Int’l Day for Natural Disaster Reduction observed
2,500 disasters occurred in 2017-2018 in Myanmar, affecting 500,000 people

Myanmar has suffered more than 2,500 natural disasters in the year 2017-2018, and five hundred thousand people were severely affected by it, said Vice President U Henry Van Thio.

He made the remark at the ceremony to observe the 2018 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction held in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Union Government has spent Ks 5.585 billion in assistance and sustainable disaster reduction projects in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, he added.

The theme of the 2018 International Day for Disaster Reduction is “Reducing Economic Losses from Disaster Has the Power to Transform Lives”, and highlights the importance of reducing economic losses brought about by natural and manmade disasters.

The Vice President, who is also Chairman of the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), said the annual international event was first designated at the UN General Assembly on 21 December 2009 with written order No.64/2009. He said Myanmar began celebrating this day in 2010 in line with the themes set by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

He said the effects from global warming and climate change can be felt around the world, with a study in 2014 revealing that 50 per cent of deaths caused by natural disasters in that year occurred in the ASEAN region.

The Vice President said economic loss from natural disasters in 2017 rose by 63 per cent from 2016. He said global economic losses between 1990 to 2018 saw the highest loss of USD 400 billion in 2011. According to the World Bank, the ASEAN region suffers an annual economic loss of USD 4.4 billion which is 0.2 per cent higher than the GDP of the region’s nations, he said.

The Vice President said that with the aim to promote cooperation between regional countries and speed up disaster management operations, the 24th ASEAN Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw issued the Nay Pyi Taw Declaration which agreed on adopting the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) of the ASEAN Coordination Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) as the region’s policy framework for One ASEAN, One Response.

He mentioned that Myanmar had formulated the Myanmar Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction 2017 to 2030 to be in accord with both the basic principles and projects related to disaster management and the sustainable development goals included in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.
THE Union Government and the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement Signatories Ethnic Armed Organizations-NCA’s EAOs held a preliminary meeting at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting, the government side was represented by Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr. Tin Myo Win, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo, Secretary of the Peace Commission U Khin Zaw Oo, Lt-Gen Yar Pyai, Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win, Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win, Maj-Gen San Myint, U Aung Soe, U Aung Kyi Nyunt and U Zaw Htay while the ethnic armed organizations side was comprised by Pado Saw Kwe Httoo Win, Vice Chairman of the Chin National Front-CNF Dr. Salai Hlyan Hmon Sar Khuang and General Secretary Salai Htalar Hay, Member of the Central Executive Committee of Arakan Liberation Party-ALP Daw Saw Mya Yanzar Lin, Vice Chairman of the Pao National Liberation Organization-PNLO Khun Myint Tun, Vice Chairman of the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front-ABSDF U Myo Win, Secretary of the Restoration Council Shan State-RCSS U Sai Nginn, Member of the Central Committee of the New Mon State Party-NMSP Nai Aung Ma Ngay and Vice Chairman of the Lahu Democratic Union-LDU Kyar Saw Lamon.

Speaking at the meeting, Chairman of the PC Dr. Tin Myo Win expressed delight for seeing the friendship between the two sides as the participants met each other frequently, urging both sides to give suggestions at the meeting to produce good results in upcoming meeting.

On behalf of the EAOs, Vice Chairman of the KNU Pado Saw Kwe Httoo Win called for negotiation between them on preparation for tackling challenges ahead and make preparations for coming meeting through discussion and understanding.

The preliminary meeting also discussed issues related with democracy and basic principles and other issues including time table and processes, self-determination and non-secession from the Union, unified army, making political dialogues easy and clear, agreements reached between leaders on political dialogues, inclusiveness of all EAOs, strengthening the ceasefire agreement and general issues.

The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the leader of the NCA’s EAO leader Pado Saw Kwe Httoo Win and Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr. Tin Myo Win. —Myo Myint and Han Lin Naing

Representatives from the Union Government and Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement signatories of the ethnic armed organizations convene at a preliminary meeting in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

Leaders, representatives from EAOs arrive in Nay Pyi Taw

THE top leaders and representatives from the 10 ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) signatories to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) arrived in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon to attend an exclusive meeting between them and the Union Government.

The leaders and representatives of the EAOs include Saw Hae Sey from Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), Salai Yanku Kyone from Chin National Front (CNF), Chairman of the Pao National Liberation Organization (PNLO) Khun Okkar, Central Committee member of the Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) Khang Kyaw Hlaing, Chairperson of the Lahu Democratic Union (LDU) Kyar Khun Sar and Vice Chairman of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) Nai Hanthar, Karen National Union (KNU) Chairman Saw Mutu Say Poe, Secretary of Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army – Peace Council (KNU/KNLA-PC) Dr. Naw Ka Paw Htoo, chairman of Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) Saw Mo Shay and Vice chairperson of Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) Khang Soe Naing Aung. They were welcomed by officials at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport.—MNA

Traffic congestion occurs in Mohnyin Township

TRAFFIC came to a halt at the corner of Mawhan village on Shwebo-Myitkyina road due to heavy rains on 13 October and local people helped ease the difficulties of travelers. “Due to relentless rains, the road becomes slippery, muddy and full of holes. So it is difficult for heavy vehicles to climb up and climb down the road and traffic interruption happened three times today.” The situation is dangerous for travelers and local people are helping them”, said U Aung Kyaw Soe of Mawhan village.

Vehicles frequently overturned at that corner causing deaths and injuries to the travelers as well as frequent traffic blockages. As a result, local people want the road to be upgraded to the one which is easily accessible in all weathers. —Ni Toe/MDN

MNA

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA

PHOTO: MNA
In the process of establishing a peaceful, prosperous and resilient nation, we must take account of the need to strengthen the mechanisms and institutions of government. It is of paramount importance to uphold rule of law, ensure the mental and physical wellbeing of our citizens, provide for equality of taxation, deliver basic services to our people, including education, health and social services, transportation, communication and infrastructure development, and to strengthen the administrative mechanisms of government.

(Excerpted from the report on the current work of the Union Government, delivered at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 19 September 2018)

Int’l Day for Natural Disaster Reduction observed

FROM PAGE 1

The Vice President said that a viewing of a documentary on the UN Secretary-General’s constructive role in disaster risk reduction processes should be included in all master strategies and project schemes that we devise.

He said the economic loss from natural disasters need to be reduced as the theme for this year suggests, to allow a more disaster-resilient society to emerge that created opportunities for all citizens to participate in, regardless of age or social class.

The Vice President said disaster risk reduction is something every relevant government department, domestic and international organization, and humanitarian agency should consider as an indispensable operation to their organization. He said if every individual actively participates in disaster risk reduction processes then society will become more resilient to natural disasters while simultaneously reducing losses from natural disasters and developing the economy.

Next, UNFPA representative Ms. Janet E. Jackson read a UN Secretary-General’s correspondence which was followed by a viewing of a documentary on the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Afterwards, the Vice President took a documentary photo with the invited guest and then toured around the commemorative exhibitions for 2018 International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction.

Attending the ceremony were Union Ministers Lt-Gen Sein Win, U Thant Sin Maung, Dr. Win Myat Aye and Nai Thet Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, Deputy Ministers U Win Maw Tun and U Soe Aung, Secretary of Amyotha Hluttaw Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Development Committee Dr. Win Myint, Permanent Secretaries, directors-general, deputy directors-general, ambassadors and chargé d’affaires of foreign embassies based in Myanmar; invited guests from UN agencies, international organizations, INGOs and NGOs, members of the media, and other officials.

—MNA

Steps closer to publishing Myanmar encyclopedic series, 100 Myanmar classic series

A DRAFT of the first volume of the Myanmar encyclopedia is having its finishing touches done by experts and is expected to be finalized in the second week of December.

The Ministry of Information and experts are working on publishing the encyclopedic series and 100 Myanmar Classics series.

At the coordination meeting to publish the Myanmar Encyclopedic series and a series of 100 Myanmar classics, held at the Printing and Publishing Department on Theinbyu Road in Yangon, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint attended to the needs for finishing the work after discussing the issue with attendees of the meeting. The meeting also focused on speeding up publishing and distribution of the books.

The work on re-publishing the Myanmar Encyclopedia started in 2017.

Meanwhile, the first volume of a series of 100 Myanmar classics is expected to complete its binding by October and Sarpay Lawka Publishing House will be publishing the first volume.

The second volume is being prepared by the Sarpay Beikman and it is expected to come out at the end of this month.

Sarpay Beikman is also putting finishing touches on the third volume and will print it in early November. The 100 Myanmar Classics series will include novels, short stories, poems, essays, plays and many literature sectors; a group of experts was formed to arrange its publication.

Following the meeting, the Union Minister inspected preparations including sound system and broadcasting for holding paper reading sessions and forums at the Head Office of the News and Periodicals Enterprise on Theinbyu Road.

Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint also visited the Advertising Department of the Mirror Daily and inspected the department’s public services.— MNA
Five-year project targets persons with vision impairment nationwide

By Nyein Nyein

YANGON Region government is currently implementing a five-year project from 2017 to 2021 to help people who are blind and visually impaired on a national scale, said U Naing Nган Lynn, Yangon Region Minister for Social Affairs at the celebration event of the World Sight Day held on 11 October at the National Eye Bank of the Yangon Eye Hospital.

The World Sight Day is annually celebrated on the second Thursday in October in all member countries of the World Health Organization. This year’s motto of the day is “Universal Eye Health: Eye Care Everywhere”. The first ever celebration of the day was held in Myanmar in 2000.

“The national project aims to offer necessary care to persons with vision disabilities throughout the nation between 2017 and 2021, raising helping hands for the target population”, U Naing Nган Lynn said. He told the gathering that the most common eye diseases in Myanmar are cataract, glaucoma, poor eyesight, injuries, eye diseases caused by diabetes and hypertension. The cataract is responsible for about 60% of the total eye problems. Thus, providing effective care and treatment for cataract is expected to protect people from vision loss.

