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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. V, No. 21, 8th Waning of Kason 1380 ME

www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

Monday, 7 May 2018

The offshore natural gas drilling site of Shwe Natural Gas Project in the west of Myanmar. **PHOTO: MNA**



Joint efforts made to provide safety, aid to displaced persons in Kachin State

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye visited a temporary camp for displaced persons opened at a Baptist church in Lankhwa Village, Namti town, Mogaung Township, Kachin State, yesterday morning.

The union minister promised to provide food, clothing, shelter, health, education and social aid to the people who left their homes. The government, he said, was working towards achieving eternal peace and good results through round-table discussions. It will listen to the voices of the displaced persons and look after their requirements. All the people should join hands with the government.

The union minister presented Ks5.75 million for children below 5, Ks1.3 million for expectant mothers, Ks1.7 million for the disabled, Ks 2 million for women-led families and one-month food supplies at the three camps.

At St Paullu Church, the union minister gave words of encouragement to the displaced. In response to the requirements presented by the displaced, the union minister and a cabinet member of Kachin State promised to provide educational opportunities for children, the systematic regrouping of farm animals and the resumption of farming.

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Rakhine offshore natural gas field fulfilling domestic needs

UNION MINISTER for Electricity and Energy U Win Khine and Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, together with Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing and Rakhine State Minister for Electricity, Industry and Transport, inspected the production and distribution of Shwe Natural Gas Project's Rakhine Offshore Blocks A-1 and A-3, west of Myanmar, on 5 May.

Firstly, officials from the

project reported to the union minister on the exploration, production, distribution and the export of gas and local distribution. They also presented plans to help develop the social economy of the local people. Managing Director of Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise U Myo Myint Oo gave a supplementary report.

Union minister and State Chief Minister looked into the requirements and made arrange-

ments to generate job opportunities for local people, transfer technology, share experiences and ensure a safe and working environment.

The union minister viewed the production and distribution of gas and other functions from the control room.

The Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise of Ministry of Electricity and Energy, Daewoo International Corporation, ONGC

Videsh Ltd, GAIL (India) Ltd and Korea Gas Corporation signed an agreement with China National United Oil Corporation to export gas from Shwe natural gas field to China on 24 December 2008. The gas produced from the project is distributed for domestic consumption and 400 million cubic feet per day was exported to China in pipelines having a diameter of 40 feet. — Myanmar News Agency ■

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MPC's 2nd paper reading session, book sales festival conclude

THE last day of the Myanmar Press Council's (MPC) second paper reading session, conducted under the theme "Democratic State of Myanmar and the establishment of a strong fourth pillar," was held at the Information Ministry's Printing and Publishing Department (PPD), Central Press Building, Theinbyu Street, Yangon, yesterday morning.

The paper reading session's Organising Committee Chairman and MPC Vice Chairman (1) U Ohn Kyaing (Hanthawady U Ohn Kyaing) and MPC members Dr. Zaw Than and U Myo Ko Myo acted as chairmen and introduced the paper readers to the audience.

Next, Dr. Maung Maung San presented "World of the Jimmy and our world," followed



Attendents listen to paper reading on democracy and the media as the fourth pillar at the paper reading session at the Printing and Publishing Department yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

by paper readings on "Battles of press freedom" by U Myat Khaing (MJA) and "Review of present news media" by U Kyi

Naing (MWU).

In the afternoon, the paper reading session continued, and MPC members Dr Tin Tun and U

Khaing Myat Kyaw, and Associate Secretary-1 of MPC Dr. Thin Thin Thar acted as chairpersons. They then introduced the paper

readers to the audience.

U Nyunt Tin (Maung Nye-in Thu-Gyobinkauk) (MWA) read "Journalists and ethics," followed by paper readings on "Status of media freedom during the NLD government" by U Chit Win Maung (MJU) and "Rakhine State affairs and usage of a peaceful newspaper" by U Zeya (Thargyi Maung Zeya).

It was followed by a question-and-answer section, and chairpersons and paper readers were awarded prizes by MPC Vice Chairman (1) U Ohn Kyaing (Hanthawady U Ohn Kyaing) and MPC Vice Chairman (2) Dr. Myo Thant Tin.

Book lovers thronged the more than 100 bookstalls at yesterday's ceremony.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Heat emissions from Htein Bin garbage dump under surveillance



Firefighters survey a zone in Htein Bin garbage dump for heat and gas emissions. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

THE fire burning in Htein Bin garbage dump in Hlinethaya has been successfully extinguished however the site is still under surveillance due to the heat emissions from the bottom of the dump.

Yesterday was the fourth day of surveillance and further containment procedures.

U Myint Oo, Head of Yangon Region's Northern District Fire service Department, said that they survey the area for heat emissions and then uncover the area with shovels and spray it with water or foam. "It's a large

area but there is no need for alarm," said U Myint Oo. "There's no reason for another fire to happen. It's just because of the heat and gas emissions that we are still surveying the area. I think it will be over in the next two days."

Dr. Aung Myint Maw, Deputy Head of the Environmental Conservation and Cleaning Department of the YCDC, said that they will tackle one zone per day to end all gas and heat emissions and today they will be starting with zone A of the garbage dump.

The Htein Bin garbage dump fire started burning on of

21 April and ended twelve days later on 2 May. A total force of 900 personnel from the fire department, Tatmadaw Men, police force, the red cross, YCDC, and the irrigation department helped in putting out the fire. The garbage dump was divided into four zones and authorities handed one zone a day starting on 29 April and eventually extinguished the fire.

Now a team of 100 personnel have been left at the garbage dump to monitor the situation and extinguish remaining heat emissions.—Zaw Gyi ■

Welcoming of Myanmar from Thailand underway

MYANMAR Ambassador to Thailand U Myo Myint Than yesterday visited Kyauk Lone Gyi reception centre in Myawady Township, Kayin State.

The Ambassador was welcomed by Myawady District Deputy Commissioner U Htoo Lwin, Head of District Police force Police Lt-Col Tin Myo Htoo, township administrator U Phyo Zaw Ko Ko and officials at the Myanmar-Thai No (1) Friendship Bridge.

The Ambassador then visited the Kyauk Lone Gyi reception centre and inspected the preparedness of accommodations, foods and healthcare for the Myanmar

citizens who returned from Thailand. He also inspected the program to bring back the returning citizens to their home and instructed the necessities.

The Ambassador also visited Shwe Myin Wun Pagoda and inspected the construction process of Myanmar-Thai No (2) Friendship Bridge.

The Myanmar citizens from Thailand who arrive Myawady today (7 May) will be welcomed by two nations' officials with a ceremony. Now is the second reception and a total of 65 people, 30 men and 35 women were received in the first time.—Htain Lin Aung (IPRD) ■



Myanmar Ambassador U Myo Myint Than speaks with officials while surveying the Kyauk Lone Gyi reception centre. **PHOTO: HTAIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**



I will carry out the implementation of the priority goals of the Union Government which are as follows:

1. Rule of law and improvement of the socio-economic life of the people,
2. National Reconciliation and internal peace,
3. Amending the Constitution which is the foundation for building a Democratic Federal Republic.

(Excerpt from the speech by President U Win Myint at the ceremony to take oath of office at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 30th March 2018)



Not only in Rakhine State which has received the attention of the world, but in the entire country let us strive collectively for security of mind and body.

(Excerpt from the speech by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the 2nd Anniversary of NLD Government on 1st April 2018)

Mon continues national-level political dialogue in Ye

THE second-day session of the National-level Political Dialogue for ethnic Mon people was held in Ye Township, Mon State, yesterday.

Group discussions were held during the dialogue. Proposals on the fundamental principles of the political sector were discussed at the National Stadium of Ye Town; proposals on the fundamental principles of the social sector to build a federal union and proposals on the fundamental

principles of the federal economy were discussed at No.(1) Basic Education High School in Ye Town. Proposals on the principles of the farmland and the environmental sector were discussed at the Tapalin Nasu Dhammayone.

The three-day dialogue will be held until 7 May, and the 500 representatives in attendance will discuss the four sectors, as designated by the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.—State IPRD ■



Mon representatives discussing the social sector at the National Level Political Dialogue in Ye Township yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Joint efforts made to provide safety, aid to displaced persons in Kachin State

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The union minister then presented Ks2 million to children below five years, Ks200,000 to expectant mothers, Ks200,000 to the disabled, Ks600,000 to women-led families and one-month food supplies at the camp.

In the afternoon, the union minister met the displaced persons at a village church in Myitkyina and presented Ks6.6 million to children below five years, Ks2.1 million to expectant mothers, Ks1.6 million to the disabled, Ks1.05 million to women-led families and one-month

food supplies for them.

The union minister and the delegation met Kachin State Chief Minister Dr Khet Aung in Myitkyina and discussed transport for displaced persons from areas with poor transport to safe areas, and the involvement of the Tatmadaw and the local govern-

ment in the union government's arrangements.

Plans were then made to transport 153 displaced persons from Manwei Village to Shwe Myitzu dhammayon in Indawgyi, before conveying them to their destination and to fulfil other needs.

