President pledges to return confiscated farmland to farmers

Registered companies need to re-register within 6 months from 1 August: MIC

NATIONAL BUSINESS

Speaking at the ceremony marking International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Nay Pyi Taw’s Myanmar International Convention Centre-II yesterday morning, President U Win Myint emphasised increasing the momentum in the fight against drug abuse.

The President spoke about Myanmar’s anti-drug operations, awareness-raising campaigns on the dangers of drug abuse and use of psychotropic drugs, the rehabilitation programmes and detoxification of drug users, conducting development programmes in states and regions with drug plantations, future plans against drug abuse that are in line with his New Year speech, international cooperation, and safe ways to provide information on drug-related cases.

(The full text of the President’s speech is on Page 6)

Afterwards, Vice President U Myint Swe conferred awards to the first prize winners in the short novel, article composition, and song competitions.

Next, a video was played showing the operations of the Central Body for the Prevention of the Danger of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The President then toured the exhibits on display from the Central Body.

In 2017, authorities handled 9,554 drug cases, apprehended 14,000 individuals, and seized 1,256.1686 kg of opium, 570.6222 kg of heroin, 72,815,686 psychotropic tablets, 198.826 kg of cannabis, 450 kg of cocaine, 5,885 kg of dried caffeine, 3,901,000 tablets of pseudoephedrine, 1,107,491 kg of the drug ICE, and 106.8826 kg of crushed powder. SEE PAGE-3

State Counsellor receives NDI's President

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, received Mr. Kenneth Wollack, President of the U.S.-based National Democratic Institute, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

To prepare for the third session of the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, work committees held meetings yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw in the political, economic, social, and environmental sectors and also on security and farmland.

The meeting of the Political Sector Work Committee focused on protection of rights of the ethnic minorities, democratic rights, basic human rights and equal rights for men and women. The Economy Sector Work Committee discussed an economic system and financial issues of the federal system, regional development works, basic principles for economy of a federal system and market-oriented systems. SEE PAGE-2

Wide range of issues discussed for Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong

INSIDE TODAY

LOCAL NEWS

Govt should reduce tax rate to promote tax system

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

55th Myanmar Gems Emporium continues for seventh day

PAGE-10

LOCAL NEWS

Ayeyarwady River water level falls from over 1,000cm at Mandalay harbour

PAGE-4

NATIONAL

Drugs destroyed in Yangon on Int’l Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

PAGE-11

P-8-9 (OPINION)
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat receives President of NDI

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to Myanmar’s democratic transition, assistance for the Hluttaw process to strengthen and pass legislation, as well as capacity building for the Hluttaw representatives and officials.

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein and officials from the Pyithu Hluttaw office also attended the meeting. —Myanmar News Agency

Union Minister U Soe Win separately receives US Ambassador, country director of ADB

During the meetings, they discussed matters related to Myanmar-US bilateral economic cooperation and assistance of the ADB to Myanmar. —Myanmar News Agency

Wide range of issues discussed for Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong

The meetings were attended by members of the Secretariat of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee Li-Gen (Ret) U Khin Zaw Oo, U Aung Soe, Maj-Gen Soe Naing Oo, U Zaw Htay, U Hla Maung Shwee, Paing Saw Tar Do Hmu, U Myo Win, U Sai Ngin, Saw Mra Yazar Lin, Khun Myint Tun, U Myint Soe, U Naing Ngan Lin, Sai Kyaw Nyunt, Min Kyaw Zeyar Oo and Tar Hla Pe, members of the joint committee, representatives of the government, the Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw, representatives of ethnic organizations and peace makers.

“Our discussion is at the stage of building understanding. The third session of the Union Peace Conference—21st Century Panglong will be held from 11 to 15 July. We resume the discussion about the security sector, which had nearly stalled, as we were encouraged by political parties. We take pride in holding this discussion,” said Tar Hla Pe.

Regarding the meeting on the political sector, Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong said they discussed facts to be submitted to the upcoming Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong.

“We have a plan to submit a compilation of points we had not agreed upon at the conference in May, 2017. We are also working to submit papers of the organisations which have not yet held political dialogues, though they have signed NCA (nationwide ceasefire agreement),” said Dr. Salai Lian Hmung Sakhong.

The meetings of the committees will be held until 28 June. —MM, Hmwe Kye Zin (Myanmar News Agency)

PHOTO: MNA

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than visits Beijing

A DELEGATION led by Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than arrived in Beijing, People’s Republic of China, yesterday morning.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and delegation were welcomed by member of National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China Mr. Dan Zhu Ang Ben and officials, Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thit Lin Ohn and officials from the Myanmar Embassy at Beijing International Airport.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and delegation then visited Creation of a small town in Zhongguancun, Beijing, where officials explained to them matters related to a new project creation and organic cultivation. Later, they visited Huawei showroom in which officials from the Huawei company explained matters related to assistance in information and communication technology for rural and urban development in the short period, as well as support for communications and electricity generation. They then visited the Great Wall of China in Beijing.

At 6.30 p.m., the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker met Vice Chairperson of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Mr. Wang Zhengwei at the Kyaukkyut guesthouse.

The vice chairperson of CPPCC then hosted a dinner in honour of the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and delegation. —Myanmar News Agency

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA

FROM PAGE 1
The participants of the Social Sector Work Committee discussed women, education, health care accessible by all, ethnic languages, literature, traditional culture and customs, national and cultural heritage, youth affairs, and consideration of social cohesion into the socio-economic development of ethnic people.

During the meeting of the Security Sector Work Committee, the participants discussed matters on establishing a standard army of world nations and security matters.

The Farmland and Environment Sector Work Committee discussed the definition of farmland, rights for ownership, land management, arrangements for protection and sustainability of the environment.
President pledges to return confiscated farmland to farmers

Farmers should have their farmland returned to them or given proper compensation for land that cannot be returned, President U Win Myint said yesterday in his speech at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

The President made the remark in his address to those attending the 6th meeting of the Central Committee for Reviewing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands.

Present at the meeting were the committee’s chairman, Vice President U Henry Van Thio, Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Lt-Gen Sein Win, Dr. Aung Thu, U Khin Maung Cho, U Han Zaw, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairperson Dr. Myo Aung, Chief Ministers from all fourteen states and regions, deputy ministers, permanent secretaries, department heads, and other officials.

The President said confiscated land must be swiftly returned to their rightful owners and squatters must be dealt with in accordance with the law. He called on the central committee, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairperson and chief ministers to properly review confiscated land for the good of the nation and the public and follow legal procedures without delay.

The President’s full speech is displayed on page 10 in a separate article.

Next, central committee chairman Vice President U Henry Van Thio addressed the attendants, saying that a copy of the central committee’s policies and 52 agenda items have been sent to similar committees in Nay Pyi Taw and states and regions. He said committee chairs should ensure proper reviews are made on the ground and to form subcommittees accordingly.

