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Monday, 2 September 2019

Aid provided to flood victims, rice to be re-planted in Taninthayi



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye presents aid to flood victims in Taninthayi yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

THE National Disaster Management Committee yesterday provided relief to flood victims and rice seeds to farmers to aid re-planting efforts on flood-affected fields in Taninthayi Township.

At a meeting held for flood victims at the Taninthayi Town Hall, the vice chairman of the committee and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye

handed over K60.69 million for short duration rice seeds, K9.75 million for five fiber boats, over K919,000 for rice to 438 flood victims, and K200,000 to the family of a Tatmadaw member who sacrificed his life in the rescue operation, along with school uniforms, snacks, and toys for students. Following the ceremony, the Union Minister visited the Kangyi and Chaunggyi monasteries where flood victims are

... short duration rice will be planted on 6,069 acres of farmlands, which were affected by the recent floods.

being sheltered, and distributed aid. Dr Win Myat Aye pledged that the committee would provide food to flood victims during their stay at the shelters, and sought suggestions from them for the committee.

He also stressed the need to take precautions for avoiding casualties and minimizing damages in floods which strike Taninthayi Region every year.

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Central Myanmar earthquake damages religious sites, buildings; no casualties

AN EARTHQUAKE with a 6-magnitude shook Shwebo district, Sagaing region, on 31 August, damaging pagodas, monasteries and school buildings.

The quake was centered 14 miles northwest of Shwebo township at 9: 39 pm, and the damages occurred in Shwebo, KhinU and YeU townships.

Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, Resettlement U Soe Aung, together with Chief Minister of Sagaing region Dr Myint Naing, Sagaing Region Hluttaw Speaker U Than and the officials, visited the quake-affected areas, met with local authorities and discussed recovery works on 1 September.

The deputy minister and party inspected the damages caused by the quake at Chanthargyi Pagoda in Shwebo.

In the afternoon, the chief minister and party arrived in YeU township, and inspected the destructions at Sutaung-pyae pagoda, Htantabin pagoda and Phaungdaw U pagoda. They also visited YeU hospital to comfort an injured woman from Pyindaung village in KhinU township.

They proceeded to KhinU township and inspected the damaged pagodas and a school.

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Information Minister returns home from Timor-Leste

UNION Minister for Information Dr Pe Myint arrived back home yesterday morning after attending the 20th anniversary of independence referendum in Timor-Leste.

The Union Minister and party left the capital Dili for Yangon on 31 August through transit airports in Bali of Indonesia and Singapore.

Director-General of Information and Public Relations

Department U Ye Naing who accompanied the Union Minister on the trip also arrived back on the same flight.—MNA ■
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint arrives back home yesterday after attending the 20th anniversary of independence referendum in Timor-Leste. **PHOTO: MNA**



Aid provided to flood victims, rice to be re-planted in Taninthayi

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Afterwards, the Union Minister and his party visited the flood management office set up at the Taninthayi Fire Services Department and gave instructions to officials to provide aid to victims systematically.

Under the supervision of the National Disaster Management Committee, the local authorities and ministries concerned are making plans for the repair of sluice gates, upgrade of dykes

around the town, and dredging of drains to reduce floods in the future. The dykes were upgraded and two sluice gates were built in 2014 to prevent the Taninthayi River from overflowing, but the facilities are not enough to prevent floods, the minister said.

With the assistance of the National Disaster Management Committee, short duration rice will be planted on 6,069 acres of farmlands, which were affected by the recent floods.—MNA
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Lin)

Heavy rain causes damages to roads, houses in Natalin

HEAVY rain caused floods damaging roads, bridges and houses in the vicinity of Taung Nyo dam in the east of Natalin Township, Tharyarwaddy District, Bago Region.

The floods left damage worth of over K42 millions and houses affecting 50 people in

the township.

Flood victims are now taking sheltering in relatives houses nearby, related departments and village administrators are coordinating to repair the road and bridges destroyed.—Tin Myint (Natalin) ■ (Translated by Alphonsus)



Torrential rain causes flash flooding on roads in Natalin. **PHOTO: TIN MYINT NAT TA LIN**

Union Minister visits Dawei for early childhood care programme



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye poses for a group photo together with children and parents after providing toys and food for children in Dawei yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Dr Win Myat Aye, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, visited Dawei Township, Thanintharyi region, to discuss early childhood care and development programme on 31 August afternoon.

He met with parents, teachers and caretakers of children from mother circles and pre-schools under the managements of state and private sectors at the City Hall.

The Union Minister suggested to develop human resources, to nurture the children in line with early

childhood care and development programmes up to 8 years old, and the collaboration of social communities, philanthropic organizations and public in this task.

He also remarked the ministry still have some restraints to operate sufficient number of pre-schools across the country, although it has plans to conduct the nationwide child development training programmes together with child protection schemes.

Dr Win Myat Aye emphasized the nutrition plans for the pregnant women and

breastfeeding mothers who play a key role in development of children in term of physical and mental processes.

The Union Minister and party then answered the queries at the meeting before providing cash assistance of K1.83 million for the five mother circles and demonstrated proper disposal of rubbish. They also donated toys and nutritious food, as well as K9.75 million to buy five fiber boats for flooding incidents.—MNA ■
(Translated by Aung Khin)

Myanmar Engineering Council receives world recognized certificates

MYANMAR Engineering Council (MEngC) hosted a dinner yesterday for being approved of provisional status in Washington Accord at International Engineering Alliance and receiving the certificate of FEIAP Engineering Education Guidelines Compliance presented by the Federation of Engineering Institutions of Asia and Pacific (FEIAP) for the second level.

Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw attended the dinner at the Lotte Hotel in Yangon, and made a congratulation remark, followed by appreciation words of Pyithu Hluttaw Transport, Communications and Construction Committee Chairman U Tin Maung Win.

MEngC's President Dr. Charlie Than handed over the two certificates to the Union Minister. The latter then presented certificates of appreciations to the patrons and former presidents of MEngC.

Then, Dr Cho Win Maw, the vice president of MEngC, read out the message sent by Prof Dr Chuah Hean Teik, the president of FEIAP.

The patrons and former presidents of MEngC conferred certificate of appreciations to members of scrutinizing committee for qualification of engineering specialized subject and the donors.—MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

MOHT shares powers, rights with local governments

YANGON Region Tourism Committee (YRTC) has permitted over K119.62 billion and US\$ 238.29 million worth of investments for hotels and tourism sector during the period from January to August end this year, generating 2691 job opportunities, according to a press meet held at the region government office on 30 August.

"The Hluttaw passed a law in connection with the tourism sector in December previous year," recounted Naw Pan Thinzar Myo, a cabinet member of Yangon Region government and the spokeswoman of YRTC, saying, "As the Hotels and Tourism Ministry has ceased its functions of the sector and shared the powers and rights with provincial governments, which established their own tourism task forces, these newly formed subcommittees are scrutinizing the applications and issuing permits.

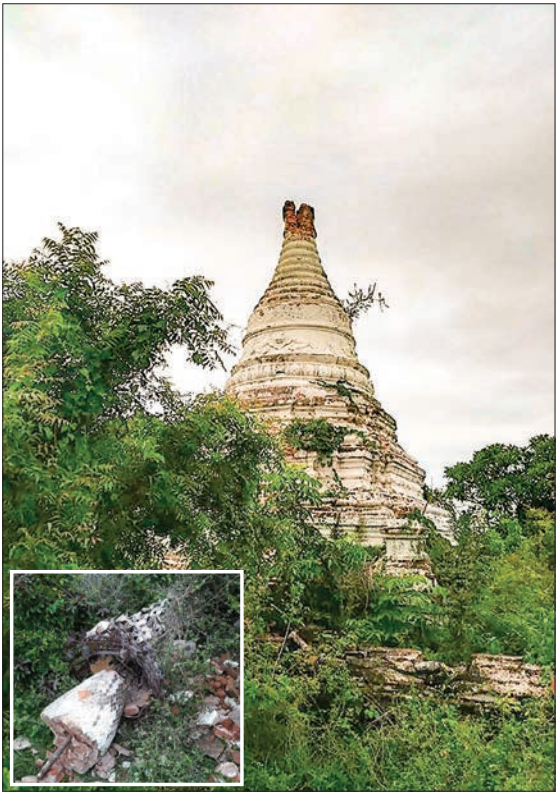
"The provincial tourism task forces are formed with the experienced technicians and academics of the private tourism sector, apart from officials of the local govern-

ments for issuing permits of the hotels and tourism industry after a scrutiny of the applications," the press meet told the media.

The YRTC approved three hotels and two guesthouses, totaling 133 rooms, construction permits for four hotels and one guesthouse, 56 tour licenses (internal/external), 19 tour licenses (external), and 30 tour-guide licenses, generating 335 job opportunities. It permitted an overall investment of Ks 26674 million for hotels and guesthouses.