Moreover, there are about 350 eye specialists in Myanmar, providing eye care and the ratio of eye patients and doctors is 150,000 to 1. Continuous efforts have yearly been made by the authorities so as to achieve universal coverage in primary eye care, including offering eye care at schools, field trips to rural people with eye diseases and giving primary eye care trainings, he added.

U Naing Nган Lynn said “The 150-bed Yangon Eye Hospital was opened since 1993, offering healthcare services to patients with 216 staff, where the majority of eye patients are suffering from cataract, glaucoma, retinal detachment, corneal diseases and injuries. On weekdays, the hospital’s out-patient department provides eye care to roughly 400 patients on a daily basis. Extensive services have also been provided to patients through the hospital’s eight specialist departments, including Department of Hepatology, Department of Hepatobiliary Surgery, Department of Nephrology, Department of Respiratory Medicine, Department of Rheumatology, Department of Thoracic Surgery, Department of Urology and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Unit. In addition, between 85 and 100 patients are daily undergone eye surgeries at the hospital on five days a week. Also, emergency eye care is given by the hospital daily.”

With the permission of the Ministry of Health, the Yangon Eye Hospital continues to make field trips to offer eye care to people in need in cooperation with related ministries and well-wishers. In their field trips in the last year, eye specialists offered free surgical and medical treatment to people in Dambyu, Labutta, Gyoingauk, Moenyo and Sittway towns. To offer better eye care to local patients, the hospital made collaboration with international bodies from Japan, Singapore, Australia, the U.S. and the Netherlands.

Also present on the celebration of the World Sight Day were officials from the Department of Health, the Medical Superintendent of the Yangon Eye Hospital and officials, officials from the WTO and international non-governmental organizations as well as invited guests.

Online applications for public services available

By Nyein Nyein

APPLICATIONS for land management in some townships in urban municipalities of the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC) can be made through an online system, said Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe in reply to a question raised by U Tin Tun Naing of Dagon Myothit (North) Township at the seventh regular session of Second Yangon Region Hluttaw on 9 October.

U Tin Tun Naing was asking whether there is a plan to provide public services on matters such as paying tax, land issues, construction permit at township and district government offices within a day or a few days.

Yangon mayor said YCDC has been providing one-stop services to those who apply for land management matters since 2013-2014 fiscal year at the ground floor of Yangon City Hall, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during office hours. YCDC has also started an online system to 18 townships in YCDC area beginning from 2 January 2015. YCDC was accepting land management application online from the applicants’ homes or by related YCDC Township office head, said the Yangon Mayor.

The relevant 18 townships are Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (East), Dagon Myothit (Seikkan), Dagon Myothit, Kyimyindaing, Thakayta, Dawbon, Dala, Seikkyi Khangawng, Mingala Taungnyunt, Tamway, Yankin, Insein, Mingaladon, Shwepyitha, Hlinethaya and Mayangon townships.

Moreover, YCDC extended the online registration system to Thingyangon, South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa, Hlino and Kamayut townships beginning from September 2017, he added. Systematic relaxation of processes in applying for land management matters were conducted step by step in related townships while assessment period of the applications were being shortened and were also being informed to the public on the website said the Mayor.

At the moment the procedure is such that even though works were conducted in townships, districts and region level but most were still being controlled by the head office. As such if matters such as construction permits, tax and land matters etc. are delegated to township level, things could be done more speedily, said U Tin Tun Naing.

Those who would like to apply for any land related matters can check for information and details about application at the YCDC website www.ycdc.gov.mm, it is learnt.
International trade scores big win in mini-budget period

MYANMAR’S external trade with foreign countries from 1 April to 30 September of the past mini-budget period showed a significant increase of US$2 billion compared to the same period last fiscal year 2017-2018.

External trade in the past six months amounted to $18.34 billion, which increases from $16.3 billion of last FY. This includes an estimated $8.5 billion in exports and $9.8 billion in imports. The trade deficit narrows to $1.3 billion from 1.86 billion of last FY.

Myanmar exported agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products,finished industrial goods whereas capital goods, raw industrial materials and consumer goods were imported into the country.

The country’s export sector is more depending on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. Export earning from the CMP (cutting, making and packaging) garment businesses are rising while lessening its reliance on natural resources such as natural gas, jade. The government is trying to reduce trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting export. Trade via the sea route brought in $14.1 billion, whereas border trade earned $4.2 billion, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce. — GNLM

Trade with Singapore increases by $368 million in five months

MYANMAR-Singapore bilateral trade from April to August this year totalled US$1.633 billion, up by $368 million from the same time last year, according to the latest monthly statistics from the Ministry of Commerce.

During the period, Myanmar exported a wide range of commodities amounting to $1.75 billion from the Republic of Singapore, whereas its exports to the city-state were valued at $1.458 billion.

When compared with the same period in the last year, the current value of bilateral exports rose by $46.6 million, while the bilateral import value increased by $415 million.

Myanmar’s exports to Singapore include agricultural products, footwear, textile and clothing, minerals, animal products and other miscellaneous items.

Its imports from Singapore consist of food, rubber and plastics, fuel, capital goods, intermediate goods, consumer products, metals and chemicals, along with other products.

According to the ministry’s data, the trade between the two countries was $3.8 billion in the last 2017-2018 financial year, which saw an increase in value by over $870 million matched against the 2016-2017 FY.

In bilateral trade with Singapore, Myanmar delivers its goods mainly by sea.

The bilateral trade was at its peak in the 2014-2015 FY, reaching almost $4.9 billion. Trade between the two countries was $3.7 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, $3.6 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, $2.8 billion in the 2012-2013 FY and $3 billion in the 2011-2012 FY.

Singapore is one of top investors in Myanmar, having invested $2.163 billion in the country during the last financial year. According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Myanmar has approved Singapore’s eight new investment projects, worth $637.8 million this year. — Shwe Khine

Myanmar’s external trade totals $565 million in first week of current FY

OVERSEAS trade between Myanmar and international countries reached US$565.5 million in the first week of the present 2018-2019 fiscal year, registering a trade deficit of more than $133 billion, according to the Ministry of Commerce’s weekly report issued this Friday.

The current external trade value rose by $277 million in comparison with the same period last year when the trade deficit was $46.6 million. Between 1 and 5 August this year, the country’s imports exceeded $349 million whereas its exports hit $216 million.

At this time last year, the external trade was $288.4 million, including $167.5 million in the imports and $120.9 million in the exports.

Myanmar conducts overseas trade with international trade partners, mainly through sea ports. The value of the nation’s trade included $484.7 million via non-border trade and $80 million through border trade.

The country chiefly imports capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer products.

Its exports include agricultural products, animal products, minerals and forest products. — Swe Nyein
Commander-in-Chief visits Wat Phu Temple, famous waterfalls, returns from Laos

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defense Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla visited the historic Wat Phu temple complex in Champasak Province in Laos on 12 October.

The Senior General is leading a Myanmar Tatmadaw delegation to Laos at the invitation of the Laotian Minister of National Defence Lt-Gen Chansamone Chanyalath.

The Wat Phu temple complex is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and lies on the bank of the Mekong directly east of Mt. Phou Khao. The temple boasts architecture and unique structure from the 11th to 13 centuries during the time of Khmer kings, according to archaeologists. Nowadays, the site is a centre of Theravada Buddhist worship.

The Senior General and his delegation were later entertained with a banquet dinner in the evening by Champasak Province military commander Brig-Gen Sukai Phimmasan at the Champasak Grand Hotel.

Yesterday, the Senior General and his delegation visited the Khone Phapheng Falls located in Patsay District in the Champasak Province and observed the 2,000-year old Manikhot tree.

The Khone Phapheng Falls are the largest in Southeast Asia and is located on the part of the Mekong River in southern Laos, near the border with Cambodia. The falls are characterized by over 4,000 islands and is known as Si Phan Don in the local dialect. The highest falls reach to 69 ft.

Coordination meeting for holding Interfaith Dialogue held in Yangon

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seen off by Lao military officers at Pakse International Airport in Laos yesterday. PHOTO: THE OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

MINISTRY of Religious Affairs and Culture held a coordination meeting in Yangon yesterday to prepare for an interfaith dialogue organized by New York-based Religions for Peace-RfP. The interfaith dialogue is aimed at supporting the national reconciliation and promotion of peace in Myanmar.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko called for leading committee, work committee and sub-committees to work hard for the success of the dialogue.

Representatives from the Union Government, the Tatmadaw, political parties, ASEAN, International Committee for Red Cross, NGOs, religious leaders and experts will participate in the interfaith dialogue which is slated to be held from 21 to 22 November, 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the dialogue, they will seek ways for overcoming challenges of the democratic transition in Myanmar, challenges found on the road to peace building, establishing market oriented system, benefits of the religions, long lasting solution for issues of development, human rights and security in Rakhine State. Divided into five working groups, the participants will discuss the title “Our Common Future” during the dialogue.

UNSG Special Envoy on Myanmar arrives in Sittway, Rakhine State

A DELEGATION led by the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Myanmar, Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, arrived in Sittway from Yangon yesterday afternoon.

The Special Envoy and her delegation were welcomed by Rakhine State Ministers U Aung Kyaw Zan and Dr. Chan Thar, and responsible officials.

The delegation will visit Buthidaung and Maungtaw, meet with civil societies and will observe the ongoing activities in the regions.— Kyaw Thu Win, Aung Kyaw Oo

UNSG’s Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener arrives at Sittway Airport, Rakhine. PHOTO: AUNG YETWIN

Myanmar, Bangladesh conduct coordinated patrol in Naf River

A troop of Myanmar border guard force led by Police Superintendent Tin Hlaing, commander of Yet Nyo Thu Police Outpost and Bangladesh border guard force carried out coordinated patrol in the Naf River yesterday.