Afterwards, officials from Confiscated Land Review Groups (1), (2), (3), and (4) explained the field inspections conducted in states and regions and the completed and ongoing processes related to them. They also gave presentations about confiscated farmland returned and compensation given, response to appeals for compensation, and other field procedures.

This was followed by the central committee’s joint secretary and the state and region chief ministers explaining their processes, operations, and progress regarding confiscated land in their administrative areas.

Next, union ministers and the Union Attorney General, who are all members of the central committee, presented and discussed their respective ministry’s available support and the issues they were facing.

The Vice President then replied to the presentations and explanations, gave guidance and instructions where necessary, and then concluded the meeting with a closing speech.

President: Increase the fight against drug abuse

FROM PAGE 1

Authorities conducted drug plantation cleansing operations between 1 October 2016 and 30 April 2017 and have destroyed 97.50 hectares in northern Shan State, 3,023.54 hectares in southern Shan State, 264.34 hectares in eastern Shan State, 28 hectares in Kachin State, 47.20 hectares in Kayah State, 28.63 in Chin State, and 47.13 hectares in Magway Region; a total of 3,535.74 hectares.

Among the attendees at yesterday’s ceremony were Vice President U Myint Swe, Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Thar Aung, union ministers, the Union Attorney General, the Nay Pyi Taw Council chairperson, Chief Ministers from States and Regions, deputy ministers, Hlut-taw MPs, permanent secretar-ies, ambassadors and military attaches, representatives from UN organisations, NGOs and INGOs, members of the Central Body for the Prevention of the Danger of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and working groups on drugs, humanitarian groups, contest winners, and other officials.

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin receives Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentiis, UNHCR Resident Representative

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin received Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentiis, Resident Representative to UNHCR Myanmar, on 26 June 2018 at 14:00 hours at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the forthcoming visit to Myanmar of Mr. Indrik Ratwatte, Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific of UNHCR, early implementation of the tripartite MoU signed between the Government of Myanmar, UNHCR and UNDP, steps to be taken for coordination and cooperation in repatriation and resettlement of displaced persons, and initiating pilot projects that can contribute to confidence building between the communities in Rakhine State.—Myanmar News Agency
Ayeyawady river water level falls from over 1,000cm at Mandalay harbour

By Khine Set Wei

The level of the Ayeyawady River at Mandalay harbour has declined slightly after a rapid rise during the monsoon, according to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

The water level reached 1,034cm on 24 June. On the morning of 26 June, the level was at 992cm, down 42cm compared to 24 June.

“The river level has declined again. The upper Ayeyawady river water level did not increase significantly. There is rain in upper Myanmar; therefore, there is much water in lower Myanmar. The river water level rose in July and August last year,” said U Kyaw Lwin Oo, director of Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (Upper Myanmar).

According to the water level record, the water level reached 643cm on 13 June, and down from 674cm on 3 June. The water level then recorded a slight increase at an average 20cm per day, beginning from 14 June. After 25 June, the water level dropped again.

Therefore, the river level is expected to not rise suddenly, as of June. The Meteorology and Hydrology Department will issue a detailed weather forecast on 26 June, he added.

The total rainfall this week in Myanmar is 8.74 inches in Putao and 10.79 inches in Myitkyina. The river level has increased owing to the heavy rainfall in upper Myanmar. The water level reached a dangerous level on 19 August 2017 at 4 p.m. On 1 August 2016, the water level reached a record high of 1,325cm, which exceeded the point of danger.

Gov’t should reduce tax rate to promote tax system

By Nyein Nyein

THE government should give priority in promoting the tax system and increasing the number of taxpayers by reducing the tax rate, said U Ye Min Aung, vice chairman of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

“There are many things that need to be done regarding the tax issue. We must give priority to encourage those evading tax to pay up. In other countries, the government reduces the tax rate to increase the taxpayers’ population. It is not popular with businessmen or the public when the government increases the tax rate. Other countries look out for ways to increase the number of taxpayers. Therefore, our country should also follow suit,” said U Ye Min Aung.

After hearing the businessmen’s complaints about taxes, the UMFCCI has formed a special team, which will submit a report to the government.

“Businessmen always share their difficulties. Most of them are related to taxes. Owing to taxes, some businessmen are facing the shutdown of their businesses,” he added.

The UMFCCI has collected the Myanmar Business Sentiment Survey 2018 in May to find out the current situation of local businesses. The survey showed that local businesses reported a steady decline in 2018, compared to the data for 2016. Business confidence has also dropped for the coming 12 months against the previous year. Entrepreneurs are losing confidence in their businesses owing to high taxation.

Thandaunggyi Women Group cultivates Arabica coffee

THE Thandaunggyi Women Group has begun to cultivate Arabica coffee on their farmland since 26 June.

The group planted the coffee with the aim of improving the lifestyle of women from Thandaunggyi township, Kayin State, as well as to sustain their women’s group.

“Thandaunggyi Women Group cultivating Arabica coffee on farmland. PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD

To be able to cultivate systematically, Saw Eh Mu Kaw, an assistant officer from the township Agricultural Department, demonstrated how to plant using the contour and the terrace systems.

“Currently, we have cultivated only Arabica coffee. We are planning to grow Arabica coffee in Thandaunggyi to become role model coffee cultivators. We have planned to raise 3,000 coffee plants this year. This project is being implemented jointly with the local cultivators. When we get profits, we will share with them,” said Daw Mar Mar Cho, the person in charge of the Thandaunggyi Women Group. The launching of the coffee plantation was attended by officials from other invited departments and members from the Thandaunggyi Women Group.—Township IPRD
MIC attempting to speed up processing time of investments

By May Thet Hnin

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) is making efforts to speed up its processes, said U Aung Naing Oo, Secretary of the MIC.

Once accepted, the MIC reviews an investment proposal, reaches a decision within 60 days and issues a permit within 10 working days.

If accepted, the MIC reviews the application from enterprises to be endorsed and decides whether to approve or reject it within 30 days. The issue of endorsement is done within 10 working days.

Under the guidance of the MIC’s new Chairman U Thaung Tun, investment proposals will be reviewed and approved or rejected at the earliest, said U Aung Naing Oo.

“The new chairman urged the MIC to adopt a fast-track procedure, although the processing time is set for 60 days for a permit and 30 days for an endorsement. Also, permits or endorsements will be granted as soon as possible, despite the stipulated 10 working days,” he maintained.

Additionally, the monthly MIC meeting will now occur twice a month. MIC will shorten the processing time and cut the unnecessary procedures that might cause delays.

