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Future infrastructure development

- * Negotiations have been made in cooperation with the IFC of the World Bank Group for the development of the Yangon elevated road project in 2019, with a view to address the traffic issues in Yangon. Such development is being pursued with the expectation of not only addressing traffic issues but also to create job opportunities.
- * During the next two and a half years, construction of over 10,000 rooms are planned, out of which over 4,000 rooms are to be constructed through different PPP models and over 6,000 rooms by private companies.
- * Urban projects in 33 cities across the country have been implemented and planning for additional urban projects are being developed in cooperation with state and regional governments.
- * Urban projects and industrial cities are being developed in some big cities like Yangon and Mandalay within three years for systematic development of urban housing.

(Excerpted from the report on the current work of the Union Government, delivered at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 19 September 2018)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives German Ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of Germany to Myanmar H.E. Mrs Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel at the Pyithu Hluttaw guest hall, Pyithu Hluttaw building, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, matters relating to promoting relations and cooperation between the two parliaments, legislative work of the Hluttaw and development of the Hluttaw were openly discussed and views exchanged.

The meeting was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office. —MNA



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat holds talks with German Ambassador Mrs Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel in Nay Pyi Taw.
PHOTO: MNA

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Man found dead in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State

A MAN was found murdered on a rural road leading to Kyaukpyutaung Village in Buthidaung Township, Rakhine State, yesterday. Villagers of the Kyauk-

pyutaung Village found the body with knife wounds and informed the village's administrator. The victim is identified as Marmat Tu Saung, 18,

from Kyaukpyutaung Village, according to the police of the Taung Bazar Police Station. The police are investigating the murder case. — MNA ■

Myanmar-Bangladesh conduct coordinated patrol



Border guard forces carried out a coordinated patrol along Myanmar and Bangladesh border. **PHOTO: POLICE INFORMATION**

A COORDINATED patrol between Myanmar and Bangladesh was conducted from bor-

der posts 40 to 41 from 11:15 am to 12:45 pm on 23 September. The Myanmar patrol was

led by Police Captain Aung Kyaw Kyaw, from No.1 Border Police sub-division, Area 2, Maungtaung Township, and the Bangladesh patrol was led by Naib Subedar Md.Sultan Ahmad of No.34 Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB).

Similarly, on the same day, another coordinated patrol between Myanmar and Bangladesh was conducted at border posts 51/5 to 52 11:25 am to noon.

The Myanmar patrol was led by Sub-Inspector Nyunt Win, from No.5 Border Police sub-division, Area 1, Maungtaung Township and the Bangladesh patrol was led by Naib Subedar Md.Salim Miah of No. 11 BGB. — Police Information ■

Art exhibition to celebrate artist U Lun Gywe's birthday

IN honor of artist Dr. U Lun Gywe's 88th birthday, an exhibition titled, 'The Glorious Old Bagan' will be held at the Artist Life Art Gallery at No. 409/413 on Toungoo Road, Shwepaukan Ward 17, North Okkalapa Township, from 29 September

to 1 October.

The art exhibition will showcase ninety-one artworks from Dr. U Lun Gywe's outdoor paintings from his family trip to Bagan, as well as other watercolor paintings.

Artist Dr. U Lun Gywe re-

ceived a diploma in art from China in 1964 and was awarded a diploma in art restoration from East Germany in 1972. He received his honorary doctorate from the National University of Arts and Culture in 2014. — Phyto Thura Kyaw ■

Global World Insurance celebrates 5th year anniversary

GLOBAL World Insurance (GWI) celebrated its 5th year anniversary as a professional insurance services provider on 23 September at Lotte Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

GWI started its insurance services on 23 September, 2013 providing only six insurance products: Life Insurance, Car Insurance, Fire Insured, Cash in Safe Insurance, Cash in Transit Insurance, and Fidelity Insurance.

GWI is one of 11 local private insurance companies within Myanmar. With an experienced team of 200 employees, located in 6 branch offices nationwide, GWI is providing 24/7 insurance services. Fur-



Representatives pose for documentary photo at the Global World Insurance celebration in Yangon. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

thermore, GWI works in cooperation with 501 agents around the country to ensure that the customers have knowledge and accessibility to insurance prod-

ucts and services.

To date, GWI has expanded from six insurance products to 14 insurance products, including Life Insurance.—GNLM ■

Saudi Arabia's 88th National Day celebrated in Yangon



Deputy Minister U Kyaw Myo welcomed by Mr. Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, at the celebration of 88th National Day of Saudi Arabia. **PHOTO: MNA**

A CELEBRATION marking the 88th National Day of Saudi Arabia was held at Meliá Hotel in Yangon at 7pm yesterday. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo and his wife Daw Thi Thi attended the celebrations.

First, the national anthems of Myanmar and Saudi Arabia were played, and the Deputy Minister and the Ambassador of Sau-

di Arabia to Myanmar, Mr. Sahal Moustafa Ahmed Ergesous, then sliced the celebratory cake, followed by commemorative photos with the guests. The Ambassador and his wife then entertained the guests with a banquet dinner.

Attending the celebrations were foreign ambassadors serving in Yangon, charge d'affaires, UN departmental representatives and invited guests. —MNA

Postcode books for Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay regions disseminated



Mori Saki Win who was appointed as Postcode Ambassador gave a talk at the event. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

JAPAN International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Myanmar Post hosted the event for educating about postcodes to Myanmar citizens on Sunday.

The knowledge of postcodes is very important for a better postal service as social infrastructure, and JICA is supporting Myanmar Post to improve postal service, including the

promotion of postcodes in three regions of Myanmar (Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay).

Postcode books for the three regions, posters, calendars and postcards were presented to Myanmar Post by JICA.

Mori Saki Win who was appointed as Postcode Ambassador gave a talk at the event. —GNLM ■

One Stop Service Centre to connect Myanmar, international gold markets

ONE Stop Service Centre (OSSC) connecting Myanmar gold with international gold market, providing services on jewellerys and items made from Myanmar gold and importing gold was opened at Myanmar Culture Valley, People's Park, Yangon yesterday morning.

"This will connect Myanmar gold with international gold market. Starting from now, Myanmar gold could be legally sent (exported). Myanmar market and international gold market will be connected. To date, gold from Myanmar was exported under other brands or names to relevant markets. The aim is for Myanmar gold to reach Shanghai, Dubai and all other markets under Myanmar brand and Myanmar letters," said Myanmar Gold Development Public Company Managing Director Dr. Ye Thu Aung.

Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association Chairman U Kyaw Win said, "Myanmar has gold resources but it doesn't have a (gold) market, so it had to depend on other markets. Some were sold at the border at whatever price it can get. Despite having gold resources, it was not used effectively for the people."

According to Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association, gold



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein and officials cut ribbon to open the One Stop Service Centre at Myanmar Culture Valley, People's Park in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

was illegally exported in the past and government lost much tax income from this. Through implementing the OSSC, it will enable the government to collect more tax from this trade and once foreign investment enters into this sector, foreign exchange can also be earned.

"In the past, gold was exported only illegally. China is close, so it went out easily that

way. Depending upon Chinese (gold) market, there are changes in Myanmar gold market. It also depends upon the situation in the country (Myanmar). It has been going this way and (sales) money also didn't enter back into the country. It was lost as Yuan at the border. With OSSC, those who want to export (gold) legally can apply. There is no export duty. An advance tax of only 2

per cent will be collected. The idea is for the trader to pay on profit earned. Millions of dollars will enter into Myanmar. From the government's side, it didn't earn any tax in the past, but as it is being exported legally, the government will earn tax," said Dr. Ye Thu Aung.

The price of gold at OSSC will be based on international market rate and local gold price.

It will monitor the import/export of gold and jewellerys in the market. Through this, a certain level of control on the market can be made, according to OSSC.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, who opened the OSSC, said OSSC is not to tighten control or a red tape mechanism. It is to provide an immediate one stop service. OSSC will become a place where sales/purchases can be made easily and will be beneficial for the country, said the Chief Minister.

According to OSSC, organisations and departments such as Customs Department, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Internal Revenue Department, Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association and related association will be included in OSSC and it will provide the best service to importers/exporters.

Gold market in Myanmar started to develop five years ago, and on 22 January, Ministry of Commerce made an announcement on free trade (of gold). The export/import of gold was permitted on 3 September, according to Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association. — Min Thit (MNA) ■

Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda holds Garudhamma Day ceremony

TRUSTEE of Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda celebrated the Garudhamma Day, that falls on Full Moon Day of Tawthalin, at the upper floor of the Kaba Aye Pagoda congregation building in Yangon yesterday afternoon.

At the ceremony, members of the trustee and the sutra chanting groups held the ceremony, according to tradition, proceeded by the pagoda trustee alternate chairman delivering a speech explaining about the reason for holding the ceremony. — MNA ■



Buddhist devotees hold the Garudhamma Day ceremony at Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda. **PHOTO: MNA**

Entrance to 11 universities announced on ministry, university websites

A LIST of students, who passed the entrance to eleven universities, were released at the respective universities, and on the websites of Ministry of Education at <http://www.moe.gov.mm>, <http://www.moe-st.gov.mm> and <http://www.myanmar-education.edu.mm>. As applications for these eleven universities and other universities were made simultaneously, students who passed in more than one entrance can choose to attend only one.

Students who submitted incomplete applications were also informed by post to reapply properly at the Department of Higher Education (Yangon branch), Thaton Road, it is learnt. — MNA ■

President's Office continues announcement of illegal drug arrests, seizures, acting on tip-offs

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 16/2018 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 22 September.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 22 September.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 26 September issue of *The Global New Light of Myanmar*. — GNLM ■

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Second central committee meeting on national crime prevention strategy held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE second Central Committee meeting to develop and implement a national crime prevention strategy was held yesterday morning at the Union Minister office meeting hall in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The meeting was attended by the chairman of the central committee to develop and implement a national crime prevention strategy, Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, committee deputy chairman Ministry of Home Affairs Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo, Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win, Union Attorney General Office Deputy Attorney General U Win Myint, central committee secretary



Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe addresses meeting on national crime prevention strategy in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar Police Force Chief Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo and central committee members.

At the meeting, central committee chairman Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe delivered an opening address. Committee members and officials discussed

additions and amendments on national-level crime prevention strategy (draft) considered in the first meeting, and suggested additional items to be included.

