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Adhipati Road, main building, of Dhammaduta Chekinda Buddhist University in Hmawby inaugurated



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife present a replica the main building of the Dhammaduta Chekinda Buddhist University to Sayadaws.

PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF DEFENCE SERVICES.

A CEREMONY to inaugurate the Adhipati Road (Chancellor's Road) and the main building of the Dhammaduta Chekinda Buddhist University took place at Chekindayama Monastery in Dhammaduta Zaytawun Tawya in Hmawby Township of Yangon Region yesterday.

It was attended by mem-

bers of the Sangha led by Dhammaduta Dr Ashin Chekinda, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Tin Aung San and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, the commander of Yangon Command, well-wishers

and guests.

At the ceremony, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Nyo Saw, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Thet Pon and Director Maj-Gen Maung Maung Myint of the Directorate of Military Engineers cut the ribbon to open the Adhipati Road of Dhammaduta Chekinda Buddhist University.

The Senior General unveiled the stone plaque and title of the main building at the university.

A ceremony of sharing merits gained followed in commemoration of the successful opening ceremony of the Adhipati Road and the main building of the university.

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Yangonians line up for filming of Line Walker-2

YANGONIANS chose to spend their weekend break trying to catch the filming of 'Line Walker-2', whose cast and crew were shooting scenes around the Sule Pagoda and Yangon City Hall

"A helicopter scene, shootouts, and a car chase involving a gang of criminals with guns blazing were filmed yesterday for the Hong Kong action film. They were entertaining to watch," said Ko Ye Lin, an onlooker from South Dagon.

Ko Soe Naing from 13th Street, Lanmadaw, expressed his amazement at watching an epic film scene being shot in Myanmar. Onlookers numbered in the thousand yesterday, he added.

Helicopter sequence

Air Myanmar Aviation Services Co. Ltd provided the helicopter for a scene in the action film. The chopper was

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The crew of Line Walker-2 prepares a helicopter for a scene in the movie in downtown Yangon. **PHOTO: WIN NAING**

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Myanmar, India discuss trade, investment matters

Union Minister for Commerce Dr. Than Myint, who is visiting New Delhi, the Republic of India, on Saturday met with Special Secretary Shri N. Sivasailam of Logistic Division, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Republic of India, and openly discussed the matters related to facilitation of cross-border transport of goods and persons and services, two nations' bilateral trade and investment and promoting tourism industries.

Additionally, on 22 February, Myanmar delegation including Myanmar Ambassador to India U Moe Kyaw Aung and Chairman of Myanmar Pulses, Beans and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association (MPBSSMA) U Tun Lwin, also met with an Indian delegation led by Senior Eco-

nomics Advisor Shri Rohit Kumar Parmar from Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and discussed the matters related to easing India's pulses and beans import policies so that Myanmar can export more pulses and beans to India, and bilateral cooperation on increasing Myanmar's pulses and beans export, especially to India in the coming years.

In the afternoon, the Myanmar Ambassador and delegation also met with Joint Secretary of Asean Division from Ministry of Commerce and Industry Shri Rajineesh and party, and discussed cooperation matters, seeking the ways to increase pulses and beans export from Myanmar to India.—MNA ■
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Myanmar Ambassador to India U Moe Kyaw Aung discusses investment and trade matters with Indian governmental officials in New Delhi. PHOTO: MNA

Union Minister pledges to provide capital, tech to SMEs

UNION Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho visited the office of the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department in Hinthada, Ayeyawady Region on 23 February.

At the meeting with staff of the office, the Union Minister urged the staff to get in utmost efforts to provide capital and technology for the progress of SMEs, assuring contacts for the availability of technology for manufacturing value-added goods. He said that the industries must be supervised to run in accordance with the laws and rules to protect natural environment and social interest. "Staff must learn to skillfully apply their office materials," he said, adding, "they should stay away from bribery and corruption, and work with full confidence."

On 22 February, the Union Minister inspected new types of medicines, foodstuff and waste-

water sent by other ministries for lab test at the pharmaceutical research division of the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industry.

At the meeting hall of the division, the Union Minister heard a report on invention of new drugs through research work, presented by its in-charge. The Union Minister spoke of the need to conduct research and lab test in accord with the international standards, maintain the quality of drugs through regular overhauling of the production machines, manufacture quality drugs and apply innovative means to attract consumers, produce new types of drugs in addition to distributing medicines that are important for public health and conduct test on foodstuff. The functions of the division involve the work of testing foodstuff, water, wastewater, drugs and related materials and herbal plants through advance technologies and equipment in-



Union Minister U Khin Maung Cho visits Industrial Supervision and Inspection Department in Hinthada on 23 February. PHOTO: MNA

cluding atomic absorption spectrometer (AAS), gas chromatography (GC), high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), fourier transform infrared spec-

troscopy, testing the Aflatoxin that may be contained in foodstuff and endotoxin that can be found in drugs through microplate reader, helping post graduate students

in compiling their research papers and testing and examining the samples sent by the related ministries.—MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)



Twinma Lake in Kani Township, Sagaing Region, the main source for natural spirulina in Myanmar. PHOTO: KO MIN (INDAW)

Domestic visitors flocking to Twinma Lake in high season

LOCATED beside the Monywa-Yagyi-Kalewa Road in Kani Township of Sagaing Region, the Twinma Lake is packed with local visitors this peak season, according to residents. Earlier, the Twinma Lake was famous for its production of natural Spirulina, a blue-green algae. The production of Spirulina has stopped since 2017. Since then, residents have created recreation sites around

the lake, which is surrounded by coconut trees. Zaw Myo Maung from Twinhte Village said the area saw only a handful of domestic visitors in 2015 and 2016.

"The number of visitors to the lake is gradually increasing year by year. In the current peak season, around 100 visitors came to the lake every day to enjoy its natural beauty. The lake is hosting more visitors, especially on

public and school holidays," he said. "For the time being, the arrivals of tourists to the lake is relatively low."

The number of visitors is expected to increase once there is easy transportation access," he said. Residents in the area mainly rely on the lake for their livelihood.—Ko Min (Indaw) ■
(Translated by Khaing Thandar Lwin)

Senior General comforts Pa-O ethnic leader U Aung Hkam Hti receiving medical treatment at military hospital

FROM PAGE-1

Member of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abbot of Nyaungthonbin Samanekyaw Monastery Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Tejosarabhivamsa read the words of advice of Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abbot of Bhamo Monastery from Mandalay Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotita Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

The Senior General supplicated giving a brief explanation of the purpose of the Adhipati Road and the main building of the university.

Next, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and wife offered documents related to the construction of the Adhipati Road of the Dhammaduta Chekinda Buddhist University and the main building of the monastery to 15th Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Agga Maha Pandita Weikzawtayon Sayadaw. The Sayadaw presented gifts to mark the opening of the Dhammaduta



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents foodstuffs to Pa-O ethnic leader U Aung Hkam Hti at the special intensive care unit of the military hospital. **PHOTO: MOSWRR**

Chekinda Buddhist University and a certificate of honour to the Senior General and wife.

Afterwards, the Senior General and wife offered provisions to the Vice Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nay-

aka Committee Abbot of Thiri Mingala Kyaungtaik Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Obhasa. Then, senior military officers and well-wishers donated alms to the Sayadaws.

After that, those present listened to a sermon delivered by Upaukkatha of Shwegyin Nikaya Maha Nayaka Joint Shwegyin Sangharaja Abbot of Maha Withokdayon Taikthit Sishin Sayadaw and shared merits

gained. After the ceremony, the Senior General and wife together with those present offered meals to members of the Sangha.

Following the ceremony, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by his wife Daw Kyu Kyu Hla and senior military officers, went to the Military Hospital (1000-bed) in Yangon in the afternoon and comforted and gave words of encouragement to the Pa-O ethnic leader U Aung Hkam Hti receiving treatment for pneumonia.

The Senior General met with Pa-O ethnic leader U Aung Hkam Hti at the special intensive care unit of the military hospital and cordially asked about his health conditions. After fulfilling necessary requirements, the Senior General presented him with foodstuffs. Thanks to the medical treatment provided by military medical specialists, U Aung Hkam Hti is now in good health condition, according to the news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.—MNA (Translated by GNLMI)

Scientific research proves effectiveness of yoga on health: Union Minister for Health and Sports

THE 1st Asian International Yoga Sport Championship 2019 will deepen public interest in yoga as a sport and encourage people to practice it, said Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe in Yangon yesterday morning.

Speaking at the awards ceremony of the championship, the Union Minister said that practicing yoga has an impact on health as it improves the biological and chemical processes in the body.

Yoga ensures physical fitness apart from mental peace, he added.

“Scientific research has proved the effectiveness of yoga on health,” he said, adding, “Yoga can increase flexibility, muscle strength and tone, and lung capacity; improve cardio and circulatory health, and mind-body connection; and combat illness.”

“Yoga also prevents hypertension, diabetes, cardiac disorder and vein diseases and depression through reducing the



Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe addresses the prize awarding ceremony for the 1st Asian International Yoga Sport Championship in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MOSWRR**

bad cholesterol in the blood,” he explained. “As Yoga sport includes the knowledge of anatomy, physiology and biochemistry, it can also deepen the understanding of sports principles,” he noted.

He then guaranteed the

ministry’s assistance for the progress of the sport as it is much helpful for the public health, and suggested the Yoga Association Myanmar to adopt a roadmap and implement its task phase by phase for gaining extra success.