Investors have to submit a proposal to the MIC, which will verify and approve it, and then the MIC will submit it to the ministries concerned to seek their approval. However, some investment proposals approved by the MIC are delayed by the respective ministries for certain reasons. To tackle this delay, the MIC is preparing standard operating procedures, which will set the exact period for the related ministries to issue permits for businesses already approved by it.

Besides this, the MIC will release notifications, announcements and procedures by the second week of July for the Myanmar Companies Law, which will take effect on 1 August.

Although the MIC intended to receive US$3 billion worth of foreign direct investments (FDI) within the six-month period (April to September 2018), only US$34.77 million worth of FDI was brought into the country as of June. The MIC is facing difficulties to reach the target in the coming three months. However, the target could still be met if heavy investments delayed by some ministries are approved.

“Foreign investors do not lose interest in investments, but there are some limitations,” U Aung Naing Oo noted.

The MIC has plans to promote the flow of foreign investments into the necessary prioritised sectors by cooperating with international commercial attaches.

Registered companies need to re-register within 6 months from 1 August: MIC

By May Thet Hnin

All companies are required to re-register within six months from 1 August, when the Myanmar Companies Law comes into effect, said U Aung Naing Oo, Secretary of the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

“The re-registration will allow the companies to enjoy benefits and opportunities under the new Myanmar Companies Law,” he said.

The new Myanmar Companies Law has abolished the mandatory system of submitting an authorised capital. Also, the requirements to establish a company, such as the Article of Association and the Memorandum of Association, have been removed. Besides companies are encouraged to re-register as they will be able to enjoy benefits through re-registration.

The Myanmar Companies Online (MyCO) registry system will also commence its services on 1 August 2018, the same day the new Myanmar Companies Law takes effect. All registered companies and other entities under the Myanmar Companies Act 1914 and the Special Company Act 1950 will be required to re-register on the MyCO registry from 1 August 2018 to 31 January 2019, during the six-month re-registration period. The re-registration can be completed electronically online or in person at the offices of the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, using the prescribed forms for re-registration, according to an MIC announcement.

Re-registration will ensure the company’s registration number and its tax identification number, issued by the Internal Revenue Department, are the same.

The MIC will accept registration fees online or via mobile. Besides re-registration, the reduction or increase in the amount of share capital and a company’s name change can be done online. There will be a notification two months in advance for the submission of the annual report.

“It will take only 15 minutes to fill out the prescribed forms and any method can be used for the re-registration. If there are difficulties, they can request to us to help with the registration process at the office, although they need to pay some service charges,” said U Aung Naing Oo.

The MIC will release the required notifications, rules and regulations by the second week of July, before the Myanmar Companies Law comes into effect.

The MIC was reshuffled on 16 June, with U Thaung Tun, Union Minister for Office of the Union Government, appointed as the new chair. He directed the speed up process of the MIC.
It is required to enhance our efforts in the drug countering matters as the national priority

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday with address by President U Win Myint. Following is the full-text of the address delivered by President U Win Myint.

Good Morning, Vice President, Union Ministers, Attorney General, Chief Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Parliamentarians, Ambassadors and Military Attachés, Representatives of UN entities and INGOs, Members of CCDAC, Social Organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to express my warmly welcome to you all, "Min Galar Par".

Today ceremony is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, 31st time we have held this event since the UNGASS endorsed June 26 as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in 1987. Similar events are also being held in other part of the world.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today in the world, all governments are tackling the drug problem by various approaches based on different background history, culture, country growth and resources they owned, and the location and geographical situation.

However, the problem is significantly complicated with degradation of public health, social and basic economy including emergence of new psychoactive substances, likewise, the stability and rule of law have being undermined by transnational organized crimes and terrorist activities as the consequences of drug related issues.

2017 World Drug Report highlighted, more than 190,000 people were premature deaths from drug and drug related blood borne deceases prevalence such as HIV, hepatitis B and C and tuberculosis are also rising as the terrible impact of drug use.

Organized crime groups continue to use drug business as their primary source of funding and use more advanced technology. In term of new modus operandi committed by the groups, much more need to be done to use technology-led investigation and to intensify synchronized coordination among governments.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Myanmar is located between two largest chemical mass production countries as well as, shared border with the countries where the international drug market existed.

Myanmar is in the country with the political background that has limited access to make sure fully effective law enforcement and rule of law interventions yet at the border and the areas controlled by insurgent groups due to the current political situation.

As I mentioned above, we are facing drug problems that is more relatively associated the geographical and political situations. The remote and under developed regions of Myanmar suffers from illicit opium cultivation, heroin and methamphetamine production and drug use problem.

In order to tackle drug problems, the successive governments made efforts against drug problems. Myanmar had signed three international drug control conventions, the drug laws also had been promulgated and the drug control authority established in compliance with the international conventions and the drug control projects have been implemented in various area of drug control.

There were 6 times of reform in Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control that was formed since 1976 and currently, the organization has been adapted by 16 committee members. Then ten working committees and Region and State committees, district, township, ward and village level committees have been restructured and upgraded their duty and function.

In regard to secure the life of opium farmers, to improve the livelihood of indigenous people lived in hilly region and to rehabilitate the people who use drug, we laid down the two strategies and three tactics and based on it, drug eradication programme has being carried out by 4 phases, basically divided by five years for one phase that will complete in current year 2019.

Therefore, recently government has adopted new drug control policy which is complied with the outcome document of 2016 United Nations General Assembly of Special Session on World Drug Problem in order to continue sustainable efforts on drug control interventions.

The new drug policy encompass all aspects including supply reduction and alternative development aiming to reduction of opium cultivation and drug production; demand reduction and harm reduction to reduce the drug use; international cooperation; improving research and analysis sectors and finally respect to human rights; and the policy prioritizes focus towards the development of livelihood of all citizens by means of reducing level of drug problem.

Similarly, Government also reviewed the 1995 Drug Law and adopted the revised law in 2018.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the 2017 UNODC report on opium poppy cultivation survey, the cultivation has been decreasing to 25% and production also was going down to 14%, compared to the previous year.

In light of law enforcement endeavor to reduce the drug production and trafficking, the former Drug Elimination Department was streamlined to the Drug Enforcement Division (DED) in 2013. DED has launched 22 drug enforcement operations since the beginning of its tenure from 2013 to June 2018.

13460 drug cases have been detected by DED during the 2017 and up to May 2018 and seized drug and precursor chemicals is worth about 520000 millions kyats, has been disposed on fire in 2017.

The government makes effort in the rural development and to enhance livelihood of indigenous people under the national poverty alleviation programme in order to develop of opium poppy cultivation areas. Likewise, the Ministry of Border Affairs has been implementing rural development activities such as providing transportation infrastructure, health, education, land access, water resource and energy, and establishing television transmitting stations and religious infrastructure.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the relevant ministries have been providing assistance to local farmers to establish the livestock and agriculture farms that would be adopted with local situation.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the UNODC, the project on alternative development and establishment of communal forest had provided to local community in the agricultural land use, establishment of coffee farmer cooperatives and forest management, tea plantation at the Loolin and Ho Pone townships.

