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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Friday, 21 June 2019

President U Win Myint receives outgoing German Ambassador

PRESIDENT U WIN MYINT received outgoing German Ambassador to Myanmar Mrs. Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel who completed her tour of duty in Myanmar, at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters relating to increasing bilateral relations and cooperation.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government U Min Thu, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and other officials.
—MNA



President U Win Myint meets with outgoing German Ambassador Mrs. Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
PHOTO: MNA

Sixteen infected, six dead from H1N1 flu: Ministry

Following is the public announcement (1/2019): increasing support in monitoring, preventing and responding to seasonal influenza

THE Ministry of Health and Sports continuously monitors communicable diseases and those with fast spread rates, implementing preventive measures and administering timely responses.

In accordance with International Health Regulations

(2005), the ministry maintains close cooperation with the World Health Organization, regional and partner organizations to monitor for communicable diseases that may threaten public health.

Starting from 2017, the ministry has carried out

monitoring tasks for flu-related symptoms by expanding into eight hospitals. The ministry will also be expanding into 15 hospitals including the general hospitals for North Okkalapa, Insein, Hlinethaya, and state/regional level hospitals.

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Speaker U T Khun Myat leaves for Thailand to attend AIPA preparatory meeting for ASEAN-AIPA leaders' Interface



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat being seen off at the Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A delegation led by U T Khun Myat, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, left Yangon for Thailand to attend the preparatory meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Inter-Parliamentary Assembly-AIPA and AIPA-

ASEAN Interface from 21 to 23 June ahead of ASEAN Summit in Bangkok.

The delegation was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by Deputy Speaker of Yangon Region Hluttaw U Lin Naing Myint and officials.

The delegation led by Speaker U T Khun Myat is comprised of Director-General U Kyaw Soe of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office and officials of Pyithu Hluttaw Office.—MNA ■
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Disaster Alert Notification-DAN Application launched



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, members from Disaster Alert Notification-Dan Application and attendees have a documentary photo taken at the event in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

A Disaster Alert Notification-Dan Application developed for the people across the country was launched yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw.

The app which is called the "DAN Application" was officially launched by the Disaster Management Department of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement at the Hilton Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw with a number of key persons present to commemorate the significance of the event. Funded by the UNDP and ECHO, the application was upgraded.

Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye spoke about the importance of the app, stating that the application would help

the mobile phone users to get access to critical weather information so that they can carry out preparedness which lead to reducing the losses in the event of disasters affecting them.

Dr. Win Myat Aye said, "About 87 per cent of the total households of Myanmar uses mobile phones. It means about 40 million people have got access to internet. Therefore, it is found that raising awareness through mobile phones are very effective." The app also allows the users to get information and to send information. Meanwhile, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP Ms. Dawn Del Rio expressed his delight for cooperation of the ministry and the ministry's commitment to using

the DAN Application for the benefit of all. In the second session, employees of the ministry took part in the workshop discussing steps and processes for widely dissemination of the app.

Dissemination about DAN Application and introducing it to the people would be launched in regions and states next week.

DAN Application can also be used by the persons with disabilities and is available on the Google Play Store or Apple Store for download.

The Department of Disaster Management encourages all the people to download this app so that they can become more readily prepared for any emergencies and disasters.—MNA ■
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Head of service organization appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Than Naing Oo, Deputy Managing Director at the Electric Power Generation Enterprise under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy as Managing Director of the same Department on probation from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

Vessel monitoring systems to be installed on offshore vessels before new fishing season

By Aye Yamone

TO control illegal fishing in Myanmar's territorial waters, vessel monitoring systems (VMS) will be installed on all offshore fishing vessels before the start of the fishing season, said Dr. Khin Zaw, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

He made the remarks at a seminar for sharing fisheries co-management experiences, which was held on 20 June at the Lotte Hotel in Yangon.

"We will install VMS on offshore fishing vessels to ensure fish are caught within the designated areas. VMS can also help us identify and check illegal fishing. There are many illegal fishing in the world. So, we want to install VMS systems," said Dr. Khin Zaw.

Currently, international entrepreneurs and companies have been invited to submit tenders for installing VMS software at the Vessel Monitoring Control Center of the Fisheries Department.

The submission of application forms began on 14 June and will be allowed till 22 July. The department will announce the tender winner on 31 July.

By installing VMS systems, the Fisheries Department can keep tabs on the routes taken by fishing boats, the fish catching area, the rate of catching fish, and illegal fishing.

"Shipping companies, which want VMS systems installed, will be allowed to employ any company of their choice for installation.

We will just focus on the information. The experts will know more details about the software. We have invited the tender, and so, we don't know which country will submit it," he added.

"With a 90-per cent reduction in the population of fish found closer to the surface and the number of fish found at greater depths declining by 40-50 per cent in our territorial waters compared to 30 years ago, we will have to push for sustainable use of fisheries resources by controlling illegal fishing," said Dr. Khin Zaw.

"Now, we have declared a no-fishing season in June, July, and August. We will allow fishing from 1 September. So, the Ministry and the Fisheries Department are trying to get the VMS systems installed before the fishing season starts again," he added.

"Although we planned to get VMS installed by taking a loan from a French company, we won't apply for the loan, and instead, we will invite tenders," said an official from the Fisheries Department.

"Once installation is complete, we will conduct training courses for watchmen. In addition, we will build control centers in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mawlamyine, Rakhine, Taninthayi, and Ayeyawady to monitor fishing vessels on which VMS has been installed," he added.

Naval vessels and the maritime police will also work with the Fisheries Department to check illegal fishing. (Translated by Hay Mar)

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Public announcement...

FROM PAGE-1

The Central Epidemiology Unit regularly publishes information on influenza monitoring in their monthly epidemiology bulletin. The Influenza A H1N1 pdm09 virus subtype occurs annually and has developed in our neighbouring countries this year as well.

In 2017, 1,165 people had a medical check-up for influenza in Myanmar and 458 of that number had contracted it. Of them, 406 were infected with Influenza A H1N1 pdm09 and 38 died from the virus.

In 2018, 367 people had a medical check-up for influenza in Myanmar and 118 of that number had contracted it. Of them, 13 were infected with Influenza A H1N1 pdm09 but there were no deaths.

The Central Epidemiology Unit, under the Public Health Department, regularly monitors for seasonal influenza and has found 10 people infected with the virus out of 71 screened between 1st January to the end of May in 2019. Of them, 4 were found to have the Influenza A H1N1 pdm09 strain but there were no deaths.

As the monsoon season approaches and infection rates go up, increased monitoring showed 12 out of 48 people screened from early June had the Influenza A H1N1 pdm09 virus strain.

From 1 January to 20 June in 2019, a total of 16 people were infected with Influenza A H1N1 pdm09. Reports showed five died from the virus in the Yangon Region and one died in Sagaing Region totalling six. The victims were reported to be the elderly and young children who already had chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, or respiratory disease.

Aiming to increase support on monitoring, preventing and responding effectively to seasonal influenza, the Union Minister led meetings at the National Health Laboratory Inspection Department in Yangon and the meeting hall of the Ministry of Health and Sports, on 16 June and 20 June respectively.

The medical services departments and public health departments across the states and regions have increased their cooperation and workload to monitor for influenza like illnesses (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) in hospitals, clinics and border immigration gates.

The departments spread health awareness to people who interact closely with people infected with the virus to prevent transmission. In addition, they also monitor the virus, provide treatment, prepare separate treatment rooms in hospitals, and provides mechanical ventilators for serious patients.

The public is advised to cover their mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing, thoroughly wash their hands after sneezing, coughing, coming into physical contact with influenza patients and public items, and avoid going to crowded places unless necessary.

If symptoms of influenza, high fever, difficulty breathing, fainting or anxiety develops, please visit your nearest health center for diagnosis and treatment.

When the general public adheres to the precautions issued by the ministry, effective prevention and treatment will be carried out and there will be no cause for alarm concerning the seasonal influenza.

The ministry will update news of the seasonal influenza at www.mohs.gov.mm, <https://www.facebook.com/MinistryOfHealthAndSportsMyanmar>, and the Facebook page of Myanmar CDC. We urge the public to report signs of H1N1 to the nearest health center.

Ministry of Health and Sports
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services receives ambassadors from PRC, Ghana separately



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Chen Hai in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing separately received People's Republic of China (PRC) Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Chen Hai and Republic of Ghana Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Akua Sekyiwa Ahenkora at the Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In the meeting with the PRC Ambassador the position taken by China in the international arena regarding the government and Tatmadaw's

efforts in resolving the Rakhine State matter, status of cooperation between the two militaries towards stability and peace in the border areas of the two countries, matters in which the two countries can cooperate and increasing cooperation between the two militaries were cordially discussed and views exchanged.

During the meeting with the Ghanaian Ambassador to Myanmar matters relating to establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries, his-

tory of the Ghanaian military, status of cooperation in trade, status of increasing friendship and relations between the two militaries, status of Myanmar walking the path of multi-party democracy chosen by the people, efforts towards achieving internal peace and efforts conducted according to law regarding events in Rakhine State were discussed according to a news released from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Union Minister for Defence receives Ghana Ambassador in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win meets with Ghana Ambassador Ms. Akua Sekyiwa Ahenkora at Ministry of Defence yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

UNION Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win received Republic of Ghana Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Akua Sekyiwa

Ahenkora at Ministry of Defence guest hall yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting increasing friendship, relation and cooper-

ation between the two militaries were cordially and openly discussed.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Min)

Commander-in-Chief (Army) Office conducts first monsoon tree planting ceremony 2019



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing plants a tree at the Monsoon Tree Planting Ceremony held around Yezin dam in Zeyathiri Township. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

THE Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) held a first monsoon tree planting ceremony for 2019 in Zeyathiri Township, Yezin Dam in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the ceremony, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife planted Mahogany saplings while Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and wife, Union Ministers and wives, high ranking Tatmadaw officers and wives from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, attending officers, troops and families planted saplings at designated places.