Myanmar security forces on two water crafts met with Bangladeshi troops on two watercrafts led by Subedar Abdul Razzaq Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB-2) near the at 8 nautical mile in the middle of the Naf River. Then, they conducted the coordinated patrol in the river reaching 11 nautical mile point near Oo Shae Kya creek at 19:00 a.m. local time. —GNLM

PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

UNSG Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener arrives in Sittway, Rakhine State. PHOTO: AUNG YETWIN

UNSG’s Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener arrives at Sittway Airport, Rakhine. PHOTO: AUNG YETWIN

PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

A troop of Myanmar border guard force led by Police Superintendent Tin Hlaing, commander of Yet Nyo Thu Police Outpost and Bangladesh border guard force carried out coordinated patrol in the Naf River yesterday. PHOTO: AUNG YETWIN

UNSG’s Special Envoy on Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener arrives in Sittway, Rakhine State. PHOTO: AUNG YETWIN

PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE
World stock markets attempt rebound from rout

NEW YORK — Global stock markets attempted to rebound Friday with mixed results one day after ferocious losses sparked by worries over rising US interest rates and the fallout from trade fights.

Wall Street stocks finished a gloomy week on a high note, with the S&P 500 advancing 1.4 percent. But the session was hardly drama-free and included a midday swoon that briefly took the Dow into negative territory.

Even with Friday’s gains, the S&P 500 lost 4.1 percent for the week, its worst since March.

Asia enjoyed healthy gains, with Hong Kong surging 2.1 percent, Shanghai up 0.9 percent and Tokyo adding 0.5 percent, at the end of a bruising week for investors worldwide.

Europe initially chased Asia higher but gave up gains as the closing bell approached. London and Paris ended the day down 0.2 percent, while Frankfurt gave up 0.1 percent.

“Markets appeared to remain skittish regarding the recent rise in bond yields and resurfaced worries that the US Fed could be heading toward a policy mistake,” said a note from Schwab.

Other analysts saw at least some signs of improvement.

“The brutal sell-off that engulfed global stocks this week took a pause on Friday as risk sentiment slightly improved across financial markets,” said analyst Lukman Otunuga at trading firm FXTM.

Efforts at reassurance

This week’s pullback was sparked by a jump in US Treasury yields, along with worries about trade conflicts and high valuations. But markets appeared reassured by comments from US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who said Friday the sell-off was not surprising.

“I think the fundamentals are still very strong. The US economy is strong, US earnings are strong,” Mnuchin told CNBC. “So I see this as just a natural correction after the markets were up a lot.” Mnuchin also downplayed concerns about US President Donald Trump’s repeated and aggressive attacks on the US Federal Reserve this week, saying Trump “respects the independence of the Fed.”

— AFP

China’s export container transport gains momentum in September

BEIJING — China’s container transport for export purposes gained momentum in September, according to new data from the Shanghai Shipping Exchange.

The average China Export Containerized Freight Index stood at 853.97 points in September, up 2.9 percent from a month earlier, as the market was still in peak season, the exchange said in a statement.

Since the beginning of this year, the index has averaged 808.63, lower than last year’s average of 820.47.

In September, the sub-indices of the United States, South Africa, the Republic of Korea, Southeast Asia and Japan all rose to different extents, the data showed.

The China Export Containerized Freight Index was first released by the Shanghai Shipping Exchange in April 1998 as a barometer of the export shipping market.

China’s exports of goods rose 17 percent year on year in September, higher than August’s increase of 7.3 percent. Total exports in the first nine months of this year rose 6.5 percent, customs data showed Friday. — Xinhua

Window of opportunity narrowing’ on global growth: IMF

NUSA DUA (INDONESIA) — The window of opportunity to keep global growth on track is “narrowing” amid trade disputes and emerging markets crises, the IMF said Saturday, and cautioned against currency wars as a US-China spat threatens to boil over.

The warning from the International Monetary Fund came at its annual meeting with the World Bank in Bali, after it cut its outlook for global GDP growth this week by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent for 2018 and 2019.

And the Fund further cautioned that “everyone is going to suffer” from a trade-and-currency clash between the United States and China, the world’s two biggest economies.

“Risks are increasingly skewed to the downside amid heightened trade tensions and ongoing geopolitical concerns, with tighter financial conditions particularly affecting many emerging market and developing countries,” the IMF said in a communiqué.

It added that historically high public debt was also among the red flags that “could further undermine confidence and growth prospects”.

“With the window of opportunity narrowing, we will act promptly to advance policies and reforms to protect the expansion, mitigate risks, rebuild policy space, enhance resilience, and raise medium-term growth prospects for the benefit of all,” the statement said.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin this week said he had told the head of China’s central bank about his concerns over the weakness of its currency.

However, he declined to comment on whether Washington would declare Beijing a “currency manipulator” in a Treasury report due out next week.

That designation would be a first for China and would trigger a process that could lead to punitive steps after a series of talks.

The IMF appeared to take aim at the two powerhouse economies which are also locked in an increasingly bitter tit-for-tat tariff battle.

“We will refrain from competitive devaluations and will not target our exchange rates for competitive purposes,” the communiqué said.

“We acknowledge that free, fair, and mutually beneficial goods and services trade and investment are key engines for growth and job creation.” —AFP
Opinion

Formulating health care services for better health of ageing population in rural area of Myanmar

By Minht Htun Aung (GCMN)

MYANMAR, like many other developing countries, is facing the emergence of increasing number of ageing population. Myanmar Elderly Foundation (MEF) revealed that there were 6.5 million elderly persons in Myanmar in 2015, with the number expected to reach 21.3 million by 2060. Among them, 5.2 million females in Myanmar, life expectancy has declined to 61.5 years and 60.3 years respectively according to the 2014 Myanmar census, and the figure shows that Myanmar has lower life expectancy in comparison with neighboring countries.

Although Myanmar has tried her best to reduce tobacco use for many years, it is found that the number of smokers and tobacco-related diseases are on the increase.

According to research data, 44 per cent of men in Myanmar consume tobacco, while quid with tobacco is consumed by 42 per cent of the men.

Within Southeast Asia’s ASEAN countries, Myanmar is seen to have the highest proportion of quid consumption with tobacco products. This is becoming a major challenge for our people's health.

Smoking cigarettes and daily or continuous consumption of tobacco leaf products including quid are said to be widely increasing among the people, both men and women.

Besides, exposure to second-hand smoke can cause many of the same diseases as active smoking. Just as preventive and treatment of non-contagious diseases become more pronounced, the demand for non-contagious diseases including diabetes, hypertension, Alzheimer's disease, and cerebrovascular diseases.

Therefore, the health services should be formulated according to the needs of age-related diseases. It is necessary to develop schemes of achieving active and healthy ageing, and improving the quality of life of them, the Ministry of Health and Sports is providing comprehensive health care services including promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.

“Elderly Health Care Program” has been launched in Myanmar since 1996 with the support of World Health Organization. As the result of the severe financial crisis, the Ministry of Health was unable to meet the changing health needs of the community and to utilize resources efficiently. The operational definition of the care is the attempt to provide all health care activity providing health care services focusing on screening and treatment of uncomplicated Diabetes and Hypertension and health care for ageing population on every Wednesday at Rural Health Center (RHC) and Urban Health Center (UHC).

Those primary health centers promote health status improvement of aged population through health literacy promotion and lifestyle modification, such as encouraging eating healthy diet, preventing physical activity, cessation of tobacco use and reducing harmful use of alcohol. It also provides curative services for minor illnesses and makes timely referred the respective patient to higher centers for further necessary examinations.

While the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Rehabilitation is providing social assistance to senior citizens and the Ministry of Health and Sports, Rural and Urban Health Care services in order to meet their health care needs. Hence, as a result of continued improvement of local community is critical for the quality of life and ageing population especially in rural area.

3. Elderly People Laws, Myanmar, December 2016
5. The Global New Light of Myanmar from Concept to implementation of Community Health Care (CCHC): Model in Myanmar (12th September, 2016)

A sketch of English language and Myanmar

Stop the rise of tobacco consumption in Myanmar

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats in Myanmar, killing about 63,000 every year due to the result of direct tobacco use, according to the World Health Organization. Myanmar has experienced falls in life expectancy as death tolls from tobacco related diseases have gone higher. For males and females in Myanmar, life expectancy has declined to 61.5 years and 60.3 years respectively according to the 2014 Myanmar census, and the figures show that Myanmar has lower life expectancy in comparison with neighboring countries.

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Myanmar has experienced falls in life expectancy as death tolls from tobacco related diseases have gone higher. For males and females in Myanmar, life expectancy has declined to 61.5 years and 60.3 years respectively according to the 2014 Myanmar census, and the figures show that Myanmar has lower life expectancy in comparison with neighboring countries.
Community fears grow as DR Congo Ebola death toll climbs

GENEVA (Switzerland)—Humanitarian workers are struggling to calm community fears in strife-torn eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where 125 people have died of Ebola, and cases of the virus are spreading fast.

The World Health Organization said on Friday that 290 cases of the deadly virus have been registered in the outbreak first detected on 1 August, with 165 of them laboratory confirmed and 35 considered probable. The UN agency voiced concern over the swelling number of cases in recent weeks, especially in the town of Beni, near the Ugandan border. “Insecurity that has increased in the city is one of the reasons why we are seeing these new cases coming up,” WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told reporters in Geneva. The latest outbreak—the 10th in DR Congo since Ebola was first detected there in 1976—emerged in the highly-restive northeastern region of North Kivu, which is home to a clutch of armed groups.

The authorities in Beni have announced measures to protect health workers after a number of incidents where response teams were assaulted. Fears and misconceptions about the virus have led to widespread mistrust and resistance to Ebola response workers, including those who come into communities wearing hazmat suits to orchestrate burials.

