

PARLIAMENT

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses, approves ratification of AHKFTA and AHKIA

PAGE-2

NATIONAL

Senior General receives PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Special Envoy for Asian Affairs

PAGE-4

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Coordination meeting of Special Economic Zones Central Committee held in Nay Pyi Taw



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the coordination meeting 1/2019 of MSEZCC in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHAIRMAN of the Myanmar Special Economic Zones Central Committee (MSEZCC) Vice President U Henry Van Thio addressed the coordination meeting 1/2019 of MSEZCC held at the Ministry of Commerce meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was attended by Union Ministers Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing, U Thein Swe,

U Khin Maung Cho, Dr. Than Myint and U Han Zaw, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Region Chief Ministers Dr. Lei Lei Maw and U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Ministers U Aung Htoo and U Set Aung, chairmen and vice chairmen of Thilawa SEZ, Kyaukphyu SEZ and Dawei SEZ management committees and officials.

At the meeting the Vice President said SEZs played an important role in the country's

economic development and concerted efforts were being made towards successful implementation of SEZs.

Of the three SEZs under implementation, Thilawa SEZ can be said of having reached a certain level. A total of 105 companies had investments and the investments had increased to US\$ 1.6 billion. A total of 65 factories were in operation now.

Looking at Kyaukphyu SEZ, the Framework Agreement was

signed with CITIC Group Company that had won the project tender and discussions and negotiations were learnt to be continuing on the matter of Transaction Documents, EIA, SIA and G.T surveys for deep sea port project. All were urged to conduct towards a timely progress so that project works were not delayed. As Kyaukphyu SEZ was linked to geopolitics, discussions and coordination were to be conducted thoroughly.

Progress and implementation of Dawei SEZ was seen to be slow and weak. Draft Terms of Reference (TOR) between NEDA of Thailand and Ministry of Construction was coordinated for a two-lane motor vehicle road connecting Dawei SEZ and Htikee and it has been learnt that site visits had been conducted. Progress was slow in continuing preliminary projects.

SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe receives Chinese Special Envoy

PAGE-4



NATIONAL

AA insurgents attack four vehicles on Thandwe Sittway Road, killing two police

PAGE-7

BUSINESS

Rakhine investment fair attracts 30 proposals worth \$5 bln

PAGE-6



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw discusses, approves ratification of AHKFTA and AHKIA

By Aung Maw, Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

THE eleventh-day meeting of the eleventh regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw was held at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning where Hluttaw representatives discussed and approved the ratification of ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Free Trade Agreement (AHKFTA) and ASEAN-Hong Kong, China Investment Agreement (AHKIA).

The Hluttaw also put on record a bill, replaced members of a joint committee and extend the committee and another committee's terms for another year, voted down to extend the term of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission and reports on a bills read.

Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Bill put on record

First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced the Hluttaw putting on record the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Bill considered as approved by the Hluttaw.

Replacement of members of committees and extension of the committees' terms

Next, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker said Joint Committee on ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and Joint Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Union were formed in 1 March 2016 and the terms were extended annually. Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker submitted to the Hluttaw on the replacement of Joint Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Union member Pyithu Hluttaw representative Daw Nan Moe of Mantong constituency and Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Brig-Gen Win Ko Ko with Pyithu Hluttaw representative Dr. Soe Moe Thu of Myaungmya constituency and Tatmadaw Pyithu Hluttaw representative Brig-Gen Zaw Win.

As there was no objection to extending the committees' terms for another year and to the replacement of two members of Inter-Parliamentary Union the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced the approval of the Hluttaw on the matter.



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is being convened in Nay Pyi Taw. PHOTO: MNA



U Kyaw Soe Lin. PHOTO: MNA



U Zaw Win. PHOTO: MNA



U Set Aung. PHOTO: MNA



U Aye Min Han. PHOTO: MNA

Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission term not extended

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker then said Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission was formed on 1 March 2016 and the term extended annually. A draft announcement on extending the term of this committee was also being distributed to the Hluttaw representatives. As there were objections toward extending the term of this commission the matter was put up for a vote and there were 20 for, 555 against and 10 abstaining toward the extension. As such, Hluttaw announce its disapproval of extending the term of the Commission for another year.

Joint Bill Committee report on Invention Patent Rights Bill read and submitted

Afterwards Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee secretary U Kyaw Soe Lin read and submitted to the Hluttaw the committee's findings and comment report on Invention

Patent Right Bill.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the report to register their names.

Joint Bill Committee report on Occupational Safety and Health Bill read and submitted

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee member U Zaw Win also read and submitted to the Hluttaw the committee's findings and comment report on Occupational Safety and Health Bill in which the two Hluttaws were in disagreement.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker announced for Hluttaw representatives who want to table amendment motions specifically on the matters in which the two Hluttaws were in disagreement to register their names.

Hluttaw discusses and approves the ratification of AHKFTA and AHKIA

As a final agenda of the day, Hluttaw representatives, Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung discussed and

the Hluttaw approved the ratification of AHKFTA and AHKIA.

First ratification of AHKFTA was discussed by U Aye Min Han of Mon State constituency 1, U Than Soe @ Than Soe (Economic) of Yangon Region constituency 4 and U Zarni Min of Shwegu constituency.

In his discussion Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung said AHKFTA strengthen economic connection and cooperation between ten ASEAN countries and Hong Kong, China and will create opportunities in trade and investment. It will also support ease and smooth trade. Mutual trade between Myanmar and Hong Kong, China will increase and benefit service trade and investment sectors and recommend for the Hluttaw to approve the ratification of AHKFTA.

As the Hluttaw decided to approve the matter, an announcement was accordingly made by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

Ratification procedure of AHKIA was then discussed by Daw Htu May of Rakhine State constituency 11, U Khin Cho of

Hlaingbwe constituency, U Zarni Min of Shwegu constituency, U Than Soe @ Than Soe (Economic) of Yangon Region constituency 4 and U Kyaw Thaung of Sagaing Region constituency 1.

In his discussion Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung said AHKIA was drawn up with the aim of increasing investment between ASEAN member countries and Hong Kong, China and is based on relaxing, protecting, easing and speeding up investment. As Hong Kong, China is included as the main countries to invite toward increasing investment in Myanmar. AHKIA will support increasing investment works in Myanmar and recommend for the Hluttaw to ratify AHKIA.

As the Hluttaw also decided to approve the matter, an announcement was accordingly made by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker.

The 12th-day meeting of eleventh regular session of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 March it is learnt. ■ (Translated by Zaw Min)

Coordination meeting of Special Economic Zones Central Committee held in Nay Pyi Taw

FROM PAGE-1

Negotiations and discussions on Dawei SEZ were being done through government to government and with ITD. There should be open and transparent discussions by the Management Committee on preliminary legal study and assessment and future programs. Myanmar-Thailand-Japan tripartite coordination was required for the slow progress of preliminary projects. Coordination was required to hold Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting on Dawei SEZ. Efforts must be made towards effective progress of SEZs. Emphasis must be placed towards making the role of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) formed for Dawei SEZ projects more active and alive. Discussions were invited on ways and means of starting the main project.

SEZs were very important for a country's economic development and were also an opportunity to create jobs for local people. Systematic efforts were to be made towards successful implementation of SEZs under implementation. Foreign investors were required to invest with trust and confidence. Ministerial departments were to coordinate in providing services in accordance with the law and international norms for investors. Only then would foreign investors invest. Meeting attendees were urged to discuss openly and transparently for economic development and for the benefit of the people and the country, said the Vice President.

Next, Central Committee Vice Chairman Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe suggested and discussed about Thilawa, Kyaukphyu and Dawei SEZs while Central Committee secretary Union Minister Dr. Than



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe.



Union Minister U Thein Swe.



Union Minister U Han Zaw.



Union Minister U Ohn Win.



Union Minister Dr. Than Myint.



Union Minister U Win Khaing.



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung.



Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo.

Myint explained about decisions to be made by the Central Committee and future work programs and Central Committee joint secretary Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo explained about decisions made at work coordination meeting 1/2018 and status of implementation.

Afterwards Thilawa SEZ management committee chairman Deputy Minister U Set Aung, Dawei SEZ management committee vice chairman Dr. Myint Hsan and Ministry of Commerce Union Minister's Office Director General U Aung Soe provided sector wise explanation about works conducted, ongoing and future works of Thilawa, Dawei and

Kyaukphyu SEZs.

Union Minister U Han Zaw, U Thant Sin Maung, U Ohn Win, U Win Khaing, U Thein Swe and Dr. Than Myint, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo, Region Chief Ministers Dr. Lei Lei Maw and U Phyo Min Thein and Deputy Minister U Set Aung also discussed about Thilawa, Dawei and Kyaukphyu SEZs.

MSEZCC Chairman Vice President U Henry Van Thio then said implementation of SEZs needed to be conducted with a holistic view and well-coordinated. Negotiations on ongoing SEZs needed to achieve fair results for both sides. Laws and rule needed to be up to international norms and standards to successfully implement SEZs and changes were to be made where required.

Land matters and other matters submitted were to be coordinated with the Yangon Region government for resolution. Thilawa SEZ was a model for all SEZs and the systems practiced there need to be continuously studied and changed towards achieving international standards. In the same way, one stop service matters need to be coordinated with the participation of relevant ministries.

For ongoing discussions and negotiations on Kyaukphyu

Laws and rule are to be up to international norms and standards to successfully implement SEZs and changes are to be made where required.

SEZ and deep sea port project to complete in a timely manner, relevant departments need to coordinate for the benefit of the country in accordance with legal norms and procedures. Kyaukphyu project was related to One Belt One Road project of the People's Republic of China which required works to be conducted in a set time frame.

