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State Counsellor attends 1st meeting of Steering Committee for Implementation of BRI



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi addresses the Steering Committee for the Implementation of Belt and Road Initiative in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Implementation of BRI, attended and made an opening address at the first Meeting of the Steering Committee which was held in Ayeyarwaddy Hall of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday at 10:00 am. Present at the Meeting were

Vice President U Myint Swe, Vice Chairman of the Steering Committee, Union Ministers, Union Attorney General, Union Auditor General, Chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Council and Chief Ministers who were the Members of the Steering Committee and the officials concerned.

In her opening remarks at the Meeting, the State Counsellor said that the Belt and Road

Initiative which was initiated by the People's Republic of China, was being participated by over 60 countries to cooperate not only in building infrastructure connectivity, but also in many other sectors. She also mentioned that being a country located at the strategic position in BRI, Myanmar would also need to participate in the said Initiative. She hoped that cooperation

activities under the BRI could present opportunities to bring benefits not only to Myanmar but to the region as well. She also added that at the same time, it will be necessary to study and scrutinize the proposed projects to ensure mutual benefits to both sides. She also stressed the need to implement the BRI in accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. She also

put emphasis on the need to thoroughly scrutinize the projects under BRI from different perspectives both for the short-term and long-term benefits of the country and the people, and to make sure that the selected projects are in conformity with national plans, policies and domestic procedures.

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Eleventh regular session of Second Pyithu Hluttaw holds 14th-day meeting

By Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

A 14th-day meeting of the eleventh regular session of Second Pyithu Hluttaw was held yesterday morning at Pyithu Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw where asterisk marked questions raised were answered and a motion on placing more emphasis on laying and upgrading inter-village roads was accepted for discussion.

Asterisk-marked questions

In the first asterisk-marked question of the day U Thaung Aye of Pyawbwe constituency asked why a Region Government had issued a notification putting restriction on Hluttaw representative meeting with the constituents in the constituency. Deputy Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Tin Myint explained that Pyithu Hluttaw Law section 12, sub-section (f) states that Hluttaw representatives are to arrange venue and other requirements to meet with constituents in the constituen-



U Thaung Aye.

cy and relevant administrative entities can be coordinated if required. As the law didn't state that an administrative entity is responsible for these meetings and to separate the division between legislative, administrative and judicial pillars of the country Mandalay Region government had issued a notification to district and township administrators to only arrange the meeting. The ministry had also instructed state/region, district and township administrators to provide



U Tin Myint.

required assistance to Hluttaw representatives in according to the law explained the Deputy Minister.

Asterisk-marked questions on upgrading of Namtlan Village to Namtlan Town in Hsipaw Township, Shan State and plan to pay allowance for temporary village administrators raised by U Sai Thant Zin of Hsipaw constituency and Dr. U Myint Thein of Nyaunglebin constituency were also answered by Deputy Minister U Tin Myint.



Dr. U Myint Thein.

Similarly asterisk-marked questions raised by U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe, U Toe Win of Tamu constituency, U Sein Myint of Myingyan constituency and U Naing Naing Win of Tamu constituency were answered by Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min and Deputy Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Tin Myint.

Motion on placing more emphasis on laying and upgrad-

ing inter-village roads

Following the asterisk-marked question and answer session U Ne Lin Aung of Mindat constituency explained and tabled a motion urging the Union Government to place more emphasis on laying and upgrading inter-village roads in townships where development of road transport is low as well as in townships where ethnic nationals live. The motion was supported by U Sai Oo Kham of Hsenwi constituency.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced the Hluttaw's agreement to discuss the motion after obtaining the decision of the Hluttaw and announced further for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the motion to register their names.

The 15th-day meeting of the eleventh regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw will be held on 20 February it is learnt.

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Eleventh regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw holds 14th-day meeting

By Aung Ye Thwin (MNA)

A 14th-day meeting of the eleventh regular session of Second Amyotha Hluttaw was held at Amyotha Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. At the meeting, asterisk marked questions were raised and answered, receipt of a bill announced and a report on a bill read.

Asterisk-marked questions

Asterisk-marked questions on rural road, rural water supply and other rural and border area matters were raised by U Myo Win of Mon State constitu-



U Myo Win.

ency 8, U Zon Hle Htan of Chin State constituency 4, U Whey Tin of Chin State constituency 11, U Min Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 12, U Naing



U Zon Hle Htan.

Thiha of Mon State constituency 7, U Bwe Khane of Chin State constituency 3 and U Lal Min Htan of Chin State constituency 10 and answered by Deputy Min-

ister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut.

Receipt of Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Bill

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced the receipt of Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Bill approved and sent with amendment by Pyithu Hluttaw and announced further for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bill to register their names.

Report on Civil Service Law (2nd Amendment) Bill read

Afterwards Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member U Thein Lwin read and explained the committee's report on Civil Service Law (2nd Amendment) Bill approved and sent with amendment by Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bill to register their names.

The 15th-day meeting of the eleventh regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw is scheduled for 20 February it is learnt.

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker separately receives PRC Ambassador, IDEA Myanmar head

PYITHU Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein received Ambassador of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang yesterday afternoon at the Deputy Speaker's office in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the meeting, matters relating to promoting friendship and cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries, Hluttaw legislative and

Hluttaw affairs works, internal peace, national reconciliation and regional development were discussed and views exchanged.

Similarly, Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on Hluttaw Development received International IDEA Myanmar office head Mr. Mark McDowell later at the deputy speaker's office.

During this meeting International IDEA providing states/regions Hluttaws and Hluttaw representatives information on constitutional matters and increasing support in legislative works, assist in successfully conducting courses and workshops on basic requirements for Myanmar becoming a federal nation were discussed and views exchanged. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein holds talks with Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor attends 1st meeting of Steering Committee for Implementation of BRI

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Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe, Vice Chairman of the Steering Committee, said that it was of great importance to learn the experiences of other countries in the region in implementation of projects under BRI and to choose the suitable projects and programs which are really necessary for the development of the country, and could really bring benefits to the people.

He also mentioned that it would be more effective if all committees concerned which were established to supervise and implement the BRI projects, could work together hand in hand in close coordination, especially among the State and Region Governments and the Ministries concerned in implementing the projects.

Then, Dr. Than Myint, Union Minister for Commerce, re-

ported the progress on the establishment of Myanmar-China Border Economic Cooperation Zone; U Soe Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, reported the progress on the implementation of the Myanmar-China Economic Corridor; and U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, reported on the preparation for the 2nd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation to be held in Beijing, China in April 2019.

Moreover, the participants of the Meeting exchanged views on the cooperation and activities being undertaken by their respective Ministries under the Belt and Road Initiative.

The meeting was concluded after the State Counsellor and Chairperson of the Steering Committee on implementation of BRI gave additional comments and guidance on the discussions.—MNA



Restoration of an ancient temple in Bagan. PHOTO: MNA

Restoration of quake-hit pagodas nearly complete

RESTORATION work on earthquake-hit pagodas in Bagan, MraukU, Sagaing, and Magway is nearly complete, and only 20 pagodas are currently being restored, according to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

An earthquake on 24 August, 2016 had damaged 389 pagodas in the Bagan Ancient Cultural Heritage Zone.

“So far, 335 pagodas, including 224 which were partially damaged, have been conserved

without damage to their original style,” the Archaeology and National Museum Department stated in a press release yesterday.

The remaining 20 pagodas are undergoing restoration, according to the statement.

Following the earthquake, the authorities divided the damaged pagodas into three prioritized groups for restoration and conservation.

The first priority group had 36 pagodas, the second 53, and

the third 300.

The pagodas were restored and conserved in keeping with international standards and with advice sought from UNESCO experts, local and foreign experts, and the post-earthquake Technical Coordination Forum.

The Bagan Ancient Cultural Zone, which has about 3,000 ancient pagodas and religious edifices in one place, has been in existence for more than a thousand years.—GNLM

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Gem businesses urged to sell more finished products

THE Myanmar Gem Emporium Central Committee held a meeting for holding 56th Myanmar Gems Emporium yesterday afternoon at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

First, Central Committee Chairman Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win said Myanmar Gem Emporium Central Committee had formed work committees and through the management of the central committee and efforts of the work committees, successes were achieved in the past emporiums. Gem business owners and gem merchants coming to buy the gem lots are to follow the emporium rules and regulations and past emporiums' strengths are to be maintained while weaknesses are to be improved.



