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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi enjoys "Duo Gazzana" violin and piano concert in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

State Counsellor enjoys Italian "Duo Gazzana" violin and piano concert

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended the concert of Italian pianist Ms. Raffaella and Violinist Ms. Nataschia Gazzana at the Kempinski Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Also present at the concert

were Union Ministers U Win Khaing, U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Myo Thein Gyi, U Han Zaw and wife, Dr. Win Myat Aye and U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing, Permanent Secretaries, Directors-General, dip-

lomats, guests and officials.

First, Ambassador of Italy to Myanmar Mrs. Alessandra Schiavo spoke about the classical music concert.

Afterwards, Pianist Ms. Raffaella and Violinist Ms. Na-

tascia Gazzana performed their special live concert with violin and piano and Romanian dance.

Following their performance, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greeted the two world-class Italian musi-

cians Ms. Raffaella and Ms. Nataschia Gazzana cordially.

In the second session of the concert, the two musicians entertained the guests with more Italian classical music.—MNA (Translated by KZL)

National Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) holds coordination meeting

COORDINATION meeting 2/2018 of the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Vice President U Henry Van Thio, in his capacity as chairman of the committee, delivered an opening address.

Speaking at the event, the Vice President called for inclusiveness in development programs, adding that challenges being faced in the world must

be overcome through working together and cooperation.

"When we carry out the development and building capacity of people with disabilities, all the people including the people

with disabilities should participate in the community-based drive for their development and should share the fruits of their development" said the Vice President.

Technical Assistance Group has been formed to lay down tasks in accordance with international standards for work committees, sub-committees and region/state committees and Nay Pyi Taw Council committee.

Myanmar ratified the UN-CRPD on 7 December 2011 and as per the convention the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015), and Rules on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2017) were enacted and a Strategy on Development of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2025) was formulated and approved.

To effectively implement the law, rule and strategy, a national level committee, work committees, states/regions and Nay Pyi Taw Council committees and

sub-committees were formed.

The sub-committees are the education sub-committee, the health sub-committee, the employment sub-committee, the research sub-committee, the monitoring sub-committee, the women and children with disabilities sub-committee, information technology sub-committee, disaster and other emergencies sub-committee, and the fund management for rights of persons with disabilities sub-committee.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

By Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

THE Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth-day regular session held its tenth meeting at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

Q&A Session

The meeting starts with asterisk marked question session where U Min Thein of Taung-dwingyi constituency asked if there is a plan by a relevant ministry to maintain the tombs of the Konbaung dynasty royal ancestors in the vicinity of Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda in Yangon. Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min replied that of the 20 tombs, only six including that of former Minister for Home Affairs Sir U Tha were of Konbaung dynasty royal ancestors Princess Mindat Hteik Khaung Tin, daughter of King Mindon had elaborate designs on the tomb while the rest are simple plain tombs.

Since about eighteen years



U Min Thein. PHOTO: MNA

ago, the tombs were left unattended but a month ago, Myanmar Royal Ancestor Association has conducted maintenance works on the tombs. It is more appropriate for the royal ancestors to maintain these tombs while the ministry gave priority to other historical, architectural and artistic heritages explained the Deputy Minister.

On the question raised by U Myo Nyunt of Homalin constitu-



U Kyi Min. PHOTO: MNA

ency on plan to promote graduate general workers in primary schools of education department as primary school teachers or grant permission to attend education college and serve as primary school teachers. Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi explained that this program has been discontinued. However as per promotion regulation, qualified general workers will be selected to attend teacher training



U Myo Nyunt. PHOTO: MNA

courses and will be appointed as primary school teachers. In addition to this, everyone, including graduate general workers can sit in the entrance examination to attend primary school teacher training course like any other graduates said the Union Minister.

Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency then asked about how local and internationally linked schools are permitted,

assessed and graded as college, center, courses, training, institute school, programme, pre-graduate trainings etc., which department conducts evaluation on the degrees granted and whether the main schools, universities and colleges recognize these degrees. Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said the curriculums of diploma, degree, master and doctorate courses conducted in Ministry of Education, Higher Education Department, universities and colleges as well as other courses conducted by other ministries in cooperation with Ministry of Education are submitted to National Education Policy Commission and National Curriculum Committee where evaluation and decision were made and approvals were granted.

Private schools teaching the national curriculum or national curriculum plus additional curriculums are permitted according to Private School Registration Law and rules.

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Amyotha Hluttaw

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's tenth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

By Aung Ye Thwin

THE tenth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw held its tenth-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting Hall of the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. During the session, asterisk-marked questions were asked and answered; discussions on a bill and a motion were made by the Hluttaw representatives.

At the Hluttaw session, U Sai Wan Hlaing Kham of Shan State constituency 3 asked the government whether it plans to upgrade a highway to tar road connecting to Mine See, Mine Hon and Mine Ya villages in Kutkai Township, Muse District, Northern Shan State. Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin replied that plans are under way to upgrade these roads to tar ones when peace prevails in the region.

U Han Win Thein of Taninthayi Region constituency 4 asked the Taninthayi Region government whether it plans to close the Mahlwe Taung Combined inspection Gate situated on Pyidaungsu Road that shares a border with Mon State and Taninthayi Region. Deputy Minister for



U Sai Wan Hlaing Kham. PHOTO: MNA

Construction U Kyaw Lin replied that there was no plan to close the inspection gate because the Mahlwe Taung border crossing can contribute to enhancing safety measure for the whole populace in the region.

U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 asked the government if it plans to construct an access road between Thadarseik and Shwe Hlaing villages, and a road between Byar Lar and Sainohchaing villages through the fields. Regarding this query, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin replied that currently there was no plan



U Kyaw Lin. PHOTO: MNA

to construct these roads due to financial constraints for this year. In doing so, the construction project would be dependent upon the allotment of funds after making coordination with the Rakhine State government.

Likewise Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin replied the queries raised by U Zung Hlei Thang of Chin State constituency 4 and U Khin Win of Magway Region constituency 2 respectively.

Then Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than asked the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the



U Han Win Thein. PHOTO: MNA

Myanmar Accountancy Council bill sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments, with the aim of letting the representatives know about the bill. Regarding the Occupational Safety and Health Bill, U Soe Thein alias U Maung Soe of Taninthayi Region constituency 10, U Maung Maung Ohn of Ayeyawady Region constituency 5, U Kyaw Htwe of Yangon Region constituency 8, Daw Ei Ei Pyone of Magway Region's Constituency 8 and U Hla San of Magway Region constituency 1 participated in the discussion.

Next Hluttaw representatives discussed the motion tabled

by Daw Thiri Yadana of Mon State constituency 12, whom urged the Union Government to save the wildlife in a timely manner, while taking effective legal action against the wildlife trafficking.

Dr. Tin Tin Win of Bago Region constituency 5 took part in the discussion and supported the motion. U Sa Khin Zaw Lin of Ayeyawady Region constituency 2 discussed that systematic measures should be made to send the pet elephants back in the forest while taking preventative measure to protect illegal logging and the smuggling of forest products. It is needed to increase the staff numbers of the forestry department while conducting training classes to share knowledge and they are in need of providing with modern equipment. Regarding this motion, Dr. Kyaw Than Htun (Kantong) of Mandalay Region constituency 3, U Khin Myo Win of Taninthayi Region constituency 12 and Dr. Khun Win Thaung of Kachin State constituency 11 participated in the discussion. The eleventh-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's tenth regular session will be held on 7 December. ■ (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

National Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) holds coordination meeting

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National committee meetings were held twice to date, once in 2017 and once in 2018. Work committee meetings were held twice in 2018, a meeting to establish a fund for persons with disabilities was also held on 20 June in 2018. At those meetings, decisions were made on projects and work processes related to development of the rights of the persons with disabilities and development inclusive of persons with disabilities.

According to the 100-day work program, conventions on children, women and persons with disability were published in Braille for persons with impaired vision. A project for persons with impaired hearing to have access to news and information was also implemented and the outcome is preparing and publishing in hand sign language of conventions on women and persons with disabilities. Translators of hand sign language are being trained and developed and courses for hand sign language assistants were also being conducted continuously.

Meanwhile, to create job opportunities for persons with physical disabilities, a project to provide vocational training to people with physical disabilities is being implemented. To promote creating job opportunities for persons with physical disabilities, a manual for



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the coordination meeting of National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

creating jobs for persons with disabilities was also completed for employers and a manual for using suitable usage for persons with disabilities was also completed.

There are 17 goals in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for 2015-2030, and only when the ministries concerned reach their respective goals, the human society including vulnerable populations can reap the benefits.

The Union Government held a forum for people with disabilities on 26 September, 2018, as part of efforts for fulfilling seven pledges made by the Myanmar delegation at the Global Disability Summit. The pledges for the disabled include making

survey about them, promoting their education and health, creating environment for the disabled at the work place, assisting them in getting access to using information technology, adopting national-level programs for development of the disabled, helping people with disability in situation of disasters and emergencies and their rehabilitation.

The Vice President also urged the people with disabilities to take part in programs including disaster management, reducing poverty and rural area development making the best use of their intellectual capabilities as much as possible.

He also called for cooperation with local and international

organizations to draw effective policies for rights of the disabled and getting technology resources, saying that the Technical Assistance Group has been formed to lay down tasks in accordance with international standards for work committees, sub-committees and region/state committees and Nay Pyi Taw Council committee.

The Vice President also urged the members of the national committee to take into consideration the role of the disabled in disaster management programs and their needs as part of efforts for reaching the goal of development of the disabled.

Afterwards, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, Vice

Chairman of the National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) spoke about tasks being implemented for providing the disabled with full rights and U Thein Lwin, Acting Chairman of the Myanmar Federation of Persons with Disabilities extended greetings.

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Defence Rear-Admiral Myint Nwe, Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Mya Lay Sein, member of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, members of the region and state cabinets, the vice chairman of the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, Permanent Secretaries, and Directors-General discussed about the rights of the disabled.

In his concluding remarks, Vice President U Henry Van Thio called for sending delegations to international events related with persons with disabilities to get technological skills and advice for the government's efforts for development of the disabled in the country.

