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President U Win Myint attends BIMSTEC Summit, closing of 4th BIMSTEC Summit

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OPINION

FFM's Report of 27 August 2018 will only serve to create further divisions in Rakhine

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President U Win Myint shaking hand with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
PHOTO: MNA

President U Win Myint meets separately with BIMSTEC leaders, Nepali mechants

PRESIDENT U Win Myint who was in Nepal to attend the Fourth Summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) met separately with the Indian Prime Minister, Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor and Nepal Business Association Chairman and party yesterday.

President U Win Myint met with Republic of India Prime Minister Shri

Narendra Modi in the Madhavi Hall, Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel, Kathmandu yesterday morning at local standard time 10:15 am.

During the meeting continuation of India's positive cooperation toward Rakhine State development, increasing the momentum of the Kaladan River project, increasing bilateral relations and cooperation were discussed.

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State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi shaking hand with Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto, Vice Minister for Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil. **PHOTO: MNA**

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi receives Brazilian Vice Minister for Asia Pacific

Promotion of bilateral relations, cooperation discussed

DAW Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, received H.E. Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto, Vice Minister for Asia and the Pacific of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Bra-

zil at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 31 August 2018 at 10:00hrs.

In the meeting, they cordially exchanged views on matters related to the promotion of bilateral relations and cooperation of the two countries. — Myanmar News Agency

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Pyithu Hluttaw

Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 14th-day meeting

THE 14th-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's ninth regular session was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall yesterday morning. At the meeting, questions on communications, compensation for land, auctioning of seized items before being damaged, upgrading of a bank branch and regional allowance for pensioners were asked and answered, two motions tabled and a report submitted.

Q&A Session

In the question and answer session, U Min Thein of Taungdwingyi constituency asked whether inspection plans and arrangements were made to inspect the maintenance and sturdiness of telecommunication towers. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo replied that Ministry of Transport and Communications, Directorate of Telecommunications has set guidelines for communication towers constructed on the ground and on the buildings to ensure that telecommunication operators and tower construction companies follow guidelines when applications are made to construct telecommunication towers. The telecommunication operations and telecom tower companies are to inspect for maintenance and sturdiness of the towers once



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

every six months and after an occurrence of a natural disaster. Instructions were also issued to inspect other parts of the telecom towers on a regular schedule. Recommendation of engineers with licenses from Myanmar Engineering Council and city development committees are required to check the strength of the materials used in the construction work and arrangements are made for steel components used in the telecom towers to have lab test certificates of internationally-recognized ISO certified third party companies, explained the Deputy Minister. Regarding the question posed by U Tun Tun of Pwintbyu constituency on plans to auction or dispose seized items (vehicles and wood products) before being damaged, Deputy Minister for

Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that whenever information of transferring unlicensed vehicles seized from illegal trades is obtained and court decision was made to detain it as government property, vehicles that can be repaired and used are distributed to departments that are in need of vehicles. If the vehicles are beyond repair, arrangements are made to scrap it according to rules and regulations, said the Deputy Minister.

As for wood and other seized products, once court decision was made, the products are inspected and auctioned off by state/region governments, according to auction plan drawn up. If the seized items are of use for government departments, they are used by paying appropriate tax.

Arrangements will be made to speed up the processes so that the seized items are not wasted through being damaged, said the Deputy Minister. U Tin Nu @ U Tin Nu Aung of Manaung constituency on the other hand asked if there is a plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in designated socially-difficult townships in the country. Deputy Minister for Planning and Finance U Maung Maung Win replied that the national budget is running at a deficit and thus there is no plan to provide regional allowance to pensioners living in remote townships in the same manner as hardship allowance provided to public servants serving in remote townships. Similarly, questions raised by Dr. U Saw Naing from South Okkalapa constituency of plan to increase a bus line in South Okkalapa Township and U Oo Tun Maung of Ponnagyun constituency on land compensation for 28 farmers whose farm lands were confiscated when the Sit-tway-Minbu railway line passed over their farm lands, were replied by Deputy Minister U Tha Oo, while a question by U Kyin Wan of Hopan constituency on plans to upgrade banks in Hopan Township was answered by Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win. **Hluttaw decides to approve My-**

anmar Gemstone Bill

After the question and answer session, Hluttaw decided to approve the Myanmar Gemstone Bill, approved and sent with amendments by Amyotha Hluttaw.

Two motions tabled

Next, Dr. Daw Thet Thet Khaing of Dagon constituency tabled a motion urging the government to set up appropriate reform policies to reform state-owned enterprises, while U Myo Zaw Aung of Kawlin constituency tabled another motion urging the government to set up and implement a strategy to reduce and eliminate illegal trade.

Hluttaw decided to discuss the two motions and announced for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the motions to register their names.

Submission of Pyithu Hluttaw Rights Committee report

Afterwards, Pyithu Hluttaw's Hluttaw Rights Committee report was submitted to the Hluttaw by committee secretary Dr. Hla Moe. Announcement was also made for Hluttaw representatives who wanted to discuss the report to enroll their names. The 15th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 September.—Myo Myint (MNA) ■

Amyotha Hluttaw

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session holds 14th-day meeting

THE 14th-day meeting of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw's ninth regular session was held yesterday morning at the Amyotha Hluttaw meeting hall where asterisk-marked questions were asked and answered, discussions on Major Bridge bill and Myanmar Mining Rules were held.

Q&A session

In the asterisk-marked questions raised, U Hla Myint @ U Hla Myint Than of Mon State constituency 11 asked why permission to demolish an old wooden school building in a pagoda compound in Zizawa (North) Road, Kyaikto Town, Mon State was not given despite a new two-storey reinforced concrete school building was built over two years ago. Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko replied that the ministry will obtain the agreement of the Kyaikto Town, Kaw San Naing Ward religious organisation and local populace to demolish the old building and will coordinate with Mon



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

State government to demolish the building, according to rules and regulation. U Ko Ko Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 8 then said in small towns, only a small amount of municipal tax is collected and the towns were lagging behind in development. He asked if there is any plan to support the civic development work in such towns with support from state/region government fund or union government special fund. Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun replied that not only city development

committee fund but state/region government funds were provided to small towns that were lagging behind in development to develop. Since the state/region government funds and city development committee funds are supporting the development of small towns and there is no development affairs (municipal) ministry in the Union Government, the Union Government could not provide special funds towards the development of small towns. In replying to a question raised by U Htay Oo of Yangon Region constituency

2 on plans to resolve the water supply problem faced by people living in Shantegyi ward, Dagon Myothit (South), who are using water from a small creek, Nay Pyi Taw Council member U Aung Myin Tun replied that Yangon City Development Committee is implementing Lagunpyin water distribution project to distribute water to Dagon Myothit (East), Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) townships and Thilawa Special Economic Zone. Once this project is completed, it will distribute a total of 40 million gallons of water; 10 million gallons to Thilawa Special Economic Zone and 30 million gallons to the four townships. Of the project works, a water treatment factory is 98 per cent complete and the construction of water distribution works, pipelines, pumping stations were being conducted with loan from the government of Japan and are now 15 per cent complete. The works are estimated to be

completed by 2021, and water can be distributed by then. Shantegyi ward will also be included in the water distribution network and water will be distributed once the Lagunpyin project is completed, said the Nay Pyi Taw Council member. Similarly, questions posed by U Aung Myo of Sagaing Region constituency 2, U Ngun Hay of Chin State constituency 1, U Min Swe Naing of Kachin State constituency 6 and U Whey Tin of Chin State constituency 11 were answered by Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun.

Discussion on Major Bridge Bill and Myanmar Mining Rules

Next U Ko Ko Naing of Sagaing Region constituency 8 discussed the Major Bridge Bill and U Saw Moe Myint @ Samuel of Kayin State constituency 1 discussed the Myanmar Mining Rules. The 15th-day meeting of the ninth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw is scheduled for 5 September.—Aung Ye Thwin (MNA) ■

President U Win Myint meets separately with BIMSTEC leaders, Nepali merchants

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Next, President U Win Myint met with Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor Mr. Dasho Tshering Wangchuk in the Tilicho Room, Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel, Kathmandu yesterday afternoon at local standard time 1 pm.