On Dawei SEZ, Joint Higher Committee (JHC) meetings were to be conducted if required based on the outcome of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meetings.

The Ministry of Construction was to set up a time frame on the project to upgrade the Dawei-Htikee two-lane road.

While conducting discussion and negotiations, if there were matters requiring policy decisions, not to wait for the central committee meeting and submit the matter direct to the central committee chairman in a timely manner so that decisions could be obtained, said the Vice President.

The meeting came to a close after the Vice President's concluding remarks in which he stressed the need to achieve progress in implementation of SEZs within the government's terms so that people obtain practical benefits and their expectations were kept alive. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Coordination between the Myanmar-Thailand-Japan tripartite is required, due to the slow progress in the preliminary projects. Joint action is required to hold Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meetings on opening the Dawei SEZ.

Senior General receives PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Special Envoy for Asian Affairs

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, received Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (PRC), at the Bayintnaung guest house in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

During the meeting, observations made by PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Special Envoy during his visit to northern Rakhine State Buthidaung and Maungdaw regions, arrangements made by the Myanmar side on receiving returnees, China's continued support for the Myanmar government and the Tatmadaw at the United Nations as well as in the international

arena, status of ARSA terrorist insurgents and AA insurgents working together to destabilize regional stability in Rakhine State along the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, status of Tatmadaw's efforts toward achieving permanent peace throughout the entire country by 2020, support provided by China in this effort and status of cooperation towards achieving stability and peace in northern Myanmar region and along the border of the two countries were discussed according to news released by the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing holds talks with Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Mr. Sun Guoxiang in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF**

Union Minister receives Chinese Special Envoy

UNION Minister from the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe received Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) at the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, preparations made by Myanmar to receive displaced from Rakhine State north, and national reconciliation and peace matters were openly discussed and views exchanged.

Present at the meeting were Deputy Minister from the Office of the State Counsellor U Khin Maung Tin, Director General U Zaw Htay and U Win Kyaw Aung, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Director General U Aung Ko and officials from the Myanmar side and Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of the People's Republic of China was accompanied by PRC Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Hong Liang and officials. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe meets with Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Mr. Sun Guoxiang in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

JICA's Create Team, MoI meet on improving quality of school textbooks



Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun delivers the speech at the meeting with JICA's Create Team. **PHOTO: MNA**

JAPAN International Cooperation Agency's Create Team (Curriculum Reform at Primary

Level of Basic Education), which is working with MoI for printing school textbooks, outlined the

requirements for improving the quality of textbooks at the Ministry of Information yesterday.

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun, in his capacity as the chairman of the Committee for Accepting and Scrutinizing Tender for School Textbooks, delivered the opening remarks.

Afterwards, Mr. Fumitaka Sato, Printing Technology Specialist and Project Coordinator of Hikari Miyahara at JICA, discussed applicable standards and raw materials for improving the quality of school textbooks, the requirements for printing textbooks, and cooperation with JICA.

In another meeting on printing of school textbooks for the 2019-2020 academic year, U Myo Myint Maung, the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, reported on the status of printing,

production target, working with private printers, and work done by the Printing and Publishing Department.

Afterwards, U Aung Myo Myint, the Director-General of the Printing and Publishing Department, reported on the arrival of raw materials for printing of textbooks for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Representatives from the Myanmar Printing and Publishing Association (Yangon), the Upper Myanmar Printing and Publishing Association (Mandalay), and the Excellent Printing Group made suggestions at the meeting. The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the deputy minister.—MNA (Translated by GNLM)

Union Minister for Border Affairs receives PRC Special Envoy for Asian Affairs

UNION Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung received Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, at the ministry meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

At the meeting, ministry's work on development and progress of border area in Myanmar where development lags behind; works on human resources development of ethnic nationals

in the border regions; border region socio-economic development; agriculture and livestock breeding to substitute opium production; internal peace and national reconciliation matters, Ministry of Border Affairs co-operating with United Nations agencies, international organisations and non-government organisations; and bilateral cooperation were cordially and openly discussed.—MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Ye Aung holds meeting with Mr. Sun Guoxiang, Special Envoy for Asian Affairs from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Steering committee holds meeting for Myanmar Country Programme

THE National Level Steering Committee for Implementing Myanmar's Country Programme 2014-2019 held a meeting at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Attending the meeting were the chairman of the steering committee Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Thu, Deputy Chief of Myanmar Police Force, officials from the Union Supreme Court office, relevant ministries, Union At-

torney-General office, and the Anti-Corruption Commission, Mr. Troels Vester, Myanmar Country Manager for UNODC, and other representatives.

Participants at the meeting discussed completed tasks, weaknesses and advantages of the Country Programme conducted in 2018, in relation to its five task areas. They also discussed the tasks to be carried out in 2019. —MNA ■ (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Thu addresses the meeting of the Steering Committee for Implementing Myanmar's Country Programme. **PHOTO: MNA**

Nay Pyi Taw hosts 27th Meeting of ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on Implementation of Declaration on Conduct of Parties in South China Sea



The 27th Meeting of the ASEAN-China JWG-DOC in progress in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

MYANMAR hosted the 27th Meeting of the ASEAN-China Joint Working Group on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (JWG-DOC) in Nay Pyi Taw from 27 February to 28 February 2019 and the Meeting was attended by Officials from Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, the People's Republic of China and

the ASEAN Secretariat.

The Meeting discussed the Single Draft COC Negotiating Text, exchanged views on the development in the South China Sea and acknowledged the progress in the implementation of the DOC and the negotiations of the COC.

The Meeting also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security and stability and recognized the benefits of having the South Chi-

na Sea as a sea of peace, stability and prosperity.

U Hau Khan Sum, Director-General of the ASEAN Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted a Welcome Dinner to the Delegations of 27th JWG-DOC at M Gallery Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw on the evening of 27th February 2019.

It is learnt that the 28th JWG-DOC will be held back to back with 17th SOM-DOC in China in May 2019.—MNA ■

Myanmar Police Force discusses tasks for third year of combating trafficking in persons project

AS the Third Five-Year Project (2017-2021) of Myanmar's Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce enters its third year, a coordination meeting was held at the headquarters of Myanmar Police Force yesterday to discuss future implementations for 2019.

Attending the meeting were Chief of Myanmar Police Force

Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, who is also Chairman of the National Task Force of the Implementation Working Group for the five-year project, and 34 other members.

The Police Chief first delivered the opening speech and the head of the Anti-Human Trafficking Taskforce explained the

tasks for 2019. This was followed by the participants engaging in general discussions, after which, the Police Chief concluded the meeting with a closing speech, according to information released by Myanmar Police Force. —MNA

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Myanmar Police Force Chief Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo addresses the coordination meeting for implementing the third year of the anti-human trafficking project (2017-2021). **PHOTO: MNA**

Rakhine investment fair attracts 30 proposals worth \$5 bln

A total of 30 agreements worth US\$5 billion were signed at the Rakhine State Investment Fair 2019, with the state's hotels and tourism sector topping the list of both local and foreign investors.

"Local and foreign investors have submitted proposals to invest in Rakhine State as they see the State's prospects. Thirty agreements were signed at the fair. Of them, 27 are Expressions of Interest, two are project proposals, one is a B-to-B MoU. The proposals are valued at \$5.249 billion," said Dr. Htoo Min Thein, the Secretary of the Rakhine State Investment Committee.

The hotels and tourism sector has topped in the list of investments, followed by agriculture, energy, livestock and fishery, production, construction, human resource development, and other sectors.

"Investors in the hotels and

tourism sector focused on areas around Manaung, Ngapali beach, and Gwa beach. They have also shown interest in the livestock and fishery sector in northern and southern areas in Rakhine State. Fish and prawn units are expected to enter there," said Dr. Htoo Min Thein.

During the investment fair, which was held from 21 to 23 February on Ngapali Beach in Thandwe, Rakhine State, about 14 proposals were submitted to the State government for investment in the hotels and tourism sector, which can create more jobs than other sectors.

More than 600 local and foreign businesspersons attended the fair and visited areas which have potential for business.

The investment fair was organized by the Rakhine State government with support from the Myanmar Investment Commission, the Japan International



Workers processing fish for export at a marine products factory in Thandwe.

PHOTO: HAN LIN NAING

Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), the Myanmar Survey Research Co. Ltd

(MSR), and private sector companies with the aim to create investment opportunities and connect local businesses with

domestic and foreign investors for economic development of Rakhine State.—Han Lin Naing, Yamanya ■

Ban Bwe Gyin waterfall in Nawngkhio set to be new travel spot



Tourists stand for a photograph on a ledge protruding along the Ban Bwe Gyin waterfall in Nawngkhio Township in Northern Shan State. PHOTO:

THE Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Upper Myanmar) will arrange regular trips to the Ban Bwe Gyin waterfall in Nawngkhio Township, Northern Shan State, as part of efforts for promoting the waterfall as a new destination for travellers. The waterfall is located 23 miles far from PyinOoLwin in the Ban Bwe Kyin village-tract of Nawngkhio Township, which shares a border with PyinOoLwin and Madaya townships.

An elephant camp will be set up near the waterfall, where visitors can also enjoy the natural scenic beauty of nearby mountain ranges. "The new destination will attract tourists as a water-related recreation site. Visitors will also get to see the

natural beauty of PyinOolwin. We are planning trips to the natural and untouched waterfall. We will ensure the safety of visitors," said U San Yu, the Director of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Upper Myanmar).

Mandalay Region is planning to create a new trip wherein travellers can explore scenic spots, ancient culture, and take part in adventure activities.