Crime prevention is the main work in implementing the United Nations' long-term aims and once the national-level

crime prevention strategy is drawn up and enacted, a crime prevention and enforcement work program that is in accord with the regional strategic aims of all states/regions at district and township level, will be drawn up and implemented, it is learnt. — MNA ■

Phaungdaw-Oo Pagoda festival crowded with pilgrims



PHOTO: CHAN THAR

THE 135th Phaungdaw-Oo Pagoda festival, occurring from 17 to 26 September in Meiktila,

is witnessing many pilgrims from Meiktila, Wundwin, Thazi, Mahlaing, Pyawbwe, Taungtha

and Myingyan flocking during daytime and at night.

As a measure to prevent

people from being affected with H1N1, stalls and funfairs were not allowed to be set up at the 134th Phaungdaw-Oo Pagoda festival last year. Only Myanmar traditional boat races were held at that time. This is the reason why local people were anticipating this year's festival, which is attracting local people as well as those from nearest towns.

"The 135th Phaungdaw-Oo Pagoda festival is crowded with many visitors", said an official from public relations sub-committee.

The festival features traditional boat races, amusement rides, many stalls showcasing consumer goods, kitchen goods, agro products, and traditional snacks. — Chan Thar (Meiktila) ■

Police bust stimulant tablets in Aungmingalar highway bus terminal

AT 10:45am on 23 September, a Drug Enforcement Division, led by police officers from the Northern Yangon Unit 40 and Lashio Unit 24, acting on information, waited at the Yadanar bus gate, Aungmingalar Highway Bus Terminal in Mingaladon Township, along with witnesses.

A Nissan Tiida car arrived

at the terminal, and out walked Zay Ye Tun (a) Sitt Thway, 38, and Khin Maung Win, 45, to pick up a luggage from the terminal. Police stopped and searched the luggage and confiscated 200 WY psychotic tablets, 20,000 pink stimulant tablets from the contents, in addition to the car driven by the two suspects, and

two cell phones. The joint police force also searched the two suspect's house in Myathida Ward, Mingaladon Township, and confiscated a packet containing 83 WY and pink stimulant tablets.

Police have arrested Zay Ye Tun (a) Sitt Thway and Khin Maung Win together with 20,083

psychotropic tablets (estimated to be worth Ks 60,249,000), and a case has been opened by the Mingaladon Myoma Police Station, with MaYa(Pa) 51/2018, under Section 19-A/21 of the Anti-Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances Law. The investigation continues. — Myanmar Police Force ■

Security measures for gold export/import taken at One Stop Service Center

By May Thet Hnin

One Stop Service Centre (OSSC), including appraiser group and related departments for gold and jewellery export/import, was launched at Myanmar Culture Valley, People's Park, Yangon yesterday. OSSC has taken tight security measures, like screening for anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism.

"The OSSC will monitor implementation of anti-money laundering and counter financing of terrorism, in cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs. These measures are according to 'know your customer' procedure. Gold will now become certified in the 'good delivery list of Myanmar' and bring good reputation to the country", said U Khin Maung Han, chair of Myanmar Federation of Mining Association and member of Market Monitoring and Steering Committee.

The opening of the OSSC signals the commencement of gold export/import businesses, following the 22 January announcement of the Ministry of Commerce, and permits will be issued for the businesses beginning next month.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein graced the opening ceremony of the OSSC and said that there are plans to set up a gold exchange market after establishing a systematic gold market. The OSSC is to facilitate



Gold jewellery displayed at a shop in downtown Yangon. PHOTO:PHOE KHWAR



businesses rather than tightening the rules for gold export/import, providing better services for the entrepreneurs. Once the gold market becomes developed domestically, the country can begin to host gold and jewellery international expos, which in turn will support other related industries, he continued.

The Department of Mines, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, the Department of Trade, under the Ministry of Commerce, Customs Department, Internal Revenue Department, Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association, Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association will be providing their services regarding gold export/import licence permits at the OSSC.

An international standard laboratory is in the pipeline for

quality assessment of gold and jewellery items. Payment can also be made through bank transactions. Gold prices will be standardized, depending on global and local gold prices. Checked and permitted items will be sealed and ready for export/import by linking, at present, with Brink's, a logistics company which provides secure transportation, cash management, and other security-related services worldwide.

Gold and jewellery export/import will be monitored and regulated. Currently, entrepreneurs would be carrying out their export/import at prevailing market price. Gold export will be prioritized for now, said U Ohn Myaing, secretary of Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association.

"We might face challenges and difficulties in running this business. We have not found out what experiences are waiting for

us yet. There's bound to be some practical solutions to whatever negative experience we will have at the start. It will definitely go well later on", he maintained.

In order to avoid unnecessary problems, the Ministry of Commerce will form a team at the airport to check the imported gold and ensure whether or not the items tally with the approved list.

Export and import of gold and jewellery products are valid through sea, border trade and air routes. International buyers can transfer their payments, Letters of Credit (L/Cs) or use telegraphic monetary transfer systems, regulated by the Central Bank of Myanmar, according to the Ministry of Commerce's announcement on 22 January.

Seeking import and export licences and registration, and evaluating prices, value, quality

and volume, are obligatory for importers and exporters.

Registration requires a certificate from the Myanmar Gems Enterprise and the Department of Mines, or a business permit from the Yangon City Development Committee.

If unscrupulous activities are discovered, those committing fraud will be given the first warning. If they commit the same offence a second time, their import-export licences will be revoked and they will face legal actions, according to the law.

Issuing new permits for gold import and export aims to eradicate illegal trade, earn revenue for the country and maintain the market's stability. It also seeks to assure that Myanmar's gold products are able to penetrate the global gold market, according to an official statement of the Ministry of Commerce. ■

Sea trade increases by \$1.79 billion as of mid-September

MYANMAR'S external trade through sea routes amounted to US\$12.8 billion from 1 April to 14 September, during the current mini-budget period (April to September), which indicates a significant increase of \$1.79 billion, compared with the similar period last fiscal year, according to the data of the Ministry of Commerce.

Exports through sea routes were worth over \$5.18 billion, whereas the import value was recorded at \$7.6 billion. Unlike sea routes, exports performed better than imports at border gates. Border trade during the same time totalled \$3.85 billion, comprising \$2.45 billion worth of exports and \$1.39 billion worth of imports.

Agro products, including

rice, various peas, sesame seeds, corn, vegetables, fruits and dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals, forest products, livestock and cutting, making and packaging garments are exported to foreign countries, whereas capital goods, including machinery, agricultural equipment and trucks, plastic raw materials, consumer products, cosmetics, and electronic tools enter the domestic market.

Myanmar's external trade value as of 14 September was registered at \$16.66 billion, with exports worth \$7.64 billion and imports valued at \$9 billion. The total trade value this year narrowed down the trade deficit to \$1.39 billion, compared with \$2.23 billion during the similar period of the last fiscal year. — GNLM ■

Intensive course to meet EU import criteria provided for beekeepers in Monywa

THE Trade Development Programme, funded by European Union, is providing a three-day intensive course from 24 to 26 September for 50 beekeepers from private and apiculture enterprises at Win Unity Hotel in Monywa, in order to produce beehive products under good beekeeping practice (GBP) and meet EU's honey import criteria.

"It is of vital importance for honey to be free from chemical residue to be exported to EU. Therefore, beekeepers should adhere to rules while using medications for the control of honey bee diseases.

"Additionally, hon-

ey production under GBP and by hygienic practice of keeping and transporting of bees, Myanmar's honey bee quality will be boosted in international market," said U Myo Tint, chair of Sagaying Region Apiculture Enterprise.

From private sector, 2,783.8 metric tons of honey, worth US\$4.17 million, were exported in 2017-2018 Fiscal Year. Myanmar's honey is shipped to Japan, South Korea, Canada, Chinese Taipei, Malaysia, Thailand and China, continued U Myo Tint.

Mr. Pablo from Guatemala has been providing the three-day course starting from 24 September.

Thirty-five beekeepers engaged in respective beehives from Nay Pyi Taw and other regions and states, and the remainder from the private sector are attending the course. Demonstrations for practical beekeeping at beehives from Kani Township are included during the course.

The course was jointly opened by Beekeeping Development Programme of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, and Honey Compliance Expert Mr. Pablo Cesar Lopez Carcamo from GIZ and his delegation.— Myo Win Tun (Monywa) ■

Public of Labour Party presents policy, stance and work programme



Chairman U Kyaw Zin of Public of Labour Party.

CHAIRMAN U Kyaw Zin of Public of Labour Party presented the party's policy, stance and work programme on radio and TV on 24 September.

Following is a translation of the presentation:

Greetings and well wishes to all voters and may all be healthy and prosperous!

I am U Kyaw Zin, Chairman of Public of Labour Party. The party will stand for the 2018 by election in four constituencies. For the Pyithu Hluttaw seats, our party will stand for Tamway Township constituency 1 in Yangon Region, and Myingyan Township constituency in Mandalay Region. The party will stand for Seikkan Township constituency, Yangon Region, and Ottwin Township constituency, Bago Region for the Regional Hluttaws.

The Union Election Commission has granted party registration on September 9, 2017, and it has been one year since the party was formed. During this period, the party provided assistance as much as we can to those who suffered. Later, we opened many party branch

offices across the country. We are also determined to stand with the people and to render help to them as best we can.

First and foremost, I would like to explain the purpose of the founding of our party. Out of national politics and political parties, we have chosen to establish a political party aiming to get official rights to work for the benefit of the people with the collective strength of an organization. Let me explain the fundamental principles of our Public of Labour Party. Ever since the party was formed, the aim was to achieve equal rights of the citizens, achieving the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and achieving the citizens' fundamental rights, as included in the Constitution.

The basic principle of the party is to prioritize in national education and national health sector. Only when the nationals in the Myanmar are healthy, can they work for the country. For the youths to be healthy, they must be free from drugs and take appropriate physical exercises. Only then can they

become a future generation that the country can rely on. When conducting national education sector, we will not be satisfied with eradicating illiteracy and will strive toward an education system that provide free compulsory high school education. For our education system to be on par with the world, we will prioritize to work with experts and learned persons.

To create employment opportunities for citizens in the country, we will amend the basic infrastructure and establish sound policies for the establishment of factories and workshops by gaining the trust of foreign investors. For Myanmar workers working in foreign countries, we will strive for them to get full rights and have no discriminations or violations of the basic laws. As for the public servants, we will lay down policies for them to enjoy welfare schemes, including healthcare services for their family members during their service life and after their retirement. If we can do this, we believe that our country can be free from malpractices.

