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Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the coffee research and development farm (Htayzan) in Tiddim, Chin State. PHOTO: MNA

U Henry Van Thio inspects prevention projects in Sagaing, coffee in Chin

National Natural Disaster Management Committee Chairman and Vice President U Henry Van Thio arrived in Kalay, Sagaing Region on Wednesday to visit disaster prevention works, and also visited a research and development coffee programme in Chin State.

U Henry Van Thio was briefed about the Kalay District natural disaster prevention

works in the local military guest house by district administrative officials, while Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung gave additional explanations for future programmes. The Vice President gave comments to ensure proper coordination and advised on how to effectively use the funds requested for long-term natural disaster prevention

programmes and how to use the natural disaster fund.

The Vice President and party then inspected the status of a river bank retaining wall being constructed on the banks of the Nayritzara River near Phaungku Bridge in Kalay. The retaining wall is being constructed with Ks 264 million allocated in fiscal year 2017-2018.

From there, Vice President

U Henry Van Thio inspected the status of the construction of a Myitha River bank retaining wall beside the Kalay-Kalewa road. The 5,100 ft. long Kalay-Kalewa road retaining wall was constructed with Ks 2.20 billion allocated in the 2018 six month fiscal year. The construction is 60 per cent completed, it was learnt.

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Private clinics, hospitals in Yangon to face surprise checks

By Nyein Nyein

The Yangon Region Private Health Supervisory Committee will carry out surprise checks at all private clinics and hospitals, said U Naing Ngan Lin, Yangon Government Social Affairs Minister, chairman of the Yangon Region Private Health Supervisory Committee, at a meeting of the Yangon Region Private Health Supervisory Committee and private treatment centres on 17 May.

The Private Health Supervisory Committee has already carried out surprise checks in some townships in March and April and found an illegal operating theater and some unregistered drugs at Yaung Ni Oo clinic in Hline Township and at Nay Won general clinic in Lanmadaw Township. The Township Public Health Department concerned has also taken legal action against a Chinese doctor at Nay Won general clinic who refused to show his licence, he added.

"When we conducted surprise checks at the two clinics, we began to suspect some of the other clinics as well. But since we did not have any evidence, we decided to conduct more surprise checks at clinics and hospitals. We will continue to conduct such checks so our citizens cooperate with us and live according to the law. We don't mean to threaten clinics and hospitals," said U Naing Ngan Lin.

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Motion calls on gov't to ensure transparency in tax collection

U Myint Thein of Wetlet Constituency presented a motion calling for the union government to be transparent and scrutinise carefully the national tax collection during the Pyithu Hluttaw session yesterday. The Hluttaw approved the motion and the speaker put it up for discussion.

U Myint Thein explained that owing to the weak tax administration and law enforcement, numerous and serious cases of tax evasion and illegal trade transactions were taking place. He said that although the state has the capacity to properly administer tax collection, there are cases where the Internal Revenue Department and tax evaders have collaborated on tax evasion.

U Myint Thein said the relevant ministries should inform taxpayers how their money is being used by the state, so as to encourage them to pay taxes. He said the union government could reward regular taxpayers with reduced tax rates and certain exemptions, and increase the yearly honorary certificates, and other commemorations for



U Myint Thein.

dutiful taxpayers. He added that doing so would instil dutiful tax-paying habits among the people and raise awareness about paying taxes.

U Myint Thein said that according to Article 389 of the constitution, it was the duty of every citizen to pay taxes levied according to the law. He said his motion is not to lobby for increased tax rates but to call for authorities to scrutinise the existing tax collecting system for loopholes and tax evaders. As



U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo.

Myanmar is transitioning into a democratic country, there needs to be more transparency and cooperation between the government and the people so that the correct amount of internal revenue flows in and can be used for the development of the nation.

The speaker requested MPs interested in discussing the motion to register their names.

Next, the secretary of the Hluttaw Bill Committee announced the acceptance of the Explosive Material Bill sent by

the Amyotha Hluttaw with remarks. The Speaker announced that since both the Amyotha and Pyithu Hluttaws agreed on the bill, it would be put on record, once the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved the bill.

The next session of the Pyithu Hluttaw will be held on 21 May.

Flow meters in breweries discussed at Pyithu Hluttaw meeting

U Aung Kyaw Kyaw Oo of Hlaing Constituency asked Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win about the progress report on installing flow meters in breweries during the fourth-day meeting of the eighth regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw yesterday.

U Maung Maung Win replied that inspections were carried out at 37 active breweries between February and March 2018, and the results showed 33 have flow meters installed according to the set standards, while the remaining four will have flow meters installed in the future.

He added that a plan to in-

stall online monitoring systems in breweries began in April and is ongoing but until then, all inspections will be carried out by the respective township Internal Revenue Department.

Daw Cho Cho from Ottwin Constituency raised a question on the plan to offer farmers long-term loans

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that the Myanmar Agricultural Development Bank (MADB) received funds from the Myanmar Economic Bank (MEB) to provide loans to farmers before the planting season. MADB collects the loans during the harvesting season and sends it to MEB. This process is done annually, he said.

He added that MEB had set aside Ks200 billion to provide long-term loans of three to five years for farmers who meet the set standards. Farmers can apply for these loans at their respective MADB.—Aye Aye Thant (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

2nd Amyotha Hluttaw's 8th regular session holds 4th-day meeting

THE fourth-day meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw's eighth regular session was held at the Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

At the meeting, the new Tatmadaw Amyotha Hluttaw representatives were sworn-in before Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than, and they signed the oath documents. Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin answered five asterisk-marked questions raised by the Hluttaw representatives.

Replying to a question raised by Daw Naw Sa Muhtu of Kayin State constituency (11) on the plan to construct a 10-foot-wide, 300-foot-long and 50-foot-high Win Yaw creek crossing bridge on a road connecting the villages in Kumkathaung Village tract and Tagundaing Village tract in Kya-in Seikkyi Township, Kayin State, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin said the bridge would directly benefit some 36,500 people from 5,216 households in 40 villages when completed. The construction of



U Kyaw Lin.

the bridge is earmarked for the 2018-2019 fiscal year union fund, and it will be implemented depending on the funds available, he said.

In response to a question raised by U Hla Oo of Sagaing Region constituency (4) on building quality roads, the deputy minister said the Penetration Macadam system was used in up to 95 per cent of the road construction work in Myanmar. The system uses the least amount of



Daw Naw Sa Muhtu.

asphalt and has the lowest cost. Myanmar is the only country in the world that is still using the Penetration Macadam system to lay its main roads. The asphalt concrete (AC) system is used for all the main roads of the countries in the world. The reason Myanmar is unable to progress beyond Penetration Macadam is due to the lack of finance and equipment. Asphalt concrete roads require equipment such as an AC plant, paver, roller

and tipper and other related accessories. Myanmar is unable to provide an AC plant and AC pavers countrywide and can deploy just one in each state and region.

Once the 29 sets of AC plants funded by the World Bank arrive, they will be deployed to states and regions, and priority roads will be upgraded to AC roads in big towns. Plans are being drawn to upgrade the technology and at the same time, studies are being conducted to assess the new technologies' appropriateness to the situation in Myanmar.

If the roads are constructed and maintained according to the instruction and guidelines of the road department, the possibility of damages to the roads before the prescribed time is low. If there are damages due to the corrupt practices of the companies and the staff, action will be taken according to the prevailing laws and the companies will be blacklisted, said the deputy minister.

U Naing Thiha of Mon State constituency (7) also asked about

the plan to upgrade two roads connecting villages in Mon State, Ye Township. The deputy minister replied that funds for the two roads had been budgeted in the Mon State government and the union fund for the 2018-2019 fiscal year and will be implemented depending upon the availability of the funds.

Questions raised by U Zaw Hein of Taninthayi Region constituency (7) and U Tet Tun Aung of Rakhine State constituency (2) were also answered and explained by Deputy Minister U Kyaw Lin.

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw bill committee member Dr. Myo Aung read and explained the report of the committee on the second amendment bill to the Settlement of Labour Dispute Law. Following this, the Amyotha Hluttaw speaker requested the Hluttaw representatives to enrol their names to discuss the bill.

The fifth-day meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw's eighth regular session will be held on 21 May.—Aung Ye Thwin (MNA) ■



We have much to carry on fulfilling the hopes and needs of the people of the country. We must press on until our citizens have their dignity raised and our country can retain its former glory on the global stage.

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



May we all be able to build the peaceful, modern, prosperous and genuine Democratic Federal Republic which is the dream of the fathers of our independence and which is what our people desire.

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

U Henry Van Thio inspects prevention projects in Sagaing, coffee in Chin

FROM PAGE-1

The Vice President went on to the public service office in Kalay to observe the works conducted and then met with the local people.

Accompanied by Chin State Chief Minister U Salai Lian Lwal and State Hluttaw Speaker U Zo Bwe, he then travelled to Tiddim Township, Chin State, to visit a coffee research and development farm (Htayzan) and inspected the systematic planting of coffee and production and sale of high-grade coffee.

Afterwards, in the briefing hall, U Min Lwin Oo from the farm and Department of Agriculture Director General Dr. Ye Tint Tun explained about the coffee planting and quality testing works being conducted.

In his comment to the explanations, Vice President U Henry Van Thio said that, according to the coffee quality specification of the world, a Cupping Score of 80 and above was considered

a special grade coffee, and coffee produced in Pyin Oo Lwin, Ywangan and Thandaung had a score of between 84 and 90, while coffee produced in Chin State was of special quality, achieving a score of 96.