In addition, he also urged the authorities to make more efforts for fulfilling more basic infrastructures and create more job opportunities for the disabled while promoting dissemination of knowledge on the disabled.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Gender equality work groups hold discussions

A TWO-DAY forum for gender equality work groups began at the training hall of the office of the Union Election Commission (UEC) in Nay Pyi Taw at 9 am yesterday.

The groups discussed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1997, and participation of women in Myanmar politics, among other things at the forum, which has been jointly organized by the UEC and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

"During the two-day forum, discussions will focus on the importance of the CEDAW and the need for collaborating with people from different sectors to promote

the participation of women voters and women Hluttaw representatives in politics and elections," said U Hla Thein, the Chairman of the UEC, while opening the forum.

The forum will discuss future tasks included in the Gender Policy Action Plan of the Strategic Plan (2019-2022) of the UEC, he said adding that he believes that better outcomes would result from the forum.

"The UEC has tried to promote women's participation in elections and politics in many ways since 2016," said U Hla Thein.

Training courses and workshops have been organized with the help of international organizations and civil society groups

to raise awareness on the issue, he said.

"Gender support groups have also been established at each level of the commission and the sub-commissions. The National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NS-PAW) 2013-2022, laid down by the government is being implemented with cooperation from other ministries, including the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement," he added.

Afterwards, the IFES Country Director, Mr. Paul Guerin OBE, explained the reason for holding the discussions and programs. Director-General of the UEC, U Khin Maung Oo, conducted discussions on matters related to gender equality at the UEC,



UEC Chairman U Hla Thein delivers the opening speech at the forum in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

programs for raising women's participation in different sectors, and works to be continued. At the forum, members of the gender equality work groups discussed the contents of the CEDAW, gender equality and inclusivity, obstacles, and terms and conditions, and building self-confidence.

Six members from the gender equality work groups of the UEC, team leaders of the gender equality work groups from region/state election sub-commissions, and 30 secretaries were present at the forum. —MNA

(Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw attends conference on dissemination of Red Cross education

U T Khun Myat, Speaker of Pyidaungsu and Pyithu Hluttaws attended the conference on disseminating knowledge of Red Cross education at the Thabin Hall, Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, Hluttaw representatives, officials and staff of Hluttaws' offices, Chairman of Myanmar Red Cross Society and its executive committee members, officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Red Crescent Societies were present at the conference.

In his opening speech, U T Khun Myat said that the activities of the Myanmar Red Cross Society have been operated as a branch of the Indian Red Cross Society since 1920 in Myanmar. In 1937, The Burma Red Cross Society obtained official, national status and was recognized by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1939. Myanmar became a member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent



U T Khun Myat, Speaker of both the Pyidaungsu and Pyithu Hluttaws, addresses the conference on disseminating knowledge of Red Cross education in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**



Societies (IFRC) in 1946.

Following this, the Burma Red Cross Act was enacted in 1959 and additional amendments in 1964, 1971, and 1988, with a view to performing humanitarian activities as always. The Burma Red Cross Act has existed for over 50 years, and the MRCS new law was enacted by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. (52/2015) in accordance with the changes of its formation, functions and roles. Consequently the amendments of the MRCS were made by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. (18/2018).

In the implementation process of the law, relevant ministries were urged to carry out the rules at the soonest possible time.

With the aim of preventing misuse of the Red Cross Symbol, the draft law for using the Red Cross Symbol law has already been drawn up and the Hluttaws would strive to enact the law.

In carrying out the humanitarian functions, there has been cooperation with ICRC, IFRC and other Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement partners, and the MRCS has laid down

its strategic goals for 2016-2020.

The Hluttaws would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the MRCS and its members for providing humanitarian assistance in the rehabilitation process of Rakhine State. That the President of the Republic of Myanmar has become a patron of the MRCS (MRCS) showed that the MRCS has been regarded in high esteem.

We believe that the purposes of the MRCS could be fulfilled through the cooperation of the Union Government. The conference has included a

question and answer session for Hluttaw representatives which could create good opportunities to develop the humanitarian process of the MRCS. The purpose of the MRCS is to alleviate human suffering. With this view in mind that efforts should be made to render necessary assistances regardless of time and place, added the the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat.

Next, Chairman of the MRCS Prof. Dr. Daw Mya Thu clarified the formation, functions and humanitarian process of the MRCS. ICRC Senior Advisor U Moe Myint Aung, Senior Management Service Manager U Kyaw Oo Khaing and General Secretary of the MRCS U Khin Maung Hla explained about procedures and ongoing process of the MRCS. Following this, officials concerned answered and clarified the queries raised by the participants. The MRCS has also actively providing humanitarian assistance to an average of 500,000 people in Myanmar every year. —MNA (Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker receives Indonesian Parliament Lower House Vice Speaker



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat holds meeting with Indonesian Lower House Vice Speaker Mr. Utut Adianto Wahyuidayat in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received a delegation led by Mr. Utut Adianto Wahyuidayat, Indonesian Parliament Lower House Vice Speaker for Financial Accountability and Parliamentary Policies and Procedures, at the

Zabuthiri Hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed building relations between the two parliaments and the peoples of both countries and exchanged views on parliamentary processes.

The meeting was attended by chairmen of Hluttaw committees U Zaw Thein, U Soe Thura Tun, U Khin Aye, U Kyi Moe Naing and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

UEC Chairman receives NIMD/Demo Finland

U Hla Thein, Chairman of the Union Election Commission (UEC), received a delegation led by Executive Director Ms. Helene Catherine e/v Otttrngat from MySop (NIMD/Demo Finland) at the reception hall of the UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they cordially discussed signing an MoU between the UEC and MySop, conducting training by

MySop for acting political parties, meeting of old attendees, holding party discussions, promoting the Multi Party Academy under the program of STEP Democracy in the framework of MySop and International IDEA, conducting courses for coordination, agendas to be extended for genders equality and programs to be cooperated with the UEC. — MNA (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein receives Ms. Helene Catherine e/v Otttrngat from MySop. **PHOTO: MNA**

MAB to offer loans up to Ks500 mln to SMEs

By Nyein Nyein

THE Myanmar Apex Bank will offer loans of up to Ks500 million to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) under a new scheme. A press conference was organized at Tower B of the Union Financial Center yesterday to announce the loan scheme.

The scheme, under which SMEs engaged in trading, service, and manufacturing businesses will be provided loans, has been launched with technical assistance from the German Development Bank (KfW) and Germany-based International Project Consults. The KfW has also contributed nearly Ks10.6 billion towards SME funding.

"The MAB has received nearly Ks10.6 billion as loan from the KfW. The bank will also use some money deposited in savings accounts to offer the SME-KfW loans," said U Zaw Moe Aung, the Deputy Chief Business Officer of MAB.

The MAB is offering two types of five-year loan plans. The first is a working capital loan to finance the everyday operations of a business such as sales and marketing, product



A woman drying colorful fabric after traditional dye process. PHOTO: CHAN THA (MEIKHTILA)

development, and wages. The second is a long-term, fixed rate, investment loan to purchase machinery, equipment, and buy property. The bank is offering loans of Ks10 million to Ks500 million under the scheme, and its grace period is maximum five years.

"We have two types of SME

loans -an SME-KfW loan with maximum lending amount of Ks100 million and an SME-MAB loan for Ks500 million," said U Zaw Moe Aung.

The MAB opened its first SME Center on 28 November at its Thirimingala market Branch near the new Thirimingala market. The bank is using a cash

flow-based approach as it can help applicants obtain financing much faster, as an appraisal of collateral is not required.

"Normally, banks offer commercial loans to currently established corporates. For example, businesses must meet the minimum three-year working requirement. They need to

present a financial statement and business tax receipt. But now eligibility criteria for SMEs somewhat less rigid, and judged by cash-flow analysis of the business. We offer relief for SME loans regarding some document verification requirements," said U Zaw Moe Aung.

The bank will evaluate SME loan amounts depending on customers' capital requirements and risk assessment. The interest rate has been set at 8.5 per cent for the SME-KfW loans and 13 per cent for the SME-MAB loans. However, those businesses which have social impact will not get access to credit, according to MAB.

"The SME loans are currently available for businesses in Yangon. We will make efforts to offer credit through our 94 branches across the country. More SME centers will be opened. I am very delighted to be a part of the development of SMEs, the backbone of the country's economy. We will push for further activities to help the SMEs grow," said U Kyaw Ni Khin, the chief business officer of MAB.

The SMEs constitute 90 per cent of businesses in Myanmar. (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trading on YSX bounces back in November

THE value of stocks traded on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) in November showed an increase of over Ks140 million compared with October, according to the monthly trading data released by the YSX.

The value of stock trades in November is estimated at Ks923 million, with trading volume of 191,153 shares, according to data from the YSX. In October, the trade value stood at Ks780 million, with a trading volume of 184,812 shares.

At present, shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMD), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), Myanmar Private Bank (FPB), and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd. — are being traded on the exchange.

This year, the YSX increased its stock trade matching time from two to four per day. In addition to this, the exchange held a promotional event to attract new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively. Financial reviews and future prospects of YSX listed companies were shared during



Yangon Stock Exchange in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

the event. "Myanmar's capital market infrastructure is still lacking. Only 15 per cent of 36,000 securities accounts are active. Stock trading this year is on the low side. In order for the stock market to grow in momentum, government support is vital. With the support of the government, more public companies will be enticed to participate in the stock market and more institutional investors such as financing companies, investment banks, and insurance companies will emerge," said U Thet Htun Oo, an executive senior manager at the YSX.

The value of stock trades of

the five listed companies on the YSX were pegged at Ks1.21 billion in January, Ks746 million in February, Ks778 million in March, Ks875 million in April, Ks869 million in May, touching an all-time low of Ks666 million in June, totalling Ks1.23 billion in July, and peaking at Ks1.5 billion in August. Thereafter, trade has seen a downward trend, with estimated trade values of Ks954.6 million in September and Ks780 million in October. Trades increased slightly in November, with estimated trading value of Ks923 million. —GNLM (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Muse gate sees only individual imports in current fiscal

INDIVIDUAL imports at the Muse gate totalled Ks11.7 million in the current Financial Year 2018-2019, according to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry.