During the trip, the union minister also distributed snacks to children and presented cash assistance for nonagenarians at specific meetings. The ministry provided nearly Ks71 million worth of aid to the displaced persons during the trip.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye meets with elderly of the displaced persons in Myitkyina. **PHOTO: MNA**



The displaced persons were gathered at a village church to receive food supplies and financial aid. **PHOTO: MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY**

GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.comPrinted and published at the Global New
Light of Myanmar Printing Factory at
No.150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan
Township, Yangon, by the Global New Light
of Myanmar Daily under Printing Permit No.
00510 and Publishing Permit No. 00629.gnlmdaily@gmail.com
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edited.

Export of forest products by private sector drops by half

THE export value of forest products by the private sector in the current fiscal year (FY) dropped to US\$11.3 million compared with the \$22.6 million earned in the same period last year, according to the commerce ministry.

Between 1 and 20 April this year, the country exported a wide range of forest products, including bamboos and other non-wood products, earning \$12.953 million, of which \$1.64 million was from the private sector.

The total export value of forest products from the two sectors in the 2017-2018 FY was \$211.071 million, decreasing by \$35.9 million compared with the previous FY.

According to the ministry, Myanmar's total bilateral exports with overseas traders reached \$588 million, including \$36.515 mil-



Wood-based products being displayed at the 4th Myanmar International Furniture Expo. **PHOTO: MYINT MAUNG SOE**

lion via the government sector and \$552.155 million through the private sector.

Myanmar continues to export locally-produced bamboos and bamboo-based products

mainly to Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Korea and Singapore.

The country exported agro products worth nearly \$156 million, animal products worth \$12

million, marine products worth \$37 million, minerals worth \$36 million, manufactured goods worth \$267 billion and other products worth \$64 million.—
Khine Khant ■

Imports from Indonesia top \$817 million in 2017-18 FY

MYANMAR'S imports from Indonesia totalled US\$817.110 million before the end of the 2017-2018 fiscal year (FY), according to the latest report of the commerce ministry.

In February alone, the country imported a wide range of products valued at \$71.505 million from the ASEAN member state, recording a decrease

of more than \$6 million compared with the total imports of more than \$77 million in January.

Myanmar's imports from Indonesia include paper, palm oil, steel, tobacco, rubber, medicine and others, while it exports marine products, agriculture products and miscellaneous items to the Southeast Asian

nation. Between last April and this February, the total value of bilateral trade exceeded \$926 million, including more than \$109 million in exports.

The ministry's yearly statistical reports showed that bilateral trade with Indonesia has gradually increased since the 2013-2014 FY. The Myanmar-Indonesia trade was \$498

million in the 2013-2014 FY. It increased to \$636 million in the 2014-2015 FY, \$741 million in the 2015-2016 FY and \$827 million in the 2016-2017 FY. According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Indonesia's investment in Myanmar by the end of the 2017-2018 FY was \$9.859 from one project.—Shwe Khine ■

KBZ to offer 25-year long-term home loan plan

KANBAWZA Bank Limited will introduce the KBZ home loan long-term financial plan for up to 25 years at a three-day KBZ Property Expo from 11 May, which will be held at Tamadaw Hall, Uwisara Road, in Yangon.

The expo will feature apartments and condominiums with room capacities of 5,000 from Ahlon, Mayangon, Pazuntaung, Sanchaung, Kamayut,

Hlaing, South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa, Dawbon, Thakayta, Thingangyun, Mingala Taungnyunt, South Dagon, North Dagon and Thanlyin townships.

Interested buyers can own apartments by paying 30 per cent down payment of the property's total value, at the interest of 13 per cent and principal to be paid in 1 to 25 years.

"We want to provide ef-

fective financial assistance. Therefore, interested buyers must consider their choice depending on their income, down payment, interest and instalment plan. The buyers will receive ownership of the property after they complete the payment. To achieve the home loan plan, buyers need to make regular payments. This will help interested buy-

ers own the property," said U Aung Kyaw Myo, deputy CEO of KBZ.

Other banks are also offering long-term home loan plans. Buyers can apply for home loans by producing documents, including papers to verify the absence of criminal records, census details and salary verification letters. —
Nyein Nyein ■



Green Gram. PHOTO: MYO WIN HTUN

India's lifting of ban on pulses importation drives prices up

FOLLOWING the news about India lifting its ban on the import of pulses, mung bean prices increased by Ks72,000 per tonne in the Yangon market.

India has now permitted an import quota of 150,000 tonnes of mung beans and green gram each for the 2018-2019 financial year (FY), according to recent official news.

The price of mung beans RC is up by Ks72,000. The pulses

market has recovered from a steep decline. On 5 May, 135 containers were traded, according to records at Bayintnaung commodity depot.

On 5 May, mung beans RC fetched Ks454,000 per tonne, while mung beans SQ were worth some Ks616,000.

Mung bean prices were below Ks400,000 between 2 and 4 May. Last Friday, mung beans RC fetched Ks382,000 per tonne,

while mung beans SQ were offered at Ks520,000 per tonne.

In the last FY, Myanmar exported some 600,000 tonnes of mung beans, pigeon peas and green gram, including 300,000 tonnes of mung beans.

Prior to India's restriction on the import of pulses, mung beans RC fetched Ks757,000, while the special quality was worth Ks887,000 per tonne. — Maung Sae Aung ■

Mandalay pulses market bustling with traders

India's relaxation of the ban on bean importation from Myanmar has revived the Mandalay market, triggering a price surge.

"India's purchase of Myanmar's mung beans, pigeon peas and green grams came to a halt in May 2017, triggering a price plunge.

The prices went up following the news that India has lifted restrictions on the importation of pulses, except for pigeon peas," said U Soe Win Myint, a depot owner.

The beans and pulses market has recovered following the

move. The market is now bustling with sellers and buyers. The price is now on the high side, he maintained.

Green grams were harvested during the pre-monsoon period of early May. China offers Ks108,000 per three-basket bag of fresh green grams. The price increased to Ks112,000 per bag in May. Similarly, the mung beans price soared to Ks45,000 from Ks36,000 per three-basket bag.

The price of green gram has plummeted to Ks65,000 per three-basket bag last year, compelling growers to turn to

other crops for the next season. Therefore, the percentage of green gram cultivation acreage decreased.

The high cost of green gram cultivation and the low price forced growers to focus on other crops. "As a result, the green gram yield is low this year," said U Soe Win Myint.

Green grams can be cultivated thrice per annum depending on the water supply. Green gram from Mandalay and the Sagaing regions were harvested early this year. — Min Thet Aung (Mandalay Sub printing House) ■

Individual trade worth Ks1.88bn in 20 days

Border trade with the use of individual trading cards (ITCs) exceeded Ks1.88 billion between 1 and 20 April in the six-month transition period for the 2018-2019 FY, according to statistics provided by the commerce ministry.

In the 20 days of individual trading, exports were worth Ks404 million, while imports were valued at Ks1.47 billion.

The trade values of individual cardholders were registered at some Ks255 million at Tamu, Ks3.9 million at Muse, Ks1.3 billion at Myawady, Ks13.7 million at Kanpikatee, Ks79 million at Kawthoung and Ks228 million at Mawtaung.

The Trade Department

has issued some 1,436 cards so far. The trade values with ITC were more than Ks737million from 21 November 2012 until 31 March 2013, more than Ks6.6 billion in the 2013-2014 FY, more than Ks9.3 billion in the 2014-2015 FY, more than Ks6.4 billion in the 2015-2016 FY, more than Ks18.9 billion in the 2016-2017 FY and Ks45.9 billion in the 2017-2018 FY.

The Trade Department has issued trade cards to boost border trade. A businessman can trade up to Ks3 million worth of goods per day using the ITC. The trade department has granted trade values of up to Ks15 million per day, which is equal to five days of trade value. — Ko Htet ■

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- 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)
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Traditional fireworks festival held in Namsam, Shan State



A rocket shaped firework launches into the sky in Namsam, southern Shan State.
PHOTO: SAI ZAW LATT (LANGKHO)

A traditional fireworks festival of Yinn Gyar ethnic, named Pan Lhu Fei, was held in Namsam, southern Shan State, yesterday. The festival was organized by the Yinn Gyar and Yinn Nat ethnic groups living in Namsam Township, Loilem District, in southern Shan State.

Few members of the ethnic group live in Myanmar, even in Shan State, said U Lone Lwe, a village administrator. The festival is annually held on every full moon day of Kason. The festival starts with the launch of competing fireworks shaped in the form



Yinn Gyar ethnic people set up a traditionally made firework.
PHOTO: SAI ZAW LATT (LANGKHO)

of rockets. Some 50 participants compete in the festival. Referees decide the winners of the festival depending on which rockets reach the target on ground. —Sai Zaw Latt (Langkho) ■

Waste sorting plant project in Bago nearly 70% complete

NEARLY 70 per cent of a waste sorting plant project implemented by Bago Township Development Committee is now complete, and it is expected to be completed within the set time frame.