“Farmers in Chin State are being urged to expand and plant this high-quality coffee. This will increase the income of the farmers as well as increase the value of the state’s export products. The land situation in Chin State remains in its natural state to this day, and local farmers should use this opportunity to produce chemical-free organic crops”, said the Vice President.

To date, Chin State has more than 560 acres of coffee plantation. Annually, there will be an increase of 220 acres. By 2021, there will be a total of 1,220 acres, it is learnt.

The Vice President and party then continued on to Sial Lum Fort in Tiddim Township, which has been preserved by



Vice President U Henry Van Thio visits the Sial Lum Fort in Tiddim, Chin State. PHOTO: MNA

the Department of Archaeology and National Museum, where they were greeted with traditional dances. The state head of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum explained the history of the fort and the preservation works conducted. Afterwards, the Vice President toured the fort and took a commemorative group photo with local ethnic nationals.

On 4 May 1889, a fierce battle was fought in Sial Lum Fort,

resulting in 36 deaths among the attacking foreign invaders, while a total of 28 defending Chin nationals, 18 men and 10 women were killed.

The Vice President went on to inspect the maintenance of a retaining wall, construction of a new one and widening of the Kalay-Tiddim-Tonzang road. He then went to Tonzang town in the evening, where local ethnic people greeted them with traditional dances.

During his travels in Sagaing Region and Chin State, the Vice President was accompanied by Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing, Deputy Minister for Defence Rear Admiral Myint Nwe, Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, regional government ministers, Permanent Secretaries and departmental officials. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Four ministries hold press conference on second one-year performance in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; Ministry of Planning and Finance; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation; and the Ministry of Health and Sports held a joint press conference to discuss the performance of the four ministries’ second year in office at the Ministry of Information yesterday afternoon.

At the press conference, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye explained the second-year performance of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement.

Laws and rules were drawn

up on the matter of setting up new policies. A youth policy was enacted on 5 January 2018, enabling the youth to participate in the education, economic, politics, peace, gender and human rights affairs. A national-level elderly policy was prepared, while a new Child Law was amended, drafted and submitted to the Hluttaw. A new law amending the Suppression of Prostitution Act was prepared and the Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women Bill was also drawn up and submitted for approval.

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Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr. Win Myat Aye talks to media at the press conference in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. PHOTO: MNA

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Forest dept to grow mangrove forests in Mon State

The Mon State Forest Department will develop a mangrove forest in the Pharlain region in Ye township in the next rainy season, under the reforestation project, according to a report in Myawady Daily yesterday.

"We are planning to grow some 20 acres of mangroves, in cooperation with the local people of the Pharlain region. The union government will provide the necessary funds to grow the mangrove forests," said a department official.

The government is working on conserving and growing mangrove forests to prevent erosions triggered by floods and to produce forest products.

Mangrove forests are mainly found in Ayeyawady, Taninthayi and Rakhine.

Mangrove forests can pre-



File photo shows workers tend to a community mangrove forest in Ye, Mon State. **PHOTO: MNA**

vent erosions and produce firewood, charcoal, medicinal plants and other forest products.

Moreover, mangrove forests near the sea can prevent

damage to agriculture lands by obstructing the inflow of salt water near beaches.

According to the survey conducted by the Mon State Forest Department, more than

1,500 acres of mangrove forest exist in Mawlamyine District. The department will continue to conduct a survey of mangrove forests in Thaton District.—GNLM ■

Illegal goods worth more than Ks 350m seized in Mandalay Region

THE Customs Department is checking for illegal goods flowing into the country through airports, seaports and border trade channels, as some Ks358.6 million worth of goods for which customs duty was not paid were seized last month.

Customs authorities detected 29 cases of illegal goods along export/import trade channels in April. Meanwhile, some Ks1.92 billion worth of goods for which the custom duties were unpaid were seized in 320 cases at customs checkpoints across the country, according to data provided by the Customs Department.

In April 2018, six cases of

illegal goods were detected at Yangon International Airport, with an estimated value of Ks78 million, while eight cases of illegal goods valued at Ks136 million were detected at Yangon Port. Additionally, 29 cases of illegal goods with an estimated value of Ks358.6 million at the Mandalay Region Customs Department, 18 cases with a value of Ks110 million at the Bago Region Customs Department, 107 cases with Ks590.5 million at Yebyu checkpoint, and 132 cases of illegal goods worth Ks503 million at Mayanchaung checkpoint were found.

Moreover, two cases of illegal goods worth Ks19.8 mil-

lion at Hpa-an Township Customs Department, six cases valued at Ks19.5 million at Muse Township Customs Department, two cases of illegal goods worth Ks16.898 at Mawlamyine Township Customs Department, three cases with a value of Ks12.4 million at Bhamo Township Customs Department, one case with a value of Ks4.8 million at Myawady Township Customs Department, two cases worth Ks46.8 million at Kengtung Township Customs Department and four cases with value of Ks29.8 million at Lwejel one-stop service checkpoint were inspected, making up Ks1.927 billion worth of illegal goods.—Khaing Set Wai ■

Private clinics, hospitals in Yangon to face surprise checks

FROM PAGE-1

The Private Health Supervisory Committee is conducting surprise checks with four objectives: To check if clinics hold a business licence, to check whether they provide treatment according to the Health Business Law, to find out whether any treatment is being provided by foreign doctors sans the necessary licences, and to check if the clinics follow the rules and regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Health and Sports. There are 12 speciality hospitals, 42 general hospitals, 280 speciality clinics and 2,666 general treatment clinics registered with the Yangon Region Health Department, said Dr. Tun Myint, Deputy Director-General of the Yangon Region Health Department. ■

Eco-tourism zone to be implemented in Kyaikmaraw tsp

THE Mon State government will develop the Hpa Baung limestone cave near Wa Pyan Gone Village, Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, as an eco-tourism zone, according to a report in Myawady Daily.

Moreover, a spring in the cave area will also be developed

as an eco-tourism site. These will be implemented within this year. The Hpa Baung limestone cave is the largest natural limestone cave in Mon state.

"Many interesting places in this area can be developed as eco-tourism sites. Kyaikmaraw has many such caves. These are

conserved by the Archaeology, National Museum and Library Department. We are planning to submit a report to the state government," said Dr. Min Kyi Win, Mon State Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

The Forestry Department

also plans to designate Hpa Baung and the surrounding areas extending to 446 acres as a forest reserve.

Recently, a committee led by the State government was formed. The committee has been making field surveys to implement the project.—GNLM

Singapore fin-tech companies to empower rural communities

By Nyein Nyein

InfoCorp, a fin-tech company headquartered in Singapore, and RGK+Z&A Group will conduct a joint pilot project with the government to develop a tamper-proof livestock identification tagging system.

This was revealed during a press conference held by InfoCorp Technologies at Hotel Novotel on 16 May.

The company will offer financial services through the Sentinel Chain platform to enrich the livelihoods of farmers in selected areas of Myanmar,

including the Yangon and Mandalay regions, and Nay Pyi Taw.

Singapore-based InfoCorp Technologies and RGK+Z&A Group will cooperate with Myanmar Insurance, operating under the Ministry of Planning and Finance, and Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, operating under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

Roy Lai, founder and CEO of InfoCorp Technologies; Zeya Mon, chairman and CEO of RGK+Z&A Group; and Dr. Sandar Oo, managing director of Myanmar Insurance, signed the pilot

project at Myanmar Insurance office, Yangon, on 16 May.

“InfoCorp believes that the joint partnership will create a financial ecosystem that will solve the risk of livestock insurance and potentially transform the market into a force for development by enabling the use of livestock as collaterals,” said Roy Lai.

InfoCorp Technologies is offering cross-border financial services through Sentinel Chain, which is the world’s first platform to accept the use of livestock as collateral. Through this platform, InfoCorp aims to

provide ordinary financial services such as banking loans and insurance to rural communities that do not have access to banking facilities.

“This technology will help enhance the livelihoods of the rural people,” said Dr Sandar Oo.

According to International Monetary Fund’s forecast, Myanmar’s economy will rebound to 6.7 per cent in the 2017-2018 financial year, mostly through the agriculture and export sectors. Therefore, the rural communities can take an unprecedented step through this joint partnership to participate

in the economic progress. This platform will become a utility for financial institutions to leverage on encrypted data to increase the asset base and serve the loan demands of the farmers.

The government is prioritising reform of the rural and agriculture sectors. This study will contribute to collecting important data on livestock and their owners.

“We believe InfoCorp’s experience of financial service in other foreign countries will help reap successful results. So, we are partnering with InfoCorp and the government,” said Zeya Mon.

YSX to link with 50 potential public companies to promote listing

The Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) will link with 50 potential public companies to promote listing on the YSX, according to a recent report in Myawady Daily.

“We will invite public companies for listing promotion. We will provide information and listing procedures to the interested companies. We will persuade them to invest in YSX,” said U Thet Tun Oo, senior manager of YSX.

The Listing Promotion Seminar is scheduled to be held from 1.30 pm to 4 pm on 5 June and will provide awareness about the listing procedures to the interested public companies and stock market.

At the seminar, Sean Tur-

nell, a special economic advisor, will deliver the keynote speech.

Shares of five listed companies — First Myanmar Investment (FMI), Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings (MTSH), Myanmar Citizens Bank (MCB), First Private Bank (FPB) and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd. (TMH) — are being traded on the YSX.