Between 1 October and 23 November, border trade with the use of Individual Trading Cards (ITCs) totalled Ks9.7 billion. Exports were valued at Ks1.68 billion, while imports reached more than Ks8 billion.

The value of trade carried out by individual card holders stood at over Ks1 billion at Tamu, over Ks11.7 million at Muse, Ks4.6 billion at Myawady, Ks8.8 million at Tachilek, Ks321 million at Kanpikete, Ks539 million at Kawthoung, Ks34.6 million at Reed, Ks3.1 billion at Mawtaung, and Ks43.9 million at Kengtung, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

Trade through the use of ITCs totalled Ks22.5 billion in last mini-budget period (April-September this year),

over Ks18.9 billion in FY 2016-2017, over Ks6.4 billion in FY 2015-2016, over Ks9.3 billion in FY 2014-2015, over Ks6.6 billion in FY 2013-2014, and over Ks737 million for the period between 21 November 2012 and 31 March 2013.

The Trade Department has so far issued 1,567 ITCs, with 292 cards issued between 21 November 2012 and 31 March 2013, 261 cards in FY 2013-2014, 317 cards in FY 2014-2015, 146 cards in FY 2015-2016, 248 cards in FY 2016-2017, 168 cards in FY 2017-2018, 92 cards in the last mini-budget period, and 43 cards between 1 October and 23 November 2018.

The Trade Department issued the cards to boost border trade. A businessman can trade Ks3 million worth of goods every day using an ITC. The Trade Department has granted trade of up to Ks15 million per day, which is a five-day trade value. —Ko Htet (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Seventh conference on media development held

The 7th Conference on Media Development in Myanmar was held at the Park Royal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. The conference entitled, 'Building Effective Partnerships in Myanmar's Media Development', focused on legislation, freedom, safety, and sustainability of the media.

The Union Minister for Information, Dr. Pe Myint, Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, Hluttaw representatives, ambassadors based in Myanmar, officials from international organizations and ministries, and invited guests attended the event.

Current media landscape in Myanmar

The first responsibility of the Ministry of Information is to disseminate information to the public and for doing so, the print and broadcast media of the government are mainly responsible for facilitating communication channels between the government and the general public, said Dr. Pe Myint at the conference.

Myanmar is striving to establish a democratic federal union, and the present Hluttaw has been elected by the people and the government has been formed through the Hluttaw for the people, he said. As both the Hluttaw and the government have been elected by the people, it is their duty to report to the people about their undertakings for the nation and its citizens, he added.

These duties are being shouldered by the state-run media, said the Union Minister. Future governments will have the media to connect with the public and the media may continue to exist in its current form or adapt to a more suitable form in the future, he said.

The Union Minister said his ministry is working to ensure private media flourishes as well. He said the previous government permitted publications of weekly and daily newspapers and journals, while new broadcasting channels were expanded under the current administration, including the establishment of a pilot community radio. He said the community radio project is in preparation for a time when strong laws and bylaws related to the media are enacted.

The Union Minister said the government has worked to ensure all journalists have access to information. He urged journalists and media organizations to build mutual trust to develop



Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint delivers the opening speech at the 7th Conference on Media Development in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

the media landscape. He said the government will continue to work for the development of the media.

Freedom of Expression and development of journalism

The Union Minister then discussed 'Freedom of Expression, Freedom of Press', one of the topics at the conference. He said freedom of expression and speech is a tremendously important topic and is directly related to the development of journalism.

Thus, there is always a desire to ensure this freedom, said the Union Minister. The government has always tried to enlist cooperation on that matter in meetings with domestic and international media organizations, he said, adding they have been unable to effectively cooperate on the matter last two years.

The Union Minister said he has heard statements claiming there is no freedom of press in Myanmar and that the situation in the country has been deteriorating in recent years. He advised people who made such statements to carefully scrutinize the situation before generalizing the situation and expressing blame.

Only then will those in charge be able to review any existing shortcomings, he said.

The Union Minister asked people to research how many newspapers and journals covered government leaders, departments and processes and to what extent in the three years following the abolishment of the prepublication censorship in 2012, and to compare it to the situation in the two years since the incumbent administration assumed office. He suggested commissioning an external research professional or



Ambassador of Sweden to Myanmar Mr. Staffan Herrstrom

organization which is believed to be unbiased to conduct the survey so that everyone will be able to perceive the true situation.

Bias, an unpredicted addition

He also explained the reason for using the word "professional or organization which is believed to be unbiased" which should conduct the survey. He said a book on freedom of press he's read contained media freedom indices. The book has been published by DW Akademie, who are working with the MOI in media development, and has been compiled by Laura Schneider.

The Union Minister said he would like to know what standards and methods are used to measure the level of press freedom in Myanmar. He said only by knowing this will it be possible to make amendments where needed and to improve on aspects that hinder development. He said the book he's read has a subtitle 'What They Tell Us - And What They Don't', which describes what the people who measure the indices say and leave out. It is here that things get interesting, said the Union Minister.



Resident Representative of the UNESCO Ms. Min Jeong Kim

The Union Minister said the book's compiler researched the procedures of five organizations that compiled indices on international press freedom. He said the book details how each organization collects data and evaluates it and includes reviews and footnotes. He said the word 'bias' unexpectedly popped up frequently in the book.

In the book's introduction, the writer also raised questions about which entities are behind the organizations who conduct the surveys, how they get funding, and what their purpose is, with the book gradually answering these questions, said the Union Minister.

It is research organizations that observe, review, and judge the international media and set media rankings. The research organizations are above the media. However, they themselves cannot escape the influence of those who fund them. So, the situation of each media monitored by research organizations is questionable said the Union Minister.

Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Expression
"We talk about editorial in-

dependence, but, the scope of editorial freedom is also under question. Can an editor oppose a publisher and can a publisher oppose advertisers who provide funds? Who is upholding the editorial policy? When these facts are taken into account, it is questionable who upholds freedom of press and freedom of expression," the minister said.

"Joe Liebling, the prominent US journalist once said the freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one. When press freedom is discussed, the discussion focuses only on freedom from the influence of governments. This fact is also important. But, journalists should also try to avoid monetary influence," he added.

Media Literacy

Besides, when we talk about media literacy, a media which writes about media literacy urging the public or youths to be clever with media, should also disclose which person or organization owns their media, what funds it receives, what influences it and what its stances are.

UNESCO's Media Development Indicators also underlined the importance of the transparency of ownership.

As a conclusion, I would like to quote two persons. The first is U Kyaw Naing, (Sayar Htet Myat), the Vice Chairman of the Myanmar Press Council. In a recent interview he said, "What journalists should do is to deeply pay attention to the country and the country's affairs. They should have a spirit of patriotism and nationalism." I have the same opinion as he does.

SEE PAGE-7

Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

FROM PAGE-2

However some private schools, education service providers and foreign universities or education organizations were not permitted under laws related to Ministry of Education and were providing their services as education service companies registered under Company Registration Law and rules at Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Ministry of Planning and Finance. There are difficulties to authenticate and evaluate diploma, degree, master and doctorate granted at such schools and entities under the National Education Law and the amendment to that law.

At the moment the ministry is striving toward enacting the private school law and prior to the enactment of this law, the ministry will cooperate with Myanmar Investment Commission

in reviewing, suggesting and evaluating proposals made to the commission to conduct education services said the Union Minister.

Next, Dr. Daw Khin Sithu of Loikaw constituency asked if the Union Government has plan to train and appoint qualified librarians and library staff to establish quality libraries that will benefit the students and teachers. Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi said that in academic year 2018-2019 there is a total of in 47,005 basic education primary, middle and high schools out of which 26,212 schools had libraries. In academic year 2019-2020, Basic Education Department had made arrangements to provide books shelves and cabinets as well as books to schools that didn't have libraries. For schools that had libraries, a teacher is responsible for the library supported by a library

team members consisting of teachers and group leaders of school councils. At the moment no specific position is assigned or appointment made as librarian in a school library. However, school library development works were conducted in cooperation with Myanmar Library Association, MBAPE, Daw Khin Kyi Foundation and Shanti Volunteer Association of Japan said the Union Minister. Department of Higher Education is conducting ordinary courses as well as master courses on library and research subject to develop library works. Diploma courses on library were also conducted while actual practical courses were conducted at the libraries said the Union Minister in his explanation to the question.

Similarly questions raised by U Sai Ngaung Hsai Hein of Maukmai constituency, U Bo Gyi of Chauk consti-

cy and U Khin Maung Latt of Myanaung constituency were also answered by Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi and Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Kyi Min.

Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Management Committee Report read

Afterwards Pyithu Hluttaw Public Affairs Management Committee Report was read by committee member Dr. Aung Tun Khaing and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the report to register their names.

Hluttaw approves Pyithu Hluttaw Economic and Financial Development Committee Report

Later, Pyithu Hluttaw Eco-

nomics and Financial Development Committee member U Ye Lwin tabled a motion for Hluttaw to approve the committee's report and Hluttaw approves it.

Amendment bill of Myanmar Engineering Council Law submitted

As a final agenda of the day, Union Minister for Construction submitted an amendment bill of Myanmar Engineering Council Law.

Bill Committee member U Pa Htan read the committee's findings on the bill and Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to table amendment motions to register their names.

The eleventh-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth regular session will be held on 7 December it is learnt.

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint and Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun pose for documentary photo together with the attendees of the 7th Media Development Conference. **PHOTO: MNA**

Seventh conference on media development held

FROM PAGE-6

A journalist has a responsibility to deliver correct information to the public, and that responsibility can be considered the most important duty of a journalist. At the same time, as he or she is a citizen, he or she should have the spirit of being patriotic.

The second and most important quote I want to tell is what President U Win Myint said at the swearing in ceremony of the Myanmar Press Council last month.

In the five points proposed

by the President, the first four points are related to the rights and responsibility of news media personnel.

Raise the image of the country through the power of media

The fifth point urged media personnel to serve their country as citizens. I would like to reiterate the president's request, when he said, "Raise the image of the country in which we were born, bring forth pride and dignity to its people through the power of

the news media".