The project has been implemented in an area between Nandawya Ward, Hinthagon Ward and Kadwin Village-tract in Bago Town on a budget of Ks225 million allotted by the re-

gion government for the 2017-18 financial year. This will be the first-of-its-kind in the region. On completion, the plant will choose not only solid waste fractions that can be sold as recyclable materials, including fiber, bottles, tins and iron materials, but some other food waste that can be turned into natural fertilisers. The project is part of the government's waste minimisation plan, which includes reducing

the amount of waste produced in the society and helps eliminate the generation of harmful and persistent wastes. The town produces between 60 and 80 tonnes of garbage per day. The new plant will sort 20 tonnes of trash per day. The waste sorting machines will be put to trial in the first week of next month, said U Zaw Naing, assistant engineer of the development committee. —Tin Soe (Bago) ■

Fire breaks out at funeral home

A fire broke out at a funeral home in Tatkon Township, Nay Pyi Taw, early Sunday morning, according to the Township Fire Services Department. The flame destroyed the home, but no persons or animals were hurt.

The funeral home was engulfed by fire at some 4 a.m. on 6 May in Padaukon Village in Gyo-gyainn Village-tract. According to the investigation, the blaze was caused by a stove fire. It started in the kitchen and quickly spread to the whole house.

With the support of residents, firefighters controlled the flame by 4:45 a.m. on the same day. The cause of the fire is being investigated and action has been taken against the person responsible, according to the law.—Tin Soe Lwin (IPRD) ■

Significant Water Level bulletin

ACCORDING to the (15:30)hrs M.S.T observation on 6.5.2018, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Myitkyina is (395) cm, and the rise of water level is about (6) feet within (1) day.

The water levels may rise about their present water levels about (4) feet to (5) feet at Bhamo, Shwegu and Katha during the next (1) to (3) days, and about (2.5) feet to (3.5) feet at Thabeikkyin, Mandalay, Sagaing, Myinmu, Pakokku and Nyaung U during the next (3) to (7) days and about (1.5) feet to (2.5) feet at Chauk, Minbu, Magway, Aungmye, Pyaw, Seiktha, Hinthada and Zalun during the next (6) to (12) days.

It is advised that the vessels running along the river and those who made plantations on sandbank during low flow period should make precaution measure for the sharp rise of water level.—Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 4:00 pm Sunday 6th May, 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF THE 7th MAY, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State, scattered in Northern Shan, Chin and Mon States and isolated rain in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of continuation of rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Shan and Chin states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th MAY, 2018: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th MAY, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7th MAY, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).—DMH

Public toilets to be built in markets, highway terminal in downtown Monywa

PLANS are underway to build public toilets in markets and a highway terminal in downtown Monywa, a city in Sagaing Region, within the next five months, said U Kyaw Myo Win, chair of Monywa Township Development Committee.

He added the committee has already signed a contract with a private company earlier this month to build separate toilets for men and woman in three markets, including Chindwinyadana Market, Myathala Market and Thiriyadana Market, besides a highway terminal in five months.

According to the contract, only Ks100 will be collected from each toilet user.

The five-month project is aimed at providing better toilet facilities to people who crowd the busiest markets and highway terminal. The new modern toilets are expected to promote the health and hygiene of individual users.

The new toilets will include bathrooms and separate toilet facilities for men and women. The partner company has guaranteed that it will use modern facilities for public toilets.—Myo Min Tun (Monywa)

Success can be achieved only through government's efforts

Interviewers: Thi Thi Min, Min Thit (MNA)

PHOTO: NAY LIN

A NEW master plan for Dawei Special Economic Zone (SEZ) near Dawei in the Taninthayi Region was adopted with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) after the project was adjourned for various reasons. Here is an interview with Vice-Chairman Dr Myint Hsan of Management Committee of Dawei SEZ.

Q: When will Myanmar launch Dawei SEZ?

A: In 2008, the Myanmar and Thai governments met in Singapore and conceived a plan to implement the Dawei SEZ project. The two then signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). At first, the Myanmar Port Authority signed an agreement with an Italian-Thai company. Because of the delay, the agreement was terminated in 2013. The tenders were invited again.

The same company won the tender. A new agreement was reached in 2015 between the management committee and the Italian-Thai company, and the works were resumed. The project was stopped between 2013 and 2014. The Myanmar and Thai governments then signed an agreement to implement the project themselves. However, the investment from Thailand was small.

As it was impossible for the Italian-Thai company alone to implement the project, a new agreement was signed by Myanmar, Thailand and Japan.

Q: What are the functions of the Management Committee of Dawei SEZ?

A: We started our work in October 2017. We have to look into the details of the agreement reached with the Italian-Thai company and also the three-country agreement. We found 78 points that need bilateral implementation—58 points for Thailand and 20 points for Myanmar. We can resume work only if these points are fulfilled.

The Myanmar government did its best to fulfil the requirements. Currently, only one or

two remain. They are important matters such as EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) and SIA (Social Impact Assessment). They are a bit complicated and difficult. However, now the EIA and SIA are nearly completed. A law firm will be hired for land agreements. We asked the Italian-Thai company to implement its part. We will begin the project soon after the two aides fulfil their agreements. The work will start according to the portion-wise time schedule.

Another part in the portion is called full phase. We have requested the Japanese government to take charge of that phase. A master plan was drawn by Thailand in 2015, but it had no detailed facts and was outdated. So JICA tried to upgrade the master plan.

The Japanese said that a new plan must be drawn and that it must include the technical details. They drew a new master plan in 2017 and completed it in 2018.

It has three phases. Phase-1 will be implemented between 2018 and 2030, but the area lacks infrastructure. We need at least a two-lane highway. No electricity and jetties exist. Without infrastructure, foreign investment is not possible. So we are giving priority to it.

Some 6,000 acres of land were fixed for phase-1. We will build the infrastructure during the 2018 to 2030 period. Foreign investment may come in only after three years.

JICA will finalise its plan in May. Phase-1 will deal with the infrastructure, investment by the Myanmar government, foreign loans and a deep-sea port. Currently, only Dawei and Kyaukphyu have a deep-sea port project.

Q: What are your plans to supply enough power?

A: The Italian-Thai company has an LNG project for power supply. So we will need large LNG tanks. We urged them to build the facilities, but they couldn't. Plan B was to import LNG. But the rate they proposed was too high. The price in the neighbouring country is usually only 10 cents, but their rate is 27 cents now.

The Ministry of Electricity and Energy has already signed with Total to generate more than 1,300 megawatts of



Dr. Myint San.

LNG in Kanbaw. Power will be available within three years. The whole Taninthayi Region will be electrified in 2021.

Q: Could you tell us about the plans for the Thiki road that connects Dawei SEZ with Thailand.

A: The Italian-Thai company will construct the 138-kilometre road as a gravel road. The Thiki road is crucial, and the previous government's administration planned to upgrade it to a tar road, but it was never accomplished due to certain reasons. We don't have sufficient funding to construct a road, so we will acquire a loan from a Thai group called NEDA. But we need the approval of the Hluttaw first, and if they approve the loan, then we will contact the Thai group and call for a tender for the project, which we estimate will take three years.

Q: How will Dawei develop after the SEZ is established?

A: It is pretty significant. The SEZ is a deep-sea port and is close to Thailand, so potential development opportunities exist.

The Taninthayi Region is abundant in natural resources, fishery businesses, rubber plantations, oil palm and mineral productions. But it does not have the electricity to produce high-end finished products

yet. Once the SEZ is completed, we will be able to produce high-quality products that can rival our neighbours. This will in turn boost the economy and create jobs.

Q: Local residents have voiced fears about the SEZ damaging the natural environment. What measures are being taken to prevent this?

A: In the past, no EIA or SIA were conducted when projects were carried out, and it was obvious the natural environment was being damaged. But now, the democratic government has ensured projects are more transparent, with the vision to reduce as much harm to the environment and to the society as possible.

Now, you cannot start a private company without providing an EIA or SIA. All the projects related to the SEZ have submitted their EIA and SIA to the union government, and we had a meeting with the local people to inform them of these practices and to answer all their questions and concerns.

Q: Are there other plans to ensure the SEZ's plans and environmental reports are more transparent?

A: We know it is obligatory to put up our environmental reports online but, for some reason, we are still unable to

launch our website. I have been told it will be up and running in two weeks. All the EIA and SIA reports will be available online, and people can submit questions on the website. The democratic government will not maintain any secrecy.

Q: What are your projections for investment prospects once the SEZ is completed?

A: It will take three to five years to complete the construction of roads, basic infrastructure and to supply electricity to the area.

Once these are completed, more investments can be expected, but large industrial works will be minimal initially. We will also need to upgrade and develop the rubber factories and fishery-related factories in our region.

Japanese companies, such as those with a firm foothold in Thailand, are interested in the steel industry and the automotive industry. Being a least developed country (LDC), Myanmar has numerous trading opportunities. For example, Thailand does not receive a GSP (Generalised Scheme of Preferences) and needs to pay tax to export to the EU and the United States, but Myanmar has a GSP and enjoys free trade. We have received these opportunities but have yet to make use of them.

Q: What is the most difficult challenge the project is facing currently?