Some 3,485 shares of FMI and MTSH were traded yesterday, at an estimated share value of Ks12 million. The remaining three listed companies registered zero trading during the four matching times per day. The share prices were: Ks11,500 for FMI, Ks2,950 for MTSH, Ks8,000 for MCB, Ks25,000 for FPB and Ks2,900 for TMH.—GNLM



The Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) will link with 50 potential public companies to promote listing on the YSX. **PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAH**

Rubber exports drop in April compared to March

Myanmar’s rubber exports, through both sea routes and border gates, recorded a decline in volume last month compared to March, according to news provided by the commerce ministry online.

Between 1 and 27 April, some 3,577 tonnes of rubber worth US\$3.55 million were sent to the neighbouring countries. The figure is down by 2,850 tonnes compared to March.

Similarly, more than 2,130

tonnes of rubber, with an estimated value of \$2.79 million, were shipped via sea from 1 to 28 April. The export volume in April declined by 1,172 tonnes compared to March.

More than 1,400 tonnes of rubber valued at \$1.47 million were exported through the Myanmar-China border gates and the Myanmar-Thailand border gates within a week from 28 April to 4 May.

The export volumes record-

ed were: 395 tonnes of ribbed smoke sheets RSS-1 and 791 tonnes of RSS3 rubber at Muse 105th Mile gate, 19 tonnes of RSS3 at Lwejel gate, and 133 tonnes of RSS3 at Chinshwehaw gate. The Kawthoung gate between Myanmar and Thailand border saw 100 tonnes of rubber being exported. Rubber RSS3 fetches Ks16.17 million per tonne at the Muse gate. The week’s export volume is also down by 46 tonnes against the previous week’s, but

the price is on the higher side this week.

In sea trade, some 1,390 tonnes of rubber worth \$1.77 million were exported to China, Japan, Malaysia, India and Singapore within a week from 29 April to 5 May, with 126 tonnes of Myanmar standard rubber MSR20 being exported to China, 196 tonnes of MSR20 to Japan, 200 tonnes of RSS3 to Malaysia, along with 210 tonnes of mixtures of natural and synthetic

rubber. More than 60 tonnes of MSR-10 were sent to India, and 302 tonnes of MSR-20 and 300 tonnes of RSS3 were sent to Singapore. The export volume is up by 1,131 tonnes compared to the previous week.

This week, the rubber price has been fluctuating. The Free on Board rubber export price remained unchanged, according to the price set by the Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association.—GNLM



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets with KNU Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Poe yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Senior General meets KNU Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Poe

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Karen National Union (KNU) Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Poe at Zeyya

Thiri Beikman in the Yangon Command yesterday.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to future works for the peace process and the halting of the con-

struction of the Kepu-Lwemupalaw road by the Tatmadaw. They agreed that locals must be allowed to move and live freely in the region. —Myanmar News Agency

Myanmar Saemaul Undong Project Steering Central Committee holds second meeting

THE Myanmar Saemaul Undong Project Steering Central Committee held its second meeting yesterday afternoon, during which Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr. Aung Thu said efforts must be made for sustained success, in cooperation with local and international partner organisations, of rural development works, including the Myanmar Saemaul Undong project.

The meeting was held at the union minister's office.

The union minister added that along with physical development, the attitude, beliefs and efforts of the villagers should be enhanced. Only when efforts are made with a cooperative attitude can there be true development in rural villages. At the meeting, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Senior Deputy Representative Moon Sang Won explained through a video clip the works conducted by the Korean side for the long-term development and success of the Myanmar Saemaul Undong project and the development of all rural villages.

Next, the project director, deputy director-general explained the project works and future programmes, while the project steering central commit-



The 2nd meeting of Myanmar Saemaul Undong Project Steering Central Committee held yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

tee members and other meeting attendees discussed and provided suggestions.

Under the programme to increase the Myanmar-Korea bilateral friendship, the Myanmar Saemaul Undong project was implemented for the third year in 100 villages of nine states and regions. The project includes socio-economic development, and capacity-raising and income-raising works by the various sectors. With the support and assistance of Daegu Town and Posco Daewo Co. Ltd., the project was expanded to 10 villages in Rakhine State and Yangon Region, and the project has been implemented in some 110 pioneer model

villages.

To support the mental development of the villagers in the project and to provide technical assistance for income-raising works, an agriculture and rural development training school was opened in Nay Pyi Taw (Yezin) in November 2017, and the village leaders and relevant staff were provided with new village movement courses.

The Korea Development Institute (KDI) and the Myanmar Survey Research (MSR) had conducted baseline and mid-term surveys to assess the effect of the project, and at the end of the project period, an endline survey will be conducted. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Religions for Peace to come to Myanmar soon

ON the invitation of the Archbishop of the Myanmar Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Charles Bo, a high-level delegation from the Religions for Peace (RfP) will visit Myanmar soon.

As a preliminary discussion to welcome the RfP, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Cul-

ture Thura U Aung Ko received the Archbishop of the Myanmar Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Charles Bo at the branch office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon yesterday morning. —Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko meets with delegation led by Archbishop of the Myanmar Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Charles Bo in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting

A JOINT bill committee's meeting on a bill amending the Early Child Care and Development Law, over which the two Hluttaws were in disagreement, was held in the second-floor meeting hall of the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Building D yesterday afternoon.

Present at the meeting were the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw deputy speaker; Joint Bill Committee Chairman U Aye Tha Aung; Joint Bill Committee deputy chairmen,

secretary, joint secretary and members; members of the Pyithu Hluttaw committee for education promotion; Amyotha Hluttaw's Women and Children's Rights Committee and Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission; and officials from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Union Attorney General's office and the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw office. —Myanmar News Agency ■

Thundershowers expected in Southern Myanmar areas

THERE is a likelihood of a thunderstorm in Southern Myanmar areas in the next two days, as the weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay, and partly cloudy elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal, according to the Myanmar Daily weather report issued by the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology yesterday.

The forecast for Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and neighbour-

ing areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 80 per cent, whereas for Mandalay and neighbouring areas, it is isolated rain or thundershowers, and the degree of certainty is 60 per cent.

Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar's waters, and the wave height will be some 3-5 feet off and along Myanmar's coast. —GNLM ■

Four ministries hold press conference on second one-year performance

FROM PAGE-3

The rules for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law and the Elders Law were also prepared.

Further, a Legal Advisory Unit was formed to ensure the laws are fair when the policies and rules are implemented.

A Department of Rehabilitation was formed on 30 January 2018 to rehabilitate handicapped persons, victims of human trafficking, former drug addicts, orphaned and abandoned children, child soldiers, street children, and victims of statutory rape, domestic violence and the aged. On the matter of rehabilitating displaced persons, the views of the regional authorities and civil society organisations were obtained and the future works, processes, long-term plans and work processes were set up.

In Chin State, Rakhine State and the Naga Self-Administered Zone where nutrition levels are low, a mother is given Ks15,000 per month. A social pension of Ks10,000 per month is also given to those above 90 years of age. For a Case Management System to become firmly established, social case managers were trained and employed in 10 more townships, expanding from 27 townships to 37 townships.

One Stop Women Support Centres (OSWSC) were also being established.

Support and assistance were also raised by the Department of Social Welfare to 979 self-help pre-schools, 244 welfare homes and 82 homes for the aged.

As for the Disaster Management Department, an earthquake forum, a rehearsal for earthquake preparedness and talks were held in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. To mitigate and reduce losses and damages from strong winds, talks on technical support against damaging winds and reinforcing houses were held in 129 wards/villages in 18 townships of Mandalay, Sagaing, Magway regions and Shan State during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. In the 2017-2018 fiscal year, talks were held in the Ayeyawady and Bago regions, in addition to the four initial regions and state.

After cyclone Nargis in 2008, a total of 93 cyclone shelters were built by the 2015-2016 fiscal year. During the incumbent government, 10 were completed and 16 were still under construction. Some 87 more shelters will be constructed, explained the Union Minister.



Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement; Ministry of Planning and Finance; Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation; and the Ministry of Health and Sports hold press conference on their performance in second one-year period in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Planning and Finance Ministry second year review

Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win spoke about the second year performance of the ministry, which include 20 departments and entities.

The Planning Department has drawn up a six-month National Planning Law for April to September of the 2018 Fiscal Year. He said the department has also drawn up the Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan (MSDP).

The Directorate of Investment Company Administration, in accord with the New Myanmar Investment Law, has relegated authority of investment administration to state and region directorates. These state and regional investment committees can loan a principal of US\$5 million or Ks6 billion to businesses.

Company registration fees have also been reduced from an initial Ks1 million to Ks500,000 in June 2016 and further reduced to Ks250,000 on 1 April 2018. Since then, the number of companies has increased from 6,728 domestic companies and 1,172 foreign companies in Fiscal Year 2015-2016 to 9,147 domestic companies and 1,322 foreign companies by Fiscal Year 2016-2017. By 19 March 2018, foreign investments reached US\$5.31 billion and domestic investments reached Ks3.63 trillion and created 106,274 jobs.

The Progress Appraisal and Progress Reporting Department conducted field surveys on 4,016 businesses and projects in 25 districts in the country. They also transitioned from a closed tender system to an open tender system for state-owned businesses and infrastructure related works.

The Central Statistical Organization passed the Statistics

Law in January 2018.

The Foreign Economic Relations Department has formed the Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU) and released the Development Assistance Policy in January 2018 to more effectively manage foreign development assistance.

Myanmar Economic Bank has acquired an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to offer two-step loans to SMEs. There is also the Bank's Owned Fund programme that grants loans for developing SMEs. The Bank also offers three-year to five-year loans to farmers and three-year loans to real estate projects.

Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank has paid income taxes of Ks7.791 billion and deposited Ks7.96 billion to the State.

