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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Elephant conservationist selected for State Counsellor's gratitude of honour for July

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the State Counsellor
Message of thanks to the people
6th Waxing of Wagaung 1380 ME
(17 August 2018)

1. Conservation of natural environment is simultaneously conserving the natural forests, mountains, lands and waters as well as conserving the wildlife living in the natural forests and mountains. Only then can the mutually interdependent ecosystem of the livings and non-livings will be sustained without any damages. As the natural environment is damaged, there will be more unnatural weather phenomenon that produces more natural disasters. The government is establishing and implementing an economic system that is appropriate to the country for the socio-economic development of the people together with political reforms.

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MSMEs in Sagaing urged to grasp opportunities brought by MSMEs Products Exhibition

AN exhibition of the products produced by local micro, small and medium enterprises-MSMEs in Sagaing Region began at the City Hall in Monywa, the capital city of Sagaing Region, yesterday, with an opening address by Vice President U Myint Swe.

The participation of private banks in the Sagaing exhibition, which is the fifth one after the same kind of exhibitions in Mandalay, Magway, Ayeyawady and Taunggyi, is the significance of this exhibition.

"As private banks are participating in this exhibition, MSMEs are urged to grasp opportunities brought about by the exhibition," said Vice President U Myint Swe, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Work Committee, in his opening address.

The committee has planned to hold the same kind of exhibition in Bago Region, Yangon Region,

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Vice President U Myint Swe (centre) and Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing inspect wooden table produced by a medium enterprise displayed at the MSMEs Products Exhibition in Monywa yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

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Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

By Myo Myint (MNA)

THE Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session held its tenth-day meeting at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning.

At the meeting, questions on natural disaster relief, audit report and forest sectors were asked and answered, decision of the Hluttaw obtained on Myanmar Mines Rule and a motion on conserving natural swiftlet bird nest habitats.

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

Q&A session

In the questions and answers session, a question posed by U Pa Htan of Matupi constituency on emergency works conducted in Matupi Township, where houses were damaged due to heavy rains, water erosion and landslides, was answered by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung. The Deputy Minister said Ks 27.9 million was transferred to Chin State government in April 2017 to construct retaining walls and water drains in Matupi Township.

The works were assigned to tender winning companies Taw Win Phu Gya Company and AIDAK Company. Taw Win Phu Gya Company started construction work on the water drains in March 2018 but due to heavy rain on 10 March 2018, the water drain under construction was damaged and the cement mixer fell into in the water drain and the work was temporarily stopped. Retaining wall constructed by AIDAK Company was completed.

Ministry of Border Affairs is also constructing five water drains and a retaining wall with water outlets with Ks 236.25 million in Matupi Town.

In addition to this, Ministry of Construction had been informed to conduct construction and maintenance of bridges, drains and retaining walls in Matupi town to prevent landslides caused by natural disasters, said the Deputy Minister.

Union Auditor General U Maw Than replied to a question raised by U Kan Myint of Thayet constituency on whether interim reports are made when illegalities such as corruption, misdemeanor, wastage and irregularities occur. Auditor General Handbook had prescribed for the Union Auditor General Office to report urgently with an interim report to relevant authorities whenever an audit uncover an illegal act that is important, without waiting until the final report is prepared, and Union Auditor General Office has also been instructed likewise.

As per this handbook guideline and instruction, state and region auditor general offices uncover illegalities such as corruption, misdemeanor, wastage and irregularities, Union Auditor General Office send an interim report to the relevant ministry in order to take appropriate action. And according to the importance of the audit finding, it is included in the report to the President and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, said the Union Auditor General.

SEE PAGE-6

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

By Aung Ye Thwin (MNA)

The Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session held its tenth-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning. At the meeting, asterisk-marked questions were raised and answered, two reports read and Hluttaw's decision obtained and a motion discussed.

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

Q&A session

At the meeting, Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe answered to a question posed by Dr. Khin Maung Win of Taninthayi Region constituency 11 on plan to conduct major repair and upgrade of Taninthayi Region Kawthoung District People's Hospital from 100-bed to 200-bed hospital. The Union Minister explained that the hospital only has 101 hospital personnel out of the full strength of 201. To upgrade to a 200-bed hospital, it would need at least 594 hospital personnel and the ministry do not have such number of personnel, and thus at the moment it couldn't be upgraded. As for the major repair, the proposal submitted was incorrect and thus fund couldn't be allocated despite the major repair being planned. It will be arranged in fiscal year 2018-2019, said the Union Minister. At the moment, a single six-apartment three storey staff house costing Ks 640 million is being constructed and another four-apartment four storey staff house costing Ks 568 million is being planned, added the Union Minister.

U Saw Chit Oo of Kayin State constituency 3 then asked about plans to construct a stadium stand, fence and a retaining wall for Zwe Mann Sports Ground in Kayin State, Hlaingbwe Township. Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe answered that the construction of the sports ground was completed on 31 March 2018 in fiscal year 2017-2018 with Ks 90 million provided from Kayin State government fund. But fund for 2,700 ft. outer fence work and 1,800 ft. inner fence work was not allocated. The state government will include the fund for a stadium stand, fence and retaining wall in fiscal year 2019-2020, and if the state government is unable to, the Union Government will provide part of the fund required, said the Union Minister.

A question raised by Dr. Lin Wai Phyo Latt of Taninthayi Region constituency 5 was also answered by Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe.

Hluttaw decides on reports read

Next, Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee members read reports on an amendment to a law and a bill after which Hluttaw's decision was obtained.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Dr. Myo Aung first read the committee's report on the second amendment to the Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits Law sent with amendments by Pyithu Hluttaw. Bill Committee member explained that the amendment suggested by U Kyi Win of the Ayeyawady Region constituency 12 was to confiscate farmlands as state owned and then re-distribute, but this process is outdated and not appropriate for the present time, situation and the market economy norms and thus not required to be amended. As the committee had discussed in detail with Amyotha Hluttaw representatives who debated the draft law (amendments), Amyotha Hluttaw Farmers Affairs Committee, Amyotha Hlutaw Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery Development Committee, relevant ministries, officials from Union Attorney General Office and experts from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, the Hluttaw is suggested to decide and approve the law with original amendments submitted by the committee and additional amendments presently proposed.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than obtained the decision of the Hluttaw and approved the draft law.

Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee member Daw Ohn Kyi then read and explained the committee's report on International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Bill sent with amendments by Pyithu Hluttaw. Here, too, the Bill Committee member explained that an amendment discussed and suggested by U Tin Aung Tun of Magway Region constituency 5 was not clear and concise and thus shouldn't be amended. The committee also had discussed in detail with Amyotha Hluttaw representatives who debated the bill, relevant ministries, officials from Union Attorney General Office and experts from Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission, and the Hluttaw is suggested to decide and approve the bill with original amendments submitted by the committee and additional amendments presently proposed.

Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than again obtained the decision of the Hluttaw and approved the bill.

Hluttaw debates a motion

Afterwards, a motion tabled by U Myo Win of Mon State constituency 8 urging the government to control and manage the management committee, development committee and farmland management committee to ensure that there is no corruption, because plots were formed on many farms and plantation lands and sold off illegally, causing losses of farms and plantation lands and lands set aside for expansion of towns and villages were also lost in a similar manner, was discussed by U Kyaw Swe of Magway Region constituency 11, U Aye Min Han of Mon State constituency 1, U Nyi Sein of Shan State constituency 5, U Myint Naing of Rakhine State constituency 5 and U Maung Maung Latt of Sagaing Region constituency 9.

The Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session will hold its eleventh-day meeting on 21 August, it is learnt. ■

Elephant conservationist selected for State Counsellor's gratitude of honour for July

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Office of the State Counsellor
Message of thanks to the people

6th Waxing of Wagaung 1380 ME
(17 August 2018)

FROM PAGE-1

Long term aims were established and efforts made to eradicate illegal trades and instill good practices of abiding the law in the community. Disregarding the enacted established law and taking part in prohibited activities for self-gain are to be suppressed and prevented jointly by the government, people and civil society organizations. Only then can a stable, peaceful community where rule of law prevails be achieved.

2. According to the records, there are a total of about 150 elephants living in the six forest reserves in Ayeyawady Region, Ngaputaw Township. Due to the illegal trade of elephant trunks, and tusks, starting from about 2011, wild elephants were being killed by poachers. The number of wild elephants killed increased in 2013 and now, not only the trunks and tusks but elephant skins and meat were being traded illegally. To prevent the wild elephants from being killed by poachers, protection and conservation works were jointly conducted by the Myanmar Police Force, Forest Department, Wildlife Conservation Society Myanmar (WCS-Myanmar), Friends of Wildlife (FOW) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
3. Since 2013 while serving as head of administration in Tin Chaung Village Tract U Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay has been working enthusiastically together with relevant departments, organizations and security forces to protect and conserve the wild elephants from being killed and to expose and apprehend the poachers. Due to this, two poachers were caught in 2016 with arms used to poach wild elephants. In 2017, four flintlock guns and accessories used to kill elephants were seized. Due to these acts, U Kyaw Myint Tun was honored with township award and honored by head of the Ayeyawady Region Police Force. He was jointly presented "Hero of elephant conservation" by the WWF and the FOW.
4. U Kyaw Myint Tun's father and grandfather had earned a living with their own domesticated elephants and U Kyaw Myint Tun understood the value and usefulness of elephants since he was young and actively participated and cooperated with relevant departments, security forces, and organizations as a volunteer in wild elephant protection and conservation works.
5. Therefore, U Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay is being selected as person who ought to be honored for the month of July and this message of thanks has been issued.
6. Just like U Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay, the citizens, well-wishers, and civil society organizations are requested to participate in the nation building works based on national spirit with keen efforts and endeavors. U Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay is honored and recorded with this message of thanks.