"Mandalay and Bagan have several cultural heritage sites. Tourists will be bored if they have to visit pagodas and historical places only. Tourists from eastern countries are flowing into Myanmar and we need to draw their attention and satisfy them. Therefore, we have to create new

destinations for tourists," he added. According to data from the Mandalay Region's Directorate of Hotels and Tourism, a total of 67,204 tourists have visited Mandalay. Among them, 43,509 were from Asian countries. Of the Asian visitors, there were 31,968 visitors from China, 1,729 from Japan, 1,711 from South Korea, and 2,626 from Thailand.

The Ban Bwe Gyin waterfall has become famous since 2018. Thus, there are plans to construct the Mandalay-Mogoke road section, which is about 9 miles from Inma village. About K30 million has been allocated for building toilets and towers.—Aung Thant Khine ■

(Translated by La Wonn)

MFF seeks law against mixed breeding of fish and livestock

By Aye Yamone

THE Myanmar Fisheries Federation has asked the government to promulgate a law to prohibit mixed farming of fish and livestock.

"Foreign entrepreneurs are renting an acre of land for K300,000 to K500,000 from local farmers. Therefore, the MFF has requested the Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to remove entrepreneurs conducting mixed farming when local farmers inform the authorities about them," said officials at a seminar on development of fish farming industry, held on 24 February at MFF, Yangon.

"Nations around the world do not accept farming practices under which breeding areas for chicken, pigs, cows, and ducks are built over fish breeding ponds, with fish ingesting animal excrement falling directly on ponds from breeding areas above. But this system is being widely practiced in Myanmar. From the health point of view, this system is quite unsafe. So, the government needs to enact a law to prohibit such an evil practice," said U Htay Myint, the chairman of the federation.

Myanmar imports lower-quality fish due to scarcity of fish and high prices in the

local market. Breeders have been focusing on the mixed breeding system to reduce the cost of farming fish.

An important fact is that the mixed farms are susceptible to bacterial infection.

"The mixed breeding system does not yield good products. This new farming system was first adopted by Thailand and China.

Today, countries focus on food safety. So, they don't practice that system of fish farming anymore. If we continue to practice such a system, our people will suffer," said Dr. Toe Nanda Tin, the vice chairperson of the MFF.

"Earlier, some experts conducted training courses on mixed farming to reduce the costs of livestock breeding, but local farmers do not breed fish using that system. Now, Chinese breeders are practising this mixed system widely in our country," said U Tun Aye, the chairman of Myanmar Fishery Products Processors and Exporters Association.

"Moreover, entrepreneurs must be aware that the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA) will come and inspect our fish farming system, and they can object if they find us practising mixed breeding," he said. ■(Translated by Hay Mar)

Gov't to register people with disabilities, assign disability rating



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye poses for the photo together with attendees at the workshop on disability rating and registration of people with disabilities in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

A workshop on disability rating and registration of people with disabilities was held on 27-28 February in Nay Pyi Taw.

Speaking at the workshop, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Chairman of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee, said the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement is focusing on capacity building to develop human resources with the help of related ministries, civil society organizations, and the general public.

“To improve the social status and ensure the development of individuals, we are providing social protection services. We’ve directed our efforts to natural disaster management to mitigate the damage caused by disasters, which are obstacles to national development. New laws, rules, and regulations have already been adopted to enable people with disabilities to raise their social status as well as bring about national economic development. Giving support to people with disabilities is part of social protection assessment. The Ministry can reduce the number of people with disabilities by fulfilling their requirements along with working for growth and development of children,” he said.

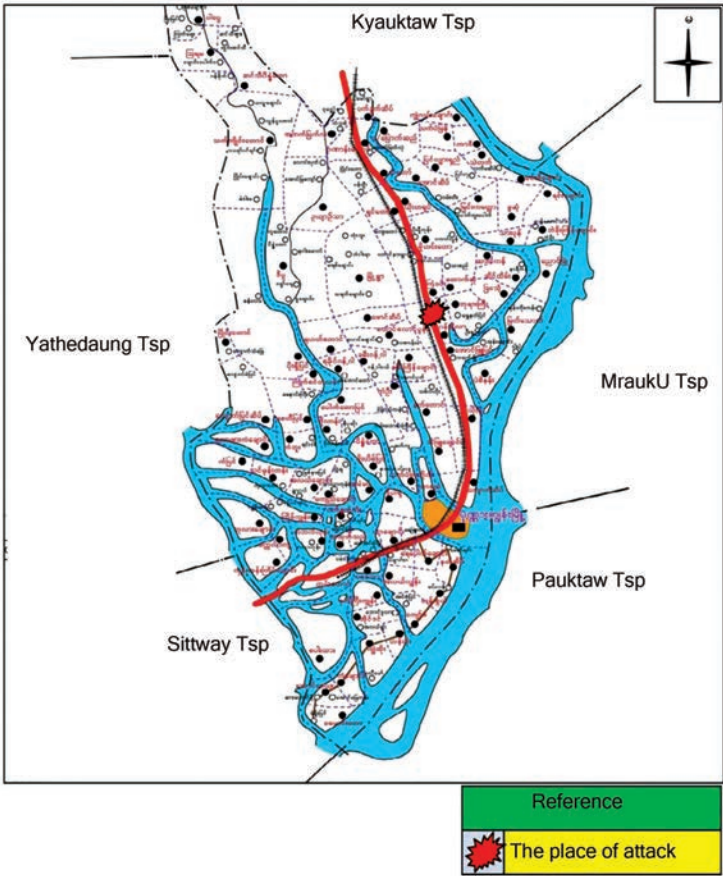
“We also need to record the exact number of people with disabilities to enable them to have free access to education and primary healthcare, in addition to creating job opportunities for them. We will conduct a disability rating exercise and register people with disabilities in Yangon and Bago regions, and Kayin State as a trial run,” said the minister.

The workshop was held to enable people with disabilities to enjoy their rights, he added.

Thereafter, UNICEF representative to Myanmar, Ms. June Kunugi, also explained the objectives for holding the workshop. The workshop was led by officials from related departments and other organizations. Participants discussed their role and responsibility in defining the level of disability, registration of people with disabilities, forming a registration committee, and assigning responsibility to people with disabilities.—MNA ■

(Translated by Hay Mar)

AA insurgents attack four vehicles on Thandwe-Sittway Road, killing two police



AA insurgents attacked four vehicles en route from Thandwe to Sittway on 27 February, killing two policemen.

Three cars belonging to the Myanmar Police Force and one Mark II driven by four police were struck with a landmine and shot by the insurgents near Mile Post 165 on the Yangon-Sittway Road between Pannila Village and Kyangin Village in Ponnagyun Township at 7:45 pm on Wednesday.

Regarding the attack, the Myanmar Police Force announced that the deadly attack showed AA insurgents committed destructive acts attacking vehicles which are not related with any operations on the public road, adding that it would take actions against AA in accordance with the law.—MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Public announcement for remonstration

THE Party for People headquartered at No. (4/361), Karya (12) Road, Thingangyungyi in Mingalardon Township, Yangon Region, submitted an application to change their party’s name from the ‘Negotiations and Stability Party’ to ‘The Party for People’ in accord with Section 9 of the Political Parties Registration Law, on 15-2-2019.

In accord with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules, it is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party’s name, may submit a complaint along with supporting evidence within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement. —Union Election Commission

One more political party applies for registration

REGISTRATION of political parties are being scrutinized by the Union Election Commission (UEC), The Yeomanry Development Party (YDP) came to UEC to register itself as a political party on 27 February 2019. —MNA

Public announcement for remonstration

THE Yeomanry Development Party (YDP) headquartered at No. (9), ground floor, Patheinnnyunt (5) Road, Patheinnnyunt Ward, Mingalar Taungnyunt Township in Yangon Region, submitted an application for registration as a political party in accord with Section 5 of the Political Parties Registration Law, on 27-2-2019. In their application they mentioned that they will use the name, the flag and the emblem as described hereunder.

In accord with Section 14 (d) of the Political Parties Registration Rules, it is hereby announced that those who want to remonstrate with the UEC about the party’s name, flag and emblem may submit a complaint along with the supporting evidence within seven days starting from issuance of this announcement. —Union Election Commission



Flag



Emblem

Govt must make a calculated leap to keep up with digital age

WITH the advancements in communications technology, the world has become a global village that allows its inhabitants to connect with each other faster than ever. We can send images, audio, and text to people far away from us. However, this technology needs to be equally accessible to all countries if we are to progress further together.

Myanmar has only been able to use modern communications technology in the last two decades. Between the private and public sectors, we can see that the private sector has been developing rapidly in this regard. The number of mobile phone connections has exceeded the number of people living in the country, and the teledensity of Myanmar has reached more than 100 per cent, with

over 80 per cent users having access to the Internet.

"To swiftly develop Myanmar's economy, we must establish a data ID card system, a digital government strategy, and an e-Government system. This will allow Myanmar to integrate with the developing world and provide us with opportunities to overcome the challenges daunting the country. This is why quickly implementing the e-Government system is of critical importance," said State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the third coordination meeting of the e-Government Steering Committee, of which she is the Patron.

While the proliferation of communications technology in Myanmar and the number of users is increasing rapidly, the system in use needs to be in tune with the modern technology used in the world. The system needs to meet set standards and protect public and national security as well. The fast pace of development in the

digital age poses its share of challenges when it comes to upgrading communication systems. We need to convert the challenges into constructive efforts for development and ensuring smoother usability.