The Yangon Region Tourism Committee (YRTC) approved projects for the tourism sector of the provinces at its first and fourth meetings of the current year. From the start of this year till today, the committee approved 33 hotels licenses, one provisional hotel license and eight guesthouse licenses, totaling 2136 rooms, 276 tour licenses (internal/external), 121 tour licenses (external), and 218 tour-guide licenses, the press meet announced. — Myint Maung Soe

(Translation: TMT)



A damaged pagoda in KhinU Township in Sagaing Region. PHOTO: KHINU SOE WAI AND LU AUNG (KATHA)



Central Myanmar earthquake damages religious sites, buildings; no casualties



Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr Myint Naing and Deputy Minister U Soe Aung inspect a damaged pagoda in Shwebo. PHOTO: MNA

FROM PAGE-1

The earthquake also resulted in devastations at Government Technological College and some religious edifices in Shwebo.

A wall of two-storey house in YeU township collapsed after the earthquake.

Head of the Regional De-

partment of Disaster Management U Sao Willy Frank said that the list of damages will be compiled to render assistances.

He said "Data is being collected about the damages to be able to provide necessary assistance to the quake-affected areas."

The latest data in Khi-

nU Township has shown that 35 pagodas, 11 monasteries, 8 schools, 1 mosque, village administration office and 5 houses were wrought by the earthquake. The Department of Meteorology and Hydrology reported that the area suffered a series of aftershocks. — Local IPRD offices

(Translated by Aung Khin)

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Sagaing Earthquake: Authorities announce no damages to dams

AN earthquake measuring 6.0 on Richter scale, centered near 14 miles northwest of Shwebo Township at 9: 39 pm, has caused no damage to the structures, especially dams and related water-works large and small, in the surrounding areas of the epicenter, assured Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department (IWUMD).

IWUMD personnel wasted no time in checking the irrigation facilities including Kabo Dam, Koebin Dam, Thaphanseik Dam, Kintat Diversion Dam in the surrounding areas of the epicenter located about 14 miles northwest of Shwebo in Sagaing Region, which is roundabout 400 miles



Officials check the irrigation facilities at Kabo Dam after earthquake occurred on 31 August. **PHOTO:MNA**

north of Yangon. The initial field check of IWUMD showed that the irrigation facilities were safe, but the department will conduct a thorough inspection of the facilities, and will inform the public if it finds any suspicious situation or any cracks.—MNA ■ (Translated by TMT)

Zalon Taung elephant camp opens in Bamauk Township

THE Zalon Taung elephant camp was opened yesterday at Bamauk Township in Katha District of Sagaing Region.

It is the 22nd camp opened by the Myanma Timber Enterprise, under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, and the fourth camp to be established in Sagaing Region.

The opening of the elephant camp is aimed at attracting tourists and locals visitors, and creating jobs for local residents.

Pilgrims visiting the Zalon Taung pagoda will also be able to visit the scenic camp, which has been designed as an eco-tourist spot, said officials.

Ministers with the Sagaing Region government, officials from concerned departments, and the regional tourism committee formally inaugurated the camp by cutting a ribbon and giving remarks.

Before the launch of the Zalon Taung camp, there were three elephant camps in Sagaing Region — Natpauk camp in In-



U Larl Htaung Htann, Sagaing Region Minister for Chin Ethnic Affairs, feeds the elephants at Zalon Taung elephant camp at Bamauk yesterday. **PHOTO: KO HTEIN**

daw Township, Pyarswe in Mawlaik, and Bodhi Tahtaung in Monywa

As per data from the Myanma Timber Enterprise, there are around 5,000 domesticated elephants and about 1,500 wild elephants in Myanmar. They are under threat as they are increasingly being poached for ivory and skin.

The opening of the elephant camp can help encourage the conservation of elephants and increase the revenue of the regional government, said officials.—Ko Htein ■ (Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Housing project for retired employees to be developed in Dagon Seikkan

By Aye Yamon Oo

A Malaysian company has won a tender to jointly build the Dagon Seikkan Smart City district project to house 30,000 civil service personnel who will retire in 2020, said U Phyo Min Thein, the Chief Minister for the Yangon Regional Government. Among the companies which participated in the competitive bidding are Berjaya company, which is one of the leading builders in Malaysia, who won the tender.

“A total of 30,000 civil ser-

vice personnel, who will retire in 2020, have requested the regional government to provide housing for them in the Yangon region. So, we’ve invited foreign companies to join us in developing this special housing project for retired personnel. The authorities have scrutinized the tenders submitted by the companies and selected this Malaysian company,” said U Phyo Min Thein at Malaysia-Myanmar Connect (MMC) 2019, held at Wyndham Grand Yangon hotel on 30 August.

Although the Ministry of Construction has been overseeing the Dagon Seikkan Smart City project, the project can take a long time to complete if it is only funded using the government budget. This being so, the government has decided to develop the project in cooperation with a foreign privately owned company to construct the buildings and ensure it is completed in a shorter time. As the flats are meant for those who are going to retire in 2020, the ministry has decided to co-

operate with a large company abroad. “The buildings covered by the project are being built by the Ministry of Construction by itself. But there is a problem of budget constraints, and so, if we depend on the government budget alone, the project will take quite a long time to finish. Currently, only four buildings have been built. If we construct the buildings, in cooperation with the Malaysian company, the project can be completed in a short time”, said U Phyo Min Thein. ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

MRF expects rice exports to plunge in current FY

MYANMAR’S rice exports through the border have plummeted drastically in the current fiscal year, bringing down the overall export volume, according to figures released by the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF). Between 1 October, 2018 and 16 August, 2019, exports of rice through the border checkpoints have fetched an estimated US\$179.7 million, while income from the maritime rice trade has reached \$443.79 million.

On account of problems in the conduct of border trade with China, the country’s rice exports are expected to touch around 2.5 million tons in the current financial year, according to the MRF. Myanmar primarily exports rice to China through the border gates. However, trade in agricultural products has been halted on account of China’s clamp-down on illegal trade in border gates. At present, rice is being sent to China through govern-



Workers loading the truck with sacks of rice at Botahtaung Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO : PHOE KHWAR

ment-to-government (G2G) pacts and under a barter system, in exchange for Chinese goods. Unlike earlier, maritime trade this year has been relatively high compared to border trade when it comes to rice exports, accounting for 70.9 per cent of the total exports. The total volume of rice and

broken rice exported between 1 October, 2018 and 16 August, 2019 is estimated at 2.06 million metric tons, worth over \$623.57 million, according to an an-

nouncement from the MRF. Myanmar rice has penetrated over 60 foreign markets. China is the largest buyer of Myanmar’s rice, accounting for over 677,900 metric tons of rice and broken rice exports, followed by the Philippines and Cameroon. Côte d’Ivoire is the fourth, while Madagascar is the fifth largest buyer of Myanmar rice. Moreover, the European Union countries have imported over 430,900 metric tons of rice from Myanmar, while over 513,000 tons of rice and broken rice has been shipped to African countries. Myanmar mostly exports broken rice to Belgium, followed by Indonesia, China, the Netherlands, and the UK. It is placed on 37 foreign markets. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tons of rice to other countries, which is an all-time record in rice exports.—GNLM ■ (Translated by EMM)

Trade deficit narrows to \$1 bln as imports decline, exports rise

A fall in imports coupled with a jump in exports, between 1 October and 23 August in the current financial year, helped narrow Myanmar’s trade deficit to US\$1.2 billion from \$3 billion in the corresponding period of the 2017-2018FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce. In the October-August period in the current fiscal year, exports were estimated at \$14.9 billion and imports were valued at \$16.2 billion. Compared to the previous fiscal, exports have increased by \$762.8 million, while imports have fallen by \$1 billion.