Similarly, Resident Representative of the UNESCO Ms. Min Jeong Kim and Ambassador of Sweden to Myanmar Mr. Stefan Herrstrom delivered opening remarks.

After the opening session, the discussion continued focusing on topics including legal reforms to freedom of expression, right of access to information, implementation of broadcasting laws and rules, security of media personnel and sustainability of local media in the transformation peri-

od from traditional to the digital media. The Media Development Conference was held for six times in Myanmar. The first one was held from 19 to 20 March, 2012, the second from 20 to 21 May 2013, the third from 18 to 19 September, 2014, the fourth from 10 to 11 December 2015, the fifth from 7 to 8 November, 2016 and the sixth was from 7 to 8 December, 2017.

The British Embassy hosted a dinner to attendees of the conference.—MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo and Myat Thandar Aung)

Mass walk organized in Nay Pyi Taw to end violence against women

AS part of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, a mass walk activity was held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun and Myanmar Women Affairs Committee (Central), participated in the activity from the Herbal Garden to the gate 3 of the Water Fountain Garden.

A total of 400 participants; including 180 people from the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association, Nay Pyi Taw, Women Affairs Federation, Myanmar maternal and child welfare association, departmental staff, women organizations and 220 people from townships took part in the activity.

The activity is a part of the 16-day campaign titled "16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence" launched with an official ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 November.—MNA

(Translated by JT)

Building a better future founded on education

AFUNDAMENTAL driver for a nation's success is its investment in the education sector. Scholars and leaders have noted how a master strategy for education is key to developing the human resources of a country; a resource that is sustainable.

Everyone knows the education scene in Myanmar. For decades, educational development in Myanmar has been meagre at best, but the first steps to fix this weak system have been taken. "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," is the Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the world development index that we must strive towards and implement during the 15-year period from 2016 to 2030.

Of course, we must be realistic and accept that a reform of the entire education system cannot happen overnight. It has to be cultivated through generations. The Union government is taking the first step to implement reforms by targeting the basic education system. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi il-

lustrated the education system that will benefit the country in her address at the Education Development Implementation Conference (Basic Education Sector) at the Myanmar International Convention Centre II in Nay Pyi Taw on 4 December.

The State Counsellor said children need to be instilled with creativity and the ability to rationalize, taught to value their culture, be disciplined, and learn skills that will enable them to make their own life decisions and avail of the job opportunities that exist. She said she believes only then will the education system be beneficial for the socio-economic development of the country.

"National discipline should start at schools. This discipline prevents people from breaking the rules of the society and the laws of the country. Rules and laws need to be obeyed and fol-

lowed everywhere. This habit needs to be inculcated through practice. The subject of civic duty is taught in almost every country under various names. Moral, ethics, and civic duty should be effectively taught in our country so that training is provided for instilling good habits. Valuing and respecting time is a habit that is very valuable in achieving discipline. We need to instill this in our youth. All need to know that to value and respect time is to value the society and the neighborhood," said the State Counsellor.

Education comprises more than just traditional schooling. People with a keen sense of curiosity and a desire to pursue lifelong learning are the ones who become valuable assets to their country. Myanmar is sorely lacking both learned members of the public and skilled people for the workforce.

We need to work together to bring about an inclusive, quality education system to ensure a brighter future for all of us. The stakeholders of the future of education include the children and students themselves, along with teachers, parents, and all members of the public. Utilizing their combined strength a developed and advanced nation will emerge.

Education comprises more than just traditional schooling. People with a keen sense of curiosity and a desire to pursue lifelong learning are the ones who become valuable assets to their country.

Talks held on simple ways to advance national development

By Shin Min, Photo: Aye Than

MRTV aired a live program on talks under the Theme—National Development through simple ways - in which Deputy Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo, General Manager of YESC U Tin Aung, Secretary of YCDC Daw Hlaing Maw Oo, and Executive of UMFCGI U Zeya Thura Mon were the speakers.

(Continued from Yesterday)

Moderator: What is the expected release date for 2019 economic indicator? Could we expect for an improvement and upturn in the economic indicator for Myanmar?

Deputy Minister: 2019 economic indicator would be released on the 31st of October 2019, and that it would be made available for the public. We would arrange to circulate the report to the responsible persons from the UMFCGI and also to the persons from the industrial sector.

Before the discussions on the expected upsurge economic indicator, I would like to talk about what we are doing right now. We worked together with the World Bank on the possible ways and means in pushing up the economic indicator through the reform memo in which short term, medium term and long term objectives shall be formulated and also intended to publicized.

The experts on the economic indicator of the World Bank came to Myanmar and engaged with our support working team, and they advised us the way forward in the right direction. We combined their suggestions together with the suggestions received from the reform memo, and work out the program for implementation as a whole and think about the realization for each economic indicator. Generally, the data for 2019 economic indicator will have wrapped up by the end of May 2018. The calculations are being worked out, and engage with other relevant countries that are in the process of calculating economic indicators.

In the work process, main focus is being made to differentiate correct and incorrect data by setting up channels at the heart of challenging approaches. In this regard, the other party has appreciated on our efforts. For example, they accepted in connection with the electricity production. With regards to the construction sector, development is being seen in the construction permits. We assume that the accumulated total markers would be much more than (44) for this year.



U Aung Htoo



U Tin Aung



Daw Hlaing Maw Oo



U Zeya Thura Mon

As all the countries are working out in a competitive paradigm, the year 2018 witnessed that Singapore reached out to second position. In fact, it stood first all in all for the year 2017. When all the countries moving ahead in the competition tempo among them, we could expect that our status could be elevated. One factor is certain that our current score of (44) is sure to be elevated into a more prominent level. All countries, whatever it may be, have been aimed at and working diligently in achieving the targeted markers during the period 2020.

Daw Hlaing Maw Oo: We are working on two parts. The first part is on the theme that what we need in making to restore and revamp. The other part is to inform the World Bank what they need to know about us. With regard to the construction permits, the other team is viewing the information to elevate the ranking of the World Bank, and that the other camp is working on to let the people convince and feel that the working process have come to be the easy and smooth ride.

At this juncture, I would like to reveal what the World Bank has been talking about in connection with the construction permit. I am taking this opportunity in telling short term work plan in the first place as it could raise the scores. The World Bank has pointed out five points. The first factor includes our transparency that needs to announce the permits on the websites. It should be in detailed such as that how many tenders were there, and that how many passed in the tender bids. Moreover, who bidders are unsuccessful

and so on. This information must be released to the public. These processes are very easy to carry out. On our part, we have been scrutinizing these processes regularly, and therefore, we uploaded the information on the website. In this connection, we may have to wait and see whether we were awarded with the marker points or otherwise. This is the first factor.

The second factor is the risk issue. We were told by the World Bank that we were working on the fixed and invariable approach. In this regards, we faces the incoming challenges and responded accordingly. Routinely since many years, YCDC have been working and scrutinizing the structure based approach on the number of flooring.

We have different examination and scrutiny with regards to the number of floors, and that they are divided in separate approach for the three-storied; the four-storied to the eight-storied; nine to the thirteen storied; and the fourteenth-storied. Each category has been divided into different risk factors. The World Bank suggested that in addition to the number of storied in the structure, other risk factors must be taken into consideration.

Acknowledgment has been accorded that we are providing easy access to under three-storied structures. Another factor is about response and challenge with regards to the security aspects which was accorded with four point markers. In the four point markers, the professionals were involved in the assessment and therefore, only two point markers were accorded.

In this issue, necessary scrutiny was being made, and the relevant officers thoroughly checked and worked it out, and granted only two points. We were deprived of two point scores, and it was due to the reason that the signing officers are the persons being registered and recognized at the professional body.

For example, the certified professionals are being acknowledged by the professional bodies such as Myanmar Architect Council and the Myanmar Engineering Council. In their rules and regulations of the body, it requires to mention and declare degree holders what courses that he have had attended, so and so years, and the experiences thus gained, which are to be incorporated in the rules.

These stipulations must be made available to the public. If we fulfilled their suggestions obviously, they promised to award two point markers either this year or next year. We responded that we have Myanmar Architect Council and Myanmar Engineering Council in our country. We also showed the relevant law which exactly fit and correlate with their requirements on education and experiences. Therefore, they accepted our clarification. However, they insisted that our documents are not clear and comprehensive enough.

In this connection, the matter was announced in the local newspapers on 15 March 2018 which took effect on 1 April 2018 making limitation and restriction that only the recognized persons must submit the necessary forms.

In the earlier days, License Surveyors (LS) were required to register at the YCDC. At that time,

there is no "Professional Body" existed, and therefore, the question of "Professional Body" never arises. When the new teams with executive authorities appeared, we have skipped the separate registration, and accepted the applications coming through the recognized authorities beginning 1 April 2018.

As the case required, we uploaded the matters on our websites. However, when they checked with the private sector on any development and changes, they were being responded with negative answers from the private sphere. Thus we have not awarded with point markers.

We have explained that beginning 1 April 2018; and that we have skipped the "LS" matter and accepted only through the recognized personnel. They promised to award scores either this year or next year.

Moreover, they insisted to upload the qualifications with regards to the professionals, which we complied by providing links. We might be awarded with points next year.

Another point of issue is on the submission of applications. They suggested uploading on the websites all the relevant data and information including financial matters with regards to the application. We have already prescribed comprehensive application forms. However, the Deputy Minister has already talked about that. Now, we have uploaded the "standard operating procedure" in detailed on our website as well as on the web of the Ministry of Commerce. We also shared this with DICA. We also pointed out the additional

charges to be incurred in this matter. All the necessary information is provided in the handouts.

We are also working for the demarcation of zonal areas. We also consider and noted down the recommendations and also the objections that needed to be pushed aside. Of course, there are some misinterpretations in connection with the problematic location whether it is inside the industrial zone or in the residential ward.

In connection with the spacing setback, we have earmarked for three feet to put up vacant space from the fencing line of the other house. In land use, a setback is the minimum distance which a building or other structure must be set back from a street or road, a river or other stream, a shore or flood plain, or any other place which is deemed to need protection. There was also some confusion in this three feet matter whether to get the permission of the neighbor or otherwise.