Union Minister Dr. Myint

Htwe, Permanent Secretary Dr. Thet Khaing Win and Chair of Yoga Association Myanmar U Zaw Min presented prizes to winners.

Ambassador of Israel to Myanmar Mr Daniel Zonshine and U Zaw Min presented certificates to the persons who have

completed the international yoga instructor course.

Fifty participants from Myanmar, India, Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos, Spain, the Netherlands and Canada took part in the championship.—MNA (Translated by TMT)



Union Minister stresses use of modern techniques for increasing oil & gas output

UNION Minister for Electricity and Energy U Win Khaing visited Phugyi Pipeline base camp of Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) in Hmawby Township, Yangon Region on 23 February.

Located near Phugyi Village in the township, the base camp serves as the transit centre for piping oil from Mann oilfield and Htaukshabin oilfield in Minbu Township, Magway Region, to Thanlyin oil refinery in Yangon Region and for the maintenance of pipelines. But now, its main function is to repair and maintain the natural gas pipelines of lower Myanmar.

Under its supervision are the Shwepyitha camp (Yangon), Dedaye camp, Thanatpin camp, Mawlamyine camp, Tanbyuzayat camp and Yay camp responsible for the repair and maintenance of 981 miles of pipeline including the 331-mile 20-inch Lankankauk-Myainggalay-Yangon pipe-

line, and the 86-mile 24-inch Daw Nyein-Ywama pipeline.

Yesterday morning, the Union Minister and team arrived at Pyay oilfield in Shwedaung Township, Bago Region, where they heard a report on its salient points presented by the general manager of MOGE. In his instructions, the Union Minister stressed the application of modern techniques for increasing output and better seismic surveys for getting precise results of the underground geological condition and collective efforts for producing more oil.

Pyay oilfield started producing oil and gas in 1965. Its maximum daily oil output reached 2563 barrels in July 1994. It produced 25.618 cubic feet of gas in June 1998. The old oilfield now has 13 wells that are producing 65 barrels of oil and 0.078 cubic feet of gas. Efforts are being made to increase oil and gas output.



Union Minister U Win Khaing visits Phugyi Pipeline base camp in Hmawby Township on 23 February. PHOTO: MNA

In the afternoon, the Union Minister and team arrived at the base camp of Titok pipeline where the in-charge presented a brief account of the functions. In response, the Union Minister pointed out the importance of pipe maintenance work and the standard operation procedure (SOP). He also observed the

pipeline emergency maintenance demonstrations.

Located near Htanmakauk Village in Pyaye Township, Bago Region, it was built as a transit centre for transporting oil from Mann oilfield and Htaukshabin oilfield in Minbu Township, Magway Region, to Thanlyin oil refinery in Yangon Region and for the

maintenance of pipelines.

Its main function at present is to repair and maintain the natural gas pipelines of the upper Myanmar. A pipeline measuring 1130 miles of Titok is under maintenance at present. The total length of the network of pipelines laid by MOGE is 2371 miles.—MNA ■ (Translation: TMT)

2nd China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum held in Kunming

A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Planning and Finance U Soe Win attended the second joint committee meeting of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor and the 2nd China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum in Kunming, Yunnan Province, the People's Republic of China on 21-22 February.

The delegation included the cabinet members of region and state governments, officials, members of various organizations and entrepreneurs.

On 21 February morning, the Union Minister and delegation visited Kunming-Dali section of China-Myanmar railroad, Europe-Asia dairy company and Yunnan Liangxun Agriculture company. They attended the regional cooperation meeting, hydropower technology workshop and other

meetings. In the afternoon, they took part in the second joint committee meeting of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. The meeting focused on regional cooperation, future programs of the joint committee, the main agenda of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, projects, proposals, Kyaukphyu special economic zone and China-Myanmar railroad.

On 22 February, the Union Minister and delegation participated in the 2nd China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum, the meeting on the projects of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum, and visited Yunnan contractors investment group. The forum discussed agriculture, livestock breeding, forestry, mining, Kyaukphyu special economic zone, tourism, railroad, bilateral cooperation, projects of



The 2nd China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum in progress in Kunming, China. PHOTO: MNA

the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor; involvement of Chinese banks, new Yangon project, investment opportunities in Myanmar and financial cooperation. The China-Myanmar Economic Corridor plays a main role in the

Belt and Road Initiative. In view of the practical cooperation and mutual benefits between the two countries and interest of the peoples of China and Myanmar, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President Xi Jinping reached

an agreement to implement the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor. Since 2018, the two countries have been implementing it with added momentum.—Aung Kyaw Kyaw and Myint Myint Cho ■ (Translated by TMT)

Maintenance of Yangon-Mandalay expressway underway



Union Minister U Han Zaw inspects the mechanized nylon tar laying on Yangon-Mandalay expressway. PHOTO: MNA

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw inspected the mechanized nylon tar laying of the section between mileposts 180/0 and 180/3 on Yangon-Mandalay expressway (Nay Pyi Taw section) on 23 February.

An official of the expressway maintenance and regulation committee reported on progress of work and quality control. In response, the Union Minister stressed the importance of traffic safety, and observed the production and transport of tar

concrete from the AC Plant at milepost 176/5 to the worksite.

During inspection of the 810-foot Swa Creek Bridge between mileposts 165/1 and 165/3, the Union Minister heard a report on the renovation of the bridge and future programs, presented by an official of the project.

The Union Minister inspected the protection of the approach structure, reinforcement of three eroded piles through bored piling, renovation of the sunken floor, and fulfilled

the needs.

The expressway maintenance and regulation committee under the Ministry of Construction is layering nylon tar on the surface of the Yangon-Mandalay expressway sector wise, installing guard rails, turning raised medians into depressed medians by digging a canal, erecting road signs, testing the durability of bridges and taking erosion protective measures the safety of passengers.—MNA ■ (Translation: TMT)

Myanmar Productivity Center planned for SMEs development

By Aye Yamone

IN a bid to boost the productivity of Myanmar's small and medium enterprises, the government will set up the Myanmar Productivity Center this year, said U Ko Ko Lwin, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Industry.

He made the remarks at a roundtable to implement the plan for the Myanmar Productivity Center at the Novotel Hotel on 23 February.

"This move aims to boost trade. The SMEs constitute 95 per cent of the country's business. The center will help improve SME management and technology, and increase productivity," said U Ko Ko Lwin.

The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry-UMFCCI and the Japan Productivity Center had carried out a pilot



A woman working at the production-line of a rubber processing factory in Myeik. PHOTO:MNA

project to increase SME productivity in January, 2016. The pilot project was backed by the Japan

ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).

During the project's term, 50 enterprises under the Min-

istry of Industry witnessed a 40-per-cent growth in productivity after undergoing SME

technology and management training programs.

"We will share essential productivity and management skills with SMEs. We will adopt unused technology through the JAIF to enhance productivity in the SME sector," said U Aung Kyi Soe, the secretary-general of the UMFCCI.

The JAIF has set a three year term for the project to help consolidate Myanmar Productivity Organization through the Myanmar Productivity Center.

At the roundtable, experts from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, and Viet Nam's National Productivity Organizations shared their know-how and exchanged ideas. There are more than 70,000 SMEs registered with the Ministry of Industry, according to data released by the Directorate of Industrial Supervision and Inspection. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Tragacanth gum market cools as China suspends trade

CHINA'S curbs on trade have led to a slowdown in the market for Tragacanth gum (locally known as Saekalamat), with the prevailing rate for the gum touching K25,000 per viss (1.6 kg), said U Zaw Min, the chair of the Sagaing Region Gum Karaya Association.

"Tragacanth gum is used in Chinese recipes as well as in some drinks. It is also added in making bottled edible bird's nest," he said.

The Tragacanth gum herb produced in Sagaing and Mandalay regions is popular among buyers.

As Tragacanth gum has a legitimate trade channel, growers need to bring about a

sustainable market and ensure quality control by organizing themselves into trade bodies, said U Zaw Min.

The herb is naturally found across the country. Now, growers from Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway, Bago, and Taninthayi regions are cultivating it on a commercial scale. There are 13,633 acres of commercial gum plantations in Myanmar, most of them concentrated in Mandalay and Sagaing regions.

Myanmar is currently exporting Tragacanth gum to China. Japan has also shown interest in gum produced in Myanmar, but it wants only organically grown gum. Gum producer bodies have submitted a report

to the Commerce Ministry, seeking its help to link them with more external markets.

Tragacanth gum, also known as Sterculia gum or Karaya gum, is grown in many countries.

While Tragacanth gum grown in other countries can only be used as an industrial raw material, the variety grown in Myanmar can be consumed. Therefore, there is a high demand for Myanmar's Tragacanth gum.

If growers want to supply the herb to other countries, they need to maintain a high quality, said U Zaw Min.—Myo Win Tun/Ko Khant ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Private sector's export of manufactured goods up 85% in current FY

EXPORTS of manufactured goods by private sector topped US\$2.2 billion in 2018-2019 Fiscal Year (from October through mid-February), up by \$1 billion, or 85 per cent, from the corresponding period last FY, the Ministry of Commerce reported this Friday. During the period, the public sector exported manufactured products amounting to \$1.2 billion, which saw a decrease in value by over \$90 million, as against the same time last FY.