Union Minister U Ohn Win delivers a speech at Myanmar Gem Emporium Central Committee meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Nature of gems is such that it is natural resources that are irreplaceable. In order to achieve good prices, the sales are to be

controlled. If the sale is systematically controlled, higher prices can be fetched and the market will be strengthened. Gem busi-

ness owners are urged to set up arrangements to produce, display and sell more finished products rather than selling it in a raw

state. Work committees are to conduct better methods than those used in the past emporiums so that the gem emporiums reach an international level and are requested to provide suggestions said the Union Minister.

Next, responsible persons from management committee, jade work committee, gems work committee, pearl work committee, security committee, financial work committee and Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association conducted sector wise discussion and provided suggestions. 2019 56th Gems Emporium will be held from 11 to 28 March at Mani Yadana Jade Hall in Nay Pyi Taw and gem, jade and pearl lots will be sold under an open tender system it is learnt. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

LPG Safety Training Course No. 2 opens in Thanlyin Refinery

OPENING CEREMONY LPG Safety Training Course No. 2 conducted by Ministry of Electricity and Energy was held at Yangon Region No. 1 Oil Refinery (Thanlyin) on 17 February.

At the ceremony Union Minister U Win Khaing said the course was conducted to raise the human resources required in the country. The country aim to use LPG as a strategic energy and sector wise courses to develop human resources is required to prepare for developing technology and investment in LPG Industry. LPG as an energy source is widely aimed toward industry, transport, rural and urban kitchen sector. Businesses were being invited to reduce government participation in LPG sector and

transit fully toward private sector.

Using LPG widely in the country can reduce electricity consumption and will help toward fully using electric power in other required areas. It'll reduce the consumption of wood and charcoal and reduce deforestation and environmental pollution. The ministry aims to expand LPG usage to rural villages by 2020 and is targeting 1 million households to use LPG by 2020. As a first step it was able to distribute LPG to 150,000 households and is arranging to open LPG Auto Gas Filling Station for vehicles driven by LPG.

LPG Safety Training Courses were being conducted for personnel from LPG distri-



Union Minister U Win Khaing addresses the Opening ceremony of LPG Safety Training Course No. 2 in Thanlyin yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

bution companies and factory. At this course handling of LPG, requirement to handle and distribute LPG, safely using and installing Car Conversion Kit to LPG as fuel in vehicles will be taught by experts. The Union Minister spoke of the require-

ment to form LPG business association so that the government and private companies can cooperate in a balanced manner toward widespread and danger free usage of LPG.

Next, business persons from LPG distribution and

sales private businesses who were attending the course submitted difficulties faced in conducting the work and the Union Minister coordinated and fulfill the requirements. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Construction Ministry takes steps to form National Urban Committee



Coordination meeting of National Urban Committee - NUC in progress. **PHOTO: MNA**

IN a bid to design national urban policies, authorities discussed setting up a National Urban Committee - NUC during a co-ordination meeting held at the Ministry of Construction in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said NUC will advise in the design of an effective national urban policy and steer guidance on implementation. He mentioned that a workshop on designing a national urban policy framework was conducted on 4 June 2018, and a preliminary workshop on holding a national policy conference was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 December 2018.

The results from the two workshops were used to decide

which policy components needed to be prioritized, said the Union Minister. He said the NUPP necessitates completing the NUP by 2020 and holding a National Urban Forum to pursue further actions. He urged everyone to participate in forming the NUC so that an NUP which is line with the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP-2030) can be drafted and put into action.

Next, Director-General U Min Htein and Deputy Director-General Daw Aye Aye Myint explained the planning stage of the NUP and the duties of the NUC, and the prioritized components of the NUP, respectively.

This was followed by the members of the provisional national urban committee discuss-

ing the formation of the NUC after which, the Union Minister delivered the closing speech.

Most of the world's countries are adopting the New Urban Agenda (2016-2036) and designing their own national urban policies. Myanmar is also implementing the National Urban Policy Program (2017-2019), a collaboration between the Department of Urban & Housing Development and UN-Habitat, with support from South Korea.

Attending the meeting were Union Ministers Dr. Aung Thu and U Win Khaing, deputy ministers, Hluttaw MPs, permanent secretaries, department heads, members of associate organizations, and other officials. —MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Myanmar, Thailand meet on combating human trafficking

MYANMAR hosted the 8th Bilateral Meeting between MPF-RTP (Myanmar Police Force-Royal Thai Police) on Combating Trafficking in Persons at M Gallery Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The meeting was attended by 19 representatives of MPF led by Police Brig-Gen Myint Htoo from the Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, 13 representatives of RTP, and 7 representatives from Thailand's Department of Special Investigation-DSI.

The meeting was opened with separate speeches from the two sides' leaders, after which they discussed the progress of implementing the decisions from the 7th meeting, and sharing information on transnational human trafficking between the Myanmar and Thailand. The 19th Bilateral Meeting between MPF-DSI will be held today, according to the Myanmar Police Force. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Bilateral Meeting between MPF-RTP (Myanmar Police Force-Royal Thai Police) on Combating Trafficking in Persons held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with Sweden Ambassador Mr. Staffan Herrstrom in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Sweden, PRC ambassadors separately

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of Sweden to Myanmar Mr. Staffan Herrstrom at the Pyithu Hluttaw guest hall, Pyithu Hluttaw building, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, matters relating to strengthening bilateral relation, cooperating

in raising the capacity of the Hluttaw, legislative process, peace process, investment, women and children rights were openly discussed and views exchanged.

Later Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Ambassador of People's Republic of China (PRC)

Mr. Hong Liang.

In this meeting increasing bilateral friendship and cooperation, legislative work of Hluttaw, development of Myanmar, and peace process were discussed and views exchanged. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

SWRR Minister discusses Rakhine State affairs with Asia Philanthropy Circle



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye holds talks with Asia Philanthropy Circle - APC representatives yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

DR. WIN MYAT AYE, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, received representatives from Asia Philanthropy Circle - APC at his ministry yesterday. The APC is currently working together with the International Relations

Task Force of the UEHRD.

The two sides discussed the UEHRD task force's implementation of development in Rakhine State, collaborations with APC to open a university in MraukU that meets international standards, and the pro-

gress of negotiations between the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, Rakhine State government, state Hluttaw, and the local residents. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

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

THE Office of the President issued Press Release No. 7/2019 yesterday, publicly announcing the Ministry of Home Affairs' arrests and seizures in the fight against illicit drug trafficking up till 16 February.

The ministry made the arrests, acting on information, sent to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President as of 16 February.

The full text of the press release will be reported in the 20 February issue of The Global New Light of Myanmar.—GNLM

Union Supreme Court sits to pass judgment, hear cases

UNION Supreme Court sits at Union Supreme Court room number 1 yesterday morning with Chief Justice of the Union Supreme Court U Htun Htun Oo and all Union Supreme Court

judges to pass judgments on five special civil appeal cases. In addition to this it also heard four special criminal appeal cases and two special civil appeal cases. —MNA

Coord meeting of UEHRD Task Forces held in Yangon

A COORDINATION meeting of UEHRD Task Forces was held at the NRPC Yangon meeting hall on 17 February.

The National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon is where the UEHRD Yangon office is located. This meeting was chaired by Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of UEHRD and attended by team leaders of the 10 Task Forces.

At this meeting, matters relating to strategic planning for 2019 - 2020 were discussed with the active participation of team leaders from the Task Forces responsible for construction and infrastructure,

international relations, communications and media and vocational training.

Chief Coordinator Dr. Aung Tun Thet spoke of the need to have strategic vision, and to consider ways and means to help those who are now in IDP camps and mixed villages as a way to make the best use of the available time before the onset of the monsoon.

This was followed by a detailed PowerPoint presentation about the nature of strategic planning. The Task Forces were requested to submit their work plans by mid March this year.—GNLM



PHOTO: KYAW MYAING

Union Minister for Health and Sports attend Global Engagement & Empowerment Forum on Sustainable Development

UNION MINISTER for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe attended the second annual Global Engagement & Empowerment Forum on Sustainable Development held at Yonsei University in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 14 to 15 February and arrived back to Yangon on 16 February.