Another factor is about the fire safety in buildings which is related to the fire services department. In connection with the low risk building, we are thinking whether the recommendation and approval is necessary or not. Changes to be made within three months are the short term matter.

Among the five points of suggestions and advice, fire safety matters remained to be considered.

They also advised to review the building code and to work out the risk based system appropriately. The plan in this regards are being considered to hookup online. At this juncture, we sought assistance in the risk based system, and that they have provided one consultant. The person arrived and debriefed us on the ways and means over the risk based system being applied in other countries. The consultant told us that he would draw up a draft plan based on our Myanmar National Building Code in creating a risk based system as an instrument for the department.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)
(To be continued)

U Soe Lynn Han concurrently accredited as Ambassador of Myanmar to Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Soe Lynn Han, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Belgium, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Ms. Andrea Faulkner as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Commonwealth of Australia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Ms. Andrea Faulkner was born on 2 January 1966. She received Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Arts(Hons) and Diploma in Education from the University of Adelaide. She joined Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in 1990 and served in various capacities at DFAT. She has been serving as Assistant Secretary in Sustainability and Climate Change Branch at DFAT since 2016.

She also served as First Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Paris, Deputy Head of Mission at the Australian Embassies in Hanoi and in Tel Aviv respectively.—MNA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued on Wednesday 5 December 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Kachin, Shan, Chin and Rakhine states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (2°C) below December average temperature in Northern Shan State, (2°C) above December average temperatures in Mandalay and Bago regions, Kayah State, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Kayin and Mon states and about December average temperature in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (3°C) in Haka, (4°C) in Ramthlo, (5°C) in Heho, (6°C) in Tiddim and (7°C) in Hsipaw.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF 6 December 2018: Light rain will be isolated in Taninthayi Region. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, Chin and Kayah states and partly cloudy in the remaining regions and states.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain in Taninthayi Region and Mon State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 December 2018: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 December 2018: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6 December 2018: Generally fair weather.

Bay of Bengal Condition

(Issued at (14:00) hours MST on (5-12-2018))

According to the observations at (13:30)hrs MST today, a low pressure area may form over the Equatorial India Ocean and adjoining South Bay of Bengal during next (24) hours.

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DEPUTY CHIEF EDITORAye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT**

Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORSZaw Min
Zaw Htet Oo
Win Ko Ko Aung**INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITOR**Ye Htut Tin,
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com**LOCAL NEWS EDITORS**Tun Tun Naing (Editor),
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Nwe Nwe Tun (Sub-editor),
nwenwe9131@gmail.com**TRANSLATORS**Khaing Thanda Lwin,
Hay Mar Tin Win,
Ei Myat Mon
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun**REPORTER**May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com
Nyein Nyein Ei,**PHOTOGRAPHER**

Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAMTun Zaw, Thein Ngwe,
Zaw Zaw Aung, Ye Naing Soe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Thein Htwe**EDITORIAL SECTION**(+95) (01) 8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305**CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION**San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114**ADVERTISING & MARKETING**(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
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‘Upcycling’ exhibition to be held in Yangon

AN exhibition on upcycling entitled ‘Pure Gold’ will be held at the Secretariat Building in downtown Yangon, Myanmar, from 15 December 2018 to 6 January 2019.

The design exhibition is coming to Yangon after Hamburg, London, and Bangkok. It will feature the original show that comprises 76 exhibits by 53 designers from all over the world.

Upcycling refers to trans-

forming rubbish into useful, beautiful objects. ‘Pure Gold’ will be the first such exhibition for Myanmar.

“For Pure Gold Myanmar, the works of international design artists will be combined with a broad range of demonstrations and workshops by local artisans, designers, and artists.

They have been applying the principle of upcycling garbage and adding value to

waste to develop useful objects for years,” said Franz Xaver Augustin, the Director of Goethe-Institute Myanmar.

Local upcycling specialists will share their expertise at the exhibition, and invite visitors to take part in Do-It-Yourself projects that demonstrate how easy and fun it is to transform waste.

One of the attractions of the show will be a giant “nagar”, a mythical dragon-like crea-

ture, winding its bamboo body through the entire exhibition space.

The entire project, organized in collaboration with Hla Day, Chu Chu, the Goethe-Institute Myanmar, and Berlin-based ifa (Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations), aims to bring about art, design, education, and environmental awareness. The exhibition will be open to the public free of charge.—GNLM

Myanmar-China marathon to be held on 31 Dec

A cross border marathon to promote goodwill through sports competition between Myanmar and China will be held on the Jiegao-Muse-Shweli route on 31 December. The theme for the marathon this year is ‘One Marathon Race—Two Countries Running’.

The event will include five races in three divisions - amateur, half marathon, and marathon. The amateur races are open to both individuals and families. About 3,000 people are expected to compete in the 7.5-km amateur, about 2,000 people have registered for the 21.0975-km half marathon, and about 1,000 runners will attempt the 42.195-km marathon.

The 2018 Myanmar-China International Marathon will start from the Jiegao cultural ground in China. Participants will proceed through Muse and finish at the Momo Park in Shweli Town, China.

“This year’s marathon will be an important platform for cultural, social, peace, eco-



Runners compete at Myanmar-China International Marathon in 2017. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

nomie, and sporting exchanges between Myanmar and China. The marathon will take runners 1 to 6 hours to complete, depending on the event,” said the Deputy Minister for Information for Dehong prefecture’s party committee.

The Myanmar-China mara-

thon was first held in 2017 with participation of athletes from 19 countries. Athletes from 22 countries have registered for the marathon this year.

The estimated cost of the whole event will be Yuan 9 million. The winner of the marathon will be awarded Yuan

20,000, while the winners of other races will be awarded between Yuan 8,000 and Yuan 6,000. For the race held only for 50 Myanmar runners, the Paukphaw Friendship Award winners will be awarded Yuan 100 each.—GNLM (Translated by Hay Mar)

Yaba tablets, Heroin seized in Momauk, Phakant & Patheingyi townships

A combined team stopped a Mark-II vehicle driven by Mar Kun with Daw Gaulolugam and Daw Si Si Dwe Bu on board at Seinlu check point, Momauk Township on 4 December. When the combine team searched the vehicle and found 79,800 Yaba tablets, heroin weighing 940 grams, Ks 50,000 and one mobile phone from the vehicle.

On the same day, a combined team from Tarmakhan area police station stopped a motorbike driven by Aung San (alias) Aung San Oo with Ma Nwet Kyi on Tarmakhan-Namhsan road, Phakant Township

and found heroin weighing 140 grams and 1,740 Yaba tablets from the motorbike.

Similarly, combined officer from the Anti-Narcotic Police force No. 17 searched a passenger bus at 16 mile Kyauk chaw check point and found 29,900 Yaba tablets and two mobile phones from the passengers identified as Ma Ohnmar and Aung Lwin who was on board on the passenger bus.

All suspects have been charged under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MNA (Translated by Hay Mar)



Drug suspects arrested in search operation in Momauk Township. **PHOTO: MPF**

Coordination meeting held for tourism video



A coordination meeting for producing tourism video held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MOHT**

A COORDINATION meeting to discuss a documentary video producing with Monarex Hollywood Corporation to promote Myanmar's tourism industry was held at the Nilar meeting hall of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism yesterday.

Besides tourism, the video clip will promote Myanmar's traditions, the culture of its ethnic people, and the country's scenic beauty.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Informa-

tion Dr. Pe Myint, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye, the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, officials from the ministry, representatives from the Myanmar Tourism Federation and its partner organizations, Mr. Chris D. Nebe, the President of Monarex Hollywood Corporation which made the Mysterious China documenta-

ry films, representatives from Myanmar Project, and Yangon Media Group Co. Ltd.

At the meeting, Union Minister U Ohn Maung delivered the opening speech. Yangon Media's Managing Director, U Zaw Win Khine, explained the process of shooting the documentary video clip. Afterwards, Union Ministers Dr. Pe Myint, Dr. Win Myat Aye, and U Ohn Maung discussed the requirements for the filming. —MNA (Translated by Hay Mar)

Union Attorney-General addresses induction course graduation ceremony



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo delivers the speech at the graduation ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo addressed the conclusion of training No. 1/2018 of the Grade 4 Law Officers (Probationary) at the meeting hall of the Union Attorney-General's Office yesterday.

In his address, the Union Attorney-General said that when the trainees serve as law officers, they need to be good in morale and belief. The refreshers are

also urged to respect and follow work ethics, disciplines and law officer's ethics and fulfil one's duties. They need to protect the legal rights of the people toward justice and rule of law, he said. The Union Attorney-General also called on them to ensure equal opportunities for all without bias based on honesty and to try to stand as the highly qualified and

responsible law officers. Prosecution and trials need to be enforced with fair judicial standards and be objective with justice in order to bring about public credibility on the justice system, he said. They need to learn continuously to be well-qualified law officers and they must try to bring benefits to the public with their law of literacy, he said.

Next, Daw Khine Zin Thet, the recipient of the model student award in Basic Civil Service Course No.78 at the Central Institute of Civil Service (Lower Myanmar), and other outstanding students from the induction course were given various awards. The Deputy Attorney-General, Permanent Secretary, Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors, trainers, 149 trainees, and invited guests were present at the ceremony. —MNA (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung) ■

Finland celebrates 101st of Independence Day in Yangon

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint and his wife Daw Khin Htay attended a ceremony to mark the 101st anniversary of Finland's Independence Day at Sule Shangri-La Hotel in Yangon yesterday. At the ceremony, Finnish Ambassador to Myanmar Ms. Riikka Johanna Laatu and Union Minister Dr. Than Myint delivered the welcome speeches respectively.

Following the ceremony,

the Union Minister and attendees watched the entertainment performed by a group of people living with disabilities from Finland.

Next, the Union Minister and guests attended a dinner hosted in honor of the 101st anniversary of Finland's Independence Day. The event was attended by diplomats in Yangon, resident representatives of UN agencies and invited guests. —MNA (Translated by JT) ■



Union Minister Dr. Than Myint delivers the speech at the ceremony to mark the 101st anniversary of Finland's Independence Day in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar, Bangladesh conduct coordinated patrol at border

MYANMAR and Bangladeshi border guard forces conducted coordinated patrol from border post No. 31 to 34 in Maungdaw on 4 December, according to Myanmar Police Force.