Next Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief and party inspected and encouraged the officers, troops and families planting trees.

In today's event a total of 4,720 saplings of Mahogany, Teak, Padauk etc. were planted in the vicinity of Yezin Dam. Starting from 2011 to 2019 the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) has been organizing monsoon tree planting ceremonies to protect and preserve the eco-system and has already planted a total of 141,783 saplings according to a news released from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.— MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Myanmar foreign trade increases by over \$460 mln from October to May

BETWEEN October and May 2018-2019 financial year, Myanmar's exports registered at US\$11.306 billion, imports at \$12.185 billion. This period, Myanmar traded with foreign countries worth \$23.491 billion.

During the same period last FY, the total trade was \$23.026 billion, with exports with \$10.054 billion and imports worth \$12.972 billion.

Compared with last FY, Myanmar's exports exceeded \$1.252

billion and decreased in import worth \$788 million. Myanmar's total trade increased \$464 million this FY compared with last FY.

Comparison table for export group items of this FY and last FY:

US\$ Million

Sr.	Subject	from Oct to May 2018-2019 FY (temporary)	From Oct to May 2017-2018 FY	Difference
1.	Agriculture products	2343.648	2096.974	246.674
2.	Animals products	298.751	95.158	203.593
3.	Marine products	564.359	524.825	39.534
4.	Mineral products	1078.418	1326.488	-248.070
5.	Forest products	118.509	130.688	-12.179
6.	Manufacture products	6168.241	4865.494	1302.747
7.	Other	733.747	1014.210	-280.463
Total		11305.673	10053.837	1251.836

Comparison table for import group items of this FY and last FY:

Sr.	Subject	from Oct to May 2018-2019 FY (temporary)	From Oct to May 2017-2018 FY	Difference
1.	Investment products	3822.250	4516.627	-694.377
2.	Raw material	4569.373	4787.893	-218.520
3.	Article of use	2220.121	2368.573	-148.452
4.	CMP	1573.136	1299.306	273.830
Total		12184.880	12972.399	-787.519

— MNA

Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-Corruption Commission

Announcement

1. The Anti-Corruption Law was enacted on 7 August 2013 to protect state property and the rights and interests of the citizens and society. Subsequently, the Anti-Corruption Commission was formed in accordance with the Chapter 3 section 5 to 14 of this law.
2. The commission exercises its authority to give anti-corruption education and prevent and investigate corruptions while working together with government departments, CSO – civil society organizations, UN and international organizations, business firms, media and the public.
3. At present, there are the Yangon Branch office and the Mandalay office with their head office in Nay Pyi Taw. They are, now, operating in conformity with the law.
4. The duties and authority stipulated in the Anti-Corruption law is entrusted only to the commission. For that reason, only the commission can legitimately open branch offices and carry out commission work in conformity with the Anti-Corruption Law.
5. Now, offices are opened and campaigns are being run in some townships under the name of the Anti-Corruption Commission. These activities do not have any connection with the commission and are not within the purview of the Anti-Corruption Law.

Anti-Corruption Commission
(Translated by Alphonsus)

China Eastern Airlines launches its Shanghai – Yangon direct flights

YANGON – 19 June 2019 – China Eastern Airlines launches its Shanghai – Yangon direct flights at Yangon International Airport (“YIA”), Terminal 1 this morning.

Utilizing an Airbus 320 aircraft for the new service, China Eastern Airlines will operate its thrice-weekly flights starting from 18 June.

The new direct service will take only 4 hours and 50 minutes connecting the largest city in China and Myanmar's commercial capital, Yangon.

The long-awaited direct flight is China Eastern Airlines' 9th route connecting China and Myanmar, and it made China Eastern Airlines became the

airline with the most significant number of flights between China and Myanmar, the airline said.

The opening of the Yangon – Shanghai route will also provide more options for international passengers departing from Myanmar to transit to a third country.

It is estimated that China Eastern Airlines will transport around 360,000 passengers between China and Myanmar in 2019, according to the airline.

A total of six airlines from China are expanded up to 11 flight destinations in 2018 and Chinese tourist arrival is increased by 38.38 per cent in compared with last year arrival.—MNA



30th ASEAN Cosmetic Committee Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE opening sessions of the 30th ASEAN Cosmetic Committee meeting was held at Hotel Mex in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe delivered his opening remarks at the event. He said that agreement of ASEAN harmonized cosmetic regulatory scheme was signed in Cambodia in 2003 to ensure the safety and quality as well as oversee the claimed benefits of all cosmetic products marketed in ASEAN.

ASEAN member countries implemented Cosmetic Regulatory System in accordance with the scheme and Myanmar followed suit in 2011.

As some cosmetics contain mercury, hydroquinone, steroids, lead, rhodamine B, etc., they cause untoward effects on skin, kidney and other organs.

As of April 2019, a total of 20,877 cosmetics were notified with Food and Drug Administration (FDA). 2060 cosmetic product were subjected to chemical analyses and found that 116 of them contain mercury, hydroquinone, steroids, lead, rhodamine



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses the opening sessions of the 30th ASEAN Cosmetic Committee meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

PHOTO: MNA

B, etc. This has been advertised to the public since 2014. As post marketing surveillance are being carried out. It is found that there are many cosmetics which are channelled through illegal border points. It is impossible for the Ministry of Health and Sports to take care of it alone and collective efforts of related ministries are need to tackle the problem.

Myanmar is committed to improve and strengthens cosmetic regulatory system in line with other ASEAN countries by promulgating the Cosmetic Law and drafting Cosmetic Law. The suggestion made at this meeting will be of great value on our way to have quality and safe cosmetics for the consumers and to strengthen the cosmetic trade between countries.

In this meeting, the participants will be able to share developments in cosmetic production and latest laboratory technology. Through this meeting, the road map on quality and safe cosmetic production will be drawn.

Then, Chairman for ASEAN Cosmetic Committee Meeting Ms. Vu Thi Hiep of Viet Nam collaboration among ASEAN countries in terms of cosmetic related issues.

The meeting was held from 18th to 21st June. This is the first time Myanmar hosted the meet-

ing and representatives from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam, Asian Cosmetic Regulators, experts from ASEAN Cosmetic Testing Laboratory Committee, representatives from ASEAN Cosmetic Association, Asian Cosmetic Industry and ASEAN Secretariat attended the event. ■ (Translated by Alphonsus)

Poor infra hinders investment in sectors other than agriculture, livestock in Shan State

INVESTORS are only parking their money in agriculture and livestock businesses in Shan State, and other sectors such as mining, hotels and tourism, and construction are failing to attract investment, according to the Shan State Investment Committee (SSIC).

Poor infrastructure in terms of road and electricity poses the main challenge to investment in the state, coupled with land ownership problems, said investors.

“At present, SSIC has endorsed five proposals and three proposals are being screened.

Projects which have been endorsed are executing agriculture, livestock, and hotel businesses,” said U Aung Nyi Win, the Deputy Director of Shan State’s Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

“Businesses which have been endorsed include a jackfruit drying business in Hsipaw Township, a corn drying business in Lashio Township, a business involved in planting and production of mango in Yaksawk Township, a dairy farming business in Nawngkhio Township, and a hotel business in Pinlaung Township,”

said a civil servant assigned to Shan State. “They are located in northern and southern Shan State. Eastern Shan State has failed to attract investments. Hopefully, more investments will flow into Kengtung, Tachilek, Mongton, Mongphyat, and Mongyawng, among others,” he said.

“Most of the local businesses are SMEs. They lack knowledge about online company registration. Regional development requires local and foreign investment,” said a local working at a food processing business in Pekhon Township.

Under the new Myanmar Investment Law, the regional and state investment committees are authorized to approve investment proposals with capitals not exceeding US\$5 million (K6,000 million), with the aim of simplifying the verification process of investment projects.

The SSIC was formed on 7 July, 2017 and the Shan State’s chief minister was appointed as the chairman of the committee.

“Under the Myanmar Investment Law, investors can be given tax exemptions for three to seven years as an incentive, depending

on the development status of the regions and states. Shan State is included in Zone 2, based on development, and investors can enjoy a five-year tax break in the state. The SSIC will not endorse projects if there are disputes and objections raised by the local people,” said U Aung Nyi Win.

“As Shan State is rich in natural resources, eco-tourism, hotel, and mining businesses have potential for investment in the state. In addition, investors can help develop road infrastructure,” said local entrepreneurs.—IPRD ■ (Translated by EMM)



An inauguration ceremony for vocational training course on processing fruits and producing consumer products held in MraukU. PHOTO: IPRD

Mrauk U residents receive skills for on processing fruits, making consumer products

A vocational training course on processing fruits and producing consumer products was inaugurated at 10 a.m. on 20 June at MraukU Township of Rakhine State.

The vocational training course has been jointly arranged by the MraukU Township Rural Development Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation with the aim of improving the job prospects of rural people.

U Chit Maung, the Deputy

Director of the MraukU District Rural Development Department, U Min Min Tun, the Head of the District Rural Road Development Department, U Tun Yan Naing Thu, the Head of the Township Rural Development Department, concerned officials, trainers, trainees, and locals attended the opening ceremony of the course.

Afterwards, Township Rural Development Department head U Tun Yan Naing Thu described the objectives of the course to

trainees, and encouraged them to apply the techniques and skills they learn during the course to increase their family income. The course covers processing fruits such as pineapple, jam, and mango to make jam and wine, and making consumer products such as soap and shampoo. The course will last two weeks and will be conducted by two trainers. A total of 25 trainees, three men and 22 women, are attending the course. — District IPRD ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

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Investors focusing on eco-tourism businesses in least developed regions: U Thant Sin Lwin

By Nyein Nyein

INVESTORS have begun to prefer eco-tourism businesses in the least developed regions, said U Thant Sin Lwin, acting Director-General, Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

The main challenges investors face in those regions are transportation difficulties and lack of electric supply. Therefore, they tend to focus on eco-tourism businesses.