In order to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals into illicit drug production, the Ministry of Home Affairs formed the Supervisory Committee for Controlled Precursor Chemical under the CCDAC to supervise and monitor the storage, transportation, sale and distribution of precursor chemicals imported from other countries under existing rules and regulations.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Noting that mental and physical trauma can contribute to higher drug use, the Ministry of Health and Sport established 26 major drug treatment centers and 47 minor drug treatment centers throughout the country to enable systematic treatment for the drug use. In addition, 51 methadone centers have been established in targeted high risk townships under the Methadone Maintenance Therapy Program.

Apart from the center based treatment, it has been carrying out community based treatment and also undertaking one stop service programs to access all services in one place.

Furthermore, harm reduction programs have been complemented in cooperation with UNAIDS, INGOs and NGOs in order to reduce prevalence of HIV, Hepatitis B, C and blood borne diseases which came out as a consequence of injecting drug use.

The trainings for health care service providers have been conducted to improve capacity of treatment staffs, and at the same time, staffs are being dispatched to international seminars to exchange the best practices and lessons learned.

President U Win Myint delivers the address at the ceremony to mark the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. PHOTO: MNA

27 JUNE 2018 THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
In relation to drug rehabilitation, mental and physical rehabilitation, vocational training and after care services have been provided to the patients after detoxification. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Refugees and Resettlement has established 12 Rehabilitation Centers as the Centre based Rehabilitation, and provides vocational trainings and other rehab program in order to reintegrate into their community. After reintegration into the community, CoC services are being delivered by the voluntary drug supervising associations in order to prevent relapse.

Preventive education is an effective way to reduce illicit drug use. Thus, knowledge on the dangers of drugs must be provided to students at the beginning of an early age. Accordingly, the Government utilizes both direct and indirect education programs, including delivery of crime mobile education by Myanmar Police Force to villages and wards, distribution of posters and banners, conducting exhibitions and competitions, provision of danger of drug curriculums in high school education, and training for teachers conducted by the Ministry of Education.

In order for the general public and students to gain more awareness on the dangers of illicit drugs, the Ministry of Information has created mobile libraries. In addition, Myanmar Radio and Television has been broadcasting television series, songs and public service announcements.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the drug problem ruins the human sectors concerned with health, social, development and peace and security, our approaches to tackle this problem should be synchronized with multi-sectorial aspects in balance and integrated manner.

It was found that the prevalence of drug use among the youth is being upward significantly; this is a matter about youth that drug reaps the life of youth, who will be handed over our duties in the future. I would to inform you that it is required to enhance our efforts in the drug counteracting matters as the national priority.

I also encourage to Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control to strengthen the efforts in this field against drug.

In regard to drug users, we need to focus on the treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration programs; likewise, improving the quality and accessibility of treatment services is required to be prioritized.

As one saying that is “Prevention is better than cure”, the prevention program should be designed with transferring broader knowledge among the public through the means of education and mobilization. Moreover, importantly, we need to educate the people that all individuals have to share the responsibility in countering the drug menace as national task.

In light of suppression of drug trafficking, we also need to stress to take legal action with effective sentences to whom committed the drug related crimes including cultivation, production, distribution, corruption and money laundry.

At the level of the state and region as well as district and township, I would like to encourage to establish the drug suppression teams comprising with the local authorities, civil society and the locals that interested to participate in drug suppression as deem as necessary.

It would be reduced the size of drug market if awarding system has been established and provided with applicable management toward the people who cooperate with authorities in drug suppression operations, that will be based on the amount of drug seizure and their performance.

It would be essential to comply with the provision of UN conventions and cooperate with UN member countries, international organizations, and regional organizations, local NGOs and public.

The leadership of State and Region Governments is important role when action plans are being implemented subsequent.

The local government should take the leading role and utilize the strength of civil society organizations including people, local community with the balance and integrated manner in the implementation of whole process.

Similarly, as the unique coordination among governmental departments can gain achievement with the effective outcomes in the implementation, I also would like to encourage to form specific coordination mechanism either the ministries at the central level or within the local level.

The last not the least, we need to take into consideration for cooperation with peace groups on how can we work together with them in the drug control program including treatment, rehabilitation, prevention and education and law enforcement at the local level to central level, that is in conformity with the peace process in which included stressing drug control cooperation.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your presence here today; and the people from different organizations that have supported us to successfully mark this ceremony, government agencies, and all professionals and judges who assisted in the competitions of short stories, articles, poems, songs, photographs, computer posters, art, comic strips, posters, and computer graphics.

I would like to conclude my speech with the theme of this year for International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking “Listen FIRST” to help children and youth grow healthy and safe.
Tackle the drug problem in synchronization with multi-sectoral aspects

By Maha Saddhamma
Jittika Dhaja
Bithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

We need to educate the populace knowing very well that all individuals have to share the responsibility in countering the drug menace, as it is a nationwide problem. Because the drug problems in our country are generally associated with geographical and political situations, the remote and under-developed regions of Myanmar suffer adversely from illicit-opium cultivation, heroin and methamphetamine production and the leading drug traffic. The prevalence of drug abuse among youth is increasing significantly. This is a serious matter that concerns the future generation to whom we will soon hand over the reins that will determine our future.

The drug problem has brought it effects to health, social development and peace of the socio-economy of the people, and this problem together with that of opium cultivation and drug suppression operations. The awards would be based on the amount of care for children. The tendency to use drugs is increasing significantly. This is a serious matter that concerns the lives of the people. Considering this, the National Drug Abuse Control, utilizing the provisions of UN conventions and cooperation with UN member countries, international and regional organizations, local NGOs and the public to formulate the national strategy and implement the management function for the entire management and stabilization of the drug menace. The objective would be to reduce the amount of drugs seized and their performances.

We need to prepare and to implement the provisions of UN conventions and cooperate with UN member countries, international and regional organizations, local NGOs and the public to formulate the national strategy and implement the management function for the entire management and stabilization of the drug menace. The objective would be to reduce the amount of drugs seized and their performances. This is a key to the implementation of the national policy. The plan is to develop and design drug treatment centers, rehabilitation, prevention, education and enforcement of laws for the level to the central level in conjunction with the peace process, with emphasis on drug control.

