DENGUE INFECTIONS PREVALENT IN ADULTS P-4 (LOCAL NEWS)

NATIONAL
7th-day meeting of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's eighth regular session held
PAGE-2

NATIONAL
Authorities discover key evidence behind massive illegal drug haul in Malaysia
PAGE-6

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi greets Mr. Henrik Bach Mortensen, Chairman of the Board of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives Chairman of the Board of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr. Henrik Bach Mortensen, Chairman of the Board of the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, yesterday morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, they cordially discussed matters pertaining to the positive contribution of their institute for the success of Myanmar's democratization process.—Myanmar News Agency

World Environment Day: President U Win Myint highlights policy changes to ensure systematic waste management

President U Win Myint delivers a speech stressing the need for revised waste management laws at the ceremony to commemorate World Environment Day 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Speaking at a ceremony to commemorate World Environment Day 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, President U Win Myint stressed the need to revise the enacted laws, rules and regulations in line with updated technology and conditions as part of efforts to ensure systematic waste management in the country.

"We need policy changes in order to adopt good practices that help reduce the use of single-use plastic, encourage the use of alternative products and materials and discourage littering," said President U Win Myint.

He called for ensuring systematic waste management based on technology and resources by using good international practices and undertaking systematic waste collection, as well as disposing of waste through effective ways.

World Environment Day has become the UN's most important day for encouraging worldwide awareness and taking action to protect the environment. With climate change impacting the world, including Myanmar, the planet is facing depletion of its natural resources, deforestation, ecosystem degradation, reduction in biodiversity, scarcity of water resources, and water and air pollution.

Of the environmental issues experienced at the international level, pollution by plastic waste is one of the major problems, and it has to be addressed throughout the world.

SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

LOCAL BUSINESS
Joint surveys for weather index-based crop insurance system to be conducted in five areas
PAGE-5

LOCAL BUSINESS
YSX's stock trading value in May on downward trend compared to previous years
PAGE-5

NATIONAL
Ministry of Border Affairs continues provision of aid to IDPs in Kachin State
PAGE-7

OPINION
Let's Combat Child Labour through cooperation
PAGE-8-9

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

7th-day meeting of 2nd Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's eighth regular session held

By Myo Myint,
Myo Thu Hein

AT the seventh-day meeting of the second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's eighth regular session held yesterday morning, a Union Minister was sworn in in the presence of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker, a bill was tabled, three reports read and explained, a decision on a bill was taken and the Hluttaw representatives discussed the projects conducted with foreign loans.

Union Minister U Soe Win takes the oath in the presence of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win sworn in

At the meeting, U Soe Win, appointed as Union Minister for Planning and Finance, was sworn in in the presence of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

Myanmar Historical Commission Bill put on record

Next, an announcement was made for the Hluttaw to put on record the Myanmar Historical Commission Bill, considered as approved by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Joint Bill Committee read reports on three bills

Later, the Joint Bill Committee reports on three bills were read by the committee secretary and members.

The Joint Bill Committee report and findings on the Revenue Appellate Tribunal Bill, sent by the union government, was read by committee secretary Dr. Myat Nyana Soe.

The committee's report and comments on the second amendment of the Public Servant Bill, sent with a remark by the President, was read by committee member Daw Nwe Nwe Aung.

The committee's report and findings on the Explosive Material Bill, sent with a remark by the President, was read by committee member Daw Kyein Ngaik Man.

An announcement was made for the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the bills to enrol their names.

Hluttaw decides on Science, Technology and Innovation Bill

An amendment motion tabled by U Kyaw Naing of the Yangon Region constituency (12) on a clause of the Science, Technology and Innovation Bill, over which the two Hluttaws did not agree was then discussed. The Joint Bill Committee tabled a motion to approve it by paragraph, and the Hluttaw's decision was obtained.

Hluttaw representatives discuss project-wise utilisation of foreign loans

Explanations given by departments and organisations on project-wise utilisation of foreign loans were then discussed by the Hluttaw representatives.

U Khin Maung Thi of Loilem constituency said the public welcomed the electrification of 416 villages in Loilem and Taunggyi districts of Shan State south with the 23.883-million-euro loan from Germany, but suggested the ministry must explain the power line and sub-station construction works.

U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency requested an explanation on the state-/region-wise allocation of steel poles, transformers and concrete poles made/obtained with foreign loans. He also requested a similar state-/region-wise allocation of power lines and sub-stations construction works completed by the Ministry of Border Affairs with foreign loans.

U Khin Cho also suggested an explanation on the status of work completed for the Thilawa Industrial Zone power line and substation projects for which 96 per cent of the loan was already taken out.

Discussions were also made by U Aung Htoo Myint of Aunglan constituency, U Win Maung of Magway Region constituency (6), Dr. Sein Mya Aye of Dala constituency, U Kyaw Myo Min of Moenyo constituency, Daw Wint Wah Tun of Shadaw constituency, Daw Shwe Shwe Sein Latt of Bago Region constituency (3), U Bo Gyi of Chauk constituency, U Than Soe, also known as Than Soe (Economic) of Yangon Region constituency (4), U Yan Lin of Kyaiklat constituency and U Aung Min of Zalun constituency.

The second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's eighth regular session's eighth-day meeting is scheduled to be held on 7 June. ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat meets with EU Ambassador Mr. Kristian Schmidt in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives EU Ambassador

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received Mr. Kristian Schmidt, Ambassador of the European Union to Myanmar, yesterday, at the Pyithu Hluttaw Hall, Hluttaw Building, in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed friendly matters related to cooperation in Hluttaw development, assistance from the European Union with regard to the Myanmar Police Force transition and assisting in national peace.

Present at the meeting were Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office.— Myanmar News Agency ■

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives Mr. Shang Fulin from China

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat shakes hands with Chairman Mr. Shang Fulin in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PYITHU Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat received a delegation led by Mr. Shang Fulin, Chairman of the 13th sub-committee for Economic Affairs and member of 13th standing committee of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference-CPPCC, at the Hluttaw Building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed several issues, including cooperation in all-round strategic bilateral relations through the Pauk Phaw relations, industrial zones and commercial investments for the benefit of the two nations and bilateral cooperation between the governments, Hluttaws and the peoples of the two countries.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Tun Tun Hein, Chairman of Investment and Industrial Development Committee of Pyithu Hluttaw U Win Thein Zaw and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw Office. —Myanmar News Agency ■

I will carry out the implementation of the priority goals of the Union Government which are as follows:

1. Rule of law and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people,
2. National Reconciliation and internal peace,
3. Amending the Constitution which is the foundation for building a Democratic Federal Republic.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)

Not only in Rakhine State which has received the attention of the world, but in the entire country let us strive collectively for security of mind and body.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

World Environment Day: President U Win Myint highlights policy changes to ensure systematic waste management

FROM PAGE-1

According to the UN Environment research for plastic pollution, some 500 billion plastic bags are being used every year globally, of which 50 per cent are single-use plastic bags. Some 10 per cent of all the waste disposed of each day is plastic waste, while 8 million tonnes of plastic waste enters the sea annually.

"If we fail to control this plastic waste, the amount of plastic in the sea is estimated to surpass the fish population by 2050. These findings must be taken into account by all countries, because plastic waste pollution in the sea and damage of marine life threatens an important food source and impacts human health."

The theme of World Environment Day for 2018 is "Beat Plastic Pollution."

President U Win Myint has also urged everybody to make efforts to eradicate plastic pollution, and reduce the production and usage of disposable plastic goods due to their negative effects and threats to marine pollution, aquatic life and human health.

As a key measure of waste management in Myanmar, the National Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2030) has been prepared with the aim of shaping a clean, green and adaptable environment at the national level.

"In accordance with this strategy and action plan, we have to take measures to enhance dumping services, ensure an environmentally sound management system for hazardous and industrial waste, utilise the 3R actions of reduce, reuse and recycle, seek regular funding for waste management, capacity building, awareness and training, and conduct regular monitoring at the national, state and regional, and city and township levels," said President U Win Myint.

In Myanmar, the Mandalay City Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan (2017-2030) was completed in December 2017, based on the National Waste Management Strategy, to create a clean, green and beautiful city for future generations.

The President urged other cities and townships to implement the same strategy and action plan adopted by Mandalay and adapt it to their local situation.

The Hazardous Waste Management Master Plan for the national level is underway for the systematic management of hazardous waste, which can affect public health and the environment.

The President has also called for using recycled waste products, a system practised by most of the developing and developed countries, to help Myanmar achieve its goal of sustainable development.

He also appreciated Myanmar's sound traditional practices of using renewable resources instead of plastic, highlighting the country's significant examples, such as clay pots to store drinking water, and the use of cane baskets and leaves for shopping. Cane chairs and bamboo chairs are good examples of Myanmar handicrafts.

"So every citizen applying these good traditional practices continuously can help reduce plastic pollution," said President U Win Myint.

"We should encourage the local small and medium enterprises to produce the products by reducing, reusing and recycling our plastic waste materials," said U Win Myint.

As for the international cooperation activities in environmental conservation, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris Agreement, Convention on Biological Diversity, Basel Convention, and the Stockholm Convention have been signed and implemented.