A: The most pressing concern right now is that of the project developer. Currently, the Italian-Thai company is leading the project, but it has financial difficulties, and so cannot achieve optimal performance. But we must employ a financially stable and internationally experienced developer during the full phase of the project. After we complete the master plan in May, we will employ developers for each project.

Q: Do you have any closing remarks?

A: Leading a project requires political stability, national integrity, active participation and support from one's government for the project to take off and succeed. These are national-level projects and thus require in-depth participation from the union government. ■

Adopting an anti-corruption culture

THE duality of human nature results in either acquiring merit or demerits. If a person lives his life with righteous ethics and good moral conduct, then he will accumulate merit. This is of course true for both men and women alike. Conversely, if they live life committing misdeeds and immoral behavior, then their demerits will increase. As a result of this duality human society has had both prosperity and criminal activity since early times.

Our minds easily fall into temptation and it takes considerable fortitude to adopt a righteous mind. For prosperity to flourish from the community level up to the national level, its people must carry out their duties and responsibilities. Everyone has their own agenda and self-interest while carrying out their jobs and while some might find fun and satisfaction within the legal boundaries

of society, others choose to break these rules and bring damage to themselves and their fellow men. If a person or organization in power abuses their position then civil unrest becomes rampant in their proximity. It is generally accepted that no one is above the law, but certain individuals may exploit the law or twist it to fit their needs and this weakens the rule of law in society. Thus, these kinds of activities are a significant obstacle to the government and the people working towards rule of law.

The type of mindset people should cultivate is one that is honest, hardworking, speaks the truth, and practices compassion to other living beings. Nurturing this mindset serves the purpose of driving the negative de-meritizing thoughts and actions out of us. Only you can cleanse yourself; no one else can do it for you. It is believed that these negative thoughts spring up due to the four corrupting influences of greed, ignorance, fear, and selfishness.

In one of her speeches at the Conference of Justice Sector Coordinating for Rule of Law between 7 and 8 March, the State Counsellor said, "Most people think that corruption only concerns bribes and illegal payments for a better, albeit unfair, gain. We have always believed that corruption is based on the four negative influences of greed, ignorance, fear and selfishness. If we give favoritism to those we adore but treat those we dislike with prejudice, then it is a kind of corruption. So too is doing what we mustn't do and refraining from what we ought to do just because we are fearful of other people's perception of us, or due to their negative influences. Ignorance is committing misdeeds or breaking the law without knowing what the law is. So I can say, corruption has a broader context than what people normally think."

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi highlighted the elusive and multifaceted nature of corruption and how opposing corruption should be more than a duty and become a part of our culture. ■

Climate-Smart and Nutrition-Smart Villages: the key to a food-secure Myanmar

By: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security

THE scaling out of climate-smart agriculture technologies and practices using community based adaptation strategies is a potential solution to food security and nutrition challenges.

Food insecurity remains a problem in Myanmar, with 25% of households living below the official poverty line. As an agricultural country with a large percentage of smallholder farmers, Myanmar's food security, nutrition, and livelihoods have been greatly affected by the increasing incidence of drought, flooding due to heavy rains, stronger cyclones, and salinization of farms. Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) can be designed to reduce inequities and empower the poor, especially women.

Because the impacts of climate change differ significantly from one agro-ecosystem to another, adaptation measures should ideally be tailor-made, targeted, location-specific, and community-based. Community

based adaptation (CBA), first tested in the Philippines by the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) with support from the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security in Southeast Asia (CCAFA SEA), is a process-oriented approach which features technological, social, and institutional elements.

Complementing the CSA initiatives in the Philippines, a school nutrition project funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) that aims to mainstream climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive activities was implemented in schools. By promoting climate- and nutrition-smart agriculture practices, schools have become platforms for both nutrition and climate-smart agriculture. This IDRC-supported model building action research and capacity building initiative in the Philippines also helped establish evidence for national policy makers.

With funding from IDRC and in partnership with CCAFA SEA, IIRR is now bringing the Climate-Smart Village (CSV) concept to Myanmar. The project aims to fine-tune, refine, adapt and optimize the CSV approach as a platform for supporting

CBA processes in four different agro-ecological and socio-cultural settings within Myanmar; develop and test scalable social learning processes and institutional mechanisms which facilitate or drive CBA processes resulting in multiple/co-benefits for farm households; and scale up the most successful social, technological and methodological innovations through sub-national governments/institutions, civil society organisations, and research and teaching institutions. IIRR's work in Myanmar will feature linkages with local research stations and local NGOs.

Creating an enabling environment

In 2015, Myanmar published its Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Strategy, which provides a framework for transitioning the agricultural sector in the context of climate change impacts and socio-economic challenges. The strategy envisions the development of technical, political, and economic conditions to achieve sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition through climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture.

To help in the implementation of support programs under the Myanmar CSA Strategy,



To generate knowledge on upscaling approaches, IIRR conducted workshops using social learning methods and participatory approaches in the prospective climate-smart villages. Photo: IIRR

IIRR, with support from CCAFA SEA, conducted a scoping study in 2016, covering four separate cultural and ecological locations. Using Participatory Rural Appraisal approaches and tools such as key informant interview and focus-group discussions, the study assessed the technological,

social, and institutional landscapes in the four agro-ecological zones.

Building Myanmar's Climate-Smart and Nutrition-Smart Villages

Based on the results of the scoping study, four potential areas representing different agro-ecological zones were identified for establishing CSVs. The proposed areas for CSVs in Myanmar are HtiPhu Village in Mandalay Region (dryland, sandy, semi-arid land), Mak-yaukAia Village in Chin State (highland), KyautNgat Village in Shan State (upland) and Ma Sein Village in Ayeyarwaddy Region (lowland delta). These four CSVs will serve as model villages for the other villages in the township.

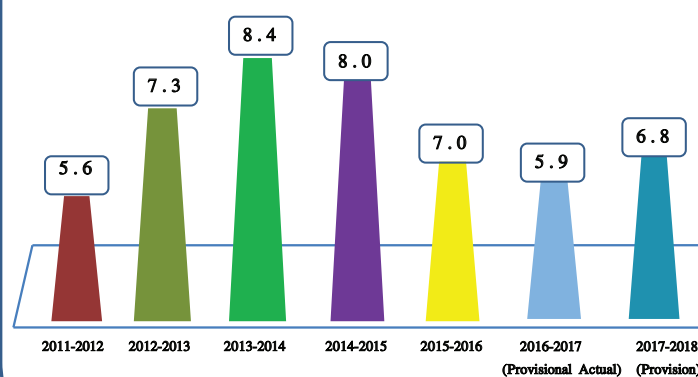
Using social learning methods and participatory approaches to generate knowledge on upscaling approaches, the CSVs will serve as learning platforms for scaling-out CSA and CBA at the township level. The CSVs are envisioned to reach out to at least 5 more villages in each agro-ecological zone, projecting a total reach of 24 villages that benefit directly from the research and capacity building activities.

The program is also being

built on a rich tradition of climate-resilience practices already being used by smallholder farmers in Myanmar. The selected villages already have some impressive climate-smart and nutrition-friendly agricultural practices, such as an emphasis on legumes, recycling of organic matter, intercropping and crop rotation, and the inclusion of small livestock. The CSV approach in Myanmar will be somewhat unique because in addition to farms it will include homesteads, schools and community forests surrounding the CSVs. Since livestock are important assets for the poor, fodder banks and livestock feed will also be given attention.

Through this project, a portfolio of CSA technologies and practices that deliver multiple benefits, such as reducing emissions and improving adaptation while securing livelihoods and food and nutrition, will be produced. Towards the end of the project, IIRR, with IDRC and CCAFA SEA and its local research and NGO partners, will promote and share their findings with the wider community via knowledge products, dialogues, and field outreach events in the different CSVs. ■

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT



Source: Planning Department
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization

ADB to Pursue Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Region — ADB President Pledges at Annual Meeting

STRATEGY 2030, the new long-term strategy of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to be released this year, will renew ADB's strong commitment to eradicate extreme poverty in Asia and the Pacific and expand the bank's vision to achieve a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable region, ADB President Mr. Takehiko Nakao said in his opening address at the 51st Annual Meeting of ADB's Board of Governors.

With the theme of "Linking People and Economies for Inclusive Growth," this year's Annual Meeting was attended by over 4,000 delegates from member governments, academics, business leaders, and civil society representatives.

In this opening address, Mr. Nakao appreciated the strong support of the Philippines as ADB's host country since 1966 and thanked the government and its people for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality. He highlighted Strategy 2030 which is in the consultation process, ADB's achievements in 2017, continued solid growth of Asian economies, and impacts of new technologies on jobs.