In defining the word "worker," we consider everyone as "workers" and that is why we gave our party the name "Public of Labour Party" to serve the people. Every politician is to serve the country and the people in the best possible way to obtain the votes from the people. But political parties and politicians must not work only for people who voted or supported them. If so, they will become selfish politicians. Our party will represent and work forever for all the citizens and people.

It is not right for politicians to work by asking what the peo-



Party logo.

ple want. They need to consider their requirement to be the requirement of the people and only then can they be together with the people. The party can guarantee 100 percent that it will stand with the people and serve the people forever. Ever since our party was formed we were determined that the party will not offend or be the master of the people. We want to represent the people officially, and that is why we want to be in the Hluttaw.

According to article 347 of the Constitution, the Union must guarantee everyone to enjoy equal rights before the law. We will make an effort to restore rule of law and security for the people. If the government and its people can enjoy the same rights according to the democratic standard, we can claim to be a "democratic state". If the rulers are the only one obtaining this, we cannot call it a democratic nation. We will strive toward everyone enjoying the modern, disciplined and systematic democracy. Only then can we be in accord with the word "no one is above the law."

To become a developed country, achieving internal peace is important. In our party's political policy, we've drawn up a peace and ethnic affairs

section. A true and permanent peace is to be established through mutual responsibility and understanding. To achieve this, we will assist socio-economic development, such as education, health and economics in less developed ethnic nationals. Our political policy considers the coordination and seeking the answer for the requirements of the ethnic nationals as the basis for stopping all armed conflicts and achieving permanent peace. Only then can our union remain together and without disintegration and exist forever.

The party will protect the belief and culture of ethnic races, according to the law, so that they can lead a peaceful life. We will give priority to our national affairs. For example, we can replace with petroleum when our teak is depleted.

We can also replace with gold, silver and precious gems when petroleum is depleted. But nothing can replace our race and religion. That is why we pledge to maintain our race and religion as our national cause. Thus we can guarantee that voters will not regret if they choose the representatives of our party. I conclude by wishing all the voters, health, happiness, peace and prosperity. ■

Mandalay slipper makers pinched by rising raw materials cost

THE rising cost of raw materials have hardly hit slipper makers in Mandalay, forcing them to shut down the traditional business.

"The cost of all raw materials for slippers has risen. For example, the price for a yard of leather has increased from 4600 kyats to 5100 kyats. We shut down our business because we cannot run our business at a loss," said Ko Gyo Thar, an owner of the slipper

making business in Mandalay.

Meanwhile, lowering the selling prices of finished products hit another blow to the slipper making SMEs, resulting in closing the businesses.

The traditional slipper making business was booming in 2015 and 2015. The rising cost for raw materials for slippers comes as exchange rate and fuel prices are going up.

Trade has been declining since last year and the number of main wholesale distributors in Mandalay has decreased from more than 10 to about five this year, said Daw Aye San, a wholesale distributor.

About 40 per cent of more than 100 slipper-making SMEs in Mandalay have shut down.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-Printing House) ■



Workers making slippers for sale. PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)

Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe attends Myanmar Police Chief Shield football tournament final

UNION MINISTER for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe attended the 47th Myanmar Police Chief Shield football final tournament and presented prizes at a ceremony held at Wunna Theikdi Stadium, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area, yesterday afternoon.

Present at the final match and the ceremony were Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Myanmar Police Force Chief Police Lt-Gen. Aung Win Oo, directors general, deputy directors general from departments under Ministry of Home Affairs, high ranking police officers and their spouses, Myanmar Police Force members

and their families.

In the ceremony held after the match, best forward, midfielder, defender, goalkeeper, player and fair player individual medals and cash prizes were first presented by officials. Next, joint third place teams No. 1 Police Command team and Sagaing Region Police Force team, runner-up Yangon Region Police Force team were presented with third and second place medals and cash prizes by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs.

Afterwards, Union Minister presented the champion Bago Region Police Force team with the shield, individual medals and



Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe attends the 47th Myanmar Police Chief Shield football final tournament in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

cash prizes. The Union Minister also presented honorable prizes to referees who helped oversee

the matches.

A total of 23 teams from Myanmar Police Force participated

in the 2018 47th Myanmar Police Chief Shield football tournament.— MNA ■

2018 Badminton Asia Junior Championships to be held in Mandalay



Badminton players in action during the men's doubles match. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (SUB PRINTING HOUSE)**

MYANMAR will host the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships for 2018 in Mandalay City in October. The event will be held at the Mandalarthiri indoor stadium in Chanmyathazi Township from 3 to 10 October, said Dr. Mya Lay Sein, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports, during the successful conclusion of the coordination meeting for hosting the badminton competition, held on 22 September.

The competition is intended to promote the next generation of skilled badminton players. Myanmar has selected 50 shuttlers to represent her in the competition, going up against 420 other badminton players from 15

countries.

The Deputy Minister said Mandalay was selected as the venue to display the city's ambience and to coax young people into sports rather than stray into drug abuse.

The Myanmar Badminton Federation (MBF) coordinated the International Badminton Championships in the city of Yangon in October last year, with shuttlers from 12 countries. The MBF is collaborating with international badminton federations to host the Badminton Asia U-17 & U-15 Junior Championships 2018 for the first time in Mandalay.—Min Htet Aung (Sub printing house) ■

Five countries invited Criterium Bike Race to be held first time in Myanmar

VICE CHAIR for Myanmar Cycling Federation, chair for Mandalay Region Subcommittee U Aung Win Tun said that the very first time of five countries invited Criterium Bike Race in Myanmar will be held on 11 November in Mandalay.

Sportsmen from Thai, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and also Myanmar will participate, and under the age of 19 years and under the age of

23 years will have to separately compete, depending on age.

He said, "The race is called Criterium, which has to be competed depending on the number of laps around a closed circuit. That bike race is going to be the very first time in Myanmar and will be held in Mandalay. The main purposes are to hold an international race as host in Myanmar, want the next generation of cyclists developed and want

people to be interested in bike sports. Six countries, including Myanmar will compete."

The 12th Street, North of Moat, Mandalay Palace Wall, is already chosen to hold the race, and it will start at 7am, on 11 November. A freelance contest for youths and a master contest for adults, outside of national contest, will be scheduled for every enthusiastic cyclist to be able to participate.—MNA ■



Cyclists seen in Mandalay. Criterium Bike Race in Myanmar is to be held on 11 November. **PHOTO: MNA**

Asia invited female golf tournament to be held at opening of MNGC

THE opening of Myohta National Championship Golf Course (MNGC) in the building project of Mandalay-Myohta City of Industry, which is a project of the government of Mandalay Region, will be held on 27 September, and it was reported that Asia Invited Female Golf Tournament will be held as a surprise at the opening

of MNGEC of Event from MMID Co., Ltd.

In the tournament, female golfer clubs from Thai, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and Philippines, which are the countries of East Asia and Southeast Asia, will compete. At the end of the competitions, award presentation and dinner

will be held in the evening of 28 September at Myohta National Championship Golf Course.

The Golf course will be temporarily closed for repair and maintenance on 8 October at the end of competitions. Starting from 9 October, it will be opened on trial. Numbers of players are set and must be registered to be

of consistent quality as a standard Championship Golf Course.

People interested in playing with the Golf Package have to book one week ahead and a group of four can play weekly (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday). 28 people, 8 flights per day and 32 people, 8 flights per day are set to play on Saturday and Sun-

day. Every Tuesday is set aside to repair and maintain the golf course. For more information, please contact 09-445024500, 09-691187788, 09-695989439.

As a special program, Bangkok Golf Center-PXG is organizing for free fitting day for golf enthusiasts during the MNGC Soft Opening.—MNA ■

Driving force behind country's economy

IN many cases, the driving force behind the economy of a country largely depends on changes in the value of foreign currency. Currently, the trade war between the two big superpowers or the main financial controllers of the world has resulted in a global financial turmoil that has fueled the financial instability of Myanmar. On the negative side of the nation's economy is the imbalanced foreign trade, in which the value of imports is larger than that of the exports, resulting in a lingering trade deficit. What makes the situation worse is the rise in US dollar value against most of the global currencies. Myanmar is bearing the brunt of the problem because of its political, economic and other conditions. So, the kyat value is steeply declining.

"Analyzing the depreciation of Myanmar kyat, although it started



... the government is conducting reform programs to reduce trade deficit and enhance the strength and durability of local economic organizations through meetings with responsible persons of the private sector.

effects on SMEs due to illegal imports. The State is in its mission of solving all those issues.

At present, Myanmar is facing hardships in many sectors, from tourism to trade and transport, resulting from the decline in the value of the kyat. The main forces behind currency depreciation are trade deficit, interest rates, inflation and prospective national economic growth. Although the country has potential for economic progress, appreciation of the US dollar pulls down the kyat value, pushes up commodity prices and strengthens inflation, but the biggest challenge is illegal trade.

In this regard, the government is conducting reform programs to reduce trade deficit and enhance the strength and durability of local economic organizations through meetings with responsible persons of the private sector.

In fact, we must have a strong driving force that can overcome the challenges caused by the economic turmoil.

To reach this end, we need efforts towards introducing swift operational reforms of the business organizations under the economic policies and goals of the State, while staying away from red-tape practices.

Shan Nationalities League for Democracy paper read at 2018 International Day of Democracy ceremony

MINGALARBAR! I am Pyithu Hluttaw representative Nan Khin Saw of Kunhing constituency in Shan State. I am going to read the paper on the commemoration of 2018 International Day of Democracy, on behalf of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD).

Greetings and well wishes to government officials concerned, officials from the Hluttaws, diplomats and all special guests from the SNLD. It's found that the motto of this year is, "Let's all lend a hand in making democracy thrive". I also want to say that this motto is suitable for Myanmar, because Myanmar has been making an attempt for the democracy system to thrive.

Myanmar has been a state that was largely ruled by one person throughout. Moreover, the country has been suffering the effects of armed conflicts for 70 years. We have already formed Hluttaws, comprised of 75 per cent of representatives elected by the people. That's why we can carry out the legislative



Nan Khin Saw

process at the Hluttaws. Although we could not fully run a government fully by Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, we

are now able to form the 75 per cent of democratic government. We haven't yet established the emergence of federal union that all the ethnic races desire for. Moreover, plans are under way to implement national reconciliation and internal peace process that are of great importance for the country. As far as I can see, rule of law plays a pivotal role in forming a democratic system.

