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Sacred objects hoisted atop Lopyae Ayechantha Pagoda in Indakaw



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko, wife and donor offer sacred umbrella or Shwehtidaw to Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE sacred umbrella or Shwehtidaw was hoisted atop the Lopyae Ayechantha Hsutaungpyae Pagoda in Indakaw Town, Bago Region, at a grand religious ceremony, yesterday morning.

The religious ceremony also included the gold gilding of the pagoda, located at Thawba-

nayama Shweminwun Sasan-ayeiktha on Dhammapala Hill, and the offering of provisions to 108 Buddhist monks.

At the ceremony Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, the Principal of the Bhamo Monastery in Mandalay, Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja

Maha Saddhamma Jotika Dr Bhaddanta Kumara administered the Nine Precepts to the congregations led by Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and wife.

The rituals including the offering of the Paritta flowers, water, threads and sand to the

monks, was performed in accord with the religious practices.

Then, the congregation including the Union Minister and wife, departmental heads and donors presented the Seimbudaw, Hngetmyatnadaw and offerotries to the monks.

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Hail damages roofs in village in Mogaung Tsp

HAILSTONES that fell with rain damaged the roofs of about 300 homes in Maran village in Mogaung Township, Kachin State, on the evening of 17 February, reported village administrator U Naw Lard.

The roofs of some 300 homes in the village, which is made up of 605 houses, were damaged.

"The rain came suddenly, at about 4 pm. Later, hailstones also came down. Some of the hailstones were rather big. They were over two inches thick. The hail continued for nearly 15 minutes, and caused damage to the roofs. We are compiling a detailed list of the damage," said U Naw Lard.

The Mogaung township administrator, members of the township fire services department and the social security association of Namati are now carrying out relief work in the village. — Win Naing (Kachin Myae) (Translated by TMT) ■



Hailstones rained down on the village of Maran. **PHOTO: WIN NAING**

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Line Walker-2 crew rehearses scenes in downtown Yangon



A resident, U Phone Kyaw Myint.



Veteran Actor U Maung Maung Myint.



Police Officer U Kyaw San Oo.



Daw Swe Zin Htike of the Film Development Centre.



Pyithu Hluttaw MP Daw Myint Soe.

RESIDENTS of Kyauktada Township eagerly observed the cast and crew of the Hong Kong film *Line Walker-2* (Operation Midnight Shadow) rehearsing a scene of the movie near City Star Hotel, situated between Maha Bandoola Park Street and Anawrahta Road, yesterday.

Hong Kong Police and the Myanmar Police Force will be cooperating on an anti-trafficking operation in this sequel to the 2014 *Line Walker* film.

U Phone Kyaw Myint, a resident of Kyauktada Township's Ward 2, said he is happy a movie is being filmed in his community and ensured that all the local residents are willingly supporting the film which will raise international awareness on Myanmar. He said the film crew began preparing for the scene since 7 am.

Veteran actor and director U Maung Maung Myint (Arts) also came to observe the film rehearsal. "Shaw Brothers was a film company working from a small room on the corner of Bar Street (now Maha Bandoola Park Street) since the colonial times," said U Maung Maung Myint. "You could say they came back to Myanmar to reminisce. Seeing them reminds me of the old film industry. We didn't have modern equipment but we were

An actor from the *Line Walker-2* practices a scene for the film with the aid of a crane truck in downtown Yangon. **PHOTO: NAY LIN**

able to produce quality films. There are professionals capable of that still."

U Maung Maung Myint said the Hong Kong film coming to Myanmar benefits the nation and the people, such as collection of duties and taxes and their paying for accommodation. He also said their professionalism is something to be admired and copied. "Even though it was just a rehearsal for a scene, they were

conducting it like it was the actual shooting day. Their commitment to their job is plain to see."

The section of Anawrahta Road up to City Star Hotel were temporarily closed from 10 am to 4 pm for the rehearsal yesterday. The Myanmar Traffic Police, Yangon City Development Committee, Myanmar Police Force and other authorities helped in diverting the traffic.

Police Captain Kyaw San Oo

of Kyauktada Township's traffic police said he and eight other officers helped in diverting the cars around the designated filming area. Daw Swe Zin Htike, managerial member of the Film Development Centre, said the first *Line Walker* film was also shot in Brazil where roads were closed for the duration of the filming. "If you want your scene to be portrayed in the global film market then you close off sections of the

road whether you're in America, London or Paris," said Daw Shwe Zin Htike. "But you must understand that we nobody blocks off the entire road. There are always alternate routes or divergences planned."

U Han Lin Aung, Assistant Director of the Film Promotion Division under the Information and Public Relations Department, said the film crew used two crane trucks to practice a jumping action scene with one of the actors. He said they are preparing the setting for another scene to be shot at the YMCA building while the actual filming will take place on the 21st.

Line Walker-2 will be employing international movie settings such as the use of gunfire, explosions, car battle scenes, helicopter shooting scenes, police cars, and special police force vehicles. Also observing yesterday's rehearsal was Yangon Region Pyithu Hluttaw MP for Botahtaung Township, Daw Myint Myint Soe, who said it is a tremendous pride to be hosting a film such as this. She said it is admirable that an international film will be including our regional scenery at a time when we are unable to penetrate into the global market. —Thi Thi Min, Min Thit ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

The *Line Walker-2* actor zips between two buildings during a scene rehearsal on Maha Bandoola Park Street in downtown Yangon. **PHOTO: NAY LIN**The crew of Hong Kong film *Line Walker-2* employ two mechanical cranes to perform an action scene for the movie in downtown Yangon. **PHOTO: NAY LIN**

Nationwide education system to be promoted through reforms

“Reforms towards a superior education system will be made through better policy and procedures,” said Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Thein Gyi at his meeting with the rector, the pro-rector, faculty members and students of Yandanabon University in Mandalay yesterday.

“In developing human recourses for socioeconomic growth of the country, the institutions of higher learning will serve as the places where graduate intellectuals and intelligentsia are born and brought up,” he said, adding, “Every university, degree college or college should make concerted efforts to improve their standard.” The Union Minister said, “All the issues in connection with departmental management, academic functions including teaching and examinations and financial procedures should be effectively carried out in accordance with the rules and regulations. “Faculty members must meet their students every week,



Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi meets with faculty members and students at Mandalay University.
PHOTO:MNA

and solve their hardships and challenges. As for the cases that are beyond their capacity, they should seek help from the rector, who also should hold a weekly meeting with them and students to solve the problems. The rector can also put forwards the hardships and challenges, he cannot solve, to the rectors committee and the Ministry of Education.

“Students should be trained to have the mutual respect and understanding amidst the diverse situation, the reading habit, the initiative and creative power and to understand the importance of accountability and responsibility

“Faculty members should develop their pupils’ abilities in sports, music and culture. They should disseminate the finds of

their research programs through the academic journals for the knowledge development of the local people. In every developed country, only the best students are chosen as faculties. Teaching profession must be encouraged as only the best and most qualified teachers can bring out outstanding students.”

He called for inclusive ef-

orts for the institutions of higher learning of Myanmar to catch up with the international counterparts.

Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun and Chair of Rectors Committee Dr Zaw Wai Soe reported on the continuous reforms of the higher education sector and future programs. The Union Minister and officials answered the questions raised by the participants. Accompanied by officials, the Union Minister also met with faculty members and students of Mandalay Degree Collage, Myanmar Institute of Information Technological and Mandalay University, and discussed education reforms, advantages and disadvantages, means to overcome difficulties and challenges and future programs. Deputy Minister U Win Maw Tun also met with faculty members and students of Mandalay Technological University, Mandalay and Mandalay Foreign Languages University—
MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)

Sacred objects hoisted atop Lopyae Ayechantha Pagoda in ...

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Mahasi Ovadacariya Shweminwun Sayadaw Agga Maha Kammathanacariya Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Dr Bhaddanta Sobana delivered a sermon. Then the congregation shared the merits gained.

The Union Minister and wife and donors conveyed the Seinbudaw, Hngetmyatnadaw, and the different tiers of the Shwehtidaw and the sacred umbrella round the pagoda clock-wise, and conveyed them atop the pagoda by a decorated carriage. Monks recited religious verses.

Afterwards, the congregation presented provisions to 108 Buddhist monks.—MNA ■



Three Daingnet villagers found murdered in Maungtaw Township

THREE ethnic Daingnet villagers in their early forties were found murdered in Maungtaw Township, northern Rakhine State, on 15 February, according to a police report.

The corpses of the three men from Thinbawhla (Daingnet) village in the township were found buried in the ground, after a search was made when they failed to come back home from crab hunting.

Villagers and security personnel found a fresh burial mound while searching for the three men, identified as U

Hla Tun Aung (42), U Chit Tun (42), and U Maung Tun Sein (41). The men reportedly went missing after going to a crab hunting ground near old Kunthibin village in the morning.

When the search team dug the ground, they reportedly found the bodies of U Hla Tun Aung and U Chit Tun, with deep cuts on their necks, and U Maung Tun Sein, with a severe cut on his temple and a puncture wound on the neck.

— MNA

(Translated by TMT)

Indian-aided road, reinforced concrete bridge opened in Leshi Tsp

Under Myanmar-India friendship project, a 6-mile and 6-furlong long Yan Nwe-Moon Kai Lin-Bann Kalar-Kawka Lan dirt road and one reinforced concrete bridge over Kyauk Sarik Creek on the road were opened in Leshi Township, Naga self-administered zone, Sagaing Region on Saturday.