UN employee taken ill
A staff member of the UN mission MONUSCO was among the latest victims of the virus, the UN and health ministry said on Friday. The employee was exposed in Beni where the health ministry said it was concerned by a “significant increase in the number of confirmed cases.” Two Red Cross volunteers were also last week seriously injured when they were attacked during the burial of a suspected Ebola victim.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) told AFP Friday that it was doing everything it could to minimise the risk to its volunteers on the ground.

But IFRC Secretary-General Elhadj As Sy stressed that the organisation would never resort to using armed escorts in the areas. “We never use military or armed group protection to do our work... That is not part of our modus operandi,” he told AFP.

He said it was not surprising that people living in an area affected by armed conflict would be “totally overwhelmed with another shock like the Ebola crisis,” and might have “wrong reactions”.

“It is not unusual for us to experience these kind of difficulties,” he told AFP, adding that much of the organisation’s work involved engaging with community members to build acceptance of the Ebola response work. —AFP

Fear is growing of Ebola response workers in strife-torn regions of DR Congo—including when workers enter communities wearing hazmat suits. PHOTO: AFP

Saudi rejects ‘baseless’ murder claims over missing journalist

DUBAI (United Arab Emirates)—Saudi Arabia dismissed on Saturday accusations that Jamal Khashoggi was ordered murdered by a hit squad inside its Istanbul consulate as “lies and baseless allegations”, as Riyadh and Ankara spar over the missing journalist’s fate.

A Saudi delegation was in Turkey for talks on the case, which threatens not only to harm fragile relations between the two countries but also to do serious damage to the reformist credentials of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and the kingdom’s ties to the West.

As the controversy intensified, the Washington Post reported Turkish officials had recordings made from inside the building that allegedly proved their claims Khashoggi was tortured and killed at the consulate.

Big names from media and business have already cancelled appearances at a major conference in Riyadh this month and both the IMF chief and the US treasury secretary made their convenience. The article said that Khashoggi, who has not been seen since he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October, disappeared in 2015.

The comments came as the diplomatic fallout continued over the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who has not been seen since he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October.

Turkey’s President Tayyip Erdogan has challenged Riyadh, denying that this was a “disappearance”. The comments came as the diplomatic fallout continued over the disappearance of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who has not been seen since he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October.

Turki bin Bandar bin Mohammed bin Abderrahmane al-Saud was arrested at Casablanca Airport on 11 November, 2015 on his way to Paris on an “international warrant issued (the same day) by Riyadh for disrupting public order via the internet and financial crimes”, a Moroccan diplomatic source told AFP. Bin Bandar, a former high-ranking Saudi police officer, was extradited to Saudi Arabia the next day “in compliance with legal provisions”, the same Moroccan diplomatic source said, requesting anonymity.

“This wasn’t a disappearance, as some in the media have described it, but a normal procedure, Morocco’s Justice Minister Mohamed Anjjar told AFP.

“The two phases, administrative and judicial were respected after his arrest made on the basis of an international arrest warrant,” he added.

His comments came after French newspaper Le Monde on Thursday published an article entitled “the disappearance of Saudi dissidents” in which it described the deportation three years ago as an extradition of convenience. The article said bin Bandar had come into conflict with the Saudi royal family over a land dispute and that he had “post videos on YouTube calling for reforms”. The former police official was “discreetly arrested in Morocco by local authorities, then transferred to Saudi Arabia”, the newspaper said.

Britain’s Guardian newspaper has reported that bin Bandar had requested asylum in France. It cited friends as saying he had disappeared in 2015.

French President Emmanuel Macron said on Friday that journalist Khashoggi’s disappearance was “very serious”, and called for an investigation to establish “complete clarity” on what happened to him. —AFP
Jetliner lands in US after world’s longest flight

NEW YORK (United States)—An Airbus jetliner arrived in Newark on Friday after a nearly 18-hour trip from Singapore, completing the world’s longest commercial flight. It marked the revival of a route that had been eliminated in 2013.

Singapore Airlines Flight SQ22 arrived at 5:29 am (0929 GMT), having left Singapore’s Changi airport at 11:23 pm, the Newark Liberty International Airport website said. That made for a flight of 17 hours and 32 minutes. The flight had been scheduled to take 18 hours and 25 minutes. The plane was carrying 150 passengers and 17 crew members as it traveled 10,250 miles (16,500 kilometers).

“I feel perfectly well rested,” said Kristopher Aladdin, a 37-year-old Canadian. “I’m lucky because I’m able to sleep on the plane.”

Flying from New York to Singapore would be a longer journey, lasting an estimated 18 hours and 45 minutes. The first flight in that direction took off from Newark at 11:10 am Friday. Singapore Airlines only offers premium economy and business seats on the flight—no regular economy seats.

“Although you’re in premium eco, you feel like you’re in first class,” said Aladdin, adding that he had taken the same flight in 2008. “The flight was very smooth, very quiet.”

“We were served a supper of three choices after takeoff. I slept soundly, woke up and realized (there were) around eight hours left,” said Denny Ong, an engineer and flight enthusiast from Singapore, after landing in Newark.

“The flight was great, smooth, enjoyable and ended too fast!” said Danny Ong, with the first flight back to Singapore, straight after landing in Newark. “The crews were attentive, professional and responded promptly. Highly recommended if you are flying from Singapore to NYC in future.” A one-way ticket from Singapore to New York on this flight costs about $2,150 in premium economy and $3,500 for a roundtrip itinerary, according to the Singapore Airlines website.

Singapore Airlines originally flew the route for nine years using the gas-guzzling, four-engine A340-500 plane before abandoning it in 2013 because high oil prices made the service unprofitable.

This trip was made with the new, more fuel efficient Airbus A350-900ULR, which consumes 25 percent less fuel than its predecessor. It topped the previous longest direct air link between cities—Qatar Airways Flight 921 from Auckland to Doha, which takes 17 hours 40 minutes.

The A350 is these days considered the go-to plane for long-haul flights, nudging out the A380, which was previously the flagship for such long distance journeys, and which carries up to 850 passengers, more than twice the number of the A350.— AFP

US-China trade row not a threat to world economy: Mnuchin

NUSA DUA (Indonesia)—US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin pushed back on Saturday against warnings that the escalating US-China trade confrontation would imperil the world economy, saying that pushing Beijing to open up would be good for all.

The IMF has warned this week at annual meetings in Bali that the escalating US-China trade confrontation would hobble global economic growth, as the fund lowered its forecasts for this year and next. But Mnuchin told reporters on the Indonesian resort island that President Donald Trump’s drive to punish China with tariffs to encourage it to adopt fairer trade practices would probably have the opposite effect.

“Our objective with China is very clear: it’s to have a more balanced trading relationship,” Mnuchin said.

“I think that if we are successful, this is very good for US companies, US workers, Europeans, Japan, all of our other allies, and good for China.” Mnuchin said, however that the IMF’s warnings were “all the more reason for China to be incented to address these issues with us”.

The IMF Tuesday cut its outlook for global GDP growth by 0.2 percentage points to 3.7 percent for 2018 and 2019, saying that “everyone is going to suffer” from a clash between the world’s two biggest economies. Tensions have soared in recent months with Donald Trump’s administration rolling out billions of dollars in tariffs against China in a bid to tackle its trade deficit and rein in what Washington views as unacceptable trade practices by the Asian giant.

“Our objective is to increase exports and have a more balanced, fair relationship where our companies can do business there on terms that are similar to how they can do business in the US,” Mnuchin said.— AFP

Guadeloupe author wins alternative prize in Nobel absence

STOCKHOLM (Sweden)— Guadeloupean author Maryse Conde on Friday won an alternative award formed in protest to the Nobel Literature Prize, postponed this year over a rape scandal that came to light as part of the #MeToo movement.

The New Academy Prize in Literature was formed in protest to denounce what its founders called the “bias, arrogance and sexism” of the venerable Swedish Academy, which selects Nobel laureates. The Swedish Academy was plunged into turmoil in 2017 over its ties to Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault, who was jailed for two years in early October for rape. Conde “describes the ravages of colonialism and post-colonial chaos in a language which is both precise and overwhelming,” the New Academy—founded by more than 100 Swedish writers, artists and journalists—said more than a week after the Nobel Literature Prize would have been announced. Swedish librarians nominated 47 authors who were later voted on by nearly 33,000 people from around the world, leaving four authors—two women and two men—on the shortlist. A jury then picked Conde from the list, which also included Vietnamese-Canadian writer Kim Thúy, British author Neil Gaiman and Japan’s Haruki Murakami. Murakami withdrew his nomination last month, telling organisers he wanted to focus on work and avoid the spotlight.

“I’m very happy and proud of this prize... Please allow me to share it with my family, my friends and above all with the people of Guadeloupe, who will be thrilled and touched seeing me receive this prize,” the 81-year-old Conde, who is often among authors tipped for the Nobel prize, said in a video message. Part of France, Guadeloupe is “only mentioned when there are hurricanes or earthquakes,” added the writer whose work explores racial, gender and cultural issues in a historical context.— AFP
Malaysia begins by-election vote to pave Anwar’s return

PORT DICKSON (Malaysia) — Anwar Ibrahim set his sights on a return to frontline Malaysian politics on Saturday as voting began in a by-election poll likely to seal the once jailed opposition figure’s remarkable political resurrection. Winning the seat is a key requirement for Anwar to succeed 93-year-old Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who hailed his former protege and heir apparent on sodomy and corruption charges in 1998 when their relationship soured. Mahathir returned to the premiership this year after a shock election win, saying he would stay in power for only two years before handing the reins to Anwar.

Anwar was in prison when he forged an unlikely alliance with Mahathir in a bid to unseat then prime minister Najib Razak, who had called elections for May amid massive corruption allegations. Underscoring the drama of Saturday’s vote, one of Anwar’s six challengers is a former aide who also accused the then-opposition leader of sodomy, landing him in jail for two years in 2014. But the charismatic politician is expected to eke out an easy win in the seat, which was vacated after a member of the ruling coalition stepped down to pave Anwar’s return.