At this time last FY, the country's exports of manufactured goods totalled \$2.450 billion, with public sector exports valued at \$1.264 billion and private sector exports pegged at

\$1.185 million. The ministry's data showed that both sectors exported manufactured goods worth \$4.533 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September), with the public sector earning \$1.6 billion and the private sector fetching \$2.932 billion. According to the ministry's annual statistical report, the country earned \$6.9 billion from the export of manufactured products in the FY2017-2018, \$5.7 billion in the FY2016-2017, \$6.5 billion in the FY2015-2016, \$4.6 billion in the FY2014-2015, \$4.4 billion in the FY2013-2014, and \$4.08 billion in the FY2012-2013.—Shwe Khine ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Import of consumer products decreases by \$110 mln

MYANMAR'S import of consumer goods hit US\$1.261 billion during the current 2018-2019 fiscal year, down by \$110 million against the same time last 2017-2018 FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Between 1 October 2018 and 15 February 2019, the total imports of consumer products included \$14.585 million by the

public sector and \$1.247 billion by the private sector. When compared with the corresponding period last FY, this FY saw a decline in public sector's imports of manufactured goods by \$24.682 million, whereas the private sector's imports of the same went down by \$85.655 million.

During the same time last year, the public sector imported

consumer goods worth \$39.267 million and the private importers bought the same products amounting to \$1.332 billion, totalling \$1.371 billion.

Over the first 138 days of the present fiscal year, the country bought \$2.157 billion worth of capital goods, \$2.486 billion worth of intermediate goods and \$885 million of CMP raw materials.

Apart from the CMP raw materials, the country saw a decline in imports of other commodities.

According to the ministry's data, the country's imports of consumer products exceeded \$2.6 billion during the 2018 mini-budget period (April-September).

The ministry's annual trade report indicated that the im-

ports of consumer goods stood at \$1.245 billion in the 2011-2012 FY, \$1.4 billion in the 2012-2013 FY, \$2.3 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, \$2.9 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, \$3.5 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, over \$4 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and \$4.403 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.—Swe Nyein ■

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish "Letter to the Editor" that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Yangon Book Street hosts talks on library law, literature, arts

VISITORS enjoyed the Literary talks organized by the Myanmar Publishers and Distributors' Association at the Yangon Book Street yesterday.

In the morning, personnel from foundations related with library and a retired professor from the Yangon University Library and Research Department conducted a roundtable talks on the topic of the Yangon Region Library Law.

The results of the talks will be submitted to the Yangon Region Hluttaw on 25 February.

At 3 pm, Director Kyi Soe Tun discussed on the topic of "Movies written from novels". In the evening Indonesian musician Indra Menus entertained the audiences the songs.

Following the talks, a book on biography of a colonial-era director written by Ko Aye Min Soe (Alinsat-IR) was introduced to the visitors.

A quiz program led by Pag-eant Elena Win was also conducted and winners of the program were awarded with novels.

Director Kyi Soe Tun gave



The Weekend Book Street in Yangon attracts local book-lovers. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

talks under the title "Movies written from novels" focusing on creation of youth directors and literature.

"The Saturday-Sunday Book Street" with some 80 book stalls

selling books on Theinbyu Road in Botahtaung Township is crowded with visitors every weekend.

With the assistance of the Ministry of Information, Yangon Region Government and Yangon

City Development Committee, the Weekend Book Street and sales program has been held since 2017.—*Thant Zin Win/MNA* ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)



Three suspects seen with illegal drugs in Maungtaung Township. **PHOTO: MNA**

Three men arrested on drug charge in Maungtaung

THREE men were arrested on drug charge after WY/R stimulant tablets were found in their possession of in Maungtaung Township, Rakhine State.

Around midnight on 23 February, police arrested Mohammad Ali, 33, and two others swimming across the Naf River during the patrol as they found the three men in possession of

965,250 WY/R stimulant tablets hidden in three gunny sacks.

The street value of the seized drugs is estimated at K 1,930 million.

Police filed charges against them under the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law at Kyaingchaung Police Station. —MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Home catches fire after cooking left unattended, 1 dead

AN elderly woman died and her son was hospitalized after a fire broke out in their two-story home in Aungban, a town in Kalaw Township, southern Shan State, on Saturday night, according to the township's fire services department.

The fire began around 9 p.m. on 23 February at the home of Daw Ohn Kyin, 75, on Pyintha Street, Ward-3 after some food was left cooking on the stove, said investigators.

The Township Fire Services Department brought the fire under control within 45 minutes with the help

of five fire engines and about 70 firefighters.

Daw Ohn Kyin died in the fire, while her son, Soe Moe Naing, 40, sustained serious wounds and was rushed to the Sao San Htun Hospital in Taunggyi from Aungban Station at 10.30 p.m.

The loss from the fire is estimated at K1.6 million, according to the fire services department.

A case has been filed against Daw Ohn Kyin for fire-related negligence.—Township IPRD ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)



Fire engulfs the two-story house in Aungban on 23 February. **PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD**

Myanmar delegation attends hydropower tech workshop in Kunming

THE China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute (CREED) facilitated a workshop on hydropower electric generation technology at the InterContinental Hotel in Kunming, China on 21 February, as part of the second China-Myanmar Economic Corridor Forum.

Participants discussed under the topic: 'Global Hydropower Development Trends and Deepening China-Myanmar Power Cooperation'.

Delegations led by U Soe Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, and China-Myanmar Economic Corridor representatives attended the workshop.

Experts discussed developing the hydropower technology of Myanmar and the world, se-



A workshop on hydropower electric generation technology at the InterContinental Hotel in Kunming, China on 21 February. **PHOTO: MNA**

cure construction of dams and dykes, conducting surveys on regions lying on earthquake faults in Myanmar, and environmental

conservation relating to hydropower generation.

Currently, the totality of Myanmar can produce 5,642

Megawatts and 57.7 per cent of it is derived from hydropower. The electric power sector and economy of Myanmar recently

made improvements in the past few years. The electric power sector is indispensable for developing Myanmar's economy and for achieving national electrification by 2030.

Myanmar has abundant resources for generating sources of power, especially through hydropower. The World Bank estimates Myanmar's hydropower sector generates 3,255 Megawatts, and it contributes to 7 per cent of economic development. As a result, Myanmar's naturally abundant resources enable it to produce hydroelectricity that will most benefit socioeconomic development, according to discussions made at the workshop. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

Yangonians line up for filming of Line Walker-2

FROM PAGE-1

lifted with a crane for a flying sequence as it could not actually be operated in downtown Yangon.

The company's MD, U Ye Myint, said when they were contacted for renting out a chopper, they first considered piloting it from the airport and landing it near Sule for the filming. But, he said, due to aircraft restrictions, the helicopter was dismantled and shipped to Sule in a container truck. Nevertheless, the chance to help in filming a movie that will boost the image of the country was a great opportunity, said U Ye Myint.

With 'Line Walker-2' scheduled to continue filming on Sule Pagoda Road for the third day, the Yangon Region Transport Authority (YRTA), YBS services, traffic police, and other departments are working together to redirect traffic and ensure there are no traffic jams.

U Thar Kyaw, traffic regulation secretary, said staff and

officials from six traffic-related organizations helped with crowd control and regulating traffic from 6 am to 6 pm. He also echoed the sentiment that the film set had transformed into a form of public entertainment. He said people were waiting with lunchboxes in anticipation of the helicopter scene and arrival of the lead ac-

tor. He said avid fans stayed at the set all day and it gave him a sort of satisfaction to see their perseverance.

U Yi Htwe, a driver for YBS 36, said even though it was a weekend, there were a lot of people riding the bus to go see the film set in the morning. He said the diverted roads did not hinder

traffic and the buses were able to operate as normal.

The left section of the road from Sule Pagoda to the pedestrian overpass at the junction of Anawrahta Road will be closed from 6 am to 6 pm from 22 to 26 February and traffic police are working round the clock to ensure smooth traffic. Yangon Synthesis Produc-



U Thar Kyaw



U Yi Htwe

tions Company, who are taking shared responsibility for the film on Myanmar's side, has issued an apology to the public for the temporary traffic inconveniences caused during the filming process and has kindly requested their continued patience. —Nyunt Ko Ko (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



A helicopter scene, shootouts, and a car chase involving a gang of criminals with guns blazing were filmed yesterday for the Line Walker-2. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**



The crew of the Line Walker-2 shooting team film scenes for the movie in the downtown Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: YE HTUT**

Building a Better Society

WE are all different in terms of the way we think, our attitudes, and our faith, depending on our family background, the society we grew up in, and our educational qualifications. The same applies to our decisions and actions.

This being the case, learning to live in harmony in this diverse world which is full of uncertainty is of utmost importance. Our ancestors laid good foundations for us, and we have enjoyed the fruitful results derived from their actions. Now, in our time, we must cement these foundations and lay down fresh ones, as far as we can, for future generations. By doing so, we, and the whole society, will have a chance to enjoy prosperity. Prosperity implies not just material progress, but a morally safe environment.

It is plain to see that moral safety is essential for all human beings. Generally speaking, prosperity and safety is desired by all people. But, regrettably, we have witnessed some cases of violence, which can only harm the prosperity of the society.

Killing someone brutally and brazenly, under the influence of anger, after a failed negotiation, or lynching someone using lethal weapons because of a difference in views shows a lack of humanity in the society and the dire need for rule of law.

