their funding.

"Cairo will no doubt be met with a lot of concern raised internationally around the passage of the law — but the Egyptian authorities have assessed that, and are moving forward, clearly," said HA Hellyer, senior non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council.

Even apolitical charities say the measure restricts them at a time when subsidy cuts and tax increases have made it harder for Egyptians to make ends meet.

Following the rise in prices that followed the government's decision to devalue the currency last year, Zaree said civil society groups should be allowed "to serve the needs of the community by offering the services that the government could not, instead of passing a law that ends their role".

Charities have long played an important role in feeding, clothing and providing health-care and education in a country where millions live on less than \$2 a day.

Provisions obliging NGOs to inform authorities before collect-

ing and spending donations will bog them down and stifle their work, NGO workers say.

Under the new law, donations exceeding 10,000 Egyptian pounds (\$550) must be pre-approved. If no approval is granted within 60 days the request is automatically denied. Failure to inform authorities could result in jail terms of up to five years and fines of up to 1 million pounds (\$55,000).

The law also gives the government power over deciding who can establish an NGO and for what purpose.

It obliges groups to stick to the "state's development plan", severely restricting the work they can do in areas the government does not consider a priority.—Reuters ■



German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks next to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a news conference at the Chancellery in Berlin, Germany, May 30, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Merkel wants to foster India ties, softens message on US as Trump scolds

BERLIN — Germany wants to develop its ties with India and this should not be at the cost of its trans-Atlantic relationship, Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Tuesday after meeting India's prime minister, who called Berlin "a very reliable partner".

Merkel, seeking to repair damage after shocking Washington on Sunday by declaring the era in which Europe could rely on its partners was somewhat over, repeatedly stressed the importance of trans-Atlantic ties but also highlighted Germany's history of cooperating with India and China in a "global world".

On Monday, Merkel had underlined her doubts about the reliability of the United States as an ally.

US President Donald Trump responded by tweeting on Tuesday: "We have a MASSIVE trade deficit with Germany, plus they pay FAR LESS than they should on NATO & military. Very bad for US. This will change."

Merkel talked to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Berlin about developing cooperation with India.

"That's of huge importance and in no way directed against any other relationships and certainly not against the trans-Atlantic ties, which

have historically been very important for us and will remain so in future," she said.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Modi, she reiterated her view that "we need to take our fate in Europe into our own hands".

Europe needs to step up its presence on the international stage, for example by bringing about solutions to issues such as the Libya conflict, migration and economic problems including unemployment, she said.

Her comments came after Trump last week criticised major NATO allies over their military spending and ruffled

feathers by refusing to endorse a global climate change accord.

Merkel praised India for implementing that climate pact very "intensively and in a very committed way" and Modi said people had no right to ruin the environment for future generations.

The German and Indian governments signed numerous agreements, including on cyber cooperation, development cooperation, education and railway safety.

In a sign of Berlin's shifting focus towards Asia, Merkel is also due to meet Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.—Reuters

Philippine Congress expands money laundering laws to include casinos

MANILA — The Philippine Congress on Tuesday approved an amendment to a money laundering law to cover gambling, a move aimed at plugging loopholes that allowed \$81 million stolen from Bangladesh to pass through casinos.

Voting separately, the House of Representatives and Senate passed on third and final readings similar bills expanding the existing anti-money laundering act to improve the legal framework against dirty money, making it compliant with global standards.

"We should move to be more transparent by amending the law to protect our casinos from money laundering by crime syndicates," said Josephine Sato, one of the amended bill authors in the lower house.

The approved measure requires any casino transactions worth 5 million pesos (\$100,500) to be reported to an anti-money laundering agency, including accumulated bets, Sato added.

Amending the law had been an uphill battle because of fierce lobbying by the gaming industry, according to lawmakers.

The Philippines has emerged as an Asian gambling hub and its casinos last year raked in 149 billion pesos in gross gam-

ing revenue, data from the gaming regulator showed. Japanese gaming magnate Kazuo Okada is set to launch a \$2.4 billion casino in Manila in July.