The government needs to expand the e-Government system it is using to cover the entire country. During the e-Government Steering Committee's first coordination meeting, the Patron said there were three essential components for the success of e-Government, namely, skills, investment, and cooperation. Of the three, cooperation is the first that needs to be initiated, and government departments need to work closely with each other for e-Government to succeed.

The State Counsellor has pointed out that the current requirement is a standardized Myanmar font so that people can easily access the government's electronic services in Burmese. She said the current Myanmar font is not widely understood and this needs to be changed as soon as possible.

We urge the government and the private sector to continue doing the best they can to bring in the financial and technological investments necessary to upgrade and expand our communications system and network across the entire country.

Systematic care of polders will increase crop production

By Thapya Tun

TO develop the agricultural sector in Myanmar's delta region, the World Bank supported the Lower Burma Paddyland Development Project, as part of the UN development programme. The Paddy I Project was carried out in Pyapon, Labutta, Ngapudaw, Bogale, and Wakema townships from 1976 to 1985. Paddy II Project was undertaken in Kyaiklat-Maubin, Bogale, Thanlyin, and Labutta townships from 1978 to 1990.

The projects led to the formation of polders to expand agricultural areas, build sluices, canals, and other projects that will help with agriculture and irrigation. This has helped in reducing flooding, controlling freshwater, and enabling seasonal planting which have established the region as a formidable agricultural success for many years.



Polder, embankment, sluice gate and summer paddy field in Pyapon in Ayeyawady Region.

To ensure successful crop plantations in Myanmar's vital delta region, authorities regularly implement polders which also expand farmlands and reduce flooding in the surrounding region. The areas near the estuary, especially lowlands nearer to the sea, are prone to flooding from the

rising tide or influx of saltwater. To form agricultural lands from these areas, officials survey the land and dig up polders to avert saltwater currents.

The polders gather up rainwater which is directed into nearby creeks to create an arable land in the vicinity. Irrigation experts

agree that polders are indispensable for averting flooding and the overwhelming saltwater influx that comes with it.

The delta region with its polders and embankments is divided into three areas: upper region, middle region, and lower region.

In the upper region we have

Hinthada, Laymyethna, Zalun, Ngathaingchaung, Yekyi, Kyonpyaw, Sakargyi, Danubyu, Kyaunggon, and Athot townships. In the middle region there is Nyaungdon, Pantanaw, Einme, Shwelaung, Wakema, Maubin, Kyaiklat, Mawlamyinegyun, and Bogale townships. In the lower region there is Pathein, Pyapon, Dedaye, Labutta, Setsan, and Kyonegadun townships. It is these areas that were included in Paddy I and Paddy II projects of the Lower Burma Paddyland Development Project.

While these areas of the delta region were successful in the agricultural sector and possessed numerous natural advantages, the rising tide from the sea and saltwater currents from the estuary and other creeks used to cause long periods of flooding. However, since the introduction and establishment of polders and embankments, the local residents are the first to have seen the great benefits they have

brought.

The Union Government and related officials must invest time, labour and resources to maintain the polders in existence and to construct new ones in areas where arable farmlands are needed and protection from flooding is crucial. This will not only develop the socioeconomic value of the region but also increase the food supply of the nation.

Among the delta regions of Southeast Asia, the Ayeyawady delta region has the highest rainfall volume at an average of 100 inches. It can supply the water needed for agriculture and swiftly fulfil the development index. If we can continue to maintain the polders, embankments, and other irrigation measures in the region, we can continue to distinguish the Ayeyawady Region with its preeminent position as the main rice producer of Myanmar.

(Translated by Pen Dali)

Surfers ride the wave of ocean action in Myanmar blue forest

UN Environment

OCEAN lovers are often left out of the bigger environmental discussions and so struggle to see how they can do their part to stop climate change.

But one organization, Sustainable Surf, is committed to changing all that by directly engaging the global surfing community to save and restore threatened mangrove forest ecosystems. Mangroves are five times more effective at sequestering carbon emissions than land-based trees.

"Many people, including most ocean-minded individuals, inherently understand the real value of restoring coastal ecosystems as a way to protect our oceans, and ourselves. But they need an easier and more engaging pathway to get involved, and that's why we're launching project SeaTrees," said Michael Stewart, co-founder of Sustainable Surf.

The ocean-health innovation lab uses surf culture to sell a sustainable lifestyle to an audience all around the world. With SeaTrees, it will provide an online portal to surfers worldwide to calculate and offset their carbon footprint, then become 'carbon positive' by funding new mangrove trees.

"The goal is to plant one million trees on behalf of the global surfing community in 2019," said Stewart, who plans to ride the same wave that advertisers have used for years to sell products using surf culture, celebrities and events, but to promote conservation rather than consumption.

"Every corporation in the world that you can think of... They all use the imagery of surf and surf culture and coastal ecosystems to sell their products," he said.

A November 2018 survey by leading surf magazine Stab found that the surfing community considers climate change to be the biggest challenge humans face.

"The global surfing world is a US\$14 billion business, and according to The World Surf League, there's 120 million surf fans out there in the world, so if we can engage 1 per cent of them, we can plant one million trees," said Stewart.

From endangered to endangering

Mangrove trees can store five times the amount of CO₂ as terrestrial trees and provide a range of other vital functions to protect life below water and on land.

"Mangroves are often underappreciated, but they are in

fact super-ecosystems that are critical for food security, coastal protection, water quality and climate regulation," said Gabriel Grimsditch, a coastal ecosystem expert at UN Environment.

"Mangrove conservation and restoration are necessary for a healthier coastal environment and a sustainable future for hundreds of millions of people around the world," he said.

Unfortunately, mangroves are being cleared at an alarming rate, with more than half of the world's forests lost in the last 50 years. Making mangroves endangered also endangers all life on earth, because when the trees die, they release the carbon stored in coastal sediments.

According to a UN Environment report, emissions resulting from mangrove losses make up nearly one-fifth of global emissions from deforestation, resulting in economic damages of some US\$6-42 billion annually.

"If we lose these things, we are not getting them back, and they go from being the most useful carbon sinks in the world to becoming huge carbon emitters because when they're degraded, the carbon stored in mud is released back into the atmosphere," said Stewart.

From surfing to offsetting

The first place to benefit from the SeaTrees project is the Thor Heyerdahl Climate Park in Myanmar, a country with almost 4,000 miles of coastline in the Indian Ocean.

"Mangroves are disappearing in Myanmar four times faster than anywhere else in the world," said Stewart.

Reforestation projects in the park have led to five million new mangrove trees and hundreds of jobs for locals as well as support for thousands of families with living and educational resources.

Since 2015, 3.5 million mangroves have been planted in the park as part of a project led by Worldview International Fund to restore more than 2,000 hectares of degraded coastal forest.

The Thor Heyerdahl Climate Park has also driven the use of cutting-edge technology in blue carbon projects. This includes pioneering the use of aerial drones to enable rapid planting at scale in hard-to-access locations, engaging with a web-based transparent mapping platform and using digital blockchain financing to allow individuals to directly support ocean-focused conservation efforts.

Marketing a model park

In February 2018, UN Environment recognized the Thor Heyerdahl Climate Park as a potential world-changing, scalable model for rapid mangrove restoration throughout South-East Asia and globally, and in November the project gained the Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) certification.

"It's sort of the gold standard of certification for voluntary projects, and the climate park project became the very first VCS certified project in Asia," said Stewart.

This makes it the largest mangrove reforestation project to receive this certification and be able to produce carbon credits for international markets, laying the market foundations for Sustainable Surf's goal to be achieved.

"What we need to do is to help bring eyeballs and dollars so that this project can grow and fulfil its potential to grow another five million trees. Then, we have a model to hopefully replicate across Myanmar and the region," said Stewart.

In early 2019, SeaTrees will support an initial planting of trees in the VCS-certified Thor Heyerdahl Climate Park and then launch an interactive online web portal to create a 'surf forest'.

Through SeaTrees, ocean-minded people can cal-



Through SeaTrees, ocean lovers can calculate and offset their climate impacts by investing directly in coastal wetland conservation Blue Carbon projects such as mangrove forests, salt marshes and seagrass ecosystems.

PHOTO BY SUSTAINABLE SURF

culate and offset their climate impacts, and ultimately become 'climate positive' by investing directly in coastal wetland conservation Blue Carbon projects such as mangrove forests, salt marshes and seagrass ecosystems.

Blue Carbon projects selected for support on the SeaTrees platform will be chosen based on industry best practices for impact



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Wednesday 28 February 2019)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 1 March 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Chin State, scattered in Northern Shan State and isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Taninthayi regions. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy 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: Continuation of likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 1 March 2019: Partly cloudy.

validation and certification, and for their ability to scale up their impact to meet the challenge ahead.

Sustainable Surf is one of many organizations that made its voluntary commitment at the United Nations Ocean Conference in 2017 and has joined a community of ocean action brought together to save life below water

by the next event in 2020.

"Now we can actually start not just operating in our silos and with our own projects, but seeing how they overlap and basically making community happen. We are being more than just the sum of our parts," said Stewart. "That's what I'm super excited about and thank you to the United Nations for making it happen."

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Yangon circular rail upgrade will up capacity, cut travel time for round trip by 1 hr: MR

A commuter train arrives a suburb of Yangon. **PHOTO: AFP**

By Nyein Nyein

AFTER the upgrade of the Yangon Circular Railway, Myanma Railways (MR) will be able to accommodate thrice the number of passengers it serves currently, and the travel time for one round trip will also be reduced by one hour, said U Zaw Lwin, the traffic manager for the No.7 division of MR.