"International and regional cooperation must be enhanced to harness human resources and technologies in environmental protection measures," said President U Win Myint.

In his concluding remarks, the President has urged people to take individual responsibility for reducing plastic pollution. (Full text of the President's speech is available on the website of the Office of the President and Myanmar President's Facebook).

Later, a message sent by United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres was read by Ms. Janet Jackson, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (a.i.).

At the ceremony, President U Win Myint awarded the first, second and third prize winners of the World Environment Day 2018 commemorative poster contest.

Further, Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win presented prizes to winners of the World Environment Day 2018 commemorative cartoon contest.

Before the concluding ceremony, the President and dignitaries posed for documentary photographs, together with the winners of the World Environment Day 2018 commemorative contest.

Before leaving the event, the President and dignitaries visited the booth set up to mark World Environment Day.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Beat Plastic Pollution

People around the world use from 500 million to 1 trillion tons of plastic every year, while one million plastic bags are thrown away every minute. Burning plastic releases ethylene oxide and dioxide, among other chemicals, which can harm living things via air pollution. If the chemicals released in the air are breathed in and seep into the bloodstream, they can cause cancer. Furthermore, people usually pack food in plastic bags, which will also release these dangerous chemicals into the food if the food is hot and kept inside for a long period of time.

Union Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint meets with Facebook Vice President Mr. Simon Milner at the Ministry of Information yesterday. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint receives Facebook vice president

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint received Facebook Vice President Mr. Simon Milner and party at the Ministry of Information guest hall yesterday afternoon.

The representatives of Facebook explained the work conducted by the social media company on improving Facebook's community norms, policies, usage of violent, vulgar and hate speech, account security of Facebook users from Myanmar and (account) contents.

The Union Minister in return suggested monitoring and controlling content such as rude and vulgar word usage, hate speech, and comments inciting community and religious conflict.

The Union Minister also suggested hiring more personnel with Myanmar language capability and opening an office in the country. Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun and other officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

ACTING CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe,
ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

EXPATRIATE CONSULTANT EDITOR
Mark Angeles,
markrangeles@gmail .com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

SENIOR TRANSLATORS
Zaw Min,
zawmin.gnlm@gmail.com
Win Ko Ko Aung,
kowink2aung@gmail.com

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
Zaw Htet Oo
Kyaw Zin Lin
Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER
May Thet Hnin,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
mayreporter.mm@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar

COMPUTER TEAM
Tun Zaw ,
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Ye Naing Soe, Nyi Zaw Moe,
Hnin Pwint, Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin

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
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmdaily@gmail.com
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Dengue infection prevalent in adults

By May Thet Hnin

A man fumigates a classroom in South Okkalapa Township. **PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE**

DENGUE haemorrhagic fever has occurred among adults in recent years and adult dengue deaths have been confirmed, said Dr Zaw Lin, deputy director of the dengue and elephantiasis programme, operating under the Ministry of Health and Sports.

The Yangon Region 2018 Dengue awareness campaigns and prevention measures event held at Summit Park View Hotel discussed the fatal fever and infection among adults yesterday.

A total of 2,314 cases of of dengue fever were recorded from 1 January to 31 May in 2018 across the country.

"Dengue fever is a life-threatening infection, most commonly occurring among children and adolescents. Now, even some adults are being affected," he said.

Dengue fever primarily occurs in children aged between 5 and 9 years. Currently, dengue has become a fatal disease for babies, as well as adults.

Of the over 31,000 patients with dengue fever, 192 died, including 27 adolescents and adults, last year.

Dengue fever manifests itself among adults in a different manner. Therefore, the adult guidelines for dengue fever, which have already been developed, will be sent to doctors.

Earlier, dengue fever mostly broke out in the rainy season. However, now it occurs throughout the year. The outbreak of dengue infections has increased compared to the previous years. The Yangon Region recorded the highest outbreak of dengue fever with five confirmed deaths, said Dr. Zaw Lin.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease, transmitted by a mosquito bite. Overcrowding and poor sanitation are the main factors contributing to the rapid spread of dengue infection. People must control parasites and dengue mosquitoes. Ensuring environmental sanitation is necessary and discarded domestic pots and tyres that are the breeding sites for the dengue virus-carrying Aedes mosquitoes must be disposed of, said Dr. Zaw Lin.

Public health staff, municipality staff, Red Cross Society's members, education staff, officials of the General Administration Department, and ward administrators, as well as civil service organisations play an important role in combating dengue. Further, public participation is of importance.

"I appreciate public participation in certain townships. But I'm not satisfied with some townships. We need the active participation of the Pyithu Hluttaw representatives, ward administrators and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association(MMCWA). The public heath department is facing staff shortage and so, we cannot spread awareness among the public effectively," said Dr. Than Than Lwin, acting head of the Yangon City Development Committee's health department.

"The Hlinethaya Township has a population of nearly 1 million people, whereas the number of public health staff is in single digits. We have been conducting prevention measures, together with the General Administration Department, MMCWA, Red Cross Society and the Hluttaw representatives. I am not happy with the lack of public participation, as it is critical to combat dengue infection. This being so, I would like to encourage the public to join our precaution and prevention measures," said Dr Khin Yupa Soe, head of Hlinethaya Public Health Department.

Timely information concerning dengue fever is important for public hospitals and private clinics to carry out effective dengue vector management. The equipment for dengue vector control, such as the fogging machine, require funds for gasoline, diesel and transport.

The Health and Sports Ministry this year has provided abate, fogging machines, dengue test kits, malathion, pamphlets and vinyls. Dengue awareness campaigns have been conducted in 41 townships, as of May. The dengue vector prevention measures covered 2,100 schools and over 600 wards and villages.

Additionally, the health ministry will form region-, district- and township-level dengue combating committees and rapid response teams. It will assign staff to collect data on dengue patients admitted to region and state hospitals. It will also raise dengue awareness campaigns in dengue vector management and school projects to ensure more public participation.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the dengue virus. Dengue mosquitoes often bite in the afternoon. There is no cure yet but many researchers are testing vaccines for the virus. Fatality can be reduced if dengue is treated early.

Traffic accident in Sagaing claims seven lives, injuries nine

SEVEN people were killed and nine others critically injured in a traffic accident between a six-wheeled vehicle and a light truck near a village in Sagaing Township at about 11:30 am on 5 June.

Following a tipoff, a local police force rushed to the scene where the traffic accident occurred. The accident happened between milepost 23/1 and milepost 23/2 near Konywa Village when a six-wheeled car collided with a light truck carrying sixteen people after the driver lost control of the vehicle. Seven passengers died on the spot and nine others were seriously injured in the incident. Local police launched an investigation into the accident to arrest the driver who fled the scene. The injured have been admitted to nearby hospitals in Sagaing and Mandalay, according to the Information and Public Relations Department. The increase in the number of deaths from road accidents in Myanmar can be attributed to high-speed driving and reckless driving. Myanmar has one of the highest numbers of road fatalities in the region. Road accidents occur mostly due to reckless driving or badly maintained roads or vehicles.

Joint surveys for weather index-based crop insurance system to be conducted in five areas

By May Thet Hnin

The joint survey will include an inspection of the weather conditions in each region, crop varieties and previous climate-related hazards. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**

Myanma Insurance is preparing to conduct joint surveys in five areas, including the Maubin Township in Ayeyawady Region and Shwebo Township in Sagaing Region, Pyay Township in Bago Region, Myingyan Township in Mandalay Region and Pakokku Township in Magway Region as pilot projects to implement the weather index-based crop insurance system.

To carry out the joint survey, Myanma Insurance is negotiating to get technical assistance from foreign organisations such as Switzerland-based Syngenta Foundation for Sustainable Agriculture-Agricultural Insurance Solutions (SFSA-AIS), which is currently running projects in Asia, said Daw Khin Moe Kywe, Deputy General Manager of Myanma Insurance.

"Myanma Insurance is preparing to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Syngenta Foundation to carry out joint surveys in five areas. Also, we will cooperate with the Meteorology and Hydrology Department and the Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Ministry. This system can be executed only after conducting an inspection tour of the project areas," she maintained.

Crop insurance pays for liabilities, depending on the rate that both parties agreed to when they bought the insurance. To set the premium rating, the insured amount (maximum amount payable) is calculated on risk factors such as the amount of rainfall, moisture content and the speed of the wind, which is measured by satellite, and issued by the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

The joint survey will include an inspection of the weather conditions in each region, crop varieties, previous climate-related hazards and the number of farmers interested in availing crop insurance, said U Khin Maung Win, General Manager of Myanma Insurance.

"The farmers are keen to avail of the crop insurance system, as it can cover possible losses. The premium rating will depend on the data procured after the joint survey. The liability rate may vary depending on the climate conditions of each regions as the weather index differs in each place," said U Khin Maung Win.

Although there are two types of crop insurance: yield-based crop insurance and weather index based crop insurance, the yield-based crop insurance resulted in losses in the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and India. Therefore, we are determined not to adopt yield-based crop insurance, which burdens the government in the agriculture sector.