Responding with hatred, rudeness, or a derogatory attitude after hearing a dictum or reading a passage which is not in conformity with one's own views is not the way of a genteel society, and reflects a lack of tolerance and benevolence.

It is mortifying for us to read and hear about foreigners, who know Myanmar people to be kind and hospitable, expressing their shock and amazement over reports of such brutal acts, and criticizing them.

A society with peace and stability, which is desired by all Myanmar people, can only be built by practicing humanity and loving kindness, and upholding rule of law.

Our moral compass defines how well we treat others with loving kindness or work to bring prosperity to the nation. At the same time, upholding the rule of law is not just the responsibility of lawmen, including officials. It is the duty of all citizens who cherish their motherland — Myanmar. We must cultivate good morals by upholding the rule of law.

Strategies key for elimination of rabies

By: Dr.Than Aung Soe

RABIES is an infectious viral disease that is almost always fatal following the onset of clinical symptoms. Rabies is also called the Hydrophobia (fear of water). People with furious rabies exhibit sings of fear of light and loud sound. Death occurs after a few days due to cardio-respiratory arrest.

In the world, a person dies of rabies infection every nine minute. Despite it being easily preventable and controllable, for many reasons there is one human fatality from this disease every eight minutes, some statistics show that every fourteen minutes in the world.

Rabies is mostly present in Asia and Africa, and Myanmar also shares the burden of rabies infection.

Myanmar sees about 200 deaths of rabies annually. About 40 per cent of victims bitten by a suspect rabid dog are children under 15 and it was found that they were bitten by the dog while they were playing near it.

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease that causes inflammation of the brain in humans and other mammals. Early symptoms can include fever and tingling at the site of exposure. These symptoms are followed by one or more of the following symptoms: violent movements, uncontrolled excitement, fear of water, an inability to move parts of the body, confusion, and loss of consciousness. Once symptoms appear, the result is nearly always death. The time period between contracting the disease and the start of symptoms is usually one to three months, but can vary from less than one week to more than one year. The time depends on the distance the virus must travel along peripheral nerves to reach the central nervous system.

Rabies is caused by lyssaviruses, including the rabies virus and Australian bat lyssavirus. It is spread when an infected animal scratches or bites another animal or human. Saliva from an infected animal can also transmit rabies if the saliva comes into contact with the eyes, mouth, or nose. Globally, dogs are the most common animal involved. In the Americas, bat bites are the most common source of rabies infections in humans, and less than 5% of cases are from dogs.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)

Post-exposure prophylaxis



Veterinarian giving vaccination injection to dog at 11th World Rabies Day ceremony in 2017. PHOTO: MNA

(PEP) is the immediate treatment of a bite victim after rabies exposure. This prevents virus entry into the central nervous system, which results in imminent death. PEP consists of:

- extensive washing and local treatment of the wound as soon as possible after exposure;
- a course of potent and effective rabies vaccine that meets WHO

Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health-OIE included the rabies in the three major diseases of the world. In Myanmar, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, Ministry of Health and Sports, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation considered the rabies as the most important diseases in the six major

carry the virus without suffering disease. We have to manage to reduce and to eliminate the disease. Meanwhile, WHO set an objective of “Zero Deaths by 2030”. The World Rabies Day is observed on 29 September.

This year’s motto for the World Rabies Day is “Rabies: Share The Messages Save A Life.”

Prevention

Eliminating rabies in dogs

Rabies is a vaccine-preventable disease. Vaccinating dogs is the most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in people. Dog vaccination reduces deaths attributable to rabies and the need for PEP as a part of dog bite patient care.

Discussions

We have a global framework that consists of socio-cultural, technical, organizational, communica-

tions, political, guidelines, resources, and acquiring funds. ASEAN has also laid down these strategies. Doctors, veterinarians and experts in Myanmar are also informing the public about rabies in the newspaper, magazines, journals, and on TV. Ah Raw Jan magazine wrote an article on how ignoring a drop of blood or a scratch from a dog can lead to fatalities.

standards; and

- the administration of rabies immunoglobulin (RIG), if indicated.

Effective treatment soon after exposure to rabies can prevent the onset of symptoms and death.

Extensive wound washing

This involves first-aid of the wound that includes immediate and thorough flushing and washing of the wound for a minimum of 15 minutes with soap and water, detergent, povidone iodine or other substances that kill the rabies virus.

Six Major Diseases

More than 99% of rabies cases in countries where dogs commonly have the disease are caused by dog bites. The World Health Organization-WHO, the Food and

diseases (Zoonoses) of the country. According to the latest figure, there are about 3.8 million dogs in Myanmar. From 150,000 to 200,000 people suffers from dog bites every year. There are over 180,000 cases in 2017 and over 190,000 in 2018 cases of dog bites in 2018. The most suspect cases of rabies were found correct after laboratory tests.

In up to 99% of cases, domestic dogs are responsible for rabies virus transmission to humans. Yet, rabies can affect both domestic and wild animals. It is spread to people through bites or scratches, usually via saliva.

Objective

The rabies virus is found in many animals. Bats are also the rabies virus carrier and it impossible to eradicate the disease as they

rabies under a set guideline. **Protecting both dogs and humans**

Officials should collaborate with donors, local and international groups, NGOs, and INGOs to systematically vaccinate stray dogs. The OIE used to donate rabies vaccinations for 400,000 dogs in Myanmar. The Ministry of Health also purchased rabies vaccination for people. In 2015-2016 FY the ministry purchased 400,000 vaccinations, in 2016-2017 FY they purchased 450,000, and in 2017-2018 FY they purchased 330,000 vaccinations and 30,000 RIG cure medicine. These medicines have been spread throughout the hospitals in the states and regions.

Vaccination is needed

Cats are just as likely as dogs to have rabies; therefore, they must be vaccinated as well. It's a safe bet to vaccinate both cats and dogs once a year starting from three months old. The main problem are the stray dogs. If we look at the states and regions, the problems mainly occur in Yangon, Mandalay and Bago regions where there are a lot of stray dogs. The city development committees used to feed poison to the stray dogs but now dog lovers and animal welfare standards don't accept that. It's a socio-cultural issue. The Myanma Livestock Journal wrote an article about how a doctor called to treat to a poisoned dog was angrily confronted by a staff following orders to feed poison to the dogs.

Cooperation between departments

This is intended to raise public awareness, and we need to increase our actions. Some time ago there was a canine sanctuary opened in Mandalay that took in stray dogs. Now you can see dog lovers banding together to help stray dogs on social media. All the departments in every township should cooperate on protecting stray dogs, spaying or neutering them, and vaccinating them for

rabies under a set guideline. **Protecting both dogs and humans**

Officials should collaborate with donors, local and international groups, NGOs, and INGOs to systematically vaccinate stray dogs. The OIE used to donate rabies vaccinations for 400,000 dogs in Myanmar. The Ministry of Health also purchased rabies vaccination for people. In 2015-2016 FY the ministry purchased 400,000 vaccinations, in 2016-2017 FY they purchased 450,000, and in 2017-2018 FY they purchased 330,000 vaccinations and 30,000 RIG cure medicine. These medicines have been spread throughout the hospitals in the states and regions.

It would be convenient if the Union Government sets a detailed plan to vaccinate stray dogs. It will also reduce costs. If we can vaccinate at least 70 per cent of stray dogs then it will greatly reduce risk of them contracting rabies. The number of foreign tourists will also increase if there is no fear of getting rabies. It has been experimented in Lewe, NyuangU, and Hmawby townships. We need to start working to eradicate rabies now. We must conduct research, connect with relevant organizations, set guidelines, and make financial plans which includes protecting humans and dogs by providing vaccinations and safeguarding them.

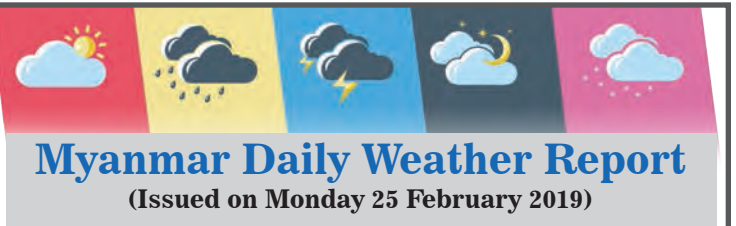
Even if we cannot safeguard all the stray dogs in the country yet, we should at least make budget plans to spay them. Officials should heed the need for systematic planning to curb rabies and save both animals and people.

Translated by Pan Dar Li

■■■



A dog lover feeds stray dogs in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR



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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 25 February, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Kachin State and isolated in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions, Chin State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Lower Sagaing and Mandalay regions, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin and Chin States and isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Regions and Shan State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR Mandalay AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 February, 2019: Generally fair weather.

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

Two killed as Venezuela aid showdown turns violent

UREÑA (Venezuela)—A high-risk operation to get humanitarian aid into Venezuela descended into deadly chaos Saturday after President Nicolas Maduro's security forces fired on demonstrators and aid trucks were set ablaze.

Two people, including a 14-year-old boy, were killed in clashes with security forces that left more than 300 people wounded at various border crossings.

Despite a blockade by Maduro, opposition leader Juan Guaido had set a Saturday deadline for the delivery of food and medical aid stockpiled in Colombia and Brazil. Aid is also being held on the Caribbean island of Curacao.