Myanmar Investment and Commercial Bank has paid income taxes of Ks9.12 billion and deposited Ks8.99 billion to the State in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank has granted farmers a loan of Ks100,000 per acre in Fiscal Year 2015-2016. In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, the Bank has increased loans for other crops to farmers at Ks20,000 to Ks50,000 per acre. The Bank has given out Ks1.63 trillion in loans in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 and Ks1.70 trillion in Fiscal Year 2017-2018. The total amount of loans granted is Ks3.34 trillion.

Myanmar Insurance began offering life insurance to farmers in October 2017 in collaboration with Myanmar Agriculture Development Bank. As of April 2018, Myanmar Insurance has 41,407 registered clients, generated Ks58.79 million, and so far has reimbursed Ks22.36 million to 40 farmers. Myanmar Insurance

generated an income of Ks56 billion in Fiscal Year 2016-2017 and Ks61 billion in Fiscal year 2017-2018, an increase of Ks5 billion to the national income.

The Internal Revenue Department implemented the online tax payment system with private banks in January 2018.

The Customs Department adopted an automated cargo clearance system on 12 November 2016, which cut time and costs for all stakeholders.

The Budget Department has made its work available to the public on the ministry's website to promote transparency. The public can view the three-month expenditure report, in year report, budget proposals, the Union Budget Law, half-year reports and other related documents on the ministry's website.

The Treasury Department drew the monthly financial schemes for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 for Union Level Executive Organizations and Union Ministries. The Department reviews the differences between actual expenditures and projected expenditures based on the financial schemes over three-month periods to compile monthly surplus money and deficits. The Department has compiled these reports for the Fiscal Years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017.

The Financial Regulatory Department approved registration of 176 microfinance organisations to help develop the livelihoods of people living in rural areas. In Fiscal Year 2016-2017, loans of Ks2.48 trillion were granted and Ks4.13 trillion worth of loans were granted in Fiscal Year 2017-2018.

The Pension Department has arranged for retired civil servants to receive their pension and bonus money within

one month.

The Revenue Appellate Tribunal, between 1 April 2016 and 31 December 2017, has received 199 customs appeals, 35 customs review appeals, and one stamp alteration case; a total of 235 cases. The Tribunal has handled 180 customs appeals and 23 customs review appeals; a total of 203 cases.

The Office of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar gave approvals for First Myanmar Investment Co. Ltd., Myanmar Thilawa SEZ Holdings Public Ltd., Myanmar Citizens Bank Ltd., First Private Bank Ltd., and TMH Telecom Public Co. Ltd. to register on the Yangon Stock Exchange company listing.

Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation

U Khin Maung Yi, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, said his ministry has banned logging in Bago Mountain Range starting in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year for a period of 10 years and reduced the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC).

In a press conference yesterday on the second year performance of the ministry, U Khin Maung Yi said that in the current 2017-2018 FY, the ministry produced only 55 per cent of the teak and 31 per cent of the hardwood compared to the output of the previous year.

As part of efforts for conserving the elephants that are usually used for logging, the ministry has expanded the establishment of elephant-based eco-tourism resorts since 2016-2017 Fiscal Year. So far, 18 camps have been established.

SEE PAGE-10

Patience, tolerance is key for complicated land confiscation issues

MORE than 4,900 acres of confiscated farmland were returned to the original owners in Sagaing Region on Wednesday, showing that justice is occurring. We believe that returning confiscated farmland to farmers, who make up 70 per cent of the country's rural population, would develop the agricultural sector and improve their socio-economic status.

The institutions concerned are urged to continue to release the farmland they have confiscated.

To speed up the scrutiny of confiscated farmland issues, four work committees formed with Deputy Ministers from relevant ministries have carried out their works in regions and states, and have assisted in solving confiscated farmland issues.

The land confiscation issue is complicated, and the reviewing and scrutinizing of the issues nationwide takes time and

patience in order to get it right.

Meanwhile, in some cases, it is found that land ownership disputes and squatters issues have caused delays for returning the farmland to owners, (even) though the ministries concerned had abandoned the farmland.

Nationwide, confiscated farmlands have resulted in severe losses for the people.

Relevant institutions have been setting policies, conducting reviews, and returning the confiscated lands to their original owners in attempts to return the confiscated land to farmers.

The committees at different levels need to put emphasis on the resolution of the confiscation of farmlands to ensure the farmers can survive for the long term.

We would like to urge those who own vacant and virgin land to register their land at their respective state or regional Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Lands Management Committee.

If their lands are registered, when agricultural production becomes stable, their lands can be converted into farmland, according to Farmland Law.

Today, the rays of hope for development of socio-economic status of farmers are shining as the government is working to establish contract farming for farmers to grow, package and trade their produce.

The government is committed to helping the farmers shift from conventional and traditional methods to mechanized farming techniques.

The farmers need not only grow crops for domestic food sufficiency, but also to grow marketable crops for a growing export market.

By doing so, farmers will not need to sell their land for money, but can maintain their fields for generations to come. ■

By Khin Maung Htay
(Ministry of Education)

MYANMAR, lying in a major seismic belt, is indeed earthquake-prone and vulnerable to hazards from moderate and large magnitude earthquakes. Consecutive quakes usually happen after events of a tremor. The experts have conducted earthquake risk assessments of several towns and cities across the country.

An earthquake is the shaking of the surface of the earth, resulting from the sudden release of energy in the earth's lithosphere that creates seismic waves. Earthquakes can range in size from those that are so weak that they cannot be felt to those violent enough to toss people around and destroy whole cities.

Earthquake awareness is needed and it is of great importance to educate the public on what to do in the event of an earthquake, including in schools. People should know they can take refuge under a table or bed, or get out into the open space.

Earthquake Zones

Myanmar has three main earthquake zones: the western fold belt, central basin and eastern highlands. While earthquakes are more common on the western fold belt, particularly in its northern section, earthquakes in the central basin, which includes the Sagaing Fault, tended to be more destructive. The Sagaing Fault is one of the major active faults in Myanmar, more than 1,200 km in length from the Andaman Sea to Putao in Kachin State.

Earthquakes in Myanmar

According to the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), Myanmar was hit with an unusually large number of earthquakes. A total of 19 earthquakes occurred between 1 to 14 of January 2018, which originated from the Western Bago Yoma Fault.

An earthquake measuring 5.8 Magnitudes on the Richter scale jolted about 15 miles away from south-west of Homalin Town in 2018, and it was regarded as one of the major quakes and another strong earthquake measuring 6.0



File photo shows the Yadanatheinkha Bridge that was destroyed in 2012 by an earthquake in Thabeikkyin. PHOTO: MNA

on the Richter scale near the Pyu Township had occurred as a consequence.

Important historic earthquake in Myanmar

Myanmar has experienced strong quakes frequently. Out of them, strong quakes which caused massive destruction are as follows:

1. Innwa earthquake in 1899
2. Bago earthquake in 1930, measuring 7.5 on Richter scale
3. Myitkyina earthquake in 1931, measuring 7.6 Richter scale
4. Mawlaik earthquake in 1947, measuring 8.0 Richter scale
5. Sagaing earthquake in 1956
6. Bagan earthquake in 1975, measuring 6.5 Richter scale
7. Tarlay earthquake in 1990
8. Thabeikkyin earthquake in 2012

Earthquake, unpredictable

Disaster

Earthquakes are not predictable in the short term but information can be obtained for the long run and based on that information, quake hazard maps for cities and villages can be drawn.

Until now, no one can predict when, where and to which extent on the Richter scale, an earthquake will happen. Only after it breaks out can its volume be measured. Yet, according to the records, strong earthquakes can happen during the period of 80-100 years.

In the past, Myanmar as well saw strong earthquakes for several times, hence the need for the nation as well as the whole national populace to make preparations, anticipating imminent dangers of quakes.

In order to avoid these consequences of earthquakes as much as possible, buildings

should be constructed with quake-proof standards only after careful and systematic planning such as installation of danger-safe systems and advanced warning systems. Thus arrangements for rescue and evacuation should also be made in advance.

Measurement

The Sagaing Fault is a major tectonic structure and one of the major active faults in Myanmar. The fault has experienced many earthquakes in her history. In addition, several major cities lie along this active fault. Therefore, the seismic studies become critically important. Using GPS methods to investigate the tectonic activity of the Sagaing Fault can yield reliable information.

Earthquake disaster mitigation programs need to be accelerated to ensure the country's growing urban areas are pre-

pared for future disasters.

Setting up modern seismology stations and global positioning system measuring devices along the major active faults, developing modern seismic micro zone maps and preparing an earthquake-resistant design code based on maps and research data are crucial steps for earthquake disaster mitigation.

Preparation

Many countries such as Japan and Indonesia are on alert for impending earthquakes every day due to their location on the earthquake prone area.

The Indonesian archipelago is constantly at risk of earthquakes and volcanic eruption; people are aware of the threat faced by these disasters and are prepared to respond to possible threats.

To address the dangers of the natural disaster, arrange-

ments and preparation have been made to ensure that the schools in Myanmar have emergency plans and students have practiced safe evacuation protocol. As for the ministries concerned, effective disaster mitigation programmes should be accelerated in schools and public places of the country.

It is essential to have drawn up emergency plans for finding, rescuing and rehabilitating victims when natural disasters occur.

Hence, arrangements should be made concerning preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation which are included in the emergency plans.