Myanma Insurance provides services for 29 types of insurance to the public. Fire insurance is mostly purchased, recording 43.65 per cent. It is followed by, comprehensive motor insurance with 33.31 per cent and third party liability insurance, marine and aviation insurance with 15.02 per cent. Life insurance is recorded 6.02 per cent. Myanma Insurance earned Ks61 billion during the 2017-2018 fiscal year. ■

Marine exports via Myanmar-Thailand borders decrease

Myanmar exported over 6,800 tonnes of marine products to the Kingdom of Thailand between 12 and 18 May through cross-borders, earning US$5.561 million, according to border authorities.

The export of marine products saw a decrease of over 3,900 tons, in comparison with the previous week's total of 10,781 tonnes.

During the week ending 18 May, the country exported 125 tonnes of marine products to Thailand, valued at $0.138 million, through the Myawady border trade zone, while $2.399 million worth of fisheries products, weighing over 2,154 tonnes, were exported from the Myeik border point, and 4,541 tonnes of similar products, worth $3.024 million, crossed through the Kawthoung border gate.

Myanmar exports a wide variety of fish, dried fish, prawns, crabs, octopuses, eels and other types of marketable aquaculture products to its overseas traders through border points, as well as sea routes.

According to the ministry's figures, as of 25 May, during this transitional fiscal year, the total export of marine products was valued at $106.17 million, an increase of $25.89 million against the same period last year. —Shwe Khine ■

YSX's stock trading value in May on downward trend compared to previous years

The stock trading value last month on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) was much lower than that in the same period for two years, according to YSX's monthly trading data released online.

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

The share trading volume, as well as its value, is declining against that of previous years. A total of 157,666 shares of five listed companies on the YSX were traded in May 2018, with an estimated trading value of Ks869 million. In the same period in 2017, a total of 219,964 shares of FMI, MTSH, MCB and FPB were traded at a value of Ks1.48 billion. FMI and MTSH traded 363,433 shares worth Ks16 billion in May 2016.

Moreover, May's stock trading value is lower than April's, which was recorded at Ks875 million with the trading volume being 153,166 shares.

YSX's stock trading was recorded at Ks70.7 billion in 2016, whereas the value in 2017 dropped three times over that with an estimated value of Ks22.1 billion. YSX's stock trading is still lacklustre in 2018. Trading of listed companies in February 2018 registered an all-time record low of Ks740 million, according to official figures.

Poor economic climate, low income and the lack of publicity about the stock market are factors contributing to the steep drop in stock trading, said YSX observers.

Officials from YSX, under the guidance of the Planning and Finance Ministry, are conducting awareness campaigns concerning the stock market in the commercial hub of Yangon and towns other than Yangon, in cooperation with securities companies, to draw public attention.

In a bid to increase the number of listed companies on the YSX, it held a promotional event for potential listed companies yesterday. This event aims to provide a better understanding of the listing procedure and benefits by building a pipeline of future initial public offerings and providing the necessary insights. It also fulfils the gap between companies and vendors during the listing process, according to the notice of the YSX released on 30 May.

Despite the online stock trading and increasing the matching time from two to four per day, YSX's stock trading appears to be on the downward trend. —Ko Khant ■

Union Minister U Ohn Win extends greeting at the reception to mark Swedish National Day in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

Reception to mark Swedish National Day held in Nay Pyi Taw

THE union ministers attended a reception to mark Swedish National Day at the Park Royal Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw at 6.30 p.m. yesterday.

The ceremony was opened with the singing of the national anthems of Myanmar and Sweden. Mr. Staffan Herrstrom, Swedish Ambassador to Myanmar, and Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Ohn Win extended their greetings at the reception.

Later, Union Minister U Ohn Win and Swedish Ambassador Mr. Staffan Herrstrom posed for a commemorative photograph with the attendees.

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin, Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun, Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo, Hluttaw representatives, officials from government offices and other invited guests also attended the reception. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo holds talks with board members of the ICCLC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Attorney-General receives board members of ICCLC

UNION Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received a delegation led by board members of the International Civil and Commercial Law Centre (ICCLC), Mr. Kunihiko SaKai, former president of Training and Research Institute under the Ministry of Justice (Japan), and Mr. Takeo Kosugi, former president of the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, at the Union Attorney-General's office in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to cooperation in the Myanmar judicial sector development, sending law officers to training courses, continuing the experience-sharing programme, closer cooperation in peace and rule of law works, area of cooperation with Japan International Cooperation Agency and ICCLC, increasing investment from Japan and conducting courses on arbitration.

Present together with Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo were Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin, Director-General U Min Swe and Deputy Director-General U Kyaw Kyaw Naing. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Small-scale Industries Department holds performance review meeting for 2017-2018 fiscal year

THE country earns income through production and exports and, therefore, if Myanmar can produce import substitution goods, it can save foreign exchange. Both will support the country's economy in various ways, said Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu.

"The manageable scale businesses are earning income for families. Therefore, we are planning to provide assistance to establish new manageable scale businesses, including by providing technological knowledge," said Dr. Aung Thu, Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation during the Small-scale Industries Department performance review meeting for the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which was held in Nay Pyi Taw's Office N0 16 meeting room on 5 June 2018.

Union Minister Dr Aung Thu observes bamboo products displayed at the vocational training course. **PHOTO: MNA**

The union minister and the officials who attended the meeting, inspected the valued-added products of the Small-scale Industries Department, small industrial equipment and the vocational training courses.

The Small-scale Industries Department provided 420 short-term vocational training courses, 2,350 registration courses, 3,350 laboratory testing methods, and 143 value-added products, which were made of rice, bean, corn and bean crops in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

The value-added products production training course will provide knowledge about food chemicals to ensure the safety of food and other nutritional value in the products. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Authorities discover key evidence behind massive illegal drug haul in Malaysia

MYANMAR police forces have discovered vital information concerning a key suspect behind a record breaking illegal drug haul seized by Malaysian authorities on 22 May that include bank accounts containing Ks2.8 billion.

Three Malaysians and three Myanmar citizens were captured in the initial raid along with 1,187 kilograms of methamphetamine and 750 grams of heroin.

The drugs were found stashed under food products in a container from Nice Guy Clearance Service Agency and investigations have revealed the key suspect to be Maung Maung, alias Yassin, 44, who contracted U Kaung Trading Co. Ltd to send the cargo to Malaysia.

Investigations on 2 June led to the capture of a suspect and extraction of vital information pointing to Yassin, who had been in hiding since 30 May. Police have seized a Toyota Lexus owned by Yassin on 3 June. The car was parked under the Tamway overpass. The next day, police discovered Yassin and his accomplices had opened bank accounts in two private banks with a balance of Ks2.8 billion. Police have frozen the assets and investigations are continuing to quickly apprehend the suspects. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Maung Maung, alias Yassin.

Union Minister Dr Than Myint holds talks with Chinese delegation led by Mr. Yang Haodong, Lancang County Secretary of Communist Party yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister for Commerce receives two Chinese delegations separately

UNION Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint received the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CCPPC) 13th Economic Sub-committee Chairman Mr. Shang Fulin and his delegation yesterday morning at 11.30 a.m.

At the meeting, they discussed matters related to the increasing bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation, technology and investment from China to help build roads, bridges, electricity and basic infrastructure in Myanmar, implementation of Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone and bilateral economic projects along the border of the two countries, as well as increasing cooperation between the governments, private sectors and the people of the two countries.

Earlier at 9:30a.m., the union minister received Yunnan Province, Lancang County, Communist Party Secretary Mr. Yang Haodong and his delegation and discussed economic cooperation between Myanmar and Yunnan Province, Lancang County, increasing Myanmar agricultural and aquatic product exports to China, and establishing and implementing a Myanmar-China border economic cooperation zone. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Forum on Myanmar Digital Rights held in Nay Pyi Taw

A FORUM on 'Myanmar Digital Rights' was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw at 9 am on Tuesday. Present at the opening ceremony were Deputy Information Minister U Aung Hla Tun and about 60 participants from the Hluttaw and various Union-level Organisations and Ministries.

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun addresses the forum on Myanmar Digital Rights in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

In his opening remarks, the Deputy Minister said that the Ministry of Information had been trying for the emergence of a systematic public debate culture, which is crucial in building a democratic society, in the country. "In so doing, the Ministry has occasionally been organising forums, in which participants can take part in openly discussing interesting public issues, all across the country. "Myanmar Digital Rights" had been chosen as the topic at today's forum," he said.

"Being invented around 1970, digital technology has developed very speedily and had strong socioeconomic impacts on every country all over the world with irresistible momentum. Digital technology has huge advantages as well as very grave disadvantages. Therefore, it is important to realize 'Digital Responsibilities' which exist together with the Digital Rights' and some other related issues. All these issues should be dealt with in today's forum," he added, calling on all the participants to actively take part in the discussions.

After that, the forum was held in an open and friendly atmosphere with U Aye Maung Kyaw from Myanmar Affairs Research Team as the moderator and U Than Win Htut from DVB, Deputy Chief Editor U Zeya Thu of the Voice Journal, and U Arnt Phone Myat from MCN TV Channel as panellists. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Ministry of Border Affairs continues provision of aid to IDPs in Kachin State

THE Ministry of Border Affairs provided aid to 268 families who fled their homes in Awng Lawt area in Tanai Township, Kachin State, due to armed conflicts.