The road and bridge construction was carried out with the third fund of Republic of India for Myanmar-India friendship project.

Development of Border Areas and National Races Department Director-General U Ye Naing, Sagaing Region development supervisor Director U

Aung Kyaw Tin, Leshi Township Management Committee U Tun Tun Lay, departmental officials and local residents were present in the opening ceremony.

Director-General U Ye Naing and officials opened the dirt road and reinforced concrete bridge by cutting ceremonial ribbons, and then inspected

along the road. Ministry of Border Affairs is carrying out a total of 21 projects in Naga self-administered zone _14 roads and bridges projects, six education projects and one health projects with the third allocated fund K 3,171.835 million from Republic of India. — MNA(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

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edited.

Dolphin population in protected area declines slightly: survey

A recent survey has found a slight decline in the population of Irrawaddy dolphins living in protected areas in the Ayeyawady River, between Mandalay and Bhamo Township in Kachin State, compared with a count conducted in 2018.

U Kyaw Hla Thein from the Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar Programme), said the current survey was conducted by the Department of Fisheries in collaboration with the WCS (Myanmar) between 6 and 16 February. The survey found 24 dolphins in the area between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung, 34 in the new protected area between Malae and Shweku townships, and 14 in Bhamo Township, putting the total count at 72. The population of Irrawaddy dolphins has decreased by four compared with 2018. The death toll of the rare dolphin species increased in 2018, when six dolphins were found dead in the protected area. In early 2019, Myanmar lost another



Irrawaddy dolphins are mostly seen in the Waterway, between Mandalay and Bhamo Township Ayeyawady River. **PHOTO: WCS MYANMAR**

Irrawaddy dolphin. The 2018 survey found 26 dolphins between Mandalay and Kyaukmyaung, 37 in Malae and Shweku area, and 13 in Bhamo, putting the total count at 76. Electrofishing on the Ayeyawady River is the most common cause for the death of dolphins, said U Han Win, an in-

charge of Irrawaddy dolphin conservation under the Department of Fisheries.

A population survey of Irrawaddy dolphins is conducted every February. The survey team usually conducts campaigns to raise awareness during the course of its trip. The 2019 sur-

vey was performed by officials from the fisheries departments in Mandalay, and Sagaing regions as well as Kachin State, members of Katha Township Fisheries Federation, fishermen, and staff of the WCS (Myanmar).—Nyi Tu ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Fall in price of betel leaves hits growers in Salingyi

THE price of betel leaves has spiralled downwards in Salingyi town of Sagaing Region, causing financial hardship to growers.

The price of betel leaves normally increases in the winter season, yet it is now seeing a downward trend, according to traders in the local market.

"During late winter in the previous year, the price of betel leaves was on the rise. But, the rate has been falling this year. Therefore, farm owners cannot cover input costs for cultivation such as wages, fertilizers, etc.," said a local report quoting farmers.

Farmers from the northern villages of Salingyi town have chosen perennial betel plants (locally known as the Kyaikhto variety) for cultivation. As betel leaves fetched a high price last year, farmers expanded cultivation. As the price has decreased this year, the number of farms is likely to be lower next year. Additionally, some farmers have plans to upgrade their farms.

"The farmers did not make a profit. The decreasing prices may be attributed to large supply from other regions," said betel leaves traders.

Betel leaves (Kyaikhto variety) are mostly cultivat-



Betel farming is popular in Salingyi Township, Sagaing Region. **PHOTO: ZAW LIN (SALINGYI)**

ed in Donetaw, Gonetaw, and Ywarthar Villages of Salingyi Township.—Zaw Lin ■ (Salingyi) (Translated by La Wonn)

Horse Racing held to commemorate 46th Anniversary of YECC

A horse racing was held in commemoration of the 46th anniversary of the founding of the Yangon Equestrian Country Club in North Dagon Township on 16 February. Yangon Equestrian Country Club Patron Wunna Kyaw Htin Dr. Khin Shwe, Yangon Equestrian Country Club

chairman U Aung Maw Thein and Yangon Region Hluttaw representative U Myint Lwin delivered speeches during the commemoration. Eight teams took part, with over 50 horses racing.

The horse racing included senior, junior and junior-junior

divisions, show jumping, barrel racing and walk-trot test completion.

The Yangon Equestrian Country Club Patron and chairman awarded prizes to the winning teams. The equestrian competition, along with demonstrations, was organized by Yan-

gon Equestrian Country Club Patron U Nyein Kyaw. There was no entry fee for the horse race. The horses used in demonstrations at the opening ceremony belong to State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.—Min Thit (MNA) ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

Kitchen fire destroys three homes in Htantabin Township

A fire that started from a kitchen stove destroyed three houses in Htantabin Township of northern Yangon yesterday, causing losses to the tune of K1.5 million.

The fire reportedly start-

ed from a stove inside a house owned by Daw Khin Win around 2 a.m. on 17 February. The blaze spread to nearby firewood sticks and then engulfed three other houses. Led by U Moe Min Aung,

the deputy chief officer of the Township Fire Service Department, 17 firefighters, 50 auxiliary firefighters, and two fire engines put the fire under control within an hour. The Township Fire Ser-

vice Department has initiated action against Daw Khin Win under Section 285 of the Penal Code. Zin Min Htike (IPRD) ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

Myanmar SMEs aim to export value-added products to ROK

By Aye Yamone

MYANMAR'S small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are planning to ship value-added products to the Republic of Korea, said U Aung Kyi Soe, the general secretary of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI).

He made the remarks at an event to promote agro, fishery, and livestock trade with South Korea held on 16 February.

"We are experiencing a trade imbalance, with low exports and high imports. We have been discussing with our Korean counterparts to improve trade," said U Aung Kyi Soe.

"At present, we have been



High-quality mangoes for export. PHOTO: THANT ZIN

negotiating with them to export new items, including Myanmar's mango and rice, to Ko-

rea," he added.

"A Myanmar Trade Center has already been opened in Ko-

rea and Myanmar's products are on display at the center. We have to make efforts to improve Myanmar-Korea bilateral trade as Myanmar has already built economic ties with Korea," said U Aung Soe, the director of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization.

"Korean people like sweet flavors. Our mango is a marketable fruit in Korea. Moreover, we can export rice to South Korea as it can be consumed as well as put to industrial use. We can increase earnings for the whole supply chain," said U Aung Kyi Soe.

"Myanmar primarily exports black sesame, soft shell crab, and other fruits. Myanmar's pulses and vegetables

should penetrate the Korean market as there is high demand," said Professor Young Jun Choi from Kung Hee University, at the event.

"Myanmar must form supporting groups related to agro exports so that those groups can help expedite export procedures, invite foreign businesspersons, organize expos, and link with international buyers," said Professor Hyun Yong Park at Kung Hee University.

South Korea imports US\$ 12-14 billion worth of agro and fishery products and livestock every year. Myanmar exports products, including black sesame seeds, to Korea, according to the UMFCCI. ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Domestic investments exceed K18,230 bln as of January-end

DOMESTIC investments in Myanmar for the period between the 1994-1995 fiscal year and the end of January this year totaled K18,239 billion, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC).

As of January-end, a total of 1,529 enterprises have been allowed to invest in 11 sectors in Myanmar, with an estimated capital of over K18,239 billion.

According to figures from the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), the real estate sector has accounted for 22.8 per cent of the total fund inflows, with K4,168 billion in investment from 78 enterprises. The manufacturing sector has attracted investments of K3,299 billion from 849 enterprises. The transport and communication sector saw investments of K2,834 billion from 50 businesses, the hotels and tourism sector received over K1,945 billion from

161 enterprises, and the construction sector has pulled in K1,075 billion from 68 projects.

The industrial estate sector has received K862 billion from 11 projects, the energy sector has obtained K663 billion from 19 businesses, the mining sector has pulled in K195 billion from 70 enterprises, the livestock and fisheries sector has raked in K153.7 billion from 85 businesses, while the agriculture sector has seen investments worth K51.8 billion through 11 projects. Other service sectors have attracted investments of K2,989 billion from 127 enterprises.

"Domestic investments have increased this year compared with recent years," said U Kyaw Win Tun, the director of the DICA.

Under the incumbent government, 51 enterprises have invested K1,572 billion in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, 119 en-

terprises have put in K3,978 billion in the 2017-2018 FY, 105 enterprises have invested K 995 million in the past mini-budget period from April to September 2018, and 66 projects have brought in K725.9 million as of 4 February of the 2018-2019 fiscal year (1 Oct to Sep-end), according to data from the DICA.

Under the Myanmar Investment Law, region and state investment committees are authorized to endorse investment proposals with a capital of not more than \$5 million (K6,000 million), in order to simplify the verification of investment projects.

Having introduced a fast-track way to set up a business in Myanmar, investors can apply to the MIC or the State and Regional investment committee for an Endorsement of an investment proposal depending on business types.—GNLM ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade with Philippines down 28.5% in December

MYANMAR-Philippines bilateral trade totalled US\$26.9 million in December 2018, down by \$10.8 million, or 28.5 per cent, matched against the previous December, according to the Ministry of Commerce's monthly trade report.

As per official statistics, exports in December 2018 were valued at \$23.194 million, while imports amounted to \$3.739 million. In December 2017, bilateral trade stood at \$37.704 million, with exports of \$14.114 million and imports of \$23.59 million.

Myanmar imports capital goods, consumer products, intermediate goods and CMP raw materials from the ASEAN member countries, Asian and African states, some European countries and Western nations. The country mainly exports agricultural, animal, marine, and forest products, minerals, and manufactured goods.