During the patrol, Myanmar troops were led by Police Major Ngwe Soe of No. 1 area Guard Police Force in area-3 in Maungdaw Township while Bangladeshi side was led by Subedar Md. Abul Kalam of Ghumdhurn Police Outpost of No. 34 Border Guards Bangladesh.

The patrol started at 10:30

am and ended at noon.

Similarly, another border guard troops of the two countries conducted a patrol in the Naf River from 10:30 am to 11:35 am.

The Myanmar troops on two water crafts led by Police Captain Kyaw Thet Oo of Magyichaung Office in No. 1 Border Guard unit in area-7 met with two water crafts of Bangladeshi troops from BGB-2 Shahparitirdip outpost at the middle of the Naf River near the the entrance of Magyichaung Creek and conducted the patrol along the river. — GNLM ■



Myanmar-Bangladesh border guard troops patrol in the Naf River. **PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE**

Xi-Trump meeting provides direction for China-US relations, say experts

BEIJING — The meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and his US counterpart Donald Trump in Buenos Aires provides direction for China-US relations in the time to come, according to experts.

Zhang Yuyan, Director of Institute of World Economics and Politics Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, has said this to Xinhuanet in an interview.

The important meeting between Xi and Trump happened in a critical time, Zhang added.

According to Zhang, Xi and Trump had an in-depth exchange of views through friendly and candid meeting, which sends a positive signal to the world that the two countries have good faith in solving problems and managing differences.

"It is very good news for export-oriented enterprises in China and US as both parties agree not to impose new additional tariffs," Zhang said. It would ease uncertainty for world



economic growth, bring benefits to both countries, and boost the confidence of global investors, added Zhang.

Based on reciprocity, mutual benefit and mutual respect, the win-win cooperation between China and US could be achieved through communication and negotiation instead of confrontation, Zhang concluded. Su Ge, Chairman of China National Committee

for Pacific Economic Cooperation, echoed.

Su believed that the important consensus reached by Xi and Trump would offer direction for future China-US relations.

Su told Xinhuanet that cooperation is the best option for both China and US, and both sides should jointly advance bilateral re-

lations with coordination, cooperation and stability as the defining features.

"It is very natural for China and US to have disputes in fields of economy and trade," Su said, adding "resolving all issues at one meeting may not be possible, it requires mutual efforts from both parties in the long run." —Xinhua ■

Malaysia financier faces new charges in 1MDB scandal

KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia) — Fugitive Malaysian financier Low Taek Jho is facing new charges of laundering more than \$1.0 billion, in a massive corruption scandal surrounding state fund 1MDB, police said on Wednesday.

The extraordinary 1MDB controversy allegedly saw billions looted from a Malaysian government investment fund, fuelling a worldwide spending spree including on super yachts and Van Gogh artwork.

Low, commonly known as Jho Low, is accused of playing a central role in plundering the investment fund.

He was an associate of Malaysia's former leader Najib Razak, whose government lost power in May in large part due to allegations that the then premier was involved in the vast fraud. Since being ousted,

Najib has been hit with a barrage of charges linked to the scandal. He denies any wrongdoing.

The new money laundering charges, allegedly committed between 2009 and 2014, were filed in a court in the capital Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

Besides Low, 37, four others linked to 1MDB including a business development manager and a finance director were also hit with charges including criminal breach of trust.

"An arrest warrant has been obtained from the court and efforts are being intensified to arrest the five individuals who have left Malaysia," Mohamad Fuzi Harun, inspector-general of police, said in a statement. The additional charges include five for allegedly laundering \$1.03 billion and another two for laundering \$126 million. —AFP ■

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Monster Energy Company, a company registered under the laws of Delaware, the United States of America, which is located at 1 Monster Way, Corona, California 92879, the United States of America, is the sole owner of the following trademark:



Reg. No. 10533/2018

In respect of **Class 32**: Non-alcoholic beverages, including carbonated drinks and energy drinks; syrups, concentrates, powders and preparations for making beverages, including carbonated drinks and energy drinks.

Monster Energy Company claims the trademark rights and other relevant intellectual property rights for the mark as mentioned above. Monster Energy Company reserves the rights to take legal measures against any infringer who violates its intellectual property or other legal rights in accordance with the concerned laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Daw May Thwe Hlaing, LL.B., LL.M., (H.G.P.)

For **Monster Energy Company**

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd. No. 1608, 16th Floor, Sakura Tower, 339 Bogyoke Aung San Road, Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 6th December 2018

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Merck KGaA, a company incorporated in Germany and having its registered office at Frankfurter Str.250, 64293 Darmstadt, Germany is the owner and proprietor of the following Trademarks:

STILAMIN

Reg. No. 4/1645/2009 & 4/1569/2012

In respect of "Pharmaceutical preparations for human use" in **International Class 5**.

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Fraudulent or unauthorised use, or actual or colourable imitation of the Marks shall be dealt with according to law.

Daw La Min May, H.G.P.

For **Merck KGaA**,

C/o **Kelvin Chia Yangon Ltd.**,

Level 8A, Union Financial Centre (UFC),

Corner of Mahabandoola Road & Thein Phyu Road,

Botataung Tsp, Yangon,

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Dated 6th December 2018

lmm@kcyangon.com

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 2301185

Formation of Myanmar Equestrian Federation with new CEC members

Election for the members of Central Executive Committee (CEC) of Myanmar Equestrian Federation (MEF) was held at Central Hotel, Yangon on the 30th of November, 2018, 10:00am.

The election process was supervised by the Chairman U Aung Din and the members of Myanmar Olympic Committee's Election Supervisory Commission for the Formation of National Sports Federations.

Twenty one persons were elected as members of Central Executive Committee led by U Pyone Maung Maung as President, U Kyin Oo as Vice President 1, U Aye Cho as Vice President 2, Daw Thazin Tun as Treasurer and U Htay Kyaw as General Secretary.

Word of thanks were delivered by the newly elected President of MEF, U Pyone Maung Maung and the election process was successfully concluded at noon.

Permafrost: a climate time bomb?

YAKUTSK (Russia) — The Earth's vast tracts of permafrost hold billions of tonnes of planet-heating greenhouse gases that scientists warn will be released by global warming, along with diseases long locked into the ice.

Here is some background.
A quarter of the north

Permafrost — soil that is frozen, although not necessarily permanently as its name implies — is found mostly in the Northern Hemisphere, where it covers about a quarter of exposed land and is generally thousands of years old.

It covers a wide belt between the Arctic Circle and boreal forests, spanning Alaska, Canada, northern Europe and Russia. Permafrost exists to a lesser degree in the Southern Hemisphere where there is less ground to freeze, including in the South American Andes and below Antarctica.

It can vary in depth from a few metres to more than 100.

Tonnes of locked-in carbon

Locked into the permafrost is an estimated 1.7 trillion tonnes of carbon in the form of frozen organic matter — the remains of rotted plants and long-dead animals trapped in sediment and later covered by ice sheets.

When permafrost thaws, this matter warms up and decomposes, eventually releasing the carbon that it holds as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane, gases which have a greenhouse warming effect on



In 2016 a child died in Russia's far northern Siberia in an outbreak of anthrax that scientists said seemed to have come from the corpses of infected reindeers buried 70 years before but uncovered by melting permafrost. **PHOTO: AFP**

the planet. Permafrost soils contain roughly twice as much carbon — mainly in the form of methane and CO₂ — as Earth's atmosphere. Most of the carbon stocks are thought to reside fairly close to the surface.

Vicious circle of warming

The release of greenhouse gases threatens a vicious circle in the warming of the Earth, jeopardising the objective set in the 2015 Paris Agreement to strive to limit the rise in temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

CO₂ is the most abundant greenhouse gas blamed for global warming but methane is 25 times more efficient at trapping heat. Adding these into the atmosphere will spur further warming and ice melt, which will in turn cause more thawing of the permafrost and free up more locked-up carbon.

Even if global warming were stabilised at around 2°C, research points to a 30-

per cent loss of permafrost by 2100, researcher Susan Natali of the Woods Hole Research Center told 2015 climate talks in Bonn.

This could reach up to 70 per cent assuming emissions continue on their current trajectory, her research said, warning that "emissions from permafrost could lead to out-of-control global warming".

Frozen diseases?

The thawing of the permafrost also threatens to unlock disease-causing bacteria and viruses long trapped in the ice.

There have already been some cases of this happening. In 2016 a child died in Russia's far northern Siberia in an outbreak of anthrax that scientists said seemed to have come from the corpses of infected reindeers buried 70 years before but uncovered by melting permafrost.

Released from the ice, the anthrax seems to have been passed to grazing herds.

Scientists have also

warned that other dormant pathogens entombed in frozen soil may be roused by global warming, such as from old smallpox graves.

In 2014 scientists revived a giant but harmless virus, dubbed Pithovirus sibericum, that had been locked in the Siberian permafrost for more than 30,000 years.

Risks to roads, pipelines

A permafrost thaw could be a boon for the oil and mining industries, providing access to previously difficult-to-reach reserves.

But it also presents a serious and costly threat to infrastructure, risking mudslides and damage to buildings, roads and oil pipelines.

A Greenpeace report published in 2009 said thawing soil in Russia's permafrost zones caused buildings, bridges and pipelines to deform and collapse, costing up to 1.3 billion euros (nearly \$1.5 billion) a year in repairs in western Siberia.—AFP ■

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR MINISTRY OF ELECTRICITY AND ENERGY NATIONAL ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Date : 6th December, 2018

Invitation for Bids

IDA, Credit No : 5727-MM

Contract Title : Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers for Yangon

Reference No: MOEE-NEP/C1-W10/18

1. The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the National Electrification Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards payments under the contract for Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers MOEE-NEP/C1-W10/18 for Yangon.

2. The Ministry of Electricity and Energy now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for **Installation of Distribution Lines and Transformers MOEE-NEP/C1-W10/18 for Yangon** in the following locations.