At the ceremony held at St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Kinsara Ward, Tanai Town, a month's food ration worth Ks4,732,152 and comprising 97 bags of rice, 166 viss of cooking oil, 249 viss of peas and 41 viss of salt were presented by Director U Aung Kyaw Htoo, which was received by the local populace who expressed their thanks.

The Ministry of Border Affairs has provided 2,869 displaced persons in Kachin State Phakant, Myitkyina, Mogaung, Tanai and Waingmaw townships with 1,116 bags of rice, 1,788 viss of cooking oil, 1,856 viss of peas, 548 viss of salt, 162 blankets and 82 mosquito nets in cooperation with local Tatmadaw forces. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Ministry of Border Affairs delivers aid to displaced persons in Tanai Township, Kachin State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Innwa Bank opens Nay Pyi Taw Branch

AN opening ceremony for the Innwa Bank Limited Nay Pyi Taw (Ottarathiri) branch was held yesterday morning in the bank branch compound. The ceremony was attended by Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) Quartermaster General and Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC) Chairman Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw, MEC Managing Director U Thant Swe, Innwa Bank Limited Managing Director U Aung Ngwe Oo, officials, invited guests, local elders and members of the public.

At the auspicious time of 09:09, Nay Pyi Taw Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw, MEC Managing Director U Thant Swe and Innwa Bank Limited Managing Director U Aung Ngwe Oo cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the bank branch. Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) Quartermaster General and MEC Chairman Lt-Gen Nyo Saw pressed a button to unveil the Innwa Bank Limited Nay Pyi Taw (Ottarathiri) branch signboard. Afterwards, they inspected the bank branch together with guests in attendance.

The Innwa Bank Limited Nay Pyi Taw (Ottarathiri) branch is the 50th bank branch of Innwa Bank and is situated at the corner of Kengtung Street and Bago Street, Zawana Theikdi Ward, Ottarathiri Town, Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Nay Pyi Taw Command commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw and officials open Innwa Banks Limited Nay Pyi Taw branch. **PHOTO: MNA**

6 JUNE 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Solving the plastic crisis

The theme for World Environment Day this year centers on the increasing danger of plastic pollution. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is focusing on this under the banner of "Beat Plastic Pollution" with a simple message that reads: If you can't reuse it, refuse it. With the very real threat of the dangers of plastic pollution manifesting itself before us, the world is giving thought to reducing plastic usage, which, given its deeply-rooted presence in our everyday life, is a herculean task.

Plastic has been in use for over 50 years, since at least 1960, especially after mass production made it easily purchasable by everyone. Plastic is light, easily shaped, strong, and inexpensive, making it unmatched by any other material. This is also why the disposal of plastic has greatly contributed to the level of pollution on a global scale.

Plastic pollution on land or in water will have disastrous consequences in the long run, and it is up to each and every one of us to reduce, reuse and restrict plastic products, and find alternatives (such as replacing plastic straws with bamboo straws).

Everything from plastic water bottles, plastic bags, household products (mostly containers) to fishing nets have been dumped on the outskirts of cities and villages, highways, forests, beaches and even in the deep blue ocean. Plastic landfills drain out toxic chemicals that seep into groundwater, flowing downstream into lakes and rivers. They render the soil infertile for plant life to grow and wildlife becomes entangled in plastic, they eat it, mistaking it for food, and feed it to their young.

More than half of the plastic produced globally is never recycled and tossed away after only one use. The disposed plastic under harsh sunlight and natural forces breaks off into smaller plastic particles generally referred to as microplastics, and can be ingested by aquatic organisms. Just a few days ago, a pilot whale in Thailand was found dead after swallowing 80 plastic bags.

Plastic pollution on land or in water will have disastrous consequences in the long run, and it is up to each and every one of us to reduce, reuse and restrict plastic products, and find alternatives (such as replacing plastic straws with bamboo straws). Fortunately, the rise in technology has created biodegradable plastic, which will be massively beneficial for the environment.

In conclusion, environmental conservation plays a vital role for us in the development of social and economic sectors at present and in the future. Beat plastic pollution so that we may live in harmony with the Earth's ecosystem.

Let's Combat Child Labour through Cooperation

By Khin Yadanar

Photo: Phoe Khwar

The Term 'Child Labour'

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the term "child labour" refers to the employment of children in works that deprive children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and is mentally, physically or morally dangerous and harmful to them as well as interferes with their ability to attend regular school.

Not all work carried out by children should be classified as "child labour" or be targeted for elimination by communities. The engagement of children and adolescents in works that does not affect their health and personal development and does not keep them from attending school is generally regarded as positive. This includes such activities as helping their parents with housework, assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside of school hours and during holidays.

Whether or not particular forms of "work" can be called "child labour" depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is done and the objectives pursued by individual countries.

Child labourers in Myanmar

It should be noted that, according to data and statistics, 61 per cent of all child labourers in Myanmar receive the minimum wage, and males get higher pay than females. Child labourers who reside in urban areas receive a salary, while those who live in rural areas get paid only on a daily basis. Being a developing country, there are still many challenges to tackle the issue of child labour in Myanmar, and cooperation is needed to enforce the full rights of child labourers and their rights in accordance with the laws of Myanmar.

Justice for Children

U Myo Aung, Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population said, "We have found out that many child labourers in Myanmar are employed in the agriculture, livestock and breeding sectors in rural areas rather than those who work in factories in urban areas. There remain some difficulties to tackle the issue as a nationwide problem. Therefore it is very crucial to take part in dealing with this problem. There should be plans to educate the employers to give the wages they deserve, and not to employ under-age workers. Or else, they can file complaints at their relevant Township Labour Offices. We are all duty-bound to protect child labour and to ensure that justice becomes reality."

Children's Workforce Survey

According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the average child labourer is paid Ks400 an hour across all sectors, while mining and quarrying pays the highest wages of Ks600 per hour.

In Myanmar, 18 per cent of children between the ages of 15 to 17 work in dangerous environments, according to the Children Workforce Survey, most of whom do not attend school. Also, children who live in rural areas have to contend with more dangerous worksites than those who reside in urban areas.

Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe met with Ms. Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict, in May 2018, and discussing matters related to prevention of the recruitment and use of underage soldiers. The Ministry is cooperating with international organisations with the aim of protecting the children and preventing future violations against them.

Child Labor Force Survey

According to the Myanmar Labour Force, Child Labour and School to Work Transition Survey 2015, of the total child labour pool, a 55.7 per cent are working in agricultural, forestry and fisheries jobs. For children in rural areas, 66 per cent work in the farming sector. Child labour is a serious challenge, and efforts are being made to eradicate the problem for the sake of the country's future. It's been learnt that there are about 12 million children aged 5 to 17, and all the children who can work cannot be regarded as child labourers. About 9 per cent out of all the children are child labourers, and 54.8 per cent of those children have to work in a dangerous environment. Child labourers aged 15 to 17 worked primarily in the forestry and farming sectors. The average weekly hours of work by child labourers is 54.22 hours, which is more than nine hours per day, according to the Survey of Child Labour. Urban children, and more specifically urban girls, work for extremely long hours. A total of 616,815 children work in hazardous environments and they work an average of 51.9 hours per week.

In Myanmar, there are about 11 million households, of which 28 per cent reside in urban areas, 72 per cent in rural areas. Of these families, about 60 per cent have at least one working child. There are more than 1,278,909 working children who were employed across informal and formal sectors including unpaid labour for family businesses such as farming. Of these, 153,348 children are not child labourers. The number of children doing hazardous work is 616815; other child labourers total 508,846, according to the Child Labour and School to Work Transition Survey 2015.

National Action Plan on Child Labour issue

Union Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe had attended the meeting regarding the Child Labour Issue, which was held in Buenos Aires in 2017. With the ultimate goal of elimination the child labour problem, the Ministry has drawn up a National Action Plan on Child Labour as a national-level measure to tackle the rampant spread of child labourers across the country. The 15-year scheme that spans from 2018 to 2033 is a concerted effort of officials representing different government agencies such as the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Home Affairs and city development committees.

Child Labour Elimination in Myanmar

Myanmar has committed itself to taking immediate action to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour by ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) agreed to by ILO member countries.

As for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, concerted efforts have been made to eliminate the worst forms of child labour including slavery, trafficking, the use of children in armed conflicts, the use of a child for prostitution, pornography, illicit activities such as drug trafficking and other hazardous jobs across the country. The public should be aware of it and cooperation is of paramount importance in dealing with this problem.

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the State Counsellor
Order 1/2018

7th Waning of Nayon, 1380 ME
5 June 2018

Appointment of Advisor to the Chairperson of the Committee of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine

1. The Committee of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) in Rakhine has been established in accordance with Order 86/2017 of the Office of the President dated 17-10-2017.

2. In order to provide support to the activities and duties of the above Committee, U Toe Oung has been appointed as Advisor to the Chairperson of the Committee of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) in Rakhine.