There will be difficulties in establishing a democratic government without the rule of law. Democracy is being run by laws and regulations, thus it is needed to put emphasis on the judiciary and administrative sectors. As I mentioned above, armed conflicts can make hindrance to the prevalence of law, and we should take into consideration ceasing of the armed conflicts as a top priority, aiming to build the democratic state.

Another salient point is that we should not put aside the freedom of expression because everyone is entitled to hold their own opinions freely

at the Hluttaw or other places. The democracy system cannot be flourished without the freedom of expressions, and we need to shun hate speech and other trivial matters.

The advantages of democracy include right to freedom of thought, freedom of worship, freedom of press and freedom of innovations that are very crucial in enhancing the development of the country, and moreover, every citizen of the state can enjoy the quality of life. In fact, democracy is a system of rule by law, not individuals.

Democracy is a collective leadership system that can resolve the differences through discussion. Everyone has to perform his or her duties while taking a hand in running the country. In a democratic system, we may inevitably meet some delays and inconveniences because decisions have to be made through the approval of the majority that can reduce the objections. I want to put emphasis on the importance of

media freedom, which is one of the salient points in the democratization process. Media is a powerful pillar of democracy that can be considered as the fourth pillar of the state all over the world. Freedom of the media can measure the level of media independence of the country.

In a democratic system, it is necessary for authorities concerned to listen to people's voice. Through the free media, the government and the Hluttaws can know the people's voice. Thus freedom of expression is of paramount importance in the democratization process. In my opinion, we can know if the country's democracy breaks down or not by judging the media freedom. The government should try to improve the media development if they want to implement the motto of today's ceremony. I would like to conclude my paper by urging all of you to work towards a flourishing democratic system in the country.

Thank you.

Arakan National Party paper read at 2018 International Day of Democracy ceremony

FIRST, may I say 'Tharliswa' to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker, Amyotha Htuttaw Speaker, Union-level members, Hluttaw speakers from states and regions, Htuttaw representatives and special guests. I am Amyotha Htuttaw representative U Myint Naing from the Arakan National Party, Rakhine State constituency 5.

Believing in democracy, I would like to say, as a member of Arakan National Party, that we are collaborating with all other ethnics on the road to democracy, during a rough period for our nation's democratic system.

Myanmar was far away from democracy for several years. Although we can work on the path of 2008 Constitution with the collaboration of students, people and monks, the 2008 Constitution still has many weaknesses. Regarding democracy standards, our Arakan National Party is serving the interests of people by activities

inside and outside of Hluttaw to make democracy thrive with support from the Rakhine people. We entered elections from 2010 to 2015. We raised questions for public affairs in the Htuttaw for the benefits of Rakhine State and Rakhine people. Being able to fulfill the requirements of the people is one of the democracy essence and standards as well.

It is a responsibility of all citizens to get equal opportunities for the survival of democracy. Cooperation is also needed for multi-ethnics living in our country. Myanmar being a multi-ethnic country, to get equal rights and to thrive in democracy is a duty for everyone. We are in need of setting up foundation for emergence of a federal Union through holding the 21st Century Panglong conference. Some of the salient things include establishing a peaceful, united federal Union, to get equal opportunities among

the ethnic races, and to reduce the development gap among the states and regions.

While we are striving for the emergence of a democratic system, the Bengali issue has become one of the challenges that can hamper the sovereignty of the State. We view that the attempts of OIC and other countries trying to give pressure intentionally to our country is a hindrance to the democratization process of Myanmar. In solving this issue, it is important not to neglect voices, feelings and opportunities of Rakhine nationals. Moreover, it is crucial not to give in to international pressures.

Cooperation among the State government, Tatmadaw, political parties, CSOs and media are needed to make the seed of democracy thrive, to strengthen democracy foundation and to enlarge the community of democracy. It is true that Myanmar has



U Myint Naing

to face many weaknesses in the tender stage of democracy and transition period. It is needed to develop democratic culture and to pass the legacy in the Union. Other striking points are to hold free and fair elections, to strengthen Hluttaws and to work for emergence of an opposition force in the Hluttaw. In a democratic country, we fear becoming a democratic dictatorship if we do not have opposition force. While the democratic system is thriving, it is important for the parties to avoid discouraging people regarding democracy system.

In conclusion, cooperation among the whole populace is of great importance to develop the democratic system. I would like to conclude my paper by urging all of you to participate in marching together towards the goals of Democratic Federal Union.

Thank you.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued on Monday 24 September 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, Southwest monsoon has been withdrawn from the North Bay of Bengal and Central Myanmar areas. Rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing and Yangon regions, Rakhine State, scattered in Upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Ayeyawady regions, Kayah State, fairly widespread in Taninthayi Region, Southern Shan and Kayin states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy falls in Kachin State. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Machanbaw (4.29)inches, Maubin (2.95)inches, Paletwa (2.56)inches, Kyeikkhame (2.24) inches, Hainggyikyun (1.81)inches, Mohnyin (1.77)inches, Mudon (1.57)inches, Nawngkhio (1.54) inches, Kyaukme (1.30)inches, Pinlaung and Homalin (1.26)inches each, Mindat and Thayawady (1.18) inches each.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the North Bay and monsoon is feeble over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 25 September 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be Widespread in Kachin state fairly widespread in Upper -Sagaing and Tanintay regions Scattered in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (1 - 4) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuations of thundery conditions in Deltaic areas.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 September 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 September 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 September 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

Four years of coalition strikes on Syria kill 3,300 civilians

BEIRUT (Lebanon) — More than 3,000 civilians have been killed in US-led coalition air strikes against the Islamic State group in Syria since they began four years ago, a monitor said on Sunday.

The Washington-led alliance puts the toll at just over 1,000 civilians in both Syria and neighbouring Iraq, and says it does all it can to prevent civilian deaths.

The coalition began bombing IS targets in Iraq in August 2014 after the jihadist group seized swathes of territory straddling the two countries, proclaiming an Islamic “caliphate”.

The coalition extended its strikes to Syria on 23 September, 2014. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group, said on Sunday those Syria strikes had since killed 3,331 civilians.

The monitor relies on a network of sources inside Syria and tracks flight patterns, aircraft involved and ammunition used to determine who carries out raids.



A fighter jet takes off from the deck of France's aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle in the eastern Mediterranean Sea on 9 December 2016, as part of the international coalition against the Islamic State group. **PHOTO: AFP**

“Among those killed are 826 children and 615 women,” said Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman.

The coalition says it takes every possible precaution to prevent civilian deaths.

In its latest civilian casualty report published last month, the coalition said its strikes had un-

intentionally killed 1,061 civilians in both Iraq and Syria up until 30 July, 2018. It is still assessing a further 216 reports of civilian casualties, some of them in strikes dating back to 2014.

Asked if the coalition could specify how many of the confirmed casualties were in Syria, spokesman Sean Ryan said it

“does not breakdown strikes by type, platform, munition, region or nation.” “As far as any discrepancy in numbers, the coalition is basing the findings on facts and evidence. We are not claiming to provide exact numbers, but saying it is based on the best available evidence,” he told AFP.

Ryan said the coalition re-

mained willing to work with anyone to investigate allegations and asked other monitors to share what metrics they were using to determine casualties.

Rights groups have criticised the coalition for not pursuing investigations of civilian casualties rigorously enough.

In June, Amnesty International said the coalition's bombing raids of IS's de facto Syrian capital Raqa last year may amount to “potential war crimes”.

“The artificially low number of civilian casualties the coalition acknowledges stems in part from poor investigation procedures that fail even to involve on-the-ground research,” it said at the time. The coalition's operations have largely wound down, with the jihadists ousted from all but tiny bits of territory in Syria.

More than 360,000 people have been killed across Syria since the conflict broke out in 2011, nearly a third of them civilians, according to the Observatory.—AFP ■

Saudi says door open to future oil output hike

ALGIERS (Algeria) — A meeting between oil producing countries on Sunday decided not to alter supply to the global market, after calls by US President Donald Trump for an immediate hike in output to reduce prices.

A committee of participating states “expressed its satisfaction regarding the current oil market outlook with an overall healthy balance between supply and demand”, a statement said, at the end of a meeting in Algiers.

But Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid al-Falih left the way open to a future production hike, as supplies tighten due to the US imposing sanctions on Iranian oil from November this year.

“It is critical that we continue to foresee and anticipate changing market supply and demand balances and take proactive actions to avoid conditions that could make (oil) consumers

uneasy and anxious,” said Falih, who chairs the joint committee of OPEC and non-OPEC countries.

The OPEC cartel in December 2016 concluded an agreement with non-member states — including Russia — to reduce output in order to arrest sliding prices. Sunday's meeting in Algiers brought together OPEC oil ministers and non-OPEC signatories to the 2016 agreement, as they seek to extend their cooperation.

Trump has repeatedly called for a hike in production by countries other than Iran to reduce oil prices, which have partially recovered since the December 2016 agreement, to trade close to \$80 per barrel this month.

“We protect the countries of the Middle East, they would not be safe for very long without us, and yet they continue to push for higher and higher oil prices!” Trump tweeted on Thursday.

“We will remember. The OPEC monopoly must get prices down now!” The committee formed by OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers “was directed to study the 2019 outlook and present options on 2019 production levels to prevent market imbalance”, the closing statement in Algiers added.

‘Spare capacity’ ready to deploy

Falih said attending ministers “showed us that they have spare capacity that they are ready to deploy if there is demand for it, if it is required by any shortfall”.

But he said producers would reduce “supply if there is ever... a demand shock to the market”.

“It's premature to say what we're going to do in 2019,” he added. Russia's energy minister Alexander Novak on Sunday appeared to back a continuation of

the partnership between OPEC and non-OPEC member states.