After participating in the forum the Union Minister met separately with Health Insurance Review and Assessment Service of the Republic of Korea (HIRA) Chairman Mr. Kim Seung Taik, HIRA International Group Commissioner Mr. John Ryu, Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH) Chairman Dr. Choo Moo Jin and Incheon Dental Association's Patron Dr. Jong-Sung Lit and discussed cooperation in health sector.

Similarly the Union Minis-

ter met with Yonsei University Health System Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Professor Do-Heum Yong at Severance Hospital and discussed cooperation in raising health care works, sending scholarship students and study groups, research in medical universities, teaching of pre-graduate courses and higher courses and cooperation with Myanmar medical universities in conducting researches were discussed. After the discussion the Union Minister inspected the treatment services conducted in Severance Hospital.

On 17 February the Union Minister met with Professor Dr. Jack Rock of Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, Michigan, United States of America; Professor Dr. Philippe Schuchti of Bern University Hospital, Switzerland; officials from Neurosur-



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses second annual Global Engagement & Empowerment Forum on Sustainable Development in Seoul. **PHOTO: MNA**

gery departments of University of Medicine 1 and 2 at University of Medicine 1, Yangon to discuss development of neurosurgery, curriculum of new generation neurosurgeons, studying and practicing teaching and treatment systems and inspected the

second ASEAN neurosurgery practical training program.

The training program was conducted by 23 professors and specialists from USA, Switzerland, Seoul Korea, Nepal, Singapore, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam with modern medical

equipment and curriculum. The training program was attended by 15 post graduates students from Cambodia, Singapore, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam and 35 post graduates students from Myanmar. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

MoI holds preliminary coordination meeting on copyright forum



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun delivers the speech at the preliminary coordination meeting on copyright forum. **PHOTO: MNA**

A PRELIMINARY coordination meeting to hold a forum on copyright was held at the meeting hall of Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun said the country has enacted a copyright law in 1914 but this was no longer in line with the time and era and was being amended to be in accord with WIPO Convention. At the moment Industrial Design Law and Trademark Law were enacted while Literature and Art Copyright Law is being drafted and will be approved and enacted soon. A systematic discussion

on literature and art copyright needs to be conducted. That is why this preliminary coordination meeting is being held, said the Deputy Minister.

The country lacks knowledge and experience in copyright and unwittingly violated others copyright while violation of own copyright were ignored and overlooked.

Once the copyright law is enacted a Collective Management Organization (CMO) will be formed and joint management of literature and art copyright will be conducted. There will also be a need to cooperate with sector wise officials said the

Deputy Minister.

Meeting attendees then conducted sector wise discussions. Following the meeting, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun received Thai Journalist Association (TJA) Vice President Ms Kornchanok Raksaseri and party at the ministry.

At the meeting, they cordially and openly discussed current situation of media sector in Myanmar and achievements, ongoing processes and challenges in the sector, and Thailand's offer of conducting journalism training focusing skills and ethics by Thailand. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Foreign trade increases by US\$ 318 mln over same period last year

ACCORDING to fiscal year 2018-2019 (October to January) (provisional) figures Myanmar foreign export and import was US\$ 5,190 million and \$ 6,126 million respectively reaching a total trade of \$ 11.316 billion. For the same period in fiscal year 2017-2018 (October to January) Myanmar foreign export and import was \$ 4,692 million and \$ 6,306 million respectively making a total foreign trade of US\$ 10.998 billion. This year foreign export increase was \$ 498 million and foreign import decreases \$180 million and the increase in total trade was \$ 318 million.

Following is the product wise comparison of foreign export.

Million US\$

Sr.	Subject	2018-2019 (October to January) (Provisional)	2017-2018 (October to January)	Comparison (+/-)
1	Agriculture products	1,095.628	1,027.502	68.126
2	Animals products	242.768	25.707	217.061
3	Marine products	295.465	271.403	24.062
4	Mineral products	328.620	587.647	-259.027
5	Forest products	60.481	67.074	-6.593
6	Manufacture products	2,907.589	2,143.402	764.187
7	Other	259.590	568.937	-309.347
	Total	5,190.141	4,691.672	498.469

Following is the product wise comparison of foreign import.

Million US\$

Sr.	Subject	2018-2019 (October to January) (Provisional)	2017-2018 (October to January)	Comparison (+/-)
1	Investment products	2,005.704	2,139.257	-133.553
2	Raw Material	2,527.720	2,700.901	-173.181
3	Article of use	1,592.335	1,465.975	126.360
	Total	6,125.759	6,306.133	-180.374

Line Walker-2 employs local talent as filming continues near Shwedagon Pagoda

By Thi Thi Min, Min Thit

CAST and crew of the Hong Kong film Line Walker-2 continued filming scenes of the action thriller at the eastern entrance of Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday. Young Myanmar actors involved in the film, and supporters and observers to the film set were interviewed for their experiences.

Director Ko Pauk

"They have been taking this cut 20 times already. They have a lot of camera equipment and ones you can film from cars. Their techniques and large crew are something to be admired and respected. I have an entry card so I can observe up close and I have been visiting almost everyday since I live close to the set. There is nothing to compare since it's an international film."

Police Major Myo Aung Myint, Traffic Police Unit 7

"They were filming along Gyar Tawya Street in front of the eastern entrance of Shwedagon Pagoda. I've heard the film commemorates close relations between the two countries, and will showcase Myanmar's participation in the global push against human trafficking. As traffic police, we are stationed here to regulate smooth traffic and ensure the filming proceeds uninterrupted."

Daw Swe Zin Htike (Managerial member of Film Development Centre)



Director Ko Pauk.

Police Brig-Gen Win Khaung (Retired) (Advisor to Yangon Synthesis Productions)

"Filming took place on Gyar Tawya Street from 6 am to 1 pm and they will continue filming downtown after that. The film wanted to include the stalls along the eastern entrance but I don't know what was misunderstood because all the stalls have been cleared. Nevertheless, we set up with what we had for the filming."

"They wanted to include the Shwedagon Pagoda in the film too. This scene is where the police are chasing the villain. The location is important. They are professionals and their work ethics and teamwork are strong. We can see everyone working uniformly under the director's administration."

"We invite everyone from the film community to come observe if they wish to. The Ministry of Information has arranged for permission. There are some



Police Major Myo Aung Myint, Traffic Police Unit 7.

Myanmar actors involved in the film too."

Police Brig-Gen Win Khaung (Retired) (Advisor to Yangon Synthesis Productions)

"All the actors from their country have all their insurances covered, and I think it's something we should emulate. The people hired here have local insurance coverage as well. Our country will surely benefit a lot from having such a large company come film here. We still have a long way to go to break out onto the global stage on our own. But filming together with world renowned actors and actresses will boost the image of our country as long as we are featured in the film. This will also send a message to the world that our country is open to major film projects."

Nay Htet Aung (Actor)

"I play the role of a special



Daw Swe Zin Htike (Managerial member of Film Development Centre).



Nay Htet Aung (Actor).

police officer from the counter terrorism unit. This film has given me the opportunity to work alongside with foreign actors. They have given us support too. In our own country, we don't do more than 10 sample takes but they do about 50 takes. People like me who have been out of work for some time finally have a chance to act again.

I wish to invite more international films to come shoot here."



Police Brig-Gen Win Khaung (Retired) (Advisor to Yangon Synthesis Productions).



Aung Myint Myat (Actor).

Aung Myint Myat (Actor)

"They have covered life insurance for us and are employing dozens of local talents. We learn so much from them and receive a lot of opportunities. Like I've said before, I will be involved in the film no matter what role I have to take. You can't tell when another opportunity like this will come again, so I auditioned for a part just to get the experience."

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



The crew of Line Walker-2 taping a scene for the Hong Kong film at the eastern entrance of Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: NAY LIN**



Film crew of Line Walker-2 set up camera equipment near the eastern entrance of Shwedagon Pagoda for filming a scene for the movie. **PHOTO: NAY LIN**

Improving our farmers' livelihoods will strengthen our economy

IT IS an undeniable truth that farmers play a critical role in Myanmar, a chiefly agricultural country. Successful governments have routinely strived to improve farmers' livelihoods, often with moderate to good success. As the majority of a farmer's life is intertwined with agriculture, it only makes sense that we focus on development of the agricultural sector to make a positive impact on the lives of Myanmar's farmers, who make up 70 per cent of our labour force.