During the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), My-

anmar exported \$11.46 million worth of goods and imported commodities worth \$17.2 million, totalling \$28.6 million.

According to statistics released by the Commerce Ministry, trade between Myanmar and the Philippines, one of Myanmar's regional trade partners, touched \$52.432 million in 2017-2018 FY, falling \$4 million from 2016-2017 FY.

The value of Myanmar-Philippines trade stood at \$28.998 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$28.2 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$33.353 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$44.012 million in the 2012-2013 FY, and \$48.959 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, foreign direct investment of permitted enterprises of the Philippines as of 31 January this year reached \$147.173 million or 0.19 per cent.—Shwe Khine ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Public sector imports of capital goods up 30% in Oct-Jan

MYANMAR'S imports of capital goods in the first four months of the 2018-2019 fiscal year reached US\$1.988 billion, with public sector imports valued at \$320.455 million and private sector imports totalling \$1.667 billion, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

Compared with the corresponding period of the 2017-

2018FY, public sector imports of capital goods have increased by \$74.246 million, or 30.16 per cent, while, private sector imports have declined by \$226 million.

During the October-January period in the previous fiscal, the country's imports of capital goods were registered at \$2.140 billion, with public sector im-

ports valued at \$246 million and private sector imports totalling \$1.894 billion.

Myanmar imported capital goods amounted to \$3.5 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period from April through September. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, capital goods imports reached \$6.59 billion, according to the minis-

try's annual statistical report.

The country's annual imports of capital goods stood at \$6.9 billion in the 2016-2017FY, \$8.25 billion in the 2015-2016FY, \$8.03 billion in the 2014-2015FY, \$5.69 billion in the 2013-2014FY, \$3.8 billion in the 2012-2013FY, and \$3.7 billion in the 2011-2012FY.

During the October-January period in the current FY, the country also imported intermediate goods worth \$2.266 billion, consumer goods worth \$1.146 billion, and CMP raw materials worth \$786 million.—Swe Nyein ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Ethnic literature and culture groups continue fourth day of Nay Pyi Taw tour

MEMBERS of ethnic literature and culture groups from Shan State (North) and Rakhine State who were in Nay Pyi Taw, continued the fourth day of their first study in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

In the morning, the excursion groups, accompanied by officials from the Department of Ethnical Literature and Culture, visited the National Museum where officials from the museum gave a brief account of the booths of the Thiha Thana Throne, Prehistoric Period, Historically recorded period, Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Myanma Anu Thukhuma.

Afterwards, the groups visited the Myanmar Gems

Museum, Nay Pyi Taw where the museum in-charge and officials explained the booths displaying jades, pearls, silver articles and natural resources, and responded to questions raised by them.

They also observed the gems and jewelry shops on the ground floor of the Gems Museum, and purchased souvenirs.

In the afternoon, the groups visited the Ngaliketha Elephant Camp and Junction Center.

In the evening, Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs, Nai Thet Lwin, hosted dinner for the ethnic groups. — Lu Maw

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Members of ethnic literature and culture groups visit the National Museum in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: HTAN PHONE

Yangon Book Street attracts book lovers



About 70 book stalls open in the Weekend Yangon Book Street. PHOTO: MNA

A LARGE number of bookworms rushed to the Weekend Yangon Book Street on Theinbyu Road in front of the Old Secretariat of the commercial city yesterday, where they joined the literary talks and bought books at the many stalls.

“We have about 70 bookshops here this year. Like in the previous year, the sales are normal. But the volume of sales varies between shops and between weekends as visitors come here with different ideas and for different choices.”

“For example, if the number of visitors who are interested in science is large, the sale of books on this category is high. So, it’s hard to tell which category of books will be in brisk

sales this weekend,” said U Nay Myo Nyunt, the chair of the Book Street supervisory committee.

“Normally, a writer holds a literary talk every weekend. We also hold poem reciting contests, apart from the “answer my question program” in which participants who can give a correct reply get a book. Some literary houses sell books at discount prices and the fair presents a book to every visitor free of charge,” he added.

This weekend, Saya Nyein Min gave a literary talk under the theme “Be the master of literary, and not its slave”, Pan Thawda, a model and movie actress, took part in the “answer my question program”, and organizers held the 1000-book free distribution

program.

The book stalls also displayed various categories of books, including new and old editions of books on general knowledge, artistic pleasure, religion, social affairs, education, health, culture, medicine, astrology and religious teaching for children and novels, short story compilations, English-Myanmar dictionaries and story books.

The Ministry of Information, with the assistance of Yangon Region government and Yangon City Development Committee, has been organizing the Weekend Yangon Book Street on every Saturdays and Sundays since the end of monsoons in 2017.—Min Thit (MNA)

(Translated by TMT)

Illegal drugs seized in Buthidaung, Mongyai, Tachilek, Namhkam

Authorities have seized 1,300 stimulant tablets and K 40,000 from Mohamat Showwhite of Myoma Ward, Buthidaung Township in Rakhine State while they searched the suspect’s house on 16 February

The drug enforcement division from Mongyai also confiscated 858g of heroin and 12,000 stimulant tablets while they stopped and searched the motorcycle driven by Sai Kham Khaing with Sai Pan Pwint on-board on Hsipaw- Mongyai road near Monsan Village in Mongyai Township on 16 February

On the same day, Tachilek drug enforcement division seized 205 stimulant tablets, 0.5g of ICE (crystal methamphetamine) and a mobile phone while they stopped and searched the motorcycle driven by Thin Aung (a) Kayin in front of Mekhong River Hotel on Bogoyoke road in Mekhong Ward, Tachilek Town.

In addition, 1,260 stimulant

tablets and 145g of ICE (crystal methamphetamine) from the bedroom of Thin Aung’s house on Mekhong Street, Mekhong Ward in Tachilek Township, and 40,000 stimulant tablets, two mobile phones and one motorcycle from Laubay and Laubar at Maw Cherry Guest House on Bogoyoke road in Samsai (b) Ward in Tachilek Town were seized on that day

Moreover, Namhkam drug enforcement division officers also seized 25,000 stimulant tablets after they stopped and searched the motorcycle driven by Kyan Phar Khun with Ma Kyhaung Shwe Maih onboard near the entrance of Namhkam Town on Namhkam-Muse road in Namhkam Township.

The arrested suspects are under investigation in accordance with the Anti-Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law. —Ko Ye

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



To fight off unemployment, Iraqi youth plant start-up seeds

BAGHDAD (Iraq) — Stuck between an endless waitlist for a government job and a frail private sector, Iraqi entrepreneurs are taking on staggering unemployment by establishing their own start-ups.

The first murmurs of this creative spirit were felt in 2013, but the Islamic State group's sweep across a third of the country the following year put many projects on hold.

Now, with IS defeated, co-working spaces and incubators are flourishing in a country whose unemployment rate hovers around 10 percent but whose public sector is too bloated to hire.

Many self-starters begin their journey at an aptly named glass building in central Baghdad: The Station.

There, they sip on coffee, peruse floor-to-ceiling bookshelves for ideas and grab a seat at clusters of desks where other stylish Iraqis click away at their laptops.

"We're trying to create a new generation with a different state of mind," said executive director Haidar Hamzoz.

"We want to tell youth that they can start their own project,



Iraqi youth at computers in "The Station", Baghdad's incubator for would-be entrepreneurs. PHOTO: AFP

achieve their dreams and not just be happy in a government job they didn't even want," he told AFP.

Youth make up around 60 percent of Iraq's nearly 40 million people.

After graduating from university, many spend years waiting to be appointed to a job in the government, Iraq's biggest employer.

Four out of five jobs created in Iraq in recent years are in the public sector, according to the

World Bank.

And in its 2019 budget, the government proposed \$52 billion in salaries, pensions, and social security for its workers -- a 15 percent jump from 2018 and more than half the total budget.

But with graduates entering the workforce faster than jobs are created, many still wait indefinitely for work.

Among youth, 17 percent of men and a whopping 27 per cent

of women are unemployed, the World Bank says.

- After IS, innovation reigns -

When IS declared Mosul its seat of power in Iraq back in 2014, resident Saleh Mahmud was forced to shutter the city's incubator for would-be entrepreneurs.

With Mosul now cautiously rebuilding after the jihadists were ousted in 2017, Mahmud is back in business.

"Around 600-700 youth have

already passed by Mosul Space" to attend a seminar or seek out resources as they start their own ventures, said the 23-year-old.

He was inspired after watching fellow Mosul University graduates hopelessly "try to hunt down a connection to get a job in the public sphere."

"A university education isn't something that gets you a fulfilling job," he said.

Another start-up, Dakkakena, is capitalising on Mosul's rebuilding spirit, too.

The online shopping service delivers a lorry-full of home goods every day to at least a dozen families refurbishing after the war.

"On the web, we can sell things for cheaper than stores because we have fewer costs, like no showrooms," said founder Yussef al-Noaime, 27. Noaime fled IS to the Netherlands, where he was introduced to e-commerce. When he returned home, the computer engineer partnered with another local to found their venture. A similar service, Miswag, was set-up in the capital Baghdad in 2014 and last year reported hundreds of thousands of dollars in profits. — AFP ■

Tour brings foreigners to areas devastated by nuclear accident

TOKYO — There is growing interest among foreign tourists for a tour in English to former evacuation zones in the northeastern Japan prefecture of Fukushima where a devastating earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 triggered a nuclear disaster.