Polls opened under cloudy skies at 8:00 am (0000 GMT) in the sleepy southern coastal town of Port Dickson, home to a sizeable ethnic Chinese community that across the country has traditionally been one of Anwar’s pillars of support.

“We are voting for the next premier. We need an influential leader to bring long-overdue progress to Port Dickson,” said 69-year-old voter Lee Tian Hock.

“This morning, I prayed to Allah for a big win for Anwar,” retired truck driver Mat Taib, a member of the country’s ethnic Malay majority, told AFP.

“I want him to be our eighth prime minister.”

About 100 supporters greeted Anwar with shouts of “Reformasi” — his battlecry while in opposition — as he arrived at a polling station. Voter turnout is too slow, hopefully, more will come out to cast their votes after they finish their work in hotels and factories,” he said.

“I will see you in parliament on Monday,” he told an AFP reporter, smiling broadly.

Charismatic politician

Anwar campaigned hard over the past two weeks to secure a mandate in the multi-racial constituency, promising voters development, clean government and a boost to local tourism.

He has not discussed the accusations of sodomy — an act that is still illegal in largely Muslim Malaysia — while on the campaign trail. He has always maintained the charges were trumped up to derail his political career.

But he has campaigned doggedly on the multi-billion-dollar graft scandal at state fund 1MDB, over which former leader Najib and his wife Rosmah Mansor facing dozens of corruption charges.

Both face the prospect of spending the rest of their lives in jail in a scandal that saw Najib’s coalition lose office for the first time since the country declared independence from Britain in 1957. Political heavyweights including Mahathir have campaigned for Anwar in a road back to office that was unthinkable even six months ago.

The duo went onstage together at one campaign event, prompting wild cheers from supporters. After he was dumped as finance minister and jailed in the 1990s, Anwar led a reformist opposition movement while fighting to overturn his convictions.

Mahathir, his mentor turned tormentor and now ally, came back from retirement to lead the Alliance of Hope coalition that won power in May. —AFP

Snowstorm kills at least eight climbers on Nepal peak: officials

KATHMANDU (Nepal) — At least eight climbers from a South Korean expedition have died on Nepal’s Mount Gurja after their camp was devastated by a violent snowstorm, officials said on Saturday. The bodies of eight climbers — four South Koreans and four Nepali guides — were spotted among the wreckage of their camp by a rescue team early Saturday morning, but unstable and icy conditions were hampering the search effort.

“We assume the incident happened because of a snowstorm because trees are broken and the tents. Even the dead bodies are scattered,” police spokesman Sailesh Thapa told AFP.

Thapa said a ninth climber may also be missing.

A helicopter reached the site and managed to land just above the expedition team’s camp, but were unable to retrieve any of the bodies. “Everything is gone, all the tents are blown apart. The conditions were too icy to continue the search,” pilot Siddartha Gurung told AFP.

Gurung said a rescue team would hopefully return to the camp on Sunday, if conditions improved. Wangchu Sherpa, managing director of Trekking Camp Nepal, who organised the expedition, said they raised the alarm after they had not heard from the team for nearly 24 hours.

“After they (the climbers) were out of contact since yesterday we sent people from the village and a helicopter to search for them,” he said.

The group of South Korean climbers and their Nepali guides had been camped at the foot of 7,193 metre (23,599 foot) Mount Gurja since early October, waiting for a window of good weather so they could attempt to reach the summit. Peteed South Korean climber Kim Chang-ho, who in 2013 became the fastest person to summit the world’s 14 highest mountains without using supplemental oxygen, was leading the expedition, according to a government-issued climbing permit seen by AFP.

Kim is believed to be among the dead, officials said.

The climbing permit listed four South Korean climbers, but a fifth member had joined the team later, according to Suresh Dakal of Trekking Camp Nepal.

Dakal said they were still struggling to confirm if the fifth South Korean had reached the base camp when the powerful storm tore through the area on Friday. Rarely-climbed Gurja lies in Nepal’s Annapurna region, next to avalanche-prone Dhaulagiri — the world’s seventh highest mountain.

Gurja was first summited in 1969 by a Japanese team but no one has stood on its summit for 22 years, according to the Himalayan Database. Four climbers have perished on its flanks and a total of 30 have successfully reached its peak — a fraction of the more than 8,000 people who have summited the world’s highest mountain, Everest.

Thousands of climbers flock to Nepal each year — home to eight of the world’s 14 highest peaks — creating a lucrative mountain tourism industry that is a vital source of cash for the impoverished country. —AFP

Livestock farmers in drought-hit Aussie state bogged down by dead kangaroos

SYDNEY — Many livestock farmers in Australia’s New South Wales are struggling to cope with a growing number of wild kangaroos dying from the latest drought, with the carcasses at risk of contaminating precious water supplies in the state, according to local media.

The iconic Australian animals are getting stuck in muddy dams drying out in the heat across the state’s far west, the ABC news channel reported on Saturday.

“The dams “become boggy, and as they do, kangaroos go in for a drink and get bogged and die,” farmer Lachlan Gall, who is also president of the local pastoralists’ association, was quoted as saying.

“There are hundreds, if not thousands of dead kangaroos around” and the marsupials “have to be removed before they putrefy and pollute the water supply,” said Gall, adding that the authorities need to better manage the animals “impact on the environment and on farming families.” One of Australia’s most severe droughts has hit large swathes of its major eastern agricultural states in recent months, with authorities increasing aid for farmers dealing with low crop production and livestock losses. The New South Wales government alone has since rolled out measures to rein in the number of kangaroos competing with local livestock in grazing areas, according to the news channel. —Xinhua
Grim search underway for victims of Hurricane Michael

PANAMA CITY — Rescue teams using sniffer dogs carried out a grim search for victims of Hurricane Michael on Friday amid fears that the death toll from the monster storm — which currently stands at 11 — could rise.

“They have that type of damage it takes some time to get in and actually go through and do the search and rescue,” said Brock Long, head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

“We hope to have 100 per cent of the initial search and rescue done in Florida today,” Long told reporters.

The Florida Panhandle town of Mexico Beach was pulverized by the Category 4 storm which crashed ashore on Wednesday, razing many homes to their foundations with 135 miles per hour (215 kph) winds and several feet of storm surge. A mandatory evacuation was issued for the town of 1,000 on the Gulf of Mexico coast, but how many residents actually heeded the warning is unknown.

“You hope that somehow at the last minute a bunch of people got up and left or went somewhere else,” Florida Senator Marco Rubio told CNN.

But judging from the number of homes reduced to “sticks,” he said “my sense is they are going to find more victims.”

Rubio added: “I truly pray I’m wrong, but common sense tells you that if you were in that house when that happened you did not make it.” Search-and-rescue teams were using sniffer dogs as they sifted through the rubble looking for victims.

“I can’t sell it now”
Bob Tenbrunson, a Mexico Beach retiree, rode out the storm at his daughter’s house in nearby Panama City and returned to survey the damage to his home.

“I was going to stay here until it turned to a Cat 4,” he said. “So I followed the mandatory evacuation order and left with my wife.

“Luckily we did not get a surge,” Tenbrunson said of his home. “I’ve got two trees on the roof and a couple of holes on the roof. I have been trying to patch it up the best I can.”

The rest of Mexico Beach did not fare as well, and most of the beachfront homes, restaurants and stores were obliterated by the storm. “I spent my life savings and retirement to stay here so I can’t sell it now,” Tenbrunson said. “I just have to be hopeful that (the town) will be rebuilt and fixed.” —AFP

Humanitarians see surge in climate-related disasters

GENEVA (Switzerland) — The number of climate-related disasters around the world is growing rapidly, humanitarians warned Friday, urging more efforts to prepare and build resilience to looming changes on a warming planet.

Climate shocks are already driving displacement, causing many to go hungry and are sparking or exacerbating conflicts around the globe, humanitarian workers said, cautioning that the situation is quickly deteriorating.

“With climate change, the shocks and hazards are multiplying,” Elhadj As Sy, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), told AFP in an interview.

Speaking on the sidelines of a conference in Geneva on the impact of climate change on humanitarian situations around the globe, he cautioned that such “shocks” were “getting more frequent and more severe.” Friday’s conference was aimed at unpacking the humanitarian implications of the findings in a landmark UN climate report this week, which warned drastic action was needed to prevent Earth from hurtling towards an unbearable rise in temperature.

“Pressure cooker”
Gernot Laganda, who heads the World Food Programme’s climate and disaster risk reduction division, pointed out that climate shocks are already “significant drivers of displacement”, forcing 22.5 million people to leave their homes each year.

Speaking to journalists in Geneva, he also decried the “increasingly distractive interplay between conflict and climate disasters.”

He pointed out that the world’s 10 most conflict-affected countries, including Syria, Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are also impacted by extreme weather events, creating a so-called “pressure-cooker” effect.

Laganda pointed to projections that if the planet warms just 2°C, 180 million more people than today will become food insecure.

“And if it is a four-degree warmer world...we’re looking beyond one billion more,” he said, adding that this “is a very, very strong argument for early and decisive climate action.”

Sy meanwhile said humanitarians had already seen a dramatic increase in climate and weather-related crises. —AFP

Indian women carry their belongings after heavy floods brought by Cyclone Titli as humanitarians warned that the number of climate-related disasters around the world is growing rapidly. PHOTO: AFP
Ouch! Thailand’s cheek-piercing vegetarian festival

BANGKOK — As burning incense fills the air, devotees in trances force skewers and swords through their cheeks in ritualistic acts underpinning southern Thailand’s colourful — and seemingly painful — vegetarian festival.

The Taoist “Nine Emperor Gods” event held on the holiday island of Phuket, began on 9 October and coincides with observances of Chinese communities across the region who refrain from meat and other indulgences such as drinking and gambling.

As burning incense fills the air, devotees in trances force skewers and swords through their cheeks in ritualistic acts underpinning southern Thailand’s colourful — and seemingly painful — vegetarian festival.