“We need to give serious thought to expand our partnership beyond this year to tackling the new challenges that appear ahead of us,” he said. After pulling out of the 2015 Iran nuclear deal in May this year, the Trump administration has pledged to impose an embargo on Iranian oil from 5 November. Iran's OPEC representative Hossein Kazempour Ardebili on Sunday said his country was continuing to meet its OPEC quota share. “I expect all countries to exercise their sovereignty and not to abide by the instructions of Trump,” he said. But output from Iran has hit its lowest level since July 2016, according to the International Energy Agency, as top buyers India and China distance themselves from Tehran in anticipation of the US sanctions.—AFP ■

Afghanistan launches polio vaccination in high-risk provinces

KABUL — The Afghan Public Health Ministry launched a five-day campaign on Monday to give immunity vaccination dose to 6.4 million children under the age of five in 27 of the country's 34 provinces, the ministry said in a statement. “Polio vaccination teams will visit 6.4 million children under the age of five in 27 high-risk provinces, mainly in Kandahar and Nangarhar. This follows several new cases in both regions,” the statement read. The drive was launched as a fresh polio case was detected in Afghanistan earlier this month, bringing to 14 the number of confirmed cases of polio virus since January this year, according to the statement. “Polio is a crippling and a potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure and the polio vaccine is the only safe and effective way to protect children.”

It added. In early August, the ministry with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), launched a nationwide campaign targeting 9.9 million children under the age of five.—Xinhua ■

Brotherhood chief, 65 others get life for Egypt attack

MINYA (Egypt) — An Egyptian court on Sunday sentenced 66 people to life in prison, including Muslim Brotherhood chief Mohammed Badie, over an August 2013 attack on a police station in Minya.

Death sentences were meted out to 183 people over the deadly attack on the police station in the southern province, before a retrial was ordered. On Sunday, around 700 people were tried again in this case, defence lawyer Abdel

Moneim Abdel Maqsood told AFP.

Sixty-six of the 700 were sentenced to life imprisonment, which is 25 years in Egypt, 288 were acquitted, six have died since the first trial and the rest were sentenced to between three

and 15 years in prison.

Badie, 75, was on Sunday convicted of inciting his supporters to violence in the Minya case following the ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013.—AFP ■

Back at UN, Trump to herald upturn with North Korea

UNITED NATIONS (United States) — US President Donald Trump is expected to trumpet America's improved ties with North Korea when he addresses the United Nations General Assembly

Twelve months on from his explosive debut on the world's biggest diplomatic stage, Donald Trump returns to the UN General Assembly on Monday to trumpet a turnaround in ties with last year's number one enemy, North Korea's Kim Jong Un.

But while relations with Kim have improved dramatically, leaders attending the annual gathering at UN headquarters in New York will hear how another of Trump's adversaries, Iran's Hassan Rouhani, remains beyond the pale for the American president.

After arriving in his hometown on Sunday, Trump has a packed schedule over the next few days, kicking off with a speech about the global drugs trade on Monday.

In addition to his address to the General Assembly on Tuesday, Trump has a series of bilateral meetings with allies such as French President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Theresa May and Japan's Shinzo Abe, whom he met with late Sunday.

One of the most closely-watched will be Monday's meeting with South Korean counterpart Moon Jae-in, who will brief him on last week's inter-Korean summit with Kim in Pyongyang.

In his 41-minute speech at the General Assembly in 2017, the US president made clear he wanted to turn the clock back on the last half-century's growth of global rules and institutions to return to the primacy of the nation-state.

While the implications of his "America First" philosophy rattled many world leaders who sat in the chamber, the main target of his invective was absent.

After months of escalating tensions over advances in the North's nuclear programme, Trump warned Kim that Washington would "totally destroy" North Korea if the US or its allies was attacked.

His colourful description of Kim as a "rocket man" on a "suicide mission" triggered an angry response from Kim, who called Trump "mentally deranged."

While Kim will again be absent from New York, observers will look for pointers toward a second summit between the US and North Korean leaders

since their historic get-together in Singapore in June.

Although he has expressed frustrations in recent months, Trump's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says efforts to persuade Pyongyang to denuclearize are progressing.

Rouhani Meeting?

"We are hopeful that we can deliver this outcome for the world," he told *"Fox News Sunday."*

Pompeo — who has visited Pyongyang three times — will preside over a Security Council meeting on Thursday where he will brief members on how the administration can persuade the North to turn its back on nuclear weapons.

He will also defend the Trump administration's use of sanctions to force change, which has seen Chinese and Russian companies punished for doing business in North Korea.

Trump's recent predecessors have all failed to bring about a lasting upturn in ties with the North and skepticism remains about whether Kim has taken any concrete steps, but that seems unlikely to deter Trump from pushing toward a follow-up to Singapore.

"It doesn't appear that the



US President Donald Trump is expected to trumpet America's improved ties with North Korea when he addresses the United Nations General Assembly. **PHOTO: AFP**

Moon Jae-in summit did much more than continue a kind of atmosphere and pageantry leading into President Trump's next summit," said Mike Green, an analyst at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

While Trump will dial down the rhetoric against Kim, there seems to be little prospect of him doing likewise with Rouhani.

The US annoyed many of its allies in Europe by pulling out of a deal they jointly negotiated in 2015 that lifted sanctions against Tehran in exchange for restrictions on its nuclear programme.

US allies in the Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia, have, however, been delighted by Trump's stance.

Several of the president's top lieutenants will address a meeting on Wednesday billed as a "United Against Nuclear Iran Summit" that will also feature speakers from Arab allies.

Rouhani has organized a press conference at the same time.

The White House has not completely closed the door on a Rouhani-Trump meeting and given how things with Kim have turned out, perhaps nothing should be regarded as impossible. But in a weekend op-ed in *The Washington Post*, Rouhani charged that Trump's offer of talks was not "genuine" and came with a list of "openly insulting preconditions." — AFP ■

Second Lada class submarine launched in St Petersburg

ST PETERSBURG — A second diesel-electric submarine of project 677 (Lada class), The Kronshtadt, was launched in a special ceremony at the Admiralty Shipyards in St Petersburg on 20 Thursday September, a TASS correspondent reports.

"The importance of this event is hard to overestimate. The submarine began to be built in 2005. There have been some pauses in construction work and in financing, but the launch day has come at last. The delay in construction work allowed for using the experience gained in building and operating the submarine The St Petersburg. By all parameters this submarine surpasses its predecessor - project 636. We are certain that the future of non-nuclear submarine force of the Russian Navy should be pinned on project 677. There will be a large series," Admiralty Shipyards CEO Alexander Buzakov said at the ceremony.



Project 677 submarines of the Lada class belong with the fourth generation of diesel-electric subs. **PHOTO: AFP**

Project 677 submarines of the Lada class belong with the fourth generation of diesel-electric subs. In the surface position its displacement is about 1,750 tonnes. The maximum speed under water is 21 knots. Lada has a crew of 35 and carries Kalibr cruise missiles. The St. Petersburg is the lead ship of project 677. Its keel-laying ceremony

took place in 1997. It was handed over to the Russian Navy in 1997 for experimental operation, which is due to end in 2019.

The Kronshtadt began to be built in 2005. At a certain point the project was paused to be resumed in 2013. Currently the Admiralty Shipyards is building another Lada class submarine - The Velikiye Luki. — Tass ■

Pirates kidnap 12 on Swiss cargo ship off Nigeria: company

GENEVA (Switzerland) — A gang of pirates took hostage 12 crew members from a Swiss cargo ship they attacked in Nigerian waters, the vessel's operator has said. Massoel Shipping said its bulk carrier MV Glarus, with 19 crew, came under attack early Saturday morning as it transported bulk wheat from Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos to the southern oil hub of Port Harcourt.

During the attack, 45 nautical miles southwest of Bonny Island, "the pirate gang boarded the Glarus by means of long ladders and cut the razor wire on deck to gain access to the vessel and eventually the bridge," the company said in a statement sent to AFP. "Having destroyed much of the vessel's communications equipment, the criminal gang departed taking 12 of the 19 crew complement as hostage," it added. Massoel spokesman Patrick Adamson told AFP it was the second largest number of people taken from a ship in the oil delta

southeast of Nigeria this year.

"Pirates usually don't make contacts in the first 48 hours, so we don't have any news on that," he added. For safety reasons, neither the identities nor nationalities of the hostages would be released, he said.

More than 60 crew were reported kidnapped last year in waters off Nigeria, Africa's leading crude producer, although many attacks are not reported.

The Geneva-based shipping company said "all the appropriate authorities have been notified" and specialists have been called in to "secure the speedy and safe release of those being held."

"Families are being kept closely informed of the situation."

Switzerland's foreign ministry said it "has been informed of the attack on Glarus, a vessel sailing under a Swiss flag along the Nigerian coast." The Swiss Maritime Navigation Office was in contact with the vessel's operator, it added. — AFP ■

India launches 'Modicare', world's biggest health scheme



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the world's largest health insurance scheme, promising free coverage for half a billion of India's poorest citizens. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEW DELHI — Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched the world's biggest health insurance scheme, promising free coverage for half a billion of India's poorest citizens ahead of national elections next year.

The bottom 40 per cent of India's 1.25 billion people will be covered under the flagship programme, dubbed "Modicare", unveiled in the federal budget earlier this year.

The 100 million lowest-income families will be provided 500,000 rupees (\$6,900) — a sizeable sum in India — in annual health insurance to treat serious ailments.

Modi handed medical cards out at the launch in Ranchi, capital of the eastern state of Jharkhand, calling it a historic day for India.

"We want to strengthen the hands of the poor and stand shoulder to shoulder with them in pursuit of good health," he posted on Twitter.

The scheme is expected to cost the central and 29 state governments \$1.6 billion per year in total. Funding will be increased gradually according to demand.

India's overburdened public health system is plagued by a shortage of facilities and doctors and most people use private clinics and hospitals if they can

afford to.

But a private consultation can cost 1,000 rupees (\$15), a huge sum for millions living on less than \$2 a day.

More than 60 per cent of the average family's spending goes on medicines and healthcare, the government estimates.

Many of the poorest just go without care.

A report published this month by *The Lancet* medical journal found substandard healthcare was responsible for an estimated 1.6 million deaths a year in India — the highest anywhere in the world.

"A scam"

Critics have questioned how the government plans to fund such an enormous safety net, and suggested it was little more than a sop ahead of elections next May.

Modi will be seeking a second term on a platform of pro-poor policies and "Modicare" is a key plank of his pitch to low-income Indians.

"This is going to be another scam. It will benefit only private insurance companies. The citizen of the country will realise later that it is nothing but an election gimmick," said Sanjay Nirupam from India's main opposition Con-

gress Party.