"More people are becoming interested in going on the tour that can deepen their knowledge," explains an official at the Japan National Tourism Organization.

At 8 a.m. on a frigid morning in January, foreign tourists gathered in front of Tokyo Station and boarded a station wagon headed to Fukushima Prefecture.

"It's surprisingly close from Tokyo." "Are nuclear power plants in Japan active?" Questions and thoughts flew around in various languages.

When personal dosimeters used to record the level of radiation were handed out, Nerious Bartkus, a 28-year-old office worker from Lithuania, pushed the operating buttons uncertainly.

"I am interested in the Chernobyl nuclear accident during the Soviet era and I wanted to visit Fukushima," he said.

The tourism company Knot World Co. based in Tokyo de-



Foreign tourists and a guide are pictured on a street lined with cherry trees in the town of Tomioka, Fukushima Prefecture. Interest is growing among foreign tourists for a tour in English to former evacuation zones in the northeastern Japan prefecture. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

signed this particular tour from a desire to encourage more people to "hear the local voices and see the area's damage and recovery" after the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

Since the tour's launch in February last year, some 200 people from 23 countries have participated, according to the company. At 11 a.m. the tourists arrived at the first stop of their tour, in the town of Namie.

"We are worried that accidents may occur at nuclear plants in China," said a Hong Kong stu-

dent accompanied by two others.

The three visited a temporary shopping district set up after the accident and ordered curry dishes that used local vegetables. "We aren't bothered as long as inspections on radioactivity are conducted," one smiled.

Scenes that reminded of the crisis greeted the tourists. An elementary school hit by the tsunami. A farm that continues to take care of their cows despite having been exposed to the radiation. A brand-new seawall.

The tourists paid their re-

spects in front of a memorial commemorating the victims. As they passed through a hazardous zone in their vehicle, they could see far in the distance the nuclear plant's exhaust pipes and cranes. The dosimeters started to make a noise when it measured more than 1 microsievert per hour, causing some people to look serious.

At dusk, they walked along a street lined with cherry trees in the town of Tomioka. "I want to go back to my town," a woman who has evacuated the town told the tourists. "But it's not easy."

It was half past 8 p.m. when the tourists arrived back to Tokyo's bright lights. "I have a better understanding of the residents' feelings," said Pak Hin Law, a 19-year-old student from Hong Kong. Fukushima Prefecture says 96,000 foreign tourists stayed at hotels and inns in the prefecture in 2017, which is four times the number in 2011. In February this year, an organization that promotes the prefecture's products and tourism launched a three-day tour with English translation in areas including Naraha, another town in the vicinity of the crippled nuclear plant, to aid recovery. — Kyodo News ■

China gold reserves rise for 2nd month in January

BEIJING — China increased its official gold reserves for a second straight month in January, the latest data from the People's Bank of China showed.

The country's gold reserves rose slightly to 59.94 million ounces at the end of January from 59.56 million ounces at the end of December 2018, marking a second straight month of increase.

The latest gold purchase by the world's second-largest economy came at a time when global central banks are hoarding the precious metal.

According to the World Gold Council, global gold demand increased 4 percent year on year to 4,345.1 tonnes last year. The amount of gold bought by central banks reached the highest since 1971, the year when the dollar's peg to bullion was scrapped.

Gold reserves of central banks around the world surged 651.5 tonnes, or 74 per cent year on year, in 2018. — Xinhua ■

Foreign Investment and Domestic Arrangements

THE time is right to welcome international investors, as well as partners and friends, as Myanmar is transforming into a developed nation, enjoying the fruits from such varied sectors as politics, economy, social welfare, and culture.

The role of international investors is especially vital in the economic sector, and it is important to cut out red tape in the investment process, and ensure that rules and regulations do not hinder investors' efforts, but promote them. With this end in view, the government, which has been unanimously elected by the people, is putting all its energies into wooing foreign investors by releasing and amending strict regulations through special arrangements.

Thanks to these undertakings, companies from abroad are investing in Myanmar, and some are now engaged in trade and services.

Foreign investment must not be invited just for profit or revenue. The aim must be to benefit from knowledge gained about international technology, management skills, and experience from such ventures.

At the same time, news has surfaced that some companies are involved in cases of fraud and misappropriation.

It is not good for local entrepreneurs, who have invested their capital and property into their businesses, to be faced with such a quandary. If foreigners who cannot provide security leave the country, it will be difficult for local businessmen to trace them, and it will be a terrible blow to them.

Foreign investment must not be invited just for profit or revenue. The aim must be to benefit from knowledge gained about international technology, management skills, and experience from such ventures.

For instance, foreign companies were engaged in the construction of high-rise buildings in Thailand during the 1980s and 1990s. During the period, Thai authorities restricted the number of skilled workers, controlling how many foreign and local workers were to be involved. And by 2000, Thai technicians and workers possessed the skills to build such buildings themselves,

without help from foreigners.

In his New Year's speech on the radio on 17 April, 1947, General Aung San, the architect of Myanmar's independence, said that the country had no money or skilled labour; that, without such skills and capital, the country could not move forward without seeking help from abroad; that, it was not always good to seek help from others; that, given the country's situation, seeking help was inevitable to resettle the nation; so, all were to cultivate themselves to possess skills worthy of independence; and, the foundations for economic infrastructures had to be laid while preparing for Independence.

Agreed, it is important to invite foreign investors who can bring great success and large capital for our national development, but, at the same time, laws, rules, and regulations to curb fraudulent practices are essential.

The Global New Light of Myanmar firmly believes that preparations are needed to equip all citizens with much needed skills.



A nurse measures an elderly man's blood sugar level at the hypertension and diabetes clinic opened on Wednesdays at community health clinics throughout Myanmar.



A doctor educates local residents on hypertension and diabetes at a rural clinic for treating the noncontagious diseases.

Community health clinics combat hypertension, diabetes in rural areas once a week across the nation

By Dr. Than Lwin Tun, Dr. Kyaw Kan Kaung, Dr. Nan Nai Nai Shein (Ministry of Health and Sports)

IN 1978, the World Health Organization (WHO) implemented the global strategy for 'Health for All by the year 2000' and acknowledged that preliminary healthcare is the first basic requirement of the people. Of the total population of Myanmar, 70 per cent live in rural areas and the nation provides preliminary healthcare for them and the rest of the citizens.

While preliminary healthcare was administered in the past, it was mostly focused to-

wards preventing and eradicating contagious diseases. But there have been changes in how diseases infect and operate in the last decade, in addition to increasing lifespans, an ageing global population, and other factors have caused public health requirements to change over time as well. After passing through the new millennium, WHO has included elevating health and containing noncontagious diseases in its preliminary healthcare plan.

The 2014 WHO STEPS Survey reveals that 26.4% of

adults in Myanmar (between ages 25 to 64) have hypertension, 10.5% have diabetes, and 22.4% are obese. Likewise, the National Survey on Causes of Death using verbal autopsy (2016-2017) shows that 74% of all deaths were attributed to hypertension, diabetes and other noncontagious diseases. As a result, there is now a greater need to administer healthcare for these diseases in the rural areas where the majority of our citizens live.

In May 2018, the Union Minister for Health and Sports

The Wednesday-only clinics aim to provide accessible quality healthcare to the people, and to reduce the mortality rate from noncontagious diseases, especially hypertension and diabetes.

directed rural health centres in Myanmar's states and regions to open community health clinics for hypertension and diabetes every Wednesday. In August of the same year, the health ministry convened a meeting with the heads of its nationwide public health departments in Nay Pyi Taw to discuss successfully opening the clinics and to fulfill the healthcare requirements of the public.

The Wednesday-only clinics aim to provide accessible quality healthcare to the people, and to reduce the mortality rate from noncontagious diseases, especially hypertension and diabetes. The clinics also run public health education programs intended to teach individuals, families and the entire population on how to take care of their personal health. It will also enlighten them on when to consult with medical personnel

in a timely manner. The clinics also aid in early identification of symptoms of hypertension and diabetes, providing treatment, and referring to specialist clinics or hospitals when required.

The community clinics provide uniform preliminary healthcare, prioritizes protection programs, utilizes public-approved methods that cater to the specific needs of a region, invites public participation, and cooperates with associated organizations on related issues.

Medical personnel in the community health clinics perform height measurements, weighing, body mass index calculations, identifying hypertension and diabetes, providing medical treatment if the diseases are present, referring to specialist clinics and hospitals if needed, and conducting public health education awareness programs.

Two months into opening the clinics, reports from 129 townships were compiled and revealed 319,001 men and 361,479 women received medical checkups for hypertension while 100,057 men and 152,302 women received checkups for diabetes. Of those numbers, 39,683 men and 51,343 women received treatment for hypertension while 10,977 men and 19,210 women received treatment for diabetes. From this, we can see that 12% of men and 11% of women checked for hypertension received treatment while 11% of men and 13% of women checked for diabetes received treatment as well.

We can see that the directions from the Minister for Health and Sports to open the Wednesday-only hypertension and diabetes treatment clinics are identifying these noncontagious diseases early on for people living in rural areas and providing appropriate treatments or referrals in order to prevent ensuing complications from arising. We can say that these clinics are a milestone for the MoHS in providing quality healthcare for hypertension and diabetes and reducing the mortality rate concerning them in all of Myanmar.

Translated by Poetplumber



An elderly man gets his blood pressure measured at the community clinic for hypertension and diabetes opened on Wednesdays in various townships across Myanmar.