To empower our growers, we must protect their rights and increase the economic benefits they can derive from the agricultural sector. They must be aided through the entire process — from planting crops to selling products in the market. Inattention to our farmers' wellbeing risks jeopardizing the nation's economy, as the agricultural sector accounts for 37.8 per cent of the country's GDP and generates 25 to 30 per cent of our total export earnings.

Common sense indicates that farmlands are the most integral resource for farmers, but the past decades have seen confiscation and misappropriation of farmlands, which has led to severe consequences in the agricultural sector. Fortunately, the recent administrations of the country have worked vigorously towards returning confiscated farmlands and promoting the interests of farmers.

In 2013, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw enacted the Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits, which has been implemented by the leading body established by that law, and various other working bodies, for providing suitable loans and assistance to farmers, managing technology, input and production facilities, assisting in maintaining a reasonable foothold in the market economy, and helping them cover losses caused by natural disasters.

Furthermore, the government is facilitating methods for farmers to either use their farmlands for other purposes or plant other crops, without harming the production of rice, the staple of the country and the powerhouse of our agricultural exports.

Farmers also need to be careful not to use their farmlands for other purposes without official permission, as it can dampen the government's efforts to help them in acquiring the rights to use their farmlands for other business models that yield additional income.

We must inform farmers of the government's efforts to improve their livelihoods, secure their trust and cooperation, and ensure that they understand the significance of adhering to the existing laws to increase their benefits and simultaneously, develop the economy of the nation.

■■■

Rakhine investment fair can pave way for JVs with foreign investors

Dr. Htoo Min Thein, the secretary of Rakhine State Investment Committee

The Rakhine State Investment Fair will be held at Ngapali beach in Thandwe, Rakhine State for three days from 21 to 23 February. The fair is aimed at generating individual job opportunities, increasing per capita income, regional development and improving the living standard. The following is the interview with Dr Htoo Min Thein, the secretary of Rakhine State Investment Committee, and the director of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, about the fair.

Interviewer: Han Lin Nating, Yama Nya
PHOTO: HAN LIN HTET

Q: Please tell me the goal of the fair.

A: Rakhine State government initiated the idea of holding an investment forum in the state. But further discussions had led to the holding of a fair, which will include forums, shows, exhibitions and study programs for the visitors. Normally, Myanmar Investment Commission lends a helping hand in holding any activity in connection with investment. It provided assistance in such kind of activities launched in Ayeyawady Region and Kayah State and in cities such as Mandalay and Taunggyi. The Government and the Myanmar Investment Commission are making joint-efforts to organize the fair.

Q: Its goal?

A: Rakhine State has several investment opportunities across multiple sectors. Many parts of Rakhine State are now connected to the national power grid, and that is good news for production businesses.

Another goal is that Rakhine State has a lot of tourist attraction. It has a number of beautiful beaches. In MraukU there are ancient cultural heritages. So, we want to promote tourism in those places. Jobs are scarce in the state, but this problem can be solved through investment programs, which will increase individual job opportunities, per capita income and living standards and enhance regional development.

Rakhine State is facing conflicts, but they are only in the northernmost parts, and have no effect on the state. So, we want to prove that the state has many peaceful and stable areas which are favourable for investments. A goal of the fair is to ensure the long-lasting peace, stability and progress in the state through investments.

Q: The possible develop-

ments the fair will bring to the state?

A: Prospects are bright that the fair will invite a lot of investments into the state. Outsiders have a wrong impression of the state. But if they come here, they will witness with their own eyes the peace and stability of the area. We hope that local and foreign investors will visit the fair, and they will find a large array of investment opportunities of the state.

According to the website entry register, 356 investors have enlisted in it to attend the fair up to 8 February. Of them 54 percent are foreigners. Diplomats, economic organizations, investors from abroad and the international media will partake

discussed. Directors-general of the departments will hold sector-wise talks. We have arrangement for the deputy level officials of the Union to explained matters relating to Kyaukphyu special economic zone and deep seaport.

Q: Which country shows the greatest interest in the fair?

A: Of the countries, the majority are from Thailand and Japan. In addition to Asian countries, European countries are also included in the registered list. According to the list, diplomats from a number of countries will also attend the fair.

Rakhine State has several investment opportunities across multiple sectors. Many parts of Rakhine State are now connected to the national power grid, and that is good news for production businesses.

in the fair. It is possible that the fair may attract more foreigners when compared with the previous ones.

Q: Who is the leading sponsor, the Union Government or the Rakhine State Government?

A: The state government, as it is an activity to expose and express the opportunities Rakhine State can offer. The fair includes forum, in which national level experts are the leading resource persons. The fair will hold three roundtable talks where national economic policies and those of the state will be presented, explained and



Dr. Htoo Min Thein.

aquatic farming are the priority sectors of the government.

The manufacturing sector is also included in the priority list. The state has only few industries. We also invite the production sector, as many parts of the state have been electrified. Another is infrastructure. We invited a large volume of investors to the infrastructure development sector. We hope more investors will join the farming and hotels and tourism sectors.

Q: Please tell me about the investment program on Manaung Island.

A: Eco-tourism business has the brightest prospects in Manaung. The island has many untouched beaches. The government is also implementing an eco-tourism development plan on it. But Manaung still needs adequate power supply. Solar-power will be the main answer for it. So, we have invited the international solar power companies.

Currently, there are two business projects in Manaung which are allowed by the Rakhine State Investment Committee.

One is the organic-cocunut-based cosmetics and food-stuff industry, and the other is

a hotel business for eco-tourism. The access to Manaung is somewhat difficult. So, we are planning to extend its airport.

Q: The number and types of booth at the fair?

A: We expect there will be about 40 booths. But we will not categorize them. The fair will serve as a showcase of local products. Some want to make their products known internationally. There are major projects in Rakhine State. One is the land reclamation project for Sittway port. The contractor of the project will also set up its pavilion at the fair. Likewise, government departments will also open booths. The booth of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism will disseminate knowledge of its changing policy. Booths of the energy sector will invite investments. There are no specific rules for the booths.

Q: What will be the benefits for the people of Rakhine and the nation?

A: There may be a lot of benefits for the locals because we hope more investments will come to the region. They will have access to technical knowhow, and there will be more jobs for them. The Rakhine is-

sue has tarnished the country's image. But the fair will change the international view of Myanmar. The fair will stand witness to the peaceful and stable situation of Rakhine State amidst the many visitors including diplomats of foreign missions and international businesspersons. They will understand the actual situation of Myanmar. In this way we can restore our international reputation.

The Rakhine State government will hold a photo contest under the theme "My beautiful Rakhine" at the same time. The photos of the contest will be used in the fair and put on the Internet. A visitor can see all the natural beauties of the state just by typing the word "Rakhine" on the Internet. So, it may be a much beneficial fair for the whole country.

Q: What are the future plans of your committee?

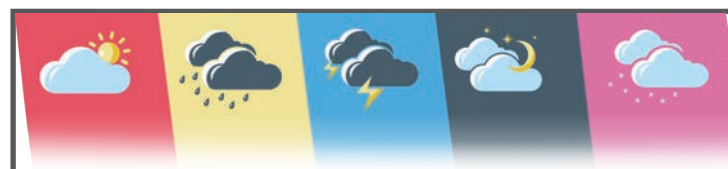
A: Internal and international investment may flow into country after the fair. There is the Myanmar Investment Commission as well as the Rakhine State Investment Committee. The Rakhine State Investment Committee deals with the projects whose investment is up to five million US dollars or 6,000 million kyats. The state commission will have to give priority to the new investment projects and ensure swift and perfect services for them.

Q: Any more comments?

A: It will be a place where visitors can witness the actual image of Rakhine State. Rakhine investment fair can pave way for JVs with foreign investors. The fair will be the place where MOUs can be signed. It will also serve as the venue where business organizations and persons can meet and set up contacts, reach mutual understanding and consent and sign MoUs. So the fair is very important for the whole Rakhine State as it may create brighter prospects for it.