But K K Aggarwal, a cardiologist and former president of the Indian Medical Association, said "politicking over the scheme should stop".

"It has been launched, and it is going to be a game changer," he told AFP.

Some healthcare providers have raised concerns about being left out of pocket, fearing the government has underestimated the cost of certain treatments.

Prathap Reddy, chairman of private hospital chain Apollo Hospitals, said the private sector was "rightly worried" about pricing and reimbursements.

"While we all work together to ensure the success of this scheme, there are areas that need focus and fine tuning," he said.

Others say it should have included primary day-to-day healthcare instead of just secondary and tertiary care for more serious and long term treatment.

"Modicare does not extend to primary healthcare, which, we believe, is the weakest link in the provision of public health in India," Rajiv Lall and Vivek Dehejia of the IDFC Institute think-tank said in a column for the *Mint* newspaper. —AFP ■

South Korean dies during adventure tour in Viet Nam

HANOI — Viet Nam's central highlands Lam Dong province has suspended all adventure tour activities at the Datanla Waterfalls in Da Lat city following the death of a South Korean tourist on Saturday, local media reported on Monday. The provincial Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism decided to suspend the activities to investigate the tragedy and review the procedures and safety of adventure tours at the waterfalls, daily newspaper *Viet Nam News* reported. The 23-year-old South Korean man named Jang Won Seok died during an adventure game on the waterfalls. He was in a group of 11 foreign tourists, including three South Koreans, two Canadians, four Belgians and two Britons. The local tour provider said all the 11 tourists had been trained in safety techniques before the game.

The first six tourists had crossed the obstacle safely before Jang's incident. He reportedly used an incorrect technique when jumping into the water, leading to his death. —Xinhua ■

Singapore watchdog fines Grab, Uber \$9.5 mn over merger

SINGAPORE (Singapore) — Singapore on Monday fined ride-hailing firms Grab and Uber \$9.5 million for breaking competition rules when they merged, saying the deal had increased fares and thrown up roadblocks for competitors.

Singapore-headquartered Grab agreed to buy US firm Uber's ride-hailing and food business in Southeast Asia in March, ending a bruising battle between the companies.

In return, Uber received a 27.5 per cent stake in Grab.

However the deal came under scrutiny across the region, and the Competition and Consumer Commission of Singapore was among watchdogs in several countries that launched probes.

In the conclusion to its investigation, the commission said it had found the merger had substantially reduced "competition in the ride-hail-

ing platform market in Singapore".

Grab fares rose between 10 and 15 per cent after the deal as the company reduced the number of points earned by riders and made it harder for them to redeem them, it said.

Potential competitors were hampered by exclusivity agreements Grab forged with taxi companies, car rental partners and some of its drivers, the commission said.

The deals meant drivers could not work for other companies.

The commission fined both firms a total Sg\$13 million (\$9.5 million) — Sg\$6.42 million for Grab and Sg\$6.58 million for Uber — "to deter completed, irreversible mergers that harm competition".

The body also criticised Grab and Uber for not getting the commission's clearance

before completing the deal.

In addition to the fines, the commission ordered several measures be implemented to ease fares and allow new players to compete with Grab, including reverting to pre-merger pricing and allowing Grab drivers to use other ride-hailing platforms.

Lim Kell Jay, head of Grab Singapore, said the firm completed the deal "within its legal rights, and still maintains we did not intentionally or negligently breach competition laws".

In the Philippines, the competition watchdog last month approved the merger but imposed conditions related to areas including pricing and exclusivity arrangements to prevent Grab acting like a monopoly.

Malaysian authorities are also examining the deal. —AFP ■

Australia's governing party making up ground on opposition: poll

CANBERRA — Australia's governing Liberal-National Party (LNP) has made up ground on the opposition Australian Labor Party (ALP) with a general election on the horizon.

The latest Newspoll, Australia's most respected opinion poll, revealed that the LNP trailed the ALP 54-46 on a two-party preferred basis compared to 56-44 earlier in September.

It marks the best result for the government since Scott Morrison replaced Malcolm Turnbull as prime minister in August.

Morrison's personal approval rating grew significantly with 45 per cent of voters picking him as their preferred prime minister over ALP leader Bill Shorten.

When asked who they believed to be the more authentic leader, 46 per cent chose Morrison compared to 31 per cent for Shorten. The prime minister's net approval rating of +5 was the

best result for a prime minister since February 2016. By comparison, Shorten's net approval rating was negative 22 per cent.

Despite the uptick for the LNP, the government is still facing an uphill battle to win the upcoming general election.

According to Newpoll, the ALP would benefit from a 4.4 per cent swing in the upcoming election, winning an additional 20 seats in the House of Representatives and forming the government with a clear majority. However, the opposition's primary vote rate tumbled from a 10-year high 42 per cent in the immediate aftermath of Turnbull's downfall to 39 per cent on Monday. The poll took place during a fortnight where Morrison was praised for a swift response to the strawberry contamination crisis that swept Australia and for announcing a royal commission into Australia's aged care sector. —Xinhua ■

France reverses car tyre sea sanctuary — an environmental flop

PARIS — What seemed like a crazy idea turned out to be just that: a 1980s experiment that saw 25,000 car tyres dumped into the crystal-clear waters of the Mediterranean to create a sanctuary for sealife off the French coast is being cleaned up after it was found to be polluting.

Since the start of last week, divers and a specially equipped boat with lifting gear have been fishing out hundreds of the old loops of rubber about 500 metres (1,600 feet) from an exclusive coastline between the towns of Cannes and Antibes.

The original vision, backed by local French authorities at the time and fishermen, was that the tyres would become populated by coral and other sea creatures in a conservation area where fishing was off limits.

In France, the idea of a “tyre reef” was tried only here, but a local

academic working on the clean-up operation said authorities in other countries, particularly the United States, had tried the same failed idea.

“We hoped (back in the 1980s) that we could restore aquatic life there, but it didn’t work,” the deputy mayor of Antibes, Eric Duplay told AFP. “It turns out that the tyre reef was not a prolific place for biomass.”

Denis Genovese, the head of an association of local fishermen, confirmed that most Mediterranean lifeforms had shunned the idea of living inside man-made products manufactured out of rubber, resins, oil and other chemicals.

Leaking toxic chemicals

Sedentary creatures such as the local scorpion fish didn’t use them, Genovese said, while “grouper fish, conger eels and sea bream swim around them, but no spe-

cies really got used to it”.

Worse, a study in 2005 by researchers at the University of Nice showed that the tyres were leaking toxic chemicals into the environment, including heavy metals, which are a threat to human life.

Authorities were also worried that the tyres could degrade further, nearly 40 years after they sank to the seabed, and break up into smaller pieces which would be a risk for nearby seagrass meadows.

In 2015, a first mission to remove 2,500 tyres was undertaken to show that they could be extracted safely, with the work underway at the moment a second and more important phase of the clean-up operation.

Around 10,000 are set to be lifted by the divers and boat crew over the next few weeks, with the remaining 12,500 extracted in the second quarter of 2019.



Divers and a specially equipped boat with lifting gear have been fishing out hundreds of the old rubber tyres 500 metres (1,600 feet) from an exclusive coastline between the French resorts of Cannes and Antibes. **PHOTO: AFP**

Regeneration hopes

AFP hopped aboard the vessel last week to watch the progress in action as dozens of tyres were hauled from the sea, with the luxury holiday villas of the French Riviera visible on the coastline behind.

The Saudi royal family own a huge villa on a small stretch of beach opposite the site, which was the focus of a scandal in 2015 when King Salman tried to privatise the sand for his holiday and caused an uproar among locals.

The fine white sand is a problem for the clean-up team of divers, which

struggle with low visibility as they find the tyres and thread them on to wire cables which are then lifted to the surface.

“In the morning, it’s easy, the water’s clear,” crew member Morgan Postic on board the Ocea vessel said. “But as we stir it all up down at the bottom, you can’t see anything and it gets much more complicated.” The tyres will be sent to the nearby city of Nice and then to recycling centres where they will be broken up into granules that can be used in construction projects.

“After that we’ll leave the seabed to restore itself

naturally and we’ll continue to monitor with sensors,” said marine scientist Patrice Francour from the University of Nice, who is working on the issue.

Francour said the clean-up would end France’s one and only experiment with a “tyre reef”, but that other countries still had to deal with the legacy of the failed idea, notably the United States.

A million euros has been provided by the French state to finance the French clean-up, while French tyre company Michelin has contributed 200,000 euros (235,000 dollars).—AFP ■

Orangutans saved as Malaysia foils high-seas smuggling bid

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia) — A pair of young orangutans, baby crocodiles and rare birds were among over 400 animals rescued from a boat off Malaysia as they were being smuggled from neighbouring

Indonesia, officials said on Monday.

Three suspected Indonesian traffickers were arrested after customs officials thwarted the bid to transport the animals to Thailand in an operation

Friday off the Malaysian holiday island Langkawi.

The unusual cargo included two “frightened-looking” orangutans and dozens of baby saltwater crocodiles, Malaysian wildlife official Mohamad

Zaki Rahim told AFP.

There were also about 350 sugar gliders — a type of small marsupial — cockatoos, parrots and parakeets found in boxes on board, he said, adding the smugglers intended to sell

all the animals as pets.

The smugglers were seeking to transport the animals under cover of darkness in a cargo vessel from the vast, jungle-clad Indonesian island of Sumatra, through the Malacca

Strait to Thailand, customs chief T Subromaniam told the Star newspaper.

But Malaysian customs officers received information about the boat and intercepted it, Subromaniam said.—AFP ■

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V TAURUS TWO VOY. NO. (18121)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TAURUS TWO VOY. NO. (18121) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-9-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-4 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 GLOBAL MARS SHIPPING
& LOGISTICS SERVICES CO, LTD

Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1825/1826)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (1825/1826) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 23-9-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
(S’PORE) PTE LTD

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M.V AREZOO VOY. NO. (SCY1041)

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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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S LAND AND SEA SHIPPING
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Phone No: 2301185

South African villagers tap into trend for 'superfood' baobab

MUTALE (South Africa) — From before dawn, 54-year-old grandmother Annah Muvhali weaves between baobab trees that loom over her rural South African home, collecting fruit that enthusiasts worldwide hail as a "superfood".