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Participants on the island — which has a sizeable Chinese population — go above and beyond, piercing cheeks and tongues with an assortment of blades, spikes, skewers and other, more exotic items — including petrol pumps.

The festival, did not take place last year because of a lengthy mourning period following the death of the Thai king in October 2016.

But on Friday it was back in full swing.

One man stuck two wrenches through his right cheek, while another shook his head side to side and cut his tongue with an axe blade, blood dripping down his chest.

A fishing rod, anchor and part of a palm leaf were also put to use, as festival-goers marched in processions with the items poking out of their mouths.

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The fact remains I was falsely accused, which is why I’m suing The Sun newspaper for defamation for repeating false accusations. JK has seen the evidence and therefore knows I was falsely accused, and that’s why she has publicly supported me. She doesn’t take things lightly. She would not stand up if she didn’t know the truth. So that’s really it,” he added.

According to EW, the “evidence” noted by Depp will be presented in court proceedings next month during The Sun defamation case. —PTI

Selena Gomez seeking treatment after suffering emotional breakdown

LOS ANGELES — Singer Selena Gomez seeking treatment after emotional breakdown in hospital following “tough” few weeks. According to the People magazine, the 26-year-old former Disney star was hospitalised twice within the last few weeks, both times for a low white blood cell count, which can be a side effect for kidney transplant patients.

“She has had a tough few weeks and the panic attack in the hospital was the tipping point. She realised she needed to seek additional help for her ongoing emotional issues,” a source said. Gomez is undergoing dialectical behaviour therapy, a therapy method designed to help try to identify, and then change, negative thinking and behavioral patterns, the source added. The news comes a few weeks after Gomez announced that she is taking a break from social media. —PTI
NASA says will use Russia’s Soyuz despite rocket failure

MOSCOW (Russia) — NASA chief Jim Bridenstine on Friday praised the Russian space programme and said he expected a new crew to go to the International Space Station in December despite a rocket failure.

“I fully anticipate that we will fly again on a Soyuz rocket and I have no reason to believe at this point that it will not be on schedule,” he told reporters.

The NASA administrator spoke to reporters at the US embassy in Moscow a day after a Soyuz rocket failure forced Russian cosmonaut Aleksey Ovchinin and US astronaut Nick Hague to make an emergency landing shortly after takeoff in Kazakhstan. The pair escaped unharmed.

It was the first such incident in Russia’s post-Soviet history — an unprecedented setback for the country’s space industry.

The Soviet-designed Soyuz rocket is currently the world’s only lifeline to the International Space Station and the accident will affect both NASA and the work of the orbiting laboratory.

Bridenstine, who is visiting Russia and Kazakhstan for the first time since his appointment as NASA chief this year, observed the launch from Baikonur cosmodrome with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Rogozin.

“Not every mission that fails, ends up so successful,” he said.

The next Soyuz launch had been scheduled to take a new crew to the ISS on 20 December.

Russia said earlier Friday it would bring forward the flight of a new manned space mission but postpone the launch of a cargo ship scheduled for 31 October.

“We will try to bring forward the launch of a new crew,” said Sergei Krikalyov, executive director of the Russian space agency and veteran cosmonaut.

He did not provide further details and a Roscosmos spokeswoman told AFP that the space agency currently does not have a new schedule of launches.

All manned launches have been suspended and a criminal probe has been launched.

When asked about the accident, US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he was “not at all worried” that Americans had had to rely on Russians to go to space. —AFP [Image 489x807 to 763x1002]

Of mice and men: scientists produce babies from same-sex mice pairs

TOKYO (Japan) — A team of researchers has produced viable offspring from same-sex pairs of mice, using a novel technology that involves stem cells altered to remove certain genes. While the applications of the research are largely theoretical for now, they could include improving existing cloning methods for mammals and even eventually fertility treatments for same-sex couples.

The study, published Thursday in Cell Stem Cell journal, is the first time the method has been successfully implemented, though previous research has looked at other ways to produce babies from same-sex pairs.

But while the team was able to produce viable babies from female pairs of mice, whose offspring went on to have their own progeny, the mice produced from male pairs fared less well.

They survived only 48 hours after birth, despite a complicated process of gene manipulation intended to eliminate abnormalities resulting from the same-sex reproductive process. While same-sex reproduction might seem an unusual avenue for research, many species are able to reproduce via methods that do not involve a male-female pairing.

Mixing genetic material from same-sex couples runs the risk of the babies receiving two sets of “imprinted” genes. So the study used haploid embryonic stem cells, which resemble “primordial germ cells, the precursors of eggs and sperm,” said co-senior author Baoyang Hu.

They then altered the genetic makeup of the cells, deleting “imprinting regions” to effectively mimic the “shutting off” process in normal reproduction.

In the case of the female mice, three “imprinting regions” were deleted from the stem cells, which were then injected into the eggs of another mouse.

In the case of the male mice, seven “imprinting regions” were deleted and the cells were injected into a mouse egg along with sperm from a second mouse ‘father.”

The nucleus of the mouse egg was removed, meaning there was no female genetic material left and the fertilised egg was placed in a surrogate mouse. —AFP [Image 198x697 to 332x689]

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They survived only 48 hours after birth, despite a complicated process of gene manipulation intended to eliminate abnormalities resulting from the same-sex reproductive process. While same-sex reproduction might seem an unusual avenue for research, many species are able to reproduce via methods that do not involve a male-female pairing.

Mixing genetic material from same-sex couples runs the risk of the babies receiving two sets of “imprinted” genes. So the study used haploid embryonic stem cells, which resemble “primordial germ cells, the precursors of eggs and sperm,” said co-senior author Baoyang Hu.

They then altered the genetic makeup of the cells, deleting “imprinting regions” to effectively mimic the “shutting off” process in normal reproduction.

In the case of the female mice, three “imprinting regions” were deleted from the stem cells, which were then injected into the eggs of another mouse.

In the case of the male mice, seven “imprinting regions” were deleted and the cells were injected into a mouse egg along with sperm from a second mouse ‘father.”

The nucleus of the mouse egg was removed, meaning there was no female genetic material left and the fertilised egg was placed in a surrogate mouse. —AFP

Tough CO2 targets ‘could cost 100,000 jobs’: VW chief

FRANKFURT AM MAIN (Germany) — Setting European Union targets for reducing cars’ greenhouse gas output that are too ambitious could backfire with the loss of 100,000 jobs, Volkswagen chief executive Herbert Diess said on Thursday.

If ministers aimed to slash CO2 emissions many per cent — as “overambitious” and “gambling with jobs”, Diess went into more detail, saying that a more gradual reduction in CO2 emissions would make for a slower ramping-up of electric cars — which take many fewer man-hours to build than comparable vehicles powered by internal combustion.

A faster decrease, he contrast, would be “barely manageable” as “by 2030, more than 40 percent between 2020 and 2030, “around a quarter of the jobs in our factories would have to go in the space of 10 years — a total of 100,000 jobs,” Diess told daily Suddeutsche Zeitung.

EU governments agreed on Tuesday to aim for a 35-per cent reduction in CO2 output by 2030 rather than the 30 per cent hoped for by manufacturers, Berlin and eastern European governments.

While Chancellor Angela Merkel called the compromise “acceptable”, the head of the VDA German carmakers’ federation Bernhard Mattes labelled it “unharmed.

It was the first such incident in Russia’s post-Soviet history — an unprecedented setback for the country’s space industry.

The Soviet-designed Soyuz rocket is currently the world’s only lifeline to the International Space Station and the accident will affect both NASA and the work of the orbiting laboratory.

Bridenstine, who is visiting Russia and Kazakhstan for the first time since his appointment as NASA chief this year, observed the launch from Baikonur cosmodrome with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Rogozin.

“Not every mission that fails, ends up so successful,” he said.

The next Soyuz launch had been scheduled to take a new crew to the ISS on 20 December.

Russia said earlier Friday it would bring forward the flight of a new manned space mission but postpone the launch of a cargo ship scheduled for 31 October.

“We will try to bring forward the launch of a new crew,” said Sergei Krikalyov, executive director of the Russian space agency and veteran cosmonaut.

He did not provide further details and a Roscosmos spokeswoman told AFP that the space agency currently does not have a new schedule of launches.

All manned launches have been suspended and a criminal probe has been launched.

When asked about the accident, US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he was “not at all worried” that Americans had had to rely on Russians to go to space. —AFP [Image 198x697 to 332x689]

Tough CO2 targets ‘could cost 100,000 jobs’: VW chief

FRANKFURT AM MAIN (Germany) — Setting European Union targets for reducing cars’ greenhouse gas output that are too ambitious could backfire with the loss of 100,000 jobs, Volkswagen chief executive Herbert Diess said on Thursday.

If ministers aimed to slash carbon dioxide (CO2) output by 40 percent between 2020 and 2030, “around a quarter of the jobs in our factories would have to go in the space of 10 years — a total of 100,000 posts,” Diess told daily Suddeutsche Zeitung.

EU governments agreed on Tuesday to aim for a 35-per cent reduction in CO2 output by 2030 rather than the 30 per cent hoped for by manufacturers, Berlin and eastern European governments.

While Chancellor Angela Merkel called the compromise “acceptable”, the head of the VDA German carmakers’ federation Bernhard Mattes labelled it “overambitious” and “gambling with jobs”. Diess went into more detail, saying that a more gradual reduction in CO2 emissions would make for a slower ramping-up of electric cars — which take many fewer man-hours to build than comparable vehicles powered by internal combustion.

A faster decrease, by contrast, would be “barely manageable” as “by 2030 more than half of vehicles would have to be all-electric” with knock-on effects on jobs, he said. “Such a drastic reduction means a painful revolution rather than a manageable transition,” he warned, adding that “there would no longer be affordable small cars built in Germany”.

Efforts to fight climate change are in stronger focus this week, after UN experts warned drastic measures are needed to avoid global temperatures rising more than the average two degrees Centigrade targeted under the 2015 Paris accord.

Meanwhile the German car industry continues to suffer from the reputational damage of the “dieselgate” scandal, which revealed vehicles worldwide were being manipulated to appear less polluting.

Despite years spent battling the fallout from such cheating on 11 million vehicles, Volkswagen reported profits of 11.3 billion euros ($13.1 billion) in 2017 on revenues of 230.7 billion.

In July, the European Commission uncovered a new trick by car companies, accusing them of inflating CO2 emissions figures in current models to make it easier to hit future targets for reducing output of the gas. —AFP [Image 198x697 to 332x689]
Hanthawady United to take part in Invitational Four-Country’s Club Football Tournament in China

HANITHAWADY United FC that stood at the fourth place on the chart of Myanmar National League in the previous football season is going to participate in Invitational Four-Country’s Club Competition to be held in China, said a source close to Hanthawady United FC.

The professional football clubs from Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Cambodia will take part in the invitational football tournament of four countries. China will be the host, but won’t participate in the tournament.

The fixtures of the invitational football tournament will be released soon. Hanthawady United FC will begin practice activities starting on 22 October. It has planned to hire foreign footballers to be added to the team in the upcoming football season. —Htut Htut (Twantay)

Myanmar to host Group-F of 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Football Qualification

MYANMAR will host Group-F in 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Football Qualification in Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon from 24 to 28 October.

Palestine withdrew from Group-F in 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Football Qualification. Only three teams including host Myanmar have been left in the Group-F due to the withdrawal of Palestine. Changes took place in group match schedule. The group matches will be held for three days. There will be a match in a day. Host Myanmar will play last two matches consecutively.

The qualifier matches of the Group-F are scheduled at 6 pm. When the situations of the teams in the group are reviewed, Myanmar has been the best status to advance the second round of the qualification process.

Myanmar U-19 women’s football squad has begun practice activities starting June and the current squad is made up of 26 players.

Myanmar U-19 women’s demonstration three international warm-up matches before the first round of the 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Football Qualification, hammering Singapore with a large margin of 7-0 and losing to Thailand with a narrow margin of 0-1 in the first friendly and 3-4 in the second. It also played against Myanmar national women’s football team in Thuwunna Stadium.

The first round qualification will be held with teams divided into six groups. Six top teams from each group and two best second-placed ones will advance the second round of 2019 Asian U-19 Women’s Football Qualification. —Htut Htut (Twantay)

Bolivia beat Myanmar in International football friendly

MYANMAR national football team and Bolivia, South American national football team played a friendly match at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

The South American star, Bolivia beat Myanmar 3-0 in the friendly match.

Myanmar lined up with Goal Keeper Kyaw Zin Htet, David Htan, Soe Moe Kyaw, Htike Htike Aung, Thein Than Win, Captain Hlaing Bo Bo, Myo Ko Tun, Ye Ko Oo, Si Thu Aung, Maung Maung Lwin and Kaung Set Naing.

Bolivia possessed better skills and was physically superior.

Bolivia scored their opening goal even at 5 minutes mark. The icebreaker was scored by Luis Haquin upon his speedy play style.

Again, Bolivia made their second goal by Bolivia star Marcelo Martins at 25 minute.

The first half ends in 2-0.

Myanmar were much better in the second half with steady play and ball delivery toward its strikers via midfielders and defenders.

But Bolivia were too strong and scored their third goal at 68 minute by Henry Vaca.

The match ended with 3-0 score, as both teams appeared exhausted in later minutes.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)
The difference between human beings and machines is, humans have hearts, but, machines do not. Having a heart means to show kindness to others without discrimination. If a human being does not have a heart, they will die with no breathing. And, this person would be like a computer. A computer can do various things, but it does not have a heart.

A person with a humanitarian heart thinks “Human is human.” I agree with this idea. Because, the origin of humans is the same. Thus we are brothers and sisters. We should solve conflicts by discussions. We should not solve them by wars.

I think that “War is a race of egos using lives and abilities of human beings. If we use abilities in other places, they would bring advantages for human beings, such as health, education and more. If we can do this, our world’s future will be bright.

Every intelligent person cannot be a good person. In this matter, the heart has an important role to play. The heart can decide how to use intelligence that brings advantages or disadvantages to people.

Nuclear energy can be used to produce enough electricity as well as atomic bombs that can stop many people from breathing. We should accept and protect the rights of humans, women and children if we have a humanitarian heart. Everyone should be able to receive education without any discrimination.

And we should protect the rights of women for a lot of women are being discriminated in many places today. I think that women have the abilities to do good for the world and “All of us are the same.” If a nation practices many discriminations, it cannot develop. In other words, equality is the beginning of development.

And then, children should be protected from extreme punishment and working in dangerous conditions by governments or communities. Because, children are the light of the future world. If we can pass on our humanitarian heart to our children, our world will become peaceful.

Thus, schools, parents, guardians and communities can teach children to see the idea that “Human is human”. We can tell them that a humanitarian heart can transform the world to peace.
The following is an excerpt from an interview with Mr. Ichiro Maruyama, the Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar, in which the ambassador responds to questions concerning Japan’s involvement in Myanmar’s peace process and development efforts, in addition to bilateral cooperation.

Interview with Japanese Ambassador

Mr. Ichiro Maruyama

Q: We understand you’ve worked at the Japanese embassy in Myanmar for twenty years before becoming ambassador. Can you tell us your opinion on Myanmar’s reforms and transformation?
A: Myanmar had armed conflicts before. After the 2015 elections, a government voted by the majority took office. The incumbent government is currently working for political, economic and social reforms. This is why Japan will support Myanmar in facing its challenges as much as we can.

Q: What do you think of Myanmar’s current situation?
A: Myanmar is currently facing political and economic hardships and the Japanese government has a strong stance to support the Myanmar people and their government.

Q: What do you think are the biggest challenges to Myanmar’s democratic transition and do you have any advice on how to overcome them?
A: First is political stability. It’s very important. Only when we have political stability can we hope to have economic development. Second is developing the economy. Third, it is important to have peace within the country. Lastly, there’s the international criticism on Myanmar concerning Rakhine State. I think these four facts are Myanmar’s and the government’s greatest challenges.

Myanmar’s future development will be smoother when these challenges are resolved. It is the Japanese government’s main objective to assist Myanmar in resolving these four challenges.

Q: Japan has been actively supporting Myanmar’s peace process. Can you tell us the nature of the support Japan has given?
A: The peace process is of vital importance for Myanmar, which is why the Japanese government has appointed Nippon Foundation Chairman Mr. Yohei Sasakawa as their Special Envoy for National Reconciliation in Myanmar. Our Japanese government and Mr. Sasakawa will cooperate with the Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw in working for peace, once step at a time, especially in collaborating with the signatories of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

Q: Can you share some thoughts on Japanese investment in Myanmar, trade between Japan and Myanmar, and how you will promote bilateral cooperation?
A: There are a lot of Japanese companies interested in Myanmar. The reason for the great interest can be contributed to the long years of close relationship between the two countries. There are a lot of accomplishments between our two governments in Thilawa Special Economic Zone and there is success in Japan and Myanmar’s private sector too.

Q: Myanmar has enacted a new Investment Law, which economists say gives Myanmar a lot of investment prospects compared to its neighbors. Can you elaborate on potential investments from Japan?
A: The new Investment Law clearly defines in which sectors foreign investors can invest in. We have discussed with the Myanmar government and will invite interested Japanese companies to come invest in Myanmar.

Another important item for investors is good basic infrastructure such as roads and reliable electricity. For this, Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) is collaborating with the Myanmar government for basic infrastructure.

Q: Have you been to Myanmar’s prominent landmarks? What advice would you give to attract more tourists from Japan?
A: I think the visa-free access the Myanmar government has given Korea and Japan will draw in more travelers from Japan. Myanmar is also initiating e-Visas which will attract more travelers. I think after visiting Myanmar and getting to know her people, Japanese people will think of Myanmar as if it were their own country and will consider visiting twice or thrice again.

Q: Can you tell us about your own travels around Myanmar?
A: Bagan and Mandalay have an ancient resonance to them, similar to Kyoto in Japan. In Shan State, Taunggyi has exceptionally beautiful scenery. If we go towards the ocean, Ngapali beach has incredible scenery too. I think Japanese people will love every area of Myanmar.

Q: What do you think of Myanmar’s future development?
A: Myanmar is a valuable country for Japan and the Japanese people because we gave a lot of hardships to Myanmar during World War II, especially to the Bamar people. But Myanmar was also the first Asian country to sign the peace treaty after World War II.

Myanmar also exported rice to Japan when we were suffering from extreme food shortage after WWII. It was from that time a lasting bond was created between not only the two countries’ governments but also its people. That’s why I feel Myanmar can be called Japan’s benefactor.

Q: Can you tell us what you like the most about Myanmar during your time here?
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My tips to control my finances

I am the mother of a child. Being a mother is more than giving birth to a child. As I am a working mom, balancing work and family is hard; even more than that, controlling the finance is harder for me.

My parents were government employees. Their salaries were low. But they could raise three children successfully. Now, my turn to raise my only daughter! When I think of long-term care for the family with monthly housing, grocery and utility cost, it really makes me crazy since my husband has stopped working because of his health. I began to be concerned about my finance. Then I realized that I need to set myself up with a financial plan, which then became my first priority. Before I came to know the keys how to manage my finance, needs and wants sometimes make me cry.

First, I looked back on how my parents managed their finance. They grew high-yield low-cost plants in their compound. But for me, I live in a small flat. How can I grow plants? So I buy just what I need to cut down on the waste and leftover. Kitchen waste is the most expensive out of all expenses. Making food at home is a kind of cutting the food budget. Luckily, my family does not have the habit of drinking alcohol, tea and coffee, which can take up a large portion of the budget quickly. Whew!