The main proponent of the bill in the upper house, Senator Francis Escudero, said internet and ship-based casinos were also covered under the amended version to ensure that the country will not be "used as a money laundering site for the proceeds of any unlawful activity".

Both bills were passed on the second to last day of the regular session of Congress, beating the June deadline imposed by the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering, a regional body with 41 member countries, for the Philippines to strengthen its laws.

The exclusion of casinos from the current scope of the anti-money laundering legislation and a strict bank secrecy law have made it difficult for authorities to track the Bangladesh money trail and identify the perpetrators.

Bangladesh's central bank has retrieved just under a fifth of the stolen \$81 million funds.

President Rodrigo Duterte is expected to sign the measure into law next month.—Reuters ■

Submission of EIA Study of Zawtika Phase 1C and 1D Development in Offshore Block M9 by PTTEPI

PTTEP International Limited (PTTEPI), following the success of Phase 1A and 1B Development, plans to develop the Zawtika Phase 1C and 1D in Offshore Block M 9. The development of Phase 1C consists of 4 remote wellhead platforms ZWP8 - ZWP11 including associated pipelines. The first platform is expected to install in 4th quarter of 2017. The development of Phase 1D consists of 8 remote wellhead platforms ZWP12 - ZWP19 including associated pipelines.

The tentative plan for commencement will be in 2020.

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study for the proposed activity has been prepared by PTTEPI and Environmental Resources Management (ERM), and was submitted to Environmental Conservation Department (ECD) on 28th April, 2017. The report is publically viewable at the following locations:

- PTTEPI's Temporary office in Yangon: Vantage Tower, 623 Pyay Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Dawei Township General Administrative Department Office, Tanintharyi Region
- Yebu Township General Administrative Department Office, Tanintharyi Region
- Mawlamyine Township General Administrative Department Office, Mon State
- On PTTEPI's website as follows: www.pttep.com

Feedback on the report can be submitted to PTTEPI in writing by contacting the following e-mail address: TinNilarSoe@pttep.com

British journalist carrying flak jacket plates charged with arms possession in Bangkok

BANGKOK — A British journalist was charged with arms possession on Tuesday after being arrested at a Thai airport for checking in flak jacket plates and gas masks, standard equipment for media heading into war zones and other hostile environments.

Anthony Cheng, 46, and German freelance journalist Florian Witulski were detained at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport on Monday, before they could board a flight to Iraq via

Turkey for an assignment for China-based broadcaster CCTV English.

Thailand's Arms Control Act stipulates that gas masks and ballistic vests are war weapons and those carrying them need a licence.

In August 2015, a Hong Kong photojournalist was arrested at the same airport for carrying body armour and a helmet. Charges were later dropped.

Cheng was carrying three gas masks and four plates for safety vests, said

Somchart Maneerat, a police investigator.

"He faces a charge of unlicensed possession of war weapons," Somchart told Reuters, adding that he faced up to five years in prison if found guilty.

Cheng was released on bail of 100,000 baht (\$2,930) on Tuesday. Witulski, 31, was released early on Tuesday.

Witulski told Reuters the men were not aware that licences were required for the safety gear.—Reuters ■

Russian rocket artillery to be rearmed with upgraded launchers by 2020

MOSCOW — The rearmament of rocket artillery brigades from Smerch to upgraded Tornado-S multiple launch rocket systems will be completed by 2020, Missile and Artillery Force Chief Lieutenant-General Mikhail Matveyevsky said on Monday.

“The rearmament of all missile brigades with the modern Iskander-M missile system and rocket artillery brigades with Tornado-S large-caliber multiple launch rocket systems will be completed,” the general said, speaking about plans

through 2020.

The planned rearmament with Tornado-S multiple launch rocket systems is beginning in 2017, he said.