About 1,000 women in the village of Muswodi Dipeni, in the northern province of Limpopo, earn a living by harvesting the furry, hard-shelled baobab fruit pods. The seeds and chalky powder inside the pods have become a global health craze celebrated for their vitamin-packed properties and now used in everything from flavoured soda, ice cream and chocolate to gin and cosmetics. "Before, I never knew there was any value in baobab. My family and I would eat the fruit simply because it makes a delicious yoghurt-like porridge that is nutritious and filling," Muvhali told AFP.

"I always use it for my grandchildren when their stomachs are

troublesome."

Known locally as "baobab guardians", women like Muvhali also plant and nurture baobab saplings in their gardens and earn an income for each centimetre that the trees grow.

Having started in 2006, the grandmother of five has since been able to build a house for her two children and grandchildren from her earnings. Elisa Phaswana, 59, has been nurturing a single one-metre-high sapling — protected from goats by a makeshift fence — for the past two years. She said the baobab guardian programme had alleviated poverty in the community.

"It helps the environment and it helps us especially because there is little to no work for us and our children in our village."

"I get about R320 (\$21) per centimetre."

Soaring demand

Sarah Venter, an ecologist who runs the Ecoproducts com-



Historically credited with mythical and spiritual powers in African folklore, the baobab is known as the "upside down tree", as its branches look like roots. PHOTO: AFP

pany behind the baobab cultivation, said the scheme rewarded women for their skills and care.

"They get paid a certain amount until the tree reaches three metres high and after that it will live for 1,000 years.

"It has a value chain where everybody benefits, including a rural person picking up something that's already in their environment and getting an income for it," Venter said.

"If we are lucky enough as an

industry to get to a point where demand exceeds supply, prices will go up and rural producers will get more for what they collect."

Venter said demand for baobab powder has zoomed every year since 2013, with Europe, the United States, and Canada now the biggest consumer markets.

Estimates by the African Baobab Alliance show that baobab powder exports grew to 450 tonnes in 2017.

Baobab Foods, a leading dis-

tributor and supplier, has seen an exploding growth in demand for baobab products in recent years.

"In 2018 we have more than doubled our annual imports of baobab fruit powder into the United States alone," it said in a statement.

The tree can take up to 200 years to bear fruit, but watering them every day can see that time reduced to 30 years. A tree then produces fruit annually for nearly 200 years.—AFP ■

'House with a Clock' chimes in atop North America box office

LOS ANGELES — A horror comedy about a clock counting down to doomsday chimed in at the top of the North American box office this weekend, industry estimates showed on Sunday.

Universal's family film "The House with a Clock in Its Walls" clocked up \$26.9 million over its debut three-day weekend, the industry tracker Exhibitor Relations said.

Jack Black and Cate Blanchett star alongside young Owen Vaccaro as Lewis Barnavelt, an

orphan sent to live with his warlock uncle. In its second week, "A Simple Favor" jumped a notch to second place. Lionsgate's tale about a mommy blogger (Anna Kendrick) investigating the disappearance of her friend (Blake Lively) earned \$10.4 million.

Just a shade below with \$10.3 million, Warner Bros.' "The Nun" dropped to third place.

The latest fright fest in the popular "Conjuring" series stars Taissa Farmiga — whose sister Vera headlined two "Conjuring"

films — in a story about a young nun, an exorcist and a guide stumbling onto a dark secret deep in Dracula country in the 1950s. After slaying the box office at number one, sci-fi action movie "The Predator" fell to fourth place with earnings of \$8.7 million. A Fox reboot of the franchise's original production that starred Arnold Schwarzenegger, the film's \$24.6 million opening weekend haul did not meet expectations. Glitzy rom-com "Crazy Rich Asians," another Warner Bros. product, held on to fifth place with \$6.5 million.

The film, with a nearly all-Asian cast led by Henry Golding and Constance Wu, has a rich North American take of \$159.4 million in its six-week run.

Rounding out this weekend's top 10 were:

"White Boy Rick" (\$5.0 million)

"Peppermint" (\$3.7 million)

"Fahrenheit 11/9" (\$3.1 million)

"The Meg" (\$2.4 million)

"Searching" (\$2.2 million).

—AFP ■



Actors Jack Black (R) and Owen Vaccaro (L) attend the premiere of "The House with a Clock in Its Walls" at the Chinese theatre in Hollywood. PHOTO: AFP

'Kingsman 3' to release in 2019 with Matthew Vaughn attach to write, direct

LOS ANGELES — The third film in the "Kingsman" franchise is officially in works with Matthew Vaughn returning as writer and director of the film.

Fox Studios has set on 8 November, 2019 as the official release date for the untitled Kingsman 3, reported Entertainment Weekly.

"Kingsman: The Secret Service", which released in 2014, introduced Eggsy (Taron Egerton), a young street-smart English ruffian handpicked by agent Harry Hart (Colin Firth) to join a secret academy that would train him to become part of Kingsman, an organization

filled with super suave super spies.

After saving the world from villain Valentine (Samuel L Jackson), Eggsy returned for "Kingsman: The Golden Circle", which brought in Julianne Moore as drug kingpin Poppy.

Firth, Mark Strong, Channing Tatum, Halle Berry, and Pedro Pascal also starred in the second film.

The movies are based on the Kingsman comics by Mark Millar, whose other works are being developed into a series of Netflix films, television, and comic projects.—PTI ■

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Fujifilm plans leukemia treatment trials using iPS cells

TOKYO — Fujifilm Corp is aiming to start clinical trials next year using artificially derived stem cells to prevent serious complications following bone

marrow transplants to treat leukemia, company officials said on Sunday.

The camera and medical equipment maker, which has

been expanding its pharmaceuticals business, will apply for government permission for the trials by the end of March. It would be the first Japanese company to conduct such trials, which could help accelerate the use of induced pluripotent stem cells.

Fujifilm will then aim to start selling products made from iPS cells in 2022 at the earliest, the officials said.

In the trials, Fujifilm plans to inject mesenchymal stem cells generated from iPS cells in individuals with acute graft-versus-host disease in order to prevent immune cells in transplanted marrow from attacking their bodies. About 1,000 people develop the disease every year in Japan.

Cynata Therapeutics Ltd, an Australian medical venture in which Fujifilm holds a stake, has started similar trials in Britain, with some individuals having fully recovered, they said.

Fujifilm will apply Cynata Therapeutics' techniques to the clinical trials in Japan.

—Kyodo News ■



Photo taken in June 2017 shows logos installed on the building that houses the head office of Fujifilm Holdings Corp in Tokyo.

PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Porsche first German carmaker to abandon diesel engines

BERLIN — Sports car maker Porsche said Sunday it would become the first German auto giant to abandon the diesel engine, reacting to parent company Volkswagen's emissions cheating scandal and urban driving bans.

"There won't be any Porsche diesels in the future," CEO Oliver Blume told the newspaper *Bild am Sonntag*.

Instead, the luxury sports car brand would concentrate on what he called its core strength, "powerful petrol, hybrid and, from 2019, purely electric vehicles".

The Porsche chief conceded the step was a result of the three-year-old "dieselgate" scandal at auto giant Volkswagen.

VW in 2015 admitted to US regulators to having installed so-called "defeat devices" in 11 million cars worldwide to dupe emissions tests and obscure its much higher emissions on the road. It has so far paid out more than 27 billion euros in fines, vehicle buybacks, recalls and legal

costs and remains mired in legal woes at home and abroad.

Diesel car sales have dropped sharply as several German cities have banned them to bring down air pollution -- a trend that Chancellor Angela Merkel was due to discuss with car company chiefs in Berlin later Sunday.

"The diesel crisis has caused us a lot of trouble," Blume said, months after Germany's Federal Transport Authority ordered the recall of nearly 60,000 Porsche SUVs in Europe.

City driving bans

Stuttgart-based Porsche in February stopped taking orders for diesel models, which it had sold for nearly a decade.

Blume said Porsche had "never developed and produced diesel engines", having used Audi motors, yet the image of the brand had suffered.

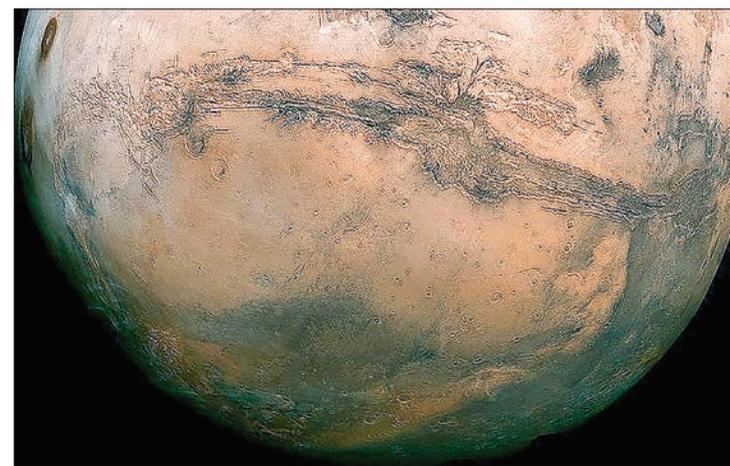
He promised that the company would keep servicing diesel models on the road now.

Blume also defended diesel as a viable technology, which the broader VW group plans to keep using. "I think modern diesel engines are highly attractive and environmentally friendly," he said. "They will continue to be of great importance to the auto industry in the future."

However, he added, "for us as a sports car manufacturer, where the diesel has traditionally played a subordinate role, we believe that we can do without diesel in the future."

According to the paper, Porsche also faces new claims of having manipulated engines to produce a more powerful sound with a technique that was deactivated during testing.

Blume acknowledged that German regulators had pointed to irregularities in the 8-cylinder Cayenne EU5, affecting some 13,500 units. The fallout from dieselgate has been wide ranging for Germany and its auto sector which employs some 800,000 people.—AFP ■



Mars. PHOTO: TASS

ExoMars rover to land on surface on 19 March, 2021

MOSCOW — A European rover will land on the Martian surface on 19 March, 2021 as part of the 2020 mission of the ExoMars joint project with Russia, Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian space agency Roscosmos, said on Saturday.