In his remarks, Mr. Nakao said Strategy 2030 will address existing and emerging challenges. "There is still persistent poverty," said Mr. Nakao. "We must address rising inequality, growing environmental pressures, and rapid urbanization. Aging in some countries and an increasing youth population in others present opportunities as well as challenges." Strategy 2030 will be aligned with the international agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Strategy 2030 will have 10 priorities: (1) tackle remaining poverty and increasing inequalities in Asia and the Pacific; (2) accelerate progress in gender equality; (3) scale up support to combat climate change, build climate and disaster resilience, and enhance environmental sustainability; (4) build livable cities that are competitive, green, resilient, and inclusive; (5) promote rural development and food security; (6) strengthen governance; (7) foster regional cooperation and integration; (8) mobilize private sector resources to meet the region's huge development financing needs; (9) further strengthen ADB's role as a provider and facilitator of knowledge; and (10) pursue a stronger, better, and faster ADB.

"We will continue to use our financial resources efficiently and creatively," Mr. Nakao said. "We will invest in our workforce, promote diversity including gender balance, and ensure a respectful workplace. We will expand our presence on the ground. We will dramatically modernize business processes to speed up our services to clients."

"A One ADB approach will break down silos and bring together expertise across ADB," he added.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region. In 2017, ADB operations totaled \$32.2 billion, including \$11.9 billion in cofinancing.—ADB ■



Pigeon pea crop performance check conducted by Nyaung U Research Station team at Htee Hpu village. Photo: IIRR

Canada oil sector faces 'significant challenges' to reduce emissions

OTTAWA — Canada's oil industry faces "significant challenges" in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which account for 26 per cent of local emissions, but cuts are "essential" for meeting climate agreement targets, the Senate said Friday.

The conclusion of the Senate report echoed others published by it and the auditor general, which have been critical of Canada's efforts to meet its Paris climate agreement target of slashing carbon dioxide emissions by 30 per cent compared with 2005 levels by 2030.

"The biggest challenges facing the industry will be to remain competitive and to encourage investment while facing increasingly tough emissions-reduction requirements," said the report.

The oil and gas sector employed 700,000 people directly and indirectly, and accounted for 7.7 per cent of Canada's gross domestic product in 2015, equivalent to Can\$142 billion in economic activity.

The Senate committee studying Canada's transition to a low-carbon economy noted that the oil and gas sector released 189 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents in 2015.

Under current projections, Canada is on track to emit 722 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year by 2030 —



A Canadian Senate report says the biggest challenge for the country's oil industry will be remaining competitive and encouraging investment while facing increasingly stringent emissions reduction requirements. **PHOTO: AFP**

far more than its target of 523 megatonnes.

The Senate cited a September 2017 auditor general's report that slammed years of inertia for leaving the nation vulnerable to climate change, saying: "Canada has failed to achieve every emission target it has set since 1992."

These included reducing emissions to 1990 levels by 2000 (Rio Earth summit), six per cent below 1990 levels by 2012 (Kyoto

Protocol), and 17 per cent below 2005 levels by 2020 (Copenhagen Accord). At the same time, temperatures in Canada have risen at approximately double the global rate, resulting in the loss of Arctic sea ice and permafrost, affecting wildlife and ecosystems.

Ottawa unveiled a plan last year to backstop regional measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions with a national carbon tax.

It set a minimum carbon price starting this year at Can\$10

per tonne and rising each year to a maximum of Can\$50 in 2022.

Currently four provinces — Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec — representing more than 80 per cent of the population, have carbon pricing or cap-and-trade schemes. Almost all of the others have carbon pricing schemes in the works.

Ottawa would only step in to top up provincial efforts that do not meet the federal standard. —AFP ■

WORLD BRIEFS

Chinese scientists develop new material for water purification

HANGZHOU — Chinese scientists have come up with a new membrane material which can efficiently separate salt from water and has other water purification functions.

A research program led by professor Zhang Lin with the Zhejiang University developed the membrane formed by nanoscale bubbles and tubes. The material allows water to permeate three to four times faster than traditional membrane for water purification. —Xinhua ■

Five militants, five civilians killed in gunfight, clashes in Indian-controlled Kashmir

SRINAGAR — Five militants and five civilians were killed Sunday in a fierce gunfight and subsequent clashes in restive Indian-controlled Kashmir, police said.

The gunfight broke out in village Badigam of Shopian, 62 km south of Srinagar city, the summer capital of Indian-controlled Kashmir.

"Today in a gunfight with militants in Badigam, five militants have been killed," a senior police official posted in the area told Xinhua. —Xinhua ■

50 live crocodiles from Malaysia seized at London

LONDON — British officials have seized an illegal shipment of 50 live crocodiles at London Heathrow Airport, the UK Border Force said Friday.

The year-old juvenile saltwater crocodiles were found crammed into five boxes coming from Malaysia. They were bound for a farm in Cambridgeshire, eastern England, where they were to be bred for their meat. The animals had not been packed in accordance with international regulations, making the importation illegal. Each box only had room for four crocodiles but 10 had been packed into each one. "It is just not acceptable for rep-

tiles to be transported in this way," said Grant Miller, head of the national Border Force Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) at Heathrow. "The crocodiles had started to fight each other during the flight as space was limited, so little attention had been paid to their welfare. "We will seize anything that contravenes CITES regulations, so this should serve as a warning to those thinking about transporting wildlife in such conditions." The crocodiles were found on 27 April. One has since died and the others are being cared for before being rehomed. —AFP ■



Saltwater crocodiles from Malaysia found at London Heathrow Airport had not been packed in accordance with international regulations, making the importation illegal. **PHOTO: AFP**

Death toll from contaminated water in Cambodia rises to 10, 121 hospitalized

PHNOM PENH — The death toll from drinking contaminated water in eastern Cambodia's Kratie province has risen to 10, as 121 others were hospitalized, Om Phy, deputy police chief of Kratie province, said Sunday.

"Four more victims were confirmed dead at the Kratie Provincial Hospital and the Phnom Penh's Calmette Hospital today, bringing the number of the dead to 10, as the number of villagers hospitalized has reached 121," he told Xinhua, adding that the dead were four men and six women. —Xinhua ■

Russian business eyes reform in Putin's fourth term

MOSCOW — Russian businesses are expecting wide-ranging reforms and are full of suggestions for a new government as Vladimir Putin begins a fourth Kremlin term with promises to revitalise the country's economy.

While Moscow's relations with the West remain tense with US sanctions hurting the Russian economy like never before, the new government will be tasked to fulfil the ambitious goals Putin presented to parliament in March.

In his last major speech before winning the presidential election by a landslide, Putin set a goal of halving Russia's "unacceptable" poverty rate in six years by investing in infrastructure, housing and health services. He also promised a growth rate of four per cent against forecasts of one to two per cent, as the Russian economy continues to stabilise following a recession that ran until 2016.

But the 65 year-old Russian leader did not explain how he aimed to achieve these goals and solve the predominantly structural problems holding back the country's growth.

Oleg Kouzmin, an analyst at

the Renaissance Capital investment bank, said business circles hope that "concrete reforms and development plans with real steps" would be outlined after Putin's inauguration on Monday.

- 'Small steps' -

In recent years, the government mainly focused its efforts on fiscal and monetary discipline to avoid dramatic changes to the deficit or debt in a country still traumatised by the 1998 financial crisis. But favourable conditions for reforms are finally coming together for Putin, who has led Russia for 18 years, in his fourth term.

Kouzmin said it was hoped the new government will adopt measures to "address the weakness of the labour market and adverse demographic dynamic" as well as weaknesses in education and health provision.

Investor support and financial development of the Russian regions would also be welcome, he added.

Thanks to control of inflation, a long term bete-noire of the Russian economy, these objectives could be "more achievable than in the past," according to Renaissance Capital.

Chris Weafer, founder of the consulting firm Macro Advisory, said that a public debate on infrastructure financing, taxes and public spending in the education and health sectors could take place at the start of Putin's new term.

But Weafer said it "is not realistic" to hope for in-depth reforms.

"Vladimir Putin received a mandate from a people who were more or less satisfied with the way the country is run," he said.

"The reforms in Russia are moving forward and will continue to progress in small steps so as not to risk unexpected consequences or instability," he added.

Kudrin, the reformer

Alexei Kudrin — a liberal former finance minister who is respected by the business community in Russia and foreign investors — is expected to return to the Kremlin in a reshuffle.

The 57 year-old has said he is ready to help "provided that we do not stop at half-measures."

Weafer said Kudrin could call for "an ambitious program of reforms, the only option he sees to avoid a long period of stagna-



Russian President Vladimir Putin promised a growth rate of four per cent against forecasts of one to two per cent, as the Russian economy continues to stabilise following a recession that ran until 2016. PHOTO: AFP

tion." Close to Putin during the election campaign earlier this year, Kudrin has pushed for a raft of unpopular measures.

He advocates cutting the number of Russian bureaucrats by 30 per cent in six years and increasing the male retirement age to 63.

A legacy of the USSR, Russia's retirement age — currently set at 55 for women and 60 for men — is among the lowest in the world. Given the demographic decline, the pension system represents a growing weight for the federal budget despite the fact that pensions are small.

Kudrin has also called for the introduction of technology classes for children from a young age to create "two million additional developers to digitalise the

economy," echoing the hopes of the business community.

"Change the secondary and higher education system. We do not need this many lawyers, we need technology experts," said Oleg Tinkov, the founder and chairman of the Tinkoff Bank board of directors.

But even if he gains support from the government, Kudrin will struggle to implement his reforms amidst the traditional reluctance of the Russian state towards any major reform.

"President Putin is clearly in favour of a more cautious approach," said Weafer.

"Even in years of growth, he was opposed to a high level of debt because of the consequences in terms of national security." —AFP ■

Crackdown shakes Chinese city's 'Little Africa'

GUANGZHOU — The Ghanaian university student was roused after midnight by police shouting and pounding on his door in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, where a crackdown on illegal immigration has left many residents of its "Little Africa" neighbourhood feeling scared and angry.

After demanding to see his visa, the agents carefully checked his papers before leaving to knock on other doors. The commercial hub has long been a magnet for fortune-seeking Africans, but traders and students say they face unfavourable visa rules and increasingly heavy policing.

"They do this because Africans live here," the Ghanaian student told AFP as he stood on a pedestrian bridge in the bustling city, still upset over last summer's after-dark visit. "I was sick of being treated like a criminal. I had to move to another neighbourhood," he said, gesturing at a nearby



Foreign traders and students in the "Little Africa" district in Guangzhou, the capital of southern China's Guangdong province, say they face unfavourable visa rules and increasingly heavy policing. PHOTO: AFP

police station and lamenting that the omnipresent security had made life more complicated.

Migration from Africa has risen in recent years as China has stepped up its diplomatic links and investments with the continent.

Guangzhou draws mer-

chants who come to buy goods such as jewellery and electronics in bulk, which they ship back to their homelands.

But in January, the official Xinhua news agency reported that the African population in Guangzhou had decreased as "police have tightened enforce-

ment on illegal immigration".

There are now 15,000 Africans living in the city compared to 20,000 in 2009, but "the real number, including illegal immigrants and overstayers, is believed to have been much higher," the report said. Estimates from Chinese researchers have put the actual number of residents at over 150,000, making Guangzhou home to the largest African community in Asia.

'Harsh treatment'

Police vans with flashing lights and officers astride motorcycles congregated after nightfall recently at a small public square in Xiaobei, a "Little Africa" neighbourhood with halal restaurants on narrow winding streets.

A Nigerian merchant was returning home from a meeting with wholesalers earlier this year when officers handcuffed him and hauled him to a police station because he was not carrying

identification. It was only after his Chinese landlord vouched for him over the phone that police allowed him to retrieve his passport in his apartment — under close watch.

The treatment seemed "wrong" for a routine document check, the merchant told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Residents who faced police checks asked not to be identified over fears of being deported.

Guangzhou's police and exit-entry bureau did not return requests for comment.

"Sure, there are some illegal activities like the drug trade and police should target this minority of people," said Ohene Opoku Agyemang, a doctoral student in international relations at Jinan University. "But the harsh treatment of law-abiding people negatively affects Africans' view of China and hurts efforts to build friendly relations with African countries," he said. —AFP ■

Thousands flee after Hawaii quake triggers new volcano eruptions

LOS ANGELES — Thousands of people have been forced to flee after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake shook Hawaii's Big Island, triggering the collapse of a coastal cliff and prompting fresh eruptions of a volcano that has been spewing lava near residential areas.

No injuries have been reported but several homes were destroyed or badly damaged by the quake Friday, the biggest to hit the island since 1975, authorities said. It caused small sea-level changes but no tsunamis.

The US Geological Survey said the quake struck at 12:32 pm (2232 GMT) and was centered on the south flank of the Kilauea volcano, which first erupted on Thursday after a series of tremors.

A 5.7-magnitude tremor hit the island earlier on Friday. The quakes prompted the Kilauea volcano, one of five active on the island, to erupt.

The quakes temporarily cut power to thousands of households.

The Federal Aviation Administration imposed flight restrictions over the area through Monday for all but relief operations.

The quakes triggered rock slides on trails in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, and caused a coastal cliff to collapse into the ocean. Officials ordered a rare closure of the park, which covers more than one-tenth the island's total area. About 2,600 visitors were evacuated.

"It is currently not safe to be here," Park Superintendent Cindy Orlando said in a statement.

Video footage showed or-



Lava spits from a fissure in the Leilani Estates subdivision on Hawaii's Big Island after earthquakes prompted the Kilauea volcano to erupt. **PHOTO: AFP**

ange magma gushing up from cracks in the ground and snaking through a wooded area.

Molten lava could also be seen bubbling up through cracks on streets in the Leilani Estates and Lanipuna Gardens neighborhood, where residents were ordered to evacuate on Thursday.

The area is home to about 1,700 people and 770 structures, and some 10,000 people live in the broader district potentially impacted.

Governor David Ige mobilized the Hawaii National Guard, which deployed about 70 soldiers and airmen to help with evacuation, neighborhood security and other emergency work.

- Dangerous gas warning -
Officials warned of extremely high levels of toxic gas emitted from the volcano.

"Hawaii Fire Department

reports extremely dangerous air quality conditions due to high levels of sulfur dioxide gas," the Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency said.

"Elderly, young and people with respiratory issues need to comply with the mandatory evacuation order," said a statement from the mayor's office.

Ige said residents were being housed in community centers until the danger has passed.

The governor visited two evacuation shelters and said he had met "many people who are frightened and deeply concerned about losing everything," but added that Hawaiians would come together to help. "This is a resilient community," he said.

One local resident, Neil Valentine, told CNN he and his wife had been forced to evacuate "our dream home that we've been

looking for all this time," calling the situation "just basically heartbreak."

The lava outbreak came after hundreds of small earthquakes in recent days that followed the collapse of a crater floor on the Puu Oo volcanic cone.

A 5.0-magnitude earthquake early Thursday south of the cone triggered rockfalls and sent a massive pink plume of ash wafting briefly into the air.

Big Island resident Janice Wei, who moved to Hawaii from California — known for its own high earthquake risk — said the eruption was almost a "relief."

"We've been waiting for big movement from the crater, after so many small earthquakes," she told AFP.

"Hawaiians and local people have lived here forever," she said.

"You know what's going on; we have warning systems. Everybody should be prepared."

'Fire curtain'

Using his drone, area resident Jeremiah Osuna captured video footage of the lava flow, which he described as a "fire curtain" that left him feeling "shock and awe."

"It was like if you put a bunch of rocks into a dryer and turned it on — a lot of earth and pressure and fire just moving around," Osuna told AFP.

Governor Ige signed an emergency proclamation releasing disaster funds to the Big Island.

He noted the current flow was similar to a 1960 eruption in the Kapoho area that "caused significant damage."

Geologist Janet Babb of the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory told AFP that scientists had been following an "intrusion of magma" down the rift zone since Monday afternoon in anticipation of a possible eruption.

Though the cracks from which lava was emitting had gone dormant, she emphasized that "the overall concern and the overall event has not ended."

US Senator Brian Schatz of Hawaii said the Federal Emergency Management Agency was mobilizing resources, as well as monitoring for forest fires, power outages and water supply issues.

Hawaii Island, or the Big Island, is the largest of the eight main islands that comprise the Pacific US state, an archipelago that includes hundreds of smaller volcanic islands.—AFP ■

One scientist's 30-year quest to get under Mars' skin

PARIS — Philippe Lognonne has waited three decades to hear the heartbeat of Mars.

With a little luck and some help from NASA, the instrument he designed to take the Red Planet's pulse will land before the year's end and press a high-tech ear to its dusty surface.

As principal investigator for the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure (SEIS), a multi-sensor seismometer, Lognonne will have a front-row seat for the scheduled launch on Saturday from Vandenberg Air

Force Base in central California of NASA's InSight mission.

But he's keeping the champagne corked: three times in the past, Mars space missions featuring his ultra-sensitive seismometers have faltered, failed or been scrapped.

Lognonne's cherubic features are framed by a mop of shoulder-length auburn hair, a grizzled beard and white sideburns.

He has just turned 55, and has a weakness for Hawaiian shirts.

A researcher at the Institute of Earth Physics in Paris, Lognonne has explored the dynamics of tsunamis and deciphered data from 1970s Apollo missions.

But from the start, his true passion and unwavering mission was to build the tools that could detect what's going on under Mars' red surface.

"This planet was habitable four billion years ago, and I want to understand why, bit by bit, it stopped being so," Lognonne said in an interview at the Paris university where he teaches.



Philippe Lognonne, the principal investigator for the SEIS experiment on the NASA InSight Mission, has always wanted to know what's going on under Mars' famously red surface. **PHOTO: AFP**

Soon after completing his PhD in 1989, the young scientist focused on designing a suite of seismometers — used on Earth

to detect and measure earthquakes — that could probe deep beneath the Martian surface in search of answers.—AFP ■

Sierra Leone holds first national cleanup day

FREETOWN (SIERRA LEONE) — Sierra Leone on Saturday held its first “national cleaning day” under new President Julius Maada Bio as part of a campaign to improve hygiene and the work rate of civil servants.

In the capital Freetown’s largest slum Kroo Bay hundreds of men and women sifted through tons of household rubbish and plastic waste that had been clogging the drainage system.

Trader Adama Kamaara who lives in the slum said he was pleased that President Bio was trying to improve the environment “because our country is too dirty”.

So much household waste is dumped in gutters that they constantly become blocked causing flooding during the rains, he said.

“After the cleaning, the water can now easily flow through the drainage and empty into the sea, so I appreciate that and I’m happy for that,” he added.

Michael Aboidu Frazer, a fisherman in his fifties, said the cleanup would have a big effect on the slum dwellers.

The area is “among the disaster prone communities in Freetown with (a) perennial flooding problem which often



The cleanup was announced by the President Bio’s office last month, two days after a rally in which Bio, a former general who was briefly in power in the 1990s, said he would be a stickler for “discipline”. **PHOTO: AFP**

cause deaths and damage to properties during the rainy season,” he said.

The cleanup was announced by President Bio’s office last month, two days after a rally in which the new leader, a former general who was briefly in power in the 1990s, said he would be a stickler for “discipline”.

Cleaning days will be held on the first Saturday of each month, from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon, a statement issued by the presidency said.

Bio added that all civil servants and government ministers would be expected to be at work from 8:30 am until 4:45 pm, and that he and the vice presi-

dent would carry out snap checks.

“Failure to report for work on time will lead to disciplinary action and potential summary dismissal,” the statement said.

Health and Sanitation Minister Alpha Tjaujan Wurie said there was much work to be done.

“I love the enthusiasm of the people... they clearly want to get their environment very clean,” he told AFP during a spot inspection in central Freetown.

“The process is going to continue (and) it will not stop at just once per month,” he said.

A monthly National Cleaning Day — in which

public areas are cleaned of rubbish, trees planted and walls repainted — was brought in during the 1992-1996 junta led by Captain Valentine Strasser, who was overthrown by Bio, then his deputy.

The monthly cleanup was restored from time to time by following regimes.

Bio took office in early April after a tumultuous election campaign, ending a decade-long rule by the All People’s Congress (APC).

One of the poorest countries on the planet, Sierra Leone wrestles with major problems of infrastructure, such as sewerage, roads and power.—AFP ■

Death toll of Pakistan’s coal mine collapses rises to 23

ISLAMABAD — The death toll of Pakistan’s two separate coal mine collapses, which took place on Saturday in southwestern Balochistan province, rose to 23, officials said on Sunday.

Chief Inspector of Mines Iftikhar Ahmad said the death toll rose after five more bodies were recovered from a mine in Margit area near Quetta, the provincial cap-

ital of Balochistan.

According to the official, overall, seven people were killed and two others sustained serious injuries in the incident in Margit area. However, he said the reason behind the mine collapse has not been known yet.

Earlier on Saturday, local media reported that an explosion triggered by gas caused the incident.—AFP ■

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M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. ()

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V TOVE MAERSK VOY. NO. () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 7-5-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.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
AGENT FOR: M/S MCC TRANSPORT
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Freak out: Telling a fashion life, Gaultier taps Nile Rodgers

WESTPORT (UNITED STATES) — Deciding how to tell his story as one of fashion's edgiest designers, Jean Paul Gaultier knew there had to be music. And he knew it had to come from Nile Rodgers.

The designer who has brought playful and provocative clothes to the world's runways for four decades is turning the focus to himself with an autobiographical show to open on 2 October in Paris.

More than a catwalk and not quite a musical, the genre-blurring "Fashion Freak Show" will bring out Gaultier's iconic designs as well as new outfits and tell his life through actors, models and a live singer.

Spearheading the music will be the creator of "Le Freak" himself — Nile Rodgers, the force behind disco titans Chic and the behind-the-scenes producer for a who's who of stars from Madonna to Diana Ross to Daft Punk.

"Truly, honestly, if there was one person I would think about for the music, it was him," Gaultier told AFP at Rodgers's sea-front home in Connecticut, the walls covered with guitars and framed records of the producer's hits by artists including David Bowie and The B-52s.

"He is part of my life," Gaultier said. "Everybody loves his songs, has danced to them, has been in love with someone because of his music."



Gaultier, who was inspired as a child by playing in his grandmother's closet, says he sees more creativity in music. **PHOTO: AFP**

Rodgers — who affectionately calls the 66-year-old Gaultier, five months his senior, "J.P." — said that the show would feature both new music and classic songs.

But Rodgers said he plans to rework some of the better-known tracks to serve as underscores during the show, which will take place at the celebrated Folies Bergere cabaret hall.

"When you're dealing with a theatrical piece, you are absolutely dealing with an emotional arc," Rodgers said. "And that emotional arc may not be served

properly with the original music. It has to change a bit."

Fashion to advance music

Gaultier has been deeply involved in the music world.

In 1989, he recorded a now-obscure dance track, "How to Do That," his vocals delivered in his rapid-fire, irrepressibly enthusiastic yet heavily accented English.

But his biggest influence in music came through his work with Madonna.

He designed some of the more headline-grabbing items

from her "Blond Ambition" tour in 1990 including her bullet-like cone bra and the golden corset she sported when she sang "Like a Virgin," a track produced by Rodgers.

Gaultier, who has also designed clothes for Beyonce, Kylie Minogue, Lady Gaga and Rihanna as well as plenty of Hollywood royalty, rocked the fashion world by mixing up traditional gender roles and has been wildly experimental when imagining costumes for films such as Luc Besson's science-fiction "The Fifth Element."

But the French designer, who was inspired as a child by playing in his grandmother's closet, said he saw more creativity in music.

"I don't think of fashion as art," Gaultier said.

"Fashion is supposed to be superficial. It's true that by fashion you can express yourself a little and tell things, but it's not like music that goes through your nose, your ears, everywhere," he said.

"Music is something very beautiful and that we truly need, like eating."

Creating an 'emotion'

Rodgers, sporting a white sports coat made of a collage of newspaper prints, said he did consider fashion to be art — but saw the overwhelming power of music.

"It's the only art that chases you down the street," Rodgers said.

The "Fashion Freak Show" is scheduled to run through April. Rodgers said he imagined shaking it up frequently, including making adjustments during intermission, and could envision creating a television version.

"What we're trying to create is not only an experience that happens with you, but I think an emotion that you internalize and that you take back home with you," Rodgers said. —AFP ■



Spike Lee's drama is based on the real-life story of an African-American police officer who infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan. **PHOTO: AFP**

Films in the running for the top prize at Cannes

PARIS — From an African-American detective infiltrating the Ku Klux Klan to Kurdish female fighters battling jihadists, here are the movies that will battle it out for the top Palme d'Or prize at the Cannes film festival this week:

Everybody Knows

Iranian master Asghar Farhadi kicks off the festival with a psychological thriller about a family reunion going awry, featuring Spanish stars Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem. While Farhadi, 45, won an Oscar and the Golden Bear at Berlin for his 2011 breakthrough film, "A Separation", he is yet to take home the coveted Cannes prize.

BlackKkKlansman

US director and activist Spike Lee's drama is based on the real-life story of an African-American police officer who

infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan in 1978. John David Washington plays him with Adam Driver as his Jewish police partner. The film will open in the US on the first anniversary of a white supremacist march in Charlottesville where an anti-racism activist was killed.

Under the Silver Lake

Four years after giving Cannes audiences nightmares with his thriller "It Follows", David Robert Mitchell returns with another spine-chiller, this time about the mysterious murder of a billionaire.

Dogman

Italian director Matteo Garrone's new work is not for the faint-hearted. Dubbed an "urban Western", the film is inspired by the gruesome murder by dog groomer and cocaine

addict Pietro De Neri in the late 1980s.

Three Faces

Little is known about this portrait of three women by the Iranian dissident Jafar Panahi, who is banned from travel by Tehran. The festival and US director Oliver Stone have pleaded with the authorities to let the director, who has faced years of harassment and arrest, to fly to Cannes to show his film.

Leto

Russia's Kirill Serebrennikov is another director who may not be able to present his work at Cannes. Under house arrest over highly disputed allegations of embezzlement, his film focuses on Soviet rock star Viktor Tsoi and the birth of Russian underground music in the 1980s. —AFP ■

Sagaing silver artisans worth the visit

SILVER has a special place in many of Myanmar's revered celebrations. For example, on special occasions silver bowls are used for pouring water, arranging flowers, sprinkling scented water, and silver kettles are used to pour water droplets during donations.

With such a prestigious place in Myanmar's culture, you can be sure to find the Myanmar's finest and most defining art and motifs on these silver paraphernalia. Indeed, detailed depictions of flowers and folklore can be seen engraved on pieces of silver and

they attract the viewers' attention. Among them, the silver crafts from Ywahtaung Ward in Sagaing City are famous for their artistry.

The process of crafting silver is interesting and the two important phases of the process are drawing the images and then the engraving. The general process of making silver crafts can be broken down into five steps. First the silver is melted and then hammered until it has a thin layer.

Then it is molded into the desired shape and size using three steps. Finally it is smoothed over

for the finishing touch. This is the initial stage of the process and the silverware then goes through a detailing artisan process where the famous motifs are engraved onto it.

Most artisans give the silverware its coloring by washing in a concoction made from soapberries and then brushed and polished. The entire process takes time and requires patience. Another common usage of silver is in producing shields and trophies for competitions. —Nwe Nadi, Myit Nge ■



Traditional silverware on display at a stall. PHOTO: MNA

After death, Hawking cuts 'multiverse' theory down to size

PARIS — With a science paper published after his death, Stephen Hawking has revived debate on a deeply divisive question for cosmologists: Is our Universe just one of many in an infinite, ever-expanding "multiverse"?

According to one school of thought, the cosmos started expanding exponentially after the Big Bang.

In most parts, this expansion or "inflation" continues eternally, except for a few pockets where it stops.

These pockets are where universes like ours are formed — multitudes of them that are often likened to "bubbles" in an ever-expanding ocean dubbed the multiverse.

Many scientists don't like the idea, including Hawking, who said in an interview last year: "I have never been a fan of the mul-

tiverse." If we do live in an ever-inflating multiverse, it would mean the laws of physics and chemistry can differ from one universe to another, a concept that scientists struggle to accept.

In his last contribution to cosmology, Hawking — with co-author Thomas Hertog from the KU Leuven university in Belgium — does not dismiss the multiverse concept, but proposes dramatically scaling it down.

"We are not down to a single, unique universe," the University of Cambridge quoted Hawking as saying of the paper submitted before his death on 14 March and published this week in the *Journal of High Energy Physics*.

However, "our findings imply a significant reduction of the multiverse, to a much smaller range of possible universes."

The new hypothesis relies on

a branch of theoretical physics known as string theory, and concludes that the cosmos is "clearly finite", Hertog told AFP, though still composed of numerous universes.

'Fringe idea'

"It is a debate that touches on the very foundations of cosmology," Hertog said.

"The underlying question is whether we can achieve a deeper understanding of where the laws of nature come from, and whether they are unique."

Not everyone likes the new theory. "The idea that we live in a 'multiverse' is a fringe idea in a small part of a subfield of the physics community," said theoretical physicist Sabine Hossenfelder of the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies.

"Nobody who does serious science works with the multi-

verse because it's utterly useless," she told AFP. The main problem, Hossenfelder explains, is that any multiverse theory is "underdetermined" and "doesn't contain enough information to make calculations".

For detractors, a multiverse theory complicates our understanding of our own Universe.

But it has its defenders too.

For astrophysicist Aurelien Barrau of Laboratory of Subatomic Physics and Cosmology in Paris, "the concept makes sense."

"It is remarkable that today numerous types of universe can be envisaged. Several theories, reliable for some and speculative for others, lead to the prediction of a multiverse," he said.

For Hertog, the new theory is a step in the right direction.

It "makes the cosmology based on our new theory a lot

more predictive, a lot... stronger as a scientific theory and therefore ultimately, we hope, testable", he explains on the UK Leuven website.

'Assumptions'

Hossenfelder disagrees. She described the new theory as just another "variant" of eternal inflation, "with some additional assumptions on top of it."

Thomas Hertog, who co-authored work on the multiverse concept with Hawking, says the measurement of gravitational waves can help determine whether the theory is scientifically sound. Hertog hopes to use gravitational waves, ripples in the fabric of spacetime caused by black hole collisions, supernova explosions, or the formation of the early Universe, to test the new hypothesis he created with Hawking.—AFP ■

Japanese manga strip fetches record price at Paris auction

PARIS — A rare series of sketches of Japanese manga artist Osamu Tezuka's robot character Astro Boy sold for a record 269,400 euros in an auction in Paris Saturday.

"It's a world record for this artist whose works are few in the market," said Eric Leroy, an expert on comic strips in the auction house Artcurial.

The winning bid was five times the pre-sale estimate and Leroy put this down to "the rarity and exceptional character" of the China ink and water colour strip measuring 35 centimetres by 25

centimetres. It drawn at the end of the 1950s and comprises six panels showing Astro Boy fighting an enemy. The buyer was a "European collector who had been dreaming for a long time" of buying the sketch, he said.

"Astro Boy is an emblematic work which has nursed a whole generation of collectors," he said.

Astro Boy was serialised in Japan from 1952 to 1968 centred around an android with human emotions who is sold to a robot circus but saved from servitude by a professor who creates a robotic family for him.—AFP ■



The red carpet of the premiere of 'Astro Boy' at the Chinese Theater in Los Angeles. PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar wins two gold medals at 2018 Asian Dragon Boat Championship in Taipei

MYANMAR claimed two gold medals at the 2018 Asian Dragon Boat Championship held in Chinese Taipei after completing the matches on 6 May.

Myanmar displayed a great performance at the Day 1 matches of the championship on 5 May and earned a gold medal in the 200-metre boat racing competition for men and women athletes, followed by the Philippines and hosts Chinese Taipei at second and third place, respectively.

Similarly, Myanmar won another gold medal on 6 May in the 500-metre boat racing competition, followed by China teams in the second and third places.

Some 28 athletes competed in the championship. The Myanmar team will compete in another category on 7 May (today).— Phoe Thaw Zin ■



Myanmar Dragon Boat team seen with their gold medals at the 2018 Asian Dragon Boat Championship in Chinese Taipei yesterday. **PHOTO:MRCF**

Yangon United to play Cere Negros on Wednesday

IN the first leg of the ASEAN zonal semi-finals of the 2018 AFC Cup, Yangon United FC will play the Philippines Club Cere Negros FC on 9 May at Panaad Park and Stadium in Barangay Mansilingan, Bacolod City, in the Philippines.

Both teams need a win to reach the final.

The second leg of the ASEAN zonal semi-finals of the Yangon versus Cere Negros will be played in Yangon on 16 May.

In the zonal semi-finals, the four teams that qualify from the West Asia Zone (Groups A–C) will play in two ties, and the four teams that qualify from the ASEAN Zone (Groups F–H) will play in two ties, with the matches and the order of play being determined through the group stage draw and the runners-up.

In the finals, the winners of the West Asia zonal final and the winners of the inter-zone play-off final will play each other, with the host team (winners of the West Asia Zonal final) alternating from the previous season's final.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Myanmar women football team to play friendlies in Thailand

AS part of the preparation for AFF Women's Championship 2018, Myanmar National Women football team will play three friendly matches in Thailand in June according to an official from Myanmar Football Federation.

Myanmar's women team is headed by its brilliant head

coach U Win Thu Moe. Myanmar's women team will depart for Thailand at the beginning of June and will play friendly matches against Thailand's national women team on 12 June, Thailand women's club on 14 June and Thailand's national women team on 16 June

respectively.

The 2018 AFF Women's Championship is the 9th edition of the AFF Women's Championship, organised by the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF).

The tournament will be hosted by Indonesia from 30 June to 13 July 2018 and both

Thailand and Myanmar will participate in the tournament.

Myanmar falls into Group B together with Viet Nam, the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore while Thailand is in Group A along with Australia, Malaysia, Timor Leste and Malaysia.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

United fans and rivals rally round stricken Ferguson

LONDON — Messages of support continued to pour in as legendary football manager Sir Alex Ferguson fought for his life on Sunday following emergency surgery for a brain haemorrhage.

Considered the most successful manager in the history of British football, Ferguson won 38 major trophies in just over 26 years in charge of Manchester United, including 13 Premier League titles and the UEFA Champions League twice.

It is a measure of the Scot's success on the pitch, and his stature off it that tributes poured in from around the world of sport, and beyond, to wish the 76-year-old a speedy recovery after he underwent surgery on Saturday.

"Everyone at AC Milan wishes Sir Alex Ferguson a

full and speedy recovery," said a statement by the seven-time European champions on their official Twitter page early Sunday morning.

Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri, who is on the verge of leading the Turin giants to a seventh successive Serie A crown, said: "Stay strong Alex Ferguson."

News of Ferguson's condition also had an impact beyond the world of football.

Top American baseball side the Chicago White Sox posted a heartfelt message on their Twitter page weeks after one of their players, Danny Farquhar, recently suffered a brain haemorrhage while sitting in the team dugout.

"The stand with the community in sending our positive



A global impact: messages have poured in from around the world wishing former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson a speedy recovery following emergency surgery for a brain haemorrhage. **PHOTO:AFP**

thoughts to Sir Alex Ferguson," said the message on @whitesox.

"Having been recently impacted by a brain hemorrhage in our own family, we know the dramatic impact it causes, and

the strength that can be drawn from those who care."

Ferguson, who retired from management five years ago, appeared in good health when presenting a commemorative

vase to old rival Arsene Wenger, who is stepping down as Arsenal manager, at United's Old Trafford ground last week.

But on Saturday an ambulance was called to the Scot's home in Cheadle, near Manchester, at 9:00 am (0800 GMT).

Concerns for Ferguson's health mounted when it was announced his son, Darren, the manager of English third-tier club Doncaster, would miss his side's match against Wigan because of "family reasons".

News of Ferguson's operation was made public by United in a statement that appeared to be cautiously optimistic about his prospects for recovery. "Sir Alex Ferguson has undergone emergency surgery today for a brain haemorrhage," the statement said on Saturday.—AFP ■