Humanitarian aid, much of it from the United States, has become the centerpiece of the standoff between Maduro and Guaido, the 35-year-old leader of Venezuela's National Assembly who declared himself interim president exactly one month ago.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the United States "will take action" as he condemned violence perpetrated by Maduro's "thugs." Guaido, meanwhile, announced he would participate in Monday's Lima Group meeting in Bogota, and called on the international community to be prepared for "all possibilities" with regard to Maduro. The country is gripped by a humanitarian crisis that has seen poverty soar during a prolonged recession and hyperinflation. A boat carrying aid from the US territory of Puerto Rico had to turn back



Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaido (c) takes a selfie his wife Fabiana Rosales (r, foreground), Chilean President Sebastian Pinera (next to him at left), Colombian President Ivan Duque (c, right, giving thumb up) and Paraguayan President Mario Abdo Benitez during the "Venezuela Aid Live" concert, organized to raise money for the Venezuelan relief effort, at the head of the Tienditas International Bridge in Cucuta, Colombia, on 22 February 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

after receiving a "direct threat of fire" from Venezuela's military, Governor Ricardo Rossello said, calling the move a "serious violation against a humanitarian mission" that is "unacceptable and outrageous." Hundreds of volunteers, many clad in white, were frustrated in their attempts to collect the aid at the Colombian border, pinned back by Maduro's security forces.

Violent clashes

Since dawn, protesters in the border towns of Urena and San Antonio were held at bay by the Venezuelan National Guard firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

Gunshots could be heard in

the streets of Urena during hours of rioting. Civil defense officials in Colombia said at least 285 people had been injured in clashes at border bridge crossings. Colombia also ordered aid trucks to return from the border after the violence.

Most were Venezuelan nationals who were trying to cross with aid parcels when they were pushed back by Venezuelan forces. But the most serious incident came hundreds of miles (kilometers) away, at the Santa Elena de Uairen crossing point on the southern border with Brazil where the killings took place. Another 31 people were wounded when troops blocking the entry of

aid opened fire on civilians hoping to gather it, according to rights group Foro Penal. "They are massacring the people of Venezuela in Santa Elena de Uairen and San Antonio, where from seven o'clock in the morning they did not allow Venezuelans to gather to bring in humanitarian aid," Guaido told reporters in Cucuta, Colombia, where he was coordinating the aid operation.

Maduro's supporters halted and set ablaze two trucks loaded with aid driven through barricades on a border bridge, sending a pall of black smoke into the sky over the Santander crossing linking Cucuta and Urena. —AFP ■

Three UN peacekeepers killed by suspected bandits in Mali

BAMAKO (Mali)—Three UN peacekeepers in Mali have been killed by suspected bandits while travelling on leave along the road from the capital Bamako to neighbouring Guinea, sources said.

Friday's attack was a robbery, a Malian security source told AFP, adding that the three victims were from Guinea, which contributes some 900 soldiers to the 15,000-strong UN stabilisation mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

At around 10:00 pm Friday, the three peacekeepers, "who were going on leave in a rental vehicle, were attacked by unidentified armed men on the road to Siby", 44 kilometres (27 miles) southwest of Bamako, MINUSMA said in a statement Saturday. "Three of them were killed and another wounded."

A civilian who was driving the vehicle was also wounded, according to MINUSMA, which said it was "shocked by the cowardly assassination of the three Blue Helmets". According to an elected official of Siby, it was "a robbery that went wrong". "They were UN peacekeepers on leave who were going to Guinea. They were robbed by thugs who visibly panicked and shot" them, the official said on condition of anonymity, confirming the death toll.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres condemned the attack on the peacekeepers while the Security Council in a statement "called on the government of Mali to swiftly investigate this attack and bring the perpetrators to justice". The UN mission was established in Mali after Islamist militias seized the north of the country in 2012. They were pushed back by French troops in 2013. A peace agreement signed in 2015 by the Bamako government and armed groups was aimed at restoring stability. But the accord has failed to stop violence by Islamist militants. Since their deployment in 2013, more than 190 peacekeepers have died in Mali, including nearly 120 killed by hostile action, making MINUSMA the UN's deadliest peacekeeping operation, accounting for more than half of blue helmets killed globally in the past five years. —AFP ■

Saudi Arabia replaces envoy to Washington: royal decree



The murder of Jamal Khashoggi has put strain on US-Saudi relations. **PHOTO: AFP**

RIYADH (Saudi Arabia)—Saudi Arabia has replaced its ambassador to the United States, a royal decree announced Saturday, as the fallout over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder tests rela-

tions between the two allies.

Princess Rima bint Bandar was appointed the kingdom's first woman envoy to Washington, replacing Prince Khalid bin Salman, who was named vice

defence minister. Prince Khalid is the younger brother of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country's de facto ruler who also serves as the defence minister. The reshuffle comes as ties with Washington are under strain following Khashoggi's murder last October in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

After initially denying they knew anything of Khashoggi's disappearance, the Saudis finally acknowledged that a team killed him inside the consulate, but described it as a rogue operation. US lawmakers have threatened to take tougher action against Saudi Arabia over the brutal killing amid claims that the crown prince was personally responsible.

The Saudi government has strongly denied he had anything

to do with the murder of Khashoggi who was a columnist with the Washington Post. The killing refocused attention on a Saudi-led military coalition's bombing campaign in Yemen, which is gripped by what the UN calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Earlier this month, the US House voted overwhelmingly to end American involvement in Saudi Arabia's war effort in neighbouring Yemen, dealing a rebuke to President Donald Trump who has publicly thrown his support behind the crown prince. US lawmakers this month also said they were probing whether Trump was rushing to sell sensitive nuclear technology to Saudi Arabia to please corporate supporters who stand to profit handsomely. —AFP ■

Fear and hoping: expectations surge ahead of new US-Taliban talks in Qatar

KABUL (Afghanistan)—The US and the Taliban are to meet in Qatar for fresh talks Monday seeking an end to 17 years of grinding conflict in Afghanistan, with the stakes ratcheting higher as the spring fighting season approaches. Marathon talks held in Doha last month have stoked hopes of a breakthrough after the two sides walked away with a “draft framework” that included a Taliban commitment to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for international terror groups.

It was the most substantial engagement by Washington with the militants since US forces ousted them from power in 2001. But there is still no accord on a timetable for a US withdrawal or a ceasefire—both major issues on which previous efforts have foundered. This time Washington’s special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad, who has spearheaded the months-long effort, is expected to face an expanded Taliban negotiating team headed by Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, the Taliban’s former deputy minister of foreign affairs. Neither side has stated how long they expect the meetings to last or the details of what will be discussed.

Analysts say this round will likely see the Taliban push for the removal of its leaders from a UN travel blacklist, matched with pressure from the US for



There is still no timetable for a US withdrawal or ceasefire in Afghanistan. PHOTO: AFP

the militants to open a dialogue with the Afghan government.

“Both sides are going into this process with open minds and a sense of urgency as the weather gets warmer and fighting season draws closer,” Graeme Smith, a consultant based with International Crisis Group, told AFP. The Taliban have steadfastly refused to negotiate with Kabul, whom they dismiss as “puppets”. They have also stated that, without a withdrawal timetable, further progress is “impossible”. US President Donald Trump’s apparent eagerness to end America’s longest war, the Afghan government’s fear of being sidelined, and the coming of

spring all weigh on the process.

“Eyes are on the Taliban to see if they are capable of compromising,” said analyst Michael Semple. “Can they come up with a sufficient compromise to agree to a formula for an intra-Afghan dialogue that absolutely involves the current Afghan government?” Khalilzad, he added, “has stirred up the peace process in a way that nobody over the previous two decades had”.

Pakistan’s influence waning?

The gathering momentum has spurred fresh peace demonstrations and cautious hope in Afghanistan. But there is also growing unease, with fears the

government is being pushed aside and that progress which many Afghans have paid for with their lives could yet be undone if the US rushes for the exits.

Women’s groups and civil society organisations have warned that a speedy withdrawal or lenient deal with the Taliban could pave the way for a return of their repressive rule, or an even bloodier civil war. Many watched in astonishment earlier this month as Taliban militants shared meals and prayers with Afghan political leaders, including presidential contender Mohammad Atta Noor and former president Hamid Karzai, in Moscow. —AFP ■

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lashes out at Sisi over Egypt executions

ISTANBUL (Turkey)— Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sharply criticised his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi after the recent execution of nine people in Egypt, saying he refused to talk to “someone like him”. “They killed nine young people recently. This is not something we can accept,” Erdogan said Saturday in an interview with Turkish TV channels CNN-Turk and Kanal D, referring to the execution Wednesday of nine men sentenced for the murder of the Egyptian prosecutor general in 2015. “Of course, we are going to be told that it is a decision of the judiciary, but there, justice, elections, all that, are codswallop. There is an authoritarian system, even totalitarian,” Erdogan added.

“Now, I am answering those



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lashed out at his Egyptian counterpart over the recent execution of nine people. PHOTO: AFP

who wonder why Tayyip Erdogan does not speak to Sisi, because there are mediators who come here sometimes, but I will never talk to someone like him,” he said.