Aung San Suu Kyi
State Counsellor

(Unofficial translation of the Message of thanks to the people from the State Counsellor.)

Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay "Hero of elephant conservation"

1. According to the records, there are a total of about 150 elephants living in the six forest reserves in Ayeyawady Region, Ngaputaw Township. Due to the illegal trade of elephant trunks, and tusks, starting from about 2011, wild elephants were being killed by poachers. The number of wild elephants killed increased in 2013 and now, not only the trunks and tusks but the skins meat of elephants are being traded illegally. Due to the poachers, from 2011 to May 2018, a total of 59 wild elephants were killed in Ayeyawady Region.
2. To prevent the wild elephants from being killed by poachers, protection and conservation works were jointly conducted by the Myanmar Police Force, Forest Department, Wildlife Conservation Society Myanmar (WCS-Myanmar), Friends of Wildlife (FOW) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
3. Head of administration in Tin Chaung Village Tract U Kyaw Myint Tun @ U Tun Lay has been working enthusiastically together with relevant departments, organisations and security forces to protect and conserve the wild elephants.
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14 stranded Myanmar workers return from Saudi Arabia

FOURTEEN Myanmar migrant workers, who were denied from getting Final Exist Visa by their employers for leaving jobs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, returned Yangon yesterday after negotiation between Myanmar government and Saudi authorities.

To bring them back, the Consular and Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population negotiated with the International Organization for Migration-IOM, employers of the workers and Saudi authorities.

The fourteen workers are of 26 workers who left for Saudi Arabia in December 2010 to work there under the six-year contract with Dar Ai Samara Est for General Contracting.

Of them, one returned home with his own arrangement after the contract, but the remaining workers left the job before it was finished under the terms of contract due to lack of salaries, threatens and inconvenient food.

Eleven workers returned home under their own arrangement following the negotiation between the Myanmar Embassy in Riyadh and Saudi authorities.

The last batch of 14 workers were exempted from paying tax, visa fee and fine thanks to the negotiation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Saudi authorities.

Myanmar migrant workers, who were denied from getting final exist Visa by their employers for leaving jobs in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, returned Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

The IOM paid flight expenses for the workers.— Myanmar News Agency ■

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Vice President and officials cut the ceremonial ribbons for opening MSMEs Products Exhibition at the City Hall in Monywa yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

MSMEs in Sagaing Region urged to grasp opportunities brought by MSMEs Products Exhibition

FROM PAGE-1

Mon State and Taninthayi Region and Nay Pyi Taw will host the national-level exhibition, while national-level award winners will be selected from the nationwide exhibitions.

In exhibitions, the businesses which have prospects for development were recorded and are invited to trade fairs, business matching and business plan competitions and are introduced with private banks to get loans.

SME development agency meetings are being held during the exhibition period, practical assistance and support for the development of SMEs in the region could be done through discussions and coordination between stakeholders and MSME businesses.

"MSMEs in Myanmar are transforming from traditional businesses to innovative MSMEs due to their innovation and they should try hard to become entrepreneurs," said the Vice President.

He also urged the businesses in Sagaing Region to become envious of the innovations, efforts made and grasping opportunities made by other business enterprises of the previous exhibitions.

"Only with innovation, good production and services, can MSMEs in Myanmar compete with regional businesses and penetrate international markets," said Vice President U Myint Swe.

Some 90 per cent of the country's economy is tied into the private sector, and 99 per cent of the private sector is made up of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), according to statistics.

To assist the MSMEs throughout the country, three bodies to assess, develop and manage funds were formed in January, in accordance with the SME law.

The MSMEs exhibitions have brought opportunities to local businesses to advertise their products and to attract local and foreign visitors with natural resources, culture and customs in respective regions.

"Another opportunity is that the exhibitions can bring about supply chain among the business as MSMEs from other areas also participate in the exhibition," said U Myint Swe.

The Vice President also urged local MSMEs to improve marketable products in order to find international markets saying that those enterprises which do not have markets cannot be sustainable.

He also called on the regional MSMEs to strive for establishing a regional MSME community which can be relied upon for local products and services and for the country's socio-economic development and environmental protection.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Vice Chairman of the MSMEs development committee Union Minister for Industry U Khin Maung Cho and members of the work committee Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing, Magway Region Chief Minister Dr. Aung Moe Nyo, Sagaing Region Hluttaw Speaker U Than, Chief Justice of the High Court of the region U Win Myint, Deputy Ministers, cabinet members of the region and state governments, Sagaing Region Advocate General, Sagaing Region Auditor General, Chairman of the Naga Self-administered Zone and members and businessmen.

Following the ceremony, Vice President U Myint Swe attended the opening ceremony of the Small and Medium Industrial Development Bank (SMIDB) in Monywa along with Union Minister U Khin Maung Cho and Sagaing Region Chief Minister Dr. Myint Naing.

Afterwards, the Vice President visited the Bodhi Tahtaung Nursery and gave instructions on greening of the region, urging the officials concerned to conserve the forests and to carry out afforestation.
— Myanmar News Agency ■

Heavy trucks banned on damaged Momauk-Lwejel road

TRANSPORT authorities have announced that they will ban ten-wheeled vehicles and above for two months as road between Momauk and Lwejel in Bhamo District, Kachin State, needs urgent repair.

The Momauk-Kyauksakhan-Seinlon-Lwejel road is badly damaged by heavy tracks. To prevent possible auto accidents and related problems caused by the bad condition of the road, authorities will repair the road between 21 August and 15 October this year.

A 12-wheeled car driver said; "I have been a road user for over ten years. I have never seen such severe road damage during a decade. This monsoon has seen more rains in comparison with the same time last year and the number of vehicles has significantly increased than before. I welcome the government's project to repair the road."

During this year, some parts of the Momauk-Lwejel road were seriously damaged due to continuous rains, causing transportation barriers for road users. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is carrying out road improvement projects nationwide so as to provide better transportation services to the general public.—District IPRD ■

Bilateral trade with US increases by $86 million this year

Myanmar pulses are kept on display for sale and export at a market. **PHOTO: ZAW MIN LATT**

BILATERAL trade in goods between Myanmar and the United States topped US$244 million in the first half of the present six-month interim fiscal period, according to the latest monthly figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

The current figure increased by $86 million against the same period last year.

This year saw Myanmar's export greater than its import. Between April and June this year, the country exported $156.9 million worth of commodities, while its imports from the US amounted to $87 million. At this time last year, the trade between the two countries was $157.8 million, with $53.039 million in exports and $104.755 million in imports.

Myanmar exports marine products, clothing, beans and pulses, forestry and some agriculture products to the American market. Its imports from the US are medicine and related equipment, industrial, transportation and dairy products, and other commodities.

According to the ministry's annual statistics, the Myanmar-US bilateral trade reached its peak of $718 million in the last 2017-2018 FY. The bilateral trade was $293 million in 2011-12 FY, $122 million in 2012-13 FY, $104 million in 2013-14 FY, $544 million in 2014-15 FY, $196 million in 2015-16 FY and $690 million in 2016-17 FY.—Swe Nyein ■

Individual trade at Myawady border exceeds Ks9 billion this FY

TRADE through Myawady, a Myanmar-Thailand border gate, using individual trading cards (ITCs) totalled Ks9.088 billion within the past four months, according to the Ministry of Commerce's trade report issued this Friday.

During the period, the Myawady border gate was ranked first, both for the volume of trade conducted and its value, followed by the Mawtaung border gate with Ks2.259 billion and Tamu with Ks1.985 billion. The ministry's trade report showed that the value of trade through the remaining border stations was lower than Ks400 million.

Individual trade from all border points of entry between 1 April and 3 August of this fiscal year was Ks14.375 billion, including Ks3.243 billion in exports and Ks11.132 billion in imports.

The ministry has issued individual trading cards to border merchants, to promote cross-border trade since 2012-2013 FY. Since then, to date, a total of 1,474 cards have been issued to individual merchants. Trade authorities issued 42 cards to new traders in the current financial year.

The ministry is putting forth continuous efforts to boost the trade industry, formulate trade policies in line with the market economic system and improve the trade environment, under its trade policy objectives.—Khine Khant ■

File photo shows cars passing through the Myawady border gate. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

Trade Mark Ads

Call Thin Thin May, 09251022355, 09974424848

Myanmar-Lao Boundary Reproduced Sheet No.12 signed

Officials sign the Myanmar-Lao Boundary Reproduced Sheet No.12 on 16 August. **PHOTO MNA**

A delegation of Myanmar led by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended the Thirteenth Meeting of the Myanmar-Lao Border Authorities at Central Level which was held in Luangprabang Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic from 15 to 16 August.

During the meeting, U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and H.E. Mr. Sengphet Houngbounguang, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, signed the Myanmar-Lao Boundary Reproduced Sheet No.12 on 16 August.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Independent Commission of Enquiry Chairperson departs from Yangon

Ambassador Rosario Manalo (Centre Left) seen off by officials at Yangon International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

INDEPENDENT Commission of Enquiry Chairperson Ambassador Rosario Manalo departed from Yangon yesterday morning while the commission member Ambassador Kenzo Oshima departed from Yangon later in evening the same day.

