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Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin attends the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Ministerial Meetings

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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Community-based tourism underway in Danu Self-Administered Zone

"Hopefully, tourist arrivals will be higher in the coming open season, as visa relaxation for South Korea, Japan and China has already been made," said Vice President U Henry Van Thio during his tour of Danu Self-Administered Zone on 4 August.

The Vice President also stressed necessary preparations for providing better tourism services before looking into the requirements for the development of community-based tourism industry in the Danu Self-Administered Zone at a village in Pindaya Township.

In his capacity as the Chair of the Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry (CCDNTI), the Vice President inspected the Shwe Oo Min Cave, preparations for community-based tourism, a green tea factory, a coffee farm and a coffee mill in Pindaya and Ywangan townships of the zone in Shan State in the east of the country, At an elephant camp in Kalaw township, southern Shan State, he heard a report on the salient points of the camp, the future prospects of the tourism industry, the upgrading of the camp's entrance road, the electrification of the camp and plans for hosting greater number of vacationers in the coming open season, presented by an official of Myanma Timber Enterprise (MTE).

Vice President U Henry Van Thio observes the Shwe Oo Min Cave in Pindaya yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

In response, he stressed the need to exert efforts for greater success of the camp that has become popular within a short period after its inauguration and for turning the facility into an all-season destination.

Located at milepost 54/3 of Meiktila-Taunggyi road, the 900-acre camp has been promoted into a green business with the aim of earning more income for the State, generating job opportunities for elephant workers and their families, turning the camp into a public vacation and education centre, encouraging public involvement in the environment conservation activities, promoting nature tourism of the country and protecting the elephants.

MTE, a State-owned business entity, opened the camp on 13 February this year under the name of 'Shan Yoma Recreation Elephant Camp'.

At the Shwe Oo Min Cave in Pindaya, Vice President U Henry Van Thio donated cash for the Buddha images and other religious artifacts Buddhist people of past successive eras had made and placed in the naturally-formed chamber.

Later, the Vice President observed the bungalows under construction and the display of traditional foods and souvenirs at Hsikyain village in Pindaya Township, which will become a community-based tourism destination. He also visited a tea factory there.

In the past, the factory was run by firewood, but now it has become a gas-and-electricity-powered smokeless industry, producing quality tea and helping conserve the natural environment.

After visiting Pinsein village in Pindaya Township and giving instructions on community-based tourism development in Danu Self-Administered Zone, he arrived at a coffee plantation in Myaing village, Ywangan Township. At his meeting with coffee-growers and officials, the Vice President promised technology assistance and quality strains for them, saying that they should extend coffee cultivation for export and domestic consumption. The township has put over 7000 acres under coffee.

He then arrived at YeU village in the township and inspected production process at a coffee factory, a coffee warehouse and a coffee seed drying ground. He also viewed the natural scenery and coffee plantations around the village where bungalows will be erected for eco-tourism.

A total of 1200 coffee plants on an acre of plantation can yield up to 0.25 ton of coffee beans that can fetch from US$6500 to $8000.

The Vice President was accompanied by deputy ministers Maj-Gen Aung Thu, U Hla Kyaw and U Kyaw Myo and officials during the tour.— Myanmar News Agency

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Union Minister: All religious bodies, individuals working in unity, mutual respect

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko meets Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group (Myanmar). **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko met with the Interfaith Friendship and Unity Group (Myanmar) at the National Museum in Dagon Township, Yangon yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister said, as an initiation of religious affairs, friendship and cooperation, a group for interfaith friendship and unity was formed in 2008 under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, with the aim of solving religious problems and accusations as a non-governmental organization and serving as an unofficial body for religious activities under the supervision of the ministry.

"Since the group received a certificate of honour from the President on 30 April 2013, it has been taking part as a sector in the national development undertakings," the Union Minister recounted, explaining its formation under the permission of Yangon Region government and registration under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

He said, "The group has been formed for some years now. As the ardent members of the group had retired due to health grounds, the group needs reinforcement and reorganization. The ministry reformed the group with 72 persons, including the leading patrons, the patrons, the chair, the vice-chairs, on 10 July this year to accelerate its functions in all parts of the country. According to the wish of the people of the respective faiths, the chairmanship duty will be assigned to a Buddhist representative. Region and state governments and relevant departments have already been informed about the reformation of the group to render assistance to it.

As the group is an independent NGO, it must not be under the control of any government body, including the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, the Union Minister assured, adding that the ministry would help the group to independently perform religious duties and serve the national interest as prescribed in the State's laws. In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, there are four major religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, he noted, saying that although there was diversity, all religious bodies and individuals were working in unity and mutual respect. The Union Minister then made a wish for the success of the group in collectively striving for fostering love and unity among the faiths and propagating the spirit of peace,

Next, All Myanmar Islamic Religious Organization presented Ks5 million for the flood victims, All Myanmar Hindu Federation and Hindu families flood relief group presented Ks5.1 million and All Christian Religious Organization presented Ks2 million. The Union Minister accepted the donations.

Also present at the meeting were Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture U Tun Ohn and heads of department, leading patrons, patrons, chair, vice chairs, secretaries and members of the work executive committee and departmental officials. — Myanmar news Agency ■

Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe leaving Yangon International Airport for the 7th Bali Process Ministerial Conference in Indonesia. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe leaves for Indonesia

A DELEGATION led by Union Minister for Home Affairs Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe left Yangon International Airport yesterday morning to attend the 7th Bali Process Ministerial Conference that will be held in Bali, Indonesia.

The Union Minister and delegation were seen off by Secretary of Yangon Region government and officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The 7th Bali Process Ministerial Conference will be jointly held with the Senior Official Meeting, Bali Process Ministerial Meeting and a ministerial-level forum between governments and economists in Bali, Indonesia from 6 to 7 August. It will be attended by Ministers and senior officials from UNHCR, UNDP and ION. Accompanying the Union Minister are the Chief of Myanmar Police Force Police Lt-Gen Aung Win Oo, Director General U Htay Hlaing from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Resettlement and other senior officials. — MNA ■

Coord meeting held for All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay)

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun addresses the meeting at the University of Mandalay. **PHOTO: MNA**

CHAIRMAN of the Working Committee for holding All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay), Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun, inspected the University of Mandalay compound, yesterday morning, where preparations are being made to hold the All-Round Youth Development Festival.

In the afternoon, officials from the Working Committee for holding All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay) and other work committees held a meeting at the university, attended by the Deputy Minister, the Chairman of the Festival Preparation Work Committee, Mandalay Region Minister for City Development, Mandalay City Mayor Dr. Ye Lwin and other officials

They discussed in detail plans for holding a successful All-Round Youth Development Festival at the University of Mandalay from 11 to 13 August.

The All-Round Youth Development Festival (Mandalay) is being held with the aim of promoting the development of the five strengths of youths – physical, knowledge, character, friendship and wealth – to support their vision and ideas in building up the future of Myanmar's society. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin attends the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Ministerial Meetings

ASEAN Foreign Ministers welcome the establishment of Independent Commission of Enquiry by the Government of Myanmar

THE Myanmar Delegation led by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation, arrived back yesterday after attending the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and its Related Ministerial Meetings held in Singapore from 1 to 4 August 2018.

While in Singapore, the Union Minister attended Interface Meeting with Representatives of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR), Meeting of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Commission and Working Dinner of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 1 August 2018.

On 2 August, the Union Minister paid a courtesy call on Mr. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore, together with other ASEAN Foreign Ministers. Then, the Union Minister attended the Opening Ceremony of the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Signing Ceremonies of the Instruments of Accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) by Argentina and Iran, Plenary and Retreat Sessions of the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) with Japan, Russia, China and New Zealand.

On 3 August, the Union Minister attended ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) with India, Canada, Republic of Korea, European Union, Australia and the United States. At the ASEAN-Australia Ministerial Meeting, the Union Minister co-chaired the Meeting with Ms. Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, and handed over the Country Coordinatorship to Malaysia at the end of the Meeting. Also at the ASEAN-Canada Ministerial Meeting, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines handed over the Country Coordinatorship to the Union Minister. Myanmar will serve as the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Relations from August 2018 to August 2021. In the evening, the Union Minister attended the Gala Dinner hosted by the Foreign Minister of Singapore.

Union Minister U Kyaw Tin and other Ministers seen at the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting. **PHOTO: MNA**

On 4 August, the Union Minister attended the 19th ASEAN Plus Three Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the 8th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and Retreat and Plenary Sessions of the 25th ASEAN Regional Forum.

The Union Minister also attended the 9th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Ministerial Meeting, the 8th Mekong-Republic of Korea Ministerial Meeting, the 11th Lower Mekong Initiatives (LMI) Ministerial Meeting and the 11th Mekong-Japan Ministerial Meeting. At the 8th Mekong-Republic of Korea Ministerial Meeting, the Union Minister co-chaired the Meeting with Ms. Kang Kyung-wha, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

While in Singapore, the Union Minister had bilateral meetings with Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Thailand, Timor Leste, Australia, the United States of America, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well as Deputy Foreign Minister of Switzerland. During the bilateral meetings, the Union Minister discussed issues of mutual interests and promotion of bilateral relations.

At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat Session, the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum, Union Minister U Kyaw Tin updated the Meetings in an informal setting on the recent developments in Rakhine State.

In his briefing, the Union Minister highlighted, among others, the complexity of the issue of Rakhine State, ARSA terrorist group's unprovoked attacks that had ignited the humanitarian crisis, progresses achieved in implementing the recommendations of the Advisory Commission and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between Myanmar, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Myanmar's efforts and arrangements to commence repatriation of the displaced persons including through implementation of the bilateral agreements as well as establishment of the Independent Commission of Enquiry by the Government of Myanmar, as part of its national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine.

At the end of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting, the Joint Communiqué of the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting was issued in which the Foreign Ministers expressed their continued support for Myanmar's humanitarian relief programme in Rakhine State and welcomed the ongoing efforts of Technical Working Group (TWG) for the adoption of the Work Plan to implement the MOU. In the Joint Communiqué, the Foreign Ministers also noted the progress made by the Government of Myanmar in implementing the recommendations of the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State and welcomed the establishment of an Independent Commission of Enquiry. They also expressed their continued support for Myanmar's efforts to bring peace, stability, the rule of law, to promote harmony and reconciliation among the various communities, as well as to ensure sustainable and equitable development in Rakhine State.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Delegation led by Foreign Minister of Japan arrives in Myanmar

A delegation led by Foreign Minister of Japan Mr. Taro Kono arrived at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport through Bangkok, Thailand by air yesterday. The foreign minister and his delegation were welcomed by Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Myint Thu and Ambassador of Japan to Myanmar Mr. Ichiro Maruyama and officials.—MNA ■

Japanese Foreign Minister and delegation arrive at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Myeik tourism association meets with businessmen from Thai sister city to promote bilateral tourism

BUSINESSMEN from tourism associations of sister cities Myeik and Parchuap Khiri Khan and relevant officials discussed promotion of bilateral tourism at the Grand Jade Hotel in Myeik, Taninthayi Region yesterday.

"This event aims to bolster tourism in the border cities of Thailand and Myanmar. We can visit Parchuap Khiri Khan only with temporary border pass. Only Thai citizens, and not third-country foreigners, can visit Myanmar through Parchuap Khiri Khan province. They usually visit through cultural tours, or are here on pilgrimage or recreation", said Dr. Thein Swe Myint, chair of Myeik Tourism Entrepreneurs Association.

About 60 businessmen from Prachuap Khiri Khan and 40 entrepreneurs and officials from Myeik district were present at the meeting. Tourism operators from Prachuap Khiri Khan introduced a tour trip from Prachuap to Hua Hin. Out of 30 tour companies operating in Myeik District, 22 are listed as members of Myeik Tourism Entrepreneurs Association. There are around 200 islands in Myeik District, and the association guides visitors to the following islands -- Smart, Dome, Harris Island or Lay Kyun, according to an official from the association.

U Myint Zaw, assistant director of Myeik District General Administration Department, and officials and businessmen from Myeik discussed tourism matters with the Prachuap Khiri Khan association. Later, they exchanged gifts and took commemorative photos. — Khaing Htoo (Myeik IPRD) ■

Myanmar and Thai businessmen pose for a photo after discussing promotion of bilateral tourism at Grand Jade Hotel in Myeik, Taninthayi Region yesterday. **PHOTO KHAING HTOO (MYEIK IPRD)**

Tachilek border hosted over 282,000 globetrotters since April

THE arrival of international tourists entering Myanmar through Tachilek, a Myanmar and Thai border town, has exceeded 282,000 during the past four months, according to a report of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

Between 1 April and 2 August this year, the town hosted a total of 282,907 foreign travellers, including 277,244 day-trippers, 3,242 visitors who joined Mongphyat-Kengtung trip and 2,421 entering the town by air.

Of the total foreign visitors, Thai tourists made up the majority.

U Tayza Min, assistant director from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism (Tachilek branch office), said the Thai tourists and others visited well-known destinations, including Talaw market, Bayintnaung statue, Myoma market in Wunkaung Ward, Koemyosin spirit house, the replica of Shwedagon Pagoda, Padaung Village, Pintork waterfall, Chinese temples and some other Buddhist monasteries.

Between 20 July and 2 August this year, 29,253 international visitors toured Myanmar through the Tachilek border point of entry.

As part of eco-tourism development plan, the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism is accelerating its attempts to implement more community-based tourism projects and border tourism. — Wai Yan Linn (IPRD) ■

Water purification tablets donated to flood victims in Thaton Township

A TOTAL of 28,800 anti-bacterial water purifying bags were donated to flood victims in Thaton Township, Mon State, by the 1994-1995 batch of graduate students from the Yangon University of Economics, at the Township Flood Rescue Administration office yesterday.

The donated bags of water purification tablets were accepted by Chairman of the Township Flood Rescue Administration office U Thein Win, after which he expressed his words of thanks to the donors.

Due to continuous heavy rains, a total of about a thousand lakes and wells, 2,000 toilets in the Thaton Township area were affected by flash floods. As a result, local people are in dire need of purified drinking water. Hluttaw representatives, officials and township elders are providing purified drinking water, but there is still much to be fulfilled. —Thet Oo (Thaton) ■

An official receives water purication tablets boxes for flood victims in Thaton. **PHOTO: THET OO (THATON)**

Sesame seeds purchased only after acid-level testing

MERCHANTS are buying sesame seeds only after testing the acid level, as foreign countries do not import acid-contaminated sesame, said U Min Aung, owner of Shwe Hsinmin brokerage in Mandalay.

Traders are currently facing difficulties in exporting sesame, as home-grown sesame has a high acid content.

U Min Aung said, "Sesame seeds with a high content of acid are used by millers in the country. The prices of sesame are different based on the amount of acid. For instance, price for acid-free brown sesame is between Ks126,000 and Ks127,000, while acid-contaminated sesames are difficult to sell. Merchants themselves make it a must to test acid level of the seeds."

He added that for the time being, China continues to buy Myanmar's sesames without testing acid level. However, Japan, South Korea and other importers do not purchase acid-contaminated home-grown sesame, urging growers to carefully cultivate and nurture the sesame crops.

The method of drying sesame crops is an important process to protect the seeds from contamination of acid through their seed husks. Sesame seeds can be contaminated with acid from seed husks when farmers dry piles of raw sesame plants after harvest.

At present, the imported toolset to measure acid level in sesame seeds is worth around Ks100,000 per packet, and each tool is valued at Ks800 in the market. The device is able to show the composition of acid in the crop in five colours. — Min Htet Aung (Mandalay Sub-printing House) ■

Merchants testing the quality of sesame put up for sale. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MANDALAY SUB-PRINTING HOUSE)**

July's trading on YSX recorded highest this year

THE value of traded stocks on the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX) last month hit a high of Ks1.23 billion, according to monthly trading data released online by YSX.

This figure is the highest value so far this year, with trading volume of 286,328 shares. However, the value is seen to decrease compared to July 2017.

At present, 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. — are being traded on the YSX.

Stock trading values of the five listed companies were registered at Ks1.21 billion in January, Ks 746 million in February, 778 million in March, Ks875 million in April, Ks869 million in May and the all-time new low of Ks666 million in June.

This year, YSX increased the matching time from two to four per day. In addition to this, in order to increase the number of new investors and encourage existing investors to trade more actively by letting them know about review and future prospects of YSX's listed companies, YSX held a promotional event for investors for better understanding about listed companies' financial review for the 2017-2018 FY and future business outlooks for the 2018-2019 FY.

YSX stock trading is still indifferent among the public owing to lack of publicity about the stock market, among other factors, experts said. — GNLM

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Myanmar Food & Bev, Myanmar Retail Sourcing Expo to be held this month

THE 5th Myanmar Food & Beverage and the 3rd Myanmar Retail Sourcing Expo 2018 will be held in Yangon this month, according to Myanmar Trade Promotion Organisation (MyanTrade).

The event is due to take place at the Tatmadaw exhibition hall on U Wisara Road in Dagon Township from 17 to 19 August, with the organisers planning to showcase food and related products manufactured from Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and China.

Also, the expo will offer food and beverage supplies, retail solutions, technology and sourcing products. In addition, the event also includes cooking and cocktail shows, where experts will share their knowledge and experiences during the three-day expo.

The new event will be organised by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI), the Myanmar Restaurants Association (MRA) and the Myanmar Retailers Association (MMRA).

This would be a great opportunity for retailers, wholesalers, supermarkets, convenient stores, hotels, restaurants, manufacturers, suppliers and entrepreneurs to create new business links.

According to organizers, the exhibition will be an excellent platform for sourcing international products, technology and solutions for retail business as well as networking opportunities for international suppliers and local retailers. — Swe Nyein ■

Import outperforms export in bilateral trade with Indonesia in two months

MYANMAR'S overseas trade with Indonesia, a member of ASEAN, topped US$166 million in the current six-month interim financial year, commencing this April, according to the Ministry of Commerce's latest trade report.

Myanmar's imports from Indonesia always outdo its exports. During the first two months of this FY, the imports amounted to $147.3 million, while exports were valued at $19 million only.

Myanmar imports raw materials, foodstuff, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, intermediate goods, consumer products, textile and clothing from Indonesia. It exports minerals, agricultural, forest and marine products, and other miscellaneous items to the Southeast Asian country.

Indonesia's trade with Myanmar has continuously increased since the 2012-2013 FY. The bilateral trade reached a record high of over $1 billion in the last 2017-2018 FY, with exports worth $123 million and imports worth $901 million.

The Myanmar-Indonesian trade was $827 million in 2016-2017 FY, $741 million in 2015-2016 FY, $636 million in 2014-2015 FY and $498 million in 2013-2014 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, Indonesia's investments in Myanmar during the last financial year were worth $9.9 million. — Shwe Khine ■

Union Minister: Youth participation in socio-economic development and regional development will further benefit the country

THE third meeting to design a national-level strategic plan concerning youth policy was held at the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (SWRR) yesterday.

Attending the meeting were Union Minister for SWRR Dr. Win Myat Aye, the Deputy Minister, directors-general and responsible officials, youth representatives from states and regions, state and regional youth representatives for designing a national-level strategic plan concerning youth policies, UN agencies, NGOs, technical advisors and invited guests, totaling 53 participants.

In his opening speech, Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye remarked that it is now already the third time this meeting was held for designing the national level youth policy strategic plan. He said a youth policy written by the youths themselves is an honest policy that will represent the entire youth population.

The Union Minister said there are sixteen sectors to youth development to fulfill the five strengths of youths – physical, knowledge, character, friendship and wealth, and added that this national-level strategic plan needs to be actually implemented. He said the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong has already held its third session and while no agreements were reached in the first session, 37 points were agreed to in the second session and 14 points in the third, totaling 51 points agreed upon. The Union Minister said there were points agreed to in the social sector and told the youth representatives to follow the news of the Union Peace Conference --21st Century Panglong. He said youths need to have unity and cooperation, coming from different backgrounds to realize a democratic federal union and to design the national-level strategic plan for youth policies with relevance to the entire youth population.

Participants pose for a documentary at the fifth Child's Dream Alumni Association (CDAA) Myanmar Conference. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Union Minister said he will explain about the different ministries related to implementing youth policies and their projects, the need to cooperate with different ministries, and the need for youths themselves to implement the national-level strategic plan.

Union Minister Dr. Win Myat Aye also delivered a speech at the fifth Child's Dream Alumni Association (CDAA) Myanmar Conference held at the Chatrium Hotel Royal Lake Yangon on 4 August.

In his speech, the Union Minister said the youth policy, needed for the youth population for the country's future, was included in the incumbent government's 100-day schemes and implemented and was distributed on 5 January of this year. The youth policy was drawn by youths themselves and is a guideline for the existence and development of Myanmar's youths.

The Union Minister said youths need to learn of the country's history, its current state of affairs, and policies for its future. He added that youths need to effectively participate in their respective categories. He said people view their desires from childhood as their dreams, and the youths also have individual dreams. He added that it is important to think about the wellbeing of oneself and others around in one's life journey. The Union Minster also mentioned for youths to actively participate in ensuring everyone has their basic human rights protected, democratic values respected, and the emergence of a socially responsible community, in the national peace process, abolishing drug abuse, and gender equality among other categories.

The conference was attended by youth alumni who received scholarships to various countries from Child's Dream, and was held with the aim for networking, sharing job and educational opportunities, and exchanging knowledge and expertise for regional development and resources.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Orphans Reduction and Protection Association (Myanmar) officials visit social welfare philanthropic childcare centers in Pathein

PROF. Dr. Mya Thida, General Secretary of the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association (Myanmar), and association members Daw Khaing Nwe Oo and Dr. Khin Than Aye, together with Ayeyawady Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr. Hla Myat Thway, visited (Panset) childcare centre in Pathein, opened by the Department of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and discussed steps for accepting children under 6 months old.

Next, the association entourage visited Manawphyu All-Rround Philanthropic School and Sayadaw Baddantha Ashin Sandarthiri was explained of the processes of the Social Welfare Group for Ayeyawady Region (Pathein), and the need for collaboration between the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association (Myanmar) and the philanthropic network in the region.

Members the Orphans Reduction and Protection Association (Myanmar) meeting with orphans in Pathein. **PHOTO: DISTRICT IPRD**

Afterwards, they visited the Saytawun Youth Development Philanthropic School (established in 1945), Yadanar Alinyaung Monastic School for Orphans (Padauk Chaung Gone and Ywar Thitgone), YGW (Yelow Generation Wave) schools and discussed the formation of a regional Orphans Reduction and Protection Association.—District IPRD ■

38 dams, reservoirs overflow through spillways

THE water level in some dams and reservoirs in regions and states exceeded the full tank levels due to torrential rains and overflowed through their spillways. People have been urged not to worry about the overflowing water as it goes through spillways into the rivers, the Irrigation and Water Utilization Management Department stated. A total of 38 dams and reservoirs including Maha Nanda Lake from Shwebo Township, Sagaing Region, and Kyoe Kyar Kwin Dam from Taungup Township, Rakhin State, are currently overflowing, said the department.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Stellar EU banks' performance won't last: analysts

PARIS — European banks may have managed to generate surprisingly solid earnings in the second quarter, but low interest rates, Brexit fears and trade war woes make a repeat performance unlikely, analysts say.

Big names BNP Paribas, Barclays, Intesa Sanpaolo, Credit Suisse and BBVA all wrongfooted sector experts with results exceeding consensus forecasts.

"For many banks, earnings were better than expected," Simon Outin, an analyst with Allianz Global Investors, told AFP.

"But it's also true that consensus forecasts had been lowered quite a bit recently," he said, as banks were seen struggling to thrive in their traditional credit business.

That they still managed to pull off an earnings surprise was mostly down to view that loan repayment rates are improving, justifying a reduction in funds set aside to cover risky exposure, and giving the bottom line an immediate boost.'

A star performance, but don't hold your breath for a repeat. **PHOTO: AFP**

Banking on lower risk

"The main adjustment variable for almost all the banks which have reported earnings are the provisions against doubtful loans which are much lower than expected," said Jerome Legras, head of research at asset managers Axiom AI. "This in essence was what made the results better than analysts' expectations," he told AFP.

Taking back risk provisions helped banks offset the dampening impact of a low-interest rate environment that is set to linger even as EU growth and inflation are showing signs of picking up.

French bank Societe Generale said it expects to improve its risk management further throughout the year, a hint that it could take back more provisions to feed profits.

In southern Europe, Spain's BBVA and CaixaBank, Portugal's Caixa Geral de Depositos and Italy's Intesa SaoPaolo are all making progress in removing toxic loans from their books.

Even the world's oldest bank, Monte Dei Paschi Di Siena, managed to eke out a profit in the three months to June, a remarkable performance given that the bank was so weakened by the 2008 financial crisis that it was pulled back from the brink with a government bailout.

Don't push it

But while analysts accept that taking back risk provision is a legitimate reward for improved risk management, they also say that banks shouldn't push their luck.

Some, like Dutch banking giant ING, are "playing with fire" with their low provisions, said Martin Crum, an analyst with IEX.nl. "You can't reduce the cost of risk indefinitely," added Legras at Axiom. "At some point it will reach the bottom of the cycle and then you will need other sources of growth, either from greater cost control, or from improving interest rate margins."

But those margins are difficult to boost while official interest rates remain low, analysts warned, meaning banks can't make much profit from loans.

The eurozone institution able to do something about that, the European Central Bank, has not shown any signs of wanting to hike official rates any time soon despite moving its quantitative easing stimulus policy slowly towards the exit.

Aiming for corporate

The EU's other big central bank, the Bank of England, raised its key rate at the start of August, but also hinted that interest rates wouldn't rise again soon.

Instead, Europe's retail banks try to use the improving economy to bolster their loan volumes, especially in the corporate sector which is poised to invest in the budding economic recovery. But that strategy has become more uncertain as trade risks and political worries threaten to throw a spanner in the works.

Swiss banking group UBS has warned that rising protectionism was puncturing investor confidence, and Credit Suisse said upcoming monetary policy shifts by the world's central banks were likely to sow uncertainty.

Meanwhile, Britain's looming departure from the EU is a big headache for that country's banks just as they have recovered a high level of financial strength.

For them, the stakes in Brexit talks are especially high because of the question of what will happen to passporting rights, which allow EU members to do business in each other's countries without needing further authorisation.—AFP ■

How far can Venezuela go in raising price of world's cheapest gas?

CARACAS — In Venezuela's inflation-hit economy, a single US dollar can buy 3.5 million liters of gasoline — an absurdity that the government says it will tackle with a hike in the cost of state-subsidized fuel.

But just how far can President Nicolas Maduro go without getting his fingers burned?

A liter of 91-octane gasoline in Venezuela costs one bolivar – but an egg in the hyperinflation ravaged economy costs 200,000 bolivars, and one US dollar trades on the black market at 3.5 million bolivars. **PHOTO: AFP**

Subsidized gas

Maduro announced on July 29 plans to adjust the price of gasoline and regulate sales based on the so-called "fatherland card," an electronic card that provides access to subsidies. As a first step the government began a census of motor vehicles, set to end on Sunday.

A liter of 91-octane gasoline currently costs one bolivar, while 95-octane gas costs six. By contrast, a single egg in Venezuela's hyperinflation ravaged economy — estimated by the IMF at one million percent in 2018 — costs 200,000 bolivars.

A dollar on the country's black market is currently trading at 3.5 million bolivars.

Experts say the retail price of gasoline covers just between two and four percent of its cost of production.

Maduro has kept details of the fuel price adjustment under wraps, but he said that "we are paying to throw it away ... we need to move to a rational usage."

Yet talking openly about cutting the gasoline subsidy has been a taboo since the 1989 riots known as the "Caracazo," which were triggered by a rise in fuel prices and left 300 people dead in Caracas and towns surrounding the capital.

Even though the iconic late leader Hugo Chavez questioned the rock-bottom prices of state-subsidized fuel during his term in office between 1999 and his death in 2013, even he never touched them. In 2016, Maduro authorized the first price hike in 20 years, but only by between 1.328 percent and 6.566 percent, which made no impact on the derisory prices.

The new adjustment will come at a time of profound stagnation, in an economy that has not stopped shrinking since 2014.

Inflationary subsidies

Fuel subsidies have cost the Venezuelan government $10 billion a year since 2012, petroleum expert Luis Oliveros told AFP.

That has created a such a gaping hole in the budget that the government has tried to fill by printing more money, which in turn has created even higher inflation, Oliveros said.

"It is a lie that increasing the price of fuel is an inflationary measure," he said. "The subsidies are hyperinflationary."

The situation has only been made worsen by the drop off in oil production from 3.2 million barrels a day in 2008 to 1.5 million in 2018. That is why the operating capacity of refineries has fallen and gasoline imports have risen.—AFP ■

China approves two IPO applications

BEIJING — China's top securities regulator has approved new IPO applications for two companies, which will raise no more than 1.7 billion yuan (about 248.9 million US dollars) in the A-share market.

Beijing Konruns Pharmaceutical Co. will be listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange, and Beijing Emerging Eastern Aviation Equipment Co. will be listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, according to the China Securities Regulatory Commission. The two companies and their underwriters will confirm IPO dates and publish prospectuses following discussions with the exchanges. Under the current IPO system, new shares are subject to approval from the commission.

China is gradually switching from an approval-based to registration-based IPO system. — Xinhua ■

6 AUGUST 2018
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Benefits of community-based tourism

OUR country is rich in beautiful landscapes, including rivers, lakes, beaches, islands and forests. These are gifts from nature. Sustainable management of natural environment is necessary to develop ecotourism in resource-rich areas.

We need to create opportunities for visitors where they should go depending on their interests.

We need to think of what arrangements should be done for tourists.

Some visitors seek adventure such as climbing a mountain or trekking. Some want to sleep in tents they themselves erected. We need to think for such visitors, too. Where can they climb a mountain? Where can they trek? Where can they erect their tent? We need to think for them, too.

To satisfy the visitors, we should promote community-based tourism, in which local residents (often rural, poor) invite tourists to visit their communities with the provision of overnight accommodation.

The community-based tourism enables tourists to discover local habitats and wildlife, celebrates and respects traditional cultures, rituals and wisdom.

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In community-based tourism, residents earn income as land managers, entrepreneurs, service and product providers and employees, because visitors want to stay in a clean place that would be safe for their health.

This is most important. If a visitor can afford it, a lodging can be as grand as they want, but the basic is to have a clean place. We need to create opportunities for emerging small- and medium- businesses which can provide safe and healthy services for community-based tourism.

We need to train local communities how to run a small guest house or bed and breakfast motels providing clean and safe food and accommodation services.

They could collaborate to create a social food farm (agritourism) that tourists could visit. This allows for earning more money within the domestic tourism value chain.

The UN Environment Programme cites that in most all-inclusive mass tourism package tours, about 80 per cent of traveller's expenditures go to airlines, hotels and other international companies, and not to local businesses or workers. For each $100 spent on a holiday tour by a tourist from a developed country, only about $5 actually stays in a developing-country destination's economy.

Hence, we need to encourage tourism professionals to procure goods and services from locally-owned enterprises that meet acceptable quality standards. By sourcing locally, communities benefit directly from the tourism value chain.

PHOTO: AFP

Floods are not natural disasters; hence, humans should be able to counter them

By Khin Maung Myint

IN the old days, storms, floods and droughts are blamed on mother nature for causing them. They were called "natural disasters" or, in the legal aspect, they were even termed as "acts of God". Those concepts or beliefs don't apply today. People are starting to realize and most, except for some stubborn individuals, accept that they are the consequences of climate change, which are the results of human misdemeanors.

I had persistently written about the causes of the climate change in the past, where I had mentioned what climate change experts said about the subject and how people who are concerned about it are trying to rein in the deteriorating climate situations. At one point, I had thought that I had written enough and there is nothing more, nothing interesting enough to write more about that topic. I was totally wrong. The climate change is still a hot topic, providing many raw materials for a writer like me, who is obsessed with that subject.

This year's monsoon had already brought much rainfalls in our region. Much rainfalls mean more incidents of flash floods and inundating, causing deaths and destructions. Lately, flash floods had caused a dam in Laos, which is still under construction, to burst, leading to catastrophic flooding. As many as over 300 people were killed and many places were inundated, causing damages to agricultural crops and destruction of homes and infrastructures, displacing thousands of people. The flood waters even reached Thailand and Cambodia in areas close to the Mekong River.

The northern and northeastern regions of Thailand, which are close to the Mekong, were hit by severe floods, as rainwaters reinforced the spilled waters from the failed Laotian dam. The results were severe inundating of agricultural lands, causing damages to crops, destruction of bridges and roads, and disrupting the traffic flows. Even the recent world-famous Thai cave incident was the result of heavy downpours.

Last, but not the least, to suffer the consequences of the floods is our country. Bago and Taninthayi regions, Kayin and Mon states were the hardest hit. According to official reports, at least 12 people have been killed and nearly a hundred and fifty thousand people were displaced by severe floods, brought on by torrential monsoon rains in recent days.

In the opening paragraph, I had bluntly claimed that such disasters are not natural, but manmade. Thus, I have the obligation to clarify that statement. As our country lies in the monsoon area,

rains are abundant and floods are common, but in the past, they were not as dangerous or destructive as today. Rains and floods are natural since time immemorial. It can be said that in the old days, centuries ago, every evolution or development were the works of nature and nature alone is responsible for everything -- good or bad.

However, to quote climate experts, since the industrial revolution in the 18th century, humans contributed much to the deterioration of the climate or, in other words, the climate change was caused by humans. Thus, it can be deduced that disasters caused by climate change, which is the outcome of humans' misdemeanors, is the main culprit and hence, they are man-made and not natural disasters anymore.

Having said that, it would be necessary to describe how humans are responsible for the flash floods that ravaged our country these days. To visualize that, we need to look back a few decades. In the past, our country was famous for the dense lush green rain forests that produce some of the best timbers in the world. Those forests were properly conserved and managed since the days of our kings. During the colonial days, the forests were even more systematically maintained, extractions properly regulated and the forests were well protected from illegal loggers.

Those practices were still carried on after we became independent until about three decades ago. However, starting from around that time all the good practices were either ignored or those responsible were ignorant of them. There was almost no control in the extractions of timber, both legally and illegally. My guess is, illegal loggings and indiscriminately issued permits to extract timbers were too excessive that led to immense depletions of the forests

As trees are useful in retaining the earth from becoming loose and also absorb the rain waters, they serve as protection to the ground on which they stand. Without trees to retain the earth and to absorb the rain waters, landslides occur. These landslides cause the streams, creeks and rivers to become shallow due to the sediments brought down by them. When there were heavy rains, flash floods were caused and as the waterways were clogged with sediments and became shallow, their flood plains became wider. Thus towns and villages were easily inundated. Trees are also helpful in the control of climate change. They absorb the carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere and reproduce oxygen, which helps to eradicate the greenhouse gases of which CO_2 forms a major portion. Less greenhouse gases mean reduced global warming, which will, in turn, reduce the effects of the climate change.

This year, since the start of the monsoon season, we had been witnessing unprecedented flooding in many places, including the Shan State, where such scales of flooding were unheard of before. These are undeniable evidences that indicate the depletion of the forests are widespread. Thus, to avoid such disasters or to reduce their effects, reforestations should be extensively implemented and strict control of loggings should be enforced. Drastic actions should be taken on smugglers and corrupt officials who abetted in the illegal loggings and smugglings.

Some so-called environmentalists in our country are loudly blaming the government for not doing enough for the victims of the recent floods. The government is doing its best to mitigate disasters of any kind, but when they are widespread, as in recent cases, it may be difficult to efficiently cope with them. One enviromental activist went too far by likening the flood disaster to the Thai cave incident and said the Thai government treated those children trapped in the cave as human beings, while our government is not doing enough for flood victims. The two situations are not similar to one another, so comparing the two was just totally absurd. I wonder whether he is a true environmentalist or a political activist or an opportunist, who wants to exploit the situation for his own gains. The least he can gain is popularity by telling such ridiculous things to the foreign media. Also, ignored was the fact that the President of

> Rains are abundant and floods are common, but in the past they were not as dangerous or destructive as today.

our country made an immediate visit to the flood-devastated areas and gave morale support to the devastated people, oversaw and gave guidance to the relief work being carried out. Such things were unheard of in the past or unprecedented.

I would like to urge the environmental activists, if they really care, to show with their actions, not words, because actions speak louder than words. They should educate the public how to divert those disasters from the environmental aspects, as they are supposed to be experts in such matters, instead of just putting the blame on the government. The least they can do is to lead the public to grow more trees and protect the existing trees in their areas from being illegally felled. As the floods are the consequences of human misdemeanors or, in other words, man-made disasters, humans should be able to counter.

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Flood Bulletin
(Issued at 14:00 hrs MST on 5-8-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (3½) feet at Madauk above its danger level. It may fall about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (4) feet at Hpa-an above its danger level. It may fall about (1½) feet during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Ngawun River

According to the (13:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ngawun River has exceeded by about (2) inches at Thabaung above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (2) Days.

Advisory

It is especially advised that people who have settled near the river banks and lowlying areas in Hpa-an, Thabaung townships and Madauk, to take precautionary measures.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report
(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 5th August 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 6thAUGUST, 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing Region and widespread in the remaining regions and states with isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi regions, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Sea will be moderate to rough elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40)mph. Wave height will be about (9 - 12) feet in Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts and (6 - 9) feet in off and along Rakhine Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Strong monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th AUGUST, 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th AUGUST, 2018: Some rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th AUGUST, 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

‘Shot like a dog’: Zimbabwe buries its post-election dead

CHINAMHORA (Zimbabwe)—The four children of a fruit-seller gunned down by Zimbabwean soldiers in post-election violence wept uncontrollably at the sight of their father lying in a casket under a baking sun.

Ishmail Kumire, 41, was one of the six victims of Wednesday’s bloody chaos, sparked when troops fired on opposition activists protesting alleged electoral fraud.

The father of four, known as “Shuz”, was buried Saturday in the village of Chinamhora, 45 kilometres (30 miles) north-east of Harare, watched by 200 mourners.

His fellow vendors swept into the yard of his home, packed into a minibus emblazoned with the words “I am blessed”, alighting drumming and dancing.

Women hunched over large cooking pots balanced on fires, preparing food for the mourners.

Kumire’s death carries a bitter irony. According to his brother Steven Matope, the fruit-seller was not among the opposition protesters angrily claiming that the ruling ZANU-PF had stolen the election.

Instead, he was caught up in the violence because he had stayed at the scene of the protest to protect his fruit.

“Ishmail was a vendor, he wasn’t a political activist,” Matope said.

“He supported the ruling party -- but then, it’s the same ruling party that has killed him.”

His funeral came a day after ZANU-PF’s President Emmerson Mnangagwa was declared the winner of Zimbabwe’s historic elections, the first since veteran autocrat Robert Mugabe was ousted by the military last year.

Mnangagwa had hailed the polls as a chance to consign to the past Mugabe’s repressive 37-year rule, but Wednesday’s crackdown was a brutal reminder of the violence of his era.

‘Killing for no reason’

“If the ruling party is killing the people it is supposed to govern, I don’t know who it is going to rule. That’s very painful,” Matope added.

“He was just selling his tomatoes,” he said of his brother.

Kumire’s brother-in-law Ignatious Neshava, who witnessed the shooting, told AFP how soldiers swooped on them as they stood guard over his wares, fearing that $700-worth of freshly-purchased produce would be looted amid the chaos.“He was standing five metres from me... and suddenly I heard gunshots. I thought they were firing rubber bullets,” said Neshava.

Ishmail Kumire, 41, was one of the six victims of Wednesday’s bloody chaos, sparked when troops fired on opposition activists protesting alleged electoral fraud . **PHOTO: AFP**

“I turned around and saw Ishmail on the ground, face-down. I saw a cartridge next to him and then, as I tried to turn his body, a soldier came and pointed a gun to my head.

“By that time, Ishmail was bleeding profusely.”

Neshava was sure he was going to be killed too.

“How can they deploy soldiers in town, killing people for no apparent reason?” he asked, as the wooden casket was lowered into the ground.—AFP ■

Iran protesters attack religious school as tensions mount

TEHRAN—Iranian protesters have attacked a religious school in Karaj province near Tehran, the conservative Fars news agency reported Saturday, as sporadic protests simmered ahead of the reimposition of US sanctions.

Iranian authorities have barely mentioned days of protests in the major cities of Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad and Tehran, driven by concerns over water, the economy and wider anger at the political system.

During past unrest, conservative outlets have focused on attacks against sensitive symbols such as religious buildings as a way of tarnishing protesters.

“At 9:00 pm (1630 GMT on Friday) they attacked the school and tried to break the doors down and burn things,” Fars quoted the head of the school in the town of Ishtehad, Hojatoleslam Hindiani, as saying, giving only his clerical rank and no first name.

“They were about 500 people and they chanted against the system but they were dispersed by the riot police and some have been arrested,” Hindiani said.

Fars acknowledged protests have taken place in “five or six cities” since Tuesday over water shortages, rising prices and joblessness, with “about 1,000 or 2,000 people” taking part.

But it said these peaceful protests were taken over by people “who come into the crowd with political slogans such as ‘Death to the dictator’”.It said this was part of a pre-planned plot by the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia to exploit economic tensions inside Iran.

Because foreign media are barred from observing “unauthorised” protests, it has been impossible to verify any of these claims or the videos of protests spreading on social media.

A cleric speaks to protesters in the holy city of Mashhad on August 3, 2018, from a video by Nasim News Agency. **PHOTO: AFP**

Clerical opposition

With tensions high ahead of the return of US sanctions on Tuesday, the government of President Hassan Rouhani also faces opposition from conservatives and religious leaders, who have long disliked his outreach to the West and accuse him of governing only for the rich.

The conservative Qom News published a video of a protest in the holy city of Mashhad after Friday prayers, in which a cleric tells the crowd: “Most of your representatives don’t care about people’s problems.

“Most have two passports and their families are abroad. The judiciary should find these people and arrest them,” the cleric says, to chants of “Allahu akbar” (“God is greater”) from the crowd.

Former hardline president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has fallen out with the conservative establishment since leaving office in 2013, has tried to ride this wave of anger.

In a Wednesday Twitter post, he called on US President Donald Trump to release a list of “relatives of Iranian government officials that have green cards and bank accounts in the United States”, if such a record exists. —AFP ■

Kenya to meet UN deadline for marine single window systems

NAIROBI—Kenya is on course to meet the United Nations (UN) deadline for establishing a maritime single window system by April 2019, officials said on Saturday.

Amos Wangora, the CEO of the Kenya Trade Network Agency, told Xinhua in Nairobi that Kenya is keen to comply with the International Maritime Organization obligation in order to facilitate maritime trade.

“A project team is already in place and is in the process of identifying vendor for the portal that will permit the electronic interchange of information for ships docking on Kenyan ports,” Wangora said.

“We anticipate that once the marine single window system is in place, there will be a 40 per cent reduction in the time spent by shipping crew in submitting documents to public authorizes,” he said.

He said the Kenya Maritime Authority is also receiving support from the World Bank to help Kenya establish the Maritime Single Window System.

Wangora noted that currently ships arriving at Kenyan ports submit documents on cargo and passengers details manually.

“This hinders the smooth flow of international trade due to the time spent on submission of manual forms,” he said.

He revealed that Kenya is in the process of automating many government services in order to improve the ease of doing business in the country.

The CEO said the maritime single window system will be connected to the National Electronic Single window system which was launched in 2014.

He added that the National Electronic Single window system was put in place to ensure electronic submission of documents for import and export trade. —Xinhua ■

Trade Mark Ads 09251022355, 09974424848

Maduro says he escaped drone 'assassination' attempt, blames Colombia

CARACAS — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said Saturday he escaped an "assassination" attempt using an explosive-laden drone, after a live broadcast showed him looking confused when a bang went off during a Caracas military parade and dozens of soldiers scuttling for safety.

His government said seven soldiers were wounded in the incident.

"It was an attack to kill me, they tried to assassinate me today," Maduro said in a later state broadcast, speaking of a "flying object (that) exploded in front of me."

He said some of those involved were arrested and an investigation under way.

Maduro accused neighboring Colombia and unidentified "financiers" in the United States, while some of his officials blamed Venezuela's opposition.

Colombia denied any involvement. A senior Colombian official speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity said Maduro's accusation was "baseless."

Venezuelan state television images showed Maduro looking up disconcertedly in the middle of a speech Saturday when a bang was heard, then uniformed members of the country's National Guard lined up in the parade suddenly breaking ranks and scattering.

Screengrab released by Venezuelan Television (VTV) showing Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro who was unharmed after an exploding drone "attack". **PHOTO: AFP**

No drones could be seen in the television broadcast, which showed bodyguards jumping in front of Maduro to protect him with flexible ballistic shields. The broadcast was quickly cut.

"This is an attack against President Nicolas Maduro," Communication Minister Jorge Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said there was "an explosive charge... detonated close to the presidential podium" and in several other spots along the parade held in central Caracas.

Maduro "came out of it completely unharmed," he said.

The government pointed the finger at "the ultra-right wing" -- its term for the opposition.

But Maduro said: "I have no doubt that the name (Colombian President) Juan Manuel Santos is behind this attack."

He added that initial investigations "indicate that various of those financing it live in the United States, in the state of Florida. I hope that President Donald Trump is ready to fight these terrorist groups."

Iron-fisted rule

The parade Maduro attended was to mark the one-year anniversary of the Constitutional Assembly, a legislative body packed with Maduro loyalists that arrogated powers from the opposition-ruled National Assembly.

The head of the assembly, Diosdado Cabello, tweeted that Maduro and the assembled military chiefs had survived a "terrorist attack" he blamed on the opposition."The right insists on violence to take areas it can't through votes," he wrote. —AFP ■

Brazil's defiant Lula gets presidential nomination behind bars

Brazilian senator and president of the Workers' Party (PT), Gleisi Hoffmann (2-R), speaks during the national convention of the Workers Party (PT), where the imprisoned but popular Lula was nominated to run for president. **PHOTO: AFP**

SAO BRASLIA — Brazil's leftist Workers' Party nominated its charismatic founder Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva for the upcoming presidential contest Saturday despite him being imprisoned for corruption.

In a message read aloud to the party convention in Sao Paulo, Lula urged "a ceaseless battle for democracy." Although serving a 12-year sentence for corruption, Lula, 72, remains by far the frontrunner in opinion polls.

Three big party conventions were held Saturday, two months before the first round of voting on October 7 in Latin America's dominant economy.

In Brasilia, center-left environmental campaigner Marina Silva was crowned by her Rede party. Also in the capital, former Sao Paulo governor and establishment heavyweight Geraldo Alckmin secured the nod from the center-right Brazilian Social Democratic Party, or PSDB.

Alckmin, 65, accepted his nomination with a speech blaming the Workers' Party for having laid the roots of today's economic disarray, with some 13 million people unemployed, and corruption rife, during more than a decade in power.

"I am the candidate whose campaign can be summed up in one sentence: 'We will change Brazil and give back to Brazilians the dignity which has been taken from them,'" he said.

But while both Silva and Alckmin are serious contenders in a likely match-up against controversial right-winger Jair Bolsonaro, it was Lula's highly unusual convention in Sao Paulo that overshadowed proceedings.

Lula is in prison in the southern city of Curitiba, serving a 12-year sentence for corruption and likely to be barred from the ballot.

But his Workers' Party issued a call to arms, casting Lula as a victim of a rigged case and vowing to get him back into office, following his largely popular two terms from 2003-2010.

In the Sao Paulo convention center, some 2,000 attendees donned Lula masks and chanted his name. Then, after fiery speeches from Lula's senior allies, the party faithful heard the leader's words read out by an actor.

"They want to scrap the people's right to choose the president," the message said. "They want to create a democracy without the people. We have an enormous responsibility ahead."

One supporter, Paulo Henrique Barbosa Mateus, 27, said the Workers' Party is confident it can somehow get Lula in.

"We've got even stronger. Our role is to reinforce his candidacy and make sure he gets his right to be in the campaign, because he is innocent," he told AFP.

Supporters have one remarkable factor on their side: despite his imprisonment and the corruption scandal, Lula remains far ahead in the polls. —AFP ■

Fire shuts highway between France and Spain for hours

MADRID — A fire in northeastern Spain on the French border forced authorities to shut a highway linking the two countries for several hours on Saturday at the height of a heatwave, firefighters said.

"We're working together with French firefighters on a fire at la Jonquera," they said on Twitter. The firefighters in Catalonia said they were aided by six water-dropping planes and helicopters.

They added the blaze, which began around 5:30 pm (1530 GMT) according to French authorities, was quickly brought under control and by the evening, the highway was open again.

The fire comes as France experiences the summer's busiest day on the roads, as July holiday-makers return home and those who vacation in August depart. —AFP ■

Catalonian firefighters, pictured in August 2016, worked with French firefighters to control a blaze on the border between the two countries. **PHOTO: AFP**

Asian countries denounce 'real threat' of global trade war

There are fears that a simmering trade spat between the world's top two economies could spiral into a full-blown trade war -- with painful consequences for China's neighbour. **PHOTO: AFP**

SINGAPORE / BEIJING — Asian countries have voiced concern about the potentially devastating impact of a US-China trade war, with ministers calling for the acceleration of talks for a gigantic Beijing-backed free-trade deal that excludes the United States.

Fear that a simmering trade spat between the world's top two economies could spiral into a full-blown trade war—with painful consequences for China's neighbours -- was among topics dominating discussion at a regional summit in Singapore on Saturday.

Tit-for-tat tariffs have fuelled months of tensions that were notched up Friday as Beijing threatened to impose levies on $60 billion of American goods, from beef to condoms.

The measures, which the White House ridiculed as "weak" but China said were "fully justified", came after Washington said it would increase the rate of additional tariffs on Chinese goods worth $200 billion. The prospect of a trade war is a "real threat" to Asian countries, Malaysian Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah told reporters Saturday on the sidelines of the summit.

"The threat is making many countries very concerned and... is becoming more complex," he said.

Other top Asian diplomats at Saturday's forum, hosted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), spoke out against protectionism, warning that it places the region's development in jeopardy.

"Rising anti-globalisation and trade protectionism among major countries is fuelling tensions and threatening our aspirations for sustained economic growth," said South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha.

Countries in the region must "explore creative ways to further deepen and broaden our cooperation", in the face of such challenges, she said.

Some ministers have called for the early conclusion of talks for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a 16-nation pact poised to become the world's largest free-trade agreement, covering about half the global population.

The planned RCEP deal would group the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus China, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. —AFP ■

Russian climber rescued in Pakistan airlifted to Moscow

MOSCOW — The Russian mountaineer Alexander Gukov, who was rescued in Pakistan after a six-day ordeal, has been airlifted to Moscow aboard a Sukhoi Superjet 100 plane of the Russian Emergencies Ministry, the ministry's press service told TASS on Saturday.

"The Russian Emergencies Ministry has completed the sanitary evacuation from Islamabad to Moscow by air of the injured Russian climber, who spent nearly a week on the slope of Latok 1 mountain in Pakistan," the spokesperson said.

The Sukhoi Superjet 100 (SSJ100) landed in Moscow's Zhukovsky Airport. Then the man was taken to a Moscow hospital for treatment. His condition did not worsen during the flight.

"The Russian Emergencies Ministry's Sukhoi Superjet 100 is equipped with cutting-edge devices and a special medical module, an artificial respirator, and cardiac monitors," he said.

Tragedy in mountains

Alexander Gukov from St. Petersburg and his climbing partner Sergei Glazunov from the Siberian city of Irkutsk got stranded on a steep slope of Latok 1 mountain. Glazunov fell to his death, while Gukov managed to cling to the wall at a height of 6,200 meters without any equipment, food or mobile communication. Most of the equipment was lost after Glazunov's fall.

Pakistani rescuers could not pluck the stranded climber to safety for several days due to bad weather.

According to the site of Russia's Mountaineering Federation, Gukov and Glazunov were members of the expedition that had been planning to ascend Latok 1 for shooting the documentary Impossible is not Forever.

Latok 1 is a 7,150-meter-high mountain in the Karakoram range. While raising money for their expedition, the alpine climbers wrote that the North Ridge of Latok 1 had been unclimbed earlier. In the summer of 1978, a group of American mountaineers hit a height of 7,000 meters, but were forced to descend.—Tass■

China renews yellow alert for heat wave

BEIJING — China's National Meteorological Center (NMC) renewed a yellow alert on Sunday as a heat wave continued in most parts of the country.

On Sunday, most areas south of the Yangtze River, as well as Liaoning, Hebei, Shandong, Shaanxi, Sichuan, Guangdong and Xinjiang will see temperatures reach 35-36 degrees Celsius, according to the NMC.

Some areas may see temperatures hit 39 degrees Celsius.

The center advised people in affected regions to take precautions against heat stroke and fires, including avoiding outdoor activities.

China has a three-tier, color-coded warning system for heat waves, with red representing the most severe, followed by orange and yellow.—Xinhua ■

Heavy rain causes landslides in Viet Nam's northern Lai Chau province

Photo taken on 4 August 2018 shows a bicycle at the site of landslide in Lai Chau province, Viet Nam. Landslides caused by heavy rain on Friday in Vietnam's northern Lai Chau province killed six people, left six others missing, according to Viet Nam News Agency (VNA). The landslides also injured three people. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Degrading plastics emit greenhouse gases

WASHINGTON — Need another reason to hate plastics piling up in the environment?

A study in the journal *PLOS ONE* on Wednesday found that degrading plastics emit powerful greenhouse gases like methane and ethylene, and are a previously unaccounted-for source of these heat-trapping pollutants.

Plastic water bottles, shopping bags, industrial plastics and food containers were all tested as part of the study.

The "most prolific emitter" was polyethylene, which is used in shopping bags and is the most produced and discarded synthetic polymer in the world, said the report.

Researchers have not yet calculated the level of harmful greenhouse gases emitted by plastics in the environment.

Piles of plastic waste are pictured on the seaside in the coastal town of Khalde, south of the Lebanese capital Beirut, on 22 September 2016. **PHOTO: AFP**

But with more than eight billion tons of plastic littering the planet — the lion's share of which is not recyclable—and plastic production expected to double in the next two decades, they need to find out, said David Karl, the study's senior author.

"Plastic represents a source of climate-relevant trace gases that is expected to increase as more plastic is produced and accumulated in the environment," said Karl, a professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology.

"This source is not yet budgeted for when assessing global methane and ethylene cycles, and may be significant." Plastic is already known to release harmful chemicals into the water and soil.

And greenhouse gases have risen to all-time highs, causing the Earth to heat up and oceans to mount, threatening coastal communities worldwide.

"Considering the amounts of plastic washing ashore on our coastlines and the amount of plastic exposed to ambient conditions, our finding provides further evidence that we need to stop plastic production at the source, especially single use plastic," said lead author Sarah-Jeanne Royer, a postdoctoral research fellow at UH's International Pacific Research Center. — AFP ■

Three dead in Spain as Europe wilts under record heatwave

The hottest July in more than 250 years in Sweden saw wildfires as far north as the Arctic Circle. **PHOTO: AFP**

MADRID—Three men have died from heatstroke in Spain as Europe sweltered in a record heatwave Friday, with temperatures hitting a scorching 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in some areas and meteorologists saying only scant relief is in sight in the coming days.

Here is a roundup:

Spain: three dead

A middle-aged man in Barcelona, who media said appeared to be homeless, was found collapsed on a street and taken to hospital where he later died of heatstroke, Catalonia's civil protection agency said in a statement.

Two other men—a roadworker in his 40s and a 78-year-old pensioner — also died from heatstroke this week, as Spain is set to experience one of its hottest days this summer on Friday, with temperatures expected to top 44°C in Badajos on the border with Portugal, 42°C in Seville and 40°C in Madrid.

Portugal: record

In Portugal temperatures topped a record 45° degrees in Alvega, 150 kilometres (93 miles) north of Lisbon, on Thursday. The heatwave is expected to reach its peak on Saturday, according to the Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere (IPMA).

While no "substantial" wildfires have been reported so far, the emergency services say they remain on maximum alert and Interior Minister Eduardo Cabrita declared a policy of "zero tolerance" towards risky activity, such as barbecues.

Germany: tourists head north

Tourism operators, such as Thomas Cook and Alltours, were quoted by German news agency DPA as saying that last-minute bookings for the Mediterranean are down, as holidaymakers seek out cooler temperatures on the North Sea and Baltic coastlines.

Netherlands: water shortages

In the Netherlands, where the current heatwave is the longest-ever recorded—with temperatures reaching 35°C on Friday—people are beginning to experience water shortages, even if drinking supplies remain unaffected for now.

Sweden: hottest month

With almost no rainfall since May, Sweden experienced its hottest July in more than 250 years, with the drought and high temperatures sparking wildfires across the country, even as far north as the Arctic Circle. The fires have largely abated.

France: health alert

Temperatures passed 40°C in France for the first time this summer on Friday as millions hit the roads for August vacations, with sweltering conditions forecast to persist into next week.

Wide swathes of the country have been placed on heatwave alert with the health ministry rolling out a TV and radio campaign alerting people to the dangers of what is expected to be the most intense heatwave since 2006.

French power company EDF announced that it was stopping a reactor at two nuclear power plants in order to avoid raising too high the temperature of the water in the Rhone river. —AFP ■

Myanma Port Authority
"Notice of High Tide"

Exceptionally high spring from 20.14 feet to 21.52 feet high above the chart datum are expected to occur in Yangon River during the period of August 10th to August 16th, 2018. Please be noted,that is not serious level of tide because the highest tide level have reached up to 22 feet above the chart datum in years 2014 and 2015, and this notice is normally issued whenever high tide of Yangon River is expected to reach over 20 feet high above the chart datum, in order to take precautionary measures to the public living near river foreshore area of Yangon City.

Forget billionaires, museums the ticket for fine art market

PARIS—Bye bye billionaires—it's now museums that acquire most artworks put up for auction, according to a firm which follows the fine art market. Sales at auction of works of fine art—paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, engravings and installations— jumped by 18 per cent in the first half of the year compared to the same period in 2017 to $8.45 billion (7.3 billion euros), according to Artprice.

An artwork entitled 'Self-portrait with Necklace', by Frida Kahlo, 1933, Detroit and New York, USA, is displayed during an exhibition entitled 'Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up' at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum in west London on June 13. **PHOTO: AFP**

The company's founder Thierry Ehrmann pointed out that "around three quarters of purchases above one million dollars is now by museums".

That trend is being supported by the opening of new museums.

"More new museums have been opened since 2000 than all of the 19th and 20th centuries," said Ehrmann. "And 700 are being founded each year in China."

The new openings helped China remain in second place in terms of auction revenues at $2 billion, accounting for just under a quarter of the market, according to Artprice's twice-yearly market report.

The United States led in auction sales in the first half of the year with $3.3 billion, or 40 per cent of the market. Britain ranked third with $1.9 billion in sales and a market share of 22 per cent.—AFP ■

Radio silence at CBS, Moonves breaks #MeToo stereotype

NEW YORK—Once upon a time recently, mere allegations of sexual misconduct spelled instant career death. Powerful men fell like dominos. But radio silence has met harassment accusations against the CEO of CBS.

The US television corporation lost $2 billion in market value after six women accused Leslie Moonves in *The New Yorker*. The board appointed lawyers to investigate, but the 68-year-old has been neither sacked nor suspended.

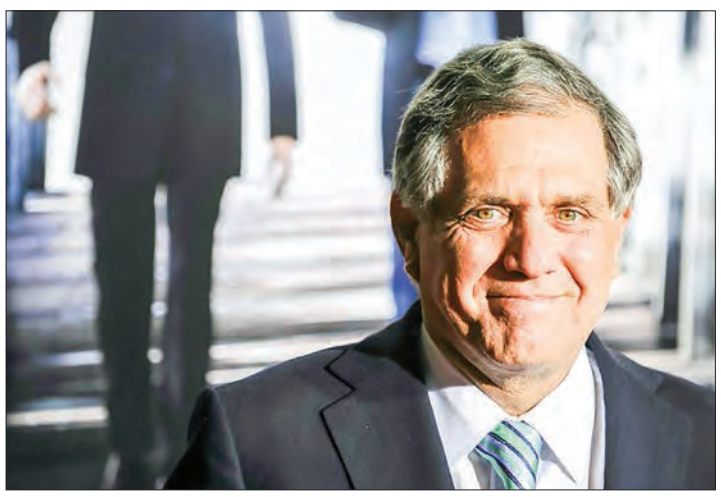
His second wife, CBS host Julie Chen, has stood by his side and several female CBS executives have publicly championed his good character and leadership. Stephen Colbert, the CBS late-night comic who has been scathing toward similar scandals, has also been circumspect.

"Everybody believes in accountability until it's their guy. And, make no mistake, Les Moonves is my guy," Colbert told his show. "I like working for him, but accountability is meaningless unless it's for everybody."

CBS News fired anchor Charlie Rose one day after misconduct accusations went public. New York's state attorney general Eric Schneiderman resigned within hours of a *New Yorker* report accusing him of physically assaulting women.

"It is highly surprising that the board, given the level of detail and the level of corroboration, didn't at least suspend Moonves temporarily," Rich Greenfield, a media analyst at BTIG told online TV program Cheddar.

"I think there were times when we saw a hanging party formed too quickly but this is not one of these times," Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, a professor at the Yale School of Management, told AFP. —AFP ■



CBS CEO Leslie Moonves, seen here in a file picture from 2010, has been accused of sexual misconduct but remains on the job pending an investigation. **PHOTO: AFP**

Turkish novelist Asli Erdogan is living in exile in Germany as she risks a life sentence on terror charges at home. **PHOTO: AFP**

For exiled novelist, Turkey 'like 1930s Germany'

FRANKFURT AM MAIN—Turkish novelist Asli Erdogan, living in exile in Germany as she risks a life sentence on terror charges at home, thinks the writing is on the wall: her country is sliding into fascism. The award-winning author, still traumatised by the four months she spent in an Istanbul prison, warns that Turkey's institutions are "in a state of total collapse". In President Recep Tayyip Erdogan — no relation —she sees a man tightening control over everyday Turkish life, emboldened by an outright victory in June elections, sweeping new powers and a crackdown on opponents.

"The extent of things in Turkey is like Nazi Germany," the flame-haired 51-year-old told AFP in an interview in Frankfurt, her temporary home as she awaits the outcome of her court case in absentia. "I think it is a fascist regime. It is not yet 1940s Germany, but 1930s," said Asli.

"A crucial factor is the lack of a judicial system," she added, describing a country of overcrowded prisons and pro-Erdogan judges in their twenties rushed in to replace ousted peers.

Asli herself was among the more than 70,000 people caught up in a wave of arrests under a state of emergency imposed after a failed 2016 coup against Erdogan.

She was held for 136 days over her links to a pro-Kurdish newspaper before being unexpectedly freed on bail.

The detention of the author of such novels as "The City in Crimson Cloak" and "The Stone Building and Other Places", famed for their unflinching explorations of loss and trauma, drew international condemnation. Turkey's Nobel literature laureate Orhan Pamuk has called her "an exceptionally perceptive and sensitive writer." —AFP ■

Jessica Lange returning to 'American Horror Story'

LOS ANGELES—"American Horror Story" veteran Jessica Lange will be making an appearance in the season eight of the popular show.

The news was shared by actor Sarah Paulson during the Television Critics Association panel and said Lange's character Constance Langdon will appear in an episode of "Apocalypse", the upcoming eighth season of the popular series.

Paulson said that the veteran actor will appear in the sixth episode which she will be directing, reported Variety.

Lange, 69, who featured in the FX anthology series' first four seasons, was nominated for four Emmys for her work in the show. She won the award in 2012 and 2014.

Paulson, 43, will reprise her roles as Cordelia Foxx from "Coven" and Billie Dean from "Murder House," in addition to playing a new character named Venable.

"Apocalypse" will feature Evan Peters, Cody Fern as Michael Langdon, Kathy Bates as Miss Meade, Leslie Grossman as Coco St. Pierre Vanderbilt, Billie Lourd as Mallory, Adina Porter as Dinah Stevens, and Emma Roberts will reprise her "Coven" role as Madison Montgomery.—PTI ■

Over 90 per cent of cellphone apps request access to private information

BEIJING — An internet privacy report said 99.9 per cent of cellphone applications within the Android operating system request access to a user's private information, and the proportion for iOS was 93.8 per cent.

The report on internet privacy security and fraud for the first half of 2018 was jointly released by Tencent Research Center and the Data Center of China Internet (DCCI) at a press conference Friday.

"Almost all applications request access to a user's private information... it is an enduring task to protect the internet users' privacy," Hu Yanping, the founder of DCCI, said at the press conference.

Some applications gain the users' private information by accessing irrelevant services. For example, an online music application might request to use the phone's camera, said Liu Jie, host of the press conference.

Some 89.9 per cent of applications request access to use the camera, and 86.2 per cent request access to the microphone and recording device, which users are the most concerned about, according to the report.

Some applications gain the users' private information by accessing irrelevant services. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Some suggestions to protect private information are given in the report, such as downloading applications from verified sources and cautiously permitting the app to access information about locations, messages, and contacts.

Since the enforcement of the Cybersecurity Law in June 2017, mobile device developers have raised their awareness toward cyber-security, the report says.

Mobile application developers cannot collect user information that is irrelevant, and they should handle such information in accordance with the laws and user agreements, according to authorities. —Xinhua ■

Sitting upright may help people sit exams

WASHINGTON—A study by researchers at San Francisco State University found a simple change in posture may improve your performance at math test.

In the study published in this week's *NeuroRegulation* journal, 125 college students were tested to see how well they could perform simple math, subtracting 7 from 843 sequentially for 15 seconds, while either slumped over or sitting up straight with shoulders back and relaxed.

Fifty-six percent of the students reported finding it easier to perform the math in the upright position, according to the study.

"For people who are anxious about math, posture makes a giant difference," said the paper's first author, Erik Peper, professor of health education with the university.

"The slumped-over position shuts them down and their brains do not work as well. They cannot think as clearly," said Peper.

According to the study, slumping over is a defensive posture that can trigger old negative memories in the body and brain.

While the students who reported no math anxiety before the test did not report as great a benefit from better posture, they did find that doing math while slumped over was somewhat more difficult.

Peper said that those findings could help people prepare for many different types of performance under stress, not just math tests. —Xinhua ■

PHOTO: XINHUA

Ebola outbreak in DR Congo believed to have killed 33: health ministry

DAKAR—A new outbreak of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo is believed to have killed 33 people in the east of the country, the health ministry said Saturday.

Thirteen Ebola cases have been confirmed since the fresh outbreak was declared on August 1 in North Kivu province.

While just three of the fatalities have been among the 13 confirmed cases, the death toll is believed to have risen to 33, the health authorities said in a bulletin Saturday.

Containing an Ebola outbreak in a "war zone" in the Democratic Republic of Congo is among the most difficult challenges the World Health Organization has faced, a top WHO official said Friday.

In North Kivu, health workers will have to navigate their response among more than 100 armed groups, 20 of whom are "highly active," WHO's emergency response chief Peter Salama told reporters.

The outbreak in North Kivu in eastern DRC was declared a week after WHO and the Kinshasa government hailed the end of an earlier Ebola flareup in northwestern Equateur province, which killed 33 people.

As with the earlier outbreak,"vaccinations will be an integral part of the response," the health ministry said Saturday.

Doctors Without Borders team members (pictured May 2018) walk through an Ebola security zone at the entrance of a hospital in DR Congo, where a fresh outbreak of the virus was declared on August 2018, in the east of the country. **PHOTO: AFP**

The latest outbreak of the haemorrhagic virus is the 10 th in the DRC since 1976, when it was discovered in the north of the country, then called Zaire, and named after a river nearby.

In Geneva, the World Health Organization said most of the new cases were recorded in the district of Mangina, 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the city of Beni.

"This is an active conflict zone. The major barrier will be safely accessing the affected population," the WHO said.

One of the world's most feared diseases, Ebola is a virus-caused haemorrhagic fever that in extreme cases causes fatal bleeding from internal organs, the mouth, eyes or ears.

It has a natural host in a species of tropical African fruit bats, from which it is believed to leap to humans who kill and butcher the animals for food.

In the worst outbreak of Ebola, the disease struck the West African states of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone in 2013-15, killing more than 11,300 people.

The DRC authorities were alerted to the recent outbreak by the death of a 65-year-old woman in Mangina in late July.

After she was buried members of her family began to display symptoms of the virus "and seven of them have died," the ministry said Saturday.

Probable Ebola cases have also been registered in neighbouring Ituri province.

While insisting that all means available were being used to stop the latest outbreak, Doctor Ndjoloko Tambwe Bathe, who is heading the fight against the virus, told the UN's news website Okapi that "we can not tell you whether we are making good progress or not". —AFP ■

Myanmar beat Thailand, securing second place in Alpine Cup 2018

IN the latest match of the Alpine Cup 2018, Myanmar U-23 men's national football team trounced U-23 Thailand national football team by 2-1 at Mandalar Thiri Stadium in Mandalay yesterday.

The win secured Myanmar a second place in the tournament.

Myanmar team lined up with Htike Htike Aung, Captain Zaw Min Tun, Win Moe Kyaw, Nanda Kyaw, Hlaing Bo Bo, Maung Maung Soe, Aung Thu, Maung Maung Lwin, Yan Naing Oo, Lwin Moe Aung and Goal Keeper Phone Thitsar Min.

Myanmar's footballers were too strong for the opponents in yesterday's match, demonstrating good tackling and defensive skills. Myanmar earned the opening goal early in the match with a quick score by Aung Thu, whose strong kick could not be blocked by the Thai goalkeeper. Again, after some minutes, Myanmar's Zaw Min Tun scored a second goal for his team with a surprisingly successful kick.

Thailand scored their consolation goal just before the first half ended by a long-ball kick bypassing Myanmar's goalkeeper. Both teams changed tactics in the second half, with Thailand speeding up play and creating chances for their team, but Myanmar's defense was too strong and no more goals were scored.—Lynn Thit (Tgi) ■

Myanmar team celebrates their victory after beating Thailand at Mandalar Thiri Stadium in Mandalay yesterday. **PHOTO: MFF**

Asensio scores twice as Real Madrid topples Juventus 3-1

Marco Asensio entered the game at the start of the second half and scored less than two minutes in before adding another in the 56th minute as Real Madrid rallied to beat Juventus 3-1 in a pre-season exhibition contest. **PHOTO: AFP**

LOS ANGELES—Substitute Marco Asensio made an immediate impact by scoring two early second-half goals as Real Madrid rallied to beat Juventus 3-1 in a pre-season exhibition contest on Saturday.

Asensio entered the game at the start of the second half and scored less than two minutes in before adding another in the 56th minute.

It was the first defeat of the pre-season and the final match of the International Champions Cup campaign for Italy's Juventus. The Serie A champions now open up their title defense at Chievo on August 18.

They were without new signing Cristiano Ronaldo, who did not make his debut against his former team. The Portuguese superstar skipped the club's US tour because he was recovering from his World Cup performance.

Gareth Bale also scored for the European champions as the Welshman served notice that he is going to produce despite the loss of Ronaldo.

Bale hit a stunning shot from 20 yards out in the 39th minute to level the score at 1-1 in the front of the crowd of 60,000 at FedEx Field in Landover, Maryland.

Bale finished with 16 La Liga goals last season and is in his fifth campaign with Real Madrid.

Asensio subbed in after half-time and wasted no time getting on the board. He finished off a drive by side-footing a shot home in the 47th minute on a rush with Vinicius Jr., who also entered the game at half-time.

Asensio scored just nine minutes later to make it 3-1 for Real Madrid on another unselfish pass, this time from Lucas Vazquez. Asensio's shot deflected off the right arm of Juventus goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny and trickled into the net. Juventus' lone score came in the 12th minute on an own goal by Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal.

Carvajal was trying to corral Joao Cancelo's left side cross when he deflected the ball into his own net.

It was the first pre-season defeat for Juventus, who were without many of their key attackers for their US tour, including Douglas Costa, Paulo Dybala and Mario Mandzukic.

In earlier matches, Juventus beat Bayern Munich, Benfica and the Major League Soccer All-Stars.—AFP ■

Putnam leads Barracuda Championship by three strokes

RENO (Nevada)—Andrew Putnam earned 15 points on Saturday to grab a three-point lead over fellow American and playing partner Sam Saunders heading into the final round of the PGA Tour's Barracuda Championship.

Putnam had eight birdies and just one bogey at windy Montreux Golf and Country Club in the Tour's lone Modified Stableford scoring tournament in Reno, Nevada.

Under the format, the players get eight points for an albatross, five for an eagle, two for a birdie and zero for par with a point subtracted for a bogey and three points docked for double bogey or worse. Putnam, a 29-year-old from Tacoma, Washington, who is seeking his first USPGA Tour victory, tops the leaderboard with 38 points over three days. Saunders, who is golfing legend Arnold Palmer's grandson, eagled the par-five 13th and 18th in a 12-point round. Like Putnam, he's hoping for his first Tour win.

Chad Campbell was third at 32 points after compiling 22 points in his round.

Ireland's Shane Lowry eagled the 18th hole in an eight-point round to reach a total of 30 points.—AFP ■