The number and identification of lots comprising this installation bidding MOEE-NEP/C1-W10/18 process for Yangon is:

Lot 1: Yangon North District-67 villages

Lot 2: Yangon North District- 45 villages

Lot 3: Yangon South District -61 villages

3. Bidding will be conducted through the National Competitive Bidding procedures as specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers ("Procurement Guidelines"), and is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the Procurement Guidelines. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from Project Management Office (National Electrification Project), Project Manager and nep.pmomoep@gmail.com and inspect the bidding documents during office hours [09:30 to 16:00 hours] at the address given below.

5. A complete set of bidding documents in English may be obtained free of charge by interested eligible bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below. The Bidding Documents will be issued through email only.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **7th January, 2019, (10:00 A.M.)** - Myanmar Time. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who choose to attend at the address below.

7. All bids must be accompanied by "Bid-Security"

8. The address (es) referred to above is (are):

Attention: **Project Manager**

Project Management Office (National Electrification Project)

Office Building No.27, Ministry of Electricity and Energy
City: **Nay Pyi Taw**

Country: **The Republic of the Union of Myanmar**

Telephone: **+95 67 3431175**

Facsimile number: **+95 67 3431176**

Electronic mail address: nep.pmomoep@gmail.com

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (595 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (595 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-12-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

New Caledonians ordered to shelters in tsunami alert after big quake

NOUMEA (France) — A shallow and powerful 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck off New Caledonia on Wednesday prompting a tsunami alert and evacuations on the Pacific island, authorities said.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said that tsunami waves had been "observed" in the region but did not say where.

Residents of New Caledonia, which lies north of New Zealand, received text messages directing them to go to refuges immediately, with waves of up to three metres possible, according to the warning centre.

But people in New Caledonia and nearby Vanuatu said they did not feel the quake, and tsunami warning sirens were not

immediately activated in Vanuatu.

"Hazardous tsunami waves are forecast for some coasts," the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said, after earlier warning that the danger zone included "coasts located within 1000 kilometres of the earthquake epicentre."

The epicentre was some 300 kilometres east

of Noumea. Several aftershocks were reported as the tsunami centre warned of waves of up to three metres above tidal levels for New Caledonia and Vanuatu and up to one metre for some parts of Fiji.

New Zealand authorities issued a similar tsunami warning after the quake, but that was quickly rescinded.—AFP ■



Comedian and actor Kevin Hart arrives for the premiere of 'Night School' in Los Angeles, California on 24 September, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

US comedian Kevin Hart to host Oscars

LOS ANGELES (United States)—US comedian and actor Kevin Hart announced on Tuesday that he would be hosting the 91st Academy Awards in February.

“For years I have been asked if I would ever Host the Oscars and my answer was always the same...,” Hart wrote in an Instagram post. “I said that it would be the opportunity of a lifetime for me as a comedian and that it will happen when it’s supposed to. “I am so happy to say that the day has finally come for me to host the Oscars.”

The “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle” star will be hosting the glitzy event

after talk show host Jimmy Kimmel held the gig for two consecutive years.

Hart will be facing pressure to boost audience ratings for the annual show that will be held on 24 February in Hollywood and which had an all-time low of 26.5 million viewers last year, compared to 43 million in 2014.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has said that it was introducing a number of changes to improve viewership, including shortening the show to three hours and handing out some of the awards during commercial breaks.—AFP ■

Scottish iPhone filmmaker wins Turner Prize

LONDON (United Kingdom)—An openly gay Scottish artist who celebrated queer lives in a short film shot on an iPhone won Britain’s prestigious Turner Prize on Tuesday. This year’s four finalists for one of the world’s most coveted visual arts awards featured works packed with political punch. Scotland’s Charlotte Prodger came out on top at a glitzy reception at London’s Tate Museum for a 33-minute visual compilation called BRIDGIT.

The jury said Prodger’s work “meanders through disparate associations ranging from JD Sports and standing stones to 1970s lesbian separatism and Jimi Hendrix’s sound recordist.

“Her work explores issues surrounding queer identity, landscape, language technology and time.” The 44-year-old Glasgow-based artist—dressed in a simple white T-shirt for the occasion—said she felt “quite overwhelmed”. “The stories that I am telling, although they are mine and are personal, are stories that a lot of people—well, I guess queer people—have experienced,” she told the BBC after picking up her £25,000 (\$32,000, 28,000-euro) prize.

Prodger had been working in relative anonymity for 20 years before making her breakthrough by being picked to represent Scotland at this year’s Venice Biennale arts exhibition. “I guess my work is quite personal, and it’s becoming increasingly personal actually as time goes by, especially since I started making single-channel videos in the dark,” she told the BBC. “I guess that became more personal. Maybe that resonates with people.”—AFP ■

Gulf artworks show its surprising historical mix

PARIS (France) — A startling exhibition in Paris, drawn from the Arab world’s biggest private art collection, shows the dizzying mix of cultures in the Gulf in the past with Chinese korans and Persian rugs of the Virgin Mary. The show at the Paris headquarters of UNESCO, the world cultural and scientific body, is taken from the vast treasury of artworks amassed by Qatari billionaire Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al Thani.

“The Majlis — Cultures in

Dialogue” takes the name of the traditional spaces where guests were sat down and entertained in the Gulf to show how ideas were exchanged in the region, often in unexpected ways.

It shows how Islamic, Jewish, Indian, Christian, Buddhist and African imagery and symbolism was mixed and shared in an enormous number of objects and manuscripts over centuries.

For the sheikh, a distant cousin of Qatar’s emir, it proves

that “the great religions are united by shared moral honesty and authenticity”. It was a “lack of culture” that leads fanatics to destroy historic sides in Mali, Syria or Afghanistan, he told AFP.

“We think that globalisation is new, but these works show the links between empires,” said his daughter, Sheikha Alanoud bint Hamad Al Thani, pointing to a rug showing Germany’s Kaiser Wilhelm II and his family surrounded by the heads of Persian

rulers. Another curious Persian rug from the first half of the 19th century shows “51 of the most eminent figures of the universe” including Confucius, Moses, Socrates, Jesus, Alexander the Great, Christopher Columbus and Napoleon.

The show, which will go on tour to the US, Britain, Austria, Germany, Turkey and China after closing in Paris in March, is drawn from the sheikh’s museum in Qatar. —AFP ■

‘Ralph’ wrecks it for second week at N American box office

LOS ANGELES (United States) — Disney animation “Ralph Breaks the Internet” held the top spot in North American theaters for a second straight weekend, taking in \$25.6 million, industry tracker Exhibitor Relations reported on Monday. The sequel to 2012’s “Wreck It Ralph” sees the title character (voiced by John C Reilly) and friend Vanellope von Schweetz (Sarah Silverman) ven-

ture into the weird world of the internet, with predictably screwy results. “The Grinch,” Universal’s family-friendly feature about the not-so-friendly green creature from Dr Seuss’s manic menagerie, placed second, with \$17.9 million for the three-day weekend and a cumulative domestic total of \$203.7 million. Benedict Cumberbatch voices the irritable title character.

In third was MGM’s boxing drama “Creed II,” with a take of \$16.6 million. This latest episode in the “Rocky” series stars Michael B Jordan as Adonis Creed as he takes on the son of the boxer who killed his father. Sylvester Stallone, of course, plays aging ex-champ Rocky Balboa, now a restaurant owner and Adonis’s mentor. Holding in fourth place was “Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindel-

wald” from Warner Bros., at \$11.4 million, pushing its worldwide total past \$500 million. The Harry Potter prequel stars Eddie Redmayne as Newt Scamander; also starring are Jude Law and Johnny Depp.

Placing fifth, and in its fifth week out, was Fox’s “Bohemian Rhapsody,” with \$8 million. Rami Malek plays rock group Queen’s talented front man Freddie Mercury.—AFP ■

US director Gray lambasts ‘imbecile’ Trump at Marrakech film fest

MARRAKECH (Morocco) — US director James Gray, chairman of this year’s Marrakech film festival, on Monday lambasted his country’s President Donald Trump as an “imbecile” and source of embarrassment for Americans abroad.

“It’s been very hard for me to be here because the president of the United States is a moron and a very dangerous moron,” he told a news conference in the Moroccan city.

“It’s embarrassing, I feel very awkward and I feel I have to apologise every two minutes,



(Jury members l-r) Ileana D'Cruz, Laurent Cantet, Dakota Johnson, Talal Hadid, James Gray, Joana Hadjithomas, Daniel Bruhl, and Lynne Ramsay at the Marrakech International Film Festival. **PHOTO: AFP**

because... I’m trying to represent the better part of my country not that one that is represented by an imbecile.”

US actor Robert De Niro,

an outspoken critic of Trump, received a tribute award at the festival on Saturday. He used the occasion to launch a fresh tirade against the president and his

“America First” mantra.

“Sadly, in my country we are going through a grotesque version of nationalism... marked by greed, xenophobia and selfishness under the banner of ‘America First’,” De Niro said to loud applause from the audience.

Gray, whose films include “Little Odessa” and “The Immigrants”, with sci-fi thriller “Ad Astra” starring Brad Pitt, to be released next year, said De Niro’s latest outburst against Trump was “for me... the moment” of the festival, which opened on Friday. —AFP ■

Armageddon avoided? Scientist doubts Solar Cycle 25 will ravage GPS-dependent economy

ST PETERSBURG — The peak of new solar activity, the 25th since the observations began, will fall on 2022-2023, Yuri Nagovitsyn, senior researcher from Pulkovo Observatory in St Petersburg told TASS on Tuesday.

Earlier, media outlets published a forecast from analysts at Denmark's Saxo Bank, in which the experts assessed the worst possible scenario for the development of the global economy in 2019. It said, in particular, that the new solar cycle the 25th (Solar Cycle 25) would trigger the most

powerful solar storm that would destroy satellites from the side of the Western Hemisphere. This, according to analysts, will bring about chaos in GPS-dependent sectors and losses amounting to nearly \$2 trillion.