Meanwhile, Myanmar’s total external trade decreased to \$31.21 billion from \$31.47 billion recorded in the same period of the previous FY. Myanmar exports agricultural products, animal products, minerals, forest products, and finished industrial goods, while it imports capital goods, intermediate goods, CMP raw materials, and consumer goods. The country’s export sector relies more on the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. While export earnings from the CMP (cut, make, and pack) garment businesses are rising, the country’s reliance on natural resources such as natural gas and jade is lessening. The government is trying to reduce the trade deficit by screening luxury import items and boosting exports. Myanmar’s trade deficit was pegged at \$1.3 billion in the last mini-budget period, \$3.9 billion in the 2017-2018FY, \$5.3 billion in the 2016-2017FY, and \$5.4 billion in the 2015-2016FY, according to statistics released by the Central Statistical Organization. — Htet Myat ■ (Translated by EMM)

Trade at Muse falls by \$1 bln

THE value of Sino-Myanmar border trade through the Muse gate plunged by US\$1.19 billion between 1 October, 2018 and 23 August, 2019 to reach \$4.36 billion from \$5.55 billion recorded in the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce. During the October-August period, exports through the Muse gate dropped significantly to \$2.76 billion, while imports were valued at \$1.59 billion. Exports through the Muse gate have declined owing to tight confiscation and trade suspension by China since October, 2018, coupled with the closure of the Mandalay-Muse road, a major trading route, due to recent fighting. Muse is an important border gate in Myanmar and handles the largest trade volume, but it has seen a steep drop as trade in agricultural products has been halted on account of China clamping down on illegal goods. Myanmar merchants find it difficult to export goods to

China through the legitimate channel as they find the tax levied by China too high. Therefore, rice confiscation and price manipulation often occur. “We need to convert the government-to-government (G2G) agreement into a sustainable pact. Myanmar requires G2G or business-to-business (B2B) agreements for trade of pulses and beans, corn, sesame, fish, and shrimp to grab a share of the Chinese market. The government and the private sector also need to move forward in harmony through public private partnerships (PPP),” according to U Ye Min Aung, the president of the Myanmar Rice Federation. Myanmar exports rice, sugar, pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals, and animal products to China, while it imports agricultural machinery, electrical appliances, iron and steel-related materials, raw industrial goods, and consumer goods. — GNLM ■ (Translated by EMM)

Border trade value increases by over \$1.1 bln this FY

THE value of total border from 1 October to 23 August this fiscal year has reached US\$ 9.09 billion, up over 1.1 billion compared with over \$7.98 billion in the same period last year, according to the statistical report of the Ministry of Commerce. The total border trade value included \$6.3 billion in exports and \$2.8 billion in imports. There are 17 border trade camps in Myanmar. Myanmar is trading with her neighboring countries_ China, India, Bangladesh and Thailand. Sino-Myanmar border trade is carried out through Muse, Lweje, Kanpiket-

ee, Chin Shwe Haw and Kengtung gates while Myanmar is carrying out border trade with India via Tamu and Reed. The country’s border trade gates with Bangladesh are Sittway and Maungtau as well as Thailand via Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthaung, Myeik, HteeKhee, Mawtaung and Maese. During this period, the border trade value at the Muse border trade camp amounted to \$4.36 billion, down \$1.2 compared with the same period last year. Among all the gates, the Muse border gate sees the largest volume and value of total border trade, with an estimated value of more than \$4.36 billion this FY, followed by HteeKhee with \$2.24 billion and Myawady with \$852 million. Myanmar mainly export agricultural products, animal products as well as forest products, minerals, fishery products, manufactured goods and other products while capital goods, raw industrial materials and consumer products are imported into the country. Currently, some 80 per cent of the country’s external trade is carried out via sea routes.—Zwe ■ (Translated by Hay Mar)

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Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko receives cash donations of well-wishers in Mandalay for building Eternal Peace Pagoda yesterday. **PHOTO: TIN MAUNG (SUB PRINTING HOUSE-MDY)**

43 well-wishers in Mandalay donate K255.31 mln for Eternal Peace Pagoda

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko received cash donations of well-wishers in Mandalay for building Eternal Peace Pagoda yesterday afternoon.

The donation ceremony was held at the Convocation Hall of State Pariyatti Sasana University on 62nd street in Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay.

The cash donations were received by the Union Minis-

ter, the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General, and the District Administrator of Mandalay General Administration Department, and they returned certificates of honour to the donors.

A total of 43 well-wishers donated K 255.31 million during the third donation ceremony at State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay)— Tin Maung (Sub printing House-Mdy) ■

SOCIAL

Meghan Markle's dad criticises being estranged from his daughter

LONDON (United Kingdom) — Thomas Markle, Meghan Markle's estranged father, has criticised being made a "ghost" in her life -- while accusing his daughter of telling "lies" about how she financed her university education.

The 75-year-old, who lives in Mexico, said in a British newspaper interview published Sunday that he had not heard from the Duchess of Sussex or her husband Prince Harry since skipping their 2018 wedding.

He told the Daily Mail he had hoped to receive a photograph of his royal grandson Archie, born earlier this year, but had so far been rebuffed.

"There was never any problem between Meghan and me until recently," said Thomas Markle, who missed walking his daughter down the aisle at her Windsor Castle nuptials due to health problems and then became embroiled in a paparazzi photo scandal.

"I've stayed quiet because Meghan was pregnant with Archie but I'm speaking out now because they and their PR people are continuing to ghost me out of her life," he added.

"Sometimes I get the feeling people think I don't love my

daughter.

"I do love her very much. I would love nothing more than to put a picture of Archie in a frame."

He added he was "disappointed" not to have seen his grandson Archie.

The duchess's estranged father said he had made efforts to reconcile with Meghan, but so far to no avail.

"I sent her a card via her financial adviser in LA but received no acknowledgement," he added.

"I have no idea if she got it."

In the lengthy interview with the British paper, Thomas Markle also hit out at claims Meghan made during a royal visit to Fiji last year that she had personally paid her way through college in the United States.

"I'm sorry but that is completely untrue. I paid every penny of her tuition and I have the bank statements to prove it," he said.

"I'm sick of the lies. I'm sick of being vilified and shut out of their lives.

"I always upheld my responsibilities as a father. Meghan's comments about paying her way through college are offensive to me," he said. — AFP ■

UN chief expresses solidarity with Ebola-hit DR Congo

GOMA (DR Congo) — UN chief Antonio Guterres started a three-day tour of the Democratic Republic of Congo Saturday, expressing "solidarity" with a region ravaged by violence and an Ebola epidemic.

The UN secretary general first visited Goma, the capital of North Kivu province which is trying to roll back an epidemic of Ebola that has claimed more than 2,000 lives in a year.

Guterres was received by Leila Zerrougui, his special representative in DR Congo.

The two did not shake hands, in line with health protocols aimed at curbing the spread of the highly infectious and very often fatal disease.

Guterres said he had come to express his support "with the armed forces of DRC in the fight against terrorism" which represents "a threat not only for the Congo but the whole of Africa."

The UN peacekeeping mission in the country known by its French acronym MONUSCO comprises some 16,000 troops and has an annual budget of over \$1 billion.

A total of 130 militias and armed groups roam the North



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. **PHOTO: AFP**

and South Kivu provinces of DR Congo, a vast country the size of western continental Europe.

At a centre for demobilised former militia fighters in Goma, Guterres appealed to the militias to choose peace.

"It's always possible to choose peace," he said, urging all combatants to come "to a centre like this (for) a new life in peace in their home community."

He added he had heard moving testimony from peo-

ple living in the bush under the illusion that by being in an armed group they could have a better life. The reality, he insisted, was that meant "a tragic life, a life without a future."

According to the Group of Experts on Congo from New York University and Human Rights Watch, armed groups killed 1,900 civilians and kidnapped more than 3,300 people in the region between June 2017 and June 2019.

— AFP ■

Israel fires back after anti-tank missiles from Lebanon

KIRYAT SHMONA (Israel) — Israel said it returned fire Sunday after anti-tank missiles from Lebanon hit targets inside its territory, raising fears of a serious escalation with Hezbollah after a week of rising tensions.

Hezbollah claimed it destroyed an Israeli military vehicle and killed and wounded those inside, but Israel had not commented in detail.

Lebanon's Prime Minister Saad Hariri urged the United States and France to intervene, contacting US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and French President Emmanuel Macron's diplomatic adviser to do so.

The head of the UN peace-keeping force in Lebanon urged "maximum restraint."

Israel's army said in a statement that "a number of anti-tank missiles were fired from Lebanon towards an (Israeli military) base and military vehicles."

"A number of hits have been confirmed," it said.

It was "responding with fire



Artillery shells are lined up beside an Israeli self-propelled artillery gun near the Lebanese border. PHOTO: AFP

towards the sources of fire and targets in southern Lebanon." The Lebanese army said Israel fired 40 rockets into the

south of the country. Hezbollah said in a statement its fighters "destroyed a military vehicle on the road to the Avivim barracks (in north-

ern Israel), killing and wounding those inside." After the initial reports of fire from Lebanon, an Israeli military spokesman called on Israelis living within four kilometres (2.5 miles) of the Lebanese border to remain at home and prepare shelters.

Tensions have risen in the last week between Israel and its enemy Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite movement backed by Iran. Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said Saturday the group's response to an alleged Israeli drone attack on the group's Beirut stronghold had been "decided".

The pre-dawn August 25 attack involved two drones — one exploded and caused damage to a Hezbollah-run media centre and another crashed without detonating due to technical failure. Israel has not claimed responsibility for the incident.

The attack in Lebanon came just hours after Israel launched strikes in neighbouring Syria to prevent what it said was an impending Iranian drone attack on the Jewish state.

— AFP ■

More than 100 killed in air strike on Yemen prison: ICRC

SANAA (Yemen) — More than 100 people are believed to have been killed in an air strike by the Saudi-led military coalition on a detention centre in Yemen, the International Committee of the Red Cross said Sunday.