The relevant ministries, on the other hand, have warned the public via the media to take precautions to avoid "deaths and damages" caused by unpredictable earthquakes. ■

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the President
Order 21/2018

3rd Waxing of Nayon, 1380 ME
17th May, 2018

Resignation of Chin State Minister approved

In accordance with the provisions stated in article 264 (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Section 52 (b) of Region or State Government Law, Salai Issak Khin, Chin State Minister for Development Affairs, Electricity and Industry, has been permitted to resign of his own volition from the position of State Minister.

Sd/ Win Myint
President
Republic of the Union of Myanmar



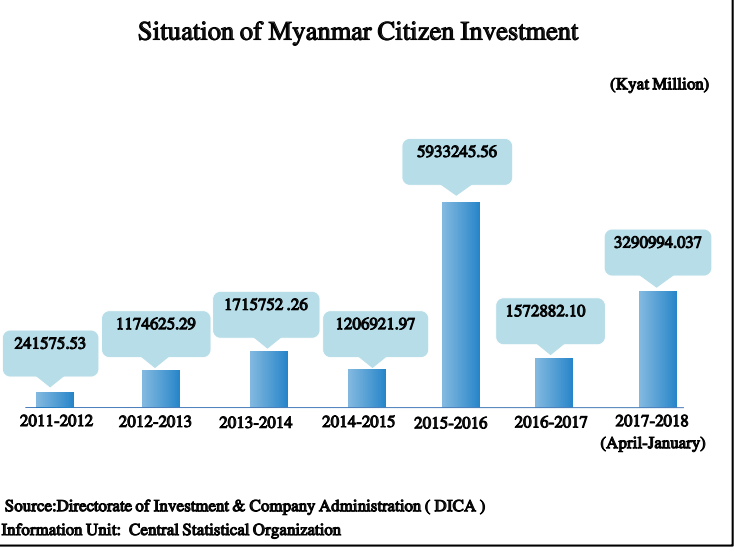
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U Kyaw Moe Tun appointed as Permanent Representative to UN offices in Geneva

THE President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Kyaw Moe Tun, Director-General of the International Organizations and Economic Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva.—Myanmar News Agency



Myanmar Delegation attends the Second Joint Working Group Meeting on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons from Bangladesh

A Myanmar delegation led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar visited Dhaka, Bangladesh from 15 to 18 May 2018 to attend the Second Meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons. The delegation included representatives from various Ministries and the Rakhine State government.

The Second JWG Meeting was held at the State Guest House of Bangladesh on 17 May 2018. The meeting was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and Mr. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

During the Meeting, both sides exchanged views on the repatriation process, including conducive environment, safety and security for the prospective returnees, current situation of displaced persons in Bangladesh, updates on the displaced persons from the international boundary line, dissemination of information among the returnees and confidence building, and the involvement of the United



Myanmar delegation led by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu (Right) attends the meeting of JWG on the Repatriation of Verified Displaced Persons in Dhaka. **PHOTO: MNA**

Nations Agencies in the process of repatriation and resettlement.

The Myanmar side informed the Meeting on its concerted efforts and preparations for the repatriation and resettlement process, including the UEHRD's activities, verification process, the issuance of the National Verification Card (NVC), and the ongoing discussion between the Myanmar Government and the UN agencies for cooperation in the repatriation, resettlement and reintegration process.

The Myanmar side reiterated its readiness to receive the verified displaced persons from

The Myanmar side reiterated its readiness to receive the verified displaced persons from Bangladesh and urged the Bangladeshi side to commence the repatriation of the earlier verified 778 Muslims and 444 Hindus as well as 1101 verified persons (as of 2 May 2018) out of 8,032 persons received from the Bangladeshi side.

Bangladesh and urged the Bangladeshi side to commence the repatriation of the earlier verified 778 Muslims and 444 Hindus as well as 1101 verified persons (as of 2 May 2018) out of 8,032 persons received from the Bangladeshi side. The Myanmar side also sought cooperation of the Bang-

ladesh side in terminating and demolition of structures recently built in the non-construction zone of the border line, since the construction of those structures breached Article 14 of the "Treaty between Myanmar and Bangladesh on the Demarcation of the Land Section of the Boundary

North of the Naaf River signed in 1998.

Furthermore, the Myanmar side urged the Bangladeshi side to provide information on its readiness to commence the repatriation process including the completion of transit camps at the Bangladeshi side as well as the promotion of awareness among the prospective returnees on the bilateral agreements between the two countries and the agreed verification forms to be shared with them.

The Myanmar delegation called upon the international community to work together to create a conducive environment to restoring peace and stability, harmony and sustained socio-economic development for all people in Rakhine State.

The Myanmar side shared its belief that mutual understanding and constructive cooperation based on the principles of objectivity, mutual respect and bilateral agreements would bring about a positive outcome in the repatriation process.

The third Joint Working Group meeting will be held in Nay Pyi Taw and the dates and venue will be communicated through the diplomatic channel.—MNA ■

Four ministries hold press conference on second one-year performance

FROM PAGE-7

The ministry also adopted the Myanmar Elephant Conservation Action Plan (MECAP) 2018-2027.

In the second one-year period, the ministry confiscated 42,893.4316 tons of teak and hardwood and arrested 6,591 persons, including 19 foreigners. As part of efforts for greening the arid region, more than 3,888 acres of cultivation and 37,000 acres were designated as forest reserve.

U Khin Latt Gyi, Director-General of the Mining Department, has suspended granting permits for new mining blocks since 1 March, 2016, and also granted extensions of permits for mining blocks which expired on 1 April, 2016.

In accordance with the new by-law of the Myanmar Mines Law enacted on 13 February, 2018, small- and medium-sized mining businesses are allowed in regions and states.

Regarding the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative

(EITI), the ministry formed the leading committee for EITI with four members led by the Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation. There is also a tripartite group for EITI comprised of the leading committee, companies and civil societies.

The ministry set its target of earning at least more than Ks540 billion from mining, gems and the pearl sector in the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, and achieved its target with earnings of more than Ks740 billion.

Ministry of Health and Sports

Afterwards, Ministry of Health and Sports permanent secretary Prof. Dr. Thet Khaing Win explained the work done on raising health knowledge among the public, and how to reduce expenses incurred by the public on health care.

A nationwide immunization campaign against 11 childhood diseases was conducted. There are about 8.7 million students all

over the country, and health inspection in schools was conducted in 97 per cent of the schools nationwide. Deworming of students was conducted twice in basic education schools and, as this is beneficial for health, it will be conducted as priority work.

Malaria is targeted to be eliminated in Myanmar by 2030. Annual campaigns against elephantiasis are also conducted, and 4,888 new leprosy patients were being treated. Across the country, 222,730 patients were given cataract operations, Seven public hospitals in Yangon, Mandalay and Nay Pyi Taw provided free anti-viral medicines to 2,000 patients, while 1,671 patients were treated up to 31 December 2017.

To identify severe and highly infectious diseases, two multi-million dollar laboratories were opened in Taunggyi and Insein.

National Strategic Plan (2017-2021) for non-infectious diseases and Myanmar National Cancer Control Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

were drawn and the Population Based Cancer Registry was also started in Nay Pyi Taw.

Open-heart surgery was performed on 1,287 patients in Yangon People's Hospital, Mandalay People's Hospital, North Okkalapa Hospital and Yankin Children Hospital and the success rate was more than 95 per cent. Cardiac Cath Labs were opened in Yangon People's Hospital, Mandalay People's Hospital and North Okkalapa Hospital, where a total of 8,162 patients were treated. An additional 18 rural health clinics and 22 sub-rural health centres were opened and 1,796 Community Health Clinics were opened, where various health care services were provided.

A total of 241 traditional health hospital and clinics were opened, where 1,512,300 out-patients and 29,868 in-patients were treated.

International-standard laboratories were opened and these labs were accredited with the ISO 17025 Certificate by US-

based ANAB (ANSI-ASO National Accreditation Board).

Twenty-four district FDA offices are under construction, and all will have modern laboratories to test food and medicines.

Sports sector development was increased within the available budget, while development of the health sector is being done. Six-hundred and seventy-five sets of Outdoor Fitness Equipment were installed in locations where the public can conduct physical exercise. Sports and Physical Education Institute Loi-kaw and Monywa were opened, making for a total of six Sports and Physical Education Institute, where more sports personnel will be produced.

For the first time in Myanmar, there were 70 students who graduated from the B.Sc (Sports) course and, at the moment, a total of 207 students were attending this course in Dagon and Yatanabon University, explained the permanent secretary.—Han Hmwe, Lin Naing (MNA) ■

Mnuchin to lead US in trade talks with China

WASHINGTON—US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will lead trade talks with China due to take place on Thursday and Friday as the countries try to head off a trade war.

“These meetings are a continuation of the talks held in Beijing two weeks ago and will focus on rebalancing the United States–China bilateral economic relationship,” the White House said in a statement.

The US has threatened to impose 25 per cent punitive duties on up to \$150 billion in Chinese goods while China has targeted \$50 billion in American exports.

China’s Vice Premier Liu He leads the trade delegation from Beijing. US Commerce

Secretary Wilbur Ross and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer will also participate.

In Beijing, the commerce ministry said China hoped the two sides could resolve the trade frictions during the talks.

“But of course we’ve prepared a response for various possibilities,” said commerce spokesman Gao Feng at a Thursday press briefing.

The talks, part of a busy week of trade negotiations and tight deadlines in Washington, have become enmeshed in political intrigue after an adviser to President Donald Trump who is considered a hardliner on China was left out.

Peter Navarro, who was seen as having a more dominant

role following the departure of White House economic advisor Gary Cohn over trade issues, was left off the list, although the statement said: “Additional senior Administration Officials will also participate.”