"At present, MR is providing transportation services to 80,000 commuters. Once the upgrade is finished, we will be able to serve three times as many passengers. There are 15-minute gaps between trains, and sometimes the gap widens to 45 minutes, causing difficulties to daily commuters. After the upgrade, the gap between trains will narrow to 10-12 minutes. The maximum speed for

trains is 40 km per hour, but trains are operating at a speed of 32 km/hr. It is estimated the train speed will increase to 60 km/hr. It takes 2 hours and 50 minutes to complete the whole route at present. The upgrade will cut travel time to 1 hour and 50 minutes," said U Zaw Lwin.

There are two parts of the Yangon Circular Railway upgrade project and the whole route is 29.5 miles long. The circular rail handles 80,000 commuters daily. The gap between trains is 15 to 45 minutes at present. It takes 2 hours and 50 minutes to complete one round trip, according to data from the No.7 division of MR.

In the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, the Yangon Circular Railway's on-time performance was recorded at 91 per cent. The rail's performance has been declin-

ing over the past 20 years. After the upgrade, MR will ensure a 100 per cent on-time running performance.

"Yangon circular trains' on-time performance did not meet expectations. MR is aiming to provide 100 per cent on-time service on the entire Yangon circular rail network," said U Kyaw Kyaw Myo, the General Manager of MR (Transport division). The Yangon circular railway is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2019, said U Tun Aung Thin, the General Manager of Myanmar Railways (Lower Myanmar).

The upgrade project has been divided into two parts. The Shwetaung Company will conduct the upgrade on the eastern part of the Yangon railway, while the A1 Company will work on the western part.

At present, the rail is running 20 additional round trips for the convenience of commuters, said U Zaw Lwin.

The upgrade project commenced on 21 December, 2018. Prior to that, the Yangon circular rail network operated 153 trips. For the duration of the project, the rail added 20 more round trips on the Yangon-Kyimyindine, Yangon-Insein, Insein-Hlawga, Yangon-Payutseikgon, Kyaikkalae-Insein rail routes. Additionally, the Yangon suburban rail service operating on Yangon-Toekyaungkalay, Yangon-Ywathagyi, Yangon-Oakphosu, Yangon-Thilawa, Yangon-East Yangon University, and Yangon-Dagon University routes is running regularly, making 68 round trips. *(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)*

Most MDR-TB cases reported in Yangon Region: 3MDG fund

OVER 53 per cent of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) cases were recorded in Yangon Region, according to the 3 Millennium Development Goals fund (3MDG).

Despite putting up a hard fight against the three fatal diseases, Myanmar still has the second highest number of new TB patients, the fourth highest number of HIV patients, and the third highest number of malaria patients in the Southeast Asia.

Of the 32,000 patients who

died of TB in Myanmar, over 4,000 patients had also contracted HIV. Myanmar still remains on the list of countries with the highest number of TB patients who do not take medicines regularly, and a high incidence of MDR-TB, and HIV and TBco-infection.

The Ministry of Health and Sports has increased its budget for the three-year TB eradication project by 2.5 per cent. The Ministry expects to reduce the incidence of TB by 40 per cent

by 2020 and MDR-TB by 5 per cent in the period from 2015 to 2020.

In Myanmar, there is higher incidence of TB among men than women. About 80 per cent of TB patients are aged between 15 and 54.

About 1.4 million people have died of tuberculosis across the country, and about 400,000 TB patients were living with HIV, according to the Nation Tuberculosis Eradication Program.

One of the world's 10 deadliest diseases, TB is identified as a public health problem by the Myanmar government. So, the Ministry is focusing on elimination of TB as a public health problem by 2020. The Ministry is also working on the eradication of MDR-TB across the country.

Based on WHO's End TB Strategy 2025, the Ministry has implemented a five-year national TB program (2016-2020).—Min Thein

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Border trade with Thailand hits nearly \$1.3 bln

BILATERAL border trade between Myanmar and Thailand between 1 October 2018 and 15 February 2019 totalled US\$1.29 billion, with exports worth \$ 926.9 million and imports worth \$ 372.6 million, according to the official's statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

The current trade figures increased by \$731.1 million against the same period of last year, when the border trade between two nations was \$ 568.3 million.

The country exports agricultural, forest and animal products, minerals, manufactured goods and other miscellaneous products to neighboring Thailand. Its import covers medicines, cosmetics, food and beverages, stationery, footwear, clothing, machinery

and other commodities.

Myanmar delivers goods to Thailand through its sea routes as well as cross-border gates. Seven border trade camps are opened between the two states, including Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Htikhee, Mawtaung and Maesai.

Among all border trade camps, the Htikhee gate saw the largest value of trade, with \$759 million during the period, followed by Myawady with \$ 321 million and Kawthoung with \$ 92 million. The trade value from all border crossings between 1 Oct 2018 and 15 Feb 2019 exceeded \$3600 billion, increasing by \$166 million over the same period last year.—Zwe ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)



Vehicles seen at Myawady border trade zone. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

IFC invests in METRO Wholesale Myanmar to expand access to quality food, support domestic farm sector

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, is providing a \$20million financing to METRO Wholesale Myanmar Limited to help create jobs, raise food safety standards, and benefit the country's food suppliers, buyers, and consumers. METRO Wholesale Myanmar offers a one-stop wholesale food service distribution for hotels, restaurants, catering firms, independent small retailers, and offices. It is a joint venture partnership between METRO AG, a leading global specialist in wholesale food and Yoma Strategic Holdings Limited, a publicly listed business corporation in Singapore with a diversified portfolio of businesses in real

estate, consumer, and financial services in Myanmar.

Progress in the agricultural sector was directly responsible for at least 46% of the reduction in poverty between 2005-2015 in Myanmar. With IFC's investment, METRO Wholesale Myanmar will drive up agricultural incomes and help reduce poverty as well as improve the quality and availability of local produce, benefiting buyers and end consumers. It will help METRO Wholesale Myanmar source majority of its produce from local farmers and companies, raising food safety standards and creating more than 300 jobs for both women and men and significant indirect em-

ployment in food processing and logistic services.

Jens Michel, CEO of METRO Wholesale Myanmar, shared "With IFC's support, we are able to initiate our operation more efficiently after building a state-of-the-art warehouse and distribution center in Yangon's Thilawa Special Economic Zone. This platform stores, processes, and distributes raw and fresh food products along with non-food and fast-moving consumer goods. In addition, it benefits from a modern value-added service area, the first of its kind in Myanmar, which undertakes rigorous quality checks and tailor-made solutions allowing customers to

order online virtually for doorstep deliveries." "IFC's investment in METRO Wholesale Myanmar is another affirmation of our commitment to improve the quality of agricultural produce in Myanmar. The aim is to ensure the availability of safe, high-quality foods from the farm to fork, increasing the agribusiness sector's export potential," said Vikram Kumar, IFC Country Manager for Myanmar and Thailand. He added, "This investment has already contributed to promoting inclusive growth as it is benefitting farmers and will eventually benefiting small and medium enterprises, and service providers along the value chain, thereby creating more jobs."

METRO Wholesale Myanmar is one of the first companies in the sector to adopt energy efficient building standards. The company's warehouse in Thilawa is compliant with IFC's EDGE (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiencies) standards by incorporating cost-effective green building features into its design.

IFC is already working with local food producers and the Myanmar government to provide training in food safety management systems, reforming regulations, and improving business environment in the agribusiness sector. Since 2013 IFC has invested and mobilized over \$1.3 billion in Myanmar. ■ GNLM

AHKFTA will encourage investments once it comes into effect: MIC

By Nyein Nyein

ONCE the ASEAN and Hong Kong Free Trade Agreement (AHKFTA) comes into force, it will help promote investments into Myanmar, according to the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC). "Hong Kong is positioned to play a prominent role in improving trade and investment flows and establishing closer links through economic integration with ASEAN, including Myanmar. AHKFTA will contribute greatly to Myanmar's investment promotion plan," said U Aung Naing Oo, the Secretary of the MIC.

"AHKFTA will lead to trade

and investment opportunities. Hong Kong has emerged as the fourth largest investor in Myanmar," according to the MIC.

Economic engagement between Myanmar and Hong Kong has been increasing at a rapid pace. From 1988 to January, 2019, Hong Kong has brought foreign direct investments of \$7.9 billion through 188 enterprises, according to official figures with the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration.

"AHKFTA covers various sectors, including freight, services, and investment. Hong Kong is ranked fourth in the list of foreign countries investing in Myanmar,"

said U Aung Naing Oo. Myanmar, being an ASEAN member country, is endeavoring for AHKFTA's coming into effect.

Additionally, Myanmar is negotiating with Hong Kong to reach a Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement. U Set Aung, the Union Minister for Planning and Finance, submitted a report at the 10th meeting of the Second Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's 11th regular session, held on 26 February, stating that Myanmar will send a notification to all signatories to show its approval for the AHKFTA taking effect. ■

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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US President Donald Trump (R) and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un hold a meeting during the second US-North Korea summit at the Sofitel Legend Metropole hotel in Hanoi on 28 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

Kim-Trump nuclear talks ends abruptly without deal

HANOI (Viet Nam) — The nuclear summit between US President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un in Hanoi ended abruptly without an agreement on Thursday, the White House said after the two leaders cut short their discussions.

The second meeting between the two leaders was supposed to build on their historic first summit in Singapore but they failed to bridge their differences and did not sign a joint statement as initially scheduled.

They had “very good and constructive meetings” and “discussed various ways to advance denuclearization and economic driven concepts”, White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement.

But she went on: “No agreement was reached at this time,” adding that their “respective teams look forward to meeting in the future.”

It fell far short of the pre-meeting expectations and hopes, after critics said their initial historic meeting in Singapore was more style over substance.

“This is a major failure,” tweeted Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund peace foundation.

It showed the limit of summitry, he added, with “not enough time or staff” to work out a deal.

In the original White House programme, a “Joint Agreement Signing Ceremony” had been scheduled in Hanoi as well as a working lunch for the two leaders. In the event, both men left the summit venue without signing anything and Trump moved up his news conference by two hours. Ankit Panda, from the Federation of American Scientists, warned on Twitter that the White House’s expectation of further talks “does not have to be a perception shared in North Korea. Kim may have left irate, for all we know. He may have no intention of continuing this.”

Trump flew around the world for the meeting and Kim undertook a mammoth two-and-a-half-day trek through China in his olive green train, travelling 4,000 kilometres (2,500 miles).

At first the smiles and bon-

homie from Singapore ran on into their second date in Hanoi as Trump touted the “special relationship” between the two, although concrete statements were vague. The US president frequently dangled the prospect of a brighter economic future for a nuclear-free North Korea, at one point saying there was “AWESOME” potential. From the outset, he had appeared to downplay expectations of an immediate breakthrough in nuclear talks, saying he was in “no rush” to clinch a rapid deal and was content if a pause in missile testing continued.

But Harry Kazianis, Director of Korean Studies at the Centre for the National Interest, said that no agreement was better than a bad one. There would be “nothing worse than signing a deal just to get something”, he told AFP.

“The challenge is North Korea’s nuclear weapons are already a reality,” he added. “Getting a deal that does little to nothing to remove that threat would be far worse than a flawed deal.”—AFP ■

Thousands stranded in Thailand after Pakistan closes airspace

BANGKOK (Thailand) — Thousands of travellers were stranded in Bangkok on Thursday when Thai Airways cancelled all flights over Pakistan after Islamabad closed its airspace in response to soaring tensions with India.

Nearly thirty flights — the majority to and from European routes—were initially affected, the airline said, with three aircraft forced to return to Bangkok’s Suvarnabhumi airport and others cancelled or set to be re-routed.

The travel disruption spun out across the region, with Singapore Airlines’ usually direct flights to Europe forced to re-fuel on Wednesday, while a flight to Frankfurt was cancelled.

The disruption follows a snowballing crisis between nuclear-armed neighbours Pakistan and India, which has raised fears of an all-out war.

Pakistan claimed it shot down two Indian Air Force planes in its airspace, although it later clarified only one Indian pilot had

been captured.

India said its forces had also shot down a Pakistani fighter jet as Pakistan suddenly closed its airspace. Thai Airways said nearly 5,000 passengers had been caught up in the drama, as it struggled to find new routes to Europe with Iran “rejecting” a request to travel over its airspace, according to a spokesperson for the carrier.

But a few hours later China gave “permission to Thai Airways ... to bypass Pakistani airspace,” according to Pratana Patanasi-ri, Thai Airways Vice President, allowing Thursday night’s flights to Europe to resume.

But frustration mounted Thursday at Bangkok’s main airport at the sudden delays.

“We have waited here for 11 or 12 hours already,” Gerda Heinzel 55, a German tourist flying back to Munich after a holiday in Phuket. “We have not been given anything to eat, anywhere to stay. There are no German-speaking staff to help us.”—AFP ■



Stranded passengers wait the Thai Airways ticket counter at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok on 28 February, 2019. PHOTO: AFP

Police took action against 40 human traffickers in Japan in 2018

TOKYO — Police took action against 40 people for human trafficking offenses such as forced prostitution in Japan last year, official data showed on Thursday, including those involved in the adult entertainment business and crime syndicates.

The number of human trafficking victims identified in the cases, mostly young Jap-

anese women or nationals of other Asian countries, stood at 25, down 17 from a year earlier amid a crackdown by the government on sexual exploitation, such as coercing women into performing in pornographic videos.

The number of human trafficking cases reported in the National Police Agency data also declined by 10 from the previous

year to 36, although the number of people allegedly involved rose by 10. Of the victims, 18 were Japanese nationals, while four were Filipinos and three were Thai.

The youngest victim was a then 9-year-old girl, whose mother was arrested for alleged crimes related to a video she produced featuring her daughter’s naked image.

Among cases of women being coerced into performing in pornographic videos, a company executive was arrested on suspicion of introducing a 19-year-old aspiring fashion model to a production company.

An NPA official warned potential victims to be wary of being tricked into becoming involved in prostitution, the sex industry, or forced labour, saying

some fell victim through social networking services.

The Japanese legal definition of human trafficking is derived from the United Nations, which states that trafficking involves “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion” for the purpose of exploitation.—Kyodo News ■

Nearly 50% of transport pollution deaths linked to diesel: study

FRANKFURT AM MAIN (Germany) — Some 385,000 people worldwide died prematurely in 2015 from air pollution caused by vehicle exhaust emissions, a US study found Wednesday, which singled out diesel engines as the main culprit.

Diesel vehicles were

responsible for 47 per cent of the deaths, it said, but the figure jumped as high as 66 per cent in France, Germany, Italy and India where diesels make up a large proportion of cars on the road.

The study was carried out by researchers from the International Council

on Clean Transportation (ICCT) — the non-governmental group that blew the whistle on Volkswagen's "dieselgate" emissions cheating scandal in 2015 — and two US universities.

"The high public health burden of diesel vehicles in Europe underscores the need for world-

class emissions standards to be accompanied by robust compliance and enforcement," said ICCT co-author Joshua Miller, calling for urgent action to replace high-emissions vehicles.

In the wide-ranging study, researchers looked at the emissions from die-

sel and non-diesel cars, trucks, buses, the shipping industry as well as agricultural and construction machinery and their impact on our health.

They found that the global transportation sector was responsible for 11 per cent of the 3.4 million premature deaths annu-

ally attributed to pollution from fine particles (PM2.5) and ground-level ozone exposure. The cost of the health burden caused by transport pollution, which has been linked to lung and heart diseases, strokes and diabetes, added up to \$1 trillion (880 billion euros) in 2015, they said.—AFP ■

Plastic found in deepest ocean animals



Microplastic particles are either dumped directly into the seas via sewers and rivers or form when larger chunks of plastic break down over time. **PHOTO: AFP**

PARIS (France) — Animals living in the deepest ocean trenches have been found with plastic fragments in their gut, according to new research published on Wednesday showing how manmade pollution reaches into the bowels of the planet.

More than 300 million tonnes of plastics are produced annually, and there are at least five trillion plastic pieces floating in our oceans.

Because deep-sea exploration is expensive and time-consuming, most studies on plastic pollution up until now had been close to the surface, showing a widespread level of plastic contamination in fish, turtles, whales and sea birds.

Now a British team of researchers say they have discovered cases of plastic ingestion among tiny shrimp in six of the world's deepest ocean trenches.

In the Mariana Trench east of the Philippines, the deepest depression on Earth, 100 per cent of the animals studied had plastic fibres in their digestive tracts.

"Half of me was expecting to find something

but that is huge," said Alan Jamieson, from Newcastle University's School of Natural and Environmental Sciences.

Jamieson and his team normally spend their time looking for new species in the depths of the ocean.

But they realised that during the course of expeditions dating back a decade they had accumulated dozens of specimens of a species of tiny shrimp that lives between 6000-11,000 metres (19,500-36,000 feet) beneath the surface.

They decided to look for plastic. "We are sitting on the deepest dataset in the world, so if we find (plastics) in these, we are done," Jamieson told AFP.

The team was astonished by just how widespread the plastic contamination at extreme depths proved to be. For instance, the Peru-Chile Trench in the southeast Pacific is around 15,000 kilometres (9,300 miles) from the Japan Trench. Yet plastic was found in both.

"It's off Japan, off New Zealand, off Peru, and each trench is phenomenally deep," Jamieson said.

"The salient point

is that they are consistently found in animals all around the Pacific at extraordinary depths so let's not waste time. It's everywhere."

'Piling our crap'

Of the 90 individual creatures the team dissected, 65 — over 72 per cent — contained at least one plastic microparticle.

The study, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, said it was unclear if the particles had been ingested by fish at higher depths which then died and sank.

But when the team analysed the fibres — most of which appeared to be clothes fabrics such as nylon — they found that the plastics' atomic bonds had shifted compared to brand new material, suggesting they were several years old. Microplastic particles are either dumped directly into the seas via sewers and rivers or form when larger chunks of plastic break down over time.

Once they start gathering bacteria, they get heavier and eventually sink. "So even if not a single fibre were to enter the sea from this point forward, everything that's in the sea now is going to eventually sink, and once it's in the deep sea where is the mechanism to get it back?" asked Jamieson.

"We are piling all our crap into the place we know least about."

Because plastic contamination is now so widespread, even at extreme depths, the team cautioned that it was nearly impossible to know what

effect plastic ingestion was having on bottom-dwelling species.

"These particles could just pass straight through the animal, but in the animals we looked at they must be blocking them.