"There are three or four enterprises that have inquired about investing in each state and region. However, eco-tourism businesses are on their priority list, owing to lack of electricity and transportation difficulties," he added.

Moreover, more investors are eyeing the least developed regions. Investments in these regions grew this year, according to the DICA.

"Despite a growing interest in the least developed regions,

there are still transportation barriers in Chin State. But, the flow of investment into Loikaw of Kayah State is increasing," said U Thant Sin Lwin.

Chin, Kayah, Kayin, and Rakhine states are included in the Myanmar Investment Commission's list of least developed regions, and investors can enjoy a seven-year tax break in these regions.

The least developed regions designated as Zone 1 attract income tax exemptions of

seven years, while moderately developed regions (Zone 2) have a five-year tax holiday, and adequately developed regions (Zone 3) grant tax exemptions for three years.

According to the Myanmar Investment Promotion Plan (MIPP), lack of infrastructures such as electricity supply, transportation, and weak logistics pose hurdles to investment in Myanmar. ■

(Translated by EMM)

YRTA: 92 buses ferrying over 1,900 students to 12 schools

By Nyein Nyein

NINETY-two of the 200 school buses bought by the Yangon regional government are being used to ferry schoolchildren to 12 schools, said U Aung Nyi Nyi Maw, the Managing Director of the Yangon Region Transport Authority.

In the current academic year, 92 buses are ferrying more than 1,900 students from 12 schools, he said.

"Schools have asked the authorities to run bus services. We are collecting the list now. Then, we will decide on the routes," said U Aung Nyi Nyi Maw.

Currently, the authorities have arranged 32 buses for 669 students from TTC (Yankin) school, 35 buses for 668 students from TTC (Kamayut) school, two buses for 35 students from TTC (Thingangyun) school, two buses for 12 students from B.E.H.S (2) Mayangon school, three buses for 73 students from B.E.H.S (1) Latha school, three buses for 29 students from B.E.H.S (2) Latha school, two buses for 20 students from B.E.H.S (2) Sanchaung school, one bus for 30 students from B.E.PS (6) North Okkalapa school, five buses for 125 students from B.E.M.S (8) North Okkalapa school, two buses for

50 students from B.E.PS (46) Shwe Paukkan school, and one bus for 36 students from B.E.PS (6) Shwe Paukkan school.

"Although some schools have only a few students, we are still running buses for them. We are operating them not for profit, but on social grounds. We are just fulfilling the need for school bus services," he added.

"At this juncture, we are transporting 38 students from Ar Yone Thit Myanmar Social Workers Association on new ferries, free of charge. They are studying at the B.E.M.S (8) North Okkalapa school," according to the YRTA.

The Yangon regional government said it is operating school buses with the aim of ensuring a smooth ferry system, without any intention to enter the ferry market.

The government will also conduct training courses for drivers to provide better and safer service to students.

In the present academic year, the Road Transport Department will allow the operation of ferries which abide by the 12 rules adopted by the department. Old vehicles will be allowed during the registration period. ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Students given milk, eggs in Mongnai primary school as part of School Milk Program

AS part of the second School Milk Program, 152 students were given milk and eggs on 20 June at the Mongnai basic education primary school in Mongnai Town of southern Shan State.

At the event, each of the 152 primary students were provided a bottle of milk and two eggs by Dr. Sai Mya Kywal, the head of the Langkho District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, U Soe Htut, Mongnai Township administrator, Daw Khine Wai Nyein, the chairman of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, and other officials, according to Dr. Khin Maung Win, the head of the Mongnai Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

The School Milk Program is aimed at boosting the phys-



Children participate in the School milk program in Mongnai Primary School funded by Langkho District Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department. **PHOTO: MYO NYUNT SHWE (MONGNAI)**

ical and mental growth of students, and encouraging student to drink at least one cup

of milk per day, as milk contains many essential nutrients, is the best nutrient for their age,

and stimulates growth. —Myo Nyunt Shwe (Mongnai)

(Translated by La Wonn)

Realty market picks up ahead of Buddhist Rains Retreat

THE property market in Yangon is heating up ahead of the three-month Buddhist Rains Retreat which starts in mid-July. An increasing number of apartments were either sold or rented in the months of May and June, and the trend is expected to continue.

While the Yangon property market was slightly active in the first week of June, it has picked up the pace of late, with foreign companies renting apartments, according to iMyanmarHouse.com.

Foreign companies are renting apartments as well as houses, mostly in Yankin, Mawangon, and Bahan townships. They have been found to prefer fully furnished apartments and condominiums with better facilities. In addition, they are also

looking to rent land.

Both high-priced, as well as affordable apartments in Kyauktada, Botahtaung, Pabedan, and Latha Townships are favoured by foreigners. While most are renting apartments for their families, there are some who are opening dormitories in the apartments.

Some apartments and houses on Pansodan and Bo Aung Kyaw streets in Kyauktada Township are not easy to find at short notice, according to a broker.

The property market in Dala Township is still cool even though the Dala bridge is being constructed to connect Yangon Myothit in Dala with Yangon City.—GNLM ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)



An aerial view of Yangon City with high-rise buildings. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

China govt-owned agri business COFCO, MRF sign MoU for 100,000 tons of rice export

By Nyein Nyein

THE Myanmar Rice Federation and China's state-owned food processing holding company China National Cereals, Oils, and Foodstuffs Corporation (COFCO) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for export of 100,000 tons of Myanmar rice through the maritime route on 20 June in Beijing, according to U Ye Min Aung, the President of the MRF.

The MoU will help disseminate information on Myanmar's rice market to COFCO and assist in trade of Myanmar rice, according to the MRF.

"The COFCO has directly negotiated with 11 Myanmar companies selected for rice trade. At present, trade will be conducted by those 11 companies. The Myanmar Inspection and Testing Services Ltd (MITS), the authorized inspection enterprise of the government, is conducting inspections at local rice companies. And, the companies selected in line with the prescribed rules and regulations will carry out exports, if China's authority agrees," said U Ye Min Aung.

"So far, MITS has inspected 103 rice mills owned by 42 com-

panies and the final selection of companies will be completed by early July. Based on the outcomes of meetings held by Myanmar's supervisory committee on the exportation of Myanmar rice to China, the Agriculture Department will share its final list of companies with China," according to the MRF.

After a meeting between former president U Thein Sein and the Chinese Premier in September, 2014, the MRF and COFCO had inked their first-ever MoU for rice export to China through the sea route in February, 2015. The quota of rice export had been set at 100,000 tons.

This is the second time that the MRF and COFCO have signed an MoU, agreeing upon an export quota of 100,000 tons of rice. The MoU comes after the State Counsellor met with the President of the People's Republic of China in April this year. Myanmar did not obtain any quota for rice export to China from 2016 to 2018.

The MRF is endeavouring to stabilize the rice market, promote exports, and explore markets in countries with strict import policies. Private companies are directly entering into

sale and purchase agreements with traders.

"We need to convert this government-to-government (G2G) agreement into a sustainable pact. Myanmar requires G2G or business-to-business (B2B) agreements for trade of pulses and beans, corn, sesame, fish, and shrimp to grab a share of the Chinese market. The government and the private sector also need to move forward in harmony through public private partnerships (PPP)," said U Ye Min Aung.

In addition to normal trade, Myanmar and Chinese businesses have agreed on export of 10,000 tons of the total rice stockpiled at Muse gate, following recent negotiations in Kunming.

Myanmar primarily exports rice to China through the border gates. However, trade in agricultural products has been halted on account of China's clamping down on illegal trade. Therefore, Myanmar could export just 500,000 tons of rice to China in the first eight months (Oct-May) of the current fiscal year, which is half the volume registered in the year-ago period. ■

(Translated by EMM)

Inspection body visits 103 rice mills; final selection for export to be made by early July

MYANMAR Inspection and Testing Services Ltd, an enterprise authorized by the government for conducting inspections, has checked 103 rice mills owned by 42 companies, and the final selection of companies that will be allowed to export rice to China will be made by early July, according to a press statement released by the Myanmar Rice Federation.

According to Article 3 of the SPS Protocol (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Protocol), an inspection of rice exporters and rice mills is mandatory, which is in keeping with the criteria set by the General Administration of Customs China (GACC).

The inspection process was explained during a coordination meeting, held on 7 May, which was attended by representatives from the MRF, the Plant Protection Division under the Agriculture Department, the Consumer Affairs Department under the Commerce Ministry, MITS, and companies engaged in the rice industry.

To ensure Myanmar rice meets the SPS protocol, a 13-member supervisory committee on the exportation of Myanmar rice to China has been formed.

The members of the

committee include the MRF president, a member central executive committee, and the general secretary. The Permanent Secretary of the Commerce Ministry has been appointed as the chairman of the committee, while the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation has been made the vice-chairman, and the Director of the Consumer Affairs Department has been appointed as the secretary of the committee.

A technical working group has also been formed to help the MITS carry out inspections. The working group includes officials from the Agriculture Department, the Consumer Affairs Department, the MRF, and the MITS.

Based on the outcomes of the meetings of the supervisory committee, the Agriculture Department will make the final selection of rice companies that can export to China.

An agreement on observing Sanitary and Phytosanitary Protocol in Myanmar's rice exports to China was due on 24 September, 2018 and extended till 2020, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation.—GNLM ■

(Translated by EMM)

Public health consciousness key to combat seasonal flu

AS summer gives way to the rainy season, our immune system drops to cope with the changes. This period is when diseases spread the easiest. Dense populations and dirty surroundings only serve to increase their rate of transmission.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has announced that there were 16 people who contracted the seasonal H1N1 virus, also known as 'swine flu', between 1 January and 20 June this year. Of them, five in Yangon Region and a patient in Sagaing Region have died from the virus. But the ministry also said that the victims were either too old or too young and had diabetes, hypertension, heart or respiratory diseases to complicate their illnesses.