According to press reports, Navarro sparred with Mnuchin over his handling of the China talks and was barred from attending the meetings this week.

- ZTE and Indonesia -

Meanwhile, Trump earlier on Wednesday denied caving to China over US sanctions on the telecoms equipment maker ZTE.

The comments followed Trump’s surprise announcement on Sunday that the administration was exploring ways to soften the blow from a ban on



Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will lead trade talks between the US and China. **PHOTO: AFP**

exporting crucial US technology to the company, which Washington says violated sanctions and misled US officials.

“Nothing has happened with ZTE except as it pertains to the larger trade deal,” Trump said on Twitter.—AFP ■

EU court upholds curbs on bee-killing pesticide



Activists have staged protests demanding a ban on pesticides blamed for killing off bees. **PHOTO: AFP**

LUXEMBOURG—A top European Union court on Thursday upheld the ban on three insecticides blamed for killing off bee populations, dismissing cases brought by chemicals giants Bayer and Syngenta.

The decision involves a partial ban by the European Union from 2013, but the bloc has since taken more drastic action after a major report by European food safety agency targeted the chemicals.

“The General Court confirms the validity of the restrictions introduced at EU level in 2013 against the insecticides clothianidin, thiamethoxam and imidacloprid because of the

risks those substances pose to bees,” a statement said.

“Given the existence of new studies ... the Commission was fully entitled to find that it was appropriate to review the approval of the substances in question,” it said.

Bees help pollinate 90 per cent of the world’s major crops, but in recent years have been dying off from “colony collapse disorder,” a mysterious scourge blamed partly on pesticides.

The pesticides — clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam — are based on the chemical structure of nicotine and attack the nervous systems of insect pests.

Past studies have found neonicotinoids can cause bees to become disorientated such that they cannot find their way back to the hive, and lower their resistance to disease. Fears have been growing globally in recent years over the health of bees.

Pesticides have been blamed as a cause of colony collapse disorder along with mites, pesticides, virus and fungus, or some combination of these factors. Last month EU countries voted for an outright ban on the use of the three neonicotinoid pesticides in fields meaning that they can only now be used in sealed greenhouses.

— AFP ■

New Zealand’s ‘first bloke’ fends off angry shark

WELLINGTON—New Zealand’s “first bloke” Clarke Gayford revealed Thursday how he fought off an angry shark with a pole while diving off Auckland.

Gayford, the partner of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, tweeted a picture of himself keeping the predator at bay while a dolphin swims in the background.

However, instead of launching a Flipper-style rescue to chase off the shark, Gayford said the dolphin was content to watch the underwater drama unfold from a distance. “So it turns out that not only do dolphins not help, they actually quite like watching,” he tweeted. “A childhood myth is ruined.” Gayford, who hosts a television fishing show, said he was helping a camera operator shoot footage for the educational show Young Ocean Explorers when the incident occurred.

He said he was “swimming safety”, or keeping watch so the cameraman could concentrate on filming bottle-nosed dolphins and false killer whales off Great Barrier Island near Auckland.

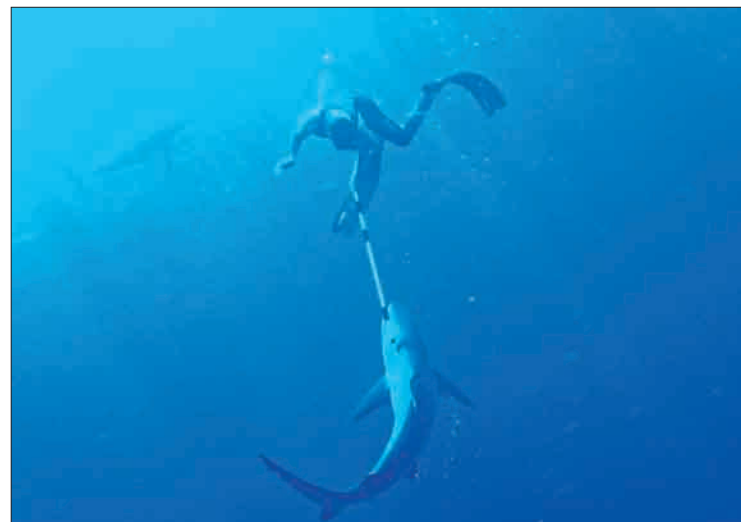
“They were feeding on kingfish and had been tearing some large ones in half and putting blood in the water, which attracted several large bronze whaler sharks,” Gayford told AFP.

“I got in the water and they turned their attention on me, I had to fend the large one pictured off with a pole several times, as it was getting quite agitated.

“We got out not long after.”

It is not Gayford’s only recent encounter with a shark.

In March, he tweeted a picture of himself with “an overly amorous whale shark” that he said accidentally pinned him against a boat.—AFP ■



Clarke Gayford, partner of New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, fends off a shark with a pole as a dolphin looks on in waters off while diving off Auckland. **PHOTO: AFP**

Trump says 'we'll see' as North Korea threatens to cancel summit

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump sounded a note of caution Wednesday about his much-vaunted summit with Kim Jong Un, saying "we'll see" after Pyongyang threatened to cancel.

Trump said the US government had not received any official word of a change in plans for the 12 June meeting in Singapore.

"We haven't been notified at all. We'll have to see," Trump said in the Oval Office.

"We haven't seen anything. We haven't heard anything. We will see what happens. Whatever it is, it is."

After weeks of warm words and diplomatic backslapping, Pyongyang abruptly threatened to pull out Tuesday, over US demands for "unilateral nuclear abandonment."

In an angrily worded statement, the North warned "if the US is trying to drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment, we will no longer be interested in such dialogue."

The statement was attributed to first vice foreign minister Kim Kye Gwan and carried by state media KCNA.

In that case, he added, Pyongyang would have to "reconsider" its participation at next



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump are due to meet in Singapore on 12 June, but Pyongyang has thrown the meeting into doubt. PHOTO: AFP

month's summit in Singapore.

The first vice foreign minister also tore into Trump's National Security Advisor John Bolton for drawing parallels between North Korea and Libya, calling the comparison "absolutely absurd."

"We do not hide our feeling of repugnance towards him," he said of Bolton.

Bolton has pushed the idea of a deal with North Korea like that reached with Libya's Moamer Kadhafi, who agreed in 2003 to the elimination of his country's nuclear program and chemical weapons

arsenal to gain sanctions relief.

After giving up his atomic program, Kadhafi was killed in 2011 in an uprising backed by NATO bombing.

A plea from China

Experts have not been surprised by the sudden about face, expecting bumps in the road as tough issues to be discussed in the meeting come into sharper focus.

Washington is pressing for North Korea's complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization. But so far, the North has given no pub-

lic indication of what it is offering, beyond a broad commitment to denuclearization of the "Korean peninsula."

Pyongyang "made clear on several occasions that precondition for denuclearization is to put an end to anti-DPRK hostile policy and nuclear threats and blackmail of the United States," the North Korean minister said.

In the past, Pyongyang has demanded the withdrawal of US troops stationed in the South, and an end to Washington's nuclear umbrella over its ally.

China, North Korea's

sole major ally, called for the summit to go ahead.

"The situation on the peninsula has eased up, which is worth cherishing," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing.

Minister Kim also dismissed offers by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for US economic aid if the North denuclearizes.

"We have never had any expectation of US support in carrying out our economic construction and will not at all make such a deal in future," he said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian urged North Korea to "demonstrate its sincerity to negotiate on its denuclearization."

During a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, Le Drian said: "Highs and lows can come along as the recent news from the peninsula shows, but we must not lose sight of the goal."

The White House said plans for the summit were moving ahead.

"The president is ready if the meeting takes place. And if it doesn't, we will continue the maximum pressure campaign that has been ongoing," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said.—AFP ■

One killed, five injured in suicide blast in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — At least one person was killed and five others injured in a suicide blast in Nowshera city of Pakistan's north-west Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Thursday afternoon, police said.

The district police officer of Nowshera said that a suicide bomber exploded his explosive-laden vest near a vehicle of the Frontier Constabulary, a paramilitary force, at the Kachehry Chowk area of the city.

Police, security forces and rescues teams rushed to the site, shifted the body and injured to the Combined Military Hospital in the city.

The identity of the deceased person is not known yet. However, police said at least three security personnel are among the injured persons. Police and security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation in the city. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet.

Earlier on Wednesday night, at least one military officer and three terrorists, including the provincial head of a banned outfit, were killed during a search and hit operation in Quetta, the capital of Pakistan's southwest Balochistan province.—Xinhua ■

Transferring Distributor for Registered Products

Distribution of following pesticides registered by Syntech International Co.,Ltd is transferring from Golden Lion High Tech Agricultural Resources Co.,Ltd to Farm Link Co.,Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co Secretary, Myanmar Pesticide Registration Board, West Gyogone, Insein Township within (14) days.

Sr	Trade Name	A.I	Type of Registration	Reg. No
1.	Stone 60 WP	Carbendazim 250g/kg + Cymoxanil 10% + Thiram 25% WP	Exp	E 2018 - 2339
2.	DC - 80 WP	Chlorothalonil 50% + Dimethomorph 30 % WP	Exp	E 2017 - 3518
3.	Accept 20 SL	Acetamiprid 20% SL	Full	F 2018 - 1576
4.	Panther 15 EC	Pyridaben 15% EC	Full	F 2018 - 1658

Trade Mark: 09-251022355

Hotline Ph: 09-74424114

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. (0241-481)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EVER ABLE VOY. NO. (0241-481) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-5-2018 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.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EVERGREEN SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

Iran says China group ready to replace Total on gas deal

TEHRAN — Chinese state-owned oil company CNPC will replace Total on a major gas field project in Iran if the French energy giant pulls out over renewed US sanctions against Tehran, Iran's oil minister has said.