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 17th February, 2019)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is generally fair over the Central Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 18th February, 2019: Weather will be partly cloudy in Yangon and Aye-yarwady Regions. Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Southern Shan States, fairly widespread in (Northern and Eastern) Shan and Chin States, scattered in Taninthayi Region and isolated in the remaining Regions and States.. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of likelihood of rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th February, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th February, 2019: Partly cloudy

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 18th February, 2019: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.).— Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar

Venezuela's Guaido says thousands of supporters ready to bring in US aid

CARACAS (Venezuela)—Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido on Saturday said he was mobilizing thousands of volunteers to help bring American aid into the country next week as President Nicolas Maduro vowed to strengthen border security and block what he called a US invasion.

Guaido's announcement came as tons of US food aid was piling up along the border with Colombia, in the latest flashpoint in the country's building political crisis.

Guaido, whose claim to be interim president now has the support of more than 50 countries, told his rally that 600,000 people had registered to help bring desperately needed aid in through different border points.

"Not only will this be happening at the border where the volunteer movement will be, but in cities up and down the country where there will be demonstrations on 23 February for the aid to come in," the National Assembly leader told thousands of supporters, many in white T-shirts and hats in the colors of the Venezuelan flag.

In addition to the aid arriv-

ing in Colombia, Guaido said, more would be coming through Brazil and the Caribbean island of Curacao.

Several tons of US aid have already arrived in the Colombian border town of Cucuta. The US Army plans to deliver an additional 200 tons in coming days, a Pentagon official said Friday, speaking on grounds of anonymity.

Guaido repeated his call on Venezuela's military—whose support for Maduro has been crucial in the growing crisis—to stand aside and let the aid pass.

"You have, in your hands, the possibility of fighting alongside the people who are suffering the same shortages you are," Guaido said in a tweet addressed to soldiers.

'Crumbs' and 'rotten food'

But Maduro, who asserts that aid could be used as a cover for a US invasion, called for reinforced border security. He dismissed the arriving aid as "crumbs" and "rotten and contaminated food." On Friday he instructed his army to prepare a "special deployment plan" for the 2,200-kilometer (1,370-mile)



Juan Guaido told his rally that some 600,000 people had registered to help with the efforts to bring aid in and repeated his call for on the military to stand aside. PHOTO: AFP

border with Colombia. He said he would examine "what new forces" might be needed to keep the frontier "inviolable." Maduro claimed that US President Donald Trump and Colombian counterpart Ivan Duque had worked out "war plans against Venezuela" when they met Wednesday in Washington.

Duque on Friday told Guaido he would help ensure that humanitarian aid reaches Venezuela.

Venezuela and its neighbors have been shaken by the power struggle between socialist leader Maduro and Guaido, who proclaimed himself interim pres-

ident last month. A grave economic crisis has left millions in the once-wealthy country living in poverty, facing shortages of basic necessities such as food and medicine. Some 2.3 million Venezuelans have fled the country since 2015 as a result, according to the United Nations. Maduro, the hand-picked successor to socialist firebrand Hugo Chavez, meanwhile blames Venezuela's woes on US sanctions.

'All options'

Maduro said on Friday that six million families had benefited from subsidized food boxes and he claimed to have bought 933

tons of medicines and medical supplies from China, Cuba and Russia, his main international allies.

"We paid for it with our own money because we're beggars to no one," he said.

Guaido accuses Maduro of being a "usurper" over his controversial reelection last year in polls widely branded as fraudulent.

Maduro meanwhile says the 35-year-old National Assembly speaker is a puppet to the US, which he claims is trying to secure access to Venezuela's gold and vast oil reserves—the largest in the world. Trump this week repeated his warning to Maduro that "all options" are on the table, including military. On Friday the US Treasury announced that it was imposing sanctions on five intelligence and security officials close to Maduro.

US Vice President Mike Pence on Saturday called for the European Union to recognize Guaido's claim to the presidency.

Some 30 European countries have already recognized the former engineer as Venezuela's leader, but holdouts include Italy and Greece.—AFP ■

24 bodies retrieved from flooded Zimbabwe gold mine: report

HARARE (Zimbabwe)—Rescue workers retrieved 24 bodies and eight survivors Saturday from two flooded gold mines in Zimbabwe where officials fear dozens more illegal miners are still trapped, state television reported. "Eight of the trapped minors have been rescued ... while 24 bodies have been retrieved to date as rescue efforts continue at Battlefields Mine," the Zimbabwe Broadcast-

ing Corporation reported. The two disused mines are situated near the town of Kadoma, 145 kilometres (90 miles) southwest of the capital Harare. The rescued received medical attention on site before being taken to hospital, but were in a stable condition, the report added.

Television footage showed some of the men, in soaked, muddy clothes, being helped to a makeshift

clinic. In a clip posted on Twitter, one survivor told journalists that the waters had risen to neck level, forcing them to stand for days until it receded. On Friday the government said that between 60 and 70 "artisanal" miners were trapped in two shafts. It launched an appeal for \$200,000 to be used "to pump out water, feeding the bereaved families and the (rescue) teams on the ground, transportation and burial of the victims", local minister July Moyo said in a statement. "Given the magnitude of this disaster, we kindly appeal to individuals, development partners and the corporate world for assistance in cash and kind," he said. Zimbabwe is in the throes of a deep economic crisis, the worst in a decade.

Annual inflation shot to 56.90 per cent up from 42.09 percent in December 2018, according to official statistics released Friday, the highest increase in a decade. Economists say in reality prices have gone up more than three fold in recent months.—AFP ■



Rescue workers are still trying to save more miners trapped by flooding at the mine in Kadoma, Zimbabwe. PHOTO: AFP

Regime shelling kills 18 civilians in northwest Syria: monitor

BEIRUT (Lebanon)—Regime bombardment has killed 18 civilians in the last major region outside government control in northwest Syria over the past 48 hours, a war monitor said Saturday. Artillery and rocket fire launched by regime forces took the lives of eight children, seven women and three men in the Idlib region, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The deadly bombardment hit the towns of Maaret al-Noman and Khan Sheikhun, said the Britain-based monitor, which relies on sources inside Syria for its information.

Idlib region is mainly controlled by the jihadists of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, a Syrian group led by former Al-Qaeda fighters, after they last month pushed back smaller, Turkey-backed rebel outfits. Since September, the region

has been protected from a massive regime offensive by a ceasefire deal brokered by regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey.

But sporadic regime bombardment has continued to hit the region, and hundreds of missiles rained down on Maaret al-Noman, Khan Sheikhun, and other areas on Friday and Saturday.

Almost eight years into Syria's grinding civil war, President Bashar al-Assad's regime controls around two-thirds of the country. His army and allied fighters have made great gains against rebels and jihadists since Russia's military intervened on the side of Damascus in 2015.

The war started in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-Assad protests, and has since spiralled into a complex conflict involving world powers that has killed more than 360,000 people.—AFP ■

Trump briefed in Florida on 'productive' China trade talks

WASHINGTON (United States)—US President Donald Trump said Saturday he was briefed at his Florida resort by negotiators working to reach a trade deal with Beijing after their return from “very productive” meetings with Chinese officials.

“Trade negotiators have just returned from China where the meetings on Trade were very productive. Now at meetings with me at Mar-a-Lago giving the details,” the president tweeted.

He also reiterated his assertion that current tariffs “are being paid to the United States by China,” when in fact they are paid by US companies and ultimately by American consumers in the form of higher prices.

Senior officials completed two days of high-stakes talks in Beijing on Friday as they try to avert the US threat to more than double tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese goods, which would be an unwelcome shock to the

world’s second largest economy as it already has shown signs of slowing.

American officials accuse Beijing of seeking global industrial predominance through an array of unfair trade practices, including the “theft” of American intellectual property and massive state intervention in commodities markets.

Since a December detente, China has resumed purchases of some US soybeans and dangled massive buying of American commodities to get US trade negotiators closer to a deal.

Talks have included discussion of purchases to reduce the “large and persistent bilateral trade deficit,” the White House has said.

But many China experts say Beijing’s Communist Party rulers are unlikely to make significant changes to industrial policies without a long and tough fight.—AFP ■



US President Donald Trump has been briefed in Florida about China trade talks. **PHOTO: AFP**

UK airline flybmi collapses under fuel costs, Brexit pressures

LONDON (United Kingdom)—British regional airline flybmi announced on Saturday it had ceased operations and was filing for administration, blaming spikes in fuel and carbon costs and uncertainty over Brexit.

Parent company British Midland Regional Limited said it had cancelled all flights with immediate effect, and would not be able to purchase, rearrange or reschedule any bookings on behalf of customers.

Flybmi, based in the East Midlands region of England, operated 17 aircraft on routes to 25 European cities, and had 376 employees based in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Belgium.

“It is with a heavy heart that we have made this unavoidable announcement today,” a company spokesperson said in a statement posted on its website.

“The airline has faced several difficulties, including recent spikes in fuel and carbon costs.

“Current trading and future prospects have also been seriously affected by the uncertainty created by the Brexit process,” the spokesperson added.

Flybmi had been unable to secure post-Brexit flying contracts in Europe and feared it may not be able to continue serving destinations on the continent after Britain leaves the

EU on 29 March, according to the statement.

“Against this background, it has become impossible for the airline’s shareholders to continue their extensive programme of funding into the business, despite investment totalling over £40 million in the last six years,” it said.

The airline, which said it carried 522,000 passengers on 29,000 flights last year, operated under codeshare agreements with a host of European partners, in-

cluding Lufthansa, Turkish Airlines and Air France.