Translation: TMT

■■■



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued on Monday 18 February 2019)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Shan and Kayah states, fairly widespread in Kachin and Chin states, scattered in Taninthayi Region and isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing and Mandalay regions, weather has been generally fair in Yangon and Ayeyawady regions and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (2°C) below February average temperature in Lower Sagaing Region, (2°C) above February average temperatures in Upper Sagaing Region, Southern Shan, Kayah and Mon states and about February average temperatures in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (6°C) in Haka, (7°C) each in Hsipaw, Nawngkhio and Namhsan, (8°C) each in Heho, Nyaungshwe, Falam, PyinOoLwin and Mogok. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Ramthlo (0.43) inch, Mogok (0.35) inch, Bhamo (0.32) inch, Kyaukme (0.28) inch, Machanbaw, Heho and Mawlaik (0.23) inch each.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the Central Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 19 February 2019: Rain will be fairly widespread in Kachin State, scattered in Upper Sagaing Region, isolated in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and Taninthayi regions, Chin and Shan states. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of rain in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 February 2019: Probability of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (40%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 February 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19 February 2019: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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, in person, or by email to ce@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

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Traditional bullock cart race at Wundwin attracts visitors

A Myanmar traditional bullock cart race is being held at the Myat Nyi Naung pagoda festival in Wundwin Township, Meiktila District in Mandalay Region.

The bullock cart race at the Myat Nyi Naung pagoda festival is famous in Meiktila District. This is the reason why local people from Kyaukse District are participating in the bullock cart race. The



Bullock cart races are held during Wundwin Myat Nyi Naung pagoda festival.

PHOTO: CHAN THAR (MEIKTILA)

pagoda festival commenced on 12 February and will continue till 20 February.

"Locals are interested in the bullock cart race. There are two types of bullock cart races,"

said Ko Thar Dun Kyaw, a local from Payar Su Village.

The village pagoda festival is usually held after the harvest time. The Myanmar traditional bullock cart race is always in-

cluded in the pagoda festival as a recreational activity and as a way to showcase the strength and health of oxen, said villagers.—Chan Thar (Meiktila)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Railroad projects: Farmers get over K1.7 bln for 574.2 acres land

THE AUTHORITIES yesterday doled out more than K1.7 billion as compensation to farmers for 574.2 acres of land used for two railroad projects in Minbu Township of Magway Region.

Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo, Magway Region Hluttaw MPs U Kyaw Swan Ye and U Kyaw Ngwe presented the compensation amount to more than 430 farmers at the Magway Town-

ship Hall.

The Kyangin-Pakokku railroad's Ushitpin-Kyunchaung section passes through 12 village-tracts in the township, and the road section has been constructed over 455 acres of land owned by 339 farmers.

In the Minbu-An-Sittway railroad project, the Minbu-An section was constructed on nearly 120 acres of farmland owned by 97 farmers of two vil-

lage-tracts.

"This compensation came as a surprise because we thought that we would not get it when the railroad was constructed on our land," said U Tun Aye, a local farmer.

The Minbu District Administrator handed over K381 million to 97 farmers from the two village-tracts in the district.—Zayyatu-Magway

(Translated by La Wonn)

Fire destroys small vessel near Myeik jetty

FIRE outbreak in small vessel which had been anchored for night suspension around 1.25 am yesterday near Myeik jetty, Taninthayi Region.

The fire started from an overheated battery inside the 52x11 small vessel owned by U Thar Thar.

Fire destroyed a boat roof, two batteries, furniture and boat accessories and there was not any injuries nor fatality. The total cost of losses reached K700, 000.

This fire was totally extinguished around 2:35 am by a combined team led by U Zaw Win, head of Township Fire Services Department including 26 firefighters and 15 auxiliary firefighters, Police Major Aye Min and 12 policemen from Myeik Township Police Station with a total six vehicles including two fire engines and four water bowsers and two light fire engines and two private small vessels.

Action has been taken against U Hlaing Tun, 42, (son of U Hlaing Tin) the responsibility of small vessel under Section 285 of the Penal Code by Myeik Township Police Force.—Myint Oo (Myeik)

(Translated by La Wonn)

Wire shock triggers fire at Tobacco warehouse in Myingyan

A WIRE shock fire broke out in U Aung Pyae Phyo's tobacco warehouse, No 20 ward, Myingyan Township, Mandalay Region around 8:03 yesterday.

The fire was put under control by firefighters and local people around 8:15 am after it engulfed 50x60 and 10x10 two houses. There was not any injury and killed to people and animals.

A combined team led by U AungKo Thant, deputy chief officer of Myingyan Township Department and local people put out the fire with five fire engines, four water bowsers and three private water



bowsers.

Township Fire Service Department has taken action against U Yarzar Min, the officer in charge of tobacco

warehouse under Section 285 of the Penal Code.—U Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

(Translated by La Wonn)

Border trade resumes, but no demand for rice from China yet

By Nyein Nyein

ALTHOUGH border trade between China and Myanmar has resumed after the Chinese New Year holiday, there has been no demand for rice from China yet, according to traders at the Muse rice purchase depot.

“Myanmar-China border trade resumed on 13 February. Currently, the market for sugar is good. But, there have been no sales in the rice market yet,” said U Min Thein, the vice chairman of the Muse Commodity.

In addition, the price of rice is on the lower side, according to Muse rice traders.

“The price of rice has increased in the lower regions such as Yangon, Ayeyawady, Pyay, and Bago. However, the price is stable in Muse. We expect the price to increase when the Chinese side raises its demand for rice,” said a rice trader from Muse.

Although Myanmar-China border trade resumed on 13 February, trading is not likely to be active until 20 February, said Muse rice traders.

The Muse rice depot was closed for 12 days from 1 to 12 February, when Chinese merchants stopped purchasing rice from Myanmar during the Chinese New Year.

During that period, exports of Myanmar products such as rice, sugar, and corn, which are sent to China through the Muse border gate, stopped because there was no demand from China.

Myanmar’s rice exports via border trade have declined because of China’s crackdown on illegal importation of goods since mid-October last year, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation. According to 2018 official statistics, Myanmar exported over 1.7 million tons of rice between April and December, a decrease of over 800,000 tons compared with the same period the previous year.

Last year, Myanmar shipped over 3.6 million tons of rice, nearly half of which was exported via the China border gate.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Local fuel prices on the rise



An employee at a fuel station fills up a car with fuel. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

LOCAL fuel prices, which had been stable for a month, are on the rise in the market, according to taxi drivers.

On 17 February, fuel prices stood at K700 per liter for Octane 92, K790 for Octane 95, K885 for diesel, and K895 for premium diesel in the Yangon fuel market.

Although fuel prices had been stable since 10 January, the rates have increased slightly beginning 15 February. The price

of Octane 92 has increased by K5 per liter this month compared to last month.

“Local fuel prices usually increase during the tour season. Global crude oil price has also increased these days. That’s why, local fuel prices have also risen marginally these days,” said a fuel oil shop owner.

Local fuel prices continuously declined from the end of October to the first week of Janu-

ary 2019. The prices have begun to rise now.

Myanmar imports 90 per cent of its fuel oil, while 10 per cent is produced locally.

The country mainly buys fuel from Singapore, importing 200,000 tons of gasoline and 400,000 tons of diesel every month. There are 2,000 petrol stations and 50 oil importers in Myanmar.—GNLM

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Gold continues upward trend on strong global cues

By Nyein Nyein

WITH the increase in global gold prices, the price of domestic gold also rose and reached a new record of over K1,077,000 per tical on 18 February.

“As a consequence of the rising global gold prices, the price of domestic gold has also increased,” said U Myo Myint, the chairman of Yangon Region’s Gold Entrepreneurs Association.

Currently, the domestic gold price has increased slightly, tracking the upward trend in global gold prices. The gold price has increased from about K1,050,000 per tical on 4 January, to K1,060,500 on 30 January, reaching K1,070,900 on 8 February. On 18 February, the price of domestic gold was K1,077,800 per tical, according to traders.

Global gold prices have been on the upswing daily since mid February, standing at \$1,324 per ounce on 18 February, \$1,321 per ounce on 16 February, \$1,314 per ounce on 15 February, and \$1,306 per ounce on 14 February.



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

Although the domestic gold price is on the rise due to the positive trend in the global gold market, the US dollar exchange rate has remained cool and on the lower side at K1,520 a dollar.

The price of domestic gold declined to K1,027,100 per tical on 30 November from K1,044,500 on 2 November. The price increased to K1,043,000 per tical on 29 December from K987,000 on 4 December. In 2019, the price of gold reached a record high of

K1,061,000 per tical on 31 January from K1,043,400 on 1 January, according to a gold dealer.