The drug problem has brought it effects to health, social development and peace of the socio-economy of the people, and this problem together with that of opium cultivation and drug suppression operations. The awards would be based on the amount of care for children. The tendency to use drugs is increasing significantly. This is a serious matter that concerns the lives of the people. Considering this, the National Drug Abuse Control, utilizing the provisions of UN conventions and cooperation with UN member countries, international and regional organizations, local NGOs and the public to formulate the national strategy and implement the management function for the entire management and stabilization of the drug menace. The objective would be to reduce the amount of drugs seized and their performances.
More progress on returning farming

President U Win Myint attended and addressed the sixth coordination meeting of the Central Committee for Reviewing Confiscated Farmlands and Other Lands held at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday afternoon. Following is the unofficial translation of the President’s speech.

In the afternoon, the Myanmar Gems Emporium held its seventh seven-day sale and a total of 1,150 jade lots were put on sale.

Union Ministers, Chief Ministers and departmental officials.

The Union Government was to take action against those who were hindering or obstructing the reviewing, release, return by the relevant committees and utilization by the rightful owners of the confiscated/released/returned land.

The released lands should be returned without delay to the original owners, and the matter of the unreleased lands should be effectively and speedily reviewed.

Necessary actions should be taken against those who are hindering or obstructing the reviewing, release, return by the relevant committees and utilization by the rightful owners of the confiscated/released/returned land.

In conclusion, confiscated lands all over the country should be released back according to the policy. If it is not possible to release back the land, compensations and reparations should be provided. Works should be conducted effectively to release back the land under the name of the rightful owners.

The released land shouldn’t fall into the hands of those who are not entitled. Action should be taken according to the law and procedures set to clear illegal squatters on the released land.

In conclusion, central committee members and Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman and state/region Chief Ministers who were Nay Pyi Taw and state/region committee chairmen are to conduct their works according to the policies and work processes set by the Union Government to speedily return the confiscated land for the benefit of the country and the people.

55th Myanmar Gems Emporium continues for seventh day

By Myo Thu Hein

The seventh day of the 55th Myanmar Gems Emporium fetched 86.866 million euros through the sale of 818 jade lots yesterday.

Over 4,000 local and foreign merchants attended the sale, and a total of 1,150 jade lots from lot numbers 2,301 to 3,450 at a floor price of 4,000 euros and above were put on sale yesterday through the open tender system.

In the afternoon, the Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee held a ceremony to present certificates of honour to the foreign merchants who had attended the emporium 20 times and above at the Mani Yadana Jade Hall.

Members of the Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee, Chairman of the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association U La Phai Khunsar presented certificates of honour to the six foreign merchants who attended the event 20 times. The secretary of the Central Committee and Managing Director of Myanmar Gems Enterprise U Aung Nyunt Thein presented a foreign merchant who had attended the emporium 30 times and two foreign merchants who attended it 35 times with certificates of honour.

The jade lots of numbers 3,451 to 4,600 will be put on sale through the open tender system on 27 June, whereas lot numbers 4,601 to 5,750 will be on sale on 28 June and lot numbers 5,751 to 6,795 will be on sale on 29 June.

More progress on returning farming

President U Win Myint delivers the speech. PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: KYAW YE SWE

Merchants look at jade stones at the seventh day of the 55th Myanmar Gems Emporium in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.
Thura U Shwe Mann separately receives Italian Ambassador, President of NDI

CHAIRMAN of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission Thura U Shwe Mann separately received outgoing Italian Ambassador Mr. Pier Giorgio Aliberti and National Democratic Institute’s (NDI) President Mr. Kenneth Wollack in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting with the Italian Ambassador, they discussed the continued support to Myanmar’s democratic transition and promotion of bilateral relations.

In his meeting with NDI President, Thura U Shwe Mann said the NDI had provided much help in Myanmar’s democratic transition and provided constant support to fully realise it. He said everyone should be cautious of the negative effects on Myanmar’s democratic transition that can possibly arise from the situation in Rakhine. He said the UN and subsequent organisations should provide assistance and understand the complex history of Rakhine State and the current situation. He emphasised that cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh is the key in solving the issues in Rakhine State.

Present at the meetings were commission members U Kyi Thar, U Nyi Tun, Dr. Daw Thida Oo, and other commission officials.—Myanmar News Agency

MNHRC calls for providing aid sufficiently to Kachin State IDPs

FOLLOW their trip to IDP camps in Kachin State, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission issued a statement yesterday, calling on the Union Government to provide aid and assistance for the IDPs and to make appropriate arrangements for access to humanitarian assistance from local and foreign donors.

The team visited a Baptist church, a Roman Catholic church, and an Anglican church in Lang-gwa village of Mogu-ang Township, IDP camps located at the entrance of Mogu-ang, and Lawah and Laine-nang Roman Catholic IDP camps located in Karkraine township on 21 June and Jaw-ma-sap, Tan-phe-reh and Trinity IDP camps located in Myitkyina Township, and Winemaw zone IDP camp located in Wine-maw Township on 22 June.

The statement said the displaced villagers fled into the forest because they feared being hit by bombs that fell near their villages and because of a fear of clashes with armed organisations near their villages.

“Along the route of escape, they faced difficulties from a shortage of food and potable water; a shortage of medicines for sickness and diarrhea and not having enough shelters. Moreover, elderly persons and children were unable to walk due to malnutrition and had to be carried. Some pregnant women had to give birth in the forest and some newborn babies and elderly persons died due to severe weather conditions,” said the statement.

The statement quoted the villagers as saying that during the time they were hiding in the forest, there was a shortage of food, and villagers who went back to their villages to fetch food found out that their houses were destroyed.

In most of the IDP camps inspected by the Commission’s team, villagers have been facing the difficulties including inadequate tents, lack of potable water, unclean water for bathing, risk of fire from improper kitchens, inadequate toilets, and difficulties for education of their children.

The MNHRC also called on Hluttaw Representatives, responsible persons from the government and responsible military officials responsible for the security of the region to visit such villages and establish security, building of trust and confidence, hillside cultivation and an environment in which citizens can live and move freely within the region, which can happen only if the skirmishes stop. As the citizens living in the villages, including elderly people, children, pregnant women and the disabled, are faced with the above-mentioned manifold problems, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission would like to urge for the early realisation of the Union Peace Process, which the State is currently implementing.—MNA

Drugs destroyed in Yangon on Int’l Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

A LARGE amount of confiscated illegal drugs were burned yesterday in Hlinethaya Township in Yangon as part of a ceremony in observance of the 31st International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

Present at the ceremony were Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin Maung Tun, Chief Justice of the Yangon Region High Court U Win Swe, Regional Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Chairperson of the Yangon Region Body for Preventing the Danger of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Regional Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col. Aung Soe Moe, ministers of region government and official concerned, invited guests and students, and reporters from home and abroad.

At the ceremony, Police Brig-Gen Win Naing said the drugs being destroyed were confiscated by police from Yangon, Tanyin-Thaung, Bago, Ayeyawady, Rakhine, Mon, and Kayin, by the No. 1 Border Security Force, and by the highway police force. Approval from the courts had been obtained before the destruction of the drugs, officials said.