Its flights operated out of Aberdeen, Bristol, East Midlands, London Stansted, Newcastle and Derry in Britain as well as a host of European airports, including Frankfurt, Milan Bergamo, Munich, and Paris Charles de Gaulle.

In lengthy advice posted online, it told customers not to travel to airports unless they have re-booked flights with alterna-

tive providers. It advised them to seek refunds for their cancelled reservations from credit card companies, booking websites or travel insurance providers.

Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union in less than six weeks.

But its parliament is yet to approve a withdrawal agreement with the bloc, leaving businesses increasingly concerned that the country may crash out without a deal.—AFP ■



Flybmi, based in the East Midlands region of England, operated 17 aircraft on routes to 35 European cities and had 376 employees based in Britain, Germany, Sweden and Belgium. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police and protesters clash outside Albanian parliament

TIRANA (Albania)—Thousands of opposition supporters clashed with police outside the Albanian parliament on Saturday during an anti-government protest demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Edi Rama. The socialist prime minister, in power since 2013, has been accused of corruption by his critics. Police fired tear gas and water cannons at protesters, some of whom tried to enter the parliamentary building in the capital Tirana by forcing their way through the main entrance. Five police officers and around ten demonstrators and journalists required hospital treatment, mostly for breathing problems after the clashes, the health ministry said.—AFP ■

Helicopter evacuation for Canadians trapped in Haiti

OTTAWA (Canada)—A group of 131 Canadian tourists Saturday were evacuated via helicopter from their beachside resort in Haiti after being trapped for one week at the site due to ongoing unrest. The tourists were ferried in shifts to the Port-au-Prince international airport, where they boarded a flight to Canada, tour operator Transat told AFP. “We are relieved that these travelers are on their way to Canada, but we remain concerned about the current difficult situation in Haiti,” said Transat CEO Annick Guerard, who flew to Haiti to accompany the tourists home. The Air Transat Airbus A310 also carried “customers from another airline, and Canadian residents wishing to return home,” Transat said in a statement.—AFP ■

Helicopter crashes while fighting fires in New Zealand’s south island

WELLINGTON—A helicopter involved in fighting bush fires near the Pigeon Valley of the South Island of New Zealand crashed at around 3 pm local time, according to Nelson Tasman Civil Defense sector.

The pilot survived and is receiving medical treatment for non-life threatening injuries, according to Roger Ball, the local Civil Defense Controller.—Xinhua ■

Kim Jong Un aide arrives in Viet Nam ahead of N. Korea-US summit

HANOI—A top aide to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Hanoi on Saturday with less than two weeks to go until the second summit between Kim and US President Donald Trump, according to diplomatic sources.

Kim Chang Son, chief secretary of the North Korean Secretariat of the State Affairs Commission, is expected to discuss protocol and security matters with the Vietnamese government and the US side for the 27-28 February summit in the Vietnamese capital.

After arriving in the morning with around 12 other officials he headed to the Vietnamese government's guest house for a meeting with senior Vietnamese officials who recently visited North Korea, Yonhap News Agency reported. Afterward, he

inspected hotels in the city.

Kim Jong Un will arrive in Viet Nam on 25 February and meet with the country's top leader Nguyen Phu Trong later the same day, Reuters reported Saturday, citing three sources with knowledge of the North Korea leader's schedule. The North Korean leader will also tour sites in northern Viet Nam ahead of his summit with Trump, according to the report. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh visited Pyongyang this week at the invitation of his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho.

According to Yonhap, Minh was accompanied by five government officials, including the ministry's protocol chief, indicating that the purpose of the trip was to lay the groundwork for a state visit by Kim Jong Un.

The US special represent-

ative to North Korea and his Pyongyang counterpart, who met in Pyongyang earlier this month, are expected to hold another round of working-level discussions in a third country before the summit.

In an interview with the CBS News on Thursday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, "We have a team leaving again this weekend to travel to Asia to continue to prepare for the summit. I'm not going to talk about what it is we hope to achieve, but I'm very hopeful that we'll get a good outcome."

Prior to the first US-North Korea summit held last June in Singapore, Kim Chang Son, sometimes called the chief butler to the family of Kim Jong Un, arrived in the city-state to lead pre-summit talks with the US delegation. —Kyodo News ■



Kim Chang Son, a senior official of North Korea's State Affairs Commission, known as a close aide to the country's leader Kim Jong Un, arrives at Beijing's international airport on 15 February 2019. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Targeted assistance helps improve medical condition in China's poorest regions

BEIJING—Medical conditions in China's poorest regions are improving with the help of targeted medical assistance to hospitals in these regions. More than 400 hospitals in such regions have been upgraded to higher levels, and over 30 hospitals of this kind can now provide medical services comparable to that of top hospitals, according to the National Health Commission (NHC) in a press release.

Once, the people and medical workers in these places were deeply troubled by the shortage of medicine, personnel and equipment. Now, medical workers in hospitals such as Kashgar Prefecture Second People's Hospital in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are witnessing the improvement of their hospital's condition. "The hospital is now top-notch, with cutting-edge emergency treatment methods for heart diseases," said a senior physician of the hospital, which received targeted assistance from top hospitals in Shanghai Municipality. Since 2016, 963 top hospitals have paired with 1,180 hospitals in 834 impoverished counties to offer similar targeted assistance, the NHC figures show. —Xinhua ■

Saudi crown prince seeks contracts and allies on Asia tour



Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman kicks off his Asia trip in Pakistan, one of Saudi Arabia's key regional allies. PHOTO: AFP

ISLAMABAD (Pakistan)—Saudi Arabia's powerful crown prince arrives in Pakistan on Sunday, the start of an Asian tour during which he will seek lucrative contracts and demonstrate he still has allies five months after the Khashoggi affair. Mohammed bin Salman, widely known as "MBS", is expected to land in the capital Islamabad and stay in Pakistan until today (Monday).

His trip comes amid high tensions in the region: India and Saudi Arabia's arch-rival Iran—both bordering Pakistan—have accused Islamabad of backing militant groups which have carried out bloody suicide attacks on their soil in

recent days. After Pakistan, MBS will travel to India, where he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. He is expected to finish the trip with a visit to China on Thursday and Friday. Two short stops initially scheduled for Sunday and Monday in Indonesia and Malaysia were postponed on Saturday without explanation. The Asia trip comes five months after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, a fierce critic of MBS, at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul igniting a diplomatic crisis.

Riyadh initially denied the murder, then gave sev-

eral conflicting accounts of Khashoggi's death, and now claims he was killed in an unauthorised operation. Turkey said Friday it has not yet revealed all the information it has uncovered in the extraordinary case, which launched a global wave of revulsion and has profoundly tarnished the image of the kingdom, especially that of the crown prince.

But for analysts, the Asia tour—the largest outing on the international scene for the crown prince since his participation in the G20 summit in Argentina last December—is a timely demonstration to the West that he still has friends in rising Asia.

'Not a pariah'

He "wants to demonstrate that he is not an international pariah", said James M. Dorsey, a researcher at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. It is a matter of proving that he still has "international access and he can function... as the most senior representative of Saudi Arabia beyond the king". Li Guofu, director of Middle East studies at the China Institute of International Studies, a government-affiliated think tank, noted that the Khashoggi case continues to cause indignation in Western countries, so visiting them would have been "inconvenient".

"Not travelling to the West does not mean that he cannot come to the East. Saudi Arabia is also making strategic adjustments, and Asia is the new main direction of Saudi diplomacy," he said. Asian countries, he added, "have an important special characteristic—that is, we don't interfere in the internal affairs of other countries". The prince's trip also includes an important economic component.—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (852S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC HALONG VOY. NO. (852S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-02-2019 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE)

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With climate change, sunny day flooding incur losses too

WASHINGTON (United States)—With greater and greater frequency, the parking lot in the small historic port of Annapolis near Washington is flooded even on sunny days: water washes in, pushed by the force of ever higher tides. No one is hurt, no roofs are torn off, and the neighborhood isn't evacuated as it might be in a hurricane.

But these less spectacular events also incur economic costs, in the form of fewer tourists or residents coming to shop or eat at one of the historic City Dock's 16 businesses. Researchers at Stanford University are using a novel method to estimate the cost, published Friday in the journal Science Advances, in hopes of raising

awareness of the more mundane, everyday consequences of a warming climate. "So often we think of climate change and sea level rise as these huge ideas happening at a global scale, but high-tide flooding is one way to experience these changes in your daily life," said Miyuki Hino, a Stanford graduate student and co-author of the

study. The researchers have methodically gathered photos and satellite images of the parking area to document the number of high tide flooding days: 63 in 2017, against an average of four a year in the 1960s. They then estimated the corresponding decline in the number of visitors, using parking receipts as documentation. —AFP ■

Thousands of UK kids skip school for climate protests

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Thousands of schoolchildren went on "strike" across Britain on Friday in a protest against climate change, with hundreds rallying in London's Parliament Square. Children of all ages chanted "save our planet", cheered as flares were lit and clamored onto statues in the shadow of Big Ben to call for action, and to raise awareness. "As humans, we got ourselves into this predicament, it's our responsibility to get out of it," said Hal, a 15-year-old from London.