"Total has said that if it doesn't get an exemption from the United States to continue its work, it will begin to pull out of the deal," Bijan Namdar Zanganeh was quoted as saying by his ministry's Shana news service.

"If that happens, the Chinese firm CNPC will replace Total."

Total started the

\$4.8-billion South Pars 11 project in July 2017, two years after Western powers signed a nuclear deal with Tehran prompting the return of many businesses to Iran.

But earlier this month, US President Donald Trump announced his withdrawal from the deal, and warned companies that they face sanctions if they do business with Iran.

The French group said Wednesday it has \$10 billion of capital employed in its US assets, and US banks are involved in 90 per cent of its financing operations, making Total highly vulnerable if target-



Iran possesses the second largest gas reserves on the planet, after Russia, and the fourth largest oil supplies. PHOTO: AFP

ed by any US actions.

By contrast, Total said it had spent less than 40 million euros (\$47 million) on the Iranian project, which it runs with its

partner Petrochina and which is dedicated to the supply of domestic gas inside Iran.

Zanganeh said on Wednesday that were

CNPC, which was part of the Total deal, unable to carry out the work in South Pars due to US sanctions it would fall to Iran's Petropars.

Iran possesses the second-largest gas reserves on the planet, after Russia, and the fourth largest oil supplies. —AFP ■

WHO says Ebola outbreak has spread to DR Congo city

GENEVA — The Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has spread to a city, the World Health Organization said Thursday, fuelling concern the deadly virus may prove tougher to contain.

The fresh outbreak, publicly declared on 8 May with 23 deaths so far, had previously been confined to a very remote, rural area in Equateur Province in the northwest of the country.

But the UN's health agency confirmed that an Ebola case has been recorded in the city of Mbandaka, which lies roughly 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the Bikoro area where the outbreak originated. "This is a concerning development," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. Last week, a top WHO official warned that if the virus reached Mbandaka, the DRC could be confronted with yet another Ebola crisis.

The city's population has been variously estimated at between 700,000 and 1.2 million.



Health workers don protective equipment at Bikoro Hospital in northwest DR Congo — the epicentre of the latest Ebola outbreak. PHOTO: AFP

"If we see a town of that size infected with Ebola, then we are going to have a major urban outbreak," the WHO's head of emergency response, Peter Salama, told reporters last week. The agency said Thursday it was deploying around 30 experts to Mbandaka "to conduct surveillance in the city," including rapid efforts to trace all contacts of the new urban case.

Forty-four cases have been reported in the outbreak so far, including three confirmed, 20 probable and 21 suspected, according to the WHO's tally. - Urban trigger - Ebola is not only le-

thal but also highly contagious, which makes it difficult to contain and roll back.

Lacking an arsenal of drugs to treat or prevent the virus, doctors use classic tactics of isolating patients and tracing people who have been in contact with them. That challenge amplifies greatly in urban environments where people move around more and have more contact with others than in the countryside.

Adding to the headache is the fact that the virus has broken out anew in one of the world's most vulnerable and volatile countries.—AFP ■

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MYANMA RAILWAYS

Extension of Tender Closing Date

Myanma Railways Extends the Tender Closing Date as follows:

Sr No	Tender No	Description	Initial Closing Date & Time	Extension Closing Date & Time
1	16/MR/INDIA (E)2017-2018	Track Recording Car EM 80 and Small Track Maintenance Machineries	22.5.2018 (14:30)Hr	10.7.2018 (14:30)Hr

Managing Director, Myanma Railways

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

Changing Distributor for Registered Pesticides

Distribution of pesticide registered by Shandong Weifang Rainbow Chemical Co., Ltd is changing from RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD to Myanmar Arysta LifeScience Co., Ltd. Any objection regarding to this transfer can notify at Co-Secretary, Pesticide Registration Board, Plant Protection Division, West Gyogone, Insein within 2 weeks.

New Trade Name	Active Ingredient	Registration Type/No
BRUSH 70 WP	Imidacloprid 70% WP	Provisional: 2015 -2513

RAINBOW AGROSCIENCES CO., LTD

Add: Building No. (C), Room No. (402), Level-4, Dagon Center (1),
Bargayar Road, Sanchaung Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Phone : 09456060160, 09456060180

INVITATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Thilawa Property Development Limited is the developer of the Residential and Commercial Area of Thilawa SEZ. We are seeking proposals from well reputed, financially sound companies with similar existing experience for the following project:

Investment, Design, Development and Operation of a New Hospital

- Security deposit of 100,000,000 Kyats (One Hundred Million Kyats) is required to submit request for proposal. Security deposit will be refunded back to the unsuccessful bidders.
- Project location map, project layout and project scope shall be included in Proposal Documents.
- The proposal documents shall be available for purchase from **18 May 2018** and proposal submission will be closed at 4:00 pm on **6 July 2018**.
- The proposal documents can be purchased at a cost of 100,000 Kyats at the address below during office hour.

Investors interested in this Request for Proposal may obtain further information from:
No 4C, Thilawa Development Road
R & C Area, Thilawa Garden City
Kyauk Tan Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Phone: 09 77773 3273, 09 25777 0877
E-mail: info@tpdmyanmar.com



Sonam Kapoor. PHOTO: PTI

Sonam turns heads in her second appearance at Cannes

CANNES — For her second red carpet appearance at the Cannes Film Festival, Sonam Kapoor opted for a Vera Wang couture gown.

Matching with her beige and yellow gown with a corset, Sonam wore minimal accessories and sported a messy bun. She round off her look with dramatic eyes.

Sonam's sister, Rhea

shared her photos from the Cannes Film Festival and wrote, "The most glam go with the flow ever."

Earlier in the day, Sonam made several appearances for the brand.

She sported a blue denim from Bhane, a clothing brand owned by husband Anand Ahuja.

In the afternoon, the

"Veere Di Wedding" star wore a white and red striped dress from designer Emilia Wickstead and coupled it with Sophia Webster shoes and Bottega Veneta shades.

Sonam wore a Ralph and Russo lehenga-inspired outfit for her first appearance at the French Riviera this year as the brand ambassador of cosmetic brand L'Oreal.—PTI ■



K-pop sensation Psy's official 'Gangnam Style' video has been viewed more than 3.1 billion times since it was uploaded to Youtube in 2012. PHOTO: AFP

Freelance style: Psy splits from agent

SEOUL — K-pop sensation Psy, whose "Gangnam Style" hit had an unprecedented global impact for a non-English language song, has severed ties with his management agency, reports said on Tuesday.

South Korea's music industry is dominated by powerful management companies who pick up prospects at an early age, usually in their early or mid teens, and put them through gruelling singing and dancing training. The agents dictate everything from band memberships to musical style, as well as diet regimen to mobile phone use. As a major star in his own right Psy has sought greater control over his own output and career. "We have decided, through a deep conversation, to end the contract to respect Psy's

thoughts on taking on new challenges," YG Entertainment said in a statement according to widespread reports. Psy has been part of its stable for eight years. The official "Gangnam Style" video has been viewed more than 3.1 billion times since it was uploaded to Youtube in 2012, with imitations, spoofs and spinoffs watched countless times more. "Our close relationship with Psy will continue forever regardless of a contract," YG said. "We will support his new start." Psy is expected to found his own management firm, Yonhap news agency said.

Psy released his eighth studio album 4x2=8 a year ago, featuring appearances by other K-pop stars including Big Bang members G-Dragon and Taeyang.—AFP ■

Happiness makes hit songs

PARIS — Hit songs today are "happier", more danceable and more likely to be sung by women than songs that fail to make it to the charts, a study into 30 years of musical evolution revealed on Wednesday.

But also it noted a somber trend: while people clearly prefer happy music, there is less and less of it. "More and more unhappy songs are being released each year," a research team from the University of California Irvine reported in the journal Royal Society Open Science. Overall, they found that "happiness" and "brightness" in music has declined, "while 'sadness' increased in the last 30 years or so". But hit tunes defy the trend, and tend to be "much" happier than unsuccessful ones — think of Pharrell Williams' "Happy". The findings



The winner of this year's Eurovision Song Contest echoed the results of the study: "Toy" by Israel's Netta Barzilai was happy, danceable and sung by a woman. PHOTO: AFP

of the study, which analysed the "sound" characteristics of popular tracks but not their lyrics, echoed earlier research showing that "positive emotions" in music was dwindling, the team said.

A previous study covering 1980-2007 found that music lyrics have become more self-cen-

tred, with increased use of the words "me" and "I", fewer social words such as "we", and more anti-social ones such as "hate" and "kill". This trend in lyrics are in tune with overall increases in loneliness, social isolation, and mental disorders across society.

The new study, based on a

massive data trawl of 500,000 songs released in Britain between 1985 and 2015, found that as "happy" music declined, so did the popularity of songs sung by men.

Signs of the times

"In the recent years, successful songs are more often sung by females," said the study.