"The mission to Mars will be launched on 25 July, 2020. On 19 March, 2021, a Russian lander is to deliver gently the European rover to the surface of the Red Planet," he wrote on Facebook.—Tass ■

Microbubble scrubber developed to destroy dangerous biofilm

CHICAGO — Researchers at the University of Illinois (UI) have developed a system that uses naturally abundant diatoms along with hydrogen peroxide and tiny oxygen-generating sheets of the compound manganese oxide to propel tiny particles through the surfaces of these tough films and deliver an antiseptic deathblow to the microbes living inside.

"The species of diatom we selected are hollow, highly porous and rod-shaped, providing a lot of surface area for the bubbles to form and a channel for the bubbles to escape," said co-author and postdoctoral researcher Yongbeom Seo.

The chemical reaction between the hydrogen peroxide and manganese oxide nanosheets takes place within the empty space inside the diatom. The result is a flourish of microbubbles that flow through the tiny channel, propelling the rigid diatoms forward with enough force to break up the surface and internal structure of the biofilms, the researchers said.

"We dope the particles with nanosheets of manganese oxide, then mix them with hydrogen peroxide and apply that to

the surface of the biofilm," said co-author Hyunjoon Kong, a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at UI.

"Once the diatoms break through to the internal structure of the biofilm, they continue to expel bubbles and facilitate the entry of hydrogen peroxide, which is an effective disinfectant against bacteria and fungus," Kong said.

The researchers believe that their success is a result of a decision to focus on the mechanical aspects of biofilm destruction, not the chemical aspects of simply killing microbes.

Biofilms are slimy colonies of microbes held together by internal scaffolds, clinging to anything they touch. About 80 percent of all medical infections originate from biofilms that invade the inner workings of hospital devices and implants inside patients. Eradication is difficult because traditional disinfectants and antibiotics cannot effectively penetrate a biofilm's tough surface.

The study has been published in the journal *ACS Applied Materials and Interfaces*.—Xinhua ■

Tiger Woods seals first win in five years with Tour Championship

ATLANTA (United States) — Tiger Woods scored his first victory in more than five years on Sunday, completing a two-shot win at the Tour Championship to crown a fairy tale comeback after a near two-year absence.

The 42-year-old, 14-time major winner carded a one-over-par 71 at Atlanta's East Lake Golf Course to claim the 80th title of his glittering career.

Woods, who finished with an 11-under-par aggregate 269, raised his arms in delight after the victory, with several thousand fans ringing the green roaring appreciation.

Woods admitted he had nearly been overcome with emotion as he walked up the 18th fairway.

"I was having a hard time not crying coming up the last hole," Woods said.

"I kept saying 'Hey, I could still play this out of bounds.' But

once I got the ball on the green I gave (caddie) Joey (LaCava) a high five because I knew it was done."

It was an emotional finale to a year which saw Woods return to the highest level after he had once feared he may never play golf again.

"It was just a grind out there," Woods said of his final round. "I loved every bit of it. The fight, the grind, the tough conditions.

"Beginning of the year (winning) was a tall order. But as the year progressed I found my swing and put the pieces together and I knew I could do it."

The victory erased any last lingering doubts about Woods' ability to compete at the highest level, something he had served notice of with top 10 finishes at the British Open and US PGA Championships.



Tiger Woods seals his first win in more than five years at the Tour Championship. PHOTO: AFP

Woods, who returned in January after missing almost the entire previous two years with a debilitating back injury, held a three-shot advantage heading into the final round.

A birdie on his opening hole extended Woods' lead to four

shots to give the former world number one a dream start.

With the remainder of the 30-man field struggling to make any inroads, Woods then played solid if unspectacular golf to keep a stranglehold on the lead.

A bogey on the 10th was a

mere blip, with Woods re-establishing a five-shot cushion at 13 under after rolling in a 13-foot birdie putt on the par-four 13th.

Billy Horschel closed the gap to four shots after a four-under-par final round 66, but Woods looked to be in control.

Woods, however, gave his army of fans roaring him on a scare though when back-to-back bogeys on the 15th and 16th holes cut his lead to two with two to play.

But he steadied the ship with a par on the 17th and then closed out the win with a par on 18.

The victory was Woods' first since his win at the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational in August 2013. Meanwhile England's Olympic champion Justin Rose ensured he walks off with the FedEx Cup playoff title after finishing on six under for a share of fourth.—AFP ■

Pique rescues point for 10-man Barca against Girona

BARCELONA (Spain) — American fans will be licking their lips if this is what awaits Miami's Hard Rock Stadium in January after Barcelona and Girona played out an enthralling 2-2 draw at the Camp Nou on Sunday.

There were four goals, one for Lionel Messi and two for Girona's Cristhian Stuani, not to mention a controversial red card shown to Barca defender Clement Lenglet. Gerard Pique salvaged a point for the hosts to complete his own blockbuster night, after clearing one shot off the line and making mistakes for each of Girona's goals.

By the end, Barca had surrendered their perfect record in La Liga, as well as a two-point advantage over Real Madrid. They return to the top of the table, but only on a goal difference. Girona

move up to sixth.

"For us, this is a triumph," Stuani said. "Coming here and getting this result is so valuable for us."

Hanging over this game was always the wider prospect of it not being returned, given La Liga's desire to move the reverse fixture at Girona's Estadi Montilivi on January 26 to the United States.

For all the opposition, however, there was a noticeable lack of complaint at the Camp Nou, where there were chants for Catalan independence but precious little in opposition to a trip to Miami.

A point may not be viewed as a bad return either for Barca, having played through the best part of an hour with 10 men, but changes made by coach Ernesto Valverde failed to hit the mark.

Lenglet came in for Samuel Umtiti, presumably to bed in next to Pique, given Umtiti is suspended for Barcelona's Champions League game against Tottenham later this month.

But he was, perhaps harshly, sent off in the 35th minute with Barca one up, and they then conceded before Umtiti came on at half-time. Arthur and Arturo Vidal - also brought in - were substituted before the hour. "When we got the red card, our intention was to make a change but we had to let him (Umtiti) warm-up," Valverde said. "It looks like an error on my part."

Messi and Pique had changed too, each shaving their beards, but it had contrasting effects based on the evidence of the first half.

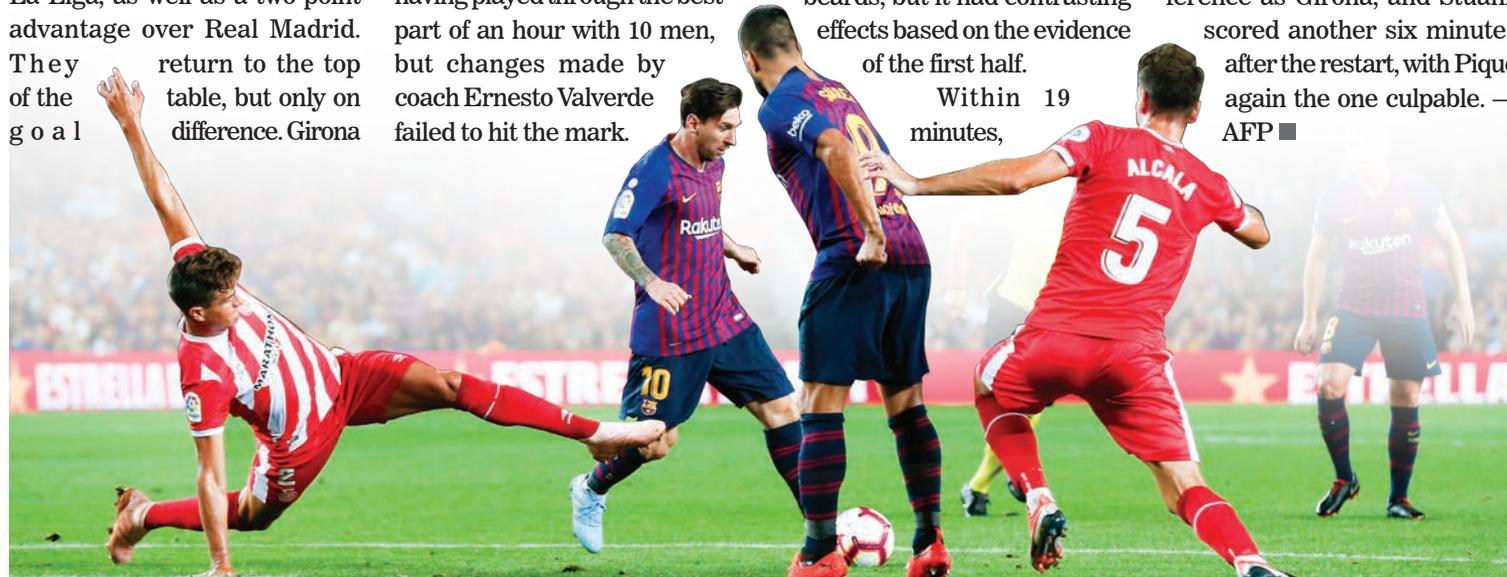
Within 19 minutes,

Messi had put Barca ahead, a slick finish into the corner finishing off Vidal's pass for the Argentinian's eighth goal in six games.

Pique, however, was at fault for the equaliser, a lethargic attempt at a clearance allowing Stuani to poke the ball past Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Girona had been spurred on by Lenglet's red card, after VAR showed the French defender landed an elbow into the face of Pere Pons, and referee Jesus Gil deemed it deliberate.

The red card rippled through the French contingent as Lenglet's dismissal meant Ousmane Dembele was replaced by Umtiti at half-time. It made little difference as Girona, and Stuani, scored another six minutes after the restart, with Pique again the one culpable. — AFP ■



Girona's Colombian defender Bernardo Espinosa (L) tackles Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi during the Spanish league football match between FC Barcelona and Girona FC at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on 23 September, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

Neymar gets PSG back on track

PARIS (France) — From a deeper than usual playmaker role Brazil's Neymar pulled the strings as Paris Saint-Germain came from behind to beat Rennes 3-1 in Ligue 1 on Sunday, helping to dispel midweek memories of a European flop at Liverpool.

Hosts Rennes took a surprise 11th minute lead when PSG midfielder Adrien Rabiot nodded past his own 'keeper, Gianluigi Buffon, from a corner before goals from Angel Di Maria, Thomas Meunier and Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting gave them a hard-fought sixth straight Ligue 1 win.

Later Sunday Lyon, who stunned Manchester City in the Champions League in midweek, host bitter rivals Marseille.

PSG critics have suggested the French giants had overspent on strikers and forgotten about the midfield after a tame 3-2 defeat in the Champions League at Anfield this week. — AFP ■