The coalition said it targeted a facility run by the Huthi rebels that "stores drones and missiles", but the rebels said the attack had levelled a building they used as a prison.

The ICRC rushed to the scene in the city of Dhamar with medical teams and hundreds of body bags.

"The location that was hit has been visited by ICRC before," Franz Rauchenstein, its head of delegation for Yemen, told AFP from Dhamar. "It's a college building that has been empty and has been used as a detention facility for a while."

"What is most disturbing is that (the attack was) on a prison. To hit such a building is shocking and saddening – prisoners are protected by international law."

Rauchenstein said that over 100 people were estimated to be dead, and that at least 40 survivors were being treated for

their injuries in hospitals in the city, south of the capital Sanaa. ICRC teams collecting bodies were also "working relentlessly to find survivors under the rubble", he said, but cautioned that the chances of finding any were very slim.

Footage obtained by AFP showed heavy damage to the building and several bodies lying in the rubble, as bulldozers worked to clear away huge piles of debris.

The coalition intervened in 2015 to support the government after the Iran-aligned Huthis swept out of their northern stronghold to seize Sanaa and

much of Yemen -- the Arab world's poorest nation.

Fighting since then has already claimed tens of thousands of lives and sparked what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

War crimes

Both sides stand accused of actions that could amount to war crimes.

The coalition has been blacklisted by the UN for the killing of children, while Saudi Arabia and its allies accuse the Huthis of using civilians as human shields in densely populated areas. — AFP ■



A screen grab from an AFPTV video shows the destroyed building following reported airstrikes on 1 September. PHOTO: AFP

9 dead in plane crash in Philippines

MANILA — All seven passengers and two pilots onboard an 11-seater private plane were killed in a fiery crash on Sunday afternoon in Laguna province south of Manila in the Philippines, an updated police report said.

The medical evacuation plane, carrying seven passengers, a pilot and a co-pilot, crashed into a private pool resort inside a subdivision in Pansol, a village in Calamba City, around 3:00 p.m., the report said.

Police said the King Air 350 plane with tail number RPC 2296 was transporting a patient from Dipolog City in Zamboanga del Norte province in the southern Philippines to Manila for a medical treatment.

Among the passengers onboard were the patient's wife, a doctor and medical staff, plus the two pilots. All the nine died, the report added.

"As of 8: 16 p.m, nine cadavers were retrieved from the wreckage," the report said, add-

ing that investigators and airline personnel are in the process of identifying the bodies.

The report said the private plane took off from Dipolog City airport at 1:40 p.m.

The report said the two caretakers who were at the resort during the crash were also injured and taken to a local hospital for treatment. According to witnesses, smoke engulfed the low-flying plane before it crashed and exploded in fireball. They said that the plane attempted to ascend before it hit the ground.

Metal debris were falling from the plane while it was trying to maneuver, the witnesses added. Firefighters and emergency personnel rushed to the scene minutes after the crash.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines said that a medical evacuation plane lost radar contact with the Manila Control Tower while on its way back to Manila from Dipolog City.

— Xinhua ■

Keep hopes and dreams for peace alive

REPRESENTATIVES of the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre (NRPC) and four members of the Northern Alliance — KIO, MNTJP, PSLF, and ULA — held talks on 31 August for ceasing the ongoing armed conflicts at the earliest.

In a recent early morning gunbattle at Moheik village, Kutkai, northern Shan State, three women and two children, including an infant, lost their lives.

The armed conflicts that started on 15 August in the northern Shan State have already claimed several lives and caused heavy damage to property.

From the attacks on PyinOoLwin at the eastern edge of Mandalay Region to the skirmishes all along the road to Lashio and Muse in the northeastern part of the country, the people have had more than their share of suffering.

Let alone the torching of heavy trucks, passenger coaches, and private cars during the conflicts, even ambulances on rescue missions were not spared. Civilians were caught in the crossfire, and the wounded and the sick could not get access to medical treatment. Some of the more unfortunate civilians were arrested and tortured, simply on suspicion, according to the natives.

Normal traffic ground to a halt on the Union Highway, the main trade route between China and Myanmar,

as bridges on the facility were blown up, burnt-out cars were placed as road blocks, and sporadic skirmishes occurred along the road. It is clear that the armed conflicts have had an adverse impact on trade and traffic flow.

Indeed, battles involve opponents using different weapons and tactics, but targeting communities, unarmed people, and innocent persons, and taking cover in towns and villages amounts to an act of terrorism.

The wish of the people is peace, not war, and everyone is aware of this. It's about time use of armed struggle as a bargaining chip for political gains is seriously reconsidered.

The NRPC, KIO, MNTJP, PSLF and ULA have released a joint communiqué that supports the public hope for peace, national reconciliation, and cessation of armed conflicts at the earliest. Additionally, the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services has also issued a statement, extending unilateral ceasefire till 21 September.

Both the joint communiqué and the statement are encouraging signs for the peace-loving people of the country, who dislike playing games, as their great hope is the emergence of a democratic federal union through sincere and proactive efforts. Let's keep their hopes and dreams for peace alive!

■ ■ ■

Improving Health Initiative through Schools

By Dr. Myint Myint Than (Deputy Director-General), Dr. Phyu Phyu Aye (Director [School Health])

(Continued from yesterday's article)

Seven directives of the State Counsellor

- (1) Elimination of drug hazards and to create a drug free society.
- (2) Eradication of cigarette/cheeroot smoking, tobacco chewing and betel quid consumption.
- (3) Reduce and avoid heavy alcoholic drinking and to shun away from related diseases, hazards and risks.
- (4) Living and leading a lifestyle in a healthy manner.
- (5) Reducing injury and damage from vehicle accidents and road accidents.
- (6) Raising awareness and imparting knowledge on reproductive health through school curriculum.
- (7) Reducing the excessive video game addiction among the students.

(6) Mental health issues

Among the teenagers, one out of ten youth are always (or)



Young school children enter their classrooms as their teacher waits by door.

PHOTO: PHOE KHWA

Strengthening health promotion at schools is as important as implementing the National Health Plan 2017-2021 -- the health roadmap for the country.

most of the times remained isolated and lonely. In the midst of such lonely youth, one out of ten attempted to commit suicide; (GSHS-2016).

(7) Reproductive health issues

According to the findings in the (2016) Myanmar Demographic Health Survey (MDHS), youth between the age brackets of 15 years to 24 years only a few numbers of youth have the comprehensive knowledge on HIV issues such as 16 percent among the girls and 18 percent among

the boys.

Recent National Seminar on Strengthening Health Promoting School in Myanmar

Under the auspices of the State, and in cooperation among the relevant ministries and the Ministry of Health and Sports, the National Seminar on Strengthening Health Promoting School titled "Physically and Mentally Fit Youth for the Brighter Future" was held at the Myanmar International Convention Center-2 on 12 and 13 June 2019 in Nay Pyi Taw.

At the two-day seminar, pri-

ority tasks and programs on (7) topics have been taken up by experts and professionals and exchanged views. The seminar pointed out the salient points and the future tasks for the implementations at various levels such as the Central Level, the Regional Level, the State Level, the District Level, and the Township Level.

National Seminar on Strengthening Health Promotion School titled "Physically and Mentally Fit Youth for the Brighter Future" was held at the Myanmar International Convention Centre-II in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 August 2019.

Speaking at the seminar, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe said Strengthening health promotion at schools is as important as implementing the National Health Plan 2017-2021 the health roadmap for the country.

He continued to say that promoting health standard of the school-age children who makes up about 20 per cent of the country's population would ensure the all-round development of the country.

The Union Minister said the suggestions given by experts from different sectors

including education, health and sport areas would be used for laying down strategies and future plans strengthening health promotion at schools.

Union Minister Dr. Myint Htwe also called on other related ministries, INGOs and civil society organizations for cooperating in implementing the seven tasks for promoting the health standard at schools under the leadership of the Ministry of Education as the Ministry of Health and Sports alone cannot bring success to the program.

At the seminar, the General Framework was adopted for the future tasks.

Cooperation needed for the

future of the offspring

Participation of the parents is very much vital and important for elevating health initiative through schools in top gear for the better future of the children.

School is one of the most important things in youth lives. If they are not educated then they do not have the skills needed to function in everyday society.

Educational institutions are the venues for the youth which systematically provide such as that of their physical and mental health; that of decent living among the society; that of the love and cherish for the tradition and culture.

As for teachers, they exhibit loving kindness, enthusiasm, and

As for teachers, they exhibit loving kindness, enthusiasm, and a spirit of sacrifice, treating their students like their own offspring and nurturing them properly.

a spirit of sacrifice, treating their students like their own offspring and nurturing them properly.