Brig-Gen Win Naing said there were 25 types of drugs destroyed, worth a total of about Ks89,584,5122 million (approx. US$66.36 million). He said that destroying the drugs was part of the national duty.—Myanmar News Agency
Ceremony to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held in Maungtaw

The ceremony to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was held at No. 1 Basic Education High School in Maungtaw, Rakhine State, at 9 a.m. yesterday. At the ceremony, U Ye Htut, Deputy Commissioner and chairman of Maungtaw district Committee for Drug Abuse Control, gave the opening speech.

Then, police Lt-Col Tun Myint Tun, district police head and vice chairman of Maungtaw district Committee for Drug Abuse Control, read the message sent by the State Hluttaw chairmen. The officials then awarded those who participated in the art, cartoon, poster, essay and computer drawing competitions.

At the ceremony, the chairman of the district Committee for Drug Abuse Control gave the opening speech. Then, Dr. Phyo Ko Ko Zaw explained the disorders resulting from drug use. The ceremony was attended by officials from the district and township departments, NGOs members, teachers and students. —Nay Win Tun (MMAL)

Gov’t ready to help potential disaster victims

A meeting took place at the meeting room of the General Administration Department in Thanyuzayet Township, Mon State yesterday, with an address by township administrator U Thein Htut.

The meeting was held with the intention of drawing the support from departmental officials concerning the natural disaster management tasks since Thanyuzayet Township is prone to natural disaster risks. Speaking at the meeting, the township administrator said that Thanyuzayet Township is located in an area where natural disasters can occur any time, without warning. He also stressed the need to focus on safeguarding government offices and ensuring security for them at the same time. Some wards and villages throughout the township may face possible floods in the rainy season if sea levels and torrential rains severely increase in the area. The township disaster management committee including respective departments is ready to assist local people in the disaster affected areas in rescue operations and provide necessary assistance to them if they receive information about natural disasters in a timely manner. —Kyaw Win (IPRD)/MDN

Pyuntaza Township locals receive free eye care

Over 1,000 eye patients have been provided with free eye care services at the Sitagu Sakku Dana Hospital that was founded by the head of the Sitagu International Buddhist Academy Dr. Ashin Nyanissara starting on 22 June until 25 June. A group eye specialists led by the chairman of the free eye care operation group from Sitagu Missionary Prof. Dr. Mya Aung furnished eye care services to those who suffered eye diseases from Nyaunglebin, Kyaukdag, Dikeo, Shwe Kyin Townships and other regions.

This is the fourth time for the township to receive free eye care and a total of 1,404 patients were provided with eye care services and a total of 286 patients underwent ophthalmological operations. Since the hospital has been established a total of 5,648 patients have received eye care services and 1,000 people underwent procedures to restore their vision. —Ye Myanmar (Nyaunglebin)/MDN

Ceremony to mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held in Sittway

The ceremony to observe the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was held at U Oaktama hall in Sittway Town at 8 am yesterday. At the ceremony, Ra-kkhine State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col. Phone Tint gave the opening speech. Then, State police Col Aung Myat Moe, the police head of the Rakhine State read the messages sent by Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control chairman and Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe.

The officials then awarded those who participated in the art, cartoon, poster, essay and computer drawing competitions.

Later, a video clip on drug abuse activities was shown. State Hluttaw chairmen and officials then looked around the drug education hall, which displayed the work of the winners of the art, cartoon, poster and essay competitions. The ceremony was attended by State Hluttaw Speaker U San Kyaw Hla, State Chief Justice of the State U Kyauk, State Hluttaw deputy Speaker U Mya Than and state ministers and officials from the state department, local guests, as well as members of the UN, INGOs, CSOs, teachers and students. —Tin Tun (IPRD)

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M/V CAPE FLORES VOY.NO. (092NS)
Consignees of cargo carried on M/V CAPE FLORES VOY.NO. (092NS) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINES.

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM’S DAY NOTICE
M/V SENTOSA STAR VOY.NO. ( )
Consignees of cargo carried on M/V SENTOSA STAR VOY.NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 27-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of APIs 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 BLPL SHIPPING LINE.

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 27-6-2018 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
Desperate search for 12 children trapped in Thailand cave

BANGKOK — Desperate parents led a prayer ceremony outside a flooded cave in northern Thailand where 12 children and their football coach have been trapped for days, as military rescue divers packing food rations resumed their search on Tuesday.

Hundreds of people have been mobilized to find the youngsters who went into the Tham Luang cave on Saturday and were trapped when heavy rains flooded its main entrance.

Anxious relatives camped out to perform traditional rituals, making offerings and reciting emotional prayers for their children's safe return.

"I asked for all God's wishes, but I'm certain in my heart that they will find the Laos and Myanmar border; where huge crowds have gathered near stockpiles of water and food.

"My child, I'm here to get you now," one crying parent said, while another screamed: "Come home my child!". The children, aged between 11 and 16, are thought to have retreated further into the tunnel as monsoon rains fell and flooded the cave, believed to be several kilometres (miles) long.

Rescuers found bicycles, football boots and backpacks at the entrance to the site on Monday, and divers said they spotted footprints in one of the cave's chambers.

Park officials, police and soldiers were dispatched on foot, while an aerial team was also being mobilised to see if there was another entrance to the cave, according to an AFP photographer at the scene.

"We're working against time, but we're not panicking," he told reporters.

Forecasters said rains are expected to continue Tuesday, which could hamper rescue efforts.

Tham Luang cave is not hugely popular among foreign tourists because of its remote location but draws locals to worship at small Buddha statues inside.—AFP

TRADEMARK CAUTION
Orient Europharma Co., Ltd., a company incorporated under the laws of Taiwan, R.O.C., which is located at 7F, No. 368, Sec. 1, Fu-Hsing South Road, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C., is the sole owner of the following trademark:

Ostricare

Reg. Nos. 6559/2012, 8422/2015

In respect of Class 29: Milk; cow milk formula; goat milk formula; milk with probiotics; goat milk tablets; cow milk tablets; dairy products; soy milk formula; calcium fortified milk formula; milk with cereal.

Orient Europharma Co., Ltd. claims the trademark rights and other relevant intellectual property rights for the mark as mentioned above.

Orient Europharma Co., Ltd. reserves the rights to take legal measures against any infringer who violates its intellectual property or other legal rights in accordance with the concerned laws of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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

For Orient Europharma Co., Ltd.

Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd.

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 27th June 2018

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Karihome

Reg. Nos. 6557/2012, 8420/2015

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Tilleke & Gibbins Myanmar Ltd.

Email address: myanmar@tilleke.com

Dated: 27th June 2018
Big, mean and making the green: ‘Jurassic’ tops N America box office

NEW YORK — Huge, green and scary stomped on cute, young and funny this weekend as “Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom” debuted at $148 million to dislodge “Incredibles 2.”