The equivalent would be for you to swallow a 2-metre polypropylene rope and expect that not to have an adverse affect on your health," said Jamieson. "There's no good aspect to this."—AFP ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (121 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO TAI VOY. NO. (121 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 01-03-2019 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 SILKAGO LOGISTICS PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Myanmar Resident Mission (MYRM)

INVITATION TO BID

1. The Asian Development Bank (ADB), a multilateral development finance institution headquartered in Manila, Philippines, wishes to receive bids for **Project Management Services for the fit-out works** of ADB's Myanmar Resident Mission (MYRM) Nay Pyi Taw Office.
2. The Contractors shall provide ADB with the most reliable and efficient services with professional expertise related to the architectural and engineering design matters, deployment of fully trained personnel, transportation, equipment and supervision in accordance with the policies, standard and procedures established by the ADB. The ADB will evaluate the performance of the Contractors in carrying out these services against the standards set forth in the Work Performance Statement, which will be provided to the Bidder.
3. To be eligible, the Contractor must:
 - a. be from an eligible member country of ADB (<https://www.adb.org/about/members>);
 - b. have an independent legal existence as a valid registered company, or a joint venture partnership (under joint and severally liable), for approximately five years;
 - c. have a minimum of five (5) years' experience related to the above-mentioned specialization;
 - d. have at least one (1) similar project as described above to showcase company's expertise/capability in providing the above-mentioned services; and
 - e. not be under a declaration or record of ineligibility for corrupt and/or fraudulent practices issued or kept by ADB.
4. Bid Documents will be available to interested contractors at the ADB MYRM offices at the addresses below from **Monday, 4 March 2019** (Office Hours : 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.). Bids should reach ADB not later than **5:00 p.m. of Thursday, 14 March 2019**.

ADB MYRM (Nay Pyi Taw Office)

Padauk Building, PARKROYAL Hotel Nay Pyi Taw

Jade Villa, No.13/14 Hotel Zone, Dekkhina Thiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw

Tel +95 678106280~86, Fax +95 678106287 (OR)

ADB MYRM (Yangon Office)

04-05, 4th Floor, Union Business Centre (UBC), Natmuk Road,

Bo Cho Quarter, Bahan Township, Yangon

Tel +95 1 543359, 543426, Fax +95 1 8603439

5. For inquiries, you may contact Ms. Theingi Soe at tsoe@adb.org, telephone number 067 8106280~86.
6. ADB reserve the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to award of Contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders or any obligation to inform the affected Bidder or Bidders of the grounds for ADB's action.
7. This advertisement does not entail any commitment on the part of ADB, either financial or otherwise. Any cost of preparation of bids shall be borne solely by the Bidder.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



Britain's Booker Prize lives on with new sponsor

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Britain's most prestigious literary prize will revert to being as known as the Booker Prize this year after securing a new sponsor, it announced on Thursday.

The annual award for novels, which has been known as the Man Booker since 2002, has struck a sponsorship deal with the charity Crankstart, the Booker Prize Foundation said.

Investment firm Man Group announced the end of its 18-year partnership with the prize, which honours writers from English-speaking countries whose work is published in Britain and Ireland.

Crankstart has committed to five years of initial funding, with the option of renewing for a further five years, the foundation added in a statement.

"We are thrilled that The Booker Prizes have found such marvellous philanthropic supporters in Crankstart, whose founders share our vision and values," said Helena Kennedy, chair of the foundation's trustees.

"With its support, we look forward to developing initiatives for The Booker to reach new audiences of every generation and background around the world."

Crankstart was established in 2000 by British venture capitalist Michael Moritz—who provided early



British author Anna Burns holds her book 'Milkman' during a photocall at the Royal Festival Hall in London on 14 October, 2018, ahead of Tuesday's announcement of the winner of the 2018 Man Booker Prize for Fiction. **PHOTO: AFP**

backing for firms including Google and Yahoo!—and his wife Harriet Heyman.

Moritz, who was born in Wales but is now based in the United States, was a journalist before moving into the world of technology investment, while Heyman is a former journalist and a novelist.

"The Booker Prizes are ways of spreading the word about the insights, discoveries, pleasures and joy that spring from great fiction," he said in a statement, noting the couple are avid readers.

The new arrangement will begin on 1 June, meaning this year's award handed out in October will be called the Booker Prize for Fiction.

A second prize open to authors of any nationality and awarded annually in May, will adopt its new name—the International Booker Prize—in 2020.

The winner of the main award currently receives £52,500 (61,500 euros, \$69,700), although the bigger prize is seen as a spike in sales which invariably follow.

Previous winners include VS Naipaul, Iris Murdoch, Salman Rushdie and Ian McEwan among others. The prize, launched in 1969, was only open to novelists from Commonwealth states until it began permitting those from other English-speaking countries to enter in 2014.—AFP ■

Worshippers divided over e-money offerings at Japanese temples

UTSUNOMIYA (Japan)—With a slowly rising move toward cashless payments in Japan, some temples are now accepting electric-money offerings. Yet the move has divided opinion, with some worshippers still shunning the method, saying they feel it will bring them less good fortune. Kaigen temple in the city of Fukuchiyama, Kyoto Prefecture, last year started to use Japanese smartphone service PayPay to receive offerings. The temple then gained wide attention by introducing what it called a "cloud visit" in the year-end period. This time of year is when many Japanese visit temples and shrines, and throw coins into an offering box, as they give thanks for guidance in the passing year and wish for good luck in the new one. The "cloud visit" enables people to pay a virtual visit to the temple and make money offerings through QR codes sent from its chief priest via Twitter.

"Many people were amused (by the new system) and offered money online," said Mitsuhiro Shibahara, 39, chief priest of the temple. Such payments amounted to about 10 times more than the

cash put into an offering box, he said. Byodo temple in Tokushima Prefecture, western Japan—one of the famed pilgrimage spots on the 88-temple "Shikoku Henro" route—also introduced late last year a mobile payment service provided by a major carrier, NTT Docomo Inc. Several years ago, Atago shrine in Tokyo's Minato Ward began accepting offerings via Rakuten Inc's Edy during the New Year season.

But many visitors still feel uncomfortable offering e-money, according to Nikko Futarasan shrine, a World Heritage site in Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo. It started accepting offerings through PayPay early February, but most worshippers headed for its offering box, saying the act of throwing coins itself has a meaning to them. Even Kaigen temple now receives few e-money offerings. "The upsurge was temporary," said Shibahara. "Currently, people are talking about its novelty rather than its convenience," said Yuki Fukumoto, a chief researcher at the NLI Research Institute. —Kyodo News ■



Photo taken on 6 February, 2019, shows a board bearing QR codes at Nikko Futarasan shrine that enables visitors to make cashless offerings. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Swiss luthier striving to make a 21st-century Stradivarius



In this file photo taken on 5 February, 2019 Swiss violin maker David Leonard Wiedmer works in his workshop on 5 February, 2019 in Lyon. **PHOTO: AFP**

LYON (France)—Meet the man who is trying to make the closest thing you will get to a 21st-century Stradivarius.

Award-winning Swiss luthier

David Leonard Wiedmer has set himself the task of reproducing the legendary Italian violin at his workshop tucked away in a quayside in Lyon, southeast France.

Working from the details of one of the most famous Stradivarius violins, Wiedmer told AFP: "This is the first time I'm making this model so I'm looking forward to hearing how it sounds.

"Apparently the original sounds very, very good, so we'll have to find the same features again. It's a challenge."

Wiedmer may still only be 29, but he has already made his reputation as a master craftsman.

One of his violins won gold at the Violin Society of America's international competition last year. With friend and collaborator Damien Gest, he won gold for one of their cellos. And in the same competition, he picked up silver for his workmanship on a viola.

Last year's prizes were just the latest in a series of awards for his work, including a medal in 2015 for one of his violins at a competition in Cremona, the home of the Stradivarius.

Trained at the Ecole nationale de lutherie de Mirecourt, in eastern France, Wiedmer served apprenticeships in New York—and London with renowned luthier Florian Leonhard—before setting up shop in Lyon three years ago. While part of learning his craft involved restoring old instruments, he quickly moved on to creating his own.

"Already at school he had an exceptional hand," Gest told AFP. "We were always the first to give up going out with our pals

to finish an instrument." At his Lyon workshop, Wiedmer works beside his partner Lea Trombert, a former cellist, who switched to making instruments rather than playing them. And while the work represents an endless challenge, it is one he never tires of.

"There is the woodwork, there is the music, the human relationship, the psychology, physics, chemistry—it's huge," he says. "It's really a constant thought process. I love thinking about it and this is precisely a job where you do only that and there are no answers."

It takes him at least a month to make a violin, which will cost between 6,000 and 12,000 euros (\$7,000 and \$13,600). —AFP ■

Nearly half of children with cancer untreated: study

PARIS (France)—Some 45 per cent of children with cancer are left undiagnosed and untreated, according to an innovative study of the disease's global footprint among under-15s, published on Wednesday. Worldwide, there are some 400,000 new cases of childhood cancer each year, but barely half are logged in national health registries, researchers reported in *The Lancet Oncology*, a medical journal.

"The patients will almost certainly die, although cancer will not be listed on a death certificate," noted Eva Steliarova-Foucher, a scientist at the UN-backed International Agency for Research on Cancer, commenting on the study. Sixty percent of countries do not even have cancer registries, and of those that do many only cover a fraction of the population.

The new method for calculating disease burden also incorpo-

rates data from the World Health Organization's Global Health Observatory, along with health and household surveys developed by UNICEF. Researchers took into account general levels of access to primary care and referrals to specialised care. "Our model suggests that nearly one in two children with cancer are never diagnosed and may die untreated," said lead author Zachary Ward from Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. "While under-diagnosis has been acknowledged as a problem, this model provides specific estimates that have been lacking." As with many diseases, the disparity between rich and developing nations is stark. The survey of data from 200 countries shows that more than half of childhood cancer cases in Africa, south-central Asia and the Pacific Islands slip through the healthcare net. By contrast, only

three percent of cases are undiagnosed in the United States, Europe and Canada.