With these feeling of tenderness that surrounds the learning centers, the parents must come forward and fill in the needy cooperation in the campaign of health initiative through schools.

Ways and means in support of the campaign is not necessarily just contributing cash and kind towards the school, but providing voluntary work and time in the activities.

Task for improving health initiative through schools depends mainly on the abilities of the parent-teacher association and the school health committee. Enhanced abilities of the parent-teacher association and the school health committee could surely elevate and pushed up the health awareness and knowledge of the students.

Healthy dealing with things sensibly and realistically in a way that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations would be achieved in the daily lives of the youth.

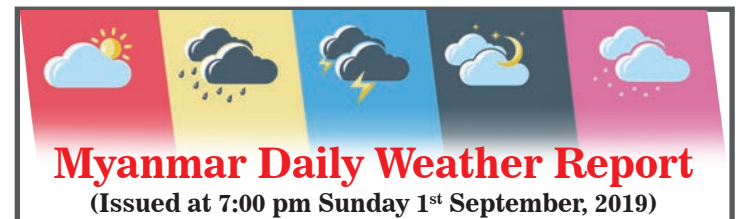
It might be literally termed as nurturing a new generation with peace of mind, physically and mentally. Peace of mind is a state of mental and emotional calmness, with no worries, fears or stress.

In conclusion, it may be strongly advisable that the parents and the public must come forward in the campaign and drive for the health promoting schools for the greater good of the students.

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■ ■ ■



BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong to vigorous over the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 02nd September, 2019: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Sagaing Region, Kachin and Northern Shan States, fairly widespread in Mandalay and Magway Regions and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with regionally heavyfall in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region, Chin, Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)m.p.h. Wave height will be about (9 -12) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd September, 2019: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd September, 2019: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 02nd September, 2019: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

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

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EU court to hear case on jailing MPs over air pollution



Archival picture shows a police officer monitoring polluting vehicles in Paris, January 2017. **PHOTO: AFP/ GEOFFROY VAN DER HASSELT**

FRANKFURT AM MAIN—The European Court of Justice will this week examine whether German judges can impose prison sentences on politicians for failing to enforce inner-city bans on polluting vehicles. In a case starting Tuesday, the court will advise in a long-standing dispute between environmental activists and the state govern-

ment of Bavaria, just one battle in a furious national debate over diesel and driving bans.

The ECJ's opinion, though not legally binding, could have implications for leading politicians in the Bavarian sister-party of Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling Christian Democrats.

In a legal tug-of-war stretching back to 2012, envi-

ronmental group Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) is attempting to force the Bavarian government to implement measures against air pollution in the state capital Munich.

"We are asking that air pollution limits be respected," DUH chairman Juergen Resch told AFP. Nitrogen dioxide levels have long exceeded EU limits

in the southern German city, and following a final decision in 2014, a Munich court demanded a plan of action from the state government which included a city ban for diesel-fuelled vehicles.

'No precedent'

Yet both activists and the judiciary have claimed the government is flagrantly ignoring the 2014 ruling. In November last year, the Bavarian higher administrative court referred the case to the ECJ, saying that "high-ranking political figures" had "made it clear, both publicly and to the court, that they would not fulfil their responsibilities." The court said that a 4,000 euro (\$4,433) fine had proved "inefficient", and asked the magistrates in Luxembourg to advise on the legality of threatening lawmakers with imprisonment. "It is quite a spectacular case," Philipp Reimer, a professor of public law at the University of Bonn, told AFP.

"I don't know of any precedent in German law." — AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Genes explain up to 25 pct of same-sex behavior: study

WASHINGTON—An international team of geneticist and behavioral scientists found that genetic markers are not enough for predicting whether a person is gay, bisexual, or straight.

The study published in this week's Science magazine showed that genetics can explain between 8 percent and 25 percent of same-sex behavior while the rest can be explained by environmental influences, ranging from hormone exposure in the womb to social influences later in life.

Scientists used the UK Biobank, a long-term health study of 500,000 British people, and examined DNA markers and data from surveys of sexual behavior filled out by nearly 409,000 UK Biobank participants and about 69,000 customers of 23andMe.

They found five genetic markers significantly associated with same-sex behavior: two markers were shared by men and women, two were specific to men, and one was found only in women. — Xinhua ■

Japan whaling town Taiji begins dolphin hunting

TAIJI —The hunting season for dolphins using a controversial "drive-hunting" method began Sunday in the whaling town of Taiji in western Japan, without any major protest from animal-rights groups.

While local police officers were on high alert for anti-whaling campaigns, 12 boats left the town's port around 5 a.m., but

all returned without any catch, according to a fisheries cooperative official.

The hunting method, in which fishermen herd dolphins and small whales into a cove before sealing the area with a net, has drawn fierce criticism from animal-rights groups at home and abroad.

As a member of the Inter-

national Whaling Commission, Japan halted commercial whaling in 1988 but hunted whales for what it called research purposes, a practice criticized internationally as a cover for commercial whaling.

Japan had long sought to lift the moratorium and finally left the IWC on June 30 after the organization last year vot-

ed down its proposal to resume commercial whaling of species considered abundant, such as minke whales. Hunting dolphins and other small cetaceans in waters near Taiji was not subject to controls by the IWC, although critics have said the technique is cruel and it has become the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary. — Kyodo ■

Southern Africa threatens to quit wildlife trade monitor

JOHANNESBURG —Southern African nations are threatening to quit the global wildlife trade regulator after it refused to relax restrictions on trade in ivory and rhino horn and imposed a near total ban on zoos taking African elephants captured in the wild.

Ties soured during this week's meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Geneva after numerous proposals from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional bloc were rejected.

Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe -- home to the world's largest elephant population -- asked for the right to sell ivory acquired through natural deaths, confiscations and culling.

The demand was rejected by a majority of 101 votes. — AFP ■

China's FAST telescope identifies 93 pulsars

GUIYANG — China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Radio Telescope (FAST), the world's largest single-dish radio telescope, has identified 93 new pulsars since October 2017, the research team announced Friday.

A pulsar is a highly magnetized, rotating neutron star, which emits two beams of electromagnetic radiation.

Since the first time FAST reported it had found pulsars in October 2017, the telescope has already detected 132 promising pulsar candidates, 93 of them had been confirmed, the research team said.

Zhu Wenbai, a researcher with National Astronomical Observatories, said around 3,000 pulsars have been identified by global scientists since the first one was discovered by humans in 1967. Pulsar observation is an important task for FAST, which can be used to confirm the existence of gravitational radiation and black holes, and help solve many other major questions in physics.

Located in a naturally deep and round karst depression in southwest China's Guizhou Province, FAST was put into trial operation in September 2016. — Xinhua ■



Photo taken on Aug. 27, 2019 shows China's Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical radio Telescope (FAST) under maintenance in southwest China's Guizhou Province. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Chinese books translated into Mongolian to mark 70th anniversary of China-Mongolia ties

ULAN BATOR—An inauguration ceremony of the complete translations of three Chinese books was held on Saturday as part of a China-Mongolia seminar on translation of literature.

The Firebrand by popular Chinese novelist Cao Wenxuan, The Study of Tsend Damdinsuren's Literature by director of the Mongolian Research Centre at Peking University Dr. Wang Hao, and The Mencius were translated by scholars of the National University of Mongolia (NUM) on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of China-Mongolia diplomatic

relations.

"The importance of literary translation is immeasurable. It provides people with a deeper understanding of culture of other countries," Choimaa Lodoiravsal, deputy director in charge of research and cooperation of the NUM, said at the inauguration ceremony.

"By translating The Mencius, I achieved my goal to completely translate the Four Books of Confucianism. Today, I am very much satisfied with myself," said Menerel Chimedtseye, a prestigious sinologist and professor at the NUM.—Xinhua ■



FILE PHOTO: Chinese writer Cao Wenxuan poses with his works at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in Bologna, Italy, on April 4, 2016. PHOTO: XINHUA

US, Taliban at "threshold" of Afghan agreement: envoy

ISLAMABAD—The U.S. envoy leading negotiations with the Taliban said Sunday that the two sides are "at the threshold of an agreement" that would allow full peace talks among Afghans.

Zalmay Khalilzad, Washington's special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, said via Twitter that the ninth

round of negotiations, which began on Aug. 22 in Doha, was concluded Saturday and that he would be heading to Kabul for consultations with the Afghan government.

"We are at the threshold of an agreement that will reduce violence and open the door for Afghans to sit together to nego-

tiate an honorable & sustainable peace and a unified, sovereign Afghanistan that does not threaten the United States, its allies, or any other country," Khalilzad said.

The Taliban's political spokesman in Doha, Sohail Shaheen, concurred, saying in a tweet, "I assure our believing

Mujahid nation that we are on the verge of ending the occupation and reaching a peaceful solution."