"As well as being a message to the politicians, it's a way to spread awareness to everyone," added the teenager, who was wearing his school uniform "to accentuate the fact that I should be at school". The protesters waved makeshift placards reading "Make Earth Cool Again", "Don't Mess With My Mother", "We Stand For What We



Students who took part in the UK protest said they were doing little things for the climate "but it's the government that needs to do the big things" PHOTO: AFP

Stand On" and "I'm Getting Detention For This". There were similar protests in dozens of British towns and cities, including Brighton, Leeds, Manchester and Oxford. Many of the children said their schools had shown them leniency in attending the "Youth Strike 4 Climate" event, part of a Europe-wide movement that has seen walkouts in Belgium, France, Germany, and Sweden.

Young protesters have been gathering in

Brussels and other Belgian cities on Thursdays for around six weeks, with approximately 11,000 turning out in the capital this week. Demonstrators also took to the streets of European cities like Paris, Potsdam and Munich on Friday, according to organizers. "I'm originally from Germany so my friends already did it, then I saw people talk about it, and I said 'Oh my god, I've got to come,'" art student Emily El-Harake, 17,

told AFP in London. The teenager called on politicians to get Brexit sorted quickly in order to focus on "more important issues" like the environment. "Young people are a lot more conscious of it, most people I know, we buy our clothes second hand," added friend Erin Mantle, 16, who said their school was supportive of their strike. "It's the little things that we are doing but it's the government that needs to do the big things." —AFP ■

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For Warner Media, LLC,
By their Attorneys
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New Delhi – 110 049, India
lmm@kcyangon.com
Dated 18th February 2019

Notification of Land Demarcation and Survey Activities

Notice is hereby given that in the under mentioned location, DHPI (MOEE) likely needs to acquire land for the Deedoke Hydropower Project in Mandalay Region. The Notice to Proceed for this project was signed on August 16, 2018.

Township	Sum of Area (Acres)	
	Permanent Acquisition	Temporary Acquisition
Kyaukse	278.91	50.68
Pyinoolwin	206.47	29.12
Total	485.38	79.80

Township	Sum of Area (Ha)	
	Permanent Acquisition	Temporary Acquisition
Kyaukse	112.87	20.51
Pyinoolwin	83.55	11.78
Total	196.42	32.29

Land in Kyaukse District is located in the following village tracts: Kyaung, Tha Yet Pin, Ye

Land in Pyi Oo Lwin District is located in the following village tracts: Lun Kaung

High Tech Construction Trust Co., Ltd. (HTCT) will undertake the demarcation and survey activities described in Section 4 of the Land Acquisition Act in respect of the land in the abovementioned locality.

Further details of the project plan and land are available at Shwe Taung Mandalay Office, No (413/2) 35th Street, Between 63th & 64th Street, Maharaungmyae Township, Mandalay.

For further information, (or) if you think your land/house/other will be affected, you can contact to 09 894 738 859.



India hosts first 'yoga on a pole' world championships

MUMBAI (India)—Wearing only underpants, Pavel Kalina twists his body up a wooden pole before performing a handstand at the top in the first world championships of an ancient Indian sport.

The 55-year-old from the Czech Republic practises Mallakhamb, a gymnastics-like discipline that originated in western India in the 12th century and is often described as "yoga on a pole". "I do it because I'm a crazy man," Kalina tells AFP, struggling to catch his breath after two minutes performing poses on the pillar, which is covered in castor oil to stop friction burns. "To be honest it is like torture but I have to do it because I need to spend my energy," adds the former gymnast who took up Mallakhamb ten years ago.

Kalina was among some 100 competitors from 15 different countries taking part in the Mallakhamb World Championships in Mumbai over the weekend.

The sport, first mentioned in Indian texts in 1135, is popular in western Maharashtra state—of which Mumbai is the capital—but is little known outside India.

"Malla means wrestler and khamb means pole," explains Uday Deshpande, the organiser of the event and India's most renowned Mallakhamb practitioner.

"The pole is eight and a half feet (2.6 metres) in height. It is smooth, well polished and tapered at the top. Different acrobatic exercises and yogic postures are performed on it.

It "is there in the absence of your partner and you are wrestling against it," he adds.

On day one of the event—held in Mumbai's Shivaji Park—men, mostly in swimming trunks, and women, mostly in leotards, wowed a crowd of several hundred with gravity defying moves.

'Courage'

Onlookers clapped and cheered as a competitor from Spain stretched out on his front like Superman on the top of the pole, which had a circumference of just 35 centimetres (14 inches).

A participant from England gave a Usain Bolt-like salute from the summit while Kalina sat in a meditative position with the palms of his hands facing skywards. Faezeh Jalali, wearing a headscarf, represented Iran in the rope category which saw participants perform stunts up and down a rope that hung 15 feet in the air. "You feel a real achievement and you build strength and flexibility. It's amazing what the human body can do," Jalali, 39, told AFP. Competitors from France, Germany, Malaysia and Viet Nam also took part.

Deshpande, 65, says Mallakhamb helps people mentally as well. "When you perform yoga on the ground you get lots of benefits—meditation, breathing, concentration. "When you perform yoga at eight feet high you get the same benefits but you also develop your confidence, your courage," he tells AFP—AFP ■

With 'Roma,' Alfonso Cuarón reinvents how he makes films

LOS ANGELES (United States)—Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón has experimented before with styles and genres, from space epic "Gravity" to road trip coming-of-age tale "Y Tu Mama Tambien" to fantasy flick "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."

But with "Roma," his highly acclaimed autobiographical love letter to his childhood, he flipped the script, so to speak—a lot of the time, the actors didn't even have the whole script. He filmed chronologically, in black and white, and did the filming himself. Sometimes he gave the cast contradictory instructions to see what would happen, and if it would yield movie magic.

Based on the 10 nominations his film earned for the Oscars on 24 February—including four for Cuarón alone, for best picture, director, original screenplay and cinematography—it seems he did something right. The project is perhaps the most personal of his career—a near-retelling of his childhood in Mexico City, in the Roma neighborhood, at 21 Tepeji Street. Unlike some of his Hollywood fare, the film was made in Mexico, by Mexicans. The dialogue is in Spanish and the indigenous Mixtec language. "It was a process that I did not know how to pull off—reinventing and learning as I went was fundamental," the 57-year-old filmmaker, already an Oscar winner for best director and film editing for "Gravity," told AFP.

Cuarón wanted to make a film like no other in his career, which is why he went to extremes, like filming chronologically—very rare for a feature film—and not sharing the full script.

'Chaos' on purpose

"Roma" focuses on Cuarón's childhood nanny, a young woman from an indigenous community who gets pregnant after her first

the casting call by chance, as her sister was the one planning to audition. Each morning, during the more than 100 days on set—Cuarón's longest film shoot to date—the director gave some cast members guidelines that did not mesh with those given to others. "Those instructions were contradicting each other, so when I was running the camera, it was chaos, like a traffic



Bafta-winning 'Roma' is a cinematic love letter to director Alfonso Cuarón's childhood in Mexico City in the 1970s. PHOTO: AFP

sexual experiences—played by newcomer and Oscar nominee Yalitza Aparicio. The film also examines the disintegration of his parents' marriage, taking a wider look at domestic dramas and societal hierarchies in 1970s Mexico. Casting the film was part of Cuarón's reinvention: he insisted that the actors physically resemble the people they were playing—usually not a requirement.

As a result, most of the cast are newcomers to the industry, like Aparicio, who ended up at

jam—but that's life, life is not neat," Cuarón said at a directors' symposium in January. One such scene was when Cuarón's mother asks the children to write letters to their father, who they believe is on a work trip. They do not realize their parents are separated. The director recounted that he told Marina de Tavira, who plays his mother, to make sure the eldest son "writes a really good letter to the father"—a supposed representation of their close bond. —AFP ■

IN Picture

Chocolate Festival held in Athens, Greece



Visitors pose biting a huge panel of chocolate during the Chocolate Festival in Athens, Greece, on 16 February 2019. The four-day festival, held from 14 to 17 February, involved tasting sessions, workshops and children activities led by experts dedicated to the art of chocolate.

PHOTO: XINHUA

Russian cosmonauts to make next spacewalk in May

MOSCOW—Russian cosmonauts are scheduled to make the next spacewalk in May this year, Russia's Energia Space Rocket Corporation said in a statement on Friday.

"A spacewalk from the Russian segment of the International Space Station (ISS) is planned for May this year. The available resources for fulfilling the expedition's program are sufficient," the statement says.

Under the Russian program, spacewalks are conducted only by cosmonauts of Russia's State Space Corporation Roscosmos. These spacewalks are made from the orbital outpost's Russian segment.

A source in the Russian space industry told TASS that the spacewalk in May will be conducted by cosmonauts Oleg Kononenko currently staying on the space station and Alexei



The previous spacewalk under the Russian program was conducted in December 2018. PHOTO: TASS

Ovchinin scheduled to fly to the world's sole orbiter on 14 March. The source did not specify the operations, which the cosmo-

nauts will carry out during their spacewalk.

Cosmonaut Kononenko has been working aboard the

ISS since early December 2018 together with NASA astronaut Anne McClain and astronaut of the Canadian Space Agency

David Saint-Jacques. The first manned launch to the ISS this year is scheduled for 14 March. A Soyuz-FG carrier rocket with the manned Soyuz MS-12 spacecraft will lift off to deliver Russian cosmonaut Alexei Ovchinin and also NASA astronauts Nick Hague and Christina Koch to the space station.

Ovchinin and Hague were expected to arrive at the orbital outpost back in October 2018 but their expedition was foiled by the abortive launch of the Soyuz-FG carrier rocket on 11 October.