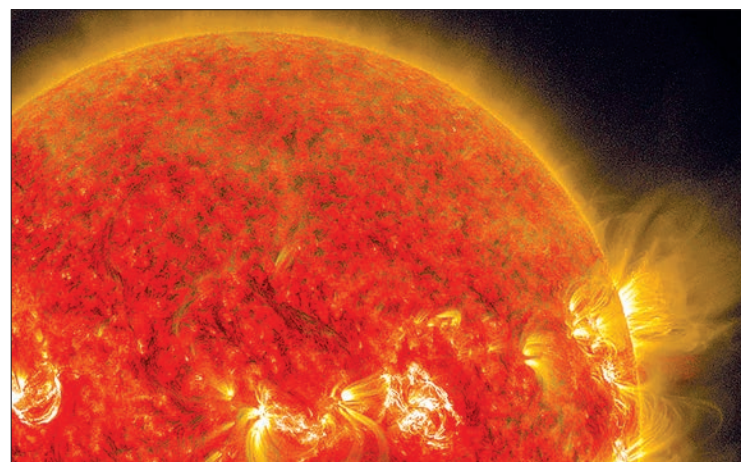
"As for the new solar cycle, it may start in 2019, but most likely in 2020. This will be only the start of a solar cycle and geomagnetic disturbances are not expected," the researcher said.

"the research officer said."
"The solar maximum, when powerful solar flares are indeed

possible, will surface somewhere in 2022-2023," Nogovitsyn told TASS.

He said it is difficult at the moment to assess the power of the flares that people on earth will face in three to four years, however, the possibility of losses running into many billions and the global cataclysms about which the Danish analysts warn of, is next to none.

"If we speak about Arctic aviation during a powerful flare, at the poles, where the geomagnetic impact is stronger, a pilot may



The solar maximum, when powerful solar flares are indeed possible, will surface somewhere in 2022-2023. **PHOTO: TASS**

catch a year's dose of radiation, and the health of an astronaut would also be at risk if he happens to be on a spacewalk when hypervelocity particles flow by,"

he went on to say. "It is clear that some satellites may malfunction, both big and small, but global cataclysms are unlikely," he explained.—Tass ■

Disappearing Arctic sea ice threatens Canada's polar bears: expert panel

OTTAWA (Canada) — A committee of wildlife experts warned on Monday that Canada's largest land predator, the polar bear, was at risk of disappearing from its vast Arctic landscape as melting Arctic sea ice makes hunting prey a challenge.

"It is clear we will need to keep a close eye on this species," Graham Forbes, co-chair of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) said in a statement. "Significant change is coming to its entire range."

He explained that the bears use sea ice and the "same sit-and-wait techniques familiar to ice fishers" to hunt seals for food.

Predictions of longer ice-free Arctic summers will make hunting "much more difficult" for polar bears, he said.

Inuit, however, are cautiously optimistic the bears will adapt.

In its latest assessment,

COSEWIC incorporated both science and Inuit knowledge. It concluded that "while not currently threatened with extinction, the species faces an uncertain future."

Its status was listed as a Special Concern, meaning it may become threatened or endangered.

Canada is home to two-thirds of the world's polar bear population. At last count in 2011, there were 15,500 polar bears in Canada. The same year, Ottawa listed the animal under its Species at Risk Act, requiring a conservation strategy be put in place to alleviate human threats to the iconic bears.

COSEWIC also expressed concerns about declining Chinook salmon stocks along the Pacific coast, and Black Ash after two billion of the trees in the Great Lakes region were killed by Emerald Ash Borer beetles. —AFP ■



At last count in 2011, there were 15,500 polar bears in Canada. **PHOTO: AFP**

First baby born via uterus transplanted from dead donor

PARIS (France) — In a medical first, a mother who received a uterus transplant from a dead donor gave birth to a healthy baby, researchers reported on Wednesday.

The breakthrough operation, performed two years ago in Brazil, shows that such transplants are feasible and could help thousands of women unable to have children due to uterine problems, according to a study published in The Lancet medical journal.

The baby girl was born in September 2016 in Sao Paolo.

Until recently, the only options available to women with so-called uterine infertility were adoption or the services of a surrogate mother.

The first successful childbirth following uterine transplant from a living donor took place in 2013 in Sweden, and there have been 10 others since then.

But there are far more women in need of transplants than there are potential live donors, so doctors wanted to find out if the procedure could work using the uterus of a woman who had died.

Ten attempts were made — in the United States, the Czech Republic, and Turkey — before the success reported on Wednesday.

Infertility affects 10- to 15 per cent of couples.

Of this group, one in 500 women have problems with their uterus — due, for example, to a malformation, hysterectomy, or infection — that

prevent them from becoming pregnant and carrying a child to term.

"Our results provide a proof-of-concept for a new option for women with uterine infertility," said Dani Ejzenberg, a doctor at the teaching hospital of the University of Sao Paulo.

He describing the procedure as a "medical milestone".

"The number of people willing and committed to donate organs upon their own death are far larger than those of live donors, offering a much wider potential donor population," he said in a statement. The 32-year-old recipient was born without a uterus as a result of a rare syndrome.

Four months before the transplant, she had in-vitro fertilization resulting in eight fertilized eggs, which were preserved through freezing.

The donor was a 45-year-old woman who died from a stroke. Her uterus was removed and transplanted in surgery that lasted more than ten hours.

Proof of concept

The surgical team had to connect the donor's uterus with the veins, arteries, ligaments, and vaginal canal of the recipient.

To prevent her body from rejecting the new organ, the woman was given five different drugs, along with antimicrobials, anti-blood clotting treatments, and aspirin.

After five months, the uter-

us showed no sign of rejection, ultrasound scans were normal, and the woman was menstruating regularly.

The fertilized eggs were implanted after seven months. Ten days later, doctors delivered the good news: she was pregnant.

Besides a minor kidney infection — treated with antibiotics — during the 32nd week, the pregnancy was normal. After nearly 36 weeks a baby girl weighing 2.5 kilogrammes (about six pounds) was delivered via caesarean section. Mother and baby left the hospital three days later.

The transplanted uterus was removed during the C-section, allowing the woman to stop taking the immunosuppressive drugs.

At age seven months and 12 days — when the manuscript reporting the findings was submitted for publication — the baby was breastfeeding and weighed 7.2 kilogrammes.

"We must congratulate the authors," commented Dr Srdjan Saso, an honorary clinical lecturer in obstetrics and gynaecology at Imperial College London, describing the findings as "extremely exciting".

Richard Kennedy, president of the International Federation of Fertility Societies, also welcomed the announcement but sounded a note of caution. "Uterine transplant is a novel technique and should be regarded as experimental," he said.—AFP ■



Kalaw U-14 football team, winner of the MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018, celebrates the victory while receiving the trophy at Taunggyi Stadium in Taunggyi yesterday. **PHOTO:MNL**

Kalaw team wins MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018

A TEAM of young footballers from Kalaw beat a team from Taunggyi by 4-3 in the final match of the MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018 held at the Taunggyi Stadium in Taunggyi yesterday.

The Kalaw team beat Taunggyi team in penalty play as the teams were tied even after full-time of play.

An award ceremony was held after the match. The Kalaw U-14 team was pre-

sented with a trophy and Ks1 million. The second placed Taunggyi team was awarded Ks500,000, while the third placed Hopong team was given Ks300,000.

Maung Nge from the Taunggyi team won the award for the best striker, Kyaw Naing from the same team was adjudged the best midfielder, and Khun Aung Htun took the best defender award.

Kaung Khant Thu from

the Kalaw team won the best goalkeeper award, while his teammate Nyi Nyi Aung was adjudged the best player at the tourney. Kyaw Zeyya from the Hopong team won the award for the most scores.

Similar tournaments have been successfully held in Mandalay, Monywa, Mawlamyaing, Sittway, Bago, Patheingyi, and Yangon, said a source with the Myanmar Football Federation.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Thai club Chonburi hires Myanmar defender Zaw Min Tun



Myanmar national football team and Yangon United's defender Zaw Min Tun (left) seen with an official from Chonburi FC. **PHOTO:MNL**

THAILAND'S premier football club, Chonburi FC., has recruited Myanmar's Zaw Min Tun, according to a release on the

team's website.

Yangon United star Zaw Min Tun served as a defender on Myanmar's national football team at

the AFC Cup 2018.

Zaw Min Tun has decided to join Chonburi for one year and he will wear the No.3 jersey in the team, said a source with Chonburi FC. The Thai football club will arrange for his accommodation in Thailand and his salary.

The Chonburi Football Club is a professional club based in the city of Chonburi, Chonburi Province, and is currently placed in the top division in Thai football, the Thai League 1.

The football team finished in the ninth place in the previous season of Thai League 1. The team won the championship of a Thai domestic league in 2007.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Guardiola would welcome UEFA Fair Play probe clarity to end rumours

WATFORD (United Kingdom)—Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola hopes a swift conclusion to UEFA's investigation over alleged Financial Fair Play (FFP) irregularities committed by the Premier League champions will silence the speculation surrounding the case.

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said after an Executive Committee meeting of European football's governing body on Monday that an independent body looking into the allegations made by German magazine Der Spiegel as part of their Football Leaks campaign would provide answers "very soon". Reports on Tuesday claimed City could even be banned from next season's Champions League should they be found guilty. Guardiola insisted the story hasn't been a distraction to his players, as they moved five points clear at the top of the Premier League on Tuesday with a 2-1 win at Watford. However, the Catalan coach is hoping for an end to what he described as "voices" surrounding the club's business. "If UEFA found something the club will make a statement and I'd like to do that because we will know exactly and to finish with these voices," said Guardiola. "We will know if we did something irregular and if we didn't do something irregular, the people is going to finish talking about it."

It is claimed City bypassed UEFA's FFP rules, designed to restrict the losses clubs can make and therefore lavish spending on player transfers and wages, by allowing their Abu Dhabi-based sponsors to make cash injections and backdate sponsorship contracts. A member of the Abu Dhabi ruling family, Sheikh Mansour, has owned City since 2008, transforming the club by investing billions of pounds in players and the club's facilities.

In a repeated statement City said they would not comment on what they described as "out of context materials purportedly hacked or stolen from City Football Group and Manchester City personnel and associated people".—AFP ■



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola gestures on the touchline during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Newcastle United at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, on 1 September, 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**