Relations between Turkey

and Egypt have been virtually non-existent since the Egyptian military, then led by Sisi, in 2013 ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, a close ally of Erdogan. Morsi’s Islamist Muslim

Brotherhood is outlawed in Egypt but members of the group have sought refuge in Turkey. Erdogan, who denounced Morsi’s ouster, sometimes draws a parallel with the failed coup against himself in 2016. The Turkish president also called for the release of Muslim Brotherhood prisoners in Egypt.

“First of all, he should release all those imprisoned with a general amnesty. As long as these people have not been released, we will not be able to talk with Sisi,” he said.

Erdogan also attacked Western countries which, according to him, “roll out the red carpet” for Sisi and turn a blind eye to the latest executions in Egypt. “Where are the Westerners? Have you heard their voices?” he said. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Philippine central bank governor dies at 60

MANILA—The governor of the country’s central bank, Bangko Sentral ng Philipinas (BSP), and the chairman of the Monetary Board (MB) Nestor Espenilla died on Saturday at 60 years old, according to a statement of the MB on Sunday.

The board said it is deeply saddened to announce that Espenilla peacefully passed away surrounded by members of his family. Espenilla had been undergoing treatment for cancer for more than a year, the MB, the highest policy making body of the BSP. —Xinhua ■

Japan, Britain mull foreign, defense ministers’ talks in April

TOKYO—Japan and Britain are arranging a meeting of their foreign and defense ministers on 8 April in Tokyo, with an eye to enhancing post-Brexit bilateral cooperation, government sources said Saturday.

Japan hopes to leverage closer ties with Britain, which is set to leave the European Union in late March, in advancing Tokyo’s broader initiative to create a free and open Indo-Pacific region in the face of growing maritime assertiveness by China. —Kyodo News ■

China issues work plan on national defense education

BELJING—China will push forward reform in national defense education in 2019, according to a circular released by the national defense education office Thursday. The circular said a document on deepening reform in national defense education is planned to be released this year. The country also plans to revise its national defense education law and work out draft regulations on promoting national defense education at educational institutions and social organizations participating in national defense education. According to the official in charge of the office, the country will hold a series of educational campaigns including lectures, contests and learning activities to attract young people to learn more about national defense. —Xinhua ■

North Korean leader rides train on way to Viet Nam

BEIJING (China)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's armoured train chugged across China on Sunday as he headed to his highly anticipated second summit with US President Donald Trump in Viet Nam.

Emulating his late father and grandfather, who took epic train trips when they were leaders, Kim set off on the long journey from Pyongyang on Saturday, with a military honour guard seeing him off in the North Korean capital.

His departure from the Pyongyang railway station was confirmed by North Korea's official KCNA news agency, with official photos showing him waving from the train for what could be

a 60-hour journey to Viet Nam.

The train crossed the border city of Dandong later that day, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency and the specialist outlet NK News, but its route remained a tightly-held secret.

The train's crossing into China follows days of speculation over Kim's travel plans, as his team gathered in Hanoi ahead of the talks expected next Wednesday and Thursday.

Accompanying the North Korean leader was right-hand man and top general Kim Yong Chol, who met with Trump in the White House last month, along with several other top dignitaries, KCNA said. Security was tight before the train's arrival in Dandong, with



This picture taken on 23 February 2019 and released from North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on 24 February shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (C) departing Pyongyang Station for the second North Korea-US summit meeting in Hanoi, Viet Nam. **PHOTO: AFP**

police cordoning off the border bridge area with tape and metal barriers, and leading an AFP journalist out of the area.

A hotel facing the bridge

was closed for impromptu renovations on Saturday. "The train is long and crossed the bridge slower than the tourist train, but it's definitely him, there's a lot of

police presence," an unidentified source told NK News. Windows on the train were blacked out, the source said, with only headlights turned on as it crossed.—AFP ■

Gov't holds ceremony marking 30 years of Emperor Akihito's reign

TOKYO—A government-sponsored ceremony marking 30 years of Emperor Akihito's reign was held Sunday at the National Theatre of Japan in Tokyo ahead of his abdication on April 30.

In a congratulatory speech, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the people will "never forget" how the imperial couple have "always stood by the people for 30 years."

Abe also said the couple's official visits to 35 countries since the emperor acceded the throne in 1989 have strengthened friendly ties between Japan and those nations. Fukushima Gov. Masao Uchibori, whose north-eastern prefecture was hit by a nuclear crisis in 2011, thanked the imperial couple for their encouraging messages and visits to the affected areas. "The people of Fukushima were given the courage to move forward as they tried to recover from the globally unprecedented triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis," Uchibori said. Former Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, who accompanied the imperial couple on a trip to Singapore in 2006, said the emperor and empress were "selfless" and "had contact with people wholeheartedly" overseas as they do in Japan.

She said the significance of



Undated photo shows Japanese Emperor Akihito. He is set to abdicate on 30 April 2019. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

their trips abroad was "far beyond international goodwill" as they created "a deep impression" both in Japan and the visited countries. After hearing those speeches, the emperor said he believes it is "fortunate that I have been able to undertake duties with the help of people" and expressed gratitude to "the people, in whom I take pride and for whom I feel joy in being 'the symbol of the state' and the civilization of this country built over the long period." Referring to a series of disasters that struck Japan during his reign, he said "affected people who endured many hardships and those from other parts of Japan who stood by them and offered support in various ways have become an

unforgettable memory" for him.

The emperor also thanked foreign countries and international organizations for their support for Japan when the country was "in the middle of suffering and sorrow" due to the disasters.

At the ceremony, singer Daichi Miura, from Okinawa, performed a song in the style of the southern island prefecture, "Utage no Hibiki" (Resonance of Singing Voices), written by the emperor and composed by Empress Michiko.

Another song "Omoigo" (Endearing Child) composed by the empress was sung by soprano Yumiko Samejima.

Emperor Akihito, 85, was enthroned on 7 January, 1989, following the death of his father Emperor Hirohito, posthumously known as Emperor Showa.

The emperor will become the first monarch to abdicate in about two centuries at the end of April and will be succeeded by his eldest son Crown Prince Naruhito on 1 May.

Members of the public signed their names in registers to commemorate the emperor's 30-year reign at designated points in front of the Imperial Household Agency building in the Imperial Palace grounds.—Kyodo News ■

Sri Lanka to face thundershowers, heavy winds

COLOMBO—Sri Lanka will face thundershowers and heavy winds over several parts of the island country within the next few days, the Meteorology Department said in its latest weather update on Sunday.

The possibility of thundershowers is especially high over the southern part of the island particularly in the Uva province during the next few days, the department said.

Wind speed can also increase up to 40 km per hour at times in the Hambantota district, in the south.

Anuradhapura, in the north central province, will face the maximum temperature of 37.7 degrees centigrade while the central highlands of Nuwara Eliya will face the minimum temperature of 6.8 degrees centigrade.—Xinhua ■

5 missing in east China boat accident

HANGZHOU—Five people were missing as a fishing boat crashed into a cargo ship and sunk in the sea near east China's Zhejiang Province, according to local authorities.

The accident happened at around 1:40 p.m. Saturday. Local governments have organized 23 fishing boats in the surrounding areas and dispatched multiple official ships for the rescue.

The fishing boat, with the capacity for seven people, is 32.2 meters long and 6.5 meters wide. The cargo ship is 224.98 meters long and 32.2 meters wide with a tonnage of 35,890 tonnes.

The rescue is underway.—Xinhua ■

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Race on to make urban agriculture viable, durable

PARIS (France)—In a world faced with the conundrum of mountains of waste and obesity for some and dire shortages and malnutrition for others the future of food is a main dish on today's global menu.

A key ingredient is the trend in ever more imaginative forms towards urban agriculture, a multi-faceted recipe already being pored over by some 800 million people globally, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization. The trend takes many forms—from collective

market gardens in even the most run-down of urban districts to connected vertical farms using indoor farming techniques to meet spiralling food demand in areas largely bereft of arable land. The FAO wants to see the trend prosper and become durably and sustainably embedded within public policy. Yves Christol, of French cooperative In Vivo, has identified six models of the genre. They include a key European variant, electronically managed without recourse to pesticide—or even soil or sunshine.



One of an estimated 800 million urban farmers in the world. PHOTO: AFP

Green beans means ... Iceland

"That has allowed Iceland to become a major producer of green beans,"

says Christol, thanks to geothermal heating. Asian countries are also in on the act, not least Singapore, with the high density pop-

ulation city state bent on ensuring high-tech food autonomy. Japan and China have sought to give new life to sites which once hosted

electronics factories even if the strategy appears costly.

China has launched some urban farms even in areas where the soil has been polluted by heavy metals and would be too costly to clean up. The US model, as cities including New York and Chicago seek to become sustainably hunger-proof, includes hydroponic gardens—effectively eschewing soil and using mineral nutrients in a water solvent, although profitability can prove elusive. —AFP ■

Marshall Islands consider radical measures to survive rising sea levels

MAJURO (Marshall Islands)—The far-flung Marshall Islands needs to raise its islands if it is to avoid BEING drowned by rising sea levels, President Hilda Heine has warned.