Nonetheless, we must all take necessary precautions to protect ourselves from the seasonal influenza. It is a good idea to wash your hands and feet thoroughly when returning home and to wear facemasks in crowded public areas. We must also remember to cover our mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing and wash up afterwards.

It is best to avoid places with lots of people and to get sufficient sleep in order to build up your immune system. A helpful thing you can do for your community is to pass flu prevention information on to your neighbors and friends.

It is best to avoid places with lots of people and to get sufficient sleep in order to build up your immune system. A helpful thing you can do for your community is to pass flu prevention information on to your neighbors and friends.

Eating nutritional food will boost your defenses against the virus but there are some foods that do the job exceptionally well. Broth made with onion, celery, carrots and garlic will keep you hydrated and satiated while keeping your health in check. Consuming yogurt and other vitamin C-rich fruits is also recommended.

Senior citizens, young children and pregnant mothers have to be extra vigilant when the seasons change and the virus makes its entry. If you

do come in contact with someone who has the flu, remind yourself not to touch the things they use on a daily basis, as microbes can linger on everyday items as well.

We suggest getting flu vaccines if you have to interact with a lot of people everyday or just to be on the safe side. Also make sure to get yourself or someone you know checked at the nearest clinic or hospital if symptoms show up. After all, prevention is always better than cure.

The symptoms of the virus include fever, though not always, chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and watery red eyes, with more serious cases also exhibiting body aches, headaches, fatigue, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. Flu symptoms develop about one to three days after a person is exposed to the virus.

It is worth noting that the H1N1 virus infects the cells that line your nose, throat and lungs when you inhale contaminated droplets, either from water or phlegm. Therefore, people who work with poultry and swine should take immediate precautions to shield themselves from any infection.

We believe that increasing health awareness among the public is an effective way to counteract the virus. As more people become health conscious and take necessary measures to safeguard their health, there will be less alarm for outbreaks when the seasons change.

WHO

SEASONAL influenza viruses circulate and cause disease in humans every year. In temperate climates, disease tends to occur seasonally in the winter months, spreading from person-to-person through sneezing, coughing, or touching contaminated surfaces. Seasonal influenza viruses can cause mild to severe illness and even death, particularly in some high-risk individuals. Persons at increased risk for severe disease include pregnant women, the very young and very old, immune-compromised people, and people with chronic underlying medical conditions. Seasonal influenza viruses evolve continuously, which means that people can get infected multiple times throughout their lives. Therefore the components of seasonal influenza vaccines are reviewed frequently (currently bi-annually) and updated periodically to ensure continued effectiveness of the vaccines.

There are three large groupings or types of seasonal influenza viruses, labeled A, B, and C. Type A influenza viruses are further divided into subtypes according to the specific variety and combi-

FLU
Spread the message Save lives

DO...

- wash your hands
- stay more than one arm's length distance from persons sick with flu
- avoid crowded places
- eat nutritious food and drink plenty of water
- get plenty of sleep and rest

World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia. 2009. www.searo.who.int

nations of two proteins that occur on the surface of the virus, the hemagglutinin or "H" protein and the neuraminidase or "N" protein.

Currently, influenza A(H1N1) and A(H3N2) are the circulating seasonal influenza A virus subtypes. This seasonal A(H1N1) virus is the

FLU
Spread the message Save lives

DO NOT...

- shake hands or hug
- spit in public
- take medicines without consulting a physician

If you are sick, PLEASE

- cover your cough or sneeze
- stay home and limit contact with others as much as possible
- rest and take plenty of liquids
- seek medical advice

World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia. 2009. www.searo.who.int

same virus that caused the 2009 influenza pandemic, as it is now circulating seasonally. In addition, there are two type B viruses that

are also circulating as seasonal influenza viruses, which are named after the areas where they were first identified, Victoria lineage and

Yamagata lineage. Type C influenza causes milder infections and is associated with sporadic cases and minor localized outbreaks. As influenza C poses much less of a disease burden than influenza A and B, only the latter two are included in seasonal influenza vaccines.

Do's and don'ts to protect from seasonal flu

- Do...**
- wash your hands
 - stay more than one arm's length distance from persons sick with flu
 - avoid crowded places
 - eat nutritious food and drink plenty of water
 - get plenty of rest

- Do not...**
- shake hands or hug
 - spit in public
 - take medicines without consulting a physician

- If you are sick, please**
- cover your cough or sneeze
 - stay home and limit contact with others as much as possible
 - rest and take plenty of liquids
 - seek medical advice

Rakhine traditional ceremony of eating the first crops and I

By Maung Mayu (Buthidaung)

I AM a school teacher in a village by the name of Pirot in the north of Buthidaung Township. A big house was built at the edge of the village for school teachers. I stayed there together with the other teacher. One morning while I was kept busy in the kitchen, Maung Hsoe's mother came hurriedly to our house; And invited us to have lunch in their house. We were overjoyed with the invitation. That was the first time when a student's parents invited us.

When we were young, every household in villages took an alternative turn to feed teachers, thereby establishing a friendly relationship with villagers. Teachers were free from the worry of carrying water, firewood, and cooking in their house. That would create a lot of chances for lesson preparations for the classrooms. Even though the teachers didn't take the teaching seriously, they sympathized with the students in their charge by focusing on teaching. But nowadays these good habits were found at a loss; the reasons might be due to an increase of government employees and the economic inconvenience of peasant farmers. But it is not at a total loss; these good traditions have existed in some villages. I was amazed to have been invited because my village is not included in the list.

I found it strange when I got into the village; it happened to a traditional ceremony of eating the first crops. Even though I have heard about the ceremony, I didn't know about it in details. When found by myself, I realized it to be a valuable and lovely Rakhine traditional ceremony. A Rakhine traditional

ceremony of eating the first crops means that the reaping of the first crops in carried out during the harvest season; the first crops were cooked as 'soon' and served as a big feast.

Farmers have toiled tirelessly during the rainy season to cultivate paddy. They felt overjoyed with the reaping of the first crops. As a commemoration of growing crops healthily, the first crops are served to monks, the elderly, teachers and relatives by visualizing Lord Buddha; it is a feast not eaten first by the farmers themselves. In some villages, groups of Nats(Devas) were invited to the feast. A sheath of banana stems is shaped like a container in which several kinds of food are put and mounted atop the roof to feed the Sun and Moon devas (celestial beings). This tradition is found among other traditions of ethnic nationals; held in different fashions but the intention is the same.

Donations of first crops bring virtuous actions. Once there lived two brothers; the elder brother used to donate his first crops and the best portion of his food and younger brother donated things in a slipshod manner. Due to his meritorious deeds, the older one became Ashin Kawdanya when Buddha attained Buddhahood. After listening to the first sermon given by the Lord Buddha, the elder brother became the Arhat whereas the younger one as Ashin Thubanda became the last Arhat when the Buddha attained Nirvana. These are the reasons that donations of the first crops and the best portion of one's food are beneficial to the donors. Cooking of first crops as 'soon' would bring a lot



First crop donations bring virtuous actions.

of benefits to the donors. Donations of Soon (offerories) to the Lord Buddha or monks would bring five comestibles of longevity, beauty, wealth, strength and intelligence. Offering food to Lord Buddha or monks would bring longevity, beauty, wealth, strength and intelligence to the donors.

In our society, nothing is nobler than the Buddha, Dharma, the Sangha, parents and teachers. In accordance with Buddhist traditions, offering food

at the altar to the Buddha, offering food to monks and the best portion to monks and the best portion of food to our elders and then our turn comes to eat. That is why Rakhine traditional ceremony of eating first crops should be maintained as a lovely habit of Rakhine Buddhists which must be handed down from generation to generation.

Translated by Arakan Sein

Re-opening of the Call for Nominations for the ASEAN Prize 2019

As none of the candidates merits the ASEAN Prize to 2019 to be awarded at the 34th Summit, the ASEAN Secretariat has re-opened call for nominations for ASEAN Prize 2019 to recognise inspiring achievements and exemplary contributions of an individual or organization, inter alia, to the building of a rules-based, people-oriented, people-centered ASEAN Community, and intra ASEAN collaborative efforts.

Nominees should have exceptional merit in contributing to the following designated focus areas:

- Outstanding collaboration between ASEAN Member States (AMS);
- Outstanding collaboration between ASEAN and the world;
- Outstanding people-to-people engagement among AMS;
- Outstanding economic integration and promotion of standards between or among AMS; or
- Other outstanding contributions to ASEAN Community Building

The Judging Committee, consisting of eminent high-level members, including incumbent and former ASEAN Secretaries-General, will select a recipient who will be awarded the ASEAN Prize Trophy and a cash prize of US\$ 20,000. This year's prize will be presented at the Opening Ceremony of the 35th ASEAN Summit in November 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand.

The nomination form for ASEAN Prize 2019 can be downloaded at the ASEAN Secretariat Website <http://www.asean.org/asean-prize>. Nominee must submit the duly fill-in form to the ASEAN Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office No.9, Nay Pyi Taw or dgasean@gmail.com and psaseanmmr@gmail.com no later than 6 September 2019.

Nominee must be an ASEAN citizen or an ASEAN-based organization. In the nomination form, the nominee need to elaborate within three or five pages highlighting the achievement the nominee has contributed to the building of a rule-based, people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community and intra-ASEAN collaborative efforts since the launch of the ASEAN Community on 31 December 2015. The nominee should also share future plans in continuing the work after winning the prize. For further information, please visit the ASEAN Secretariat Website.