The dinosaur sequel — executive-produced by Steven Spielberg, who directed the original two movies — fell short of the then-record $208 million opening by the last “Jurassic” film in 2015, according to industry tracker Exhibitor Relations.

Still, “Fallen Kingdom” has passed the $700 million mark worldwide — despite tepid reviews like the suggestion by The New York Times that the film is little more than “a way for people with no other plans to grab some air conditioning.”

The movie stars Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard as they try to rescue genetically recreated dinosaurs from a volcano-threatened island and move them to — why not? — a sprawling California mansion. Sliding to second, Pixar’s “Incredibles 2” earned a respectable $90.3 million as North American theaters continued to recover from last summer’s downturn.

The film, about a quirky superhero family, raked in $182 million in its debut weekend, a record for an animated feature in the US and Canada, easily surpassing the $135 million debut of 2016’s “Finding Dory.”

The film tells the story of the Parr family — centered this time on matriarch Helen (Holly Hunter) as she battles to help bring the world’s hiding superheroes back into the open. Husband Bob (Craig T. Nelson) is left at home in charge of their frighteningly talented but scarily unpredictable kids, and finds the homemaker’s job more challenging than being a superhero. In third spot was Warner Bros.’ hit movie “Ocean’s 8,” at $11.5 million.

The female-centric sequel has Debbie Ocean (Sandra Bullock) assembling a gang of talented women (Cate Blanchett, Anne Rhianhna, Helena Bonham Carter) to plan a seemingly impossible diamond heist from the Met Gala in New York.

Adult comedy “Tag,” also from Warner Bros, came in fourth at $8.3 million. It tells the story of childhood pals, led by Jon Hamm and Jeremy Renner, who keep up a game of tag for decades, sometimes at the oddest of moments.

Staying alive in fifth was “Deadpool 2,” the R-rated superhero flick from Fox, at $5.3 million. It stars Ryan Reynolds as the irreverent, foul-mouthed title character.

Rounding out the top 10 were:

- “Solo: A Star Wars Story” ($4.5 million)
- “Hereditary” ($3.6 million)
- “Superfly” ($3.4 million)
- “Avengers: Infinity War” ($2.6 million)
- “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” ($1.8 million) —AFP

“Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom” stomped the competition in its debut weekend at the North American box office. PHOTO: AFP

Venezuela’s Gustavo Dudamel to lead youth concerts in Chile

SANITAGO — Venezuela’s Gustavo Dudamel will lead concerts on Thursday and Friday in Santiago with youth from Latin America and Europe to honour his late mentor Jose Antonio Abreu, who created a celebrated public music education programme for young people.

“This is the start of something that will last throughout our lives,” said 37-year-old Dudamel, currently the music and artistic director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra.

Abreu, also a Venezuelan, died in Caracas on 24 March at the age of 78. The music programme he pioneered, the National System of Youth Orchestras of Venezuela, or “El Sistema,” has been replicated in more than 40 countries.

It seeks to provide low-income children music education to build confidence and rise out of poverty. Dudamel told reporters that the Santiago concerts will bring together members of Chilean youth orchestras with musicians from ensembles based in Vienna, Berlin, Los Angeles and Gothenburg, as well as two Venezuelan orchestras, National de Venezuela and Simon Bolivar. For the performances, the conductor said he chose some of Abreu’s favourite pieces, including Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony and Tchaikovsky’s Fourth Symphony.

Some 500 children from across Chile are also set to travel to Santiago to attend the second performance. —AFP

Freed Mill takes on police brutality at BET Awards

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Meek Mill, free after a controversial jail sentence, returned to the stage on Sunday with a vigorous attack on police brutality as he premiered a song at the BET Awards.

The awards of Black Entertainment Television, broadcast live from Los Angeles, recognize the best of African American music and film and the blockbuster “Black Panther” won Best Movie.

Mill was one of the night’s most memorable performers as he debuted his song “Stay Woke.” The 31-year-old rapper in April won his freedom five months after a judge jalled him over violations of probation stemming from a 2008 arrest, a decision that triggered protests charging that it was overly harsh and racially biased.

Mill performed “Stay Woke” on a set designed as a street scene in his native Philadelphia — a neighborhood that is unkempt yet also full of life with children playing. Police swarm onto the scene with force and a shot is heard. The song pauses a little girl who was jumping rope is revealed to have been killed, her body then draped with an American flag. “How can I pledge allegiance to the flag / When they killing all our sons and dads?” Mill raps.

The singer Miguel contributes the chorus, which says, “Though it was designed for us to lose / Nothing nothing nothing’s impossible / Believe it, we’re still undefeated.” —AFP

Rebel Wilson to star in and produce comic book adaptation ‘Crowded’

LOS ANGELES — Actress-cum-comedian Rebel Wilson has bought the rights to “Crowded,” an upcoming Image Comics publication, and is planning to star in as well as produce the movie adaptation of the same.

According to the Hollywood Reporter, Wilson will develop the project and produce it via her Camp Sugar production banner.

“Crowded,” written by Christopher Sebela and drawn by Ro Stein and Ted Brandt, is set in a near future where the world’s economy is all job sharing and apps and where a crowdfunding platform that funds assassinations named Reap is all the rage.

The story is set in motion when a woman named Charlie, leading a normal life, finds her world upside down when she suddenly becomes a target on Reap, with a multimillion-dollar bounty. She hires Vita, the lowest-rung bodyguard on the Dend app.

The two have work to together to take down the aspirational assassins and find out who wants Charlie dead before the campaign’s 30-day period concludes, or their lives are over.

Sebela will act as a consulting producer on the movie adaptation. —PTT
On NY’s rooftops, old-style wooden water tanks hang tough

NEW YORK — They are part of New York’s skyline and millions of people unknowingly depend on them: behold, the venerable rooftop water tank, made of plain old wood.

And forget about technology and innovation and all that. The tanks are more popular than ever in this city of skyscrapers.

Here, any building higher than six stories must be fitted with one four-meter-high depository tank. It takes several men to get the tank up there, and people are amazed at the sight of the wooden contraption. It is a reminder of the past.

Photo: AFP

Their employer is Isseks Brothers, one of three companies that share the rooftop water tank market in the most populous American city. In total, there are around 10,000 tanks.

The tools they use have evolved a bit, but for the most part, a water tank is set up today the same way it was in 1890, when the Isseks brothers, immigrants from Poland, founded their company. “That’s the beautiful thing. It’s so simplistic,” said David Hochhauser, a co-owner of the firm. Wooden water tanks — which also serve as protection against fire — have lots of advantages over tanks made from other materials, even atop a 1,300-foot-tall (400-meter-high) building.