The two sides have been holding peace talks on and off in the Gulf state of Qatar for nearly a year, striving to reach an agreement to end the nearly 18-year-long conflict.—Kyodo ■

What lies beneath: Singapore plans a subterranean future



Singapore has already built an underground highway and state-of-the-art air conditioning system, but is now looking to house more facilities beneath the surface in order to optimise land use above it. PHOTO: AFP

SINGAPORE—Space-starved Singapore has expanded outwards by building into the sea and upwards by constructing high-rises but planners are now looking underground as they seek new areas for growth.

The nation has carefully managed its rapid growth in recent decades to avoid the problems faced by other fast developing Asian metropolises, such as

overcrowding and traffic chaos.

But with its population of 5.6 million expected to grow steadily in coming years, authorities are now considering how to better use the space below the streets in a city that is just half the size of Los Angeles. Singapore has already built an underground highway and state-of-the-art air conditioning system, but is now looking to house more facilities

beneath the surface in order to optimise land use above it.

"We need to consider options for putting critical infrastructure underground," Abhineet Kaul, a Singapore-based public sector specialist at consultancy Frost & Sullivan, told AFP.

"We have an increasing need for industrial, commercial, residential and green space on land in Singapore."

According to a draft development plan released in March, authorities want to put utilities, transport as well as storage and industrial facilities underground in order to free up land on the surface. There are as yet no plans to put housing underground, however. Three-dimensional technology will be used to produce subterranean maps, with three pilot areas targeted initially, according to the Urban Redevelopment Authority, which created the development plan.

Digging deep

Singapore is the latest city to try to make use of subterranean space. Finland's capital Helsinki has tunnels housing car parks, shopping malls and even swimming pools, while Montreal in Canada has a so-called "Underground City", a tunnel network connecting key points.

In a report commissioned by Samsung about what the world will look like in 50 years, experts predicted the appearance of "earthscrapers"—like an inverted skyscraper burrowing downwards for many storeys—in an attempt to save space in overcrowded cities.—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

China imposes retaliatory tariffs on US imports

BEIJING —China on Sunday imposed further tariffs on US imports, in retaliation for Washington's fourth round of tariff hikes on Chinese products. China will impose additional tariffs of 5 per cent or 10 percent on a total of 5,078 products from the United States worth \$75 billion, with some levied from Sunday and the rest to come on Dec. 15.

The move came as the United States slapped China on Sunday with the first stage of a new round of tariffs that will see nearly all Chinese imports taxed, in response to what it calls Beijing's unfair trade practices, including intellectual property theft.—Kyodo ■

Flights cancelled after Hong Kong protesters target airport

HONG KONG—More than a dozen flights were cancelled Sunday as thousands of pro-democracy activists blocked routes to Hong Kong's airport, a day after protesters and police fought pitched battles in some of the worst violence seen in the city since unrest began three months ago. At least 16 flights were cancelled, the airport's website said, with the departure hall packed with a backlog of passengers who had struggled to make it to the terminals.

Earlier, operators of the Airport Express train suspended services after the station was besieged, while black-clad protesters—hiding from CCTV cameras under umbrellas—built barricades at the bus terminus and attempted to stop traffic on the main road leading to the facility. Stranded travellers were forced to abandon their lifts and drag their luggage along the airport road.

Sunday's action is the latest in three months of increasingly violent protests sparked initially by opposition to a proposed law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, but which morphed into a broader anti-government movement.—AFP ■

Iran's Rouhani warns Macron of looming nuclear step

TEHRAN—President Hassan Rouhani spoke with French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on Saturday, warning him Iran would take the next step in reducing its nuclear commitments unless Europe lives up to its own undertakings.

Tensions have spiked in the Gulf since May last year when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from a nuclear deal between Iran and world powers - known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The escalation has seen ships attacked, drones downed and tankers seized in the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint for around a third of the world's sea-borne oil.

At the height of the crisis, Trump ordered strikes against



Twelve months on from the US pulling out of the nuclear deal, Iran began reducing its commitments. **PHOTO: AFP**

Iran on June 21 before cancelling them at the last minute.

Macron has been leading

efforts to de-escalate the situation, and expressed hopes at a G7 meeting last week of

bringing Rouhani and Trump together for a meeting.

But Rouhani has played down the likelihood of that happening unless the United States first lifts crippling sanctions that it has slapped on Iran since pulling out of the deal.

"If Europe cannot operationalise its commitments, Iran will take its third step to reduce its JCPOA commitments," Rouhani told Macron in a phone call, quoted by the government website.

However, "this step, just like the other ones, will be reversible," he added.

"Unfortunately after this unilateral move by the US, European countries did not take concrete measures to implement their commitments.—AFP ■

At least 5 dead as 21 injured in Texas shooting: police

WASHINGTON—At least five people have been killed in a mass shooting that left 21 victims in the US state of Texas on Saturday, police said.

"We have at least 21 victims, 21 shooting victims and at least five deceased at this point in time," Odessa Police Chief Michael

Gerke told reporters. Three police officers were injured in the incident which began with a traffic stop, he said. The suspect was shot dead in an exchange of fire with officers.

The shooting comes less than a month after a gunman killed 22 people in the Texas city of El Paso, close to 480km west of Odessa.

Police in Odessa had earlier reported that "a subject (possibly 2) is currently driving around Odessa shooting at random people".

They added that "the suspect just hijacked a US mail carrier truck" and urged people to stay off the road and use extreme caution.—AFP ■

Britons protest Johnson's Brexit 'coup' move



Demonstrators hold up placards in the sunshine at a protest against the move to suspend parliament in the final weeks before Brexit outside Downing Street in London on Aug 31, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON—Protesters wielding pro-democracy placards and EU flags rallied on Saturday in dozens of British cities against Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial move to suspend parliament just weeks before Brexit.

In the biggest demonstra-

tion, thousands of whistle-blowing, drum-banging people gathered raucously outside the gates of Downing Street in London chanting "Boris Johnson shame on you!"

"I'm absolutely disgusted by what's happening here," said attendee Maya Dunn, 66, a Dutch

citizen living in Britain, who accused Johnson of "riding roughshod over everybody". "You just can't trust him," she said.

The demonstrations come ahead of an intense political week in which Johnson's opponents will go to court to block his move to suspend parliament

from mid-September and legislate against leaving the European Union without an agreement.

Johnson, who only came to power in July following a Conservative Party leadership election, hit out at the prospect in a newspaper interview published Sunday. "What on earth are we achieving by this?" he told the Sunday Times, noting Brexit had already been delayed twice this year and warning rebel Tory MPs risked toppling the ruling Conservatives. "What we need to do is get a deal done, or if we can't get a deal done then get out of the EU on Oct the 31st, come what may.

"And that's what we're going to do," he added.

However the EU's chief Brexit negotiator said Brussels would not change the divorce deal struck with his predecessor Theresa May. "I am not optimistic about avoiding a 'no deal' scenario," Michel Barnier wrote in the Sunday Telegraph newspaper.—AFP ■

NEWS In BRIEF

Fragile truce holds over northwest Syria: monitor

BEIRUT—A fragile Russian-backed ceasefire was holding on Sunday in Syria's violence-plagued northwest, following months of heavy bombardment of the anti-regime bastion, a war monitor said. "Relative calm prevails" over the Idlib region, said Rami Abdel Rahman, the head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Regime and Russian warplanes have not been seen over Idlib since a unilateral ceasefire went into effect at 6 am (0300 GMT) on Saturday, he added.

But the Observatory head did report some "skirmishes" in Idlib, where government forces have been battling jihadists of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham alliance and allied rebel groups.

HTS, Al-Qaeda's former Syria affiliate, controls almost all of Idlib as well as parts of neighbouring Aleppo and Latakia provinces. The area is one of the last holdouts of opposition to forces of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.—AFP ■

Libya's eastern-based army launches airstrike near Gharyan city

TRIPOLI—Air force of Libya's eastern-based army on Saturday launched an airstrike on positions of the rival UN-backed government forces near the city of Gharyan, some 80 km south of the capital Tripoli.

"The air force targeted positions of the Gharyan Protection Force, killing two of the militias (government forces) and destroying a number of their vehicles," said the eastern-based army's information center.

No statement has been issued so far by the UN-backed government regarding the airstrike.

A few days ago, the UN-backed government's forces announced that they had stopped an attack of the eastern-based army near Gharyan.

Later last month, the UN-backed government's forces took over Gharyan city and expelled the eastern-based army.—XINHUA ■

Could cryptocurrency dethrone the dollar?

LONDON — Bank of England governor Mark Carney has suggested that a virtual currency, modelled on Facebook's Libra, could one day replace the dollar as king of the foreign exchange market.

The BoE chief aired vague proposals for a so-called "Synthetic Hegemonic Currency" at the recent Jackson Hole Symposium of central bankers.