In the meeting, matters relating to bilateral visits, promoting people-to-people connectivity between the two countries, bilateral relations and cooperation, initiating air link between Myanmar and Bhutan were discussed.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint met with Nepal Chamber of Commerce President Mr. Rajesh Kazi Shrestha and party during which the attendance of Myanmar companies and merchants at a trade fair in Nepal, increasing bilateral trade and visits between business persons of the two countries were discussed.

Present at the meetings were Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin, Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin and officials.— Myanmar News Agency ■



President U Win Myint meeting with Interim Government of Bhutan Chief Advisor Mr. Dasho Tshering Wangchuk in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Win Myint meeting with Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Win Myint meeting with Nepal Chamber of Commerce in Kathmandu, Nepal, yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Independent Commission of Enquiry issues press release

THE Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) held their second meeting from 28 to 31 August 2018. The ICOE is tasked to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) in Rakhine State with a view to seeking accountability and formulating recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine State.

On 29th and 30th August 2018, the Commission met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe, Union Minister for the Home Affairs, and U Kyaw Tint Swe, Union Minister

for the Office of the State Counsellor. They also had a working lunch with the representatives from Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICOE appreciated the openness of the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Union Minister for Home Affairs in sharing of information. They were heartened by the assurance of their full cooperation to the work of the ICOE and also welcomed their commitment to provide safe and secure passage to the sites to be visited.

There was a frank and open exchange of information and discussions on Rakhine State such as background history of Rakhine State, the current situation in Rakhine, the related works of the government in

Rakhine State, the progress of work between Myanmar and Bangladesh governments and the work and objectives of the ICOE during the courtesy calls. The ICOE reiterated their commitment to ensure that the rule of law prevails, seek accountability and promote reconciliation.

On 31st August 2018, the ICOE made a day trip to the affected areas in the Northern Rakhine to have an understanding of the prevailing environment. They toured the villages in the Maungdaw region such as Nga Khu Ya, General Administrative Department and Shwe Zar. During the visit, the Commission met with Rakhine Chief Minister and was briefed on the government's efforts for the repatriation process for the displaced persons who crossed over to Bangladesh after the terrorist

attacks on 16 October 2016 and 25 August 2017 by ARSA in line with the principle of "voluntary, safe and dignified return" under the "Arrangement" signed by Myanmar and Bangladesh governments on 23 November 2017.

The activities of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement, and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD) and their ten task-forces was also elaborated.

The ICOE inspected one of the Reception Centres for returnees to understand the process of verification and to see first-hand the preparedness of Myanmar for the returnees. The ICOE Members also took time to dialogue with the different communities in the various villages in Northern Rakhine namely Rakhines, Muslims and Hindus living in mixed villages. They also spoke to some survi-

vors and their family-members of the terrorists' attacks of 25-26th October 2018.

The ICOE met with a family of eight (8) members who had returned to Myanmar on their own volition and not under the "Arrangement". They had candid discussions on their experiences prior and after their return.

This second meeting of the ICOE was very productive and allowed for more substantive discussions to take place. The field visits also provided them the opportunity to have better understanding of the situation on the ground and to hear the voices of the different communities.

**Office of the Independent
Commission of Enquiry
(ICOE)**

Nay Pyi Taw
31 August 2018

Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses NWRC coord meeting 3/2018

VICE President U Henry Van Thio, who is the Chairman of the National Water Resources Committee (NWRC) attended and addressed the NWRC co-ordination meeting 3/2018 held at the meeting hall of Ministry of Transport and Communications, Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

In his address the Vice President said the NWRC had conducted eight meetings including this meeting. The country faces cyclones, flooding, inundations, river bank erosions and landslides during the raining season and those affected encounter economic, social, health and education losses.

The country on the other hand is spending funds annually for relief and rehabilitation works. Due to the efforts put up by relevant ministries and weather situation, this raining season saw less water related disasters along the Ayeyawady and Chindwin rivers. However much flooding and inundation are currently occurring along the Sittoung, Thanlwin, Bago, Shwekyin and Taninthayi rivers in Mon and Kayin states and Bago and Taninthayi regions. The President, the State Counsellor as well as responsible persons went to help and support flood affected citizens.