Starting 21 July, 2017, the domestic gold price has remained above K900,000 per tical. Tracking the rise in global gold prices, the domestic price also peaked at K1,047,700 million on 20 September, 2017, after touching a high of K989,000 in August the same year.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
- City Mart (Myanmar Plaza)
- City Mart (Junction 8)
- City Mart (St. John)
- Ocean North Point (9 mile)
- Ocean Shwegonedine

Ocean SUPERCENTER

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marketplace

N Korea faces 'historic turning point', says state media ahead of summit

SEOUL (South Korea) — North Korea is facing a “significant, historic turning point”, state media said on Monday, ahead of a highly-anticipated second summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un.

The meeting between the two leaders — which will be the second time the pair have come together following their Singapore summit in June — is scheduled for Hanoi, Viet Nam on 27-28 February.

Attention has been focused on whether the US team will offer to lift some economic sanctions on North Korea, in return for Pyongyang taking concrete steps toward denuclearization.

“It is time for us to tighten our shoe strings and run fast, looking for a higher goal as we face this decisive moment,” the *Rodong Sinmun* newspaper said in an editorial.

“Our country is facing a significant, historic turning point,” it added, without explicitly referencing the summit.

Earlier this month, US President Trump tweeted that North Korea will become a “great Economic Powerhouse” under Kim.

“He may surprise some but he won’t surprise me, because I have gotten to know him &



Korean People's Army (KPA) soldiers gather as they prepare to pay their respects before the statues of late North Korean leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il as part of celebrations marking the birthday of late North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, known as the 'Day of the Shining Star', on Mansu hill in Pyongyang on 16 February, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

fully understand how capable he is,” said Trump. The *Rodong Sinmun* commentary called on North Koreans to make greater efforts to boost the country’s economy.

North Korea is rising as a “strong, socialist nation,” and one’s true act of patriotism begins at one’s workplace, the com-

mentary added. “Each and every product should be made to make our country shine.”

North Korea, which holds most of the peninsula’s mineral resources, was once wealthier than the South, but decades of mismanagement and the demise of its former paymaster the Soviet Union have left it deeply

impoverished.

In 2017 the UN Security Council banned the North’s main exports — coal and other mineral resources, fisheries and textile products — to cut off its access to hard currency in response to Pyongyang’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. —AFP ■

100 Australian IS militants unaccounted for in Middle East: gov’t

CANBERRA — The fate of as many as 100 Australians who left the country to fight for Islamic State (IS) remains unknown, the Australian government said.

Of the 230 Australians who travelled to the conflict zone in the Middle East to take up the fight for the jihadist militant group, nearly 100 have been confirmed dead and 40 have returned while a handful were caught and arrested.

The Department of Home Affairs has confirmed that around 100 Australians who fought for or supports “Islamic extremist groups” remain in Syria and Iraq but could not confirm how many are living, dead or captured.

“The government doesn’t provide a running commentary on the status of individuals in the conflict zone for security reasons,” a spokesperson told News Corp Australia on Monday.

“The Australian government’s capacity to confirm reports of deaths in either Syria or Iraq is extremely limited.”

It came as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is supported by the United States, prepares to seize the final 700 square km of territory held by IS in Syria including the town of Baghouz.

Greg Barton, a terrorism expert at Australia’s Deakin University, said it was unlikely that many Australians remained in Baghouz.

“Clearly a lot of IS figures in northern Iraq and presumably a lot in Syria were not in this last stand and (there’s) an unknown number in Turkey that may be many thousands,” he said.

“So as to where the Australians are, my guess would be that quite a few are in Turkey.

“I don’t think many of them will end up in this last siege. I think they would have gotten out in some of the negotiated evacuations of Raqqa and smaller settlements further east, or in other movements.” —Xinhua ■

Four Indian soldiers killed in battle with Kashmir militants: police

SRINAGAR (India) —At least four soldiers died on Monday in a fierce gunfight with rebels in Indian-administered Kashmir just four days after a suicide bomber killed 41 paramilitaries in the

troubled territory, officials said.

One soldier and one civilian were also critically wounded in the shootout as troops launched a search operation in Pulwama district where the suicide bomber

struck on Thursday.

“Four soldiers were killed during the shootout and another one is injured,” a senior police officer told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The official said the soldiers fired warning shots and the militants fired back, unleashing the firefight in the district 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of the main city of Srinagar.

The official added that the rebels were believed to have escaped.

Government forces have launched a massive hunt for militants in parts of the disputed region since Thursday’s bombing that India has blamed on Pakistan. An explosives-packed van rammed a convoy transporting 2,500 security forces in the deadliest attack in Kashmir in 30 years.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947. Both countries, which have fought two wars over the territory, claim all of Kashmir.

Tens of thousands of people, mainly civilians, have died in Kashmir since an armed rebellion broke out in 1989. —AFP ■



An Indian army soldier stands guard during a curfew in Jammu on 18 February, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

‘Urgent steps’ needed to save Australia’s biggest river system

SYDNEY (Australia) — The viability of a key river that feeds into Australia’s biggest water system is under threat if poor conditions that killed millions of fish are not improved within six months, scientists warned on Monday.

The management of the Murray-Darling River system, which stretches thousands of kilometres across several states and supplies Australia’s food bowl, has been under close scrutiny following three mass fish deaths in December and January.

Authorities said millions of fish died in the Darling River events, blamed on low water flow and oxygen levels in the river as well as possibly toxic algae.

Leading scientists who studied the three bouts of kills said that while a severe drought plaguing inland eastern Australia contributed to the deaths, there were also “serious deficiencies in governance and management” of the river network.

“Our review of the fish kills found there isn’t enough water in the Darling system to avoid catastrophic outcomes,” said Craig Moritz, chair of the independent expert pan-



This decades-old Murray cod was among millions of fish which died in mass kills in December and January in the Darling river. **PHOTO: AFP**

el commissioned by the opposition Labor Party to investigate the deaths.

He said an analysis of rainfall and river flow data over recent decades points to “excess water extraction upstream” in the agricultural regions of Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) states.

If urgent steps are not taken within six months to increase the flow of water, the expert report said, the “viability of the Darling” as well as the communities that depend on it for their livelihoods would be under threat.

Authorities in 2014 launched a vast Mur-

ray-Darling Basin Plan to manage water sharing and usage along the length of the system, which runs through five states and territories.

Last month a Royal Commission launched by South Australia state accused officials of “maladministration”, “negligence” and “unlawful” actions in implementing the plan.

Environmental activists and many residents living along the lower reaches of the Murray-Darling system have put much of the blame on abusive water extraction for irrigation by agribusinesses, includ-

ing major cotton farms in Queensland and NSW.

But officials of Australia’s conservative federal government have focused on the impacts of prolonged drought and an unprecedented heat wave during this southern summer as the primary causes of low water flow in the Darling River.

Federal Environment Minister Melissa Price said on Monday that “significant rainfall” was needed to alleviate the poor water quality and that release of more water into the system from upstream dams would not improve the conditions.—AFP ■

New research reveals mountains 660 km within Earth

BEIJING — An international study has found mountains and other topography in a layer about 660 km underground that separates the upper and lower mantle of the Earth.

In the US journal of Science published on Friday, researchers from the Institute of Geodesy and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the California Institute of Technology, Princeton University and other research institutions reported that they used powerful waves generated by a magnitude 8.2 earthquake, the second-largest deep earthquake ever recorded that shook Bolivia in 1994, to peer deep into the Earth.

The Earth has three layers — the crust, mantle and core. Big earthquakes first impact the mantle, sending shockwaves traveling in all directions through the core to the other side of the planet and back again, providing valuable data for geoscience research. As light waves bounce off a mirror or bend through a prism, earthquake waves can also reflect or refract when they encounter any roughness or boundary traveling through rocks below our feet.

Researchers used powerful computers including Princeton University’s Tiger Supercomputer cluster to simulate the complicated scattering of earthquake waves in the

deep Earth.

Their statistic models show that the scattering earthquake waves encountered a boundary 660 km within the Earth. It is a stronger and rougher topography than the surface layer that people live on, and there is a chance that these underground mountains are bigger than anything on the surface of the Earth. Meanwhile, the roughness wasn’t equally distributed as the crust’s surface has ocean floors and mountains.

According to the researchers, the presence of roughness on the 660-km boundary has significant implications for understanding how our planet formed and continues to function, providing new information to understand the fate of ancient tectonic plates which have descended into the mantle.

Christine Houser, a seismologist and assistant professor at the Tokyo Institute of Technology who was not involved in this research, said in a peer-reviewed article that the results might help answer fundamental questions about the Earth’s evolution.

The research was supported by the National Basic Research Programme of China, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the National Natural Science Foundation of China and the National Science Foundation.—Xinhua ■

Bavarians in record push for ‘save the bees’ vote

BERLIN (Germany) — A record 1.75 million Bavarians signed a petition to seek a referendum to “save the bees”, a move that could have huge consequences for the German farming industry and envi-

ronmental protection.

The proposal for a vote to protect species diversity sets a target to have 20 per cent of farmland meeting organic standards by 2025, before reaching 30 per cent by 2030. Ten per cent

of green spaces in Bavaria should also be turned into flowering meadows, while rivers and streams must be better protected from pesticides and organic fertilizers.

The number of people who descended on city halls across the state to sign the petition far surpassed the one million required to obtain a referendum within six months, under the state’s direct democracy system. It also came despite opposition from the powerful regional farmers’ association, which has urged the population to “stop bashing farmers” and warned of the poten-

tial financial costs to the industry.

The petition also puts the Bavarian government led by the CSU — sister party of Chancellor Angela Merkel’s CDU — under intense pressure, as it counts farming communities among its staunchest supporters.

Having ruled the wealthy state known for its Oktoberfest and lederhosen traditional dress almost uninterrupted for decades, the CSU in October lost its absolute majority as voters angry with its hardline stance against migrants turned to the Greens party.—AFP ■



The petition wants 10 per cent of green spaces in Bavaria be turned into flowering meadows. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE

M.V LEFKO NIKO

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V LEFKO NIKO V. 19007 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19-02-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T-3 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

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12th Traditional Htamane Making Contest held at Shwedagon Pagoda



People enjoy the 12th Myanmar Traditional Htamane making contest at the Shwedagon Pagoda on 18 February, 2019. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**



A team participates in the 12th Traditional Htamane Making Contest at the Shwedagon Pagoda on 18 February, 2019. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**

Grammy winner Kacey Musgraves to present award at Oscars 2019



US singer-songwriter Kacey Musgraves. **PHOTO: PTI**

LOS ANGELES — Singer-songwriter Kacey Musgraves has been added to the list of people who will be presenting the trophies to the winners at the upcoming 91st Academy Awards.

The 30-year-old musician recently won the 2019 Grammy Album of the Year award for her critically acclaimed, genre-bending record “Golden Hour”. Apart from this, she also won awards for best country album, best country song and best country solo performance.

According to Variety, the Academy is yet to announce which award Musgraves will present at the awards ceremony but it is expected to be one of the two music awards best original song and best original score.

She joins previously announced presenters — Chris Evans, Brie Larson, Awkwafina,

Daniel Craig, Tina Fey, Whoopi Goldberg, Jennifer Lopez, Amy Poehler, Maya Rudolph, Amanda Stenberg, Charlize Theron, Tessa Thompson, Constance Wu, Javier Bardem, Angela Bassett, Chadwick Boseman, Emilia Clarke, Laura Dern, Samuel L Jackson, Stephan James, Keegan-Michael Key, KiKi Layne, James McAvoy, Melissa McCarthy, Jason Momoa and Sarah Paulson.

Last year’s Oscar winners, Alison Janney, Sam Rockwell, Gary Oldman and Frances McDormand will also be presenting awards at the 2019 ceremony.

The 2019 Academy Awards will be held on 24 February. A replacement of actor Kevin Hart as the Oscars host is yet to be announced by the Academy. —PTI ■

Victoria Beckham goes ‘retro’ at London Fashion Week show

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Exaggerated collars, leopard print and a strong colour palette: British designer Victoria Beckham turned to “pinches of the ‘70s” as she showcased her latest collection on Sunday at London Fashion Week.

The former Spice Girl chose the rarified galleries of the Tate Britain museum, a neoclassical building home to some of the country’s most treasured art, for only her second catwalk show in the British capital. “I have been thinking about what women want, about modern femininity,” she told audiences in show notes describing her autumn/winter 2019 collection.

“There are touches of retro, pinches of the ‘70s. Yet it’s all brought together into something encapsulating what we call the

modern feminine alphabet,” the 44-year-old said. The audience was as expected packed with fashion industry celebrities, including Vogue magazine heavyweights Anna Wintour and Edward Enninful. Meanwhile her family, from husband David Beckham to kids Romeo, 16, Cruz, 13, and seven-year-old Harper, were front row to show their support. Beckham celebrated a decade of her brand — previously only exhibited in New York — by showcasing in London for the first time, in the autumn of 2018, in a homecoming of sorts.

“The studio is based here, as is our flagship store, and I felt I wanted to continue to be a part of London Fashion Week,” she told The Guardian of the decision to feature in Britain again.

This time around the de-

signer said she wanted to accentuate “lots of colour, lots of pattern” in her collection, with a bold palette ranging from ab-sinthe green to lipstick red, dusty pink to pale teal. Tweeds, wools and silks were “matched and mismatched”, in everything from blazers and trousers to sweaters and scarves, alongside a plethora of high-heeled boots, closed or open-toed. “Throughout, there is a celebration of the inherent femininity of dresses — ideas of their past, and proposals for the future,” the designer explained in her show notes. Despite being a respected figure in the fashion landscape, Beckham is still sailing in troubled financial waters, with losses rising to £10.3 million (\$13.3 million, 11.7 million euros) for 2017, according to figures published in December.—AFP ■



British designer Victoria Beckham acknowledges the crowd during her 2019 Autumn / Winter collection catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London on 17 February, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

Scientist rules out sending cosmonauts to fix faulty Russian space telescope in orbit

MOSCOW — A manned space mission, even if sent, will not help to fix the faulty Spektr-R space radio telescope, said Nikolai Kardashev, the director of the AstroSpace Center (the Radioastron project contractor).

“Radioastron’s technical group is doing its best. I even asked whether a cosmonaut may approach and fix it. Well, approaching it is technically possible, but, regrettably, nothing can be done,” he said.

The scientist explained that in order to withstand the extreme conditions of outer space, all technical elements of the satellite were carefully sealed by the manufacturer using a special technology, so “you can’t just get inside of it.”

Moreover, he added “cosmonauts are just not being sent to such altitudes at the moment.”

The satellite operates on the highly elliptical orbit, with the apogee height of 330,000 km and the perigee height of 600 km.

“The signal from the telescope is being received on a regular basis. Most importantly, the spacecraft does not tumble uncontrollably, so its orientation system is working, solar batteries keep producing energy, so everything works.

However, we cannot control the satellite. We don’t know what it is currently looking at,” Kardashev said.

Attempts to establish control with the satellite are being made on a regular basis: scientists send a signal to Spektr-R, which is being ping-ponged and received by stations in Moscow region’s Pushchino, Ussuriiskoye in Russia’s Far East and Green Bank



Spektr-R space radio telescope. PHOTO: TASS

in the United States.

The Gazeta.ru web portal reported problems with Spektr-R on 11 January, citing the head of the RadioAstron project to which Spektr-R is affiliated, Yuri Kovalyov. Russian space corporation Roscosmos later told the media that experts were trying to fix the glitch.

The Spektr-R was launched in 2011 and the

warranty period of its active operation expired back in 2014. The space telescope has exceeded its expected life span by 2.5 times.

A source in Russia’s space industry told TASS the problems with the Spektr-R master transmitter might have been caused by space radiation accumulated in its electronics over the years in orbit.—Tass ■

Japan OKs test using iPS cells to treat spinal cord injuries

TOKYO — Japan’s health ministry approved on Monday the world’s first clinical test in which artificially derived stem cells will be used to treat patients with spinal cord injuries.

A team of researchers from Keio University, which filed a request for the test with the ministry, will inject neural cells produced from so-called induced pluripotent stem cells into four people who sustained injuries while playing sports or in traffic accidents.

It is the fifth time that the government has authorized clinical studies using iPS cells. The patients, aged 18 or older and to undergo the test treatment administered by a team led by Hideyuki Okano, a professor of the School of Medicine, will have suffered lost mobility and sensation.

The cells will be injected within two to four weeks of the patients’ accident — a period in which the treatment is believed to

be effective.

The cells to be transplanted will be created from iPS cells in storage at Kyoto University and will be kept frozen.

Kyoto University’s Shinya Yamanaka won the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine in 2012 for developing iPS cells, which

can grow into any type of body tissue and are seen as a promising tool for regenerative medicine and drug development.