Sd/ Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor
Republic of the Union of Myanmar

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Heads of Service Organizations transferred and confirmed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred Dr Soe Naing, Managing Director, No. (3) Heavy Industries Enterprise, Ministry of Industry as Director-General of Directorate of Industrial Collaboration from the date he assumes charge of his duties.

2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of U Maung Maung Aye, Director-General, Social Security Board under the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population on expiry of the one-year probationary period.

Rain to increase in coastal areas

There is an increase in rainfall in the coastal areas, as the monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak to moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday.

The forecast for Yangon, Mandalay and the neighbouring areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent, whereas for Nay Pyi Taw and the neighbouring area it is one or two rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, and off and along Mon-Taninthayi coasts. The surface wind speed in squalls may reach 35mph. Seas will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar's waters. The wave height will be some 7-9 feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi coasts and some 3-6 feet off and along Rakhine coasts.—GNLM

Rakhine State Chief Minister meets Yathedaung residents

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and ministers met with local authorities and residents of Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State, yesterday and called for cooperation from the local communities in making efforts for regional development.

"Security, the rule of law and peace is important for the betterment of the socio-economic status of the people." said U Nyi Pu, " The government is building the necessary infrastructures for the transportation, education, health and agriculture sectors, which are required for promoting the socio-economy of local people."

"Cooperation from the people will speed up development in the region," said the Chief Minister.

The Rakhine State Government is striving for increased investment in the education and other sectors, as investment in education plays an important role in the development of a country, he added.

At the meeting, the Chief Minister also expressed the government's commitment to building a Federal Democratic Country through negotiation, mutual respect and transparency while taking lessons from the past.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu delivers cash assistance to residents of Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State. **PHOTO: MNA**

Afterwards, Yathedaung Township Administrator U Win Aung reported on projects to be implemented in the interim financial period, which starts in April and ends in September, and future plans.

Following the meeting, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu inspected the water supply system, which pipes in water from the Kandawgyi Reservoir to residents of Yathadaung.

The Chief Minister and ministers also visited villages and fulfilled the requirements for the rule of law, education, health, agriculture and social security of the people.—MNA ■

Thai Embassy to commemorate 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Myanmar

THE Thailand Embassy in Yangon announced yesterday that it will conduct cultural activities to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Myanmar.

According to the announcement, "Colours of Friendship: Thailand – Myanmar Art Exhibition" will be held from 7 to 14 June at the National Museum in Yangon, with displays of creations of prominent artists from Thailand and Myanmar.

"Khon: Masked Dance Performance of Thailand" will be held in three major cities of Myanmar — at the National Theatre in Yangon on 19 June, at MICC in Nay Pyi Taw on 21 June and at Mandalay National Theatre on 23 June.

The performance will feature a Thai version of the Ramakien.

Thai embassy plans to hold cultural activities to mark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Myanmar. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR**

Tickets for the performance in Yangon will be available at the Embassy (visa section) from 6 June 2018.

The embassy will organise the Thai Film Festival from 6 to 8 July at JCGV Junction City.

The embassy, together with Novotel Yangon Max, will organise "Thai Food Week" from 9 to 13 July at Novotel Yangon Max.—GNLM ■

Myanmar's restaurants need to improve quality, services

The Myanmar restaurant business needs to upgrade its quality and services, said U Nay Lin, chairman of Myanmar Restaurant Association (MRA) at the 2017 MRA's annual meeting, which was held at Dolphin Restaurant on 5 June 2018.

"Restaurants currently operating in Myanmar lack many requirements; for example, the street food shops in Myanmar. The most important thing is cleanliness. These days, most of the restaurants are upgrading their services and hygiene. Consumers are choosing foods that are healthy. Therefore, we plan to focus only on health and cleanliness," said U Nay Lin.

"We need the support of other related government departments, when we conduct the development of street food shops and restaurants," he added.

"The Food and Drug Administration needs to check some of the food ingredients that should not be included in our daily foods. Some such foods include dye and mouldy items. Our team alone cannot ensure hygiene. We can only educate them," he added.

The Myanmar Restaurant Association has over 570 members.—Nyein Nyein ■

Action taken against rule-breaking cars, drivers

Ten cars running beyond speed limit were seized at the 201-mile checkpoint and six at the Phyu tollgate on Yangon-Mandalay Highway on 2 and 3 June. Action will be taken against the rule breakers.

Drivers from a total of 32,434 cars running beyond speed limit were arrested from 1 September 2016 to 3 June 2018.

Likewise, four drivers who did not fasten their seatbelts while driving were arrested at the Sagar-in tollgate in TadaU township, whereas 12 drivers who did the same were arrested at the No. 3 Junction tollgate.

From 1 June 2017 to 3 June 2018, action was taken against 5,012 drivers who did not fasten their seatbelts while driving.—Myanmar Digital News ■

UN mission condemns attack on Afghan peace gathering

KABUL — The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Tuesday denounced the suicide attack on a gathering of Afghan clerics seeking to promote peace in the country.

"The attack against a group of religious leaders who peacefully gathered in Kabul to issue a joint declaration that would contribute to a safer and more secure Afghanistan is totally unacceptable," Tadamichi Yamamoto, special UN envoy and head of the UNAMA, was quoted in an UNAMA statement.

He said he would continue to be outraged at those extremist groups seeking to derail efforts made in the interest of peace. "No cause can justify such violence. Targeting civilians in this way is a clear violation of international law," he noted.

"The United Nations stands with the people and government of Afghanistan as they endeavor to build a peaceful future for their country," the statement said. On Monday, at least 14 people, including seven religious scholars, have reportedly been killed and 17 others wounded when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-packed vest at the gate of an Afghan university, where more than 2,000 clerics have gathered to highlight their stance against war and to call on the Taliban to accept the government peace offer.

The Taliban has reportedly denied their involvement in the incident.— Xinhua ■

Israel's security agency says thwarted plot to harm PM

JERUSALEM — Israel's Shin Bet security agency said on Tuesday it foiled a plot to attack Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Shin Bet released a statement saying Muhammad Jamal Rashdeh, a 30-year-old resident of the Shuafat refugee camp in East Jerusalem, was among those arrested on suspicion of being involved in the plot.

The plot, orchestrated from Syria, included a plan to carry out terror attacks against Netanyahu and Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, the Shin Bet said.

"It was learned that Rashdeh had planned to attack buildings that belong to the US consulate and a senior Canadian delegation that was in Jerusalem in order to train Palestinian Authority forces," the statement read.

To advance the planned attacks, the cell intended to bring another operative into Israel from Jordan, according to the Shin Bet.

Additional suspects have been arrested.

Barkat said in a statement that he was kept informed about development during the investigation and had not changed his routine. "No threat will deter us," he said.— Xinhua ■

Iran tells UN it will hike uranium enrichment capacity

TEHRAN — Iran has notified the International Atomic Energy Agency that it has launched a plan to increase its uranium enrichment capacity, nuclear chief Ali Akbar Salehi said on Tuesday.

"If conditions allow, maybe tomorrow night at Natanz, we can announce the opening of the centre for production of new centrifuges" for uranium enrichment, said Salehi, a vice president and head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, according to conservative news agency Fars.

"What we are doing does not violate the (2015 nuclear) agreement," he said, adding that a letter was submitted to the IAEA "yesterday regarding the start of certain activities".

He specified that this was just the start of the production process and "does not mean that we will start assembling the centrifuges".

Under the 2015 agreement, Iran can build parts for the centrifuges as long as it does not put them into operation within the first decade.

Salehi also emphasised that these moves "do not mean the negotiations (with Europe) have failed."

European governments have been trying to salvage the agreement ever since the United States announced its withdrawal last month and said it would reimpose sanctions on foreign companies working in the Islamic republic by November. —AFP ■

An International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspector in January 2014 disconnects cascades for 20 percent uranium production at the nuclear power plant of Natanz, some 300 kilometres south of Tehran. **PHOTO: AFP**

Robert Wood has vowed to stop Syria from pushing through any reform aimed at normalising the regime during its rotating presidency of the global disarmament body. **PHOTO: AFP**

US boycotts world disarmament body over Syria presidency

GENEVA — The United States said it would boycott Tuesday's session of the Conference on Disarmament amid fears that Syria is using its presidency of the body to "normalise" the regime.

"Based on Syria's repeated attempts last week to use its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament to normalise the regime and its unacceptable and dangerous behaviour, we are not participating in today's session," Robert Wood, the US ambassador to the Geneva-based body, said in a statement.

"We will continue to defend United States' interests" in the disarmament body, he added.

Syria last week took over the body's rotating, four-week presidency, which according to a decades-old practice among its 65 member states follows the alphabetical order of country names in English.

Wood was present during the first plenary session on Syria's watch a week ago, when he took the opportunity to lead a number of countries to protest what he described as "a travesty".

Despite the mechanical nature of Syria's arrival at the helm of the disarmament conference, following Switzerland and Sweden, a number of country representatives voiced their outrage that a representative of Damascus was presiding over the body that negotiated the chemical weapons ban.

Syria's ambassador Hussam Edin Aala meanwhile slammed last week's protest as "sensational propaganda" and "characterised by double-standards."

More than 350,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's civil war began in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests.

After hundreds of people died in chemical attacks near Damascus in 2013, a deal with Russia was struck to rid Syria of chemical weapons, staving off US air strikes.

But the United Nations and Western countries have accused Damascus of carrying out a number of chemical attacks since then.

A suspected chlorine and sarin attack in the Syrian town of Douma on 7 April this year triggered punitive missile strikes against alleged chemical weapons sites in Syria by the US, Britain and France.

Last week, Wood had briefly walked out of the room when Edin Aala took the floor, before returning to deliver a scathing speech.

"Today marks a sad and shameful day in the history of this body," he told the assembly on 29 May.

He vowed at the time that throughout Syria's presidency, the United States would be represented "in this hall to ensure that Syria is not able to advance initiatives that run counter to the interests of the United States."

That was a promise the US has now backed away from. A spokeswoman for the US mission in Geneva confirmed that no American representatives would be present during Tuesday's session.—AFP ■

US-led coalition committed 'potential war crimes' in Syria

LONDON — The US-led military campaign to oust the Islamic State (IS) group from the Syrian city of Raqa in 2017 killed hundreds of civilians in indiscriminate bombing, committing possible war crimes, Amnesty International said on Tuesday.

The military operation failed to take "adequate account" of civilians and the "precautions necessary to minimise harm" to them in the city, which IS had declared its de facto capital in Syria, the human rights group said in a report.

"Coalition claims that its precision air campaign allowed it to bomb IS out of Raqa while causing very few civilian casualties do not stand up to scrutiny," the report concluded.

"The coalition strikes detailed in this report appear either disproportionate or indiscriminate or both and as such unlawful and potential war crimes."

The United States led a four-month campaign of air strikes from June last year, dubbed a "war of annihilation" by US Defence Secretary James Mattis, to liberate Raqa from IS control.

Amnesty researchers travelled to the devastated city in February and spent two weeks visiting 42 coalition air strike sites, interviewing 112 witnesses and survivors. The report — "'War of Annihilation': Devastating Toll on Civilians, Raqa - Syria" — details the experiences of four families "whose cases are emblematic of wider patterns".

Between them, they lost 90 relatives and neighbours — 39 from a single family — almost entirely from coalition air strikes, according to Amnesty.

"The cases provide prima facie evidence that several coalition attacks which killed and injured civilians violated international humanitarian law," the report said.

The probe, which also analysed satellite imagery and other publicly available material, found the coalition fired vast numbers of imprecise explosive weapons in populated areas.

Amnesty has written to defence officials in the United States, Britain and France — whose forces carried out the air strikes over Raqa — seeking additional information about these cases and about other attacks, it said.

"When so many civilians are killed in attack after attack, something is clearly wrong, and to make this tragedy worse, so many months later the incidents have not been investigated," said Donatella Rovera, Amnesty's senior crisis response adviser. "The victims deserve justice."

Coalition spokesman US Army Colonel Sean Ryan told Britain's Press Association that Amnesty International UK director Kate Allen should "leave the comforts of the UK " and travel to Iraq and Syria to see how coalitions forces were "fighting an enemy that does not abide by any laws, norms or human concern".

He insisted the coalition made "painstaking efforts" to assess allegations of civilian casualties and any "non-combatant death or injury is a tragedy".

A spokesman for the UK ministry of defence said it had been "open and transparent" over its nearly 1,700 Syrian strikes. "We do everything we can to minimise the risk to civilian life," he added. "We must accept that the risk of inadvertent civilian casualties is ever present."—AFP ■

The United States led a four-month campaign of air strikes from June last year, dubbed a "war of annihilation" by US Defence Secretary James Mattis, to liberate Raqa from IS control. **PHOTO: AFP**

Guatemala volcano death toll reaches 69

RIO DE JANEIRO — The death toll from an eruption of Guatemala's Fuego volcano rose to 69 on Monday, local media reported, with the number of casualties likely to increase further.

The volcano started erupting Sunday, leaving about 50 injured and a number of others unaccounted for. It has affected roughly 1.7 million people, including some 3,300 who were forced to evacuate, authorities said.

Pyroclastic flows hit houses at the base of the mountain following heavy rain in the area, according to the local media.

The volcano spewed ash over a wide area causing the international airport in Guatemala City to temporarily close. However operations were restored to some degree on Monday.—Kyodo News ■

Firefighters observe the damage in effected area by eruption in the community of San Miguel Los Lotes in Escuintla, Guatemala on 4 June, 2018. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

SpaceX delays plans to send tourists around Moon

WASHINGTON — SpaceX will not send tourists around the Moon this year as previously announced, and will delay the project until the middle of next year, US media reported on Monday.

"A new timetable for the flight — now postponed until at least mid-2019 and likely longer — hasn't been released" by the California-based company, said the report in The Wall Street Journal.

The reason for the delay is unclear. But it is a "sign that technical and production challenges are disrupting founder Elon Musk's plans for human exploration of the solar system," said the report. "SpaceX also is confronting industry doubts about market demand for its Falcon Heavy rocket," it said. The tourists would ride aboard a Dragon capsule, hoisted into space on SpaceX's most powerful rocket to date, the Falcon Heavy, which made its first test flight only four months ago. SpaceX spokesman James Gleeson said, in an emailed statement to AFP, that the company "is still planning to fly private individuals around the moon and there is growing interest from many customers."

SpaceX has not publicly released any new timeline for the mission, first announced in February 2017. At the time, Musk said on Twitter the moon tourist mission was slated to happen "late next year," referring to 2018.

Two private citizens, who have not been named, "have already paid a significant deposit," Musk added. The trip would mark the farthest humans have ever traveled to deep space.

The United States has not sent astronauts to the Moon since NASA's Apollo missions of the 1960s and '70s. SpaceX is also planning to send astronauts to the International Space Station later this year, marking the first time since the US space shuttle programme ended in 2011 that people have blasted to space from US soil.—AFP ■

Japanese Prince Akishino (2nd from L) and his wife Princess Kiko (2nd from R) visit on 4 June, 2018, a monument in Honolulu dedicated to nine people who died in a 2001 collision off Oahu Island between the Japanese fisheries school training boat Ehime Maru and a US naval submarine. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Prince Akishino visits Hawaii to commemorate Japanese immigration

HONOLULU— Prince Akishino and his wife Princess Kiko arrived in Hawaii on Monday for a six-day official visit to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Japanese immigration to the islands.

On the first day, the prince, the younger son of Emperor Akihito, and the princess laid a wreath at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, which commemorates US soldiers who died during World War II and the Viet Nam War, and visited two cenotaphs for Japanese immigrants.

They also visited a monument in Honolulu dedicated to nine people, including four high school students, who died in a 2001 collision off Oahu Island between the Ehime Maru, a Japanese fisheries school training boat, and a US Navy submarine on a demonstration cruise that was carrying civilians.

The prince will be first in line to the throne after the accession of his elder brother, Crown Prince Naruhito, following the emperor's abdication on 30 April, 2019.

During the couple's first official visit to the United States, Prince Akishino will deliver a speech on Thursday at a ceremony to mark the arrival of the first group of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii in 1868.

In the afternoon, the couple visited Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, the state's largest museum, where the prince opened an exhibition on the first group of Japanese immigrants, known as Gannenmono, with around 200 of their descendants in attendance.

Nearly 150 Gannenmono emigrated from Japan in the first year of the Meiji era to settle across Hawaii, paving the way for the Japanese labourers to work on Hawaii's plantations, according to the museum.

The couple are scheduled to attend an event on Wednesday organized by the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, a Yokohama-based organization connecting members of the Japanese diaspora with their ancestral homeland.

The prince and princess also met with people of Japanese descent during their visits to Brazil in 2015 and Chile last year. —Kyodo News ■

Hong Kong 'celebrity tutor' charged with exam paper leaks

HONG KONG — One of Hong Kong's top "celebrity tutors", who rose to prominence by promising exam success to under-pressure students, has been charged by the city's anti-corruption bureau for leaking questions from public university entrance papers.

Cut-throat competition in Hong Kong's education system has spawned famous and sought-after tutors who claim to transform students into A-grade pupils by providing exam skills training, tips-sharing and even predictions of test questions.

Siao Chi-yung, also known as Siu Yuen professionally, carved out a lucrative career based on his apparent knack for forecasting test questions correctly in public exams.

Local media has reported that Siao raked in an annual salary of HK$16 million (RM8.11 million) as a teacher of Chinese language, which is a core subject of the Hong Kong school curriculum.

But Siao, 42, is now facing charges related to illegally obtaining confidential exam material.

Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption alleged that a probe had revealed that a former examiner and Siao's wife had used their smartphones to send him confidential questions from Chinese language tests for university entrance exams.

Siao faces two joint charges of conspiracy to obtain access to a computer with dishonest intent, along with two former Chinese examiners. He faces a third joint charge with his wife, Tsai Ying-ying, of accessing a computer with dishonest intent.

Tsai is also a Chinese language tutor at the same tutorial school, Modern Education.

The school was not immediately reachable for comment.

Schools build up the profile of their impeccably-styled tutors by having them dress in suits and party dresses for marketing campaigns which resemble ads for TV shows or music stars.

Hong Kong parents, often desperate to help their children succeed in the city's intense public-exam system, are more than willing to shell out large sums for extra-curricular help.

University places are particularly highly prized — only 40% of students who took the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Exam qualified with their scores last year.

Competition between rival tutorial schools is also intense.

Hong Kong's best-known celebrity tutor Lam Yat-yan rejected an annual pay offer of HK$85 million in 2015, put forward by Modern Education in a newspaper advert as an attempt to poach him away from his employer.

Lam remained at rival tutorial school Beacon, where he was reportedly earning at least HK$42.5 million per year. — AFP ■

PESTICIDE TRUE ACTIVE INGREDIENT ANNOUNCEMENT

We would like to following announce true percentage of active ingredient Togizene (Trade name) which is manufacture from IN & CO SEEDS CO., LTD and get certificated for distributer SEED ENERGY AGRO GROUP CO., LTD.

Sr.	Trade Name	Corrected A.I	Registration Type	Registered number
1	Togizene	Sodium-O-nitrophenol 0.6%+ Sodium-p-nitrophenol 0.9%+ Sodium 5 nitroguicolate 0.05%	Provisional	2013-1721

SEED ENERGY AGRO GROUP CO., LTD အမှတ် (၁၅၁)၊ အနော်ရထာလမ်း၊ (၁၆/အေ) ရပ်ကွက်၊ ဒဂုံမြို့သစ် မြောက်ပိုင်းမြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့။ ph-၀၁၅၈၄၈၀၁၊ ၀၉၉၇၂၂၂၀၃၁၁

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (017 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAENAM-1 VOY. NO. (017 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SOUL OF LUCK VOY. NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SOUL OF LUCK VOY. NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY.NO.(589N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BINTAN VOY.NO.(589N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 6-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.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

Going 'Overboard': Hollywood's glut of gender-swap remakes

LOS ANGELES — From the polarizing "Ghostbusters" remake to the controversy over female versions of James Bond and Doctor Who, Hollywood's proclivity for gender-swapped retreads is among its most enduring and contentious.

The trend — seen as empowering or annoying, depending on who you ask — is getting fresh attention with "Ocean's 8" due for release on Friday, "Overboard" still in theaters and "What Men Want" coming out in January.

The new "Overboard" swapped Goldie Hawn from the 1987 comedy for Eugenio Derbez and Kurt Russell for Anna Faris, and has grossed a healthy $70 million worldwide on an estimated $12 million budget.

But it was disliked by the vast majority of critics, according to online reviews collator Rotten Tomatoes, which dismissed it as a "remake that fails to clear the fairly low bar set by the original."

There's nothing new in Hollywood, and gender-swapping has been popular since Howard Hawks cast Rosalind Russell for "His Girl Friday" (1940) in a part played by a man in the source movie, "The Front Page" (1931).

A slew of female-led remakes followed — from "The Incredible Shrinking Woman" (1981) and "The Next Karate Kid" (1994) to "American Psycho II: All American Girl" (2002) but were largely seen as pale imitations.

"Ghostbusters" (2016) could well be studied in future film history classes for the bizarre backlash it received from the legion of "ghostbros" who swore lifelong loyalty to the 1984 original.

The "Ghostbusters" remake could well be studied in future film history classes for the bizarre backlash it received from the legion of "ghostbros" who swore lifelong loyalty to the 1984 original. **PHOTO:AFP**

Much of the criticism was grounded in straightforward misogyny — with a certain kind of male moviegoer scandalized both by the presumption of a remake and by the very idea of women trying to be funny.

'Sex, eating and farting'

With two months to go until its release, its trailer had become the ninth most-disliked YouTube video in history, with over one million users down-voting it into oblivion.

Various entertainment media estimated the eventual losses for Sony and its partners at somewhere in the $55-75 million region, despite the film garnering mainly positive reviews.

The fact that these movies keep coming out despite the missteps is a sign of progress and a "minor miracle," according to Kelly Konda, of the We Minored in Film entertainment blog.

"This used to be a one-and-done ordeal... However, with 'Ghostbusters,' Hollywood took a big swing on a female-led project, and didn't overreact to its failure," he wrote.

The premise of "What Women Want" (2000) — Mel Gibson as a marketing executive who is suddenly able to hear women's thoughts — lends itself more obviously to a gender-flipped remake than most.

Taraji P Henson, who does the honours in "What Men Want" (2019), told AFP at the recent CinemaCon industry gathering in Las Vegas her role was an empowering statement for women, but also a learning experience.

"You kind of just brush it off as 'men like sex, eating and farting.' I was like, 'How are they going to make this interesting?'" said the "Empire" and "Hidden Figures" star.

"But then I read the script and I'm like, 'Wow, men are really insecure about their looks, just like women!' I think that's going to be great, for women to see that."

'Kickass ensemble of women'

Some Hollywood watchers have argued that while female-flipping may seem progressive, in reality it militates against those really fighting pay inequality, harassment and other forms of sexism.

"Even though I can get excited for a movie like 'Ocean's 8'... at the end of the day it still seems to signify that women's movies still need some sort of male appeal to get made," said Hazel Cills of female-focused pop culture website Jezebel.

"A gender-swapped movie implies that women aren't important enough to get their own, original stories, and thus must piggy-back on franchises helmed by men that have already proven to be successful."

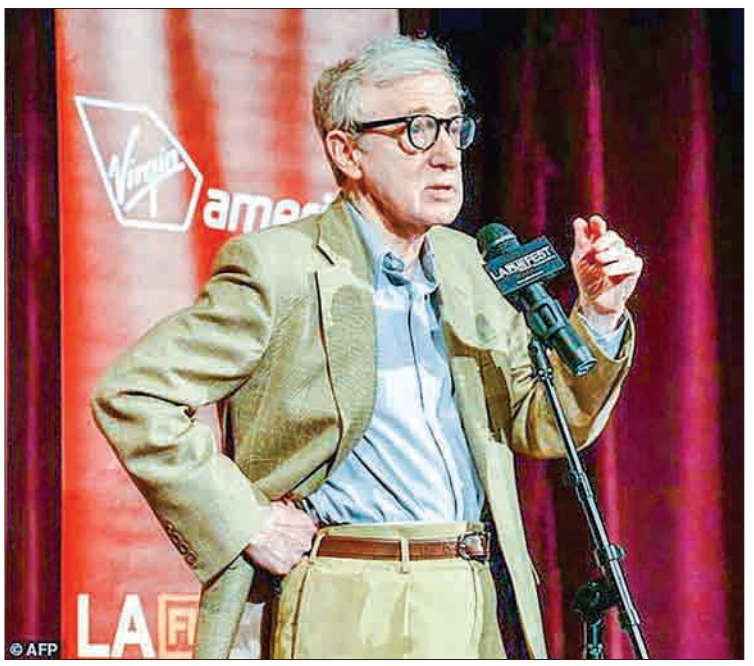
It was an issue that came up when Sandra Bullock, Cate Blanchett and the rest of the "Ocean's 8" cast hosted a news conference at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art earlier this month.

Bullock admitted that initially she "honestly didn't think it would work, or get made" while Blanchett agreed that, a few short years ago, such a project would have been out of the question.

Gary Ross ("Seabiscuit," "The Hunger Games") directed while Steven Soderbergh, who made the male versions starring George Clooney, Brad Pitt and Matt Damon, serves as a producer.

"The thing that stuck with me about 'Hunger Games' was the impact it had on girls seeing a protagonist like that, that they could relate to," Ross said.

"I was with a friend one night and we were talking about this, and I realized that there had never been this kind of ensemble. There had been a lot of male versions of this. There had never been this kickass ensemble of women coming together like this."—AFP ■



Woody Allen said that he was frustrated he was being bracketed with abusers exposed by the #MeToo movement. **PHOTO: AFP**

'I should be the poster boy of #MeToo': Woody Allen

BUENOS AIRES — American filmmaker Woody Allen has backed the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and said he would have been a "poster boy" for the cause if he hadn't been unfairly maligned.

"It is a good thing they are exposing them," Allen told Argentina's Canal 13 television network.

The publication of bombshell articles about movie mogul Harvey Weinstein in October has triggered a watershed moment that has since felled the careers of dozens of powerful men across a variety of industries.

"I should be the poster boy of the MeToo movement. I've worked in movies for 50 years, I've worked with hundreds of actresses, and not a single one has ever suggested any kind of impropriety at all," he continued, adding that the women working in production in his films had all been paid the same as men. The 82-year-old actor and director said that he was frustrated he was being bracketed with abusers exposed by the movement over allegations he molested his adoptive daughter, Dylan Farrow, in 1992 when she was seven years old. He was cleared of the charges, first leveled by his then-wife Mia Farrow, after two separate monthslong investigations.

"People who have been accused by 20 women, 50 women, 100 women of abuse and abuse and abuse, and I — who was only accused by one woman in a child custody case, which was looked at and proven to be untrue — I get lumped in with these people," Allen said. "This is just so crazy. This is something that has been thoroughly looked at 25 years ago by all the authorities, and everybody came to the conclusion that it was untrue. And that was the end, and I've gone on with my life.—AFP ■

Myanmar-based enterprise tries to make trash trendy

YANGON — With creative flair the Myanmar-based social enterprise "Chu Chu" lets little go to waste as its staff turn discarded clothes and rubbish into handy accessories that get snapped up by tourists.

Coffee sacks are woven into baskets and old tyres are refashioned as belts — just some of the 60 products on offer at the organization's shop in Dala, a short ferry ride from the bustling downtown of commercial hub Yangon.

"We're trying to change the way of thinking that recycled things are old and dirty," explains Canadian volunteer and product developer Debra Martyn.

Even the shop is made from reused waste, with walls formed by cemented plastic bottles and a roof made from old tyres. **PHIOTO: AFP**

Chu Chu, which means 'plastic' in Burmese, started in 2013 with just two workers, and now sells its products in Yangon and across the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

"We try to make things that are good quality, well constructed, nicely designed and beautiful — and can be considered useful."

Myanmar has seen a huge spurt in development over the last few years after emerging from half a century of junta rule in 2011.

But the increase in the availability of consumer goods has also caused waste levels to skyrocket, clogging city streets, fields and alleyways.

Chu Chu, which means "plastic" in Burmese, started in 2013 with just two workers.

Now it employs 45 local women and their products sell at souvenir shops in Yangon and across the country.

For the moment, most customers are foreign tourists as Myanmar is still a long way from embracing recycling or recycled products, says managing director Wendy Neampui.

"They just don't understand that throwing plastics away is disastrous," the 66-year-old says.

Even the shop itself is made from reused waste.

Plastic bottles cemented together form the walls and a roof made from old tyres provides insulation and protection during the punishing seasonal changes.

The team suffers no shortage of raw materials.

Just five minutes away lies the town's eyesore of a garbage dump, where piles of putrid rubbish spread over a vast expanse of land roughly equivalent to two football pitches.—AFP ■

The Cambodian village on stilts

KOMPONG PHLUK — Each monsoon the soaring stilts that hold up the houses of Kampong Phluk prove their worth, as the dusty Cambodian village is transformed into a deep waterway.

The village, a short tuk-tuk ride from the ancient Angkor ruins, is on the floodplain of Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake, Tonle Sap.

The lake swells between the dry and wet seasons, expanding from covering an area of 2,500 square kilometres to several times that size at the height of the monsoon rains in September and October.

When Kampong Phluk floods, residents also change their pattern of life, clambering up sheer wooden staircases to the dry of their homes and moving around by boat. After a lifetime of seasonal change in an otherwise sleepy village, 80-year-old Ta Nguon says he is excited to see the growing influx of tourists.

"For the last few years tourists have flocked to our village to see these houses, mangroves and the sunset over the Tonle Sap," he said, sitting on a bamboo platform under his house during a hot recent afternoon. With the arrival of the rainy season, scores of boats wait to ferry tourists along a canal which cuts through the village to the main body of the Tonle Sap and its floating restaurants. They bring good money to the 1,000 families of Kampong Phluk, off-setting the decline in fish catch from Tonle Sap lake, which is fed by the heavily dammed Mekong River. The Tonle Sap is a source of sustenance and survival for more than one million people, according to the Mekong River Commission. But the tourist influx is not without its downsides. Some locals complain of trash and oil pollution from the endless boats carrying visitors around the homes and the lake. But for American tourist Elizabeth Wilson the rhythm of lake life and the adaptation of its villagers is a marvel.

"It's a great way to spend the afternoon or morning exploring, staying on the little boats, seeing the beautiful lake, it's an amazing place," she said.—AFP ■

The Tonle Sap lake expands to several times its size during the monsoon rains, attracting tourists to the stilt villages and floating restaurants. **PHOTO: AFP**

Ancient marble bracelets unearthed in central China

ZHENGZHOU — Archaeologists have found six ancient white marble bracelets at a site in central China's Henan Province, local authorities said on Tuesday.

Besides the bracelets, some other jade and stone materials which had been polished, cut or carved, have also been discovered at the Huangshan Site, which is located in Nanyang. The site was built by a Neolithic culture called Yangshao that originated on the middle reaches of the Yellow River and is considered a main precursor of Chinese civilization.

All of the findings date back to between 5,000 to 7,000 years ago. Experts said this area could have been a processing factory of jade and stone ware. —Xinhua ■

Williams pulls out, top seeds march on at Roland Garros

PARIS — American tennis great Serena Williams pulled out of the 2018 French Open due to injury on Monday, a moment ahead of her women's singles fourth round match against Russia's Maria Sharapova.

Williams, who made a return to Grand Slam tournament after giving birth to a daughter last September, announced her withdrawal at a press conference.

"Unfortunately I've been having some issues with my pec muscle. Right now I cannot actually serve, so it's hard to play when I can't physically serve," said Williams, adding that she will wait for the results of Tuesday's MRI and consultation to doctors before making any decisions about future training plans and Wimbledon.

Williams had won 18 straight matches against Sharapova prior to their 22nd head-to-head clash on Monday.

Sharapova will take on third-seeded Garbine Muguruza, who advanced to last eight following Lesia Tsurenko's retirement in the first set due to injury.

Serena Williams pulled out of her French Open clash with bitter rival Maria Sharapova on Monday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Top seeds Rafael Nadal and Simona Halep won in straight sets to secure their places in the quarterfinals.

Despite conceding a break at the start, 10-time champion Nadal swept Roland Garros debutant Maximilian Marterer of Germany 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (4).

The Spaniard will next face Argentine Diego Schwartzman, who rallied from two sets down to eliminate No 6 seed Kevin Anderson in full sets.

"It's a match against one of the best players of the world today, so what you expect is a very tough match and you need to be ready to accept that and fight for it," said Nadal.

No. 3 seed Marin Cilic edged Italian Fabio Fognini 6-4, 6-1, 3-6, 6-7 (4), 6-3, setting up a quarterfinal match with Juan Martin Del Potro. The fifth-seeded Argentine raced past John Isner of the United States 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Women's top ranked player Halep conceded just three games to outclass Belgian Elise Mertens 6-2, 6-1 in 59 minutes.

Halep's next opponent will be Angelique Kerber. The German saw off home favorite Caroline Garcia 6-2, 6-3.

China's Xu Yifan and Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski lost their women's doubles third round to Japanese duo of Hozumi Eri and Ninomiya Makoto 6-1, 6-2.

Xu's compatriot Duan Yingying, along with Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus, also bowed out following a 6-3, 6-3 loss to Andrea Sestini Hlavackova and Barbora Strycova.

Chinese juniors fared well so far, as No. 8 seed Wang Xiyu overwhelmed Romanian Andreea Prisacariu 6-1, 6-0 in girls' singles second round. Zheng Qinwen positioned herself in the second round after beating Wong Hong Yi of Hong Kong, China 6-4, 6-2.—Xinhua ■

Haraguchi set for transfer to Hannover: German media

Genki Haraguchi. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

COLOGNE, Germany — Japan midfielder Genki Haraguchi appears set to move from Hertha Berlin to Hannover, with the two Bundesliga sides on the verge of a transfer deal, German media reported on Monday.

According to soccer magazine Kicker, Hannover has agreed to pay a transfer fee of about 5 million euros (about $5.86 million), after initially making an offer of 3 million euros.

The two sides are reportedly aiming to conclude the deal before the start of the World Cup, which kicks off on 14 June in Russia.

Other German and overseas clubs had shown interest in the 27-year-old, but all appear to have dropped out of the race for his signature, the magazine reported.

Haraguchi played the second half of the German season on loan with second-division side Fortuna Dusseldorf after requesting an opportunity for more playing time ahead of the World Cup.

Playing alongside Samurai Blue teammate Takashi Usami, Haraguchi helped Fortuna win the second-division championship and earn promotion to the Bundesliga.—Kyodo News ■

U-14 football team of JFA Fukushima Academy to play friendly matches in Myanmar

THE U-14 football team of Japan Football Association-JFA Fukushima Academy will play friendly matches against the Myanmar football teams on 6 and 8 August.

The Japanese football team will not only play friendly matches but also conduct joint training with Myanmar football teams during its friendly tour from 5 to 9 August.

Additional information over which Myanmar teams will play against the Japanese football team will be released later, according to the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).— GNLM ■

2nd round of MPT Myanmar National League (U-19) 2018 football competitions begin

THE second round of football competitions of the MPT Myanmar National League (U-19) 2018 began yesterday, according to the Myanmar National League (MNL) website.

During week-12 competitions in the second round of the MPT Myanmar National League (U-19) 2018, Gospel for Asia Football Club-GFA and Yadanarbon teams played at Salin playground yesterday in which Yadanarbon beat GFA 2-0. On 6 June, Sagaing United and Myawady will also play at Salin playground, whereas Magwe and Southern Myanmar will play at South Dagon playground.

On 7 June, Shan United and Ayeyawady United will play at Salin, whereas Rakhine United and Zwekapin United will play at South Dagon; Yangon United and Hantharwady United will compete at Padomar playground.

All the competitions will be played at 3.30 pm on the respective dates.—GNLM ■