The number of new cases in 2015, the most recent year analysed, was stable or declining in most regions, but remained highly concentrated—92 per cent—in low- and middle-income nations. The most common non-adult cancer that year in most parts of the world—with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa—was acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, which affects white blood cells. "Health systems in low- and middle-income countries are clearly failing to meet the needs of children with cancer," said senior author Rifat Atun, a professor at Harvard University. "Universal health coverage—a target of UN Sustainable Development Goals—must include cancer in children as a priority to prevent needless deaths," he said in a statement. — AFP ■

New tech taking telemedicine to the next level

BARCELONA (Spain)—Telemedicine has gone way beyond conference calls: new technologies allow doctors to monitor blood pressure and other vital signs—take x-rays even—and assist with operations from miles away. Wireless technology is moving "healthcare outside of clinics and hospitals", said Pamela Spence, health sciences market leader at Ernst & Young, at the Mobile World Congress trade fair in Barcelona. And that is making it easier to provide in remote areas, she added.

Participants at the mobile industry's biggest annual global event discussed how telemedicine is doing more than just con-

necting doctors and patients over a video or voice call.

A telemedicine cabin developed by French firm Health for Humanity (H4D) allows a doctor hundreds of miles away from a patient measure their pulse rate, temperature and blood oxygen level.

The cabin—dubbed the Consult Station—is also equipped with tools that allow a doctor to carry out X-rays and hearing tests. Dozens of Consult Stations have so far been installed in France, Italy and Portugal and H4D is carrying out pilot projects in Canada, the United States, the Philippines and Dubai.

But training doctors on how

to carry out a clinical exam remotely is "crucial" to the success of the service, said HD4 founder and president Franck Baudino. They have to learn how guide the patient through the process.

Doctors were initially wary of the idea of telemedicine cabins when the company was founded in 2008 but have since warmed to them, he added. "Ten years ago people looked at me as if I were an alien," said Baudino, a French doctor who worked in remote African communities. "Today people still think we are avant-garde but the big difference is that 10 years ago we were talking about the future, today it is systems that are already being used." — AFP ■



Catalan paramedics were among those demonstrating the advantages of 5G wireless technology, in their case in their ambulance. **PHOTO: AFP**



In 2017, the number of malaria cases climbed to 219 million, a sign that long-standing progress is being reversed. **PHOTO: AFP**

Study finds potential new weapon in fight against malaria

TOKYO (Japan)—For years, insecticide-soaked mosquito nets have helped dramatically lower malaria infections, but insecticide resistance has driven a search for alternatives and a new study may have uncovered one option.

The weapon is a familiar one: an anti-malarial drug already used by humans to prevent them contracting the disease, and researchers now envisage using it on netting like insecticides.

Their research shows the drug works on mosquitos, killing the malaria parasite in the insects and preventing it from being transmitted.

It is a potentially important breakthrough in the battle against a disease that killed 435,000 people in 2017, the majority of them children under five in Africa.

In 2017, the number of malaria cases climbed to 219 million, a worrying rise from the previous year and a sign that long-standing progress is being reversed.

The researchers, including Flaminia Catteruccia, a professor of immunology and infectious diseases at Harvard University, found exposing mosquitos to even low doses of an anti-malarial called atovaquone or ATQ caused "full parasite arrest".

"We tested a couple of anti-malarials, and it worked beautifully with ATQ: all parasites were killed!" Catteruccia told AFP by email.

Attacking inside mosquitos

The team was initially looking for ways to sterilise female mosquitos that had developed

insecticide resistance, to prevent resistance spreading.

But when they found that the compounds they were testing also affected the malaria parasites inside the mosquitos, they shifted their focus.

"We then thought, if we can attack parasites with non-specific chemicals, why don't we try to kill them more effectively with anti-malarials," Catteruccia said.

They settled on ATQ because like insecticides it can penetrate the "skin" of mosquitos when they land on nets.

The team, whose research was published on Thursday in the *Nature* journal, tried to simulate the conditions in which insects land on nets.

They fed two groups of mosquitos with malaria-infected blood and then exposed one group to surfaces coated with ATQ.

Just six minutes of contact with the surface—around the time the insects would usually spend on a net trying to land a bite—wiped out the malaria parasites in the mosquitos.

The control group mosquitos that weren't exposed to ATQ however "showed a high prevalence and intensity of (malaria) infection", the study said.

The drug even worked to prevent mosquitos contracting malaria parasites when the insects came into contact with the drug 24 hours before eating infected blood.

The researchers said computer modelling showed their novel approach would "substantially mitigate the global health effects of insecticide resistance" in the fight against malaria. — AFP ■



Myanmar's Badminton player Thet Htar Thuzar. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Thet Htar Thuzar wins Uganda International Badminton championship

THET Htar Thuzar, who represented Myanmar at the International Badminton championship in Uganda, won the women's singles finals by defeating Jordan's Domou Amro by a decisive 21-14, 21-12.

Of the 32 players who took part in the badminton championship, she scored decisive victories over players from Uganda,

Zimbabwe, and Iran.

"I would like to thank all fans who supported me," said Thet Htar Thuzar after her victory.

After taking the gold medal in the women's singles at the Uganda International Badminton series, she is now headed to Kenya for another tournament, the player stated on her social media page.

Thet Htar Thuzar's love for badminton started at a young age; she took up the sport when she was 7.

She has bagged six imperial awards from the King of Thailand, and over 70 awards from various organizations.

According to her social media page, her achievements include winning the First Prize

at the BWF International Series (2018) in Egypt, the Second Prize at the Nepal International series (2018), and the Third Prize at the Iran International challenge (2018).

Thet Htar Thuzar is also preparing for the 2020 Olympics badminton competition, scheduled to take place in Japan.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

AFC U-16 women's qualifiers: Myanmar needs 2 wins to advance

AFTER a huge 5-0 loss to China in their first group match on Wednesday, team Myanmar need to win the next two matches of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers to advance in the tourney.

Speaking about the match against China, Daw San San Thein, the head coach of the Myanmar team, said: "Our aim is to win the qualifiers. Although Myanmar suffered a big loss in

the previous match against China, my girls created goal chances, too. China's team was very good in corner and free kick. Though we had prepared not to concede any goals from the corner, China scored thrice from the position. The difference in body built and strength showed the gap in the previous game. Nevertheless, we will train hard for the next stages." Today, Myanmar will play a decisive match against Bangla-

desh at the Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon.

Given Bangladesh's win over the Philippines in the opening match of the championship, host Myanmar will be under pressure.

Since before the start of the championship, Myanmar has been aiming for winning or emerging as a runner up in the qualifying matches to go through to the next stage, said officials.

—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



Team Myanmar before their match against China in the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers. **PHOTO: MFF**

Guardiola hails 'fantastic' City as they edge out West Ham

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola praised his side's "incredible" performance after a 1-0 win at home to West Ham on Wednesday saw them keep pace with Premier League leaders Liverpool. City dominated the early stages at the Etihad and could have had several goals, but in the end they had to make do with a 59th-minute penalty from Sergio Aguero, awarded when West Ham's Felipe Anderson was ruled to have tripped Bernardo Silva in the box. Victory left reigning English champions City in second place, just a point adrift of Liverpool, who

thrashed Watford 5-0 at Anfield on Wednesday.

"It was a very hard result, but the performance was incredible," Guardiola told the BBC. The Spaniard added: "Had we scored one or two in the first five minutes the game would have been completely different, but we did very well." "The game became a little bit flat. We started the second half really well. We just didn't score enough goals to make the last 15 to 20 minutes a little bit more relaxed," the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager insisted. "We fought a lot to be close to Liverpool. The result could be better, but the way we played is fantastic."—AFP ■

Lukaku's striking ambition pleases Solskjaer as Man Utd beat Palace



Manchester United's Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku (c) vies with Crystal Palace's English defender James Tomkins (l) and Crystal Palace's Serbian midfielder Luka Milivojevic (r) during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United at Selhurst Park in south London on 27 February, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON (United Kingdom)—Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was glad to see Romelu Lukaku making the most of playing in his favoured central striker role with two goals in Manchester United's 3-1 win at Crystal Palace on Wednesday. Lukaku has been asked to fill in on the flanks in recent weeks, with caretaker United manager Solskjaer preferring to employ Marcus Rashford through the middle. But with Rashford not fully fit and named amongst the substitutes at Selhurst Park, Lukaku was restored to his preferred position and responded with a goal in each half to complete a win that maintained Solskjaer's unbeaten run in the Premier League to 11 games since he took charge in mid-December. And the manager, himself a former United striker, was in no doubt that the positional switch had played a key role in Belgium international Lukaku scoring his first goals in 10 appearances. "He was through the middle today, we created chances for him, he put them away well," said Solskjaer. "He's done loads of running up and down the line, right wing, left wing, he's had a different role because of Rashford's form of course. "Today he got a chance up front, two very good finishes, could have had another one as well earlier on, so very pleased for Rom, he is a quality finisher."

'Professional boy'

Solskjaer added he had been impressed by the player's attitude during a period when he has slipped down the pecking order at the club—a situation he also had to endure during his own playing days at Old Trafford. "He's a professional boy, a good boy, it's great to have him in and around the place, always happy, always working on his finishing," said Solskjaer. "I think he's played more than you think actually, but he's played wide right, wide left, so it's Rash's form that has moved him out there, now with Rash's injury he grabbed the chance."

Victory in south London kept United on the fringes of the top four and Solskjaer said had been concerned about the prospect of facing Palace after a testing run of fixtures including the Champions League first-leg clash with Paris Saint-Germain, the FA Cup win against Chelsea and the drawn Premier League clash with leaders Liverpool. —AFP ■