Plans are underway for national talks on which of the 1,156 islands, scattered over 29 coral atolls, can be elevated in a dramatic intervention to ensure safety on the islands. "Raising our islands is a daunting task but one that must be done," Heine said in an interview with the Marshall Islands Journal published Friday. "We need

the political will, and especially traditional leaders' commitment, to see this through. "We must come together as a nation as this is about our survival as a nation, as a people and as a culture." A "climate crisis" policy document prepared by the office of the chief secretary painted a bleak outlook for the Pacific Ocean archipelago with a population of 55,000. It cited an increasing frequency of "inundation events, severe droughts, coral bleaching events, and... looking forward, there is very good reason to believe that conditions and prospects

for survival will only worsen." Most of the islands are less than two metres (6.5 feet) above sea level and the government believes physically raising the islands was the only way to save the Marshall Islands from extinction. They have not yet outlined specifics of how this would be achieved expect to have plans formulated by the end of the year. In the meantime, they are keeping a close watch on the ambitious City of Hope project on an artificial island in the Maldives as a viable option. —AFP ■

MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY HOLIDAY NOTICE

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

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Union Minister U Ohn Maung attends concluding ceremony of Bapu@ 150 Car Rally New Delhi to Yangon

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Ohn Maung attended Concluding Ceremony Bapu@ 150 Car Rally New Delhi to Yangon in Inya Lake Hotel in Yangon yesterday.

The Bapu@ 150 Car Rally New Delhi to Yangon is a drive to commemorate 150th anniversary of the legendary Mahatma Gandhi and Propagating the message of Road Safety.

The Union Minister, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Shiri Saurabh Kumar and officials welcomed the cars of the motor rally entering the hotel compound at 5:30pm.

In his speech at the meeting, the Union Minister said, border gates are ready to welcome foreign tourists to promote the Myanmar's tourism industry,



Union Minister U Ohn Maung addresses the Concluding Ceremony of Bapu@ 150 Car Rally New Delhi to Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

and it is expected to attract more visitors to Myanmar as arrival visa through Tamu-Moreh border gate are already permitted for the visitors from India.

As hosting such car rally

through border gate benefits Myanmar's tourism development, such events and car rallies will be organized in the future, he added.—MNA ■ (Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

'If Beale Street Could Talk' takes top prize at Spirit Awards

SANTA MONICA (United States)—“If Beale Street Could Talk” was crowned best picture on Saturday at the Film Independent Spirit Awards—as Oscar favorite “Roma” scooped best international film. Directed by Barry Jenkins, “If Beale Street Could Talk” took two other prizes: best director for Jenkins, and best supporting actress for Regina King. It follows the story of a young African-American woman (KiKi Layne) who seeks to clear her husband's name before the birth of their son. Jenkins, whose film is nominated in three categories at Sunday's Oscars, was frank in his acceptance speech.

“I'm not gonna lie, man. I didn't want to win this damn

award. With everything going on in the world, it just feels strange to be up here,” he said. “And so, I'm going to take this. But I want to take it by thanking all the women involved in If Beale Street Could Talk to make it the film that it was.” Meanwhile, Glenn Close continued her sweep of this awards season, winning best actress for her role in “The Wife.” The veteran actress is a favorite to take the same accolade at Sunday's Oscars. “It's very hard for me to accept the win-lose situation. I don't think there's any losers,” she told reporters on the red carpet in Santa Monica, California—which was actually blue—accompanied by her dog, Pip.—AFP ■

Oscars night is here! Hollywood ready for glitzy gala

HOLLYWOOD (United States)—Hollywood's A-listers hit the red carpet Sunday for the Oscars—the climax of a long, eventful awards season that could yield some big surprises. Alfonso Cuarón's black-and-white cinematic ode to his childhood, “Roma,” leads with 10 nominations and is a firm favorite for the coveted best picture Academy Award. If it does win, it will be the first foreign-language film, and the first from streaming giant Netflix, to earn the honor. But civil rights dramedy “Green Book” has overcome controversy to remain on the radar, and could benefit from the Academy's complex preferential voting system to snatch the top prize. Hot on their heels are a variety of films, from offbeat royal romp “The Favourite” (also with 10 nominations), to Spike Lee's race drama “BlacKkKlansman,” to crowd pleasers like superhero flick “Black Panther” and musical romance “A Star Is Born.”

Two biopics—“Vice” about former US vice president Dick Cheney and “Bohemian Rhapsody” about the band Queen—round out the list of contenders for best picture. The 7,900-odd voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences had bold choices in front of them—traditional art-house Oscar bait, and big, rous-



A woman walks the Oscars red carpet as preparations continue for the 91st Academy Awards in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, US on 23 February 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

ing blockbusters. “With eight best picture nominees, every film has passionate supporters, but no film has a consensus,” Tim Gray, awards editor for showbiz trade publication Variety, told AFP.

All will be revealed at the Dolby Theatre, in a ceremony beamed around the world to millions of showbiz fans, with a twist—there will be no host for the first time in three decades. The Academy opted to take the risk after comedian Kevin Hart withdrew from the gig in the face of a firestorm over past controver-

sial tweets that were slammed as homophobic. “They still don't have an answer to a question that's been around since the first TV showing in 1953: is this a presentation of every category, or is it entertainment?” Gray said. “They want it to be both.” The entertainment factor will be high when Queen opens the show with singer Adam Lambert fronting the iconic band.

Will Glenn Close finally win?

For top acting honors, Christian Bale's transformation into

Cheney for “Vice” gave him the early lead in the Oscars race, and several statuettes. But Rami Malek won respect from his peers—and a Golden Globe, Bafta and a Screen Actors Guild award—for his spellbinding turn as late Queen frontman Freddie Mercury. “In Christian Bale's, I see an incredible actorly thing, but with Rami Malek, you see a role that just really connected with audiences,” said Variety's chief film critic Peter Debruge. “I wouldn't be surprised if the newcomer disrupts in this

case.”

The best actress race has a clear favorite: Glenn Close, who has swept the prizes for her gripping work in “The Wife” as a woman on the edge when her author husband wins the Nobel Prize in Literature. Lady Gaga wowed fans and critics with her turn in “A Star Is Born,” and Yalitza Aparicio's nomination for her first acting role in “Roma” earned praise. But it looks to be Close's night.

“It is not her strongest role, but it is an opportunity for her to really own a small film, to carry it on her shoulders, and to remind the industry that here is one of our real treasures as an actress,” Debruge said. Mahershala Ali (“Green Book” and Regina King (“If Beale Street Could Talk”) are the odds-on favorites in the supporting acting categories.

Better ratings this year?

The Academy—desperate to boost television ratings that have plummeted in recent years—is trying to stick to a three-hour telecast, but it hit a few bumps along the way. Controversies over its efforts to save time included plans to present a handful of awards during commercial breaks, and to feature only a few of the nominated songs. Both ideas have since been scrapped. —AFP ■

NASA's New Horizons returns sharpest views of Ultima Thule

LOS ANGELES—NASA's New Horizons spacecraft has sent back the sharpest possible pictures of the Kuiper Belt object nicknamed Ultima Thule, the most distant object ever explored. These new images of Ultima Thule were obtained by the telephoto Long-Range Reconnaissance Imager (LORRI) just six-and-a-half minutes before New Horizons' closest approach to the object at 12:33 a.m. EST on 1 January, according to a release of the mission team on Friday.

The images offer a resolution of about 110 feet (33.5 meters) per pixel. Their combination of high spatial resolution and a favorable viewing angle gives the team an unprecedented opportunity to investigate the surface, as

well as the origin and evolution of Ultima Thule.

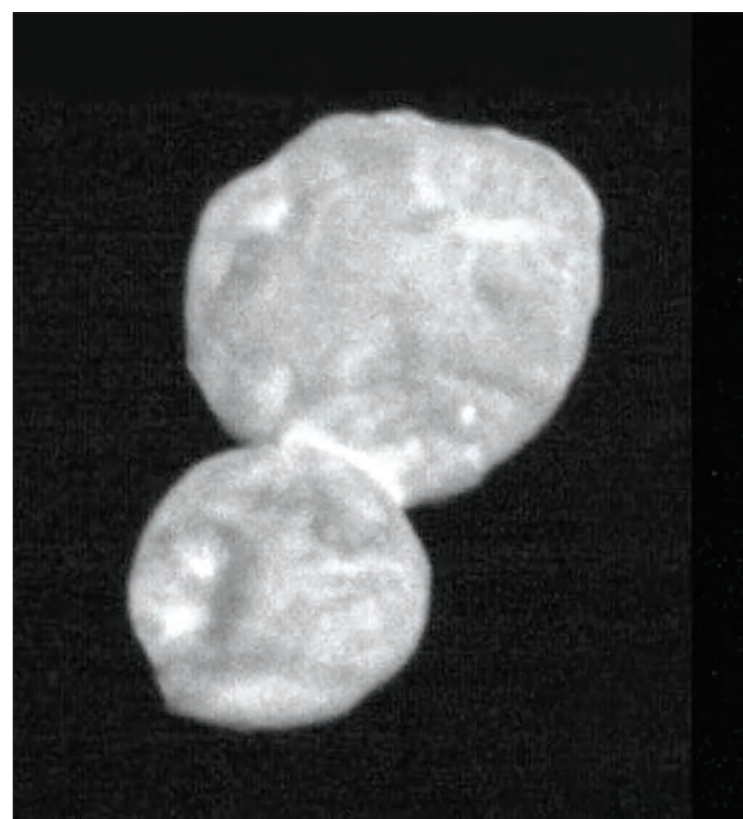
"Getting these images required us to know precisely where both tiny Ultima and New Horizons were - moment by moment - as they passed one another at over 32,000 miles per hour in the dim light of the Kuiper Belt, a billion miles beyond Pluto," said New Horizons Principal Investigator Alan Stern. "This was a much tougher observation than anything we had attempted in our 2015 Pluto flyby," he added.