The main purpose of Keio’s study is to confirm the safety of the neural cells to be created. The team will limit the number of cells they will transplant to 2

million but plan to increase that to up to 10 million in the future.

Every year, some 5,000 people sustain spinal cord damage in Japan, and the number of people living with some sort of spinal cord-related injury is estimated to total over 100,000.—Kyodo News ■



A health ministry panel approves on 18 February, 2019 the world’s first clinical test in which artificially derived stem cells will be used to treat patients with spinal cord injuries. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

In memoriam Family shares merits gained Maha Thayay Sithu Lt-Gen Tin Oo

In memory of benefactor Phay Phay Gyi Lt-Gen Tin Oo, who suddenly left us 18 years ago, we, his family, have made donations in his memory since he left us, and have offered “soon” and provisions to the members of the Sangha today (19.2.2019). We, his family, share with him the merits gained so that he can step on the path to achieve Nibbana.

Wife	- Daw Khin Than Nwe
Sons and daughters	- U Maung Maung Kyaw + Daw Cho Leh Oo - Phyu Phyu Oo - Dr Myat Noe + Yin Mar Oo - Zaw Tun Oo + Khin Thida - Nay Tun Oo
Grandchildren	- Hein Htet, - Yin Myat Noe, Phu Ngon Kyaw - Thant Thi Han Zaw (Po Thila)

Teaching robots to get a grip: Australian research

SYDNEY — Scientists at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Australia have been given a 50,000 US dollar helping hand from tech giant Amazon to continue the research into vision-guided robotic grasping and manipulation.

QUT robotics researcher, distinguished professor Peter Corke, along with research fellow Jurgen “Juxi” Leitner, led the team to victory in the 2017 Amazon Robotics Challenge in Japan, helping their work to gain the attention of the company.

“Real-world manipulation remains one of the greatest challenges in robotics,” said Corke.

While significant breakthroughs have been made in developing robot “hands” capable of grasping objects, Corke’s team moves the focus from simple grasping, towards the realm of more meaningful vision-guided manipulation.

“In other words, we want a robot to be able to seamlessly grasp an object ‘with intent’ so that it can usefully perform a task in

the real world,” he said.

“Imagine a robot that can pick up a cup of tea or coffee, then pass it to you!”

To achieve their goals the team has spent hours monitoring human behaviour to discover how people pick up an object when they need to then pass it to somebody else.

They looked at the way people picked up objects including a pen, a screwdriver, a bottle and a toy monkey, and how the other person would receive that object if they were then to perform a task with it.

Passers tended to leave “handles” available to the receiver to take hold of, an intuitive choice which allows them to then use the object comfortably.

“While most people don’t think about picking up and moving objects — something human brains have learned over time through repetition and routine — for robots, grasping and manipulation is subtle and elusive,” he said.

“We strive to be the world leader in the research field of visually-guided robotic manipulation.”—Xinhua ■

Mourinho open to working in France

LILLE (France) — Jose Mourinho said he could see himself coaching in France as he attended Sunday's 0-0 draw between Lille and Montpellier to reportedly cast an eye over Ivorian star Nicolas Pepe.

Mourinho was sacked by Manchester United in December in a move that cost the Premier League club £19.6 million (\$25 million) in severance pay for the Portuguese boss and members of his staff.

He has since taken on a punditry role with beIN Sports, and was pictured sitting alongside Lille sporting advisor Luis Campos at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy on Sunday.

"I can imagine (coaching) in France one day," Mourinho said. "I'm a man who's worked in four different countries, who likes that, who likes to know other cultures."

"I like to learn all the time, to work in a different league would be a fantastic experience. (At the moment) I'm calm, I'm trying to enjoy life with family and friends and calmly working to hopefully find another opportunity in football."



Jose Mourinho . PHOTO: AFP

Campos is a friend of Mourinho's and served as chief scout when the latter was in charge at Real Madrid.

A source told AFP Mourinho had come to Lille to watch Pepe and Brazilian midfielder Thiago Mendes.

Pepe, 23, is the third leading scorer in France this season with 16 goals, trailing only Paris Saint-Germain duo Kylian Mbappe and Neymar, and also has eight assists for sec-

ond-placed Lille.

United replaced Mourinho with former striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer halfway through his third season at Old Trafford with the club languishing in sixth and 19 points off the pace.

He has pledged to return to "top-level football" with Real Madrid, the club he coached from 2010 to 2013, touted a possible landing spot for the 56-year-old.—AFP ■

Suspended Van Dijk leaves gaping hole in Liverpool defence for Bayern visit

LIVERPOOL (United Kingdom) — Fortress Anfield has become even more impenetrable for visiting sides in the 13 months since Liverpool made Virgil van Dijk the world's most expensive defender, but the commanding Dutchman's absence for Bayern Munich's visit in the Champions League leaves Jurgen Klopp with a selection headache.

Van Dijk is banned for the last 16, first leg on Tuesday after being booked three times as last season's finalists squeezed through the group stages by the narrowest of margins thanks to more goals scored than Napoli.

In stark contrast to their Premier League form, where Liverpool have been beaten just once all season, Klopp's men lost all three of their group games on the road against Napoli, Paris Saint-Germain and Red Star Belgrade to underline the importance of taking a lead to Germany for the second leg.

Three wins at Anfield pulled them through to the last 16 and Van Dijk has yet to taste defeat in 25 Premier and Champions League games on home soil as a Liverpool player, keeping 16 clean sheets in the process to tighten up a leaky defence that undermined Klopp's first two years in charge. "Straightaway he was organising the defence, he was the leader at the back, and as time has gone on he is even more important," said former Liverpool captain Sami Hyypia.

"He gives confidence to the players and makes many other players play better. "It is very dif-

ficult to find a weakness. He is an ultimate centre-back."

Missing the £75 million man is a big enough blow, but Liverpool will also be without Joe Gomez and most likely Dejan Lovren through injury. Gomez underwent surgery on a lower leg fracture earlier this month, while Lovren has not featured since suffering a hamstring injury on 7 January and did not travel with the rest of the squad for a warm weather training camp in Marbella this week.

Lewandowski threat

A makeshift centre-back pairing of Joel Matip and Fabinho are therefore likely to be tasked with stopping another former pupil of Klopp's — Robert Lewandowski. The prolific Pole won two Bundesliga titles under Klopp when the pair were together at Borussia Dortmund and also lost the Champions League final against Bayern in 2013 before Lewandowski was lured to Bavaria a year later. Bayern have been dominant in the Bundesliga since Klopp's Dortmund won back-to-back titles in 2011 and 2012, but are playing catch up in the title race to Lucien Favre's outfit this season. "Of course over the years I have watched a lot of Bayern games and this season as well," said Klopp. "They were six times in a row champions of Germany, which is not easy, and they were one of the teams in the last 10 years who were pretty much all the time in the quarter-finals, semi-finals, final of the Champions League."—AFP ■

Friendly fire as Monfils beats Wawrinka to win Rotterdam Open



Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka plays a forehand return to Canada's Milos Raonic during their men's singles match on day four of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 17 January, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

ROTTERDAM (Netherlands) — Gael Monfils defeated good friend Stan Wawrinka 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 on Sunday to win his eighth career title at the Rotterdam Open.

Monfils, the runner-up three years ago, held off Waw-

rinka's second-set surge to ease through the decider.

Wawrinka, the 2015 champion in the Dutch port city who is continuing an 18-month comeback from double knee surgery, was playing in his first final since Roland Garros in

June 2017.

It was the first championship match in 11 years at Rotterdam to feature two unseeded players.

Monfils, 32, showed no hard evidence of the left wrist injury which has bothered him all week and forced him onto a regime of pain-killers.

The world number 33 triumphed in one and three-quarter hours with four service breaks against three-time major winner Wawrinka as he claimed his first title since Doha last year.

The Frenchman took the opening set with two breaks of Wawrinka, but the 33-year-old Swiss immediately returned the favour with a 6-1 second set.

In the third, Monfils broke for 2-1, taking control of his opponent's mighty backhand.

The Frenchman moved to 5-2 and saved a break point a game later as he closed out victory.—AFP ■



Liverpool's Dutch defender Virgil van Dijk (c) plays the ball during the English Premier League football match between West Ham United and Liverpool at The London Stadium, in east London on 4 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP