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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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President U Win Myint, centre, meets with members of the Union Election Commission at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

President U Win Myint meets UEC

UEC is obliged to supervise political parties as part of efforts for holding free and fair elections

President U Win Myint met the Union Election Commission at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, urging the UEC to hear the voices of political parties as part of the commission's obligation to strictly supervise the parties in order to hold free and fair elections.

In accordance with its duty and responsibilities, the UEC should invite the political parties and listen to them in order to learn more about their platforms, said the President.

President U Win Myint also called on the UEC to make systematic arrangements for holding the elections so that eligible voters cannot lose their chance to vote.

At the meeting with the UEC, the President also stressed the importance of voting lists, as it helps the voters to clearly know where they should go to vote.

He also stressed the need to give election-related training courses to state, district, township and ward/village election sub-commissions so that they can digest and understand the election law and its rules.

He urged the election sub-commissions to make preparations for their role in holding free and fair elections to become reliable and trustworthy commissions for the people, as sovereign power resides in the people in a democracy.

Afterwards, the Chairman of the UEC reported on measures being taken by the commission for compiling voting lists, cooperation with related departments and training courses being conducted for the sub-commissions and meetings with political parties.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister U Min Thu from the Office of the President and members of the UEC including U Aung Myint, U Soe Rei, U Tun Khin, U Hla Tint, U Myint Naing and U Than Htay.—Myanmar News Agency

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Myanmar, UN agencies initial MoU on assistance for repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) initialed a Memorandum of Understanding in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 May, to assist the government of Myanmar in implementing the "Arrangement on the Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State", an agreement between the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed on 23 November 2017.

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2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's 8th regular session holds 10th-day meeting

By Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

THE 10-day meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw's eighth regular session was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning, where the International Theravada BuddhistMissionary University Bill was approved by the Hluttaw.

Question-and-answer session

At the meeting, six asterisk-marked questions were answered by Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun and Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung.

U Pe Than of Myebon constituency asked if there were plans to designate holidays for special days such as the state day, ethnic national day and other unique days of the states and ethnic nationals. Union Minister for Ethnic Affairs Nai Thet Lwin replied that the union government's office announced public holidays yearly, and according to that announcement, there is an average of 26 public holidays, including the Myanmar New Year holidays, every year. As Saturdays and Sundays are also designated as holidays, there is an average of some 130 holidays every year. There are seven states in the country, and if the state day is added to the list, there will be seven additional holidays. The country has more than 100 ethnic nationals, and if the special days of these are added, there will be too many holidays. The law protecting the ethnic rights, enacted in 24 February 2015, has given the full right to all ethnic nationals to celebrate their special days, according to their traditions and designating a holiday for an ethnic national or a state is a matter for the respective state Hluttaw to debate and decide. Therefore, the union government has no plan to designate holidays for special days such as the state day, ethnic national day and other unique days, said the union minister.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. **PHOTO: MNA**

Replying to a question raised by U Nyunt Aung of Monywa constituency on the plan to construct wastewater drains in Monywa, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun explained that detailed calculations to ensure proper water flow is being done, and the drains will be constructed after the funds are allocated.

Next, U Oo Hla Saw of Mrauk U constituency asked a question in three parts: the allocation of US$25 million assistance from the government of India, which will be used in Rakhine State, and the norm for selecting the location of the assistance. Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung replied that the government of India and the government of Myanmar had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide assistance of $25 million for the socio-economic development of ethnic nationals in Rakhine State on 20 December 2017. The MoU was signed by the deputy minister for social welfare, relief and resettlement and the Indian foreign affairs secretary.

U Soe Aung said kyat equivalent to $5 million per year was put in the capital revenue account of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Disaster Management Department, in the Union Budget, and kyat equivalent to $5 million per year was put in the capital expenditure account of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Disaster Management Department, in the Union Budget. The allocation is for five years, starting from the 2018-2019 fiscal year to the 2022-2023 fiscal year, said the deputy minister.

Regarding the second and third part of the question, on the assistance being used in Rakhine State and the norm for selecting the location, he said the project works were selected and submitted by the relevant union ministries and the Rakhine State government in April 2018.

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2nd Amyotha Hluttaw's 8th regular session holds 10th-day meeting

By Aung Ye Thwin

THE second Amyotha Hluttaw's eighth regular session held its tenth-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning, where asterisk-marked questions were answered, two reports read and a bill approved.

Question and answer session

U Naing Ko Ko of Kachin State constituency (12) first asked if there is a plan to widen to 18 ft. and upgrade to asphalt the 30 mile, 4 furlong road in Htigyaingt, Katha and Mabein townships of the Mandalay-Tagaung-Bhamo-Myitkyina Union Road. Union Minister for Construction U Han Zaw said Htigyaing, Katha and Mabein townships road section on the Mandalay-Tagaung-Bhamo-Myitkyina Union Road is from mile post 60/3 to 119/0. It is 58 miles, 5 furlong long and is a road managed by the union government. As of 31 March 2018, the road is 18 ft. wide and 29 miles, 3.35 furlongs is asphalt surfaced and 29 miles 1.65 furlong is gravel surfaced.

The 35-mile, 18 feet-wide section of Mandalay-Tagaung-Bhamo-Myitkyina Road from mile post 85/0 to 120/0 will be upgraded to concrete and, according to the International Project Management programme, data design review, preparation of bidding document, conducting of technical evaluation and price bid opening will be conducted with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) ODA Loan programme starting from fiscal year 2018-2019, said the Union Minister.

Daw Nang Moe Moe Htwe of Kayin State constituency (4) asked if there are plans to prevent and reduce illegal settling and encroaching onto the roads connecting districts, townships and villages in Kayin State by informing and explaining the public regularly about notices, instructions and setting up posts along the road.

The Union Minister replied that regional instructions and notifications on road areas were sent to district general Administration departments of Hpa-an, Kawkareik, Papun and Myawady districts, which in turn informed the public to prevent and reduce illegal settling and encroachment onto the roads. In addition

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. **PHOTO: MNA**

to this, road area marker posts, notice boards with information about the road and warnings against illegal settling and encroachment onto the roads were displayed. The Department of Roads and district general administration departments of the four districts will also explain to the public in July 2018 about not constructing any buildings or structures in the road area, said the Union Minister.

Similarly, questions posed by U Kyaw Than of Kayah State constituency (8), U Tet Tun Aung of Rakhine State constituency (2), U Shar Aww of Chin State constituency (2) and U Whey Tin of Chin State constituency (11) were explained by the Union Minister.

Invitation to debate bill to amend the Myanmar Red Cross Society Law

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than informed the Hluttaw about Pyithu Hluttaw sending a bill to amend the Myanmar Red Cross Society Law. The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker said Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bill should enroll their names.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee reports read

Following this, Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Kyein Ngai Mahn read and explained the committee report on the bill to amend the television and video law approved and sent with amendments by Pyithu Hluttaw, after which Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker said Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the bill should enroll their names.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Dr. Myo Aung read and explained the committee report on the second amendment bill to the Settlement of Labor Dispute Law.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker then took the decision of the Hluttaw on the bill by section. This was followed by U Kyaw Htwe of Yangon Region Constituency (8) (local and international workers affairs committee chairman) tabling a motion for the Hluttaw to approve the bill, which was supported by U Okka Min of the Taninthayi Region constituency (8).

The bill was announced to be approved after the Hluttaw decided to approve the bill. The eleventh day meeting of the second Amyotha Hluttaw's eighth regular session will be held on 4 June, it is learnt.

Today at this time, we are witnessing the transformation of an era and a system in accordance with democratic principles. This is just the beginning of the democratic transition. To make this transition process smooth and successful, it is very important for our peoples, government employees and civil servants to change their dogmatic mindset and habits. Those government institutions which are lagging behind in the transformation process will need to be put under tight management controls. The country's weak judiciary system would need to be strengthened. More efforts need to be exerted to stamp out corruption. More efforts need to be exerted to prevent human rights violations. More efforts need to be exerted to crack down illegal drug trade. We need to manage public funds properly so that there is no wastage. Measures need to be taken to return confiscated farmland to farmers and to give compensation to farmers for losses they have suffered in accordance with the law. We also need to improve the socio-economic life of farmers, improve the lives of workers and ensure that students gain access to higher education.

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

I would like the people to assist and support the peace efforts of our Union Government. I would especially want the youth to look to the future and join in this effort. I have observed that youth have been participating in these efforts.

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

Myanmar, UN agencies initial MoU on assistance for repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State

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The ceremony was held at the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor and it was attended by Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Thein Swe and U Kyaw Tin, UNHCR Representative Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentiis and UNDP's Deputy Country Director Ms. Dawn Del Rio.

The MoU was initialed by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population U Aye Lwin, UNHCR Representative Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentiis and Deputy Director of the UNDP Ms. Dawn Del Rio in the presence of Union Ministers U Kyaw Tint Swe, U Thein Swe and U Kyaw Tin.

The Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR are expected to sign the MoU soon. — Myanmar News Agency ■

A ceremony to initial MoU on assistance for repatriation process of displaced persons from Rakhine State between Myanmar and UNDP and UNHCR in progress in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 May, 2018. **Photo: MNA**

Meeting of Construction and Infrastructure Task Force held in Sittway, Rakhine State

Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement who is also Vice-Chairman of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development (UEHRD) stressed the importance of accountability and responsibility in building infrastructure in Rakhine State.

He made the comment at the Coordination Meeting of Construction and Infrastructure Task Force of UEHRD in Sittway yesterday, urging the task force to construct the buildings meeting standards as they had also gained reasonable profits from the construction works.

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye addresses the meeting of construction and infrastructure task force in Sittway yestreday. **Photo: MNA**

"I can understand that the working hours are few because it depends on the weather conditions. In doing so, scrutiny and review are of great importance to carry out the tasks. There are some obstacles in the process of joining UEHRD projects. As for the UEHRD committee, and Committee for the Implementation of Peace and Development, scrutiny and review are needed to perform the tasks. It is essential to meet the standards and finish the tasks in time."

He said he was much obliged to the businessmen who attended the meeting. There should be accountability and responsibility among them, because they had also gained reasonable profits from the construction works. With positive attitude, efforts should be made to carry out the tasks successfully, he added.

Then Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu also discussed repatriation process. U Ko Ko, a deputy leader of the CITF openly discussed the UEHRD process and some of the difficulties they had encountered in the construction process. Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye, Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, Deputy Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin, and Rakhine State Minister U Aung Kyaw Zan gave comments and advice with a view to coordinating with the relevant government departments and to fulfill their needs in the construction process.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Monsoon moderate to strong over Andaman Sea, South Bay

The monsoon is moderate to strong over the Andaman Sea and the South Bay and weak to moderate 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, Mandalay and neighboring areas for today is isolated rain or thundershowers and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent, whereas for Yangon and the neighboring area it is one or two rain or thundershowers and the degree of certainty is 100 per cent.

Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely off and along Mon-Taninthayi coasts. The surface wind speed during the squalls may reach 35-40 m.p.h. Seas will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar's waters. The wave height will be some seven-nine feet off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and some four-seven feet in the Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama and off and along Rakhine Coasts.—GNLM ■

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Lawmaker demands harsher sentences for child rape cases

By Aye Aye Thant/MNA

A lawmaker called on the Union Government yesterday at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting to draft a special bill which can impose the death sentence for child rape cases in order to deter child sexual abuse.

"An increase in the number of child rape cases has threatened the morality and culture of Myanmar society," said Daw Khin Saw Wai.

Quoting information released by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the lawmaker from Yathedaung Constituency in Rakhine State said the number of the child sexual abuse cases has spiralled upward year by year, with nearly 2,000 cases in the past two years.

Daw Khin Saw Wai said the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement was making efforts to allow a 10-year sentence or a life sentence for child rape convictions when he met with journalists following an Amyotha Hluttaw meeting on 28 November last year.

She said the Union Minister also told reporters that his ministry is redrawing the 1993 child law and the issue of giving heavy penalties to child sex abuses should be brought to the Hluttaw.

Despite the collective efforts of CSOs, lawmakers and ministries concerned since 2014, a bill has not yet submitted to the Hluttaw yet, said Daw Khin Saw Wai.

Amyotha Hluttaw accepted the motion to discuss at the parliament meeting. ■

Daw Khin Saw Wai, Lawmaker of Pyithu Hluttaw.

Mandalay Railway station overbridge to be toll-free from 1 June

BEGINNING 1 June, the Myanma Railways (MR) will not collect toll at the overbridge towards the Mandalay Central Railway Station, said U Myo Win, general manager from Myanma Railways (Upper Myanmar).

The overbridge is constructed between 78 and 79 streets in Mandalay.

The overbridge toll fee was being collected by the MR. To solve the traffic problem, MR will stop collecting the overbridge toll fee.

"Earlier, the MR collected the toll fee depending on the type of vehicle.

However, we stopped it to reduce Mandalay's traffic woes," he added.

The overbridge was constructed in 2000 to access the Mandalay railway station. A fee was collected for crossing the overbridge between 6 am and 9 pm. The charges were Ks50 for a motorbike and Ks100 for motor vehicles. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) ■

Government to develop 15-acre teak plantations in Mandalay

THE Mandalay Region government is working to develop some 15 acres of teak plantation in the region, in anticipation that the region's ancient structures would be renovated in the future by the next generation.

U Myo Thit, Region Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, said the ministry was planning to cultivate a 15-acre teak plantation, according to the approval of the region government. The establishment of the teak plantation is aimed at renovating the ancient teakwood structures that existed in the region by the next generation.

The new scheme is likely to be implemented in Singu and Thabeikkyin Townships. The region Forest Department is looking for a suitable area for the tree-planting project.

The region ministry has submitted its project proposal to the union government.—Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) ■

Heavy rains destroy rural bridge in Paukkaung Township

No casualties or damages were reported following a rural bridge collapse that took place at Ngamuayzin Village, Paukkaung Township in Bago Region on 29 May, interrupting transport for local people.

The collapse of the bridge's piers can largely be attributed to the erosion of embankment caused by heavy rains. The 220 ft long, 15 ft wide and 35 ft high wooden bridge was built in 2008 at a cost of Ks. 16.550 million. The bridge was repaired in the fiscal year 2017-2018 by the Department of Rural Development by spending Ks. 4.48 million.

Arrangements are being made to repair the collapsed bridge, according to a source from the DRD.—Myanmar Digital News ■

Haka fire leaves three people dead, one injured

Three people were killed and one other injured in a fire-breakout at a house in Zaythit Ward, Haka in Chin State yesterday.

The fire was believed to have started from ember at 1:45 am and engulfed a wooden house and four stalls. The firefighters took more than 2 hours to bring the fire under control and put out it at 4 am, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

An investigation into the case is ongoing and the house owner has been charged with negligence of fire by the local police. —Myanmar Digital News ■

Freshwater catfishes are seen at a small-scale fish farm. **PHOTO: MYINT OO (MYEIK)**

Freshwater catfish producers face losses due to lack of demand

FRESHWATER catfish producers in Myeik Township, Tanintharyi Region, are now facing financial hardships due to the low demand for their products in the domestic market, said local fish producers.

The commercial production of freshwater catfish started in the township in mid-2017. Since then, the small-scale fish farms raised their productivity on a commercial scale. They got the species from fish farms in the Yangon Region. Earlier, the prices of catfish reached their peak of Ks6,000 per viss (3.6 lbs) when the demand for the same product was between 20 and 30 viss per day in the market.

The number of freshwater catfish producers is increasing in the township, whereas the demand for the same is decreasing significantly. Currently, the demand in the market is lower than the supply, and the prices of freshwater catfish have decreased rapidly by half in the market. According to retailers, catfish is currently sold for some Ks3,000 per viss.

U Htwe Nge, a fish farmer from Kyweku Village in Myeik Township, said his catfish farming business came to a halt because of the lack of demand. Myeik Township is a coastal area and residents most frequently consume seafood. It is difficult to penetrate the market here for freshwater catfish producers.

Some fish farms in the township stopped their production of catfish due to the huge gap between profits and expenses.—Myint Oo (Myeik)

Individual border trade reaches Ks5.6 billion in current FY

THE border trade value using individual trading cards (ITCs) topped Ks5.6 billion in the current six-month transitional fiscal year, according to the commerce ministry.

The country's individual imports through the border are greater than its exports. From 1 April and 18 May this year, the value of goods exported using ITCs exceeded Ks1.2 billion, while the import value using ITCs reached Ks43.9 billion. The ministry's statistics showed that the Myawady border trade camp reported the largest trade volume and value reaching more than Ks3.7 billion.

The trade value achieved using the ITCs at nine border points of entry were Ks705 million at Mawtaung, Ks684 million at Tamu, Ks175 million at Kanpaiktee, Ks130 million at Kawthoung, Ks11 million at Tachilek, Ks7 million at Kengtung, and Ks6 million at Muse.

Last FY, the border trade value achieved using the ITCs was Ks45.9 billion, an increase by Ks27 billion over the previous year.

The commerce ministry has issued some 1,441 ITCs to individual traders at borders from the 2012-2013 FY to date. The ministry permitted 292 ITCs in the 2012-13 FY, 261 cards in the 2013-14 FY, 317 cards in the 2014-15 FY, 146 cards in the 2015-16 FY, 248 cards in the 2016-17 FY, 168 cards in the 2017-18 and 10 cards in the current FY.

According to the ministry, an ITC holder may trade goods worth up to Ks15 million in five days at the border trade camps and through the import and export offices, with a trade value of Ks3 million per day on average.—Swe Nyein

China's imports of sugar increase one-fold in third week of May

CHINA imported more than 13,600 tonnes of sugar from Myanmar in the week ending 18 May through the Muse (105th mile) trade zone and the Lwejel trade station, according to border authorities.

Myanmar earned more than US$8 million from the sale of sugar to China between 12 and 18 May this year. The total exports of sugar to China included more than 13,600 tonnes from Muse and 77.5 tonnes from Lwejel.

Compared with the previous week, China's imports of sugar via the Muse border gate increased by more than 7,000 tonnes. China imported 6,487 tonnes of sugar in the week preceding 12 May.

According to border merchants, the price of sugar increased to Ks875,550 per tonne during the week starting from 12 May, from Ks799,020 in the second week of this month, at the Muse market.

China, one of Myanmar's largest trade partners, conducts bilateral trade through both land borders and sea.

The trade value between the two countries last financial year reached $5.015 billion, including $725.6 million in exports and $4.3 billion in imports.—Shwe Khine

India's imports of areca nut from Myanmar continue to decline

INDIA imported areca nuts weighing 1,475 tonnes from Myanmar during the period between 12 and 18 May through the bilateral border gates, which saw a decrease by more than 500 tonnes as against the previous week, according to traders.

India's border imports of areca nuts continued to decline in the market.

The export of the product from the two cross-borders decreased significantly this week. Myanmar's export of areca nuts to India decreased by some 525 tonnes compared to the previous week ending 11 May, when the country exported 2,000 tonnes to its neighbour.

The country's export of areca nuts to India included 118 tonnes, valued at $0.15 million, from the Reed border and 1,357 tonnes, valued at $1.823 million, from the Tamu border.

Normally, India imports cigarettes, food, clothing, blankets, betel leaves, agricultural products and miscellaneous items from Myanmar, and exports a wide variety of its products to Myanmar.

Some 150,000 acres of areca nut plantation have been cultivated in the country, predominantly in the Taninthayi and Ayeyawady regions, as well as Mon State.—Khine Khant

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Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi and other officials pose for a documentary photo at the signing ceremony of a cooperation agreement in Israel. **PHOTO:MNA**

Union Minister Dr. Myo Thein Gyi returns from Israel trip

Union Minister for Education Dr. Myo Thein Gyi attended the signing ceremony of a cooperation agreement in the field of education between the Israel and Myanmar governments, signed by Myanmar Ambassador to Israel U Maung Maung Lin and Israel Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Ms. Tzipi Hotovely at the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28 May.

As per the agreement, teachers and students from the two countries will participate in exchange programmes, study tours and cooperate in education.

Later in the evening, the union minister attended the international ministerial-level science and technology gala dinner held at Station Hall, Jerusalem, together with ministers from 25 other countries, where Israel Minister of Science, Technology and Space Mr. Ofir Akunis delivered a message of greeting and Israel Prime Minister Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu gave an opening remark.

The union minister attended the international ministerial-level science and technology congress held under the title "Thinking out of the Box" at Orient Hotel, Jerusalem, from 28 to 30 May.

At the congress, international experiences on science and technology, and innovative systems that can respond to the international problems faced were discussed and views exchanged.

The union minister, together with other international representatives, visited the Knesset (Israel Parliament) on 29 May afternoon and Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 30 May. On the evening of 30 May, the union minister and his delegation returned to Myanmar and were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Israel Ambassador to Myanmar and officials from the Ministry of Education. — Myanmar News Agency ■

CBM governor discusses investment permits in financial sector for Japanese companies

Central Bank of Myanmar Governor U Kyaw Kyaw Maung received a delegation led by Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama at the Central Bank of Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday afternoon.

During the meeting, they discussed matters related to the development of the information and communication technology (ICT) system in the Central Bank of Myanmar, the status of payment and account clearance system, conducted with the support of the government of Japan, permitting investments in the financial sector for Japanese companies, and the ease of payment and clearing accounts in Japanese yen. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Deputy Information Minister U Aung Hla Tun interviewed by VOA Yangon Bureau Chief

U Aung Hla Tun, Deputy Minister of Information, gave an exclusive interview to Daw Khin Soe Win, Yangon Bureau Chief of the Voice of America (VOA), at the Ministry in Nay Pyi Taw at 10 am yesterday.

The Deputy Minister answered VOA's questions concerning current Myanmar media landscape at the interview.—Myanmar News Agency

Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun gives the exclusive interview to Yangon Bureau Chief of VOA, Daw Khin Soe Win in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

2nd Pyithu Hluttaw's 8th regular session holds 10th-day meeting

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The projects were selected based on the project selection and implementation method set in the MoU. Five union ministries submitted 18 projects at an estimated cost of $26.5 million, while the Rakhine State government submitted 10 projects at an estimated cost of $24.5 million. The costs were for five years, and the projects and cost are just proposals and will be approved only after further coordination, said the deputy minister.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will lead the discussion and coordination with the relevant ministries, Ministry of Planning and Finance, the Rakhine State government and the Amyotha and Pyithu Hluttaw representatives on the selection of projects, and the projects will be implemented and managed in the most effective way, explained the deputy minister.

Questions raised by U Win Min of Hlinethaya constituency, U Lar Mar Lay of Hsawlaw constituency and U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency were answered by Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun and Deputy Minister U Soe Aung.

Motion on enacting effective law to prevent rape of minors

Next, Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathedaung constituency tabled a motion urging the union government to enact an effective special law to prevent the rape of minors, as such cases had reached an alarming level. She added that the death penalty be included in the law.

The Hluttaw decided to accept the motion, and the Hluttaw speaker announced the acceptance of the motion by the Hluttaw for discussion. The Hluttaw speaker also called for the Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motion to enrol their names.

Information, discussion and decision on bills

Later, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat informed the Hluttaw about receiving the Myanmar Historical Commission Bill, sent without amendments by the Amyotha Hluttaw, and announced to proceed with it.

The bill committee then submitted an amendment motion on the International Theravada Buddhist MissionaryUniversity Bill, submitted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, and the motion was discussed by U Aung Hlaing Win of Mingaladon constituency and Dr. Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency.

After the decision of the Hluttaw was obtained to approve the bill, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced the approval and requested to proceed with it.

The 11th-day meeting of the second Pyithu Hluttaw's eighth regular session will be held on 4 June.

MoTS, Intelsat sign Satellite Payload IRU Agreement for MyanmarSat2

Officials pose a documentary photo at the Signing Ceremony of Satellite payload IRU agreement for Myanmar Sat 2 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **Photo: MNA**

The Department of Information Technology and Cyber Security and Intelsat Global Sales and Marketing Ltd signed the Satellite Payload IRU Agreement for MyanmarSat-2 at the Ministry of Transport and Communications in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Present at the event were Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint, Union Attorney-General U Tun Tun Oo, Ministry of Transport and Communications deputy ministers, permanent secretaries and other officials.

During the signing ceremony, Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung explained the MyanmarSat-2 and Regional Vice President (Asia Pacific) from Intelsat Global Sales and Marketing Ltd Terence Antony Bleakley explained the advantages of using the services of MyanmarSat-2 Satellite.

Next, the Satellite payload IRU agreement for MyanmarSat-2 was signed by Acting Director-General of the Department of Information Technology and Cyber Security U Sai Saw Lin Tun and Terence Antony Bleakley.—MNA ■

Myanmar, Japan sign MoU for 620 million yen educational grant

Myanmar and Japan exchanged notes on a 620-million Japanese yen grant aid to the Myanmar government, for the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship, at the Ministry of Planning and Finance meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The grand aid worth approximately US$5.6 million was signed and exchanged by Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Set Aung and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama.

Next, U Set Aung and Mr. Ichiro Maruyama delivered speeches of thanks and took a commemorative photograph.

The scholarship provides opportunity for up to 48 young Myanmar Government officials and young leaders from the private sector to obtain a Master's Degree or a Doctoral Degree in Japan.

Present at the event were Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun, permanent secretaries, directors-general and officials from the Japanese Embassy.

The signing of the MoU will improve the Japan-Myanmar bilateral friendship, and Myanmar will obtain support for human resources development from Japan.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Japanese Ambassador Mr. Ichiro Maruyama shakes hand with Deputy Minister U Set Aung in yesterday's MoU signing ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

China donates Ks40 million for displaced persons in Kachin

Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr. Tin Myo Win accepts Ks40 million for displaced persons in Kachin State presented by Mr. Hong Liang. **PHOTO: PHOE HTAUNG**

By Ye Khaung Nyunt

The Chinese government donated Ks40 million for the livelihoods of the displaced persons in Kachin State through the Myanmar Peace Commission yesterday.

At the ceremony held at the National Reconciliation and Peace Centre in Yangon, Chinese Ambassador Mr. Hong Liang said the donation would be helpful for the villagers who fled their homes due to armed conflicts in Kachin State and who are now facing difficulties for their livelihood.

The armed conflicts in northern Myanmar have caused instability and damaged security at border areas, he added.

He also expressed China's support for the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, saying that China is playing a constructive role in peace-making in Myanmar.

China is willing to help make the Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong a success, hoping that Myanmar will achieve peace and economic development.

China donated US$1 million last year for the peace-making process and an additional US$1 million this year.

At the ceremony, Chairman of the Peace Commission Dr. Tin Myo Win accepted Ks40 million presented by Mr. Hong Liang.

The Peace Commission's chairman expressed thanks to the Government of China for the donation. Dr. Tin Myo Win also expressed thanks to the Chinese government for its arrangements for holding peace talks with the Myanmar Government and the ethnic armed groups.

Also present at the ceremony were Deputy Chairman of the Peace Commission U Thein Zaw, Secretary U Khin Zaw Oo and members of the commission, and Chinese diplomats. ■

2 JUNE 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

With united strength, we will march towards our goal of a drug-free country

MYANMAR is facing the challenges of an alarmingly dangerous menace of drug abuse, especially in the areas of high opium poppy cultivation, heroin production, methamphetamine production, trafficking, and drug use.

The country saw a 25 per cent decline in production and a 14 per cent decline in production in 2017.

But data from the seizure of drugs in the country has shown that methamphetamine production and smuggling has increased at home and abroad. Regarding drug use, the number of HIV infections has increased among intravenous heroin users.

Illicit drug trafficking linked with organized crime can cause detrimental effects to a country's economic stability and has posed a threat to peace, stability, security and even sovereignty.

Drug abuse is increasing and ruining the lives of youths. Therefore, more efforts need to be put towards drug abuse control works as a national duty by the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control.

At the meeting with the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, President U Win Myint has signaled that effective punishment would be brought against any individual or group engaged in planting, producing, possessing, transporting, distributing and selling of illegal drugs.

In creating a drug-free society, it is better to use an index that measures the level of drug-related crimes and its dangers rather than the number of drug confiscations to see the effectiveness of current drug prevention techniques.

Meanwhile, the dangers of illegal drugs needs to be informed widely to the people, and treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts needs to be conducted.

Regional drug combatting authorities, civil societies and interested people should be organized to be a part of organizations for fighting drug abuse in townships, districts, states and regions.

Direct and indirect educational training on drugs should be given to students as part of efforts for preventing drug abuse.

Raising awareness through educational videos, songs and news in different languages are effective to prevent students from using drugs. Creating websites and Facebook pages would also be effective and useful in raising public awareness.

In creating a drug-free society, it is better to use an index that measures the level of drug-related crimes and its dangers rather than the number of drug confiscations to see the effectiveness of current drug prevention techniques.

It is important that everyone collaborates to devise new approaches to drug-related incidents given the complicated mixture of law enforcement personnel and the judiciary sector involved in such incidents. At the same time the impact of such drug-related incidents on society and the economy should also be considered.

Myanmar is a signatory to three UN conventions on prevention of drug abuse and the country's rehabilitation centres for drug addicts are treating drug addicts who offer themselves to the centres and those who are sent there by their parents without taking legal action against them.

Works related to drug abuse needs to be conducted according to the UN Convention and must be done in cooperation with UN member countries, international organizations, regional organizations, local and international non-government organizations and the people.

With united strength of the authorities, INGOs, NGOS and the people, we will overcome the challenges ahead and will reach our goal of a country free of drug abuse. ■

PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Safeguarding of both Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritages in Myanmar

By Zaw Anaw Yahtar (Culture)

CULTURE is the social behaviour and the set of custom, traditions and values of a society or our community. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization (UNESCO) has defined the term 'culture' as tangible culture and intangible culture.'

Tangible heritage includes historical buildings, buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts, etc., which are considered worthy of preservation for the future. These include objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture.

Intangible heritage comprises cultural practices and expressions that help demonstrate the diversity of this heritage and raise awareness about its importance.

Myanmar has thrived in cultural heritages and possessed its own architectural designs, historical buildings and heritages through the successive kings and ages. With the aim of protection and preservation of ancient cultural monuments, a total of 47 Ancient Monumental Zones, Ancient Sites Zones and Protected and Preserved Zones have been designated across the country.

Safeguarding Cultural Heritages

The Department of Archaeology and National Museum takes charge of Myanmar Culture heritages including tangible and intangible culture, and efforts have been made to make research and underground excavation, make field research to find out historic ancient sites, record list of the cultural heritage monument and sites, and preserve the Myanmar cultural heritage monuments, the mural painting, stucco carving by means of scientific methods. In order to implement the plans and projects of the reservation of the cultural heritage, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has classified the projects many stages such as World Level, National Level, State and Regional Level respectively.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has promulgated many relevant bylaws, rules and regulations with the aim of raising national prestige and integrity through the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritages which include the criteria for the designation of location as national and world heritage sites. As a result, the Ministry has prescribed 1998 Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regional Law, 2009 Amendment Law of Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regional Law, 2011 Cultural Heritage Conservation Law, 2015 the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Regions Law, and 2016 Preserving Cultural Heritage Law respectively.

According to the 1998 Cultural Heritage Law, ploughing and cultivation within the boundary of the ancient monument are prohibited in the cultural heritage region; constructing, extending a building, renovation the ancient monument and extending the boundary of its enclosure are not allowed within the ancient monumental zones; within the protected and preserved zone, constructing, extending, renovating a hotel, motel, guest house, lodging house or industrial building or extending the boundary of its enclosure; within the cultural heritage region carrying out the renovation and maintenance work of the ancient monument without altering the original ancient form and structure or original ancient workmanship; carrying out archaeological excavations; building road, constructing bridge, irrigation canal and embankment or extending the same.

In order to safeguard the cultural heritages, the authority concerned has worked in cooperation with related ministries, region or state governments for the protection and preservation of land or the part of the land where Ancient Monumental Zone, Ancient Site Zone, and Protected and Preserved Zone are located.

As for the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, concerted efforts have been made to conserve the cultural heritage of the count; Kuthodaw Pagoda in Mandalay in 2013, the three Pyu ancient cities, including Hanlin, Beikthano and Sri Kestra were inscribed by the UNESCO List in 2014, Myazedi Inscription in 2015, and inscription of the bell donated by King Bayintnaung in 2017 respectively.

As part of efforts for conservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, cooperation is of vital importance to strengthen the management capacity for cultural heritage sites across the country.

Moreover plans are under way to submit the Rakhine State's Arnanda Sandrasara inscription, which have been listed as a world heritage in Pacific region, to UNESCO soon to be included in the world's heritage list. ■

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung

The Myazedi Stone Inscription. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Tobacco use is falling, but not fast enough : WHO

TOBACCO use has declined markedly since 2000, according to a new World Health Organization (WHO) report, but the reduction is insufficient to meet globally agreed targets aimed at protecting people from death and suffering from cardiovascular and other non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

For World No Tobacco Day 2018, WHO has joined with the World Heart Federation to highlight the link between tobacco and cardiovascular diseases (CVD) - the world's leading causes of death, responsible for 44% of all NCD deaths, or 17.9 million deaths annually.

Tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure are major causes of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attacks and stroke, contributing to approximately 3 million deaths per year. But evidence reveals a serious lack of knowledge of the multiple health risks associated with tobacco.

"Most people know that using tobacco causes cancer and lung disease, but many people aren't aware that tobacco also causes heart disease and stroke – the world's leading killers," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "This World No Tobacco Day, WHO is drawing attention to the fact that tobacco doesn't just cause cancer, it quite literally breaks hearts."

While many people are aware tobacco use increases the risk of cancer, there are alarming gaps in knowledge of the cardiovascular risks of tobacco use. In many countries, this low awareness is substantial; for example in China, over 60% of the population is unaware smoking can cause heart attacks, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey. In India and Indonesia, more than half of adults do not know smoking can cause stroke.

"Governments have the power in their hands to protect their citizens from suffering needlessly from heart disease," says Dr Douglas Bettcher, WHO Director for the Prevention of NCDs. "Measures that reduce the risks to heart health posed by tobacco include making all indoor public and workplaces completely smoke-free and promoting use of tobacco package warnings that demonstrate the health risks of tobacco."

World off track to meet tobacco reduction target

Tobacco kills over 7 million people each year, despite the steady reduction in tobacco use globally, as shown in WHO's new Global Report on Trends in Prevalence of Tobacco Smoking 2000-2025. The report shows that worldwide, 27% smoked tobacco in 2000, compared to 20% in 2016.

However, the pace of action in reducing tobacco demand and related death and disease is lagging behind global and national commitments to reduce tobacco use by 30% by 2025 among people aged 15 and older. If the trend continues on the current trajectory, the world will only achieve a 22% reduction by 2025.

Other main findings from the new report include:

- Change in smoking: There are 1.1 billion adult smokers in the world today, and at least 367 million smokeless tobacco users. The number of smokers in the world has barely changed this century: it was also 1.1 billion in 2000. This is due to population growth, even as prevalence rates decline.
- By sex: For males aged 15 and over, 43% smoked tobacco in 2000 compared to 34% in 2015. For females, 11% smoked in 2000, compared to 6% in 2015.
- Smokeless tobacco: around 6.5% of the global population aged 15 and over use smokeless tobacco (8.4% of males and 4.6% of females).
- Country response: Over half of all WHO Member States have reduced demand for tobacco, and almost one in eight are likely to meet the 30% reduction target by 2025. But countries must do more to monitor tobacco use in all its forms – not only tobacco smoking. Currently, one in four countries have insufficient data to monitor their tobacco epidemic.
- Youth: Worldwide, about 7%, or just over 24 million children aged 13–15, smoke cigarettes (17 million boys and 7 million girls). About 4% of children aged 13–15 years (13 million) use smokeless tobacco products.
- Developing countries: Over 80% of tobacco smokers live in low- and middle-income countries (LMICS). Prevalence of smoking is decreasing more slowly in LMICs than in high-income countries, and the number of smokers is on the increase in low-income countries.—WHO ■

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects Tatmadaw textile factory

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party inspected the Tatmadaw textile and garment factory in Meiktila yesterday morning.

The senior general remarked on various matters from producing quality products at cheap prices to expanding the market. He also gave instructing on providing for the welfare of the staff and personnel of the factory.

Next, the senior general and party inspected the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) uniforms and other clothes produced by the factory.

In the afternoon, the senior general and party visited the Tatmadaw waterproof sheet factory and shoe factory in Hlinetet and inspected the products made by the factory.—MNA

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing observes Tatmadaw uniforms and clothes produced by Tatmadaw textile and garment factory in Meiktila yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

2018-2019 Academic Year for basic education schools begins

Schools nationwide Myanmar commenced the 2018-2019 academic year yesterday, and school children from basic education primary to high level are provided with free text books and free entrance.

In Yangon Region, a total of 874,400 school children from basic education level schools in 43 townships went to school yesterday.

"Today, our teachers explain us about examination. Teaching also beings today and they formed groups and assigned duties," said Maung Min Khant Ko, 11th grade student from Dagon Basic Education High School-1.

On the beginning day of the new academic year, school children came to schools together along with their parents.

"Teachers await at the school to welcome school children. School children are provided with text books free of charge when they enrolled. Schools do not collect any cash for funds. So, we, parents have no obstacles for sending our children to school," said Daw Aye Mu, a mother of a school children, as she accompanied her children to BEHS-1 Dagon.

Teachers received training in summer for new teaching method for school children.

Schools in Nay Pyi Taw have seen higher enrolment rate this year.—MNA

School children seen with their cheerful faces in a school. **PHOTO: GNLM/ PHOE KHWAR**

Italy National Day observed in Yangon

Italian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Pier Giorgio Federico Aliberti welcomes Union Minister U Kyaw Tin as the latter arrives to attend the National Day celebration of Italy in Yangon. **PHOTO: MNA**

A celebration to mark the National Day of Italy was held at No. 33 Inya Myaing Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, yesterday evening.

The function was attended by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and wife. The celebration opened with the playing of the national anthems of the Republic of Union of Myanmar and Italy.

Next, Italian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Pier Giorgio Federico Aliberti and Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin delivered the welcome speeches. Present at the event were ambassadors and charge d'affaires of the embassies in Yangon, representatives of United Nations organisations and other invited guests.—MNA

Results of inaccessible and remote matriculation exam centres on Myanma Radio

Examination results of the matriculation exams held in March 2018 will be released simultaneously nationwide at 6 a.m. on Saturday 2 June. The lists of candidates who passed the examination taken at the inaccessible and remote examination centres of regions and states will be broadcast on Myanma Radio's national races' channels at 6 a.m. on the same day.—MNA ■

Traffickers kill 12 migrants trying to flee Libya camp

TRIPOLI —More than 12 migrants were shot dead by human traffickers last week while trying to escape a camp in Libya, where some were subjected to "torture abuse", the United Nations said Friday.

The incident, previously reported by Doctors Without Borders and local sources, occurred on 23 May in the town of Bani Walid, 170 kilometres (110 miles) southeast of Tripoli.

"Human traffickers in Libya reportedly killed more than a dozen people and wounded many others after a group of some 200 Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis, being held captive, attempted to escape," the UN refugee agency said in a statement, adding that those killed "were shot".

"The survivors spoke of torture abuse and exploitation at the hands of traffickers - some being held in captivity for up to three years," the statement added.

Bani Walid is a transit point for migrants aiming to reach Europe by boat from the coast further north. People traffickers and kidnappers run around 20 detention centres in the town, telephoning the migrants' families to deliver ransom demands.

Since the 2011 fall and killing of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi, Libya has become a key launchpad for migrants making desperate bids to reach Europe.

"This latest deadly incident demonstrates, once again, the huge challenge of providing protection to refugees in Libya, where many people fleeing war and persecution fall prey to criminal networks," UNHCR further said. — AFP ■

Since the 2011 fall and killing of dictator Moamer Kadhafi, Libya has become a key launchpad for migrants trying to reach Europe. **PHOTO: AFP**

World's highest ER battles to save lives on Everest

EVEREST BASE CAMP (NEPAL) —As word came over the radio that a Sherpa had been struck on the head by a falling rock high on Everest, the three doctors at base camp jumped into action, fully aware that saving him would be a life-or-death race against the unpredictable mountain.

Wary of the fading light that would ground the medevac helicopter overnight, they administered emergency treatment on the helipad where the chopper brought him in — enough, they hoped to give him a fighting chance of surviving the 20 to 30 minute onward flight to a hospital in Lukla, down the valley.

"He was bleeding, so we had to stop that and then get him down," said Suvash Dawadi, one of three doctors who has spent the last two months at the Everest ER.

The doctors staffing the sole emergency room on the roof of the world battle high altitude, freezing conditions and violent weather every climbing season to save the lives of sick and injured mountaineers.

Medics running the tent clinic at 5,364 metres (17,600 feet) must compete with medicines freezing overnight, winds that threaten to blow the clinic's tent away and a cardiac monitor that gives up due to the cold.

Countless foreign climbers who have run into trouble on Everest's unforgiving slopes have been saved from the brink by the rudimentary clinic since it was set up 15 years ago.

But the ER has served a higher purpose: providing affordable medical care for Nepali Sherpas, the guides who are the backbone of the lucrative Everest industry.

"Before Everest ER was set up the Sherpas didn't have any proper coverage," explained Subarna Adhikari, an orthopaedic surgeon.

Risky business

Established by an American doctor and now run by the Nepal-based Himalayan Rescue Association, the ER charges foreign climbers for treatment and in return provides subsidised care to the Sherpas.

The ER has helped chip away at the stark imbalance between the foreigners who pay a small fortune to summit Everest and Sherpas who take on much of the risk to get them there.

A Sherpa can earn up to $10,000— more than 14 times the average annual salary in Nepal— during the brief two-month climbing season that runs from early April to late May.

But that means many ignore medical issues for fear of being forced out of a season's work.

"For them to lose that job, for them not to complete the season, is disastrous," said Dawadi.

A routine morning at the ER was shattered as an injured sherpa was rushed into the clinic -- he had fallen 60 metres into a crevasse in the treacherous Khumbu icefall.

Doctors quickly assessed him for internal bleeding -- a life-threatening injury so far from a fully equipped hospital.

But the Sherpa's sobs of pain gradually gave way to relief as doctors confirmed no bleeding or broken bones.

A few days' rest, and he would be back at work.—AFP ■

The tent clinic at Everest base camp is at an altitude of 5,364 metres (17,600 feet). **PHOTO: AFP**

South Africa seeks to increase investment in energy sector

JOHANNESBURG—The South African government on Friday said there is an increase in the renewable energy investment and they want to see more money put in the energy sector.

This was said by South Africa's Energy Minister Jeff Radebe speaking at a stakeholder engagement in Johannesburg on Friday.

The meeting was attended by government officials, business, civil society and industry associations among others.

The country secured 10.8 billion US dollars between 2014 to 2016, through the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), said Radebe.

"This was significantly more than any other African state in the same period," said the minister.

"More recently we have continued growing the renewable sector through the recent signing of the Independent Power Produce (IPP) agreements, securing 4.67 billion US dollars of investment into 27 new projects," Radebe said. "These 27 projects are making a significant contribution to government's commitments to meaningful black ownership participation and economic transformation."—Xinhua ■

Trump to receive Kim letter as nuclear summit takes shape

NEW YORK—US President Donald Trump was to receive a letter from his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong Un on Friday, a much-anticipated moment as preparations for a historic nuclear summit gain pace.

Kim's right-hand man, Kim Yong Chol, was due in Washington a day after talks in New York with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made what the US diplomat called "real progress" towards holding the planned 12 June summit.

Meanwhile, back in Pyongyang, the North Korean leader re-committed his isolated state to "denuclearization," boosting hopes of what would be an extraordinary diplomatic turnaround just a week after Trump threatened to cancel preparations.

Since that short-lived crisis, diplomats in both countries have conducted an intense flurry of negotiations, culminating on Thursday when Pompeo sat down in New York with Kim's envoy.

Simultaneously, Kim met Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and, according to official news agency KCNA, said the North's "will for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula still remains unchanged and consistent and fixed." It is still far from clear that North Korea's vision of "denuclearization" in exchange for security guarantees and sanctions relief will prove compatible with Washington's demand for a "complete, verifiable and irreversible" end to its nuclear program. Many expert observers expect Kim, perhaps with tacit Chinese backing, to demand that Washington also reduce its own military footprint in South Korea and loosen its guarantees to treaty ally Japan.

Trump to receive Kim letter as nuclear summit takes shape. **PHOTO: AFP**

But Pompeo suggested things are moving in the right direction.

"It will take bold leadership from Chairman Kim Jong Un if we were able to seize this once in a lifetime opportunity to change the course for the world," he said.

"President Trump and I believe Chairman Kim is the kind of leader who can make those kind of decisions, and in the coming weeks and months, we will have the opportunity to test whether or not this is the case."

Strategic shift

Kim Yong Chol — the most senior official from Pyongyang to visit the United States in 18 years — is expected to present an eagerly expectant Trump with a letter from his young leader.

But Pompeo warned this message in itself may not resolve all the issues standing in the way of the summit.

"This is a difficult, difficult challenge. Make no mistake about it. There remains a great deal of work to do," Pompeo said, citing ongoing talks in Singapore and in the demilitarized zone on the Korean border. But he said that, after what have now been two meetings with Kim Jong Un and three with Kim Yong Chol, he believes the North is at least ready to consider addressing US demands for denuclearization.

"I believe they are contemplating a path forward. They can make a strategic shift. One that their country has not been prepared to make before. This will obviously be their decision," he said. US officials now expect the summit to go ahead, but they want Pyongyang to accept that nuclear disarmament be at the heart of the discussion — and warn there can be no end to trade sanctions without it.—AFP ■

Arctic seas are the planet's cleanest, say Russian scientists

MURMANSK—The Arctic's seas are the cleanest seas on the planet, Deputy Director of the Murmansk Marine Biology Institute Dmitry Ishkulov told TASS, commenting on results of scientific studies, which the institute organized in 2017.

"Despite the active development and exploitation of the North, the seas here remain among the planet's cleanest seas," he said. In 2017, the Institute's scientists organized several big expeditions to the Arctic. For the first time over many years, or even decades, those were fundamental studies - not applied tasks. The institute's experts worked in the Barents, Norwegian and Greenland Seas. The 30-day voyage on board the Dalniye Zelentsy research vessel to Spitsbergen finished the season: during that voyage, scientists worked in the archipelago's territory waters. Some of the tests, taken during the expedition, required long laboratory and analytical work. This is what the scientists were doing for a few months. They studied samples of water, sediments, plants, animals, and used results to speak about the ecology there.

Ecology buffer

The researchers checked the samples to see traces of most pollutants - from radiation to plastics. Very detailed information was received about the Barents Sea. "The Barents Sea is still quite clean, though there are many industrial or military facilities on its shores, and despite development of the oil and gas sector," the Institute's representative said. "We saw similar situations in the other seas." The scientists have not found plastic micro particles, though ecologists have been warning about them.

Murmansk biologists say it is a great advantage the Arctic seas are open seas. "Another reason is the mighty buffer processes in the Arctic seas, their ability for keeping the balance, for self-regulation," the scientist said.

The big streams, coming to the Arctic from the Atlantics, do not bring pollutants there, either.

Warmth for the North

Scientists are paying close attention to Gulfstream, as it influences climate in the Arctic's western parts. Some ecologists say the global warming may change the stream's movement, thus causing irreversible consequences for the Arctic region.

However, the Institute's specialists compared results of their tests with data collected over many years and came to the conclusion the stream is stable. "Its changes are only seasonal," the scientist said. Marine biologists also cannot see reasons to speak about irreversible warming on the planet. "Our opinion is this process is cyclic," he continued. "Temperatures have been growing recently, the ice is retreating, but in future will come the opposite process - cycles of the kind are well known in the past."

Scientists are also paying close attention to Gulfstream, as it influences climate in the Arctic's western parts. **PHOTO: TASS**

How animals behave

During the expeditions, the scientists studied how animals in the Arctic behave. For example, it was a surprise that the scientists realized that birds may fly not only from north to south, but also across meridians, - making flights of thousand kilometers.

This discovery was made as the scientists had installed marks on gulls. Formerly, biologists were sure about two separate populations of those birds in the western Arctic and in the Far East, but the scientists saw that the two groups' representatives "travel to see each other." As yet, however, they cannot explain what makes the birds make those long trips.—Tass ■

Japan eyes deploying land-based Aegis missile shield in Akita

AKITA (JAPAN) — The Defense Ministry said Friday it hopes to start deploying the US land-based Aegis Ashore missile defense system in the city of Akita, northern Japan, with a senior official noting the need to boost the country's missile defense capabilities amid the unpredictable situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Parliamentary Vice Defense Minister Tatsuo Fukuda told Akita Gov. Norihisa Satake and Akita Mayor Motomu Hozumi that the ministry wants to start surveying the Ground Self-Defense Force's training area in Akita's Araya district, describing the site as "most suitable" for the planned Aegis Ashore deployment in fiscal 2023.

The government decided in December to install two Aegis Ashore batteries to protect the entire Japanese archipelago against the North Korean missile threat and has selected the site in Akita along with the GSDF's Mutsumi training area in Hagi in Yamaguchi Prefecture, western Japan, as candidate sites.

Both sites are on the Sea of Japan coast facing the Korean Peninsula.

The land-based system will supplement Japan's missile interception capabilities and is considered more efficient than deploying Aegis-equipped destroyers every time.

While tensions on the Korean Peninsula have been receding since North Korea pledged to denuclearize, with US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un expected to hold a summit in Singapore this month, Fukuda indicated the government still believes the introduction of the Aegis Ashore system is necessary.

"We cannot speak with certainty about the situation on the Korean Peninsula," Fukuda said as he sought the approval for the candidate site from the governor and mayor.

Satake said the training zone is close to residential areas, asking the Defense Ministry to "consider conducting a survey on the impact of the deployment and to provide thorough explanations to the residents."

In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said the government plans to carefully answer every question and concern raised by locals.

"It is extremely important that North Korea abandon all of its weapons of mass destructions and the government bears the heavy responsibility of protecting people's lives and peace," the top government spokesman said, adding the government is seeking to commence the Aegis Ashore deployment swiftly. —Kyodo News ■

Japanese Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera (2nd from L) visits a test complex of the land-based Aegis Ashore missile defense system on the Hawaiian island of Kauai on 10 January 2018, ahead of the planned introduction of the US-developed system to Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

India's conventional submarine under upgrade in Russia to be floated out in coming days

MOSCOW — India's diesel-electric submarine Sindhukesari under repairs with upgrade in Russia has been rolled out from the workshop of the Zvyozdochka Shipyard in Severodvinsk.

The sub will be floated out in several days, a source in defense and diplomatic circles told TASS on Thursday.

"The Indian Navy's submarine Sindhukesari has been rolled out of the workshop and the slipway stage of the repairs has been completed. In several days, it will be floated out for outfitting work," the source said.

After the repairs with the upgrade are over, "the service life of the Sindhukesari will be extended by 10 years to 35 years," the source noted.

The Sindhukesari is undergoing medium repairs with the upgrade in Russia for the second time now. Another Indian submarine of this class, the Sindhuraj, is also currently at the Zvyozdochka Shipyard.

After the repairs with the upgrade are over, "the service life of the Sindhukesari will be extended by 10 years to 35 years," the source said. **PHOTO: TASS**

Russia's Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation and the United Ship-Building Corporation declined to comment on this information for TASS.

Indian submarines

A contract for the Sindhukesari's medium repairs with the upgrade was signed in 2015. The term of the repairs is 27 months.

The Rolldock Star vessel delivered the Sindhukesari to Severodvinsk in June 2016.

The Sindhukesari became the sixth Russian-built Project 877EKM submarine undergoing upgrade at the Zvyozdochka Shipyard for the Indian Navy.

Before that, the Severodvinsk-based facility specializing in the repair and decommissioning of nuclear submarines has modernized five diesel-electric subs at its slipway on order from the Indian Navy since 1997: the Sindhuvir, the Sindhuratna, the Sindhugosh, the Sindhuvijay and the Sindhurakshak. The Zvyozdochka Shipyard also provided repairs and upgrade of the submarine Sindhukirti at its base (Visakhapatnam).

The Sindhukesari was built at the Leningrad Admiralty Association (currently, the Admiralty Shipyard).

The sub went into service with the Indian Navy in 1989. It underwent medium repairs and modernization at the Admiralty Shipyard.

The Sindhuraj was laid down at the Krasnoye Sormovo Shipyard in Nizhny Novgorod in 1985 on order from the Indian government. In 1987, the submarine entered service with the Indian Navy. The Admiralty Shipyard also performed the first medium repairs of this submarine.

In 2017, the Sindhuraj was delivered to the Zvyozdochka Shipyard for the second medium repairs. —Tass ■

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V DENSA EAGLE VOY. NO. (V-18056)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V DENSA EAGLE VOY. NO. (V-18056) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 3-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT 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 GLOBAL MARS SHIPPING & LOGISTICS SERVICES CO LTD
Phone No: 2301928

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. (146W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SINAR BATAM VOY. NO. (146W/E) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-6-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT/AIPT 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 INTERASIA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

Our pills don't cause racism, drugmaker Sanofi tells Roseanne

WASHINGTON — Pulled off air over a racist tweet, US sitcom star Roseanne Barr has blamed her outburst on a sleeping pill -- prompting a swift retort Wednesday from pharma giant Sanofi which stated, deadpan, that its drugs do not cause racism.

In a since-deleted overnight tweet, Barr blamed a dose of Ambien for the incendiary tweet in which she likened Valerie Jarrett, an African American former White House aide, to an ape.

"It was 2 in the morning and I was ambien tweeting" wrote the 65-year-old actress, whose hit comedy "Roseanne" was axed by ABC over the post that read: "Muslim brotherhood & planet of the apes had a baby = vj."

The French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi was quick to push back -- trolling Barr in an acerbic post that quickly went viral.

"People of all races, religions and nationalities work at Sanofi every day to improve the lives of people around the world," the drugmaker tweeted.

"While all pharmaceutical treatments have side effects, racism is not a known side effect of any Sanofi medication."

Barr, a vocal supporter of President Donald Trump who has previously used Twitter to voice hard-right and conspiracy theorist views, has been dropped by her talent agency ICM amid a wave of public outrage over the tweet.

Roseanne Barr has had her show taken off air and been dropped by her talent agency amid outrage over a racist tweet. **PHOTO: AFP**

She called her own actions indefensible, saying: "I made a mistake I wish I hadn't but... don't defend it please."

Barr later deleted this tweet, but in another pointed again to her use of Ambien as a reason for her misconduct. Barr also re-tweeted several people defending her. —AFP ■

Jeff Goldblum to receive star on Hollywood Walk of Fame

LOS ANGELES — Jeff Goldblum will be honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The 65-year-old actor, known for his work in the "Jurassic Park" franchise, "Independence Day" and "The Grand Budapest Hotel", will be honoured with the 2,638th star by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce on 14 June, according to official Walk of Fame website.

The star will be dedicated in the category of Motion Pictures at 6656 Hollywood Boulevard in front of the Hologram USA Theatre.

"Jeff Goldblum is a unique actor who has gifted us such memorable movies with his unforgettable roles. His movies transcend generations and bring together both younger and older fans glued to adventure on the big and small screen.

"The 'teleportation' of his star will instantaneously shine bright among our stars on the Walk of Fame!" stated Ana Martinez, Producer of the Walk of Fame ceremonies.

The actor is also set to release his debut jazz album this year.—PTI ■

Harvey Weinstein indicted on charges of rape, criminal sex act in US

NEW YORK — Movie producer Harvey Weinstein has been indicted on charges of rape and criminal sex act by a New York City grand jury.

It is the first criminal case to arise from a range of sexual misconduct allegations against the 66-year-old film producer.

Wednesday's indictment brings Weinstein "another step closer to accountability" for alleged attacks on two women in New York, said Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr. said in a statement. "The defendant's recent assault on the integrity of the survivors and the legal process is predictable."

Weinstein's lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, said he would defend against the indictment and called the allegations "unsupported." Brafman added that Weinstein strongly denies the charges.

Weinstein was arraigned last week on the same charges, about seven months after women began to allege sexual misconduct by the Hollywood producer. Dozens of women have accused him of sexual misconduct ranging from harassment to assault in various locales.

Weinstein remains free after posting a 1-million-US-dollar cash bail and is due back in court on 30 July.A temporary order of protection has been granted by the court on behalf of an alleged victim in the case.

Investigations for alleged sex crimes involving Weinstein is underway in Los Angeles and London. —Xinhua ■

Matt LeBlanc to quit 'Top Gear' after next series

LONDON — "Friends" star Matt LeBlanc is leaving hit automobile show "Top Gear", BBC Studios have announced.

The 50-year-old actor, who joined the show as a co-host in 2016, will leave after the next series which is scheduled to air later this year.

LeBlanc thanked the crew for "a great drive" and said his desire to spend more time with his family and friends was the reason behind his departure from the show.

"My experience on 'Top Gear' has been great fun. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the whole team.

However, the time commitment and extensive travel required to present 'Top Gear' takes me away from my family and friends more than I'm comfortable with. It's unfortunate, but for these reasons I will not be continuing my involvement with the show," the actor said in a statement released by BBC. —PTI ■

Jason Momoa departs from 'The Crow' reboot

LOS ANGELES — Jason Momoa has exited the reboot of "The Crow" but the actor hinted that he might return to the film at a later date.

The 38-year-old actor, who is best known for playing Khal Drogo on the "Game of Thrones" and superhero Aquaman in "Justice League", took to Instagram to share the news of his departure from the project and said the film has fallen apart.

"I've waited eight years to play this dream role. I love you @corinhardy and @sonypictures unfortunately I may have to wait eight more. Not our team. But I swear I will. James O'Barr sorry to let you down. I won't on the next," Momoa wrote.

"This film needs to be set free. And to the fans. Sorry. I can't play anything but what this film deserves and it needs love. I'm ready when it's right," he added.

"The Crow" reboot has been plagued with numerous setbacks over the years and nearly a dozen Hollywood stars have been attached and then left this new version of film including Jack Huston, Norman Reedus, Luke Evans and Tom Hiddleston.

Development on the reboot dates back to 2008 when Mark Wahlberg was being eyed toto play rockstar-turned-undead-avenger Eric Draven.

Things were finally coming together after Momoa and director Corin Hardy boarded the film and it was expected to start filming later this month with a release date of 11 October 2019.

According to Deadline, the financial issues between producer Samuel Hadida and Sony were the cause of the project's collapse. —PTI ■

Confucius institutes help enhance friendship between China, Europe

Students prepare for dragon dance at the Confucius Institute in Barcelona, Spain, on 15 February 2018. In recent years, a surge in the learning of the Chinese language has been observed around the world. Confucius institutes and classrooms worldwide play an undeniable role in the process of bringing the Chinese language and culture closer to the international community. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

WARSAW — In recent years, a surge in the learning of the Chinese language has been observed around the world. Confucius institutes and classrooms worldwide play an undeniable role in the process of bringing the Chinese language and culture closer to the international community.

There are 525 Confucius institutes in the world, out of which 173 have been set up in 41 European countries. This shows the enthusiasm of the European people for learning Chinese and their deep interest in the Chinese culture. These Confucius institutes and classrooms use the Chinese language as a medium and culture as a bridge to help enhance friendship between people in China and Europe.

MORE THAN LANGUAGE

During this year's Chinese New Year holidays, Marcin Pilarski, a citizen of Torun in northern Poland, took his family to the local Confucius classroom, where they admired dragon dances, paper cutting and traditional Chinese calligraphy. Marcin's family also attended a Chinese language class.

"This year's Spring Festival activities have given us a close experience of Chinese culture. My children and I were very fond of it," Pilarski told reporters with excitement. To encourage his children to learn Chinese, they also signed up to become students at the local Confucius classroom.

In recent years, thanks to Confucius institutes, traditional Chinese martial arts have also entered the lives of European people.

With the help of the Confucius Institute at the Vilnius University, a Tai Chi practice rush has been recently observed in Lithuania. In 2016, 233 Vilnius citizens took part in a spectacular scene, jointly practicing Tai Chi in one place.

A WELCOME CLASS

Mateusz Adamkiewicz, an 18-year-old Polish student, has a keen interest in Chinese language and culture. Since there was as yet no Chinese language school in his hometown Torun, he began to learn Chinese by himself four years ago, using borrowed textbooks. When he learned that the first Confucius classroom had opened, he felt very lucky.

Laura Zatina, a student of the Confucius Institute at the University of Latvia, just like Adamkiewicz, is very happy to be able to learn Chinese: "Not only can you learn Chinese at the Confucius institute, but you can also apply for scholarships, summer camps and exchanges opportunities. This gives us a chance to visit China, experience culture and understand this country better," she said to Xinhua. Moreover, the level of teaching demonstrated by the Confucius institute teachers has also been commended by European students.

In a teachers' assessment activity, held recently at the University of Helsinki in Finland, Confucius institute teachers received 98 per cent positive evaluation. Some students even wrote: "Chinese class is the best foreign language class I have ever had in college."

BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

The president of Portugal, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, had praised the role of the Confucius institute at a 2017 education exhibition in the country. He praised cultural activities conducted by the institute and expressed hope that it would continue to play an active role in exchanges between the two countries.—Xinhua ■

Japan drops bid for World Heritage listing of southwest islands

TOKYO — The government decided Friday to drop its plan to recommend a chain of southwestern Japan islands for a World Heritage site listing this summer.

The move, approved at a Cabinet meeting, comes after a UNESCO preliminary review panel forewent the recommendation of the islands in Kagoshima and Okinawa prefectures for this year's world natural heritage site listing in May, calling for further review.

The government will seek their registration in the list of UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as early as 2020. It had originally recommended the islands in February last year.

The site consisting of some 38,000 hectares of land in Amami-Oshima and Tokunoshima islands in Kagoshima, the northern part of the main island of Okinawa and Iriomote Island, also in Okinawa, boasts subtropical forests that home to rare species such as the Amami rabbit and Okinawa rail.

After conducting an on-site survey, the UNESCO preliminary review panel said the proposal should cover a northern Okinawa forest in a former US military training site returned to Japan in December 2016.

The panel also questioned the validity of having so many different locations in the proposal.

The government has informed concerned local governments that it may temporarily shelve its recommendation in order to draw up a better proposal by adding the former training site adjacent to Yambaru National Park.

The local authorities have generally agreed on the withdrawal, government officials said.

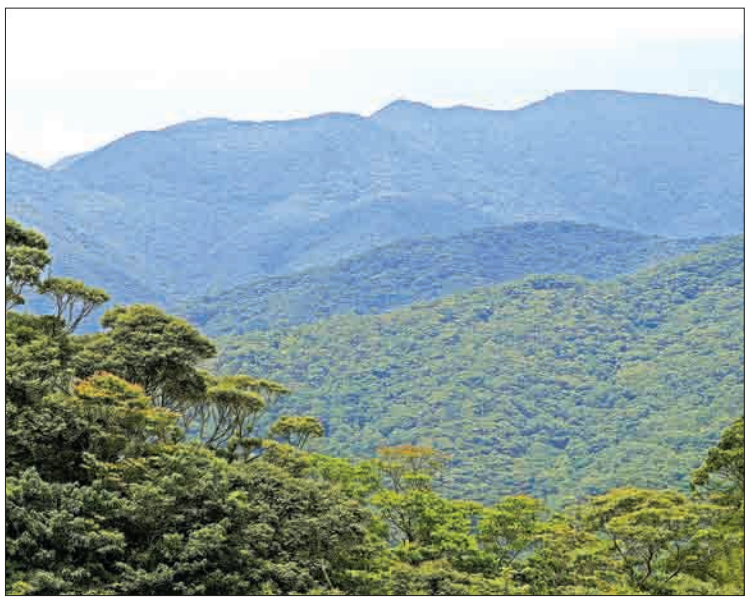

Photo taken 28 April 2018, shows the forest-covered Mt. Yuwan on Amami-Oshima Island, southern Japan. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

Toyoko Ichida, the deputy chief of a nonprofit organization offering eco-tours in the northern Okinawa area, called the withdrawal "disappointing," but added she has seen improving conservation activities.

"I want to train people in the next generation who can protect the forest after an envisioned registration." she said.

After addressing the issues including scattered site locations, non-native species and ways to accept tourists, the government plans to submit a proposal again by 1 February, 2019.

Environment Minister Masaharu Nakagawa told a press conference on Friday, "The best way to secure the site's registration is to submit a new proposal at an early stage. We want to begin anew immediately."

Meanwhile, a dozen sites linked to the history of Japan's persecuted Christians in the southwestern Japan prefectures of Kumamoto and Nagasaki have passed the panel's review and are expected to be added to the cultural sites on the World Heritage list at a meeting of the World Heritage Committee from 24 June to 4 July in Bahrain.

The government dropped bids to register the ancient city of Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo and churches and other Christian sites in Nagasaki and Kumamoto prefectures as cultural heritage sites in 2013 and 2016, respectively. —Kyodo News ■

Myanmar youngsters gear up for the Football for Friendship Programme in Russia

MIN Khant Thu and Thant Tay Zar, the selected 12 year old ambassadors from Myanmar will be on their way to Russia on June 8th to participate in the 6th Gazprom Football for Friendship International Programme. They will be joined by kids from over 210 countries around the world, in Moscow.

Min Khant Thu selected in the role of a defender will be a part of the 32 International Teams of Friendship that play against each other in the Gazprom Football for Friendship International Championship. The young footballer will be a part of the "Gharial" team and will undergo a 3 day training camp in Moscow.

The training camp is scheduled for the young ambassadors to get used to the playing conditions and get ample practice with their team, before the start of the championship. Each International Team of Friendship will be trained by 14-16 year old young coaches from different countries. The young footballers will also participate in workshops and sessions, conducted by renowned celebrities.

Myanmar youngster Min Khant Thu. **PHOTO:SUPPLIED**

Min Khant Thu, who hails from Monywa, started playing football at the age of 6. He was scouted by the Myanmar Football Academy who were impressed by his control over the ball. He currently studies and plays for the academy, and dreams to play for a professional football club in the future, like his idol, Lionel Messi. A Barcelona FC fan, this talented, young footballer believes it is important to promote friendship, equality and peace because he believes that we need each of these three things to brighten our world. Apart from football, this young ambassador also likes to read and sing.

At the F4F Programme in Russia, Min Khant Tu will be accompanied by Thant Tay Zar, who will act as a young journalist and cover all the local and global activities of the program as part of the International Children's Press Center.

The Press Centre acts as hub for the young journalists who gather information, make reports, write news articles and prepare materials on the initiatives implemented as part of the Programme.

Thant Tay Zar is a football enthusiast who hails from Yangon. He started playing at the age of 6 and made it to his school football team at a young age. He has participated in inter school football tournaments, playing as a striker for his school team. He was selected as a striker for his team because of his speed and his strong control over the ball. An avid supporter of FC Barcelona, his favourite player is Neymar Jr. In his free time, he likes to read and play video games.

Min Khant Thu and Thant Tay Zar will also participate in the Sixth Football for Friendship International Children's Forum in Russia, which will provide the youngsters an opportunity to meet their peers from other countries, share their experiences, and discuss with famous footballers and journalists on how to promote key values of the F4F Programme around the world.

The International Children's F4F Forum will be participated by famous sportsmen, journalists, and public figures who support the project and provide their thoughts and inspiration to the young athletes.

The young ambassadors will also participate in the Nine Values School programme, where they will be taught about the 9 key values of the F4F programme (friendship, equality, fairness, health, peace, devotion, victory, traditions and honour) under the guidance of young coaches and the supervision of famous players.—GNLM ■

Week 14 MNL football matches start today

THE football matches of week 14 of the MPT Myanmar National League (MNL) will start today with a much-anticipated match between Magwe FC and Yadanabon FC.

Other notable matches are Rakhine United vs Yangon United, Ayeyawady United vs GFA and Sagaing United vs defending champion Shan United.

Rakhine United will play Yangon United at Waitharli Stadium and Hanthawady United will play Myawady FC at Grand Royal Stadium.

These matches, both of which will start at 3:30pm, will be broadcast live on the MNL Facebook Page, according to the MNL.

Another popular match today will feature Magwe FC against Yadanabon FC at Thuwunna Stadium at 4pm.

On 3 June, Ayeyawady United will play GFA at Pathein Stadium, while Southern Myanmar FC will play against Zwekapin United at Mawlamyaing Stadium. Both matches will commence at 3:30pm.

At the same time, defending champion Shan United will play Sagaing United at Monywa Stadium.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

Course for MFF's football coaches concludes in Yangon

A two-day long course for professional football coaches organised by the Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) was concluded yesterday afternoon with a ceremony at the press conference hall of the MFF in Yangon.

The course aims to conduct or refresh coaches' knowledge and theories of football by coaches from Myanmar National League, said an official from the MFF. The ceremony was attended by MFF officials including CEO U Bhone Naing Zaw, technical director and AFC instructor U Tin Myint Aung, and the trainees.

U Bhone Naing Zaw and U Tin Myint Aung openeded the ceremony with speeches, followed by the presentation of certificates to the trainees by MFF officials.

The course was conducted from 31 May to 1 June for 22 trainees who will be undertaking duties at Myanmar National League football clubs, said an MFF official.—Lynn Thit(Tgi) ■

AC Milan face Europa League ban

MILAN — European football's top financial investigators have recommended excluding Chinese-owned AC Milan from the Europa League next season for violating rules that limit spending, the New York Times reported on Friday.

According to the US daily newspaper, "two people involved in the process" have confirmed that UEFA investigators have recommended Milan be excluded from European competition for violating Financial Fair Play rules.

UEFA announced last week that the seven-time European champions had failed to convince officials they are financially sound and referred the case to the adjudicatory chamber of its financial control unit to recommend an appropriate punishment.—AFP ■