The cost is reasonable — between $35,000 and $100,000 — as compared to what a tank made from fiberglass or steel goes for — double or triple that much.

They are also quicker to install — just one day as opposed to at least a week for the other kinds.

Not in any books

Up on the rooftops, Stokes is following in the footsteps of his father, who retired three years ago, and overseeing the work of a crew whose very specific skill is the company’s main asset.

“It’s a very dangerous job. At all times, you have to be aware of what you’re doing,” said Stokes, a native of St Vincent and the Grenadines in the Caribbean.

This particular building on Lexington Avenue is just nine stories high.

But Isseks Brothers has also installed tanks atop the old World Trade Center and the new one known as the Freedom Tower, which soars 1,776 feet into the air, as well as many other Big Apple skyscrapers.

The team works pretty much non stop and by 3:00 pm, water is flowing into the tank. It leaks a bit but that’s expected — it will take the Alaskan cedar used to build the tank two or three days to swell and become water-tight. The tank lasts around 55 years.

Isseks Brothers’ supplier is the Hall-Woolford Wood Tank Company in Philadelphia, which provides it with the carefully cut boards that make up a water tank. The 160-year-old supplier’s workshop employs just seven people, and some of the machines are older than the people operating them. Nothing is automated. Everything is guided by the human eye.

“As far as getting it right, there is no book that can teach you that. It’s from generation to generation, from one worker to the other,” said manager Jack Hillman. — AFP

Japanese guests visit school library at Letpadan No. 2 Basic Education High School

Ms. Kyoko Ito, Coordinator of the Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) from Japan, and party arrived at the school library of No. 2 Basic Education High School in Letpadan Township, Thayawady District, Bago Region, yesterday afternoon.

Ms. Kyoko Ito and party toured the library and encouraged the children and teachers who have participated in measures for developing reading power at the library.

The Japanese guests then met with the Headmaster of No. 2 Basic Education High School of Letpadan Township and discussed the requirements of the school library. — Maung Shwe Win (P-yay)

Damaged centuries-old Japanese porcelain on loan to Taiwan repaired

TAIPEI (China) — A damaged centuries-old porcelain plate on loan to Taiwan’s National Palace Museum from a pottery museum in Osaka has been repaired, the two museums said on Monday.

Jasper Lin, director of the National Palace Museum, told a press conference that the repair of the 17th century Imari-style porcelain ware took about a year, with the two museums spending the first six months discussing how to repair the plate. The Taiwanese museum then conducted tests and examinations of the object and began the repair work in the beginning of March and completed it at the end of last month.

“Now the porcelain ware is reborn and has a new life,” Lin said. The centuries-old porcelain ware is among the 300 ceramic items on loan for three years to the southern branch of the National Palace Museum to celebrate the opening of its first branch in Chiayi County, southwestern Taiwan, in 2015.

Among them, 161 are Imari-style porcelain wares from Kyushu’s Arita area, the cradle of porcelain manufacturing in Japan. In July last year, the plate was found cracked in three pieces inside a glass display box.

The incident taught him that everything has a life span, including porcelain ware. Nevertheless, the object was repaired in a “creative” way that Degawa said “breathed new life” into it and increased its original value. — Kyodo News

Photo: Maung Shwe Win (P-yay)
Three things we learned today at the World Cup

MOSCOW — Spain finished top of Group B on Monday despite being held by Morocco while Portugal took second place after a controversial draw with Iran.

Uruguay and Russia were both already through to the knock-out stages but the South Americans clinched top spot in Group A after beating the hosts 3-0.

Here, AFP Sport looks at three things we learned from the World Cup today:

Russia crash back down to earth

Russia were dealt a reality check by Uruguay whose victory was perhaps a little flattering but, still, entirely comfortable.

Many will conclude Russia rode the wave of enthusiasm to beat two poor opponents but were found wanting against a better one and it will be up to them to prove that theory wrong.

When they return to their favoured Luzhniki Stadium on Sunday.

Uruguay, meanwhile, have hardly set the world alight but they go through top with nine points out of nine. Portugal, their next opponents, will not have it easy.

VAR at its worst

Portugal scored one of the finest goals of the competition so far, a bending strike from the outside of Ricardo Quaresma’s right foot, and Iran equalised late on to seal a dramatic 1-1 draw.

But in between, this was a contest spoiled by a combination of a referee misusing the video assistant referee and players constantly begging for it.

Paraguayan official Enrique Caceres reversed his initial decision and awarded Portugal a penalty that was not clear. He took too long to decide Cristiano Ronaldo did not deserve a red card for throwing an arm. And then he wrongly gave Iran a penalty for a handball by Cedric Soares.

Through it all, the players and managers were wagging fingers and drawing imaginary television screens, with the actual football all but forgotten. There has been enough in Russia to suggest VAR can be a success but in this game, its flaws were painfully exposed.

Good for Hierro, bad for Spain’s backline

Spain’s problems would seem to lie less with their coach Fernando Hierro, whose substitutions aided a late comeback against Morocco, than their defence, whose mistakes twice gave their opponents the lead.

Hierro, the last-minute replacement for Julen Lopetegui, was brave enough to bring off Diego Costa and David Silva for Iago Aspas and Rodrigo in Kaliningrad. Both were involved in the equaliser, which Aspas flicked home for a 2-2 draw.

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France’s forward Kylian Mbappe (L) vies with Denmark’s midfielder Thomas Delaney during the Russia 2018 World Cup Group C football match between Denmark and France at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, on 26 June 2018. PHOTO: AFP

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Here, AFP Sport looks at three things we learned from the World Cup today:

Russia crash back down to earth

Russia were dealt a reality check by Uruguay whose victory was perhaps a little flattering but, still, entirely comfortable.

Many will conclude Russia rode the wave of enthusiasm to beat two poor opponents but were found wanting against a better one and it will be up to them to prove that theory wrong.

When they return to their favoured Luzhniki Stadium on Sunday.

Uruguay, meanwhile, have hardly set the world alight but they go through top with nine points out of nine. Portugal, their next opponents, will not have it easy.

VAR at its worst

Portugal scored one of the finest goals of the competition so far, a bending strike from the outside of Ricardo Quaresma’s right foot, and Iran equalised late on to seal a dramatic 1-1 draw.

But in between, this was a contest spoiled by a combination of a referee misusing the video assistant referee and players constantly begging for it.

Paraguayan official Enrique Caceres reversed his initial decision and awarded Portugal a penalty that was not clear. He took too long to decide Cristiano Ronaldo did not deserve a red card for throwing an arm. And then he wrongly gave Iran a penalty for a handball by Cedric Soares.

Through it all, the players and managers were wagging fingers and drawing imaginary television screens, with the actual football all but forgotten. There has been enough in Russia to suggest VAR can be a success but in this game, its flaws were painfully exposed.

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