Low pressure area over Northeast Bay of Bengal persists

According to the observations at 6.30 pm yesterday, the low pressure area over Northeast Bay of Bengal still persists. Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 21st June, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing and Magway Regions, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay Region and Kayah State and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with isolated heavy falls in Chin, Rakhine and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (8 -11)feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.—DMH



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'Apologize for what?' Biden defiant amid segregationist uproar

WASHINGTON — The Democratic presidential nomination race experienced a rollercoaster 24 hours with Joe Biden refusing to apologize for saying he “got things done” with segregationist lawmakers, remarks that triggered outrage among other 2020 candidates.

Tensions swelled Wednesday and into Thursday after Biden made his comments at a New York fundraiser, and escalated as the former vice president took a confrontational tone when questioned about the friction.

Several challengers for the nomination, including two prominent African Americans, called out Biden for saying that while he opposed the segregationist positions of late southern senators James Eastland and Herman Talmadge, “at least there was some civility” when they cooperated to pass legislation.

Eastland “never called me ‘boy,’ he always called me ‘son,’” Biden said.



Former US vice president Joe Biden is under fire for seeming to speak favorably of lawmakers who favored racial segregation in America. PHOTO: AFP

White House hopeful Senator Cory Booker demanded an apology and said Biden “should have the sensitivity” to avoid speaking fondly of cooperating with racist lawmakers.

Biden appeared to bristle when asked by reporters if he would apologize.

“Apologize for what?” Bid-

en said outside a fundraiser Wednesday in a Washington suburb.

“Cory should apologize. He knows better,” Biden added. “There’s not a racist bone in my body. I’ve been involved in civil rights my whole career.”

Democratic rivals pounced after his initial Tuesday com-

ments, shedding their restraint over attacking frontrunner Biden.

Some party progressives said this affair shows Biden, 76, is out of step with his party.

Booker, appearing on CNN late Wednesday, took issue with Biden’s remark that Eastland “never called me ‘boy,’” a racially charged word long used to emasculate black men.

“I was raised to speak truth to power, and I will never apologize for doing that, and vice president Biden shouldn’t need this lesson,” Booker said.

The back and forth has exposed strains within the party one week before the top 20 Democrats in the nominations race engage in a two-night debate, the first in the 2020 primary cycle.

A handful of black lawmakers defended Biden.

“I worked with Strom Thurmond all my life,” House Majority Whip James Clyburn, the highest-ranking black member

of Congress, said in Politico, referring to the notorious segregationist senator from Clyburn’s South Carolina.

“You don’t have to agree with people to work with them.”

At the New York fundraiser, Biden pushed back against leftist critics of his desire to work with Republicans given the fierce partisanship of President Donald Trump and his allies.

On Wednesday Biden plowed ahead with his message, attending two Maryland fundraisers. He brought up Eastland and Talmadge again, although he tweaked his remarks.

“We had to put up with the likes of, like, Jim Eastland and Hermy Talmadge and all those segregationists,” Biden told 150 well-heeled supporters in a Chevy Chase home.

“And the fact of the matter is that we were able to do it because we were able to win, we were able to beat them on everything they stood for.” — AFP ■

China’s former Interpol chief pleads guilty to bribery



When still president of Interpol, Meng Hongwei vanished last September during a visit to China and was later accused of accepting bribes and expelled from the Communist Party. PHOTO: AFP

BEIJING — Former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei pleaded guilty at a trial in China on Thursday to accepting \$2.1 million in bribes — a remarkable fall from grace for the former vice minister of public security.

The Tianjin No.1 Intermediate Court said Meng “showed repentance” during the hearing, which was the culmination of a dramatic case that shook the international police organisation and put a spotlight on China’s opaque judicial system.

The verdict will be announced at a “select date or time”, the court in northern China said in a statement, without

specifying further.

Photos released by the Tianjin court showed Meng, who disappeared last year, sitting between two police officers in the courtroom, wearing a light brown jacket. His hair had greyed and he appeared gaunt compared to photos from 2017.

Meng is among a growing group of Communist Party cadres caught in President Xi Jinping’s anti-graft campaign, which critics say has served as a way to remove the leader’s political enemies.

Over one million officials have been punished so far during Xi’s six-year tenure.

The court said that between 2005 and 2017 Meng used his status and positions, including as vice minister of public security and Marine Police Chief, to accumulate bribes equivalent to some 14.46 million yuan (\$2.1 million).

‘Clear conscience’

Meng vanished last September during a visit to China from France, where Interpol is based, and was later accused of accepting bribes and expelled from the Communist Party.

The scandal has “badly hurt China’s image”, said Willy Lam, a Chinese politics expert at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The fact that a senior Chinese official — especially one posted overseas — was arrested casts doubt on China’s ability to conduct due diligence, he told AFP.

The case also raises questions on whether there were “hidden reasons” resulting in Meng’s arrest. “Was it really because of corruption or some other cases?” said Lam.

Meng’s wife and their two children are still in France, where they were granted political asylum in May.—AFP ■

Tale of two cities: Hong Kong turmoil may boost Singapore

SINGAPORE — Hong Kong’s reputation as a stable financial hub has been shaken by a controversial extradition bill that prompted massive protests, and its loss might just be Singapore’s gain, experts say.

The Chinese territory and the Southeast Asian city-state have long vied for the title of Asia’s top financial destination, attracting international business from around the world.

But a decision by Hong Kong’s Beijing-backed government to introduce a bill allowing extradition to the mainland sparked concern among the business community and brought up to two million protesters into the street.

Hong Kong’s political cri-

sis is “definitely a dent in its reputation,” said Lawrence Loh, director of the Centre for Governance, Institutions and Organisations at the National University of Singapore’s Business School.

“There will be some immediate benefits (for Singapore),” he added, pointing to reports that tycoons were already shifting money from Hong Kong.

Hong Kong offers access to China but enjoys freedoms unseen in the mainland, under the terms of its 1997 handover from Britain to Beijing.

It has a large expatriate community and prides itself on its reputation as a financial capital in the region.—AFP



Unrest in Hong Kong over a bill to extradite criminals to mainland China could mean companies will lean away from the financial hub and towards Singapore, experts warn. PHOTO: AFP

Stewart out as Johnson gets birthday boost in race to be British PM

LONDON — Maverick candidate Rory Stewart was knocked out of the race to become Britain's next prime minister on Wednesday, as Boris Johnson extended his lead over the three other remaining contenders. International Development Secretary Stewart actually lost votes to come in last in the third ballot of Conservative MPs. Former foreign minister Johnson, on his 55th birthday, extended his commanding lead with the support of 143 out of 313 members of Britain's governing party. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt came second with 54, Environment Secretary Michael Gove followed with 51 and Interior Minister Sajid Javid won 38.

The winner will take over from Theresa May as prime minister next month. His biggest task is to end the political deadlock over Britain's exit from the European Union, currently scheduled for 31 October. Stewart won 27 votes, 10 fewer than he received in Tuesday's second ballot, ending a remarkable run by an unorthodox politician few expected to get this far. Two further ballots are scheduled for Thursday to choose a final pair that will then be put to 160,000 grassroots party members. "Thank you once again to friends and colleagues for your support in the third ballot — especially on my birthday!" tweeted Johnson after Wednesday's result.

"We've come a long way but we have much further to go."

'Nobody has plan'

Initially a rank outsider, Stewart's social media-driven campaign had garnered momentum as the only candidate to rule out leaving the EU without a divorce deal with Brussels.

But following a lacklustre performance in a televised debate on Tuesday night, Stewart shed support. He said he was bewildered at the loss of votes, but told reporters: "I believe the arguments I made will be vindicated. "Nobody has a plan for how they are going to get Brexit through parliament. Nobody has a plan on how they're going to renegotiate with the EU.

Nobody can define what a no-deal Brexit is. "These are the fundamental truths that will haunt us for the next six months."

Stewart wanted to try again to get the divorce deal May struck with Brussels through parliament, even though MPs have rejected it three times.

The other candidates say they will threaten to leave with "no deal" in a bid to change the text, which the European Union has so far said will not be reopened. Johnson and Javid insist Britain must leave on the twice-delayed October 31 exit date, while Hunt and Gove are prepared to delay if a divorce deal

with Brussels seems close.

'Take on Boris'

Former Brexit secretary Dominic Raab, who had warned he was willing to suspend parliament if it blocked his "no deal", was eliminated in Tuesday's second ballot and threw his weight behind Johnson.

Hunt has come second in every ballot so far and said he was "best placed to take on Boris". "If I make it to the final I will put my heart and soul into giving him the contest of his life: in politics today the unexpected often happens," he tweeted.

"The stakes too high to allow anyone to sail through untested."

Home Secretary Javid tweeted: "Delighted to make it through to the final day of MP voting. Grateful for the support of many excellent colleagues. We can do this!" May officially stepped down as Conservative party leader this month over her failure to deliver Brexit on time, although she remains prime minister until her successor is chosen. Thursday's fourth ballot takes place between 10:00am and 12:00pm (0900 GMT and 1100 GMT), with the result declared an hour later. If no candidates have voluntarily withdrawn and three remain, MPs are then scheduled to vote again between 3:30pm and 5:30pm (1430 GMT and 1630 GMT).—AFP ■



Russian President Vladimir Putin. PHOTO: AFP

Putin says MH17 probe shows 'no proof' of Russia's guilt

MOSCOW — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday the international community had failed to provide any evidence that Moscow was behind the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in which 298 people died.

"What we've seen as evi-

dence of Russia's guilt absolutely does not suit us. We believe that there is no proof there," Putin told reporters.

On Wednesday, international investigators charged three Russians and a Ukrainian over the downing of the plane in eastern Ukraine in 2014.—AFP ■

Turkey sends new ship to search for gas off Cyprus as tensions mount

GEBZE — Turkey on Thursday sent a new ship to search for oil and gas off Cyprus, in a move expected to escalate tensions after the EU called on Ankara to stop its "illegal drilling activities".