"This is particularly interesting given a large debate about the role of women in the music industry, especially the issues of gender inequality, stereotypes and the sexualisation of female singers." Songs were considered successful if they made it into Top 100 charts, which less than four percent of new releases do every year. Also rising in popularity are songs described as "relaxed" and "danceable", possibly linked to a

rise in electronic music and a converse decline in rock and heavy metal. The research showed that classical and jazz songs were "unlikely" to be successful. Dance and pop music were the most popular genres. The team gave examples of happy songs from 1985, including "Live is Life" by Opus, "Freedom" by Wham!, and Bruce Springsteen's "Glory Days". More recent songs with a low happiness index included Sam Smith's "Stay with Me" and "Whispers" by Passenger, both from 2014. Can the research help songwriters? "In a way it could, if they look at the trends that we found and try to follow them," study co-author Natalia Komarova told AFP. "But of course a large component of success is still something that even mathematics cannot quantify."—AFP ■

China-Myanmar trade fair kicks off in Yangon

CHINA-MYANMAR trade fair opened at Myanmar Event Park in Yangon yesterday and Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint delivered the opening speech at the event.

Union Minister Dr Than Myint said the event is aimed at promoting bilateral trade and investment and enhancing Myanmar-China cooperation, introducing high quality made-in-china products for Myanmar market. Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang and Madam Mo Changying, Vice Chairwoman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Guangxi Committee delivered the speech at the ceremony.

Afterwards, Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Vice Chairperon of Chinese People's Political Con-

sultative Conference Guangxi Committee Madam Mo Changying, Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang, Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) Chairman U Zaw Min Win and officials unveiled the China-Myanmar (Yangon) Trade Fair 2018 by pressing the button.

Union Minister Dr Than Myint and the Yangon Region Chief Minister accompanied by the officials then went around the exhibition booths of the China-Myanmar Trade Fair 2018.

About 200 booths from 103 companies have displayed made-in-china consumer goods, hardware lighting products, household utensils. This event also showcases food, Myanmar products and demonstrating banking services.—GNLM ■



Union Minister Dr Than Myint and Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein observe machines at the opening ceremony of China-Myanmar (Yangon) Trade Fair 2018 in Yangon. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAH

'Mad' king's lost gift to Wagner gets rare show

BRUSSELS—Kept safe in a silk-lined box by its Belgian "custodian" lies a piece of the historic legacy of German composer Richard Wagner that was nearly lost forever: The Lohengrin vase, made of porcelain, was given to Wagner more than 150 years ago by Ludwig II, the "mad king" of Bavaria, whose passion for building fairytale castles was matched only by his love of Wagner's operas.

It was believed lost after Allied bombing in World War II destroyed much of Bayreuth, the town where Wagner built the legendary theatre that now hosts an annual music festival.

But one fragment emerged after the war and was taken to the Belgian capital, Brussels, in 1949, where it has largely remained out of sight in the intervening years.

A group of Wagner devotees recently received a special viewing during a production in Brussels of the opera "Lohengrin"—the work that first bewitched Ludwig—and an AFP reporter was given a rare glimpse.

Patrick Collon, the renowned organ maker and art expert who now owns the fragment, said that "Ludwig was barely 18 years old when he started thinking about this vase, and he obsessed about it for six months. His diaries are full of it." "After Ludwig became king he sought out Wagner, who was hiding from his creditors, all over central Europe. He found



A piece of the Lohengrin vase, created by Ludwig II of Bavaria for the late German composer Richard Wagner, seen in Brussels on 7 May, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

him a year later and gave him this vase in May 1865 for his 52nd birthday," added Collon, 75.

'First creation'

Saved from the ruins of the defeated Nazi Germany in 1945, the fragment at first looks insignificant, consisting of just the blue and gold base of the urn-like vase, and part of one rounded side.

But it sheds an intriguing light on the extraordinary friendship between the young Ludwig and the older Wagner.

The eccentric Ludwig is best known for designing the fantastical Neuschwanstein near Munich which served as the model for Disney's Sleeping Beauty Castle.

A minor king under whom Bavaria lost its independence to

Prussia, Ludwig has nevertheless gone down in history as a patron of the arts, especially of the equally erratic Wagner.

Ludwig was just 15 and infused by the old German legends when he first saw Wagner's "Lohengrin", based on the traditional story of the Swan Knight, and which later became the inspiration for Neuschwanstein Castle.

Two years later, Ludwig became obsessed by creating a porcelain vase featuring scenes from Lohengrin.

"It was Ludwig's first creation. He didn't make it himself but he imagined it, he dreamed up the scenes that were painted on it by his drawing teacher," the German landscape painter Leopold Rottmann, said Collon.

Rottmann's watercolours of the receptacle—the only surviving evidence of what it looked like in full—show four scenes from the opera and have a lid and handles in the shape of a swan. The fragment in Brussels shows a gilded swan, the tragic heroine, Elsa, on a balcony, and the two villains Telramund and Ortrud.

It is the only piece that survived the Allied bombing of Bayreuth on April 5, 1945. Two other similar vases—a Tannhaeuser Cup and a Flying Dutchman Cup—were destroyed on that day.

'Horrors of war'

"It was said that it had disappeared and that nothing was left of it. But in 1949 the Wagner brothers (Wagner's grandsons Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner) were able to get a piece in a pretty box to a Belgian benefactor," said Collon. "At the end of her life, she gave it to a musician friend. When the friend died it was passed to me." The benefactor—identified by Collon only as Juliette, contributed to the post-war reopening of the Bayreuth festival in 1951 and was nicknamed "Joan of Arc" by the Wagner brothers.

The Brussels fragment is an object of fascination for music lovers. "A smart friend once said to me: 'in the end, it's moving because it's broken,'" said Collon.

"This fragment has survived all the horrors of war."—AFP ■

Returned Tang Dynasty porcelain on display in Changsha

CHANGSHA—A collection of 1,200-year-old Chinese porcelain returned from Germany went on public display in a museum in Changsha, capital of central China's Hunan Province, on Tuesday.

The 162 pieces were part of a shipment of ninth-century porcelain which left China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) onboard an Arab dhow, which later sunk in Indonesia's Java sea.

In 1998, a German salvage company discovered the shipwreck and named it "Batu Hitam." More than 67,000 pieces of porcelain were found in the ship, 85 per cent of which were produced at Tongguan Imperial Kiln in Changsha. On Tuesday, the 162 relics were put on display at a museum built on the original site of the kiln.

The 1,300-year-old imperial kiln site in Changsha became China's first porcelain museum in 1999.

The exhibition of Tongguan Kiln Porcelain Culture covers an area of 6,272 square meters and includes a replica of the sunken boat.—Xinhua ■

Antoine Hey new head football coach of Myanmar's national team

Antoine Hey, a German football coach and former professional player in the Bundesliga, was named the new head coach of the Myanmar national team, it was announced at a news conference held on Wednesday at the headquarters of the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

Mr. Hey, 47, who most recently was head coach of the Rwandan national team, agreed to a two-year contract that went into effect on 16 May, according to the MFF.

Former Myanmar star footballer and Shan United head coach U Soe Myat Min will work together with Mr. Hey as an assistant head coach, said an MFF official.

U Soe Myat Min was the interim head coach of the national team after the departure



Antoine Hey (third from left) shakes hand with MFF's CEO U Bhone Naing Zaw (third from right) at the MFF office on Wednesday. **PHOTO:MFF**

of Gerd Zeise.

"We can see a brighter future for Myanmar football as MFF signs a great football coach from Bundesliga, a German league. We are hoping the

best for our Myanmar national football team," said Sai Wai Yan Lin Thu, a football fan from Yangon.

The news conference announcing the hiring of Mr. Hey

was attended by MFF's CEO U Bhone Naing Zaw, the General Secretary of MFF U Ko Ko Thein, MFF's Technical Director U Tin Myint Aung and other officials.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Crunch time for Chelsea's Courtois

LONDON — Thibaut Courtois faces a defining period as the Chelsea goalkeeper juggles his bids for FA Cup and World Cup glory, while considering whether to commit his long-term future to the Blues. Courtois has one year to run on his current Chelsea contract and a new £200,000-per-week (\$269,000) deal to extend his stay at Stamford Bridge is reportedly on the table. But the 26-year-old has been linked with Real Madrid and a move back to the Spanish capital could make sense for Courtois, who spent three years with Atletico Madrid on loan from Chelsea.

He is a regular visitor to Madrid, where his former partner Marta Dominguez lives with his children Nicolas and Adriana. Real's current goalkeeper Keylor Navas has endured an error-prone campaign, sparking talk of an offer for Courtois.

Earlier this season, Courtois, who joined Chelsea from Genk in 2011, wouldn't rule out a move, telling reporters in Spain: "I have not made a decision on my future."

"I said my heart was in Madrid, because I have my two children there, and it was misinterpreted. This situation is not easy for me.—AFP ■

MNL referees to oversee University Football Tournament

WITH the aim of providing quality officiating of youth football tournaments, referees from the Myanmar National League will judge the matches of the 2018 MPT-University Football Tournament, which will start on Sunday.

The MPT-University Football Tournament consists of male and female teams comprised of

college students between the ages of 18 and 28 from across the country. The tourney is under the supervision of the Department of Higher Education and with the support of the Myanmar Football Federation, MPT and the MNL.

"We are planning to have referees from the Myanmar National Leagues so as to upgrade

the standard of the MPT-University Football Tournament 2018. In doing so, all the youth footballers will likely have a professional footballers' mindset of obeying the football rules set up as per FIFA", said a football official.

The teams are in two categories for group play, upper and lower Myanmar. The matches of lower Myanmar will start on 20

May and the upper Myanmar matches will start on 2 June. The top teams from each group will advance to semifinal play. Referees from MNL II will judge the group matches and more experienced referees from MNL will judge the semifinal and final matches of the tournament, according to the Myanmar Football Federation.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■



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