Here is a brief assessment of why the greenback is losing its lustre and the outlook for Carney's proposed new digital currency, which would be supported by major central banks around the world.

Why dollar dominance?

The dollar has been the world's reference currency since the Bretton Woods agreement in 1944, when various key units were fixed to the val-



File photo shows bitcoin medals. Carney proposed new digital currency. PHOTO: AFP

ue of the greenback. It has retained its global supremacy ever since, thanks to the economic and political clout of the United States.

"The dominant currency is always that of the world's biggest political power," noted Philippe Waechter, head of research at Ostrum Asset Management.

The dollar accounted for almost 62 per cent of

global foreign exchange reserves in the first quarter of 2019, according to the International Monetary Fund.

The European single currency was second with 20.2 per cent, while China's yuan comprised only two per cent despite the country's rise to the rank of the world's second biggest economy behind the US.—AFP ■

Gov't to launch smartphone-based rewards program to soften tax impact

TOKYO — The government will launch a smartphone-based rewards program in 2020 using national identification "My Number" cards, as part of measures to mitigate the impact of the consumption tax hike next month, sources close to the matter said Sunday.

The government is considering providing 5,000 yen (\$47) worth of points to spend at stores across Japan to consumers who load 20,000 yen in their account for smartphone payments, starting in October next year, the sources said.

There will be no income restriction for applicants for the program and details of the framework will be disclosed soon in an upcoming Cabinet meeting on the promotion of digitalization of public administration.

Some municipalities

in Japan offer similar rewards programs to spur their local economies and the government initially considered using their systems.

But the plan was scrapped as their programs are available only within their own areas, not nationwide.

The new program that is expected to cost several hundred billion yen will follow another measure to give rebates for cashless payments at

small shops from October to June next year, for which the government set aside 279.8 billion yen. The consumption tax will be raised to 10 per cent from the current 8 per cent from Oct. 1. The government will look into the feasibility of bringing forward the start of the rewards program to July 2020, in time for the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics beginning late in that month.—Kyodo News ■



A "My Number" card. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

New ordinance to boost barrier-free hotel rooms ahead of Paralympics

TOKYO — A Tokyo metropolitan government ordinance took effect Sunday that is expected to boost the number of hotel rooms in the capital accessible by the disabled and the elderly ahead of the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic games.

Tokyo's revised barrier-free building ordinance is the first in Japan to set criteria for standard hotel rooms so persons with disabilities and senior citizens can more conveniently access them.

It stipulates that standard rooms in hotels and lodgings with renovated, newly or additionally constructed floor space of over 1,000 square meters must provide doorways at least 80 centimeters wide and bathroom entrances

that are a minimum 70 cm wide. There should be no steps in the rooms or on the way to them, according to the ordinance.

"We would like to use the games as a jump-start to improve facilities, leaving a legacy toward the future of an aging society," said a Tokyo government official in charge. The metropolitan government estimates up to 850 barrier-free hotel rooms will be needed per day during the upcoming Tokyo Games.

As the existing number of wheelchair-accessible rooms is insufficient to meet demand, the new ordinance is expected to push hotel operators to further renovate standard rooms to make them barrier-free.—Kyodo News ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (629 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (629 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 02-09-2019 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 SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

Phone No: 2301185

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M.V MCC DHAKA VOY. NO. (935S)

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

Notice for Change of distributor

Notice is hereby given that the official distributor have been changed for the following fungicide manufactured by UPL limited.

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Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co.,Ltd. invites objections to Co-secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, Wet Gygone, Insein township, Yangon from all parties within a period of fourteen (14) days from the publication of this notice. If no objections are received within the period prescribed, parties mentioned above shall proceed with the completion of formalities recorded with the Pesticide Registration Board.

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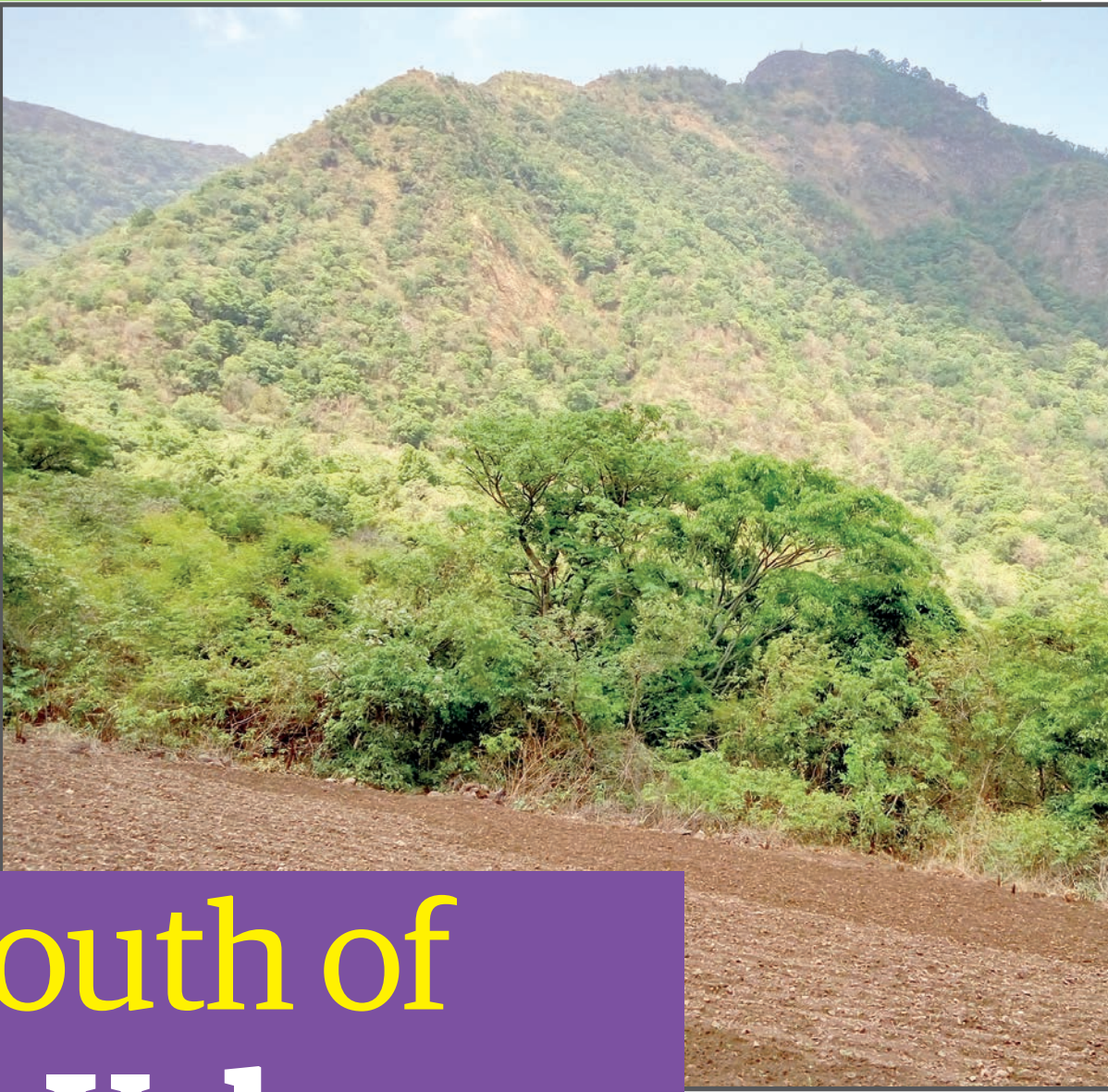
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THE view of Mt. Popa on the road to it after driving past Kyaukpadaung Town was a spectacular sight. The solitary extinct volcano rising up to a height of 4,981 ft. above sea level makes it distinct in the flat plains of central Myanmar. It is a well known and a major attraction for both locals and foreigners alike.

Mt. Popa is an extinct volcano in central Myanmar near Bagan and on a clear day, it can be seen from the bank of Ayeyawady River 37 miles away from it. It is 10 miles northeast of Kyaukpadaung Town in Mandalay Region, 405 miles from Yangon and 31 miles southeast of Bagan. Experts estimated the last eruption to be about 250,000 years ago. The mouth at the top of the extinct volcano was about a miles wide and drops down to a depth of 2,650 ft. The gorge or chasm was known as Chone Ma Twin gorge.

Attraction for researchers, devotees and visitors

Mt. Popa is an attraction for students and researchers of geology, history, zoology,



To the mouth of Mt. Popa Volcano

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

biology, forestry etc. as well as for religious devotees, curious and casual local and foreign visitors.

Along the southwest slope of Mt. Popa is a pedestal hill, a sheer-sided volcanic plug, known locally as Taung Kalat, rises 2,156 above sea level. This was a place of legends and beliefs where believers, devotees, curious and casual local and foreign visitors flock to. Myths, legends, facts and fictions of Myanmar’s first kingdom Bagan was closely associated with Mt. Popa and this Taung Kalat.