As Chairman of NWRC, a work coordination meetings related to recent floodings and inundations were held on 28 July and 8 August with relevant ministries and organizations.

At the moment, due to damage of the Swa dam's spillway, a population of more than sixty thousands faces flooding. Assessments are underway to compile a list of losses in lives and property. At the moment, Tatmadaw Commander-in-Chief, Union Ministers, Deputy Ministers and responsible officials are on site to provide necessary coordination and supports, he said.

The NWRC is conducting water resources management and water sector development works and water related works of distribution of irrigation and potable waters, hydro-electricity generation, reducing flooding, inundation and water scarcity, reducing bank erosion,



Vice President U Henry Van Thio addresses the meeting of the National Water Resources Committee (NWRC) in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

safety of waterway passages, personal hygiene and maintaining of natural surroundings, waste water disposal and maintaining of water quality in coordination with water related ministries, organizations and state/region governments.

In her meeting with Kayin State government members, the State Counsellor had pointed out the need to uncover the root causes of flooding and inundation and if the cause were due to silting of river ways, dredging and maintaining of river ways need to be conducted.

The State Counsellor also remarked on preventing the blockage of drains in towns by setting up proper regulations for waste disposal and informing the public about it to prevent flooding and inundation in towns.

As it is the raining season, the problems and dangers of flooding, inundation and water related disasters and health problems of mosquito breeding will be encountered. Preventive and counter measures for these problems and dangers need to be conducted. Coordination among relevant ministries and organizations are required to mitigate flooding, inundation, water scarcity as well as development of water sector and progress of future

works.

Majority of the meeting decisions on future work of the committee has been implemented and remaining works will also be implemented. Meeting attendees can support

river banks, disposal of waste waters in rivers and managing waste disposals, systematic usage of underground water, establishing a good water law, short and long term work processes to reduce flooding and

secretary Dr. Khin Ni Ni Thein explained about work processes relating to drawing up water laws and works conducted by the advisory group.

Following this, Union Ministers Dr. Aung Thu and U Win Khaing, Deputy Minister Maj-Gen Than Htut, state/region government ministers, heads of departments and officials discussed and explained about experiences of governments in states/regions where recent flooding and inundation was occurring, arrangements made to mitigate damages and losses, maintaining and improving water ways and works of ministerial departments.

The meeting came to a close after Vice President U Henry Van Thio had given his comments on the discussions and suggestions; he said there was a need to place emphasis on the requirement of the country and to listen to the voices of the people as the committee conducted its work for the long term development of the country's water resources.

The meeting was attended by NWRC member union level organization members, state/region government member ministers, heads of departments, advisory group chairman and members, technicians and officials. — Myanmar News Agency ■

As it is the raining season, the problems and dangers of flooding, inundation and water related disasters and health problems of mosquito breeding will be encountered.

the implementation of effective all round water resources management system for the country and the people by openly discussing and suggesting on water related works conducted by the committee and related ministries, cooperation with international organizations and requirements in coordination with other ministries and organizations, said the Vice President.

Next, committee Vice Chairman Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung explained about maintaining the

inundation. Committee Secretary Director-General of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems U Tun Lwin Oo explained the work status of NWRC, Ayeyawady River SOBA (State of the Basin Assessment) Report and Integrated Ayeyawady Delta Strategy (IADS) first phase report and future works.

Afterwards, chairman of departmental expert group U Ko Ko Oo suggested on immediate works of NWRC on preventing flooding, inundation and improvement of waterways while NWRC advisory group

President U Win Myint attends BIMSTEC Summit, closing of 4th BIMSTEC Summit



President U Win Myint attending the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit meeting in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PRESIDENT U Win Myint attended the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Summit meeting and the closing ceremony of 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting yesterday.

President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho arrived at the BIMSTEC Summit venue Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel swimming pool at local standard time 9:30 a.m. and were welcomed by the Nepalese Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli and wife.

Next, President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho posed for commemorative photos with heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries who

were attending the summit.

Afterwards, President U Win Myint attended the BIMSTEC Summit meeting. BIMSTEC Summit meeting was attended by heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries.

Later, President U Win Myint attended the closing ceremony of 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting held in the Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel.

At the event heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries discussed and approved the 