Russian Deputy Defence Minister Yuri Borisov said earlier that the serial production of Tornado-S multiple launch rocket systems was planned to be launched in 2017. According to him, the new complex will excel its predecessors by the firing range and will be armed with precision munitions and a new automated control and guidance system.—Tass ■



The new complex will excel its predecessors by the firing range and will be armed with precision munitions and a new automated control and guidance system. **PHOTO: TASS**

Hurricane death toll rises to 14 in Moscow, Moscow Region

MOSCOW — Hurricane killed 14 people in Moscow and the Moscow Region on Monday, a spokeswoman for the Russian Investigative Committee, Svetlana Petrenko, told TASS.

“Eleven people were killed in Moscow and three others in the Moscow Region,” Petrenko said. One of the victims is a minor, the Health Ministry said. A total of 168 people had sought medical assistance and 146 people were hospitalized, said Alexei Khripun, who heads Moscow’s department of health. Now 108 people, including 22

children, remain in hospitals and eight of them are in a serious condition. Most victims have bruises, cut wounds, fractures, head and spine injuries.

Moscow City Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said the hurricane was “unprecedented.” In Moscow, the storm affected transport in 20 streets and more than 50 flights were delayed at the airports. The hurricane plucked about 3,500 trees and damaged roofs of more than 140 high-rise buildings and administrative buildings, and over 1,500 cars. — Tass ■

Trump’s communications director set to leave W House -Trump adviser

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump’s communications director, Mike Dubke, is set to leave after three months in his White House post, White House adviser Kellyanne Conway said on Tuesday.

“He has expressed his desire to leave the White House and made very clear that he would see through the president’s international trip,” White House adviser Kellyanne Conway said in an interview on Fox News, referring to Trump’s first

overseas trip to the Middle East and Europe that ended on Saturday.

Dubke, a communications firm owner who was brought into the Trump administration in March, resigned 18 May though he has not set a last day on the job and is leaving on good terms, according to Axios News, which first reported his departure citing a senior administration official.

His departure comes amid White House plans for a larger strategic

shake-up to tackle head-on allegations involving communication between Russia and Trump’s presidential campaign, including a “war room” to combat mounting questions and multiple probes.

According to administration officials and persons close to Trump, the president plans to bring in new aides to the White House, adding experienced political professionals including Trump’s former campaign manager.

The changes may

also include more lawyers to handle the Russia probe as part of the effort to tackle a scandal that has threatened to consume Trump’s young presidency. Other potential changes are also expected to the White House communications office, according to Axios, including fewer on-camera briefings with White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer. Trump will also take more questions directly from the media, it reported.—Reuters ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SINAR BANDA VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV RONG HAI VOY. NO (0623)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV RONG HAI VOY. NO (0623) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 30.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-2 where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CHUN AN SHIPPING PTE
LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA HASIL VOY. NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.5.2017 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Indonesia's hijab-wearing Muslim metal group challenges stereotypes

GARUT, Indonesia — With their heads covered with Islamic headscarves, the three members of the Indonesian band VoB (“Voice of Baceprot” or “Noisy Voice”) do not look like your typical heavy metal group.

Formed in 2014, the band of teenagers met at school in Indonesia's most populous province of West Java, and use their music to combat the stereotype of Muslim women as submissive or voiceless.

Wearing a hijab, or Islamic head scarf, should not be a barrier to the group's pursuit of its dream of being heavy metal stars, said Firda Kurnia, 16, who plays guitar and sings.

“I think gender equality should be supported, because I feel I am still exploring my creativity, while at the same time, not diminishing my obligations as a Muslim woman,” she added.

Invited to perform at a recent graduation ceremony at another school, the trio quickly had fans dancing and head-banging at the front of the stage.

“I don't see anything wrong with it,” said one fan who



Widi Rahmawati (L) and Firda Kurnia, members of the metal Hijab band Voice of Baceprot, perform during a school's farewell event in Garut, Indonesia on 15 May, 2017. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

attended, Teti Putriwulandari Sari. “There's no law that bars hijab-wearing women from playing hardcore music.

“This also relates to human rights. If a Muslim girl has a talent to play the drums or a guitar,

should she not be allowed?”

Besides covering classics by groups such as Metallica and Slipknot, the band perform their own songs on issues such as the state of education in Indonesia.

Muslims make up nearly

90 per cent of a population of 250 million, the vast majority practising a moderate form of Islam, although there are some conservative strongholds.

Not everyone in the town of Garut, where the band was

formed, and which is home to several Islamic schools, feels the community is ready for them, or that their music is appropriate for performance by young Muslim women.

“It is unusual to see a group of hijab-wearing girls playing metal music or even women shouting,” said Muhammad Sholeh, a teacher at the town's Cipari Islamic boarding school, adding that religious pop music was popular with many young Muslims.

“But we're talking about metal here, which is loud.”

Maudya Mulyawati, a student at the school, felt the band should focus on singing “Salawat”, an invocation to the religion's founder, Prophet Mohammad.

An official of a top clerical body said although the group might trigger a culture clash in a conservative area, he did not feel it broke with Islamic values.

“I see this as part of the creativity of teenagers,” added Nur Khamim Djuremi, secretary general of the Islamic Art and Culture Division of Indonesia's Ulema Council.—Reuters ■



Emma Watson. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

Emma Watson is my role model: Paris Jackson

LONDON — Aspiring actress-model Paris Jackson says she looks up to Emma Watson.

The 19-year-old actress says she was elated to meet the “Beauty and the Beast” star at the recent MTV Movie and TV Awards held in Los Angeles and would love to collaborate with her one day, reported Grazia magazine.

“I love her, and it would be great to work with her in the

future. She's my role model,” says Paris.

The upcoming actress approached Watson at her table during a break at the awards ceremony and was delighted when the “Harry Potter” star shared her phone number with her.

“Paris rushed over to Emma's table during an ad break and gushed about how inspired she is by her work,” says an insider.—PTI ■

I look up to Tom Hanks with great respect: Dwayne Johnson

LOS ANGELES — Wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne Johnson said, his actor friend, Tom Hanks is a role model for him.

The 45-year-old actor took to Instagram where he posted a picture with the “Bridge of Spies” star and wrote that he respects him for his work ethic and kindness.

Hanks had appeared on the episode of “Saturday Night Live” to support Johnson, who had hosted the show for the record fifth time.

“(I) want to say thank you to my bud Tom Hanks for taking time out of his busy schedule as he's shooting with Spielberg in NY, to come by and help induct me into the #SaturdayNightLive 5 Timer's Club.



Actor Dwayne Johnson. **PHOTO: REUTERS**

“I look up to this man with such great admiration and respect. His work ethic, talent, humility and most of all his kindness. Values that are important to me. OG Hanks,”

wrote Johnson. In the “SNL” episode, the “Baywatch” star “officially” announced he would run for US President in 2020 and chose Hanks as his running partner.—PTI ■

Ex-Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega dies at 83: reports

RIO DE JANEIRO — Former dictator Manuel Noriega, who was ousted in the 1989 invasion of Panama by the United States, died in Panama City on Monday, according to local media. He was 83.

The health of the former general, who ruled the Central Amer-

ican country from 1983 to 1989, had been deteriorating since surgery to remove a brain tumor in March, the media reports said.

Born in Panama City in 1934, Noriega joined the national police force in 1962 and assumed the post of intelligence commander before being promoted to general in 1983.

He collaborated with the US Central Intelligence Agency to contain the country's leftist groups but was later imprisoned in the United States on charges including drug trafficking.

—Kyodo News ■



Former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega sits in a wheelchair as prison wardens help him after a health check up at the facilities in Panama City. **PHOTO: REUTERS**



Chinese learners from Ataturk Middle School perform fan dance in Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey on 29 May, 2017. Confucius Institute of Middle East Technical University in Ankara held celebrations to mark Chinese Dragon Boat Festival here on Monday. Chinese learners in Ankara gathered to sing Chinese songs, perform Chinese dance and learn to make traditional Chinese food Zongzi during the celebration. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Japan bathhouse offers “naked school” to lure bathers

TOKYO — A Tokyo bathhouse is offering classes on topics ranging from comedy to gaming in hopes of luring younger bathers and reversing Japan's dying tradition of communal baths.

During one recent session of the “Naked School” at the Hinodeyu bath house, nine men sat around the bath, listening to an expert on the ancient board game Go. “I think young people would be interested and come back to communal baths if they knew these kind of classes are offered here,” Tadashi Manayama, a 37-year-old architect, said after class.

Yuichi Tamura, manager of the Hinodeyu, operated by his family since 1939, said many young people had never been to a communal bath because most homes have modern bathrooms.

“I wanted to give them a reason to visit us by offering an odd event like this naked school,” Tamura told Reuters Television.

In its heyday, more than 500 people bathed daily at Hinodeyu near Tokyo's Asakusa district. Today that number is around 100, he said. Traditional bathhouses, known as sento, once numbered more than 2,600 in Tokyo alone in the late 1960s, but since

then have seen a gradual decline and prompted some bathhouses to come up with novel ideas to lure customers. At Hinodeyu, the admission price of 460 yen (\$4) allows anyone to attend a class on the topic of the month. Bathers learned about traditional comedy in April, while the topic for March was the public bath industry.

Looking ahead to June, bathers will learn how to deal with the local problem of stray cats.

“It can be anything as long as you have something to teach people,” Hinodeyu's website said.

—Reuters ■

mitv Myanmar International Programme Schedule

(31-5-2017 07:00am ~ 1-6-2017 07:00am) MST

07:03	Am	News
07:25	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (EP-3) (Part-1)
07:50	Am	Myanmar Social & Charitable Association (EP-3) (Part-2)
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Lawka Nandar Wildlife Sanctuary and Its Rare Star Tortoises
08:49	Am	Farming: Duck Breeder
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Chef Life: Syi Syi Lwin
09:39	Am	Civic Duty
09:53	Am	Graffiti: Portraiture
10:03	Am	News

10:26	Am	Shrinking Footprints
10:51	Am	Sai Ye Kwan

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

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:26	Pm	Cruising To Precious Islands (Part-1)
08:03	Pm	News
08:27	Pm	Innovative Handiworks Based on The art of Line Drawing
08:46	Pm	Five Hair Relic Enshrined Pagodas

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm) - Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm ~ 03:00 Am) - Tuesday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) - Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

MRTV

Programme Schedule
(31-5-2017, Wednesday)

6:00 Am	◆ Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	1:00 Pm	◆ Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions
7:00 Am	◆ Breakfast News	2:25 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
7:35 Am	◆ Money Talk Myanmar	3:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
8:30 Am	◆ Documentary	4:00 Pm	◆ Documentary
9:10 Am	◆ Documentary	5:05 Pm	◆ Documentary
9:30 Am	◆ Life Struggles	5:20 Pm	◆ Documentary
10:30 Am	◆ Pyi Thu Ni Ti	6:20 Pm	◆ Football Magazine
11:35 Am	◆ “ASEAN Cultural Fair 2014 Fashion Show” (Myanmar Wedding Dress)	6:35 Pm	◆ Real Story Real Movies
12:30 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series	7:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
		8:00 Pm	◆ News/ International News/ Weather Report
		9:15 Pm	◆ TV Drama Series
			◆ Musician's Talk

LONDON — Striker Sergio Aguero is among the best players in the world and is staying at Manchester City next season, the Premier League club's chairman Khaldoon Al Mubarak said, dismissing transfer speculation surrounding the Argentine international.

Aguero helped City finish third in the league, scoring 20 goals in 31 league appearances, but his starting role came under intense

in his first two league starts, helped him oust Aguero as the first-choice striker but the 20-year-old sustained a broken foot and the Argentine reclaimed his spot.

"Absolutely.

There has never been any doubt about that. I've read a lot about the speculation on this and it's ridiculous," Emirati Al Mubarak told the club website in his end of season address when asked if Aguero was staying. "Aguero is one of the best players in the world. And we are a team that aspires to win in every competition we compete

in... having Sergio Aguero as part of the squad is an absolute must. And it has never been in doubt." The 28-year-old Aguero, who joined City from Spain's Atletico Madrid in 2011, has a contract at the Manchester side until 2020. He has won two Premier League titles and two League Cups during his time at the Etihad. —Reuters ■

scrutiny following the arrival of in-form Brazilian forward Gabriel Jesus in January. The Brazilian's impressive start at the club, including two goals and an assist

Man City chairman says Aguero will stay next season

Manchester City's Sergio Aguero.
PHOTO: REUTERS



Taiwan's Hsieh Su-wei shakes the hand of Great Britain's Johanna Konta after winning their first round match of French Open at Roland Garros in Paris, France on 30 May, 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

Konta suffers painful Brexit from Paris

PARIS — Johanna Konta suffered a painful personal Brexit at the French Open on Tuesday, sliding out 1-6, 7-6(2), 6-4 at the hands of Hsieh Su-Wei in the opening round of the claycourt grand slam.

Starting splendid in ce- rise, 26-year-old seventh seed Konta swept through the first set in 26 minutes, dominating her Taiwanese opponent with heavy serves, heavy groundstrokes and an aggressive front-foot-forward style.

But almost as soon as she had asserted her dominance, the Briton relinquished it, allowing her opponent to settle into a metronomic rhythm of awkward double-fisted groundstrokes off both sides.

Time after time Hsieh spooned clumsily-hit ground-

strokes deep into the Philippe Chatrier court, sidespun or sliced, for Konta to swipe her replies wide or long.

And once the Taiwanese had levelled matters in a second-set tiebreak, she had all the momentum, while Konta continued to spray errors all around the arena.

Fittingly, it was yet another lame forehand into the net that sealed the Briton's fate, as she was left to return to London to prepare for Wimbledon.

Hsieh has a second-round clash to look forward to, and could barely contain her delight.

"Thank you for my team," she giggled, as Konta gathered up her bags and left the court.

"Merci beaucoup for the match today." —Reuters ■

Svitolina eases into French Open second round

PARIS — In-form Ukrainian Elina Svitolina moved swiftly into the second round of the French Open on Tuesday, easing through a potentially tricky encounter against Yaroslava Shvedova with a 6-4 6-3 victory.

The fifth seed, one of the pre-tournament favourites after winning the Rome clay-court tournament, was just a cut above her Kazakh op-

ponent, who has reached the quarter-finals here twice.

"I felt good on court played the important points well. Winning a big title just before coming here gave me a lot of confidence and I look forward to my next match," Svitolina said courtside. She next faces either German Mona Barthel or Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova. —Reuters ■

Nadal brushes aside France's Paire in Roland Garros opener

PARIS — Rafael Nadal smoothly negotiated the potential stumbling block presented by Frenchman Benoit Paire on Monday, launching his bid for a 10th French Open trophy with a largely routine 6-1 6-4 6-1 win.

The heavy favourite for the title looked in imperious form as he steamed through the first set in under half an hour.

Paire, described prior to their encounter on Court Suzanne Lenglen as a dangerous



Rafael Nadal. PHOTO: REUTERS

opponent by Nadal, played with more freedom in a closer second set as the Spaniard lost his edge.

Trading baseline rallies, they exchanged breaks to leave the Frenchman leading 4-3.

But Nadal then pulled clear and, with Paire periodically clutching his stomach after a medical time out, the Spaniard took nine of the last 10 games to close out the match in just under two hours. —Reuters ■