My second tip is ‘hand-me-downs’ like my parents practiced. They accepted ‘outgrown’ clothes from my cousin. I had to wear them until I got a job. Now my daughter uses all clothes, toys, shoes, books that come from my friends. Giving away her clothes that she does not need anymore makes me feel like happy to be able to keep the circle going for giving.

Minimize shopping is my useful tip. The act of going shopping causes most of all the money leaks. In case if I need to shop, I try to stick to my list. I cut my habit of buying something that is not on my list. Staying away from fast fashion and luxury brands kind of helps me to support my financial plan.

My final tip is to cut the electricity bill down to size. Avoiding cooking and washing laundry at peak hours, switching off lights and electrical appliances when they are not used, and using LED light bulbs that consume 90 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs are useful tips. Phone and internet bills should be considered here. As a careful spender, I try not to use my phone pretty much to make calls. Instead of making calls, texting is better and lowers the cost and then downloading movies and music with Wi-Fi access can cost less.

Now my life is much easier when I practice these financial habits. In my opinion, life is too short. So it should be simple and not complicated with debt problems. What is your opinion?
“Students join myME not only to learn, but also because they feel safe talking about their difficulties in life”

By Arnold Marseille & KMM Aung

By-: Arnold Marseille & KMM Aung

PHOTOS: Supplied

“I get up at 4am and start working by 5am. Usually the shop closes at 5.30pm, sometimes a bit later. I am ten years old.” As dramatic as it sounds, this is not the story of just one child in Myanmar. Over 2.7 million Myanmar children do not go to school. At least half of them work instead. Up to seven days per week, 12 to 14 hours a day. Earning as little as 2 euros per day, usually for slightly better payments, disappearing after the classes. They prefer to learn driving, fixing things, than learning to read and write. Asking around, he soon realized families depend on their children for survival and that a more creative solution was needed. “I asked myself: how can we bring education to these kids?”

Saw Wah Khu from Kayin State

FCA supports Mobile Education for out-of-school children in Myanmar

The Social Child Protection and Social Re-Engineering Program at FCA Myanmar is helping children get education and stay out of child labor. According to a recent law stipulates children under 16 in Myanmar are no longer allowed to work full-time, and children younger than 14 are not allowed to work in factories. A law banning child labor altogether would protect the children better. One could argue that a program, such as myME, condones a continuation of child labor. “We have to make a compromise when we look at Myanmar’s specific situation”, explains KMM Aung, FCA Myanmar Country Director.

Htay Than from Ayeyawady Region. He is 19 and has worked in a teashop since he was ten. It even gives students new energy: “Going to school feels refreshing and even though the working days are long, the tiredness vanishes as the lesson starts”, smiles Saw Wah Khu, 20, from Kayin State. He has been working in a teashop for seven years. But he lives above the shop with other young adults and children also working in the shop.

Nay Pyi Taw, Mawlamyine, Myingyan and Kyaukse. Around 10,000 out-of-school children and young adults benefited since we started the project.”

The question resulted in the founding of myME: “delivering education in a creative, fun way”. Tim Aye-Hardy says. “We bought old buses and trucks and made them look like classrooms with desks, chairs, whiteboards. We put solar panels on the roof for electricity and started going around teashops in Yangon, major cities in Myanmar. We ran a pilot with 60 kids in two teashops in early 2014. Now we serve more than 3,890 students from various teashops, restaurants, monastic schools, and underprivileged communities in townships of Yangon, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Mawlamyine, Myingyan and Kyaukse. Around 10,000 out-of-school children and young adults benefited since we started the project.”

Challenge

Naturally myME cannot simply park a bus in front of one of the thousands of teashops and start teaching. “We have to visit a shop several times and sometimes need to wait two or three hours for a brief first conversation with the owner. It is very difficult to get permission from the owners”, tells Shwe Sin, academic coordinator at myME. But even when we do get permission, it is a challenge to motivate the children for the classes. They prefer to learn driving, fixing things, skills getting them better jobs. Many also move from teashop to teashop for slightly better payments, disappearing from our classes after a few months.”

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(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK)

15. "a" (from the verb) "from" or "of" (from the noun) 
(a) I borrowed the book from Su.
(b) We need to prevent wars from breaking out.
(c) He ran away when they asked him to give up.
(d) I spoke to Su after I saw her.

16. "away" or "up"

(a) They went up the hill.
(b) She is coming down the stairs.
(c) He ate up the food.
(d) They have down the plan.

17. "in" or "under"

(a) Children under five do not go to school.
(b) U Ngwe Gaing studied under U Ba Nyan.
(c) We fought for our independence under the leadership of Bogyoke Aung San.

18. "behind"

(a) He is hiding behind the tree.
(b) There is a garage behind the house.

19. "in front of"

(a) There is a blackboard in front of the class.

20. "after" or "out"

(a) The boy is running after the horse.
(b) The girls went out one after another.
(c) She was talking after the war.

21. "about"

(a) He pulled out a five-kyat note from his wallet.
(b) She will come out of the house soon.

22. "about"

(a) What are they talking about?
(b) When we meet, we usually talk about poems.

23. "around"

(a) There are about 20,000 books in our library.
(b) There are many paddy fields around.

LESSON 9

16. "for" or "from" 

(a) These flowers are for you.
(b) This kind of paper is not good for printing on.
(c) She sold the bicycle for K1,500.

17. "during"

He was a soldier during the war.

18. "near"

(a) My house is near the market.
(b) The hospital is near the river.

19. "in front of"

(a) There is a blackboard in front of the class.
**SUNDAY COMICS**

14 OCTOBER 2018

**THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR**

**PEOPLE WILL BE PEOPLE**

Cartoon: Maung Shwe Win

- Business is the most important in my life.
- I work day and night to fulfill my life.
- I have planned everything for my wife.
- My children's future is planned too.
- You still have parents, right?
- What have you done for your parents?
- Oh, um, I've sent them to the home for the aged.
- Good Lord!

**SUNDAY JOKE**

Cartoon: Maung Maung Aung 2018

Really? Do invite him to our house. We need to ask about our financial situation.

We'll have to wait mom.

Which house called him away?

No one! He got hit by a car on his way here!

Good heavens! He couldn't see his own future!
GOODBYE September.
The sun takes a step back. The leaves roll themselves to sleep. And now autumn has awakened.

September is the doorway to my favourite month, October. The wind direction changes as the night change. The smell of October wind is telling the new story. The sky. It’s colour turns orange from blue. And the trees. They’ll tell us how it’s lovely to let the dead things go. They all release the old crispy leaves to make way for the new young ones. Oh... Life starts all over again, my friend. Just take a look around you.

Now that the little birds start to search for perfect place to make their home sweet home. The place to stick each other during winter. The place to have fun sleeping together with their families. Just like you and me, isn’t it? It seems like rain has left to tour around the globe again.

The artists of this month’s masterpiece are just those tall trees and their orange leaves. “If there is life, there is death as well”, the trees teach us this lesson every time of this month. The branches holding their long-term friends, the green leaves, finally let go of them when they become orange. The slight October breeze mildly carries the old leaves onto the earth’s surface. There, they are now. Laying on the hard ground, glazing up again to see how their branches get fun with upcoming young green ones. Sad story though. The October’s ground is covered with those weeping old yam-coloured leaves that it somehow looks like the endless ocean of orange. This reflects on the sky above us. And that’s why the sky takes off its blue shirt and wears the new orange one. The whole environment is getting new like someone hit the ‘restart’ button of our earth.

The October harp starts playing the tunes of October. This melody gives support to the changing world around us. It’s so divine that even the leaves fall for it. The sign of the times let us know that everyone is going to face up October’s challenges which are coming ahead.

The word ‘October’ actually means the eighth month in the old Roman calendar, just before the other two months were inserted. However, in our Julian and Gregorian calendars, it means the tenth. What’s more, it’s the sixth of seven months to have all the leaves released to the earth. In our Burmese calendar, it’s when we have our Thadingyut festival. Likewise, there is also the Halloween festival in the other countries.

During Thadingyut, our country is so classy with colourful lights. People do good things and have fun during this festival. Children in foreign countries look forward to a very chilly party called Halloween. It’s somehow a kind of a great fun too. Dressing up in spooky costumes and enjoying the trick-or-treat thing.

Additionally, there is a favourite party of beer lovers that takes place in this month. And it’s named, Oktoberfest. It’s been for beer lovers since 1810. The Oktoberfest celebration marks the beginning of a new beer-brewing season, as cooler temperatures bring optimal beer-brewing months —the colder weather keeps beer from spoiling. It has long been a tradition to polish off the remaining beer from the year to prepare the casks for a new brew in autumn.

Munich’s Oktoberfest now begins in late September, and although the seasonal climate is less relevant to breweries today, the beer festival of Oktoberfest remains a vibrant tradition!

Where does the name October come from?

October is here, and in the northern hemisphere that often means the days are flush with falling leaves, chiling weather, and growing anticipation for the holiday season. The tenth month by our Gregorian calendar, October shares a root with octopus and octothorpe — the Latin octo-, meaning “eight.”

So, how did October become the 10th month?

In the Roman calendar, which had only ten months, October was the 8th month, as January and February hadn’t been added to the calendar year yet! Like its neighboring months September, November, and December, the numerical name stuck even after Julius Caesar expanded the calendar year from ten months to twelve. October entered Old English through Old French, replacing the English vernacular term Winterfylleð.

What happens in October?

Children may look forward to October for Halloween, which falls at the month’s close, but beer-lovers may be more excited for what’s happening at the beginning of the month—Oktoberfest. This long-standing beer festival has gained popularity around the world, but the true Oktoberfest is located in Munich, Germany, where the festival has been held since 1810. The Oktoberfest celebration marks the beginning of a new beer-brewing season, as cooler temperatures bring optimal beer-brewing months —the colder weather keeps beer from spoiling. It has long been a tradition to polish off the remaining beer from the year to prepare the casks for a new brew in autumn.

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Reference: Thesaurus