The previous spacewalk under the Russian program was conducted overnight to 12 December 2018 by cosmonauts Sergei Prokopyev and Oleg Kononenko. The spacewalk was required to inspect a hole found in the casing of the manned Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft in August last year.—Tass ■



The Saudi government says the app provides services for "all members of the society", but critics say it enables abuse against women and girls by allowing men to track their movements. PHOTO: AFP

Saudi defends app allowing men to monitor women relatives

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia)—Saudi Arabia on Saturday defended a mobile app that allows men in the kingdom to track female relatives after rights groups and a US lawmaker criticised tech giants for offering it. The Absher app provides services for "all members of the society... including women, the elderly, and people with special needs", the interior ministry said. The free app is available on Android and Apple smartphones and allows users to renew passports, visas and eases a variety of other electronic services.

But critics have said the app enables abuse against women and girls by allowing men to track their movements. Apple CEO Tim Cook told US National Public Radio earlier this week he had not heard of the app, but would "take a look at it". US Senator Ron Wyden has called on both Apple and Google to remove the app, arguing on Twitter that it promotes "abusive practises against women".

Under Saudi law, women must have consent from a husband or immediate male relative to renew passports or leave the country. The ministry criticised what it called a "systematic campaign aimed at questioning the purpose of the services". It rejected what it described as "attempts to politicise" the tool. This comes as Saudi Arabia faces intense scrutiny over the shocking murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi last year, which has renewed criticism of the kingdom's rights record. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has garnered international attention with his rapid rise to power and promise of social and economic reforms. But the kingdom has detained a number of human rights and women campaigners, some of them accused of undermining national security, with scant public information about their whereabouts or the legal status of their cases.—AFP ■

Chinese scientists develop smart windows to clean air pollution

WASHINGTON—Chinese scientists have developed a large-scale transparent smart window that can change light intensity while effectively capturing the particulate matter in smog, said a study published on Saturday in the journal iScience.

The study described a simple solution-based process to fabricate large-area flexible transparent windows with Ag-nylon electrodes for high-efficiency PM2.5 capture.

It takes only 20 minutes to fabricate 7.5 square meters

of Ag-nylon flexible transparent windows showing an optical transmittance of over 86 per cent, according to the group of scientists led by Yu Shuhong from the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC).

The Ag-nylon mesh can not only change the indoor light intensity, but also purify indoor air as a high-efficiency PM2.5 filter. The scientists found that the obtained Ag-nylon electrodes could be used as an ideal intelligent thermochromic smart window with excellent

mechanical stability.

It remains stable after undergoing a bending test with 10,000 bending cycles with a minimum bending radius of 2.0 millimeters.

Also, the Ag-nylon electrodes can remove PM2.5 by 99.65 per cent while remaining stable even after 100 cycles of PM filtration and a cleaning process, according to the study.

The design could lay the foundation for next-generation flexible transparent smart windows that can reduce air pollution.—Xinhua ■

Soyuz-2 rocket launcher upgrade to be completed in 2019

MOSCOW — Russian Aerospace Force intends to complete the upgrading process of Soyuz-2 rocket launcher this year, First Deputy Chief of the Russian Aerospace Force General-Major Igor Morozov said on the air with Ekho Moskv (Echo of Moscow) radio station.

"We are to complete the upgrade of one more launcher of the Soyuz-2 medium-class rocket in Plesetsk [launch site - TASS] this year and naturally perform flights tests from this launch site, confirm its operability," Morozov said.

The goal of such upgrade is to "launch the whole range of military and dual-purpose spacecraft exclusively from the territory of the Russian Federation," the general added.—Tass ■



The goal of such upgrade is to launch the whole range of military and dual-purpose spacecraft exclusively from the territory of the Russian Federation. PHOTO: TASS

MFF honors women's team for winning Hero Gold Cup

THE Myanmar Football Federation held a congratulatory ceremony yesterday for the Myanmar women's football team for winning the Hero Gold Cup 2019.

The tourney was held from 9 to 15 February at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India.

The Myanmar team arrived back from India yesterday, and MFF officials and fans cordially welcomed them at the Yangon International Airport.

The MFF congratulated the team for its victory at the Novotel Yangon Max Hotel yesterday.

The patron of the football federation and the Chairman of KBZ Bank, U Aung Ko Win, presented K20 million to the team, while the chairman of the



Victorious Myanmar Women's national football team honored at Novotel Yangon Max Hotel yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

Aya Bank and the MFF, U Zaw Zaw, also gave K20 million to the team.

The Myanmar team was also honored by the Myanmar women's football subcommittee,

with paying prize money K10 million to the team.

The Poe Poe Company

awarded K5 million to the champions.

At the congratulatory ceremony, the Chairman of the MFF said the federation was congratulating the Myanmar Women's national football team for garnering the Hero Gold Cup 2019, which was held as a four-nation invitational tournament.

"We are also hoping for their victories in the upcoming international football tournaments, including the SEA Games, and Asian-level competitions," he added.

Team Myanmar was led by head coach U Win Thu Moe, and notched up no losses across the tournament.

They got a decisive win in the final match against Nepal, leading the score 3-1.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Messi penalty lifts Barca as Griezmann eclipses Torres

MADRID (Spain)—Lionel Messi scored a penalty and missed another as La Liga leaders Barcelona ground out an unconvincing 1-0 win over Real Valladolid, while Antoine Griezmann surpassed Fernando Torres with his 130th goal for Atletico Madrid.

Messi's fitness was again in the spotlight on Saturday after a nagging thigh strain in recent weeks, but he completed the full 90 minutes at the Camp Nou and hit the 30-goal mark at Barcelona for the 11th straight season.

The Argentine coolly dispatched a spot-kick just before half-time, drilling beyond the reach of Jordi Masip after Gerard Pique was bundled to the ground by Valladolid midfielder Michel.

Masip brilliantly tipped over a Messi volley soon after the interval and Luis Suarez wasted a huge opportunity to double the lead shortly after replacing

Kevin-Prince Boateng with an hour gone. Messi found himself booked for dissent after an apparent foul on him went unpunished, and he then blew the chance to kill off Valladolid when Masip kept out his second penalty of the night —awarded following a trip on Philippe Coutinho.

The excellent Masip alertly gathered Messi's follow-up header and again denied Suarez late on as Barca pulled seven points clear of Atletico ahead of their trip to Lyon in the Champions League last 16.

"We haven't played well. The truth is it wasn't a good match today. The only good thing is the victory," Pique, who made his 300th appearance in La Liga told Movistar. "Getting back on track with three points is important after two draws in the league. But we definitely have to improve. We have to be better on Tuesday oth-

erwise we'll have a tough time."

'Extraordinary player'

Griezmann scored a second-half winner in Atletico's 1-0 victory at neighbours Rayo Vallecano to provide a timely boost going into next week's showdown with Cristiano Ronaldo and Juventus. The French forward surpassed Torres—now playing for Sagan Tosu in Japan—for fifth all-time on the Atletico goalscoring charts as they shook off two successive defeats, including last week's 3-1 loss at home to Real Madrid. Griezmann struck for the tenth time in his last 11 outings, forcing home from six yards on 74 minutes after Alvaro Morata laid off a high, looping ball inside the area. "Griezmann is an extraordinary player, he always adapts to what the team needs. He's very important for us," Atletico coach Diego Simeone said. —AFP ■

Women's football Olympics: Myanmar meet India in Round 2 Qualifiers

MYANMAR will face India, the defending champions of the South Asian Football Federation Women's Cup, in Round 2 of the Asian Qualifiers for the Women's Olympic Football Tournament 2020, according to the official drawing ceremony at the AFC House on Wednesday.

Host team Myanmar has been placed with India, Indonesia, and Nepal in Group A.

There are a total of 12 teams, in three separate groups, for the Women's Olympic Football Tournament 2020 Asian Qualifiers Round 2, according to the AFC draw.

The competitors have been divided into three groups comprising four teams. Only three teams, the winner from each group, will advance to the final round of the qualifiers,

said an official with the AFC.

In Group B, host Uzbekistan will play against Viet Nam, Jordan, and Hong Kong.

In Group C, host Palestine has been placed with Chinese Taipei, Iran, and the Philippines.

The Round 2 Qualifiers will be played from 1 to 9 April.

In the final round, the winners will join Australia, DPR Korea, Korea Republic, China PR, and Thailand in two groups of four teams, with the top two teams from each group advancing to the play-offs, said a source with the AFC.

The two winners from the play-offs will then qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics with hosts and reigning Asian champions — Japan.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Santa Cruz keeps featherweight title by unanimous decision

LOS ANGELES (United States)—Mexico's Leo Santa Cruz defended his World Boxing Association featherweight title on Saturday, dominating compatriot Rafael Rivera to win by unanimous 12-round decision.

All three judges gave Santa Cruz the victory by scores of 119-109 as the champion improved to 36-1-1, marking the third defense in his second reign in the division.

"I tried to give my best. I did

what I could," Santa Cruz said. "I'd like to give a lot better but Rafael is pretty good. It was a tough fight."

Santa Cruz took inspiration from his father and trainer Jose Santa Cruz, who is battling bone

marrow cancer.

"It means the world to me (to have my father in my corner)," Santa Cruz said. "When I climb in the ring, I don't want to let my dad down.

I want to inspire him to

keep fighting the cancer." Rivera, who fell to 26-3 with two drawn, was a late fill-in for his first world title bout after original challenger Miguel Flores suffered an ankle injury last month. —AFP ■