The higher resolution brings out many surface features of Ultima Thule, including several bright, enigmatic, roughly circular patches of terrain, and many small, dark pits near the terminator, the boundary between the

sunlit and dark sides of the body.

"Whether these features are craters produced by impactors, sublimation pits, collapse pits, or something entirely different, is being debated in our science team," said deputy project scientist John Spencer. The latest images have the highest spatial resolution any New Horizons has taken, or may ever take, during its entire mission, according to the team.

The New Horizons mission, launched in January 2006, aims to understand worlds at the edge of the solar system by making the first reconnaissance of the dwarf planet Pluto, and by venturing deeper into the distant, mysterious Kuiper Belt—a relic of solar system formation.—Xinhua ■



This handout image released on 2 January 2019 by NASA taken by the Long-Range Reconnaissance Imager (LORRI) is the most detailed of Ultima Thule returned so far by the New Horizons spacecraft. It was taken at 5:01 Universal Time on 1 January 2019. PHOTO: XINHUA

Tech connection boosts NY vertical farmers

KEARNY (United States)—Workers at Bowery Farming's warehouse near New York have swapped out a farmer's hoe for a computer tablet that takes real-time readings of light and water conditions.

Launched in 2015, Bowery is part of the fast-growing vertical farming movement, which employs technology in a controlled, man-made setting to grow fresh vegetables indoors all year long.

Champions of the practice see vertical farming as a key tool to meet the world's food needs at a time when the population is rising and the climate is changing.

The company's chief executive and co-founder, Irving Fain, said his company's Kearny, New Jersey site uses fewer resources than traditional farms and does not employ pesticides. "I have been a big believer my entire life in technology as being able to solve not only hard problems, but also important problems," said Fain, who previously ran a company that provides data analysis for big companies on their loyalty programs. Bowery employs more programmers than agricultural scientists. The company says its use of algorithms enables it to be 100 times more productive per area compared with a traditional farm and to use 95 per cent less water.

Lower electricity costs

Vertical farming has long been practiced in Japan and some other places but it did not take off in the United States until

recent technological leaps made it viable. A key component has been LED bulbs, which have enabled indoor farmers to drastically cut electricity costs. But Bowery is also making heavy use of robotics and artificial intelligence to keep prices under control. The combination of these newer tools "is how we really rethink what agriculture will look like in the next century and beyond," Fain said.

The company has also benefited from more than \$120 million in funding from tech titans including Google Ventures and Uber Chief Executive Dara Khosrowshahi.

The Silicon Valley connection has also boosted San Francisco-based Plenty, another prom-

inent vertical farming company, which has garnered more than \$200 million from Amazon Chief Executive Jeff Bezos, Softbank and others. US-based Crop One and Emirates Flight Catering have launched a \$40 million joint venture to build a giant vertical farming facility in Dubai.

Profitable?

The world's biggest vertical farm is in Newark, New Jersey and operated by AeroFarms. The company, founded in 2004 and considered a pioneer in the sector, remains privately-held and does not disclose financial data. But the company says it is now profitable after a series of fumbles. David Chang, founder of

the noodle restaurant brand Momofuku, is an investor. AeroFarms exclusively uses company-made technology that has now made its way to China, the Middle East and Europe, said its co-founder Marc Oshima.

In a warehouse that was once a steel mill with 40-foot (12-meter) ceilings, the company is growing kale and arugula leaves set in rows of 12 metal racks each. The roots are suspended in the air as they are intermittently irrigated while the leaves bask under LED lights. AeroFarms experiments regularly with lighting and nutrients with an eye towards finding the optimal recipe for each plant and developing the best algorithm. — AFP ■



A Bowery Farming employee inspects some of their greens grown at the hydroponic farming company in Kearny, New Jersey. PHOTO: AFP

Laser tweezers used to boost liquid crystal technology

CHICAGO—US researchers said that by using a combination of flow and light, they can create defects that remain stable in the liquid crystal over long periods of time.

The breakthrough could ultimately result in using liquids in new ways, such as to create new kinds of autonomous materials or nanoscale reactors, said a news release posted on the website of the University of Chicago Friday.

To create the defects in the liquid crystals, researchers with the Institute for Molecular Engineering at the University of Chicago and the University of Ljubljana used laser tweezers, a laser system that can manipulate particles at the nanoscale, to heat up and melt either a tiny point or a line within the material.

While the bulk of the liquid crystal remained ordered, the melted spot, several microns in size and just a little smaller than a single red blood cell, became disorganized. As it cooled, the molten liquid becomes re-ordered, and forms a defect on its trail.

As such defects cost the material energy, the material experiences strong driving forces to eliminate them, and it eventually reverts to a uniform, defect-free state. —Xinhua ■



Thailand shooter Isaranuudom Phurihiranphat is only 14, but says he is eyeing World Cup gold. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thailand's 14-year-old shooting prodigy aims for World Cup gold

NEW DELHI (India)—Thailand's James Bond-loving ace sport shooter says he is unfazed by his older opponents as the high school prodigy sets his sights on World Cup gold in India this week.

Isaranuudom Phurihiranphat is the youngest competitor at the tournament and the 14-year-old faces a strong field in the 25-metre rapid fire pistol event.

"I know I am the youngest in these games. There is tough competition but I don't feel any pressure. I stay relaxed and calm when I shoot," he told AFP after practice at the New Delhi shooting range.

"Of course I'll go for gold. I feel I can do it. My aim is to participate in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," he added.

Isaranuudom says his love of British spy films motivated him to become a full-time sporting shooter at the age of nine.

"I liked guns since I was a small boy. I also watched a lot of James Bond movies," he said.

"My favourite is Johnny English," he added, referring to the slapstick British spy film franchise.

But his parents have also motivated him all of the way, with his mother Phon Phak travelling with her only child to the Indian capital as one of the Thailand shooting squad's managers.

"My father is a captain of a ship and my mother runs a business. They helped me pursue my sport full-time. My mother travels with me to all

events and she wants me to do something more than just study."

Phon is all praise for Isaranuudom's "focus" at such a young age as she recalls his early trips to the Bangkok shooting academy from their home four hours away in Nakhon Ratchasima city.

"He is very focused regarding his shooting career which is rare at such a young age. He just loves the sport and will achieve great heights," she told AFP.

"It was not easy travelling from our hometown to the Bangkok shooting range where he trained during his holidays. But I am always there with him," she added.

Isaranuudom is still searching for his first medal in a senior competition after representing Thailand at the Asian Games in Indonesia and the World Championships in South Korea.

The Delhi event is the teenager's fourth World Cup tournament after competing in junior events and he has more than 10 medals in international competitions.

"I started as a air pistol shooter when I was nine years old. But realised that I wasn't too good at it, so switched to 25-meter rapid fire and got results in just two years," he said.

"I like rapid fire because it's fast, I don't like things slow. I shot in my first competition in 2015 in a Thailand event and got gold."

The tournament in Delhi concludes on Thursday.—**AFP** ■

AFC Cup: Shan United leave for Philippines to take on Ceres Negros

SHAN United F.C., who are representing Myanmar at the AFC Cup 2019, left yesterday for Bacolod in the Philippines, where they will play against Ceres Negros F.C. in an important match on 26 February.

The face-off will take place at the home stadium of the Ceres team in Bacolod at 7.30 p.m. local time, according to the team's website.

Speaking about playing an important match against the Philippines club, U Min Tun, the head coach of Shan United said: "I have carefully observed the playing style of the Ceres Negros F.C. The team has many talented and well-experienced players. We will try not to concede goals and use responsive attacks in playing against them. The team has an impressive

forward and midfield line-up, and have worked on their long pass. We are well-prepared for the match as Ceres has a good history and a very good team."

"Shan United is ready to play the match. Although two players — Keeper Phone Thitsar Min and Hein Thiha Zaw — have been injured, the team sees no problems ahead of the match," said officials.—**Lynn Thit(Tgi)** ■



Shan United team leaves for the Philippines yesterday to take on Ceres Negros FC. **PHOTO: SUFC**

Myanmar U-16 team ready for AFC women's qualifiers

MYANMAR U-16 women's national football team are preparing for the second round of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers, which will be held in Mandalay starting Tuesday.

Host Myanmar has been placed in Group B together with China PR, Bangladesh, and the Philippines. Myanmar will play against China in the opening match on 27 February, Bangladesh on 1 March, and the Philippines on 3 March at

the Mandalay Thiri Stadium in Mandalay.

Reflecting on the battle, Myanmar star footballer Myat Noe Khin said she believed the team will advance to the next stage of the championship as they are in peak form, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

Myat Noe Khin said she is aiming to compete in the U-17 Women's FIFA World Cup after passing the AFC U-16 stage.

Another star player Swe

Mar Aung said she was pleased with the understanding displayed by her teammates, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

She said the team is ready for each match in Round 2 of the qualifiers.

Matches featuring Myanmar will be broadcast live on the Myawady Channel and on My Sports' Facebook page, according to the football federation.—**Lynn Thit(Tgi)** ■



The Myanmar U-16 women's national football team undergoes training in Mandalay. **PHOTO:MFF**