Deforestation almost completely wipes out vegetation and wild life in the Mt. Popa region but a successful reforestation cam-

paign started more than half a century ago restored the vegetation and wild life to such an extent that it now had become a place for zoology, biology and forestry students, experts and enthusiasts to visit and study. Popa is home to 10 mammal species including monkey and wild cats, 100 species of butterflies, 175 species of birds including some rare and endangered one, 360 types of herbs with medical values and 84 species of orchids.

Hiking to the mouth

Most visitors came to Taung Kalat while the mountain itself was a place for students and experts to visit, study and research. However, it’s been some years since hikes up the mountain was arranged between December 21 and 25. It was not a very well known activity but it had been growing in popularity among locals as well as foreign visitors year by year and this was what brought me to the mountain.



Forest Department station.



Stone hedge demarcations. PHOTOS:

Majority of the hikers were from nearby townships of Kyaukpadaung, Myingyan and NyaungU.

Christmas was the day when most climbers or hikers hiked up the mountain. They were ordinary people who came just for fun and were not mountaineers, a native or inhabitant of a mountainous region or a person who climb mountains for sports. They came in groups to enjoy



went along with a group organized by Bagan Hotelier and Bagan Tour Guide groups. We left our hotel in Popa Town by car passing through Popa Lwin and Gyaing villages and arrived at a natural pozzolan factory. Pozzolan is a natural product rich in silica and aluminous materials

leading to the mountain top. It had more than 500 households and majority of the villagers were farmers growing banana, peanut, tomato etc. Even though the village name in English would be mountain top village (Taung = mountain, Paw = on or top), we were actually at the start of our hike

many stones that were formerly lava spewed out by the volcano. These volcanic stones littered the area around the volcano to a considerable distance. After passing the farmlands, the track became narrower and our group had to walk in a single file. The hike

On the plateau near the summit of the mountain was a Forest Department station where we rest briefly and then continue down the crater of the volcano locally known as Chone Ma Twin gorge. The descent was a bit steep. Before I was there I read about the crater being surrounded



Plantations include dragon fruit farming.



by three peaks looking up from the crater but when I was there, I saw four peaks or summits surrounding the crater. As in the case of many peaks or summits in Myanmar each peak or summit here had a pagoda on top of it. We briefly look around inside the crater and then return back to the Forest Department station without climbing further up to the summit of the mountain. As we descended the mountain, we passed by many farm lands. In some farm houses, we also saw dragon fruits grown on a concrete pillar. As dragon fruit fetches good price, many household grow it in a small scale. Kyaukpadaung Township where Mt. Popa is located was bordered by Meiktila Township and Mahlaing Township in the east, Nyaung U and Chauk townships in the west, Natmauk Township in the south and Taungtha Township in the north. It is easily accessible by good road connections. With its diverse and good eco-system, pleasant climate all year round and scenic natural view, local and foreign visitors can visit it all year round. Arranging new activity like our hike up Mt. Popa was a good way of making this place more attractive.

Translated by Handytips
■■■

MAUNG THA (ARCHAEOLOGY)

the hike in the cool December weather. As it was a memorable hike for all, more and more were participating in the annual hike up Mt. Popa. The hikers take the jungle trail on the left side of the road just before reaching Popa Mountain Resort. Popa Mountain Resort is on the side of Mt. Popa overlooking Taung Kalat. My hike up the mountain was arranged by Journey Plan Travel from Yangon and we

and were found volcanic ash. Contact with water made it harder and harder to it was used in constructing canals and dams to strengthen the structures said Bagan Hotelier Group Chairman U Zaw Wate. After 10 minutes drive from pozzolan factory brought us to Taung Paw Village (south). There were two Taung Paw Villages, south and north of which Taung Paw Village (south) was beside the road

up the mountain. The cars were parked at the exit of the village and our hike up the mountain starts there and then. On departing the village, we went past farm lands were individual lands were demarcated by stone hedges. The stone hedges were made putting big stone at the bottom with smaller one place on top. That was a strange sight for me. Being a volcanic area, the place had

up the mountain wasn't steep but long so many of our group members stop frequently to rest. The mountain path was through thin forest that had become a habitat for monkey, wild pigs and deer said U Thein Win from Forest Department who was in our group. We hiked up slow and steadily and reached the mouth of the volcano in about an hour and half.

International U-15 Girls' Football Tourney: Myanmar trounce host Viet Nam 3-0



Team Myanmar celebrate their victory after beating Viet Nam 3-0 in the International U-15 Girls' Football Tourney, which was held yesterday at Hanoi's Youth Football Training Center. **PHOTO: MFF**

MYANMAR secured a big win over Viet Nam in the International U-15 Girls' Football Tourney, held yesterday at the Youth Football Training Center in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

Myanmar used fast attacks from the start and dominated over Viet Nam throughout the match.

Two minutes into the game, Myanmar used an error on behalf of the Viet Nam goalkeeper, who had let the ball slip from her hand, to land their first goal. The goal was netted by Than Than Soe.

Myanmar won their second goal at 29 minutes off a long pass, getting it past Viet Nam's defense, who failed to put up a united front, and into the goal net.

Spurred by the goals, Myanmar kept up their attack, and ended the first half with a lead of two goals.

In the second half, Myanmar girls continued to dominate the play, demonstrating solid control of the ball, and showing excellent passing and heading, and they managed to thwart all goal attempts by Viet Nam.

The third goal for Myanmar

was scored by Su Myat Noe at 78 minutes over a corner assist.

In the final minutes, team Myanmar seemed to reduce their tempo and concentrate on building a massive defense, successfully deflecting all goal attempts by Viet Nam. At the final whistle, the score was 3-0 in favour of Myanmar.

With the win, Myanmar is in a good shape in the tourney, and for fulfilling their championship dream.

Myanmar will play their next group match against Iceland on 3 September.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Lethwei event 'Fearless Tigers' to be held in Mandalay: WLC

THE World Lethwei Championship (WLC) has announced that a lethwei event titled 'Fearless Tigers' will take place on 4 October at the Mandalay Thiri Indoor Stadium in Mandalay.

In the main event, Myanmar's elite fighter Thway Thit Win Hlaing, who is among the most famous fighters in the WLC, will take on German-Thai striker Burutlek Petchyindee. Both are undefeated strikers.

Thway Thit Win Hlaing dispatched Saw Ba Oo, Shwe Yar Mann, and Shan Ko in the first three World Lethwei Championship events before taking a brief hiatus. In the co-main event in the women's Light Welterweight category, newly signed lethwei rising superstar Nicola Barke will meet Hungarian champion Bianka Balajti.

Nicola Barke has won multiple championships in England and China, and is now making her foray into the world of Lethwei. Nicknamed the 'Burmese Python', she has won an ardent fan following in Myanmar, and this is the first time she will be competing in the birth country of her mother.

Bianka Balajti is a multiple-time Muay Thai champion in Europe. Originally from Hungary and now residing in Vietnam, Balajti's intense style is in complete contrast of Barke, who is a technical striker. Other bouts featured on the cards include a clash between two of the biggest stars in lethwei, Shwe Yar Mann and Phan Thwe, and a face-off between World Lethwei Championship veterans Yan Naing Tun and Tha Pyay Nyo.

The bare knuckle fight-show will be broadcast live on Canal+ in Myanmar and UFC Fight Pass for international viewers, according to lethwei officials.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)



Two Spurs coaches give football training to over 200 kids

TWO coaches from the Tottenham Hotspur club of the English Premier League provided football training to around 240 kids yesterday at the Yangon United Sports Complex (YUSC) in Yangon.

At the day-long program, Mr Anton Blackwood, International Development Manager, and Mr Aaron Tilbrook, International Development Coach, from the Tottenham Hotspur F.C. trained young footballers aged 7 to 14 years, with the assistance of local coaches from the Yangon United Football Club.

The young trainees took to the training fields enthusiastically, running drills and exercises.

Mr Anton Blackwood and

Mr Aaron Tilbrook are members of a coaching team that trains world-class stars such

as England forward Harry Kane and South Korean attacker Son Heung-Min.

"As football coaches, it is always a delight to be contributing towards the development

of youth through sport, especially here in Asia.

Such training camps are very effective at inculcating positive values, such as teamwork and the importance of staying active through physical activities," said Aaron Tilbrook.

"On behalf of our coaching team, we would like to express our appreciation for the honour to be in Myanmar for the first time, thanks to AIA Myanmar, and to directly work with these young footballing talents who have a bright future ahead of them," he added.

The football training event was entitled 'AIA KICK', and it was organized by the AIA Life Insurance Company. —KyawKhin



The two Spurs coaches wearing violet colour jerseys providing football training to the children at the Yangon United Sports Complex (YUSC) in Yangon on 1 September. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH**