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Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, centre, with Mr. Li Fanrong, Vice Administrator, National Energy Administration (NEA) of China, second from left, Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, left, Energy Adviser to Bangladeshi Prime Minister, U Win Khaing, second from right, and U Kyaw Tin. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor receives energy officials from PRC, Bangladesh

STATE Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received delegations led by Mr. Li Fanrong, Vice Administrator, National Energy Administration (NEA) of the People's Republic

of China, and Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, all of whom had attended the Trilateral Meeting for Electric

Power Trading Initiative involving Myanmar, China and Bangladesh yesterday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw.

U Win Khaing, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, and U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister

for International Cooperation, also attended the meeting, during which they discussed matters on enhancing cooperation in the areas of electricity and energy among Myanmar, China and Bangladesh.—MNA ■

Union Minister briefs on Rakhine, peace, democracy at UN side event

A side event entitled “Understanding Myanmar: Efforts for Reconciliation and Peace”, at which the peace process, the transition to democracy and the Rakhine issue were addressed, was held Thursday during the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council being held at the United Nations Office in Geneva.

The Myanmar delegation hosting the briefing was led by U Thaug Tun, Union Minister for the Office of the Union Government.

The Myanmar delegation included Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of UEHRD, Daw Pyone Kathy Naing, Member of Pyithu Hluttaw, U Je Yaw Wu, Member of Amyotha Hluttaw, U Nay Oke Tint and Daw Haymar Min Thu. More than 40 Permanent Representatives/Representatives from Permanent Missions and UN agencies in Geneva were present at the event. U Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative of Myanmar, made the introductory remarks.

The Union Minister briefed attendees on the changes, challenges and choices for Myanmar. Salient points of his statement were:

- Myanmar has undergone remarkable change and transformation in recent years.

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‘BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017’

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)

Pyithu Hluttaw

Pyithu Hluttaw discusses education, livestock sectors

U Tun Tun, of Pwintbyu constituency, raised a question on the plan to send outstanding graduate students on scholarship to foreign countries, during the 26th-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

Union Civil Service Board Chairman U Win Thein replied that the Ministry of Education was selecting and sending qualified students attending post graduate courses to foreign education institutions, whenever it received a scholarship invitation/proposal from foreign educational institutions.

Invitations/proposals for scholarship are forwarded to relevant universities, where written and personal interviews are conducted for students entitled to attend the courses, and those selected are then sent abroad, according to the procedure and regulations.

After the foreign scholarship assessment and selection committee is informed of the wide-ranging courses that can



U Hla Kyaw. PHOTO: MNA

be freely applied to, news about this is distributed, and interested students can apply to attend the course. If selected by the respective course, the students are sent abroad, according to the procedure and regulations. Students can also apply for scholarships online with the approval of the Ministry of Education, and those accepted are sent according to the procedure and regulations.

Arrangements have also been made to enable outstanding students to get quality education



U Win Thein. PHOTO: MNA

by upgrading Yangon University, Mandalay University and Yangon Technology University into centres of excellence and providing opportunities to continue further studies abroad through the appointment of an education attaché and selection for state scholarships, explained the Union Civil Service Board Chairman.

A question by Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathedaung constituency on the deployment of police posts and stations in the five police



Daw Khin Saw Wai. PHOTO: MNA

areas of Yatheduang Township was then answered by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Aung Soe, who also gave details about future deployment plans.

Next, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw responded to a question raised by Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency on how people who wanted to start the livestock business could acquire permission for land. The Deputy Minister said land per-



U Tun Tun. PHOTO: MNA

mission was granted to those who wanted to start the livestock business. For those who want to start a livestock business on farm land, application can be made according to the 2012 Farmland Law and Rules, and for those who want to start the livestock business on vacant, fallow and virgin land, they can apply to do so according to the Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land Management Law and Rules, replied the Deputy Minister.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's seventh session holds 26th-day meeting

THE 26th-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw was held at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Replying to a question raised by U Mahn Law Moun of Chin State constituency (8) on mentioning the name of the ethnic national races on the National Registration Identity Card (NRIC), Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe said that the name of the ethnic national races will be mentioned on the NRIC according to the law, directives, procedures and guidelines provided, and will be from among the 135 ethnic national races designated under the 1983 census record. Unless the government determines and designates a new ethnic national race, there is no plan to put in other names, except the designated 135 ethnic national races, said the Union Minister.

Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe then replied to a question posed by Dr. Zaw Lin Htut of Mon State



Dr. Zaw Lin Htut. PHOTO: MNA

constituency (9) on the plans to raise the standard of the national traditional sport of Chinlone. The Union Minister said it is a good thing to train new blood players in the national traditional sport of Chinlone in the basic education schools. Whether the standard of the sports of Chinlone is raised or not is a secondary matter; the main thing is that the entire student population can become healthier. As such, in the coming few months and within a year, this traditional sport will be promoted in schools, in coop-



U Thein Swe. PHOTO: MNA

eration with the Chinlone sports group. Initially, it will be started in schools in the urban areas, as well as in the six sports and physical science schools under the ministry, said the Union Minister.

On the matter of upgrading the nurse and midwife training school in the Ayeyawady Region, Patheingyi Town, General Hospital, and to increase the trainee numbers, raised by U Soe Moe of the Ayeyawady Region constituency (1), the Union Minister for Health and Sports said



Dr. Myint Htwe. PHOTO: MNA

there are 281 trainees attending the Patheingyi nurse and midwife training school and 243 trainees attending the Hinthada nurse and midwife training school.

As the Myaungmya nurse and midwife training school will come into existence in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, it is expected that the requirement of the Ayeyawady Region will be met, replied the Union Minister.

Next, a bill on the amendment for an anti-corruption law (fourth revision) was discussed



U Mahn Law Moun.

by Daw Myat Thida Tun of Mon State constituency (5), U Hla Oo of Sagaing Region constituency (4), U Hsan Myint of Ayeyawady Region constituency (3) and U Tin Aung Htun of Magway Region constituency (5).

Later, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than informed the Hluttaw about receiving the Myanmar Investment Rule, approved and sent with amendment by the Pyithu Hluttaw, and took the approval of the Hluttaw.—Aung Ye Thwin (MNA) ■

Trilateral ministerial meeting held for electric power trading initiative between Myanmar-China-Bangladesh

A trilateral ministerial meeting for electric power trading initiative among Myanmar-China-Bangladesh was held at Horizon Lake View Hotel, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar yesterday.

U Win Khaing, Union Minister for Electricity and Energy, Li Fanrong, Vice Administrator of

National Energy Administration of the People's Republic of China, Dr. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury BB, Advisor to the Prime Minister, for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Affairs from Bangladesh, and other senior officials from the energy sector of the esteemed countries attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to enhance the trilateral and Myanmar-China bilateral cooperation on electric power trading by promoting the interconnection of the power grid and infrastructure development among these three countries. The meeting in plenary discussed the kick-starting of

the Myanmar-China-Bangladesh cross-border power trading and its implementation mechanism.

By initiating and collaborating in electric power trading with the three neighbouring countries, reciprocal benefits can be enjoyed not only in the improvement of energy security, sharing

of electricity resources, infrastructure development, capacity development of officials and job opportunity, but also strengthening of long-term friendships and fulfilling the basic requirements of electricity supply to support the economic development of each country. —MNA ■

Union Minister briefs on Rakhine, peace, democracy at UN side event

FROM PAGE-1

The country has abandoned five decades of military rule and is striving to ensure that democracy takes firm root. We are now on a path of transition away from centuries-long legacies of colonial occupation, ethnic rivalries and military rule.

- Immediately after taking office, the government began revitalizing the peace process. In spite of the complexities involved, there has been significant progress. The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was signed by eight ethnic armed groups in 2015. A new milestone in the direction of peace was made last month when two more ethnic armed groups came on board.

- With regard to rule of law, it is worth mentioning here that State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, in addressing the conference on justice and rule of law on Wednesday, underscored the need for judicial and legal reforms.

- The complexity is compounded by the high expectations that the international community and the Myanmar people have for the Government.

- With regard to Rakhine, it is only natural that there will be critics and doubting Thomases. Scepticism may well be warranted. However, what we need is constructive criticism and not recriminations and the passing of judgment. We need to find a constructive way forward.

- Nothing must be done to derail the transition to democracy.

- In Rakhine, our efforts to bring peace and development were on track until August 2017, when violence was triggered by the attacks on security forces by terrorists. Regrettably, the attacks and the subsequent mass displacement of people changed the situation and negatively af-



(From left to right) Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of UEHRD, U Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative to UN, Union Minister U Thaung Tun and MP Daw Pyone Kathy Naing. **PHOTO: MNA**

ected the perception and attitude of the international community on the situation in Myanmar.

- The Government, recognizing the urgent need to find a lasting solution to the problem of Rakhine, has been working to promote peace, harmony, and development for all communities.

- The Government has initiated a number of programmes to find a sustainable solution to the issue of Rakhine. We are currently implementing the recommendations of the Annan Commission. A Ministerial-level implementation committee and an Advisory Board, made up of eminent personalities from home and abroad, have been set up to help us find lasting solutions. The State Counsellor herself is leading a public-private enterprise, the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD), to provide humanitarian assistance, carry out resettlement and rehabilitation and to develop Rakhine State.

- Allegations of widespread "atrocities", "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide" have been made repeatedly. The Government and the leadership have

been accused of standing by in silence.

- The leaders of Myanmar, who have been struggling so long for freedom and human rights, will never condone any action that can be construed as ethnic cleansing or genocide. The Government will do everything to prevent it.

- We take the allegations of human rights violations seriously and will take action against offenders whenever there is clear evidence.

- Far from being indifferent to the situation, we care deeply for all people affected, including those who have fled to Bangladesh, due to recent incidents in Rakhine.

- Following the agreement reached between Myanmar and Bangladesh, we have made preparations for the repatriation of the displaced persons.

- Concerns have been expressed by the international community for the safety and security of the returnees. We have strengthened our border guard police capacity to ensure the safety of the returnees as well as all communities – Rakhine, Muslim, Daingnet, Mro, Thet, Maramagyi and Hindu. They are all victims of

violence and terrorism. Security needs to be ensured for all.

- Today, we are faced with terrorism, funded and inspired from abroad. This is a dangerous trend for all of us. We need to join hands to counter the growing threat posed to our region by terrorism.

- The complexities and challenges in Rakhine cannot be seen in isolation and through a narrow lens of human rights of one particular community alone.

- On our part, Myanmar is ready to continue to work with the international community.

- At the same time, we earnestly hope that the international community will pursue a more objective and balanced approach to help overcome the challenges in Rakhine.

- Without mutual understanding, mutual suspicion and hostility will prevail. The lives of those most affected will not improve. And the door will be open to even greater tragedy.

- I believe that the better choice before us is to recognize the reality of the situation on the ground and accommodate each other's concerns. We must work together to build trust and confidence in order to achieve lasting peace, stability and development in Rakhine.

Then, Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State (UEHRD), appraised Myanmar's development strategies and agendas, which are in line with Sustainable Development Goals. He also briefed about the work of UEHRD (a public-private enterprise), in term of humanitarian assistance, resettlement and development in Rakhine State through ten task forces.

Daw Pyone Kathy Naing, a

member of the Pyithu Hluttaw, gave an explanation of her perspectives on Rakhine, providing humanitarian assistance in Rakhine, the promotion and protection of human rights, and concerns on the terrorist acts of ARSA based on her 30 years of experience in human rights. She stressed that no one is above the law and they will continue to fight for it. She urged the international community to extend understanding and cooperation to Myanmar. She warned that sanctions against Myanmar will affect mostly the ordinary people of Myanmar.

During the question-and-answer session, Permanent Representatives/Representatives of Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, the European Union and Australia raised questions related to the state of cooperation between Myanmar and the UNDP and UNHCR on humanitarian and development assistance in Rakhine State, the work and funding of UEHRD, cooperation with the World Bank, more access for humanitarian organizations, the repatriation process, the possibility of setting up a national independent investigation commission, actions against security personnel who committed human rights violations, freedom of movement and prevention of statelessness.

The Union Minister and the Chief Coordinator responded to all the questions.

After the side event, the Union Minister briefed the press on the situation in Rakhine State at the United Nations Office and conducted a telephone interview with BBC (Myanmar).

The 37th Session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations Office in Geneva began on 26 February and will continue until 23 March.— Myanmar News Agency ■

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Inle floating market to open in November

THE Inle floating market is expected to open in November this year, according to the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

"We are discussing a plan to develop the Inle floating market. We will choose the best place for the floating market," said U Ohn Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is cooperating with the forestry department to procure the woods required for the construction of boats for the market.

The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is also working on creating new tourist destinations and market promotion, in cooperating with the related ministers, and private and international organisations to attract more foreign tourists.

The floating market is being developed in the Inle region to promote its tourism



Vendors on boats wait customers in Inle Lake. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

market, as well as create jobs opportunities for the local people.

There are some 105 hotels

with 3,410 rooms in the Nyaung Shwe-Inle region. The ministry has issued licences to 70 tour

companies, 257 vehicles, 1,204 vessels, 386 tour guides and 934 local tour guides. —GNLM

Five pilgrims died as minivan topples into gorge in Kachin State

FIVE people were killed and nine others injured after a minivan fell into a canyon in the northern Myanmar state of Kachin on Wednesday.

The accident happened near mile post 38 on Momauk-Lwejel road between two villages in Momauk Township. The minivan carrying 15 pilgrims, including a driver plunged into a 200 ft deep ravine after the driver lost control of the vehicle, killing five women who reside in Muse,

Northern Shan State.

The vehicle was on the way to Momauk from Bamauk Township in Sagaing Region after visiting a famous pagoda in the area, the van was driven by Phyo Maung Maung, 28 years of age. The injured have been transferred to a nearby government hospital. Action has been taken against the driver by local police.

Myanmar is thought to be a country with one of the highest numbers of road fatalities in



The car fallen into the canyon seen. PHOTO: MDN

the region. Road accidents occur mostly as a result of poor driving or badly maintained roads or vehicles.—MDN

Raw jade stones seized during a car search in Northern Myanmar

LOCAL security force discovered 34 different sizes of raw jade stones weighing about 90 kilograms during a car search.

The vehicle was on the way to Myitkyina from Phakant and was driven by Thein Tan, 34 years of age from Myitkyina. The force seized the raw jade stones at a checkpoint near a village in Kamai Town, Kachin State this evening.

The driver has been charged with transporting the raw jade stones illegally by local police force, according to a source from the Information and Public Relations Department.—MDN



The man with raw jade seized by police seen. PHOTO: MDN

Myanmar likely to reach target FDI for 2017-2018 FY

MYANMAR is set to achieve its US\$ 6 billion Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) target, according to the Ministry of Commerce (MIC).

Myanmar has received over US\$ 5 billion in FDI while it is just one month away from the end of 2017-2018 fiscal year, said U Tun Aung Kyaw, Deputy Director General of Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

We inquired businesses about their difficulties and make responses, he added.

For 2017-2018 FY, MIC has approved 206 FDI businesses worth US\$ 4,508.453 million until February, 2018, and total investment including introduction into existing project amount US\$ 5,307.207 million.

Besides, MIC approved US\$ 366.530 million in Thilawa Special Economic zone under special economic zone law, therefore total investment reached US\$ 5,673.737 million.—GNLM

Yangon gov't submits proposal to establish fish farming zone

By May Thet Hnin

THE Yangon Region government has submitted a proposal to the union government on developing a fish farming zone in Kawhmu and Kungyangon townships in the Yangon Region, said U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Region Chief Minister.

The proposal was made during the 15th meeting between the Vice President and entrepreneurs, which was held on 7 March at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The fish farming zone will be established on a 10,000-acre plot. "We are discussing a project with the Myanmar Fishery Federation for the fishery sector and supply chain, and for the Yangon Region

to become a role model. We have already submitted a proposal for the project to the union government," he added.

The fish farming zone will include incubate camps, feed factories and cold storage factories.

Myanmar Fisheries Federation General Secretary U Win Kyaing said, "We have already conducted surveys in Kawhmu and Kungyangon townships. We have submitted the proposal to implement the project in those townships, because of their good water quality and transport system. "The fish market will play a part in boosting the country's gross domestic product. Also, it can enhance the export sector, as well as create job opportunities for the local people," he added.

The union government has



A worker selects fish at the Nyaungtan Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

not responded to the proposal yet. "If the union government grants the permission, we have to discuss the details with the land owners, whether we will pay

a compensation for the land or allow them to participate as land owners," he stated. According to 2012 Farmland Law, farmlands cannot be used for other purposes.

There are some 480,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the country, but only 108,000 acres are officially sanctioned by the government. ■

Cuttlefish price increases due to low supply

THE price of cuttlefish has increased since February because of the low supply to Yangon fish market, according to the Thiri Mingalar fish wholesale market.

The price of cuttlefish was Ks9,000 per viss in the third week of January 2018. Now, the price of cuttlefish has increased to Ks10,000 per viss.

"Last year, few supplies of cuttlefish entered the market. Even suppliers could not supply

the fish to our market to meet the market demand this year. This is because fish suppliers are directly contacting restaurants," said a fish retail seller. Moreover, fishermen are facing difficulties in catching cuttlefish, because they do not have fishing licences, which is another reason for the lower supply.

"Although the cuttlefish fishermen have a boat and machine grants, according to

the rules and regulation of the fisheries department, they do not have fishing licences. Therefore, some fishermen may have to suspend their businesses," said the Joint-Secretary of Myeik District Cuttlefish Entrepreneurs Association.

There are more than 800 cuttlefish fishing boats in Myeik district, but only some 200 are officially sanctioned by the fishery department. — GNLM ■

Internal Revenue Department issues notification on affixing commercial tax stamps

By May Thet Hnin

THE Internal Revenue Department sent a notification letter to the Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association on 6 March about affixing commercial tax stamps on gold purchases.

The Internal Revenue Department released the notification letter, because they found a few gold shops had failed to affix the commercial tax stamps on their gold vouchers, while others were selling gold with two vouchers — one with payment for commercial tax and another without payment for commercial tax.

The Internal Revenue Department has reduced the commercial tax on gold

jewellery from 5 per cent to 1 per cent, and while refined gold is now exempted from the commercial tax, earlier it was taxed 5 per cent.

The ministry has thus requested Myanmar gold entrepreneurs to ensure they collect the commercial tax from buyers. The ministry has not made a public announcement, as it does not want to reveal the names of the gold shops yet.

In this regard, Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association's General Secretary U Ohn Myaing said, "Now, buyers pay only one per cent commercial tax on gold jewellery purchases, because our association requested for that. The commercial tax rate imposed

by the government is reasonable. Every country pays taxes. Therefore, we have delivered the notification letter to the state and region gold entrepreneurs associations through the Central Executive Committee and regional Executive Committee, as soon as we received it from the ministry. In addition to this, it has been announced on social media (Facebook). We will also discuss the matter in the forthcoming monthly meeting."

The commercial tax of 1 per cent on gold jewellery is collected through gold purchases. However, some gold shops reduce the commercial tax for their regular customers, because they do not want to lose business. ■

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- Market Place by City Mart (6.5 Mile)
- Market Place by City Mart (Damasidi Road)
- Market Place by City Mart (Junction City)
- City Mart (Aung San Stadium)
- City Mart (47th street)
- City Mart (Yankin)
- City Mart (China Town)
- City Mart (Myay Ni Gone)
- City Mart (FMI)
- City Mart (Junction Square)
- City Mart (Junction Maw Tin)
- City Mart (Sule Square)
- City Mart (Star City - Thanlyin)
- City Mart (Waizayandar)
- City Mart (Hledan)
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Discussion on draft law to amend Television and Video Law (8/1996)

A discussion on the draft law to amend the Television and Video Law (8/1996) was held at the Ministry of Information's office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the event, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint explained about the ministry performing its information, education and entertainment duties, in cooperation with other organisations, entities and individuals.

The Union Minister said that everything needs to be conducted according to the enacted laws, but when a law is not in accordance with other enacted laws, it is not useful or is an obstacle or a hindrance, and attempts must be made to amend it.

Next, U Saw Hla Tun, member of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, said the law was being amended to prevent and reduce piracy of videos and to develop the motion picture sector.

Later, Dr. Wei Phyto Aung, member of the Pyithu Hluttaw



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint delivers the address at the meeting with departmental officials and lawmakers on amending the Television and Video Law (8/1996). **PHOTO: MNA**

bill committee, said the stage to submit the bill committee's report had been reached, and the related sectors were holding discussions and coordination meetings. The Hluttaw will discuss establishing a law that is appropriate to the Myanmar movie sector.

Following this, Pyithu Hluttaw Health and Sports Develop-

ment Committee member Dr. Sein Mya Aye said the day's discussion would be held with the aim of enabling discussion in the Hluttaw for the establishment of a law that is appropriate for the motion picture sector. Only then can discussion be held in the Hluttaw for the enactment of the law, added the committee member. The laws enacted

must be amended if there are difficulties in following it, he said urging the attendees to discuss it openly.

Information and Public Relations Department Director General U Ye Naing then explained that the draft law was prepared because the Television and Video Law (8/1996) was not in accordance with the Constitu-

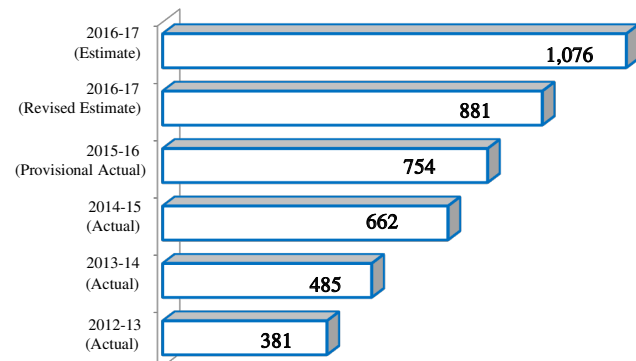
tion and the international motion picture laws. Before a new motion picture law can be enacted, the clauses and fines prescribed in the law are being amended to be in line with the time, explained the Director General.

Myanmar Motion Pictures Organisation Chairman U Zin Wine, Myanmar Music Association Copyright and International Relation Chairman U Myo Swe, Myanmar Thabin Association Vice Chairman U Ne Win, Video (central) Group Chairman U Win Naing, Anti-corruption Commission Member U Han Nyunt, representatives of states/regions governments, and representatives of states/regions video related groups and committees provided discussions and suggestions.

The Union Minister also discussed the amendment proposed on the work licence, video rental, show and distribution, and offences and fines included in the television and video law. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Expenditure on Health of Myanmar

(Kyat Billion)



Source : Budget Department
Information Unit : Central Statistical Organization

Rain, thundershowers likely in Bago, Yangon, Taninthayi regions

RAIN or thundershowers are expected in the Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi regions, and Kachin, Shan, Kayah, Kayin and Mon states within two days, as the weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over South Bay and a few clouds hover over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather re-

port issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday evening.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and neighbouring areas for today is generally fair and for Yangon and the neighbouring area is likely to be isolated rain or thundershowers, with the degree of certainty being 60 per cent.

The outlook for the weekend weather is slight rain or thundershowers in the Yangon Region, and the weather will be generally fair in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Region.

Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. The wave height will be some 3-5 feet off and along Myanmar coasts. —GNLM ■

Fish resource declines in Ye due to poison fishing

LOCAL fishermen in Ye, Taninthayi Region, are facing scarcity of fish in the rivers, and have blamed illegal fishing activities for the decline.

Traditional fishermen have complained about illegal fishing with the use of poison to the local authorities, urging them to take action against those involved in such activities.

“To fight illegal fishing, we need the cooperation of the local people, because it is difficult to get evidence,” said U Zaw Min Oo, Head of Ye Township

Fishery Department. A case was brought to the court this year, thanks to the cooperation of the local people, he added. The department is conducting a campaign to educate the local people and raise awareness against illegal fishing with the use of poison.

According to the local people, some people engage in illegal fishing early morning to avoid being caught. Local fishermen noticed the decreasing fish resources three years ago.—Htut Htut (Ye) ■



Fishermen in Ye have been facing declining of fish resource. **PHOTO: HTUT HUT (YE)**



Senior-General Min Aung Hlaing is welcomed back by senior military officers. PHOTO: MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing back from Singapore

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and his delegation, who attended the 15th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Informal Meeting in Singapore, left the Singapore Armed Forces Paya Lebar Airbase for Myanmar.

He was seen off by Myanmar

Ambassador to Singapore U Htay Aung, Military Attaché (Army, Navy, Air) Col. San Nyunt Oo and senior officers from the Singapore armed forces. The commander-in-chief of defence services and his delegation were greeted at Yangon International Airport by Commander-in-Chief (Navy)

Admiral Tin Aung San, Lt-Gen Myo Zaw Thein and Lt-Gen Tin Maung Win of Commander-in-Chief (Army) office, the Yangon Command commander, senior Tatmadaw officers, Singapore Ambassador to Myanmar Mrs Venessa Chan and other officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Heads of service organizations appointed

The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the following persons as Heads of Service Organizations shown against each of their names on expiry of the one-year probation period.

Name	Appointment
(1) U Thant Sin	Director-General Protocol Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs
(2) U Zaw Htay	Director-General Union Peace Implementation Department Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor

U Aye Tha Aung returns from Viet Nam

A delegation, led by Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Aye Tha Aung, visited Viet Nam on the invitation of the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank and International Monetary Fund and returned to Yangon yesterday evening. The delegation was welcomed by Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Tin



Maung Tun, Deputy Speaker U Lin Naing Myint, Viet Nam's Ambassador to Myanmar Dr. Luan Thuy Duong and officials from the Amyotha Hluttaw office at Yangon International Airport. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Attorney-General receives executive director of ILF

Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo received Jennifer Smith, executive director of International Legal Foundation (ILF), at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to legal aid for criminal cases in Yangon and Mandalay, the processes of free lawyer renting by the Union Attorney-General's Office for the poor who are

facing the death penalty, cooperation work and training in the rule of law, as well as legal aid and cooperative works between legislators and legal-aid lawyers for the legal rights of the clients.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Attorney-General U Win Myint, Permanent Secretary Daw Nu Nu Yin and Director-General Dr Thida Oo. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Number of students sitting for matric exam declines

The total number of students who registered to take this year's matriculation examination was 844,358, of which 789,883 turned up on the first day of the three day assessment, when Myanmar subjects are tested.

Since then, the number of students who have shown up on subsequent days has declined, officials said.

On the second day, when English is the main subject tested, 789,070 students showed up. On the third day, when the test subject is mathematics, only 788,504 students turned up. The total three days reduction in numbers sitting for the examination was 55,854 on the third day. In Nay Pyi Taw, a total of 22,389 sat for the Myanmar subject. This number was re-

duced to 22,357 on the English subject day and further reduced to 22,336 on the mathematics subject day.

Similarly in Yangon and Mandalay, the numbers declined from 111,851 and 111,397 on day one to 111,672 and 111,260 on day two and 111,523 and 111,188 on day three, respectively. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Nothing must be done to derail the transition to democracy

MYANMAR is going through a critical period of transition. The government is dealing with social, economic, rule-of-law and judicial challenges.

Rebuilding and reforming the rule of law and justice sector is a top priority for Myanmar. It is also vital for our efforts towards sustaining Peace and Development.

In Rakhine, the government's efforts to bring peace and development was on track until Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) extremist terrorists made a series of attacks in Maungdaw in August, 2017. Due to the attacks, situations on administration, the economy, transportation, and regional development affairs strayed from the right paths, displacing people to other regions. Concerning these changes, authorities have taken measures to restore the governmental machinery back to normal.

With regard to Rakhine, we need to find a constructive way forward to find a lasting solution to the issue of Rakhine.

The Myanmar government is giving priority for repatriation of the displaced people. Humanitarian aid has been provided to all affected communities.

We take the allegations of human rights violations seriously. Little is known on reports in the international media about the many people of Daing Net, Mro, the Mramagyi and Rakhine minority groups and Hindus who have had to flee their homes as a result of violence. They are all victims of violence and terrorism. Security needs to be ensured for all.

Today, we are facing terrorism, funded and inspired from abroad. This is a dangerous trend for all of us.

Instigations, threats and false hopes given by ARSA also play a role in the mass displacement of people. Terrorist attacks triggered a humanitarian crisis, but many conveniently failed to denounce the provocative attacks.

The Myanmar government is giving priority for repatriation of the displaced people. Humanitarian aid has been provided to all affected communities.

Meanwhile, the international community has expressed concerns for the safety and security of the returnees from Bangladesh.

Myanmar is ready to continue to work with the international community to counter terrorism and to improve the lives of those affected by the terrorists.

We earnestly hope that the international community will pursue a more objective and balanced approach to help overcome the challenges in Rakhine.

2018 Union Tax Law, a turning point to dramatic change for higher economic growth

By Ye Htut Naing

It is intriguing news that the 2018 Union Tax Bill will be submitted to the Union Parliament, because it is presumably the first step to boost the economic environment of the country.

The Union Government made the preparations and will submit it to the Union Parliament for the first phase. One of the interesting things is that the government is going to remove all forms of withholding taxes starting on 1 April, 2018. The government aims at improving the socio-economic standards of all citizens and it is regarded as a good sign towards moving forward to high economic growth.

According to the new bill, the union government is trying to improve the tax system to be more effective and ensure that taxes are efficiently and systematically collected. Therefore, action needs to be taken against tax avoidances in accordance with existing rules and regulations.

Fitting the current economic development

The 2018 Union Tax Bill was drafted in order to fit the current economic development while giving tax exemptions relief to taxpayers. Arrangements should be made not to become a burden for the taxpayers and it will come into effect for money and assets both in and outside the country, which were legally obtained. Both citizens and taxpayers in the country must pay 3 per cent tax for the first six months, and 5 per cent for the next six months. In the old Union Tax Law 2017, there was a clause that allowed paying tax for money that escaped assessment, but it was removed in the bill.

The 2018 Union Tax Law

According to the new 2018 Union Tax Law, taxpayers will have to pay only 3 per cent on the trading value within the first six months, from April to September, while those paying income tax in the second half have to pay 5 per cent. Earlier, an income tax of 15 to 30 per cent had to be paid on the trading value of property.

Buyers and sellers will have to pay only 7 to 9 per cent tax, including 3 or 5 per cent income tax, and 4 per cent stamp duty.

The reduction in tax is likely to persuade traders who evaded tax, by making transactions with general power and soft power of attorney, and some deal working on the previous contract term, to pay tax and make changes in ownership. Consequently, people are satisfied with the reduction in tax and because of the booming of real estate market.

Moreover, tax cuts will result in better real estate deals and a possible decrease in real estate prices. Real estate deals are likely to grow on account of a decrease in the income tax. However, the stock market, the automobile market, the gold export/import market and banking operations are also competitive investment options. As there are many markets that can catch the investor's eye, price manipulation will not be seen significantly in the real estate market.

Shaping stable economic development

In shaping the stable economic development of a country, sustainable provision of supports for the development of small businesses from the private sector is essential. Also, small productive industries and economic enterprises play an important role in increasing per capita income.

There are various kinds of economic spheres for Myanmar. It is essential to constantly monitor conditions of small businesses from the public economic sector and to encourage them at the same time. It is because a nation's economic development is directly proportional to the development of SMEs.

Fostering economic reforms

Compared to other ASEAN nations, Myanmar has low levels of tax yield with a ballooning budget deficit. It is high time for the country to foster economic reforms and increase the effectiveness of tax collection. The country's total tax revenues have made up less than 5 per cent of the gross domestic product. Moreover, the devel-



Taxation is an important issue for a country which loses a lot of tax revenue mainly due to privileged people, a monopolised economy and corruption.

opment of the country depends upon the private sector. The lawmakers and members of parliament should urge the government to encourage the businesses and all citizens to take pride in paying taxes as dutiful citizens. In fact, taxation reform is vital for scaling up the economic and social reforms of the country, thereby creating job employment opportunities for the citizens. In fact, tax collecting is not intended to get money for the government's expenditure, but to implement the objectives of the state.

Emergence of the acceleration effect

According to the reports released by Asian Development Bank, industry growth of the country continues to accelerate with higher investment, both public and private, in garments and other light manufacturing, while services are getting a boost from tourism and expansion in the nascent telecommunications industry.

Utilisation of taxation

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed the importance of collecting tax in her

speech. Taxation is an important issue for a country which loses a lot of tax revenue mainly due to privileged people, a monopolised economy and corruption. As for the government, it is needed to fight against corruption and bribery issues as a first priority in order to have tax revenues from taxpayers in line with rules and regulations. In doing so, the government will have tax revenues which could be used effectively for the welfare and interest of the country.

Creating tax-paying culture

She said the government was striving to improve the tax system and passport applications. But changing practices and systems in a way that is fair to everyone was very challenging. "For establishment of a tax culture, a country needs to collect taxes. Even a rich country like Japan collects taxes from its citizens. If we don't collect taxes, how can the government function? We need to collect taxes to allow the government to function.

"First the government needs to educate the public. Some people don't even know how much tax they pay as some tax laws are very complicated. We need to change the system and should make strenuous efforts to enhance the transparency of the use of tax revenues. I guarantee that the government would use cash aid effectively and transparently," she said. Therefore it is of paramount importance to develop tax-paying culture among the citizens.

Crucial points of taxation

The next crucial point of taxation is that people are satisfied with the attempts made by revenue authorities to draft a new bill which is related to the formation of a body that solves taxation problems. The 2018 tax system should be agreeable to both government and taxpayers so that the government can make the tax collection system more effective while citizens must pay their taxes as dutiful citizens.

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

Women's empowerment is a public health imperative: WHO

IN the WHO South-East Asia Region and beyond, more than half the population – women – face what is often egregious discrimination. Discrimination in education and the opportunity to learn to read and write. Discrimination in access to nutrition and the chance to grow healthy and strong. And discrimination in the workplace, where women can be subjected to unwanted advances or have their work undervalued or unpaid.

Gender-based discrimination in these and countless other forms is a persistent problem across the South-East Asia Region and throughout women's lives. But as much as gender-based prejudice and inequality violates human rights, stymies social and economic development, and crushes the hopes and dreams of millions of young girls and women, it also has a grave impact on public health and wellbeing.

Examples abound.

The region-wide practice of early marriage and pregnancy, for instance, is a direct threat to the health of young women and their children, especially in rural areas. Around six million girls aged 15-19 years give birth in our region every year, while in four of the region's countries, the adolescent birth rate is more than 50 per 1000 women aged 15-19 years. This provides immense dangers to the health of young women – dangers that can be avoided via rapid social empowerment (including access to contraception) and the implementation of laws against early marriage.

Gender-based inequities likewise impede women's access to essential health services, causing a range of adverse outcomes. Start with childbirth: Many deliveries still occur in the home, often in the presence of a birth attendant who is unskilled. This occurs partly as a result of women's inadequate access to health-related knowledge and a lack of decision-making power, and partly due to ongoing service gaps. Though during the Millennium Development Goal era the region made world-beating progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, further gains are needed to bring the maternal mortality rate to below 70 per 100 000 births, as per the Sustainable Development Goal target.

Still, there is room for optimism: The region-wide struggle to end gender-based discrimination and advance women's empowerment – particularly for rural women and girls – has never been stronger. WHO South-East Asia is proud to champion this cause, reflecting as it does our core values and commitment to human rights, as well as our evidence-based conviction that empowered women create healthier, happier communities that produce transformative change, both locally and globally.

Until full equality is achieved, however, WHO will continue to work with our member countries to promote and support the health of women and girls. That means continuing to train skilled birth attendants able to provide life-saving services when childbirth becomes complicated. It means continuing to advocate for increased access to contraceptives and the provision of adolescent sexual and reproductive health services. And it means continuing to actively campaign against gender-based violence and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation that can cause life-threatening injuries to young girls and adolescents.

Let us acknowledge that gender-based discrimination exists and is a daily occurrence in each of the South-East Asia Region's countries. Let us understand that it needn't be this way, and that gender equality can be rapidly achieved with sincere, society-wide resolve.

And let us take full stock of the fact that women's empowerment is more than a tool to advance social or economic ends – that it is a public health imperative, and one that demands our most strident pursuit.

Waste waters: Plastic rubbish chokes Bali's sea

BALI— Millions of tourists are drawn to Bali's palm-fringed scenery and rich marine life, but there is a danger lurking beneath its famously crystal-clear waters: a wasteland of plastic rubbish.

An underwater video shot by British diver Rich Horner this week showing a sea overflowing with plastic and other garbage at Manta Point, a well-known diving site near Bali's main island, has highlighted trouble in paradise.

The holiday island has become an embarrassing poster child for Indonesia's trash crisis.

The problem has grown so bad that officials in Bali last year declared a "garbage emergency" across a six-kilometre stretch of coast that included popular beaches Jimbaran, Kuta and Seminyak.

"The ocean currents brought us in a lovely gift of a slick of jellyfish, plankton, leaves, branches, fronds, sticks, etc.... Oh, and some plastic," the diver wrote on his Facebook account.

His video, which has been viewed more than a million times, shows a diver swimming through a torrent of rubbish — including bottles, cups and straws — at Manta Point about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Bali's main island.

"Plastic bags, more plastic bags, plastic, plastic, so much plastic!" Horner said.

Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, is the world's second biggest contributor to marine debris after China, and a colossal 1.29 million metric tons is estimated to be produced annually by the Southeast Asian nation.

The waves of plastic flooding into rivers and oceans have been causing problems for years, clogging waterways in cities, increasing the risk of floods, and injuring or killing marine animals who ingest or become trapped by plastic packaging.

"Microplastics can contaminate fish which, if eaten by humans, could cause health prob-



Bali last year declared a "garbage emergency" across a six-kilometre stretch of coast that included popular beaches Jimbaran, Seminyak and Kuta, where authorities used heavy equipment to clear plastic trash from the beach. **PHOTO: AFP**

lems, including cancer," I Gede Hendrawan, an environmental oceanography researcher at Bali's Udayana University, previous-

ly told AFP.

Bali's rubbish problem is at its worst during the annual monsoon season, when strong winds

push marine flotsam on to the beach and swollen rivers wash rubbish from riverbanks to the coast.—AFP

Japanese PM lauds Putin's strong spirit, love of Russia

MOSCOW — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe considers Russian President Vladimir Putin to be a strong leader with whom it is possible to resolve various issues, as he himself said in Russian TV and radio journalist Vladimir Solovyov's documentary dubbed World Order 2018, which was released on social media.

"Putin is very much fond of his country and has a strong spirit," Abe said. The Japanese prime minister added that "talks often turn out to be very difficult." "But I am sure that together we can resolve the most complicated issues," he stressed. According to Abe, the world has been facing a lot of complex problems, including the situation in Syria, the fight against terrorism and the North Korea issue.

"It is impossible to resolve these problems, particularly the Ukrainian conflict, unless Russia takes part in dialogue," he said.

Abe also shared his impressions from a joint visit to Tokyo's



According to Shinzo Abe, "Putin is very much fond of his country". **PHOTO: TASS**

Kodokan Judo Institute that he had made together with Putin in December 2016. "When people enter Kodokan, it is easy to tell if they are judokas or not," the Japanese prime minister said, explaining that before

stepping on the tatami, each judoka must take a deep bow. "Despite being a president, Putin took a bow upon entering Kodokan. President Putin is undoubtedly a true judoka," Abe concluded. — Tass

Africa new frontline in anti-tobacco fight: activists

CAPE TOWN — Africa and other developing regions are becoming increasingly significant battlegrounds in the effort to combat the spread of smoking, an anti-smoking campaign group warned on Thursday.

But most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have inadequate monitoring of tobacco use, according to the authors of the newly reissued "Tobacco Atlas" of global tobacco control efforts and challenges.

Globally, the battle to end the scourge of tobacco is still long.

Smoking claims nearly seven million lives yearly around the world from cancer and other lung diseases, and accounts for about one-in-10 deaths worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. "More than 1.1 billion people are current smokers, while 360 million people use smokeless tobacco," the authors said in a statement. The sixth edition of the atlas, co-authored by the American Cancer Society and Vital Strategies, was published to coincide with the opening this week of the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town.

"Low and middle income

countries represent over 80 per cent of tobacco users and tobacco-related deaths, placing an increased share of tobacco-related costs on those who can least afford it," said the authors.

"A growing proportion of that burden will fall on countries across Africa in the future, if governments do not implement tobacco control policies now to prevent it." Research on the tobacco industry, published in peer-reviewed journals, has portrayed a decades-long strategy by the industry to defend itself against health campaigners.

Investigators say tactics have included casting doubt on the scientific evidence of the perils of smoking, promoting brands through product placement in movies and aggressively marketing tobacco in low and middle-income countries where smoking laws are weak. Even as the percentage of adults who smoke has dropped in rich nations and plateaued in some emerging ones, the total number of smokers keeps climbing, driven by an expanding global population and more people in poor countries lighting up.—AFP

Shelling putting Ghouta aid delivery at risk

UN — Renewed shelling of Eastern Ghouta is putting a humanitarian aid convoy that entered the besieged rebel enclave on Friday at risk, the United Nations said.

A convoy of trucks carrying food aid from the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent entered Eastern Ghouta around two hours earlier.

“Shelling in proximity of Douma, east Ghouta today, is putting the UN/ICRC/SARC convoy at risk, despite assurances of safety from parties including the Russian Federation,” the UN humanitarian coordinator

in Syria, Ali al-Zaatari, said in a statement.

Friday’s convoy was delivering aid that could not be offloaded on Monday, when relief was allowed in for the first time since the Syrian regime and its allies launched a blistering assault on the enclave on February 18.

It was interrupted by bombardment and fighting in the area, depriving thousands of civilians of desperately needed aid.

“The UN calls for a cessation of hostilities in the area and for calm throughout Syria so that aid can be safely delivered to people in need,” Zaatari said. — AFP



Russian soldiers stand beside an aid truck waiting at the Al-Wafideen checkpoint on 8 March 2018 to pass from Syrian government-held territory into the rebel enclave of Eastern Ghouta. PHOTO: AFP

Flu virus: Wily ‘shapeshifter’ always one step ahead

PARIS—On a March morning 100 years ago, a soldier in Kansas reported to the infirmary with a fever, muscle aches, and a sore throat.

By lunchtime, records state, dozens had joined him, stricken with what would become known as the Spanish Flu. Within months, the virus infected a third of the world’s population and killed as many as 100 million people.

It could happen again.

While the scale of the 1918-19 flu epidemic remains unparalleled, another pandemic is inevitable, experts say.

Given the limitations of available drugs, flu-triggered respiratory diseases can claim up to 650,000 lives even in a non-pandemic year.

About a third of people infected have no symptoms, but some three- to five million fall severely ill with the flu every year, a heavy economic burden in terms of medical care and lost productivity.

Why does this common and familiar virus remain a threat after decades of study and massive medical advances that have eradicated the smallpox virus and severely hamstrung malaria and polio?

“Influenza A is the archetypal shapeshifter,” molecular virology professor Jonathan Ball of the University of Nottingham told AFP. This is the species that causes most human outbreaks.

Unlike many other viruses, the flu germ exists in dozens of sub-types of which two, H1N1 and H3N2, currently circulate in humans.

Each of these can be further sub-divided into many different strains, with new ones emerging all the time -- each needing its own vaccine.

- Drift and shift -

Vaccines work by mimicking an infection -- exposing the body to a germ, but in a weakened, non-sickening form.

When confronted by a viral intruder, the immune system

takes a few days to produce an array of assault weapons, including antibodies. After vanquishing the virus, antibodies hang around in case the same germ comes back later, prepared for a faster counterattack the second time around. But the flu virus has evolved to evade detection by patrolling antibody “soldiers”.

Its first, and most common strategy is called “antigenic drift” -- tiny genetic changes that occur as the virus replicates, rendering it ever so slightly different each new flu season.

The second, much rarer technique, is called “antigenic shift” and is what causes deadly pandemics every few years or decades.

This happens when genetic material is exchanged between Influenza A subtypes -- sometimes a mix between animal and human viruses -- to concoct a brand-new strain to which few people, if any, have immunity.

Since the Spanish Flu, three much less deadly pandemics

were caused in this way: the Asian Flu in 1957, the Hong Kong Flu in 1968, and the so-called Swine Flu outbreak in 2009.

The flu virus has another evolutionary edge too.

Unlike smallpox, polio, or measles, it has a natural home in nature -- in birds which live all around us. And it can cross

the species barrier, also into pigs and horses, with relative ease.

Because they lack an animal “reservoir”, with widespread vaccination, we could eradicate polio and measles like we did smallpox, explained virologist David Evans of the University of St Andrews in Scotland.—AFP



While the scale of the 1918-19 flu epidemic remains unparalleled, another pandemic is inevitable, experts say. Given the limitations of available drugs, flu-triggered respiratory diseases can claim up to 650,000 lives even in a non-pandemic year. PHOTO: AFP

Three killed, dozen injured in blast, fire in chemical factory in India

NEW DELHI — At least three people were killed and around a dozen others injured in a massive blast that triggered fire inside a chemical factory in India’s western state of Maharashtra, police said Friday.

The blast took place Thurs-

day night inside a boiler of the factory at Boisar-Tarapur industrial estate in Palghar district, about 150 km north of Mumbai, the capital city of Maharashtra.

“Last night at around 11:40 (local time) a massive explosion

took place inside a boiler filled with industrial solvent at a private factory, triggering fire,” a senior police official said. “Three unidentified bodies were found at the site and 13 people were injured in the incident.”

The blast shattered window

panes of buildings in the vicinity and locals said the impact of the blast was heard within a radius of 8 km.

Authorities rushed 11 fire tenders to the spot to contain the fire that spread to the nearby factories.

“Firefighting measures are underway and a lot of smoke has engulfed the area,” the official said.

Accidental explosions are common at Indian factories as owners usually ignore safety standards. —Xinhua

Trump and Kim to hold historic meeting

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump has agreed to a historic first meeting with Kim Jong Un in a stunning development in America's high-stakes nuclear standoff with North Korea.

Standing in front of the White House, South Korean National Security Advisor Chung Eui-yong announced the first ever meeting between a US president and North Korean leader, which he said would take place by the end of May.

Chung had recently returned from Pyongyang, where he met Kim, who, he said "expressed his eagerness to meet President Trump as soon as possible."

Trump hailed "great progress" in the push to persuade Pyongyang to end its nuclear weapons program.

"Meeting being planned!" he tweeted. "Kim Jong Un talked about denuclearization with the South Korean Representatives,



The White House confirmed President Donald Trump would accept the invitation to meet North Korea's Kim Jong Un "at a place and time to be determined". **PHOTO: AFP**

not just a freeze. Also, no missile testing by North Korea during this period of time."

"Great progress being made

but sanctions will remain until an agreement is reached."

News of the summit, which South Korean President Moon

Jae-in said was "like a miracle", is the latest step in a quickening diplomatic detente.

North and South Korea ex-

changed envoys as Pyongyang sent a delegation to the Winter Olympics in the South, which Seoul had dubbed the "Peace Games" and which saw the two countries marching under a unified flag.

The thaw came after a period of extreme tension between Washington and Pyongyang that sounded like the growing drum-beat of war.

Just months ago, Trump mocked Kim by calling him "little rocket man". Kim returned the favor by describing Trump as "mentally deranged" and a "dotard." The United States and North Korea were foes throughout the Cold War and fought on opposite sides of a bloody war in the 1950s. In the last two decades, they have been engaged in what is perhaps the world's most dangerous nuclear standoff, with 30,000 US military personnel stationed just over the border in the South.—AFP ■

Krill could prove secret weapon in ocean plastics battle

SYDNEY — They might be at the bottom of the food chain, but krill could prove to be a secret weapon in the fight against the growing threat of plastic pollution in the world's oceans.

New research Friday showed the tiny zooplankton are capable of digesting microplastics — under five millimetres (0.2 inches) — before excreting them back into the environment in an even smaller form.

Study author Amanda Dawson stumbled on the finding while working on a project involving microbeads — polyethylene plastic often used in cosmetics such as face scrubs — at the Australian Antarctic Division's krill aquarium to check the toxic effects of pollution. "We realised that krill actually break up plastic, it was amazing," the researcher from Australia's Griffith University told AFP. "It's difficult to know exactly what the implications of this could be, but the theory is that because plastics in the ocean are already degraded and more fragile, they would be even easier for krill to break up." The problem of plastic pollution is widespread, and rapidly getting worse.

Every year, more than eight



Krill are capable of digesting microplastics before excreting them back into the environment in an even smaller form. **PHOTO: AFP**

million tons ends up in the ocean, costing billions of dollars in damage to marine ecosystems and killing an estimated one million sea birds, 100,000 sea mammals and untold numbers of fish, studies have shown. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres last year cited one study that showed plastic could outweigh fish in 2050 if nothing was done. Australian Antarctic Division krill biologist and study co-author So Kawaguchi said this was the first time scientists had examined microplastics digested by the crustaceans.

Published in Nature Communications, it found the fragments excreted were, on average, 78 per cent smaller than the orig-

inal beads with some reduced by 94 per cent. "It's a new pathway for microplastics to interact with the ecosystem", Kawaguchi said.

He added that the research suggested other zooplankton with similar digestive systems may also be able to break down microplastics.

But Dawson cautioned the finding could also be a double-edged sword, citing the potential for toxins to be passed down the food chain as the smaller excreted particles became available to organisms that would not be able to ingest larger ones.

"We've barely scratched the surface and more work is needed," she said.—AFP ■

Sri Lanka tourist arrivals record growth in February on strong rise from China

COLOMBO — Tourist arrivals to Sri Lanka exceeded 200,000 in February, a 19.3 per cent growth compared to the same period last year, mainly due to a strong rise from China, statistics from the Sri Lanka Tourism Ministry showed here Friday.

China emerged as the leading market followed by India and the United Kingdom. A total of 35,929 tourists arrived from China in February, a 42.3 per cent increase from the same period of last year.

India recorded over 32,000 tourists while over 23,000 arrived from the United Kingdom.

So far this year, 474,542 tourists have visited Sri Lanka, a 13.8 per cent growth compared to last year. Region wise, Europe continued to be the largest source of tourist traffic to Sri Lanka with a 52 per cent growth followed by Asia and Pacific with a 41 growth, America recorded a 5 per cent growth and Middle East recorded a 2 per cent growth.—Xinhua ■

Georgian PM calls for restoration of diplomatic ties with Russia

TBILISI — Moscow and Tbilisi should take joint steps to break the deadlock in relations between the two countries, Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili said in a statement addressed to Russian authorities.

"I urge the leadership of the Russian Federation to take joint steps and resolve this complicated situation, while fully embracing our responsibility to the present and future generations," PM said in a statement released by the government's press service on Friday. According to Kviri-

kashvili, the Georgian side has stated before, and reiterates its "interest in reaching tangible progress in the Geneva International Discussions." "I have reaffirmed my commitment to personal involvement to this end," he added.

"Unfortunately, we are facing a difficult reality today. Although we have restored bilateral trade and economic relations, a chain of tragic events continues. This undermines the prospects of regulating Georgia-Russia relations," Prime Minister noted.—Tass

UN chief: now is time for gender equality

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday called for action to empower women and girls on the occasion of International Women's Day.

"Everywhere, women are saying 'The Time is Now.' Time for equality and opportunity, respect and equal representation. Time for an end to violence. Around the world, women and girls are calling out the abusive behavior and discriminatory attitudes they face everywhere and all the time. They are insisting on lasting change," Guterres told an event at UN Headquarters to mark International Women's Day.

"This is what women and girls want. And that is what I want. And it is what every sensible man and boy should want," he said.

Gender equality is a

fundamental human right and there is no better path to a more peaceful and prosperous world than the empowerment of women and girls, said the UN chief.

"Power is at the heart of the matter. As we still live in a male-dominated world with male-dominated culture and until power is fairly shared, the world will remain out of balance."

There is overwhelming evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies and countries.

Women's participation makes peace agreements stronger, societies more resilient and economies more vigorous, he said.

"Gender equality is the unfinished business of our time. And so the time



United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres addresses an observance of International Women's Day under the theme "Time Is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives" at UN headquarters in New York on 8 March 2018. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Thursday called for action to empower women and girls on the occasion of International Women's Day. PHOTO: XINHUA

is now to change it," said Guterres.

Significant advances have taken place since the

unequal pay, harmful stereotypes, discrimination and violence.

He pledged his determination to achieve gender parity throughout the United Nations.

For the first time ever, gender parity has become reality in the senior UN management team -- the top level of this organization, he said, adding that the world body is very close to reach gender equality among leaders of UN country teams around the world.

He reiterated his commitment to zero tolerance of sexual harassment.

"I am improving reporting and accountability and trying to establish confidence, empower people who experience or witness harassment to come forward and seek justice."

—Xinhua ■

Blast kills three, wounds 13 in Kabul

KABUL — At least three people have been confirmed dead and 13 others wounded in a blast that rocked western edge of Kabul city, close to a political gathering on Friday, Afghan Public Health Ministry confirmed. According to sources with the ministry, three dead bodies and 13 injured persons have been taken to hospitals in Kabul. The blast occurred next to a political gathering on Darul Aman road at around 11:45 a.m. local time. Police have cordoned off the area and are not allowing journalists to get access to the site of the incident. Meantime, an eyewitness on the condition of anonymity said he believed that the number of casualties was higher than reported.—Xinhua ■

Philippine military clashes with rebels, 12 dead

MANILA — Heavy fighting between government troops and some 50 militants in the southern Philippines has resulted in the deaths of 12 militants, a military spokesman said on Friday. Army Capt. Arvin Encinas said the clash broke out around 6 a.m. on Thursday in Lower Salbu, a village in Date Saudi Ampatuan town in Magunindanao province.

He said 23 other rebels belonging to the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) and a soldier have also been wounded in the clash. "Available fire support were launched to support the engaged troops against an estimated 50 BIFF bandits under Commander Peni of Karialan

faction," Encinas said in a statement.

"Our soldiers have been vigilantly guarding the entire Central Mindanao in order to constrict the firefight in specific engagement areas and continue to pursue the remnants of the terror group," Encinas said. The military said the BIFF has about 200 to 300 members, mostly disgruntled former members of the larger insurgent group Moro Islamic Liberation Front, who signed a peace agreement with the government in 2014. The BIFF is among the several groups in Mindanao that pledged allegiance with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria a few years ago.

—Xinhua ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (082 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BANDA VOY. NO. (082 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T 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.

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AGENT FOR: M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MAX CRUSADER VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 10-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
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Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MATHU BHUM VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MATHU BHUM VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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.

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MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S MOL (S'PORE) PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V NINOS VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V NINOS VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 12-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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.

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J.Lo and A-Rod help Bronx kids live the American real estate dream

LOS ANGELES — To amass a fortune in real estate, despite New York's crazy housing prices: that is the challenge thrown down by singer Jennifer Lopez and her boyfriend Alex Rodriguez to kids from the Bronx, the city's poorest borough.

Around 50 young students from the Bronx, most of them black or Latino, have been selected for "Project Destined," designed by J.Lo and A-Rod -- as the retired baseball superstar Rodriguez is known -- to teach them the ins and outs of financing and real estate.

The youths underwent intense instruction from lawyers, bankers, mortgage companies and realtors, but the course will not be just theoretical.

The student team that comes up with the best business plan will have the chance to buy a building worth \$1.5 million in the Bronx and develop it.

In this real estate mecca, its skyline in constant flux and whose most famous alumnus Donald Trump is now in the White House, good contacts can open unimaginable doors.

That was the philosophy of the project's two founders, Fred Greene and Cedric Bobo, both of them successful black businessmen who wanted to pass on their knowledge and experience to kids



Alex Rodriguez and Jennifer Lopez, seen here in Los Angeles January 2018, have helped launch a project to teach poor kids from the Bronx the ins and outs of the real estate business. PHOTO: AFP

from humble backgrounds.

"What we are doing here is giving kids a chance to work with us almost like apprentices," said Bobo. "Kids come in, analyze properties, we then buy them and we share a portion of the profits."

"We want to put owners and stakeholders in the communities where they live, work and play. If we do that, we do a lot," said Bobo, an experienced investment banker for the Carlyle Group, one of the power houses

of Wall Street. Before moving to the Bronx, where more than 35 per cent of the population live in poverty, the program ran in Detroit, Memphis and Miami, helping young people from poorer backgrounds learn the ropes of business.

- Escaping the ghetto -

At Yankee stadium in the Bronx, the students -- split up into six teams -- lay out their business strategies to a panel of experts

that includes Jonathan Gray, head of the Blackstone Group, and Lopez, the mega-star singer who herself grew up in the Bronx but who is selling her Manhattan penthouse apartment for \$27 million. The winning team will be the one with the most persuasive strategy that secures the greatest profit. The winners will then become minority shareholders in the development and receive some of the earnings from the property, helping pay their uni-

versity tuition as long as they stay enrolled in the project and take part in more courses online.

In a pre-training session, Rodriguez chats with participants on an impressive balcony overlooking Times Square.

"Real estate is a way out of the 'hood,'" he says. "For real estate is the one game where you can get rich .. it doesn't matter if you don't have any money and it doesn't matter what market, you can go buy real estate all over the world with no money."

The ex-ball star says he is living proof of that: he bought a duplex in southern Florida in 2003 and now owns more than 10,000 apartments through his company Monument Capital Management.

"I'm really excited to learn how the real estate market works," said Jovani Amaxtal, an 18-year-old philosophy student whose Mexican mother works slicing loaves for street vendors. "That's where the money is!"

- Don't settle for less -

"I come from very humble beginnings. My mother worked two jobs. But I believed I was going to be the leader of my family and I was going to make a difference," said Rodriguez, who grew up in Washington Heights, a Dominican neighborhood in New York.—AFP ■

Mark Hamill bags Hollywood star, with no wars required

HOLLYWOOD — "Star Wars" legend Mark Hamill was immortalized on Hollywood's iconic Walk of Fame Thursday in front of scores of fans, some of whom had waited hours to glimpse the actor. The 66-year-old Californian has appeared in some 70 movies which were nothing to do with Lucasfilm's space opera, not to mention almost 200 TV shows, but will always be thought of as ingenue farm boy turned pan-galactic lightsaber-wielding hero Luke Skywalker. "You are with me through thick and thin and the highs and the lows and everywhere in between," Hamill told the cheering crowd as he collected his star.

"If it weren't for the public, I'd be nowhere. From 'Jedi' to 'Joker' and back again, it's been

a fantastic ride. Thank you so much, and may the force be with each and every one of you."

Hamill, who lends his voice to the villainous Joker in animated "Batman" and "Justice League" shows, punctuated his comments with a cackling Joker laugh.

He paid tribute to his fans after the ceremony, telling AFP he would never get used to the acclaim, nor take it for granted.

"They are the most passionate, loyal people. They are with you in career highs and career lows," he said.

- 'Don't get cocky' -

Harrison Ford, who portrayed fugitive smuggler and all-around charmer Han Solo in four "Star Wars" films, was among those on hand to pay tribute to

Hamill, along with "Star Wars" creator George Lucas. "Mark is a friend that I don't see very often. Our lives have diverged to a certain extent but I am very pleased for him. He has been the master of his own experience, his own life," Ford said. "And he is as he always was -- a quiet, sincere, honest person. He's not a grandstander and I think he has found comfort and utility and control of his destiny, and I'm happy for you pal." As he accepted his star, Hamill told the crowd he was struggling to convey the depth of his gratitude. "I haven't been this speechless since 'Force Awakens,'" he joked in a nod to the first episode of the sequel trilogy in which he briefly appeared but said nothing. Hamill also hailed Lucas, noting if it "weren't for



Harrison Ford (top L), George Lucas (top C), Mark Hamill (bottom C), and Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, President/CEO Leron Gubler (bottom R), and guests attend as Mark Hamill is honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame on 8 March 2018. PHOTO: AFP

the genius of George Lucas, I wouldn't be standing here today."

He said he knew while working with Ford that he was in the "presence of greatness" and that Ford was "one of the best actors in film history." "He also gave me the great advice: 'Hey kid, don't get cocky,'" he added.

- Prolific -

"Star Wars" (1977) was

Hamill's first feature film. He was discovered in a workshop musical comedy called "Anthems in E-Flat Calliope" the summer before starting college in Los Angeles.

Now a prolific voice artist in animated series and video games, Hamill started out on TV in a 1970 episode of the short-lived CBS comedy-drama "Headmaster."—AFP ■

Women subvert domesticity in US art show

WASHINGTON — Is home a burden, tied to endless chores and confinement, or a liberating shelter?

Turns out it can be both for women artists exploring and deconstructing notions of domestic space and gender in a show opening Friday at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington.

Running across several generations and featuring 36 international artists working in various media, the result is full of humor — both the dark and the laugh-out-loud kind.

In “Housewives--Kitchen Apron” (1975), Austrian photographer Birgit Jurgenssen carries a literal “bun in the oven.” A loaf sticks out of an open door to an oven she carries with a strap around her neck. It’s a heavy, awkward apron.

The show could not be more topical in a #MeToo era punctuated by revelations of widespread sexual misconduct and abuse of women across multiple industries, and coincides with International Women’s Day.

Traditional gender roles become a chess game in British artist Rachel Whiteread’s 2005 sculpture “Modern Chess Set,” where the husband’s seating areas and television face off against the wife’s trash cans and dusters.

The husband’s “king” is the fridge. The woman’s? The stove.

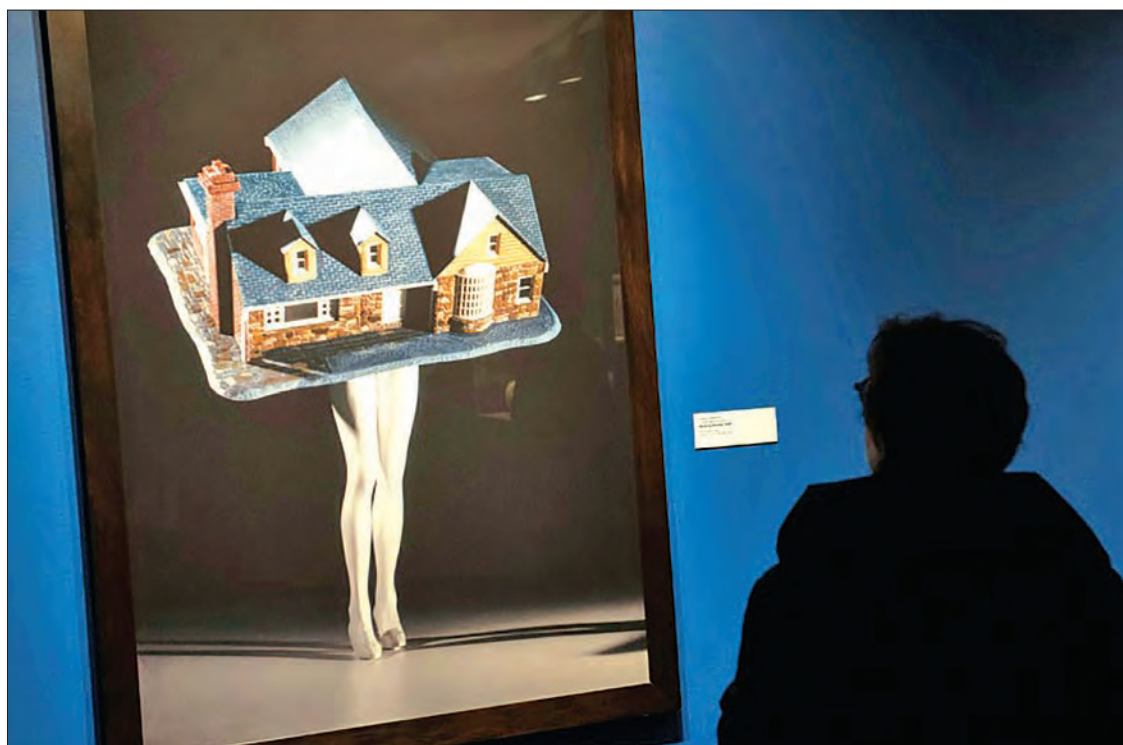
“The artists we chose, they are indeed interested in gender. But sometimes it’s poetic... everything is not brutally feminist,” said Camille Morineau, who curated the show with Lucia Pesapane, both from the Monnaie de Paris, the French national mint.

Breaking out, post-#MeToo

In one especially jolting installation, London-based Palestinian Mona Hatoum transforms ordinary kitchen utensils into a menacing situation.

A live current hums loudly and runs through the instruments laid out on a table behind horizontal metal wire, lighting up colanders and graters.

“Since I was a kid, I always



A guest looks at “Walking House,” by artist Laurie Simmons, at the exhibition “Women House” at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington. **PHOTO: AFP**

had fantasies of anthropomorphizing objects around me,” said Laurie Simmons, whose “Walking House” (1989) shows a heavy tilting home carried by a svelte pair of legs.

“That kind of collides with my idea that women have a way of morphing into where they live and what they have, and they identify themselves oftentimes through objects and a sense of place and a sense of home,” she told AFP. “Women House,” as the exhibition is titled, was inspired by a groundbreaking 1972 Los Angeles show organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro

that explored similar themes.

Some of the works here poignantly reflect on the sometimes oppressive nature of women’s condition, and their struggle to make a break.

In her 1998 video “Hammering Out (an old argument),” Italy’s Monica Bonvicini shows a woman’s arm using a hammer to repeatedly pound on a wall in a desperate effort to break it. The woman only manages to expose the underlying brick.

The work is juxtaposed with one by Dutch artist Lydia Schouten, shown in a tight-fitting white dance outfit rubbing

against the bars of a color-coated iron cage.

There’s also some of Louise Bourgeois’s “Femme Maison,” where women literally become a house, or a house becomes a woman, as well as sketches for Niki de Saint Phalle’s various “Nana Maison” (Chick House).

Morineau said it’s high time for women to get the place they deserve in the canon of art history. “We should be allowing new names, theories, movements and vocabulary to enter this space,” she said in an interview.

The show runs through 28 May. — AFP ■

Row erupts over new Frida Kahlo Barbie

NEW YORK — A dispute has erupted over toy company Mattel’s new Frida Kahlo Barbie doll, with the late Mexican artist’s family and a Miami-based corporation arguing over who holds the rights to her image.

Mattel raised eyebrows, and indeed unibrows, on Wednesday when it announced that Kahlo — a brilliant painter famous for defying gender norms — would be included in its newest collection of Barbie dolls.

Released just ahead of International Women’s Day, the “Inspiring Women” collection includes dolls based on Kahlo, pioneer aviatrix Amelia Earhart and other historic figures.

But Kahlo’s family soon issued a statement objecting

to the doll.

“Mrs Mara Romeo, great-niece of Frida Kahlo, is the sole owner of the rights of the image of the illustrious Mexican painter Frida Kahlo,” it said.

“The company Mattel does not have the proper authorization to use the image of Frida Kahlo,” it said, threatening to take “necessary measures” against the California-based toymaker.

Romeo said the problem went deeper than just a dispute over image rights.

“I would have liked the doll to have traits more like Frida’s, not this doll with light-colored eyes... It should be a doll that represents everything my aunt represented, her strength,” she told AFP. — AFP ■

Pacific island bones likely those of Amelia Earhart

WASHINGTON — Bones found on a remote South Pacific island that were originally believed to be those of a man may in fact be those of famed aviatrix Amelia Earhart, who disappeared in the area in 1937, according to a new study.

Richard Jantz, professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Tennessee, used modern bone measurement analysis to determine the bones were likely those of Earhart, who went missing while on a pioneering round-the-world flight with navigator Fred Noonan.

Earhart’s disappearance is one of the most tantalizing mysteries in aviation lore, fascinating historians for decades and spawning books, movies and theories galore.

The prevailing belief is that Earhart, 39, and Noonan, 44, ran out of fuel and ditched their

twin-engine Lockheed Electra in the Pacific Ocean near remote Howland Island while on the third-to-last leg of their epic journey.

One of the most popular theories is that Earhart and Noonan crash-landed on uninhabited Gardner Island, now known as Nikumaroro, part of the Republic of Kiribati, where she survived briefly as a castaway.

A 1940 British Colonial Service expedition to the island found a human skull, bones, part of the sole of a woman’s shoe, a box for a sextant and a bottle of Benedictine.

The bones were shipped to Fiji and examined in 1941 by Dr. David W. Hoodless, a professor of anatomy, who determined they were those of a stocky man.

The bones have since been lost. Using a computer program called Fordisc, which estimates

sex, ancestry, and stature from skeletal measurements, Jantz re-examined seven bone measurements done by Hoodless — four of the skull and three of the tibia, humerus, and radius bones.

‘Most convincing argument’

Comparing them to measurements of Earhart’s bone lengths based on photographs and examination of her clothing, he determined the bones were likely those of the aviatrix.

The bones have more similarity to Earhart than to 99 per cent of individuals in a large reference sample, according to the study.

“This strongly supports the conclusion that the Nikumaroro bones belonged to Amelia Earhart,” Jantz said. “The bones are consistent with Earhart in all respects we know or can reasonably infer.” — AFP ■

U-21 national football team formed for Brunei Challenge Cup

THE Myanmar U-21 national football team has been selected to compete for the Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy in the annual tourney in Brunei for ASEAN youth, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.

The team will be led by head coach U Kyi Lwin, the former Myanmar football star.

The newly formed Myanmar U-21 team consists of Bhone Thitsar Min, Tun Nanda Oo, Naing Lin Tun in the keeper position.

In the defence line will be Thurein Soe, Thet Paing Htwe, Y Yint Aung, Aung Wunna Soe, Than Htike Soe, Soe Moe Kyaw, Zaw Win Maung, Win Moe Kyaw, Heing Htet Sithu and Kyaw Thu Htun.

In the middle position are Ye Naing Oo, Soe Lwin Lwin, Myat Tun Thit, Zeyya Naing,

Zwe Thet Paing, Lwin Moe Aung, Pyae Sone Naing, Myat Kaung Khant and Hein Htet Aung.

The well-known young football stars Win Naing Tun, Myat Kaung Mhan and Zin Min Tun are in the striking positions.

The Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy for ASEAN Youth Football Championship is a football tournament for youth players from ASEAN member nations under the age of 21 years.

The tournament is organised by the Football Association of Brunei Darussalam in collaboration with the ASEAN Football Federation. The tournament was first launched in 2002.

The tourney starts on 20 April and ends on 5 May. Myanmar won the tournament in 2014. —Kyaw Zin Lin ■



Monster Hero and Yeik Thar futsal teams in action in yesterday's MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018 tourney at National Indoor Stadium (1) Thuwunna. **PHOTO:MFF FUTSAL**

Gandamar, GV and Yeik Thar score big in MFF Futsal Open Cup

Gandamar, GV and Yeik Thar notched double-digit, lopsided wins in Group A, B and J matches of the MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018 yesterday at National Indoor Stadium (1) Thuwunna in Yangon.

In Group A, GV Athletic beat MGG by a score of 10-2, while Yeik Thar beat Monster Hero 14-2.

In Group B matches, Zombie beat Best Friends 3-2, while MSJ

beat United 4-1.

In Group J Matches, Shwe Myawady beat Myo Chit Youth 1-0, while Gandamar had a big win over Montaung by a score of 10-2.

The Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) launched the MFF Futsal Open Cup 2018 this week with the hope of finding new players for the national futsal team.

Fifty teams from various States and Regions across Myanmar participated in the tournament, where they are divided into 10 groups of five teams each.

They will play in a round-robin competition with the best two best teams from each group getting into the knockout stage.

The competition will be held till 31 March. —KyawZin Lin ■

Mourinho must stop Salah to keep Liverpool at bay

LIVERPOOL — Manchester United boss Jose Mourinho has the tough task of keeping Liverpool's Mohamed Salah quiet as Jurgen Klopp's entertainers roll into town at the weekend — with second place in the Premier League the prize on offer. With Pep Guardiola's Manchester City virtually assured of the title, northwest rivals United and Liverpool — the two most successful clubs in the English game — are left fighting for the scraps. United's impressive fightback from 2-0 down on Monday to beat Crystal Palace 3-2 maintained their slender two-point lead over Liverpool in the battle for the runners-up spot behind runaway leaders City. Nemanja Matic bailed out Mourinho's men with a stunning stoppage-time strike in London but another three points papered over the cracks in the latest in a series of unconvincing performances from United. "We have to be honest, we have to play better,"



Mohamed Salah will be looking for his 25th Premier League goal of the season when Liverpool and Manchester United meet on Sunday. **PHOTO: AFP**

Matic admitted once the euphoria of his first United goal died down. "We have to do more if we want

to win as Liverpool is a team with great quality." The onus will be on Mourinho to take the game to the

visitors at Old Trafford on Saturday but the Portuguese manager, criticised for keeping his array of

attackers firmly on the leash, is unlikely to risk throwing caution to the wind. Liverpool had scored 20 goals in their previous seven games before a much-changed side drew 0-0 with Porto in mid-week, a result that sealed a place in the Champions League quarter-finals for the first time in nine years. With January signing Virgil van Dijk settling in well at the back and Loris Karius impressing in goal, the pieces are falling into place for Klopp's team, who have lost just once in 20 Premier League games.

But it is their forwards, led by the irrepressible Salah alongside Roberto Firmino and Sadio Mane, who have scored a combined 68 goals this season, that will give Mourinho sleepless nights. There was a palpable sensation around Anfield on Tuesday that Liverpool minds were already focused on United, with the free-scoring front three all rested at different spells of the game. —AFP ■