The region near the divided island is believed to have rich natural gas deposits, triggering a race between Turkey and Cyprus's internationally recognised government, which also plans to ramp up its exploratory activities in the eastern Mediterranean.

Turkish officials said the new vessel is the 229-metre-long (750-foot) Yavuz, which has previously drilled in the waters off several countries including Kenya, Tanzania and Malaysia.

Reporters were taken on-board the vessel docked in the port of Dilovasi near Gebze, southeast of Istanbul, before it sailed.

It carried the colours of the Turkish flag — a white crescent and a star on a red background.

The European Union on Tuesday lashed out at Turkey over its plans to drill in the area, warning it was preparing "appropriate measures" in response.

But Turkey remained defiant, with Energy Minister Fatih Donmez saying that Ankara's search for hydrocarbon reserves would continue "uninterrupted."

"We will continue the drilling activities that derive from our own legitimate rights uninterrupted," he told journalists at the port, after inspecting the ship.

The EU's appeal came after Turkey's first drilling vessel, Fatih, started searching for gas and oil in the waters considered part of Cyprus's exclusive economic zone.—AFP ■



After Rory Stewart's elimination, the field to lead Britain's ruling Conservatives is down to four — from left, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, strong favourite Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Home Secretary Sajid Javid. PHOTO: AFP

EU Extends Crimea Sanctions by 12 Months

BRUSSELS — The European Union on Thursday rolled over for another year sanctions imposed over Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from

Ukraine.

"The Council (of EU member states) prolonged the restrictive measures introduced in response to the

illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia until 23 June 2020," the bloc said in a statement, as leaders met for a summit in Brussels.—AFP ■

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Xi, Kim agree to jointly create bright future of bilateral ties

PYONGYANG — The top leaders of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) agreed here Thursday to work together to create a bright future of inter-party and inter-state relations at a new starting point in history.

The agreement was reached in talks between Xi Jinping, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chinese president, and Kim Jong Un, chairman of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) and chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the DPRK.

The China-DPRK friendship is a strategic choice made by the two sides with a long-term and overall perspective and will not waver due to changes in the international situation, Xi said, adding that the friendship accords with the aspirations of both peoples, the fundamental interests of both countries and the development trend of the times.

Noting that China-DPRK ties have now entered a new historical period, Xi said that the CPC and the Chinese government attach great importance to the friendly and cooperative

relations between the two countries, and that it is a steadfast policy of the CPC and the Chinese government to maintain, consolidate and develop China-DPRK relations.

In face of the profound and complex changes on the global and regional landscapes, China and the DPRK should strengthen high-level contact to guide the development of China-DPRK relations, Xi said, adding that he is ready to maintain close exchanges with Kim to consolidate mutual political trust and hold firmly the general direction of bilateral relations.

The two sides, Xi said, should deepen strategic communication and exchange views on major issues in an in-depth and timely manner, so as to create a favorable environment for the development of both countries.

He also suggested that the two sides expand practical cooperation to bring more benefits to both peoples.

China is ready to work with the DPRK to deepen inter-party exchanges on governance experience, and boost cadre training and personnel exchanges in economic and well-being areas,



Combined photo shows Chinese President Xi Jinping (R) and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

he said.

The Chinese leader also urged the two sides to deepen friendly exchanges to lay a solid foundation for further consolidating and developing the China-DPRK friendship.

China, he said, is ready to work with the DPRK to continue to implement the plan for commemorating the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties, and conduct exchanges and cooperation in such fields as education, health, sports, media and youth as well as at local levels, so as to carry forward the tradition-

al China-DPRK friendship and improve the well-being of both peoples.

For his part, Kim expressed a hearty welcome to Xi's visit on behalf of the party, government and people of the DPRK, noting that more than 250,000 people flocked to the streets in Pyongyang to welcome Xi.

The visit, which comes upon the 70th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic ties, represents a huge encouragement and political support for the party, government and people of the DPRK, and bears great significance in

the history of DPRK-China relations, he added.

Under current circumstances, said the DPRK leader, Xi's visit helps review the past 70 years of DPRK-China relations, envisage the future of bilateral ties, and demonstrate to the world the unbreakable traditional friendship between the two countries.

Kim said that he fully agrees with the insightful analysis and future plan Xi made on bilateral relations, and that it is an unwavering policy of the DPRK's party and government to carry forward the DPRK-China friendship from generation to generation.

He added that he highly values the profound friendship he has formed with Xi, and attaches great importance to the important consensus he has reached with the Chinese leader.

He expressed his willingness to take Xi's visit as an opportunity to further strengthen strategic communication between the two sides, deepen friendly exchanges in various areas, and lift the DPRK-China relationship to a new height. —Xinhua ■

Russian bombers violate Japanese airspace, prompt ASDF scramble

TOKYO — Japan's Defence Ministry said Thursday Russian bombers had violated southern Japanese airspace, prompting Air Self-Defence Force fighters to scramble and escort the planes out of the area.

Two Tu-95 bombers entered Japanese airspace near Minamidaito Island in Okinawa for about three minutes from around 8:55 am on Thursday, and one of them re-entered, flying near Hachijo Island in the Izu island chain, south of Tokyo, for around two minutes just past 10:20 am, the ministry said, adding there were no dangerous maneuvers.

The two bombers were spotted flying southward from the Sea of Japan through the Tsushima Strait between Japan's southwest and South Korea in the morning and then turning north over the south of Okinawa, the ministry said.

The Japanese government lodged a "stern protest" with



Supplied photo shows a Russian bomber. (Photo courtesy of the Japanese Defence Ministry.) PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Russia, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

The Russian Defense Ministry denied a violation had occurred, Russia's Tass news agency reported, citing the ministry as saying the "flight was carried out in strict compliance with the international rules" and "without any violations of the borders of other states."

Two ASDF fighters "escorted" the bombers during parts of the over 14-hour flight of the

Russian aircraft, according to the Tass report.

In September 2015, what appeared to be a Russian aircraft violated northern Japanese airspace off the Nemuro Peninsula on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido, according to Japan's Defense Ministry. The area is near Kunashiri Island and the Habomai islet group, two of four Russian-controlled islands that are claimed by Japan. —Kyodo News ■

Abe decides against holding simultaneous elections

TOKYO — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has decided against holding simultaneous elections for both houses of parliament this summer for fear of undermining the strength of the ruling coalition, senior administration officials said Wednesday.

The decision comes as the Abe administration has been facing intense criticism over its refusal to accept a report by experts that raised questions about the credibility of Japan's pension system as well as the use of erroneous geographical data in selecting a candidate site for a U.S.-developed missile defense system.

With Komeito, the coalition partner of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, also opposed to holding a double election, the prime minister on Wednesday dismissed the possibility of dissolving the House of Representatives during his first parliamentary debate with opposition party leaders in a year.

"It is not at all in my mind,"

he said in response to a question from an opposition party lawmaker.

The regular Diet session is set to end on 26 June. The upper house election will likely be held on 21 July after campaigning kicks off on 4 July, sources close to the thinking of the ruling coalition said.

The current six-year term for half of the upper house members will expire on 28 July.

Some ruling party lawmakers are skeptical that the LDP will be able to increase its seats in parliament following the party's strong wins in the 2013 upper house and 2017 lower house elections.

The LDP-Komeito coalition holds over a two-thirds majority in the lower house but is shy of it in the upper house. To achieve the first-ever constitutional revision, the long-held goal of Abe and the LDP, two-thirds majorities in both chambers are required. —Kyodo News ■



The Bank of England worries about rising chances of a no-deal Brexit. PHOTO: AFP

BoE warns risk of no-deal Brexit has increased

LONDON — The prospect of Britain crashing out of the European Union without a deal has risen since last month, the Bank of England warned Thursday, as it kept interest rates unchanged.

“Domestically, the perceived likelihood of a no-deal Brexit has risen” since May, the BoE said in a statement after its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the cen-

tral bank’s main borrowing cost at 0.75 per cent.

“Since the Committee’s previous meeting... downside risks to growth have increased. Globally, trade tensions have intensified,” said the BoE, whose Governor Mark Carney is set to step down on 31 January, having extended his tenure twice owing to Brexit uncertainty.

“As expected, recent UK data have been vola-

tile, in large part due to Brexit-related effects on financial markets and businesses,” it added.

The central bank on Thursday downgraded its forecast for second-quarter UK economic growth to zero from 0.2 per cent.

The UK’s “economic outlook will continue to depend significantly on the nature and timing of EU withdrawal”, it added. —AFP ■

Transferring Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution and registration processes of pesticides produced by SHANDONG BINNONG TECHNOLOGY CO., LTD. are transferring from MYANMAR KAUNG HMAN GROUP CO., LTD to MYANMAR GOLDEN BYTER CO., LTD. Any Objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board for the following Pesticide within (14) days.

No	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration No
1	BNS PYRAC 250 EC	Pyraclostrobin 250g/l EC	Experimental Registration	E2018-4353

MYANMAR GOLDEN BYTER CO., LTD.

No. (125-127), Kha 11 Street, Myoe Thit (A+B) Quarter, Insein Township, Yangon.

Japan convenience store sales rise in May for 7th straight month

TOKYO — Convenience store sales in Japan rose 1.7 per cent in May from a year earlier, marking the seventh consecutive month of increase, driven by increased sales of drinks, ice cream and other cold food amid relatively high temperatures across the country, an industry body said Thursday.

The same-store sales of seven major convenience store operators totaled 866.94 billion yen

(\$8.05 billion), with sales of frozen meals, rice and noodle-based items, and other prepared food remaining strong, according to the Japan Franchise Association.

Many days of ideal weather for outings, particularly during the 10-day Golden Week holiday, also pushed up sales of rice balls and sushi, it said.

The number of customers declined for the third straight month, with

a 1.1 per cent year-on-year fall, due to fierce competition from drugstores and other businesses, while average spending per customer rose 2.8 per cent to 621.2 yen, up for the seventh month in a row.

The sales figures covered Seven-Eleven Japan Co, FamilyMart Co, Lawson Inc, Ministop Co, Poplar Co, Yamazaki Baking Co and Hokkaido-based Secoma Co. —Kyodo News ■

PESTICIDES DISTRIBUTOR CHANGING

We, Behn Meyer AgCare LLP would like to change the distributor of the following products, which registered under Pesticide Registration Board, Myanmar, from Green Field Agriculture & Livestock Products Co-Op Ltd to Agri First Co., Ltd. If any object or enquiry, please contact to Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Yangon from here to next (14) days.

No.	Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type	Registration Number
1.	BM Mancozeb 80 WP	Mancozeb 80% WP	Full	F2010-715
2.	BM Glyphosate	Glyphosate 48% SL	Full	F2010-717
3.	BM Promax 75 SP	Acephate 75% SP	Full	F2010-714
4.	Cythrion Premium	Cypermethrin 10% EC	Full	F2010-712
5.	BM Delta 2.8%EC	Deltamethrin 2.8% EC	Full	F2010-713
6.	V-Fas	Glufosinate-ammonium 15%w/v	Full	F2014-970
7.	Anlate 5 EC	Hexaconazole 5% w/v EC	Full	F2014-971
8.	Pesfolin Granular	Temephos 1.1%G	Full	F2014-945
9.	Properthrin	Profenofos 40% w/v + Cypermethrin 4% w/v	Full	F2014-946
10.	Sucthion 40 EC	Dimethoate 40% EC	Full	F2014-947
11.	BM Metalaxy MZ	Metalaxyl 10% w/w + Mancozeb 48% w/w MZ	Full	F2014-948
12.	Pesfolin 50 EC	Temephos 50% EC	Full	F2017-1310
13.	BM Propineb	Propineb 70% WP	Full	F2017-1311
14.	BM Mite 80 DF	Sulphur 80% DF	Full	F2017-1312
15.	BM Amine 720	2,4-D dimethylamine 72%SL	Full	F2017-1313
16.	BM Diazinon 10 G	Diazinon 10%G	Full	F2017-1314
17.	BM Carbendazim	Carbendazim 50%WVG	Full	F2017-1315
18.	BM Imida	Imidacloprid 20%SL	Full	F2017-1316
19.	Copcide	Copper oxychloride 84%WP	Full	F2017-1317

Address- Green Field Agriculture & Livestock Products Co-Op Ltd

Building 53/Room 9, Nilar 2nd Lane, Highway Bus Terminal Compound
Saw Bwa Gyi Gone, Insein Township, Yangon

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ORNELLA VOY. NO. (923W)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ORNELLA VOY. NO. (923W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-06-2019 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)
PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (017N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCEAN PROBE VOY. NO. (017N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-06-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V TAN BINH 257

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TAN BINH 257 VOY. NO. (0119) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-06-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.I.P.T-1 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 NEW HIGHEST SHIPPING
PTE, LTD

Phone No: 2301928



Leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations pose for a photo with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (5th from l), Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (6th from l) and South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung Wha (6th from r) ahead of an ASEAN-plus-three meeting in Singapore on 15 November, 2018. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

ASEAN leaders to discuss meeting N Korean leader Kim in S Korea

BANGKOK — Leaders of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations are set to discuss at their weekend summit a planned meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un later this year in South Korea, an ASEAN diplomat told Kyodo News on Thursday.

“If the leaders agree, the meeting will take place this November in Busan, South Korea,” the diplomat said on the condition of anonymity.

The diplomat said the topic is on the agenda at a two-day ASEAN summit that begins Saturday in Bangkok. It will also be discussed by foreign ministers ahead of the summit.

ASEAN leaders have been carefully considering how to go about extending the invitation to North Korea, fearing that it may discredit the honor of ASEAN “if Kim turns it down,” the diplomat

said.

ASEAN and South Korea will be holding a Commemorative Summit, which will mark the 30th anniversary of the Korea-ASEAN Dialogue Relations, on 25-26 November in Busan.

South Korean President Moon Jae In is said to be mulling a joint invitation, to be signed by ASEAN leaders and himself, while others have suggested that Moon either extend an invitation himself or that Thailand, as ASEAN chair, extend it.

The main topic for discussion will be “peace and stability in the region, and the role of ASEAN,” the diplomat said.

If the meeting takes place, it is proposed to be a tripartite “special session” among ASEAN leaders and the leaders of North and South Korea.

When asked who initiated the proposed meeting with Kim,

the diplomat said Indonesia, but soon after South Korea also broached the topic.

He added that if the meeting materializes, it will be a turning point in North Korea diplomacy, with the 10-member group taking a greater role in talks on Pyongyang’s nuclear program.

Negotiations on denuclearization have stalled since a second summit between US President Donald Trump and Kim, held in February in Hanoi, ended without an agreement due to a gap over the scope of North Korea’s denuclearization and sanctions relief from the United States.

ASEAN comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. All 10 nations have diplomatic ties with North Korea.

— Kyodo News ■

New Zealand launches gun buyback, amnesty plan

SYDNEY — The New Zealand government began on Thursday the country’s first-ever firearms buyback in the wake of deadly mass shootings at two Christchurch mosques in March.

Finance Minister Grant Robertson and Police Minister Stuart Nash said in a joint statement the multimillion-dollar buyback and amnesty program will run for six months and aims to take semi-automatic weapons, parts, magazines and ammunition out of circulation. “The ‘buy-back’ and amnesty has one objective: to remove the most dangerous weapons

from circulation following the loss of life at Al-Noor and Linwood mosques on 15 March,” Nash said. Australian Brenton Tarrant, 28, faces an array of charges, including 51 counts of murder, in relation to the shooting rampage at the two mosques in central Christchurch.

He is alleged to have used legally purchased firearms which were subsequently illegally modified, effectively turning the weapons into military-style semi-automatic guns. The government is setting aside NZ\$208 million (\$137 million) to compensate gun owners for surrendering now-prohibited fire-

arms. Wellington passed laws to ban most types of semi-automatic weapons in April. Owners will receive compensation of up to 95 percent of the base price for guns and up to 70 per cent for parts and magazines. Although the government said firearms owners would receive “fair compensation,” lobby groups say people are angry and disappointed. Nicole McKee, a spokeswoman for the Council for Licensed Firearms Owners, told Radio New Zealand gun owners feel that the compensation amounts have not been properly calculated.— Kyodo News ■

China’s Xi arrives in Pyongyang, 1st trip as president to N Korea

BEIJING — Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Pyongyang from Beijing by plane on Thursday, making his first trip to North Korea since he came to power in 2013, Chinese state media reported.

Xi is the first Chinese president to visit North Korea in 14 years, reflecting the improvement in bilateral ties since North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made his first trip as supreme leader to China in March last year.

At their planned talks, Xi is expected to call on Kim to maintain dialogue with the United States toward denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to focus on building up the country’s moribund economy.

The RodongSinmun, the mouthpiece newspaper of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea, said Thursday in an editorial that North Korea welcomes Xi’s visit.

The nation’s friendship with China is a “cornerstone to protect peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and the region,” North Korea’s most influential newspaper said. Beijing and Pyongyang are marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

On his Twitter account earlier in the day, British Ambassador to North Korea Colin Crooks posted pictures showing many people gathered along streets, and Chinese and North Korean flags displayed in Pyongyang before Xi’s arrival. Xi, meanwhile, said in the RodongSinmun on Wednesday that he is ready to help find a political solution to issues related to the divided peninsula and work out a plan with Pyongyang to realize regional stability.

In the newspaper, Xi said he

is “ready to devise a far-reaching plan to realize permanent regional stability.”

The Chinese president also expressed support for dialogue in solving matters of “reasonable interest” to North Korea, indicating China wants the United States to meet North Korea’s demands for a security guarantee and the easing of economic sanctions.

China and North Korea, which fought together in the 1950-1953 Korean War against U.S.-led United Nations forces, have been long described as “blood brothers.” Since the cease-fire, Beijing has exerted its economic and political influence over Pyongyang.

Xi’s meeting with Kim will come around a week before the Group of 20 summit in Osaka, where world political leaders, including Xi and US President Donald Trump, will gather.

On the sidelines of the summit, Xi and Trump are likely to hold bilateral talks. Xi may try to use potential progress with North Korea as a bargaining chip to extract concessions from Washington, as the world’s two largest economies have been engaged in a tit-for-tat tariff trade war, pundits say. Xi and Kim will meet for the first time since the second U.S.-North Korea summit in Hanoi in late February collapsed, due largely to the gap between Washington’s insistence on denuclearization and Pyongyang’s demand for sanctions relief. Kim, who wants the international community to lift economic sanctions, could attempt to obtain backing from China to move ahead with negotiations with Washington, as the Trump administration is unwilling to readily compromise with Pyongyang.— Kyodo News



Ahead of his trip, China’s President Xi Jinping penned a rare opinion piece in state newspaper RodongSinmun. **PHOTO: AFP**

Iran says shot down US drone over its territory

TEHRAN — Iran's Revolutionary Guard said Thursday it had shot down a US "spy drone" which violated Iranian airspace near the Strait of Hormuz, in the latest incident to stoke tension in the strategic sea lane.

The US-manufactured Global Hawk surveillance drone was hit with a missile "after violating Iranian air space" over the waters of Hormozgan province, the Guard said in a statement.

The Iranian military did not immediately publish images of the drone. The incident comes at a time of growing antagonism between Iran and the United States following two waves of still unexplained attacks on Gulf shipping, which Washington has blamed on Tehran.

Iran has denied any involvement and hinted that the US might have orchestrated them itself to provide a pretext for the use of force against the Islamic republic. Shooting down the drone on Thursday was "a clear message" that Iran will defend

its borders, the head of the Revolutionary Guard said.

Iran will "respond to all foreign aggression and our reaction is, and will be, categorical and absolute," Hossein Salami said, quoted by Tasnim news agency.

"We declare that we are not looking for war but we are ready to respond to any declaration of war," he added.

World oil prices rebounded strongly after the incident, with London's Brent North Sea crude up 2.4 per cent to \$63.31 per barrel in late morning trading.

The US military would not confirm one of its drones was downed. "We did not have aircraft flying in Iranian airspace. All US aircraft were in international air space," said Earl Brown, spokesman for the US Central Command.

'Maximum pressure'

Tensions have been running high between Iran and the United States ever since President Donald Trump abandoned a land-

mark 2015 nuclear agreement in May last year. The subsequent reimposition of crippling unilateral sanctions has dealt a heavy blow to Iran's already flagging economy. Washington has also bolstered its military presence in the Middle East in a campaign of "maximum pressure" against Tehran.

Its deployment to the Gulf of an aircraft carrier task force as well as B-52 bombers, an amphibious assault ship and a missile defence battery has sparked fears of fresh conflict in the region.

One of the two tankers attacked in the Gulf of Oman last week was damaged by a limpet mine, the US military said Wednesday.

Commander Sean Kido of US Naval Forces Central Command, or NAVCENT, said the mine used in the attack "is distinguishable and it is also strikingly bearing a resemblance to Iranian mines that have already been publicly displayed in Iranian military parades".



The Japanese-owned tanker Kokuka Courageous has been towed to the coast of the United Arab Emirates after being attacked in the Gulf of Oman last week. PHOTO: AFP

The Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous, loaded with highly flammable methanol, came under attack last Thursday as it passed through the Gulf of Oman along with the Norwegian-operated Front Altair.

Fingerprints

It was the second attack in a month on ships in the strategic shipping lane.

On 12 May, two Saudi oil tankers and two other vessels were damaged in mysterious "sabotage attacks" in the Gulf of Oman off the United Arab Emirates. Kido told reporters in the UAE emirate of Fujairah that the US military had recovered "biometric information" of the assailants on the Kokuka Courageous including fingerprints. —AFP ■

Yemen rebels target Saudi desalination plant: coalition

RIYADH — A Yemeni rebel strike targeted a desalination plant in the southwestern Saudi province of Jizan, a Riyadh-led military coalition fighting the rebels said Thursday.

The projectile struck near the plant in the Al-Shuqaiq area of Jizan late Wednesday, coalition spokesman Turki al-Maliki was quoted as saying by the official Saudi Press Agency.

It reported no casualties or damage, adding that they were investigating the nature of the

projectile.

The coalition will take "firm measures, urgent and timely, to deter this terrorist militia", Maliki said.

"The terrorist elements responsible for planning and executing these acts... will be held responsible."

Late Wednesday, Yemen's Iran-aligned Huthi rebels said they fired a missile at a power station in Jizan province.

The White House said on Thursday that President Donald

Trump had been briefed about reports of a missile strike on Saudi Arabia, without offering details.

The rebels, who have faced persistent coalition bombing since March 2015 which has exacted a heavy civilian death toll, have stepped up missile and drone attacks across the border in recent weeks.

Last week, a rebel missile attack on the international airport in the southwestern city of Abha wounded 26 civilians, draw-

ing promises of "stern action" from the coalition.

Human Rights Watch denounced last week's strike as an apparent "war crime", urging the Huthis to immediately stop all attacks on civilian infrastructure in Saudi Arabia.

The attacks come amid heightened regional tensions with Iran, which Saudi Arabia has repeatedly accused of supplying sophisticated weapons to the rebels. Tehran denies the charge.

Saudi state media have reported an intensification of coalition air raids on rebel positions in the northern Yemeni province of Hajjah and the capital Sanaa.

The coalition intervened in support of the Yemeni government in 2015 when President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi fled into Saudi exile as the rebels closed in on his last remaining territory in and around second city Aden.

Since then, the conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, many of them civilians, relief agencies say.

It has triggered what the UN describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with more than 24 million Yemenis — more than two-thirds of the population — in need of aid. —AFP ■

China calls for combating terrorism in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS — A Chinese envoy on Wednesday called for efforts to help boost Afghanistan's capacity for combating terrorism and maintaining stability.

Ma Zhaoxu, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, expressed the hope that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) will continue to help the country strengthen capacity building in the field of security.

The international community should strengthen coordination and cooperation to support Afghanistan in its counterterrorism efforts to effectively respond to terrorism, transnational crime, and drug trafficking, among other threats, he told a UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan.

The Chinese ambassador also urged the international community to help improve the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Recently, conflicts and natural disasters have left large numbers of Afghans displaced, while millions of people affected by droughts still need humanitarian assistance, he said. —Xinhua ■



Saudi border guards keep watch along the border with Yemen in the al-Khubah area of the southwestern Saudi province of Jizan on 3 October, 2017. PHOTO: AFP PHOTO

Futsal Cup 2019: Myanmar secures place in semi-final by beating Cambodia 9-3

MYANMAR'S MIU F.C. (Myanmar Imperial University Futsal Club) prevailed over Cambodia's Down Town Sport (DTS) by 6 goals in the second Group B match of Futsal Cup 2019, held yesterday in Khorat, Thailand, to secure a place in the semi-finals.

MIU dominated the match with concerted play, while debutants Down Town F.C. made an all-out effort against the strong Myanmar futsal team.

Myanmar futsal star Pyae Phyo Maung netted the first goal for MIU at two minutes. Six minutes later, Myanmar's Kyaw Kyaw Tun scored the second goal, raising the team's confidence. Pyae Phyo Maung landed two more goals at the 8th (second penalty) and 20th minute, while Kyaw Tun added another goal to MIU's kitty, also at 20 minutes.

Down Town F.C. made two consecutive goals at 17 minutes. They were both scored by Owolabi Fisayo Blessing.

After the first half, the score stood at 5-2 in favour of MIU, assisted by Pyae Phyo Maung's hat-trick and goals by Kyaw Tun.

While MIU kept up the pressure, Down Town's Tong Chanmony landed the third goal for his team at 21 minutes, taking advantage of a breach in MIU's defense in the second half. However, MIU proved to be unstoppable, with Khin Zaw Linn scoring at 26 and 35 minutes, Phyo Maung at 37 minutes, and Aung Thu at 39 minutes, taking the goal tally to 9.

With the 9-3 win over Down Town, MIU has advanced to the semi-final stage of the tourney. It has placed first in Group B, while Down Town has finished second,



Myanmar Futsal star Pyae Phyo Maung (yellow) readies for a pass during the final Group B match of AFC Cup 2019 yesterday at the futsal stadium of Khorat, Thailand. **PHOTO: MIU F.C.**

and Melaka United of Malaysia third. In the semi-final, MIU will

take on Group A runners up Sanvines Sanatech Khanh Hoa F.C.

of Viet Nam on 22 June. —Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

U-19 MNL 2019: Zwegapin beat Hantharwady 3-1



A player from Zwegapin United (green) tries to take the ball past Hantharwady United players (red) during the U-19 Myanmar National League match yesterday at Salin Stadium in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNL**

ZWEKAPIN United beat Hantharwady United 3-1 in their U-19 Myanmar National League 2019 match, held yesterday at Salin Stadium in Yangon.

The match was an exciting one with both teams using talented players and launching open attacks from the kick-off.

Zwegapin scored the opening goal at 28 minutes. The goal was scored by youth player Aung Ko Ko.

Ten minutes later, Zwegapin United got a penalty due

to the opposing team's foul in penalty area. The penalty was successfully converted by Htoo Htoo.

After gaining two early goals, Zwegapin controlled the match with smart and steady play.

But Hantharwady managed to take advantage of breaches in Zwegapin's defence, with Sithu Aung scoring a flawless goal for his team, taking the score at the end of the first half to 2-1.

The second half saw ag-

gressive play by both teams as they put in more efforts to score.

At 55 minutes, Zwegapin United scored a penalty after a Hantharwady defender touched the ball with hand in the penalty area. The penalty was scored by Kyaw Kyaw Htet, taking Zwegapin United's goal tally to 3.

In the later minutes, no more goals were scored, and the match ended 3-1, in favour of Zwegapin United.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

'Just where we want to be' - England in good shape for World Cup knockouts

NICE — England coach Phil Neville said his team were "just where we want to be" as Ellen White's brace saw them head into the last 16 of the women's World Cup with a 2-0 win over Japan on Wednesday.

Georgia Stanway released White to slot home the opener in the 14th minute, and the same player wrapped up the win six minutes from time.

A much-changed England were already through to the knockout phase before this, but the victory in Nice ensured that they progress as winners of Group D. It also allowed them to gain a measure of revenge for their heartbreaking 2-1 defeat against the same opponents in the semi-finals four years ago.

"We've got another clean sheet, we've won another game, we've played three and won three, and we're just where we want to be, in the last 16, and ready to attack the business end of the tournament," said Neville.

White came back into the line-up as one of eight changes following the 1-0 win over Argentina, and took her tally of goals in this World Cup to three overall.

"I'm delighted to have got

two starts and for me I am delighted to contribute to this team in any way I can, on and off the pitch, and contributing with two goals is a dream really," said the 30-year-old.

"It was about winning the group, that is what we have done and now we will look forward to the round of 16."

While both sides were already through before this encounter on the Cote d'Azur, there was certainly plenty to be gained by finishing first in the section given what is likely to come next.

Having arrived in France with genuine ambitions of winning the trophy, England will now head north to Valenciennes for a last-16 tie on Sunday against a third-placed side from another group.

However, they will not know until late on Thursday who they will be coming up against, with Cameroon, New Zealand, Chile and even Thailand all potential opponents. The permutations are less complicated for Japan, but the Nadeshiko — World Cup winners in 2011 and runners-up in 2015 — will surely have a stiffer test in Rennes against either the Netherlands or Canada.— AFP ■