Independent Commission of Enquiry Chairperson Ambassador Rosario Manalo and the commission member were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Strategic Studies and Training Department Director-General Daw Kay Thi Soe, Protocol Department Deputy Director-General U Zaw Tun Oo and other responsible officials.—Myanmar News Agency ■

Myanmar, Bangladesh conduct coordinated naval patrol in Naf River

A SIX-MEMBER border police team led by Police Captain Naing Lin, commander of Kyeekyun police post on two fast attack Naval water craft met up with 12-member Border Guard Force from Bangladesh led by Subedar Md. Adul Jalil on two motor boats near the meeting point at 15 nautical mile in the middle of Naf river, water border of the two countries, near the mouth of Yay Twin Pyin stream and conducted a coordinated patrol along the Naf River reaching 18 nautical mile point near Thee Chaung stream at 11:20 am, it is learnt.—Police Information ■

Myanmar-Bangladesh coordinated naval patrol seen. **PHOTO: POLICE INFORMATION**

Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds tenth-day meeting

FROM PAGE-2

A question raised by Daw Khin Than Nu of Mindon constituency on whether land lease fee obtained from leasing forest land to construct telecommunication towers are taxed was answered by Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environment Conservation U Ohn Win. The Union Minister said 10 companies had constructed 240 telecommunication towers and forest land and departmental lands and the land lease fee, insurance, commercial tax 5 percent were being deposited into relevant department accounts as Government funds. From 2015 to date, Ks 1345.2 million has been transferred as government fund, said the Union Minister.

Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung. **PHOTO: MNA**

Similarly, questions posed by U Khin Cho of Hlaingbwe constituency on plans to promote commercial planting of Accacia Mangium (Japanese Padauk), Dr. U Than Aung Soe of Minhla constituency and U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency on arrangements made to prevent poaching of wild elephants and safeguards made to protect humans from wild elephants, was answered and explained by Union Minister U Ohn Win.

Motion to conserve natural habitat for swiftlet bird nest discussed and decided

Next a motion tabled by Daw Tin Tin Yi of Kyunsu constituency urging the government to conserve and protect mountain cliffs on islands that are a natural habitat for the swiftlet bird nest was discussed by U Soe Paing Htay of Myeik constituency, Daw Khin Sandi of Launglon constituency, U Khin Zaw of Kawthoung constituency and U Nyan Hein of Thanbyuzayat constituency.

In his discussion on the motion, Union Minister U Ohn Win said bird nest collection was permitted in Taninthayi Region Dawei District Launglon Township, Kawthoung District Kawthoung Township, Myeik District Kyunsu Township and Palaw Township, Ayeyawady Region Pathein and Ngaputaw townships.

The works of the tender winning bird nest collectors are checked and overseen by work management groups formed with Forest Department and General Administration Department officials. Modern method of collecting bird nests through man-made nest houses were also being properly checked and overseen so that there is no damage to the natural environment and the birds. As such, the Union Minister explained to put the motion on record and keep it under observation.

The decision of the Hluttaw was then made to put the motion on record and keep it under observation.

The Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session will hold its eleventh-day meeting on 21 August, it is learnt. ■

The Opening Ceremony of DW Akademie Office

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and dignitaries pose for documentary photo at the opening of DW Akademie office in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION MINISTER for Information Dr. Pe Myint attended the opening ceremony of DW Akademie office held at the compound of the Goethe Institute in Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road, Yangon yesterday evening.

At the ceremony Head of DW Akademie Ms. Ute Schaeffer and German Ambassador to Myanmar H.E. Dorothee Janetzke-Wenzel delivered opening speeches followed with a speech by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint.

Next, the four years of DW Akademie's work in media development of Myanmar was shown by a video.

Afterwards, outgoing Country Manager Mr. Patrick Benning and Country Representative Ms. Isabella Kurkowski who had completed their assignment in DW Akademie Yangon Office spoke and incoming Country Manager Ms. Eva Mehl extended greetings.

Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and officials from DW Akademie then posed for a commemorative group photo. Starting from 2014, DW Akademie plays a main supporting role in the establishment of Myanmar Journalism Institute (MJI) and Myanmar Press Council. DW Akademie helped organise workshops and annual media development conferences between media, civil society organisations and the government and supported and assisted in the digital opportunities, media information literacy and media viability sectors.

DW Akademie is Germany's leading front line association in media development playing a leading role together with partner organizations on development of free media systems, development of rights to obtain news and establishing norms for an independent media.

The ceremony was attended by Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, officials from Myanmar Press Council and international organizations working for media development. —Myanmar News Agency

MYANMAR GAZETTE

Heads of organizations transferred, confirmed, appointed

1. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has transferred Rector Dr. Tin Win of University of Economics, Meiktila under the Ministry of Education, as Rector of University of Economics, Yangon under the same ministry from the date of he assumes charge of his duties.
2. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has confirmed the appointment of Director General U Aung Myint of Department of Historical Research and National Library under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture on the expiry of the one-year probationary period.
3. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has appointed Pro Rector Dr. Nang Hseng Hom of Yezin Agricultural University under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation as Rector of the same university on probation from the date she assumes charge of her duties.—Myanmar News Agency

Deputy Minister U Aung Hla Tun inspects sub-printing house, retransmission station in Monywa

DEPUTY MINISTER for Information U Aung Hla Tun inspected the Sub-Printing House and Myanmar Radio and Television (retransmission) station in Monywa, Sagaing Region yesterday afternoon.

Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun inspects the Sub-Printing House in Monywa. **PHOTO: MNA**

The Deputy Minister and party inspected the printing of newspaper at sub-printing house (Monywa), the staff houses of the sub-printing house and met with the staff.

They then went on to Myanmar Radio and Television (retransmission) station in Monywa where the station head U Tin Soe explained about the status of retransmission. The Deputy Minister gave necessary instructions. —Min Htet Aung (Mann Sub-Printing House)

Yezin Agricultural University gets National Climate Smart Agriculture Center

Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu visits National Climate Smart Agriculture Center at Yezin Agricultural University. **PHOTO: MNA**

NATIONAL Climate Smart Agriculture Center opened at the Yezin Agricultural University in Zeyathiri Township yesterday.

The center came into existence as Myanmar facing impacts of the climate change is paying attention to developing of climate change and friendly agricultural methods , said Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in his opening remarks at the center.

Myanmar is also working to improve infrastructures and resources including agricultural experts related with climate change as the country is facing climate change induced disasters.

Experts of the ministry are making field trips and disseminate knowledge on climate-change friendly agricultural methods to farmers.

The center was formally opened by Union Minister Dr. Aung Thu and Resident Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization Ms. Xiaojie Fan.

The center is designed offering research works for post graduate and doctorate program trainees and for producing agricultural experts.—Myanmar News Agency

Get full advantages, benefits of NVC

THE Union Government is making efforts to speed up the national verification process, the first step in the process towards citizenship, in accordance with the existing laws and regulations.

While we are ready for repatriation of displaced people, we have understood that it is necessary to raise awareness about the national verification process, and the eight benefits of holding an NVC prepared in the Myanmar and English languages. Because, only if there is an understanding, will the displaced persons return and the repatriation works be accomplished.

Hence, the Union Government has made arrangements for NV card applicants to simultaneously apply for the citizenship scrutinization process.

Leaflets that outline the national verification process and advantages of NVC and responsibilities of NVC holder were also distributed to the displaced persons.

As a first step, freedom of movement for those holding NVC is granted in Maungtaw District, and the authorities are trying to expand this to other districts.

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As a first step, freedom of movement for those holding NVC is granted in Maungtaw District, and the authorities are trying to expand this to other districts. We are considering and discussing to conduct the comparative study of the citizenship laws and practices on some ASEAN countries such as Thailand, Viet Nam, the Philippines, Cambodia and Laos etc.

At the same time, anyone who makes threats against the National Verification Card issuing programme will not be tolerated will be brought to court in accordance with the law. The work of verifying identification and issuing NV Cards is a priority for the government and it is also playing an important role in bringing development to the Rakhine State.

The mobile teams of the Rakhine State Immigration and Population Department have made numerous field trips to villages in Maungtaw, explaining to villagers the merits of having an NV card.

Meanwhile, authorities announced they will take action against anyone who threatens villagers under the Counter-Terrorism Law.

At the beginning of the NVC issuing programme, 18 townselders have been killed, and three are still missing. Villagers were also threatened by some organizations and ARSA terrorists not to apply for the NVC card, and those villagers who participated in the NVC card issuing process were given death threats.

We have taken necessary steps to assure full advantages and benefits of NVC holders and to properly indentify the people crossing the border.

We are committed to achieving a durable solution for peace and prosperity in Rakhine State.

Judiciary, a vital organ of the state

U Khin Maung (A retired diplomat)

Introduction

AS regards my article "Judiciary, a vital organ of the state," please permit me to mention in essence, what our honourable President His Excellency U Win Myint has given guidance on the Judicial sector, in a meeting with Yangon Region administrative, legislative and judicial officers inter-alia as follows:

1. "The judicial sector needs to be free from bias and corruption. All levels of the judiciary need to be managed properly. Rule of law is to be conducted according to the laws. All are equal in the face of the law whether they are rich or poor, with or without power or authority. Rule of law is important in a democratic system of government and if democracy is desired, there should be mutual respect for one another, one group for another and all need to abide by and respect the law".

2. Well, dear reader, as known to you, there are three vital organs in a sovereign state. They are law-making organ or the parliament, executive organ or the government and judicial organ or the judiciary. In some constitutional laws, including our own 1947 constitution, the Supreme Court is empowered to act as the guardian of the constitution. Under the article 25, rights to constitutional remedies, the Supreme Court shall have power to issue directions for the enforcement of any of the rights guaranteed by the constitution. May I quote article 25 of our 1947 constitution as follows:

Rights to constitutional remedies

25(1) The right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of any of the rights conferred by this Chapter is hereby guaranteed.

(2) Without prejudice to the powers that may be vested on this behalf in other courts, the Supreme Court shall have power to issue directions in the nature of Habeas Corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto, and certiorari, appropriate to the rights guaranteed in this chapter.

3. Law is everybody's concern. Equality before the law; no man is above the law. These concepts or principles are universally well-known and they are the common concern and the common aspirations of all the citizens of a state. And we have a saying that, ignorance of law is no excuse. And from the academic point of view, "law is the regime that orders human activities and relations through systematic application of the force of politically organized society, or through social pressure, backed by force, in such a society, the legal system (respect and obey the law).

So, we have such principles as the rule of law, law and order, and administration of justice by the courts of law. As regards the significance of the rule of law, please permit me to quote what our first Prime Minister U Nu said in this address to the parliament. U Nu said "the first essential condition for making democracy secure in our lives is to base all our activities firmly on 'the rule of law'".

4. Before presenting my views and understanding of the role of the judiciary, I would like to mention only in brief, the role of the parliament or legislative organ and the role of the executive organ or the government. The legislative organ is "the branch of government responsible for making statutory laws." And "the statutory law is the body of law derived from statutes rather than from constitutions or judicial decisions." The executive organ is the branch of government, responsible for effecting and enforcing law. So, the executive authority is person or persons who constitute this. Well, the judiciary is the branch of government responsible for interpreting laws and administering justice.

With due respect and high regards, we call a government body consisting of one or more judges who sit to adjudicate dispute and administer justice a "court". In the United Nations organization, there is a court to adjudicate disputes among member-states. It is called "the International Court of Justice (ICJ)"

Judicial norms and principles

In our Myanmar society, we have a common saying that "a man may not live a hundred-year long life, but he may come upon over one hundred number of cases, "civil suit or criminal". The main aim of our traditional justice is to achieve harmony and peace in society. The judges and arbitrators are there primarily to give a patient ear to the litigants and gently guide them to compromise. Thus we have a custom, since olden days but still thriving. It is "let amity be eternal, ever-lasting and enmity be ephemeral" between the litigants. In other words, seek a compromise, peace and harmony by mutual consent, instead of going to a court of law for legal settlement of the dispute. This is one of the valuable legacies of Myanmar justice system, we have inherited from our forefathers.

5. In the light of some experience and education I have acquired from my superior judges and magistrates, such as district and sessions judges and district magistrates, while serving as "a special power subdivisional magistrate," I would like to offer my advice and humble suggestions to the honourable judges and lawyers as follows:

-First of all, a criminal trial is not a hole-and-corner affair. There are no secrets or mysteries. In a criminal trial, the accused person must be permitted ample latitude in cross examining the prosecution witnesses.

-Lawyers are officers of the court, in a criminal ever more than a civil trial. It is their duty to marshal or to muster the evidence and present the facts in calm and orderly form, to find the laws which are applicable to the facts, and present their case to the court in the consciousness that the essential purpose of trial is to discover the truth.

-Justice delayed is justice denied. This principle is even more true in criminal cases, where the accused person may be in custody, without bail.

-Well, Justice rushed is justice crushed, too.

-It is not enough that justice is done. Justice must be seen to have been done.

-It is important in a criminal trial that the prosecution should discharge its "burden of proof". What difficulties encountered in finding the evidence may be, the essential burden must not shift.

6. Conclusion

With all sincerity and modesty, may I offer some humble suggestions that "all judges should go on learning, as the honourable judges, as they are respectfully addressed, as the learned judges.

"No educative process is ever the end; it is always the beginning of more education, more learning, more living." And, "the purpose of education is to make a man useful, useful to himself and useful to others." The need for judges and magistrates to know the customs, cultures, and character of the people whom they serve is as great as today than before, if not greater". Thank you.

Reference:

(1) The Global New Light of Myanmar, 30.7.2018 issue

(2) Law and custom in Burmese Family, Dr Maung Maung.

(3) The constitution of the Union of Burma 1947

(4) A trial in Burma, Dr Maung Maung

(5) Word Power made easy, Norman Lewis

(6) Black's Law Dictionary, Baryan A.Garner

Central Body for Suppression of Trafficking in Persons

Myanmar Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day

13th September

The entire public needs to participate, Trafficking in persons to eliminate...

2018 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Day's Objectives

- To mobilize the participation of all citizens in combating human trafficking as a national duty;
- To have the public instilled with awareness about and knowledge of trafficking in persons;
- To protect and care trafficked victims with empathy; and
- To strengthen cooperation and coordination among all counter trafficking stakeholders – government agencies, civil society organizations, UN agencies, international organizations and general public.

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 15:00 hrs MST on 17-8-2018)

Flood condition of Sittoung River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River has exceeded by about (2½) feet at Madauk above its danger level. It may rise about (1) foot during the next (2) days and may remain above its danger level.

Flood condition of Thanlwin River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Thanlwin River has exceeded by about (4½) feet at Hpa-an above its danger level. It may remain above its danger level during the next (5) days.

Flood conditions of Ngawun River

According to the (14:30) hrs MST observations today, the water level of Ngawun River has exceeded by about (3) inches at Ngathaingchaung and (½) foot at Thabaung above their respective danger levels. The water levels of Ngathaingchaung during the next (2) days and Thabaung during the next (3) days, may remain above their respective danger levels.

Advisory

It is especially advised that people who have settled near the river banks and low lying area in Hpa-an, and Thabaung townships, Madauk and Ngathaingchaung, to take precaution measure.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 17 August, 2018)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 18AUGUST 2018: Rain will be fairly widespread in Sagaing Region and Northern Shan and Chin states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with regionally heavy falls in Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi regions, Kayin and Mon states and isolated heavy falls in Lower Sagaing, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, (Southern and Eastern) Shan, Rakhine and Kayah states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

US threatens more Turkey sanctions if pastor not freed

WASHINGTON — The US warned Thursday it would levy more sanctions on the troubled Turkish economy if Ankara does not soon release a jailed American pastor described by President Donald Trump as a "hostage."

Deepening a spat that has rattled financial markets and threated to split a long-standing defense and political alliance, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggested the next spiral of tit-for-tat sanctions was coming soon.

"We have put sanctions on several of their cabinet members," Mnuchin told President Donald Trump in a cabinet meeting attended by the press, including AFP.

"We have more that we are planning to do if they don't release him quickly."

Trump prefaced Mnuchin's remarks by saying that Turkey had not been a very good friend to America.

Referring to imprisoned pastor Andrew Brunson, Trump said "they have a great Christian pastor there, he's a very innocent man."

He later tweeted that the Protestant clergyman, who has been detained since 2016 when he was arrested in a government crackdown following a failed coup bid, was a "great patriot" being held "hostage."

Christian evangelicals constitute an important part of Trump's political base.

The threat comes as Turkey sought to reassure investors rattled by the sanctions-fueled crash of the Turkish lira, insisting the country would emerge stronger.

Finance Minister Berat Albayrak, the son-in-law of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, addressed hundreds of foreign investors from the United States, Europe and Asia via a conference call in a bid to soothe the markets.

The lira has clawed back some ground over the last two days — after losing almost a quarter of its value on Friday and Monday — but economists are warning that Turkey must urgently address its economic imbalances to avoid more troubles ahead.

"Turkey will emerge stronger from these (currency) fluctuations," Albayrak was quoted by state-run TRT television as saying during the conference call.

Albayrak rejected seeking a bailout from the IMF, an option never seen as likely given that Erdogan often boasts of paying off Turkey's past IMF debts in May 2013.

US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, at a cabinet meeting, threatens more sanctions against Turkey if it does not release a jailed American pastor. **PHOTO: AFP**

The lira, which earlier this week traded at well over seven to the dollar, held onto its gains during Albayrak's discussion, trading at 5.7 against the greenback.

"We will turn this crisis into an opportunity," said Erdogan's spokesman Ibrahim Kalin after a cabinet meeting chaired by the president, saying measures taken so far had helped bring about a "rapid improvement process" over the last two days. —AFP ■

Work underway on Russia-Turkey-Iran summit on Syria

On 4 April, the Russian, Turkish and Iranian leaders held a summit on the Syrian settlement in Ankara. **PHOTO: TASS**

MOSCOW — Work is in progress on the third meeting of the Russian, Turkish, and Iranian leaders on the Syrian settlement scheduled to be held at the beginning of September, Russian Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"The possibility of holding another trilateral meeting in early September is being explored. After the three presidents' schedules are agreed on through diplomatic channels, we will let you know," Peskov said.

Turkish Presidential Spokesman Ibrahim Kalin earlier said that the third meeting between the Turkish, Russian and Iranian leaders on Syria was scheduled to be held in Tehran in the first week of September.

Russian Presidential Envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev told TASS in late July that the Astana format summit would be held in the Iranian capital in September. He noted that no specific date had been determined.

The meetings between the leaders of Russia, Turkey, France and Germany on Syria are not on Russian President Vladimir Putin's schedule yet, Peskov told reporters.

"There is no such a meeting coordinated on the agenda," Peskov said. It was earlier reported that the summit between Russia, Turkey, Germany and France may take place on September 7 in Istanbul, at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's initiative.

It was also reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu will discuss the preparations for the summit between Russia, Turkey, Germany and France scheduled to be held on September 7 in Istanbul. One of the main issues of the high-level four-party meeting will be the provision of support for the Syrian refugees.

On 22 November, 2017, Russian, Iranian and Turkish Presidents Vladimir Putin, Hassan Rouhani and Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a meeting in Sochi, during which they stressed that significant progress had been made in the joint fight against terrorism in Syria and that a new stage in resolving the crisis in that country had begun. The next step in that process was the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi on January 30, which brought together more than 1,500 delegates representing all strata of Syrian society. Its participants decided to set up the Constitutional Council and form the Constitutional Commission.

On 4 April, the Russian, Turkish and Iranian leaders held a summit on the Syrian settlement in Ankara. The parties adopted a joint statement expressing their determination to continue work on the issue. The next trilateral summit was scheduled to be held in Tehran. — Tass ■

Israel sees decline in new start-ups

JERUSALEM — The number of start-ups in Israel has been gradually declining in recent years, according to figures released Wednesday by SNC (Start Up Nation Central) organization.

In 2014, there were more than 1,000 start-ups opened in Israel, which for many years is considered a start-up nation. In 2015, the number dropped to 943, following year was only 932, and in 2017 only 700 start-ups opened in the country.

At the same time, there is an increase in the number of Israeli start-ups closed. In 2014 it was only 221, in 2015 it rose to 376 and in 2016 it jumped to 468.

In 2017, 408 companies were closed, but the number is not final because additional companies will be added to the list. This year, 187 new companies have been listed, compared to 88 that have been closed.

According to SNC's analysts, by 2017 many of the ideas that had already been funded and established, and the good entrepreneurs were already active in companies that existed before that year.

According to the data, from 2014 there has also been a steady decline in the number of initial fund-raising rounds of Israeli start-ups.

The report also shows that 11 R&D (research and development) centers of international companies have opened in Israel since 2014, an average of 2.34 per year.

Data from Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that this trend is accelerating: since 1989, the share of the number of R&D centers in Israel has increased, and since 2004, this trend has accelerated.

SNC, located in the coastal city of Tel Aviv, is a non-profit organization, which leverages its in-depth knowledge of Israel's innovation sector to connect business leaders, governments, and non-governmental organizations from across the globe to the most relevant people and technologies that can address their most pressing challenges. — Xinhua ■

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Pope says on side of victims of US 'predator' priests

VATICAN CITY— Pope Francis is on the side of victims of more than 300 "predator" priests in the United States who are accused of abusing over 1,000 children across seven decades, the Vatican said Thursday.

"Victims should know that the pope is on their side," the Vatican said in a statement after a devastating US grand jury report published on Tuesday decried a systematic cover-up by the Catholic Church.

"Those who have suffered are his priority, and the Church wants to listen to them to root out this tragic horror that destroys the lives of the innocent," the statement said.

"There are two words that can express the feelings faced with these horrible crimes: shame and sorrow," it said.

The Vatican statement added that the church needed to learn "hard lessons from its past, and there should be accountability for both abusers and those who permitted abuse to occur".

The report is thought to be the most comprehensive to date into abuse in the US church, since *The Boston Globe* first exposed paedophile priests in Massachusetts in 2002.

But while Tuesday's report led to charges against two priests, one of whom has pleaded guilty, the majority of those responsible are dead and the vast majority of crimes happened too long ago to prosecute, officials said.

The two-year investigation by a grand jury into all but two Pennsylvania dioceses turned up dozens of witnesses and half a million pages of church records containing "credible allegations against over three hundred predator priests."

More than 1,000 child victims were identifiable, but the "real number" was "in the thousands," the grand jury estimated.

Hidden for decades

Victims were often traumatised for life, driven to drugs, alcohol and suicide, the grand jury said. The only recourse was to recommend changes to the law and expose what had happened to make sure such widespread abuse was never repeated.

So far only two new priests are being charged with crimes that fall within the statute of limitations.

The grand jury called for changes in the law that would scrap the statute of limitations for child sex abuse, give victims more time to file civil lawsuits and tighten legislation compelling people to report abuse they find out about.

"Despite some institutional reform, individual leaders of the church have largely escaped public accountability," the report said.

"Priests were raping little boys and girls, and the men of God who were responsible for them not only did nothing; they hid it all. For decades."

Church elders were instead promoted and predator priests allowed to remain in ministries for 10, 20, even 40 years after leaders learned of their crimes as the list of victims got longer and longer, Pennsylvania's Attorney General Josh Shapiro said.

Between 5,700 and 10,000 Catholic priests have been accused of sexual abuse in the United States, but only a few hundred have been tried, convicted, and sentenced for their crimes, according to the watchdog *Bishop Accountability*.

Since the abuse crisis became public in the 2000s, the US church has spent more than $3 billion in settlements, according to *Bishop Accountability*.

One estimate suggests there were 100,000 US victims. —AFP ■

The report is thought to be the most comprehensive to date into abuse in the US church, since *The Boston Globe* first exposed paedophile priests in Massachusetts in 2002. **PHOTO: AFP**

Search for survivors as anger mounts over Italy bridge collapse

GENOA (Italy) — Rescue workers in Genoa toiled for a third night in the wreckage of a collapsed bridge, continuing the desperate search for people still missing after the accident, which left at least 38 people dead.

Italy's populist government intensified its attacks on the viaduct operator amid rising anger over the tragedy and the structural problems that have dogged the decades-old Morandi bridge, which buckled without warning on Tuesday, sending about 35 cars and several trucks, along with huge chunks of concrete, plunging 45 metres (150 feet) onto railway tracks below.

The chance of finding survivors at this stage was slim and the unstable mountains of debris made the search operation dangerous, but rescue workers said they had not given up hope.

"We are trying to find pockets in the rubble where people could be — alive or not," fire official Emanuele Gissi told AFP.

Genoa's chief prosecutor has said that between 10 and 20 people could still be missing under the huge piles of concrete.

Cranes and bulldozers are working to help clear the site as rescuers try to cut up and remove the biggest slabs of concrete.

"We will then send in dogs and rescue workers to see if we can find any signs of life," Gissi added.

Government anger

The government has accused infrastructure giant Autostrade per L'Italia of failing to invest in sufficient maintenance — a claim the company denies — and said it would seek to revoke its lucrative contracts.

Shares in Atlantia, the holding company of Autostrade, slumped 22 per cent by Thursday in the wake of the barrage of criticism. Interior Minister Matteo Salvini demanded that the company offer up to 500 million euros ($570 million) to help families and local government deal with the aftermath of the disaster.

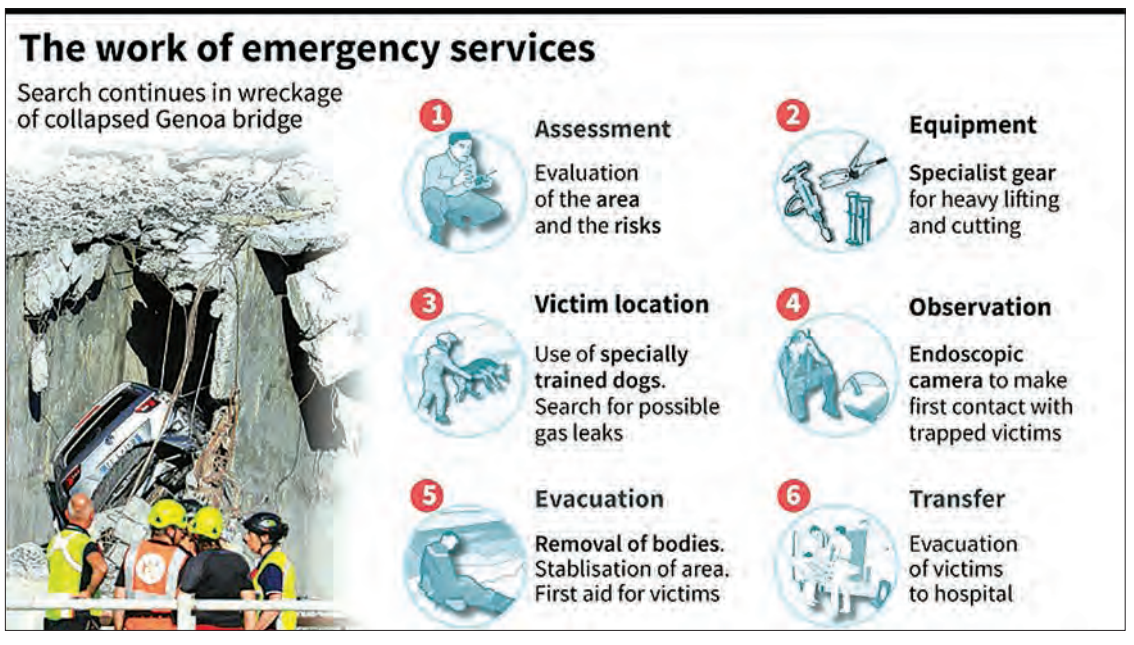
"If we've put up five million euros, they should offer 500 million," he told reporters.

"There needs to be an immediate, concrete and tangible signal for these families: they should put their hands on their hearts and in their wallets."

The collapse has prompted fears over other ageing infrastructure in Italy and abroad. At least 38 people were killed, according to an update by Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte Thursday.

The dead include children aged eight, 12 and 13, according to Salvini, while three Chileans and four French nationals are among those killed. Sixteen people were injured.

On Thursday evening the first residents of some buildings in the affected area were allowed to return home, though others are too badly damaged to save. —AFP ■



The work of emergency services . **PHOTO: AFP**

Long-term unemployment in Brazil on the rise, says study

RIO DE JANEIRO — Brazil lacks 27.6 million jobs and long-term unemployment is rising, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) said on Thursday.

The rate of underemployment and unemployment among the active population hit 24.6 per cent, similar to that of the first quarter. The underemployed population refers to those working less than 40 hours per week. An IBGE report found that a record 4.8 million people had given up looking for work in the second quarter, 200,000 more than that in the first quarter. Almost 3.2 million Brazilians have now been searching for work for over two years, accounting for just over a quarter of the country's 12.4 million unemployed people, the report said. "The probability that a person stops looking for work is related to the time that they have spent unemployed," according to the IBGE. Since Brazil's economic crisis began in 2014, there has been a 162-per cent rise in the number of people searching for work for more than two years. — Xinhua ■

India warns of 'extremely grave' crisis as flood toll rises

KERALA (India) — Hundreds of troops led a desperate operation to rescue families trapped by mounting floods in India's Kerala state Thursday as the death toll reached 106 with nearly 150,000 left homeless.

Helicopters airlifted stranded victims from rooftops and dam gates were thrown open as incessant torrential rain brought fresh havoc to the southern state that is a major international tourist draw. Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the state now faces an "extremely grave" crisis with more downpours predicted. The region's main airport has been ordered closed until 26 August.

Floods have killed 77 and destroyed thousands of homes in India's Kerala. **PHOTO: AFP**

The state, famed for palm-lined beaches at resorts such as Bekal and tea plantations, is always battered by the annual monsoon but this year's damage has been the worst in almost a century.

The death toll had jumped to 106 late Thursday, a state disaster management official told AFP.

Media reports said up to 30 more people were feared dead in landslides and rivers that burst their banks, flooding scores of villages. At least eight people were killed when an irrigation dam burst and a landslide hit three houses in the town of Nenmara, Palakkad district, authorities said. Vijayan said 80 dams have reached danger levels and appealed to the population not to ignore evacuation orders.

Army and coastguard helicopters, lifeboats and navy diving teams have been brought to the stricken state where an extra 540 troops were deployed Thursday. More are due in coming days.

The army said helicopters carried out scores of rescue operations. They also dropped food and water and appealed for victims to stand in open fields or on rooftops away from trees so helicopters were not damaged during rescue efforts.

One state official said more than 1,330 camps have been opened across Kerala and 147,000 people had sought shelter by Thursday evening.

"At least 6,500 people are stranded in different parts of Kerala and the situation in three districts is particularly grim," a separate state disaster management official told AFP.

Floods have also hit other states, including Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, where eight people at a popular picnic spot were swept away by a sudden surge of water.

'Please help'

In Kerala families could be seen paddling boats provided by the military, while in some areas as families commandeered local wooden boats to ferry themselves to safety.

The government says 10,000 kilometres (6,000 miles) of Kerala roads have been destroyed or damaged and hundreds of homes lost. It has ordered the opening of gates at 34 dams and reservoirs where water levels reached danger levels. Indian television broadcast images of cars and livestock washed away in the floods while men and women waded through chest-high waters that flowed through village streets.

Many used social media to send rooftop distress calls, some with video. A member of parliament from Kerala, Shashi Tharoor, shared on Twitter an appeal for help made by a woman who said she was trapped on the third floor of a temple with phone batteries running out.

"Over 36 people including myself and family stranded here. Phone network and charge finishing please help in any possible way," Devika Sreekumar said in the Facebook post.

Greeta Mathew pleaded for help for her family in a Twitter message. "Anybody reading this,PLZ HELP.

My relatives are stuck on the upper floor of house with an 8 months pregnant lady, in Edayaranmula, Pathanamthitta dist. All rescue control rooms' numbers busy. No rescue team reached yet. No contact with family since last evening," she said.

North and central Kerala has been worst hit by the floods but all 14 of the state's districts have been put on "red alert" as heavy rain is predicted for several days. In the main city of Kochi, the international airport will remain closed until at least 26 August, authorities said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Thursday on Twitter that he has ordered the defence ministry "to further step up the rescue and relief operations across the state. Praying for the safety and well-being of the people of Kerala".—AFP ■

Electric-powered, VIP taxi cabs to ply Bangkok streets next month

BANGKOK — The first fleet of 101 electric-powered, VIP taxi cabs are scheduled to be in service in Bangkok from early next month.

At a press conference on Thursday, Department of Land Transport Director General Sanit Phromwong said the first fleet of 101 EV Taxi VIP cabs will be launched onto Bangkok streets on 9 September.

Photo taken on 16 August, shows new EV taxi cabs in Bangkok, Thailand. The first fleet of 101 electric-powered, VIP taxi cabs are scheduled to be in service in Bangkok from early next month. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

EV Taxi VIP cabs, which are Mercedes-Benz C350e sedans, are powered by BYD e6 electric system, using a GPS tracking system, Snap Shot on-board camera and real-time data links with the department's taxi center, Sanit said.

Passengers can call EV Taxi VIP, many of which will wait for passengers at Suvarnabhumi international airport, via App Taxi OK on their cellphone.

The fare for EV Taxi VIP begins at 150 baht (about 4.41 U.S. dollars) for the first two km and amounts to 16 baht (about 47 US cents) for each following km. It can be paid via credit cards, debit cards, WeChat, Ali Pay and Rabbit Line Pay besides cash.—Xinhua ■

Australian PM facing opposition over emission reduction target

CANBERRA — Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is facing a revolt from his own party over his signature energy policy, the national energy guarantee (NEG).

The Liberal National Party (LNP) agreed to take the NEG to an open vote in parliament on Monday but 10 Members of Parliament (MP) reserved the right to vote against the policy unless amendments are made.

Conservatives within the party, led by former PM Tony Abbott, have made it clear that they will not support any energy policy containing an emissions reduction target.

Under the NEG, Australia would be committed to reducing its emissions by 26 percent from 2005 levels by 2030.

The conservative MPs have warned that they would oppose the NEG, which seeks to reduce the soaring costs of electricity in Australia and guarantee the reliability of the National Electricity Market, unless the emissions target was decoupled from the policy or dumped all together.

Peter Dutton, Australia's home affairs minister and the most senior conservative member of the party, on Thursday said there could be a time when he resigned from his ministerial position over policy, potentially triggering a leadership crisis.

The situation was exacerbated on Thursday night when it was revealed that Turnbull had given a draft of NEG legislation to the opposition Australian Labor Party (ALP) MPs before those from his own party.

Bill Shorten, leader of the ALP, described the act as one of "extraordinary" arrogance. —Xinhua ■

'Devastating' dolphin loss in Florida red tide disaster

SARASOTA (United States) — A state of emergency has been declared in Florida as the worst red tide in a decade blackens the ocean water, killing dolphins, sea turtles and fish at a relentless pace.

More than 100 tons of dead sea creatures have been shoveled up from smelly, deserted beaches in tourist areas along Florida's southwest coast as a result of the harmful algal bloom this month alone.

In just the past week, 12 dolphins washed ashore dead in Sarasota County, typically the toll seen in an entire year.

"It is physically and mentally exhausting," said Gretchen Lovewell, who is in charge of a skeleton crew at Mote Marine Laboratory that collects dead or distressed sea turtles and marine mammals.

She and two colleagues "have been literally working around the clock," Lovewell added.

Speck, a bottlenose dolphin and apparent victim of Florida's red tide, swims merrily in this 2015 picture released by the Sarasota Dolphin Research Program. **PHOTO: AFP**

On Sunday, near the fluffy sands of Siesta Key, one of America's top-ranked beaches, Lovewell recovered the remains of a decomposing dolphin. A faint number, 252, was visible, freeze-branded onto its dorsal fin. It was a 12-year-old male named Speck, who had been spotted more than 300 times by researchers monitoring generations of bottlenose dolphins in the Sarasota Bay. "It was devastating," said Randall Wells, director of the Chicago Zoological Society's Sarasota Dolphin Research Program, the world's longest-running study of a wild dolphin population, under way since 1970.

Wells pulled out a map showing where researchers have seen Speck over the years. He often swam in waters right near Wells' own home.

Researchers had also tracked Speck's mother and grandmother before they died from swallowing fishing gear.

"Speck is somebody we have known from the time he was born," said Wells, who began studying dolphins when he was 16.

"He was named after my dad."

How red tide kills

Red tide is suspected as the cause of Speck's death, but researchers won't know for certain until lab results come back in the next few weeks.

A natural phenomenon, red tide is caused by a microscopic single-celled organism called Karenia brevis, unique to the Gulf of Mexico. It releases a powerful neurotoxin that can become airborne, causing headaches, watery eyes, coughing and asthma attacks in people.

Ecologists say the organism acts like a forest fire, clearing out weeds and allowing the landscape to start anew.

Karenia brevis is found year-round at low levels.

But once it multiplies, sea turtles and manatees may inhale it, or die from eating too much neurotoxin-laced fish and sea grass. Symptoms include disorientation, lack of coordination, and seizures. Red tide has been documented as far back as the 1500s by Spanish explorers.

"But the question now is what might we be doing to enhance it and make it stay longer?" said Richard Pierce, a senior scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory and expert in ecotoxins. Florida's current spate of red tide began in October 2017, but grew considerably worse in recent weeks. Sometimes expanding and other times ebbing, it has descended on the west coast of Florida from Tampa to Naples, a nearly 200-mile (320-km) span.

Industrial farming and improper waste treatment can foster the growth of toxic blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, another problem plaguing Florida waters. The same may hold true for red tide, experts say.—AFP ■

New pesticide may harm bees as much as those to be replaced

PARIS — A new class of pesticides positioned to replace neonicotinoids may be just as harmful to crop-pollinating bees, researchers cautioned Wednesday.

In experiments, the ability of bumblebees to reproduce, and the rate at which their colonies grow, were both compromised by the new sulfoximine-based insecticides, they reported in the journal *Nature*.

Colonies exposed to low doses of the pesticide in the lab yielded significantly less workers and half as many reproductive males after the bees were transferred to a field setting.

"Our results show that sulfoxaflor" — one of the new class of insecticide — "can have a negative impact on the reproductive output of bumblebee colonies," said lead author Harry Siviter, a researcher at Royal Holloway University of London.

As with neonicotinoids, sulfoxaflor does not directly kill bees, but appears to affect the immune system or the ability to reproduce. Foraging behaviour, and the amount of pollen collected by individual bees remained unchanged in the experiment. The study has been published amid legal challenges and shifting national policies on neonicotinoids, among the most commonly used insecticides in the world.

In April, European Union countries voted to ban three neonicotinoid-based products in open fields, restricting use to covered greenhouses. Earlier this month Canada followed suit, announcing the phase-out of two of the pesticides widely applied to canola, corn and soybean crops. —AFP ■

A new class of insecticide – 'can have a negative impact on the reproductive output of bumblebee colonies'. **PHOTO: AFP**

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (1089 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY. NO. (1089 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V EF ELENA VOY. NO. (004 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V EF ELENA VOY. NO. (004 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of AWPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINE

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V UNISKY VOY. NO. (033 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V UNISKY VOY. NO. (033 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-8-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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India's three-time prime minister Vajpayee dies aged 93

NEW DELHI — Three-time Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee died Thursday, sparking tributes from across the political spectrum as current leader Narendra Modi mourned the "irreplaceable loss" of the respected statesman.

The 93-year-old had battled poor health for years but his condition deteriorated sharply in recent days, with doctors placing him on life support.

The sudden turn sparked a flurry of visits from top dignitaries, including Modi, who credited Vajpayee with laying the foundations for the meteoric rise of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which rules India today.

"Atal Ji's passing away is a personal and irreplaceable loss for me," Modi said in a tweet Thursday, using a Hindi-language honorific.

"It was Atal Ji's exemplary leadership that set the foundations for a strong, prosperous and inclusive India in the 21st century.

Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's death sparked tributes from across the country's political spectrum. **PHOTO: AFP**

"It was due to the perseverance and struggles of Atal Ji that the BJP was built brick by brick." Vajpayee was being treated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi, where he was admitted nine weeks ago. "Unfortunately, his condition deteriorated over the last 36 hours and he was put on life support systems. Despite the best efforts, we have lost him today," AIIMS said in a statement.

"We join the nation in deeply mourning this great loss." His body was being transferred on Thursday evening to his Delhi residence.

Vajpayee will be cremated Friday in the Indian capital with full state honours, BJP chief Amit Shah said.—AFP ■

'Queen of Soul' Aretha Franklin dies at 76

DETROIT (United States) — Aretha Franklin, the music icon, legendary singer and "Queen of Soul" loved by millions whose history-making career spanned six decades, died at her Detroit home on Thursday. She was 76.

She influenced generations of female singers with unforgettable hits including "Respect" (1967), "Natural Woman" (1968) and "I Say a Little Prayer" (1968).

The multiple Grammy winner cemented her place in US music history with a powerful, bell-clear voice that stretched over four octaves. In a career crossing generations, her hits spanned from soul and R&B, to gospel and pop.

After a long battle with pancreatic cancer, Franklin passed away at 9:50 am (1350 GMT) surrounded by her family and loved ones, her family said in a statement issued by her publicist.

"It is with deep and profound sadness that we announce the passing of Aretha Louise Franklin, the Queen of Soul," the statement said.

"We have lost the matriarch and rock of our family. The love she had for her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and cousins knew no bounds."

Flowers and tributes are placed on the Star for Aretha Franklin on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Hollywood, California on 16 August 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

The family thanked fans around the world for their "incredible outpouring of love" since it first emerged earlier this week that she was gravely ill. Fans mourning the death of Franklin left balloons, flowers and mementos at Detroit's New Bethel Baptist Church, where as a child the star kicked off her storied career singing gospel.

Reverend Charles Turner described her passing as a "Great loss — can't nobody replace her," adding that the grief felt by mourners was akin to the loss of a parent.

And in California similar tributes quickly amassed on Franklin's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

The 18-time Grammy award winner inspired multiple singers during her five-decade career, from pop diva Mariah Carey and the late Whitney Houston, to Alicia Keys, Beyonce, Mary J. Blige and the late Amy Winehouse.—AFP ■

New York University makes tuition free for all medical students

NEW YORK — New York University said Thursday it would offer all its current and future medical school students free tuition in an effort to tackle soaring debt levels and encourage more applicants.

The move — which it said was financed by the generosity of the university's "trustees, alumni, and friends," amounts to a reduction of $55,018 in annual fees, regardless of financial needs or academic merit.

It does not cover living and administrative costs averaging $27,000 a year.

"A population as diverse as ours is best served by doctors from all walks of life, we believe, and aspiring physicians and surgeons should not be prevented from pursuing a career in medicine because of the prospect of overwhelming financial debt," said Dr. Robert Grossman, dean of the NYU School of Medicine.

In its statement, NYU also pointed out that high student debt was putting graduates off pursuing less lucrative specializations including pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology.

According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, the median debt of a graduating medical student in the US is $202,000 — while 21 per cent of doctors who graduate from a private school such as NYU face over $300,000. "Our hope — and expectation — is that by making medical school accessible to a broader range of applicants, we will be a catalyst for transforming medical education nationwide," said Kenneth Langone, chair of the Board of Trustees of NYU Langone Health. Thursday's announcement came as a surprise ending to the school's annual white coat ceremony, which marks the start of first-year students' medical careers.

In its statement, NYU pointed out that high student debt was putting graduates off pursuing less lucrative specializations including pediatrics and obstetrics and gynecology. **PHOTO: AFP**

Those 93 students will benefit from the scholarship, along with 350 others enrolled further along in the program. NYU said it is the only top 10-ranked medical school in the US to offer such an initiative. —AFP ■

Stormzy offers black students Cambridge scholarship

British grime and hip-hop artist Stormzy, pictured February 2018, is offering a scholarship aimed at encouraging the admission of more black students to top British universities. **PHOTO: AFP**

LONDON — British grime artist Stormzy on Thursday announced he is offering a scholarship to help support black students at Cambridge University.

The scholarship aims to encourage the admission of more black students to top British universities, after none got into some Cambridge colleges between 2012 and 2016. "If you're academically brilliant, don't think because you come from a certain community that studying at one of the highest education institutions in the world isn't possible," Stormzy told BBC television.

The London artist, real name Michael Owuo, said he had harboured ambitions of studying at either Oxford or Cambridge when he was at school. "I had the academic ability," he said. "I diverted and ended up doing music so it didn't happen for me." Two successful Cambridge applicants this year and two next year will have their fees paid for by the scholarship. The announcement came as students in England opened their A-Level results, which could determine their chances of getting into university.—AFP ■

Scientists detail full genome of wheat for first time

Scientists say that mapping a comprehensive wheat genome was an "immense challenge" that took over a decade, because bread wheat contains five times more genes than a human. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON — In a breakthrough that experts say will help feed the growing global population in the coming decades, scientists Thursday revealed they have cracked the full genome of wheat for the first time.

Wheat feeds more than a third of the global human population, providing more protein than meat in the human diet and making about one-fifth of calories consumed by people.

But it is harder to grow in hot, dry weather, and these challenging conditions are expected to intensify as the planet warms due to climate change.

Experts say the world needs more disease-resistant varieties and breeds that can grow with less water in a warmer environment.

"This will greatly speed up our efforts on identification of agriculturally important wheat genes, including those that would help to combat major fungal diseases," said Kostya Kanyuka a functional genomics scientist at Rothamsted Research.

"This will also be hugely and immediately beneficial for wheat breeders, accelerating development of new elite varieties."

Mapping a comprehensive wheat genome was an "immense challenge" that took 13 years, because bread wheat contains five times more genes than a human, said the report in the journal *Science*.

The type of wheat detailed by 200 scientists from 20 countries is Chinese Spring (Triticum aestivum) a variety of bread wheat which is the world's most widely cultivated crop, said the study led by the International Wheat Genome Sequencing Consortium (IWGSC).

"Wheat productivity needs to increase by 1.6 per cent a year to meet the demands of a projected world population of 9.6 billion by 2050," said the report.

The wheat genome contains 107,891 genes, and its complex genome contains 16 billion base pairs, which are the building blocks of DNA.

Humans, by contrast, have about 20,000 genes and three billion base pairs.—AFP ■

US researchers find nanoscale particles to separate oil from well water

HOUSTON — Researchers of US Rice University, located in Houston of Texas, found a practical solution to separate crude oil from produced water, the university reported in a news release on Wednesday. The Rice lab of chemical engineer Sibani Lisa Biswal made a magnetic nanoparticle compound that efficiently separates crude oil droplets from produced water which is difficult to remove with current methods.

Produced water comes from production wells along with oil. It often includes chemicals and surfactants pumped into a reservoir to push oil to the surface from tiny pores or cracks, either natural or fractured, deep underground. Under pressure and the presence of soapy surfactants, some of the oil and water form stable emulsions that cling together all the way back to the surface.

The Rice lab's experience with magnetic particles and expertise in amines, courtesy of former postdoctoral researcher and lead author Qing Wang, led it to combine techniques.

The researchers added amines to magnetic iron nanoparticles. Amines carry a positive charge that helps the nanoparticles find negatively charged oil droplets. Once they do, the nanoparticles bind the oil. Magnets are then able to pull the droplets and nanoparticles out of the solution.

Crude oil is collected to be processed with traditional methods into fuel at a well. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

The enhanced nanoparticles were tested on emulsions made in the lab with model oil as well as crude oil.

In both cases, researchers inserted nanoparticles into the emulsions, which they simply shook by hand and machine to break the oil-water bonds and create oil-nanoparticle bonds within minutes. Some of the oil floated to the top, while placing the test tube on a magnet pulled the infused nanotubes to the bottom, leaving clear water in between.

Best of all, Biswal said, the nanoparticles can be washed with a solvent and reused while the oil can be recovered.

The researchers detailed six successful charge-discharge cycles of their compound and suspect it will remain effective for many more. —Xinhua ■

Aussie researchers develop tool to predict landslide boundaries two weeks before they hit

SYDNEY — Australian researchers on Thursday said they have developed a software tool that uses applied mathematics and big data analytics to analyze intricate ground motion patterns and track not just the location of landslides but also when they will occur, up to two weeks in advance.

There are always "warning signs" in the leadup to a collapse or slope "failure" but the tricky part is identifying what they are, University of Melbourne researcher Professor Antoinette Tordesillas said in a statement.

"These warnings can be subtle. Identifying them requires fundamental knowledge of failure at the microstructure level - the movement of individual grains of earth," said Tordesillas.

"Of course, we cannot possibly see the movement of individual grains in a landslide or earthquake that stretches for kilometers, but if we can identify the properties that characterize failure in the small-scale, we can shed light on how failure evolves in time, no matter the size of the area we are observing."

The early clues include motion patterns that change over time and become synchronized. The movement can initially be "highly disordered ... But as we get closer to the point of failure - the collapse of a sand castle, crack in the pavement or slip in an open pit mine - motion becomes ordered as different locations suddenly move in similar ways," she said.

"Our model decodes this data on movement and turns it into a network, allowing us to extract the hidden patterns on motion and how they are changing in space and time. The trick is to detect the ordered motions in the network as early as possible, when movements are very subtle."

The new software focuses on turning algorithms and big data into risk assessment and management actions that can save lives, said the university's Professor Robin Batterham.

"We're able to do things that were just unimaginable in a mathematical sense 30 years ago.

"We can now predict when a rubbish landfill might break in a developing country, when a building will crack or the foundation will move, when a dam could break or a mudslide occur. This software could really make a difference."—Xinhua ■

Chinese paleontologists discover ancient beetle to pollinate plants with naked seeds

WASHINGTON — Chinese researchers have found a pollinator of early gymnosperms prior to the rise of flowering plants, lending clues to complex biology of those plants with naked seeds.

A study published on Thursday in the journal *Current Biology* described a new mid-Cretaceous (99-million-year-old) boganiid beetle with specialized pollen feeding adaptations.

The findings suggested an ancient origin for beetle pollination of cycads long before the rise of flowering plants, according to Cai Chenyang with the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Plant-insect interactions, one of the critical bedrocks for modern ecosystems, are largely dominated by insect-angiosperm relationships owing to the hegemony enjoyed by flowering plants since the Late Cretaceous. Gymnosperm-insect interactions, on the other hand, are far less well understood, particularly in terms of pollination modes.

Unlike modern wind-pollinated conifers and Ginkgo, cycads are unusual in that they are an ancient group of gymnosperms pollinated by insects, such as beetles and rarely thrips.

The researchers discovered a new genus and species of boganiid beetle, preserved with many tiny cycad pollen grains and possessing specialized mandibular patches for the transport of cycad pollen. The fossil represented the earliest definitive fossil evidence for cycad-insect interactions, and illuminated the ancient history of the establishment of complex entomophily in cycads. Entomophily is the form of pollination whereby pollen or spores are distributed by insects. —Xinhua ■

Ronaldo set for Serie A debut amid sombre backdrop in Italy

MILAN — Cristiano Ronaldo will make his much-anticipated Serie A debut for Juventus who open their campaign for an eighth straight Italian league title on Saturday against a sombre backdrop of a country in mourning following the Genoa bridge disaster.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner was the star signing of the summer season arriving amid great pomp and ceremony following a 100 million euro ($117 million) deal from Real Madrid.

But it could be a low-key start for the 33-year-old Portuguese superstar against minnows Chievo in Verona's Stadio Bentegodi on Saturday on a day of national mourning for the victims of the Morandi bridge tradegy in the north-western port city.

The emotional impact of the disaster has led to the postponement of Serie A games involving local teams Sampdoria and Genoa who had been due to open their campaigns against Fiorentina and AC Milan.

But all other games will go ahead starting on Saturday — the day of the 38 victims' funerals — with last season's top two teams Juventus and Napoli in action.

A minute's silence will be held before each match with the players taking to the pitch wearing black armbands.

Juventus' forward from Portugal Cristiano Ronaldo (C) is congratulated by teammates after scoring a goal during the friendly football match between Juventus A and Juventus B at Villar Perosa, on 12 August 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

Much is expected of Ronaldo's presence in the Italian league this season after the low of Italy missing out on qualifying for the World Cup in Russia.

"He's going to raise the level of the championship," said Italian football legend Dino Zoff.

"Everyone can benefit. With Ronaldo all eyes will be on us and Serie A can regain ground. His purchase will result in the arrival of other big names to Serie A."

Midfielder Sami Khedira said he was eager to play alongside Ronaldo again, and forget his own dire World Cup campaign where Germany crashed out in the group stage. —AFP ■

Kani football team wins Monywa Zone MPT U-14 Championship

THE Kani U-14 football team won the Monywa Zone MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018 Championship, after beating Yinmapin U-14 football team, with a 2-0 score, on Thursday at the region-level playground in Monywa Township, Sagaing Region.

The MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018 (Monywa Zone) was held from 7 to 16 August. The best forward player award was received by Paing Thet Phyo, and the best midfielder award by Htut Aung Lin, both from Monywa team.

Aung Phone Chit from Kani team received the best defender award, Wai Phyo Aung from Kani team the best goalkeeper award, Nay Myo Aung from Yinmapin team the best goalscorer award, and Hlaing Zin Phyo of Yinmapin team the best player award.

The best fair play team and the runner-up awards were obtained by Yinmapin team. Myaung team received the second runner-up after beating the Monywa team.

Under the supervision of Myanmar Football Federation (MFF), Myanmar National League and main partners, MPT, Myanmar Care, and Sports and Physical Education Department (Basic Education), organized the MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018, across the country, dividing into zones. The MPT U-14 Football Tournament 2018 in Mandalay and Monywa zones were already held, the same tournament in Bago Region is underway, and the tournament for Mon State will be held in September. —K. Banana ■

Salas surges to LPGA Indy lead with record-equalling 62

INDIANAPOLIS — American Lizette Salas fired a course record-equalling 10-under par 62 on Thursday to take a two-shot first-round lead over Japan's Nasa Hataoka and Angel Yin in the LPGA Indy Championship.

Salas birdied the last three holes at the Brickyard Crossing Golf Club course in Indianapolis, Indiana, two of them after waiting through a weather delay.

With an eagle and eight birdies total, her career best round put her two ahead of two 19-year-olds -- American Angel Yin and Japan's Nasa Hataoka.

Sweden's Caroline Hedwall, South Korean Ko Jin-young and Americans Danielle Kang and Jane Park shared fourth, a further stroke back on 65 and New Zealand star Lydia Ko headed a group of six players on 66.

Salas got going early with an eagle at the par-five second hole. She birdied three in a row from the fourth through the sixth and bagged two more birdies at 12 and 14.

After a birdie at 16, she was on the green and looking at a birdie putt when play was halted for more than an hour.

"I had about a four-foot putt on 17," Salas said. "I didn't even think about it the entire time during the delay. I was hanging out with Danielle (Kang) and she was giving me her silly dad jokes, so it definitely kept my mind off of it.

"I was really excited to be back. And to finish off with birdie on 18 from off the green, which is icing on the cake, so I've just got to keep it going the next three days."

Yin exploded out of the gate with eight birdies in her first nine holes, her eight-under 28 on the front nine one short of the LPGA's nine-hole record. —AFP ■

Lizette Salas of the US hits her third shot on the 13th hole during the first round of the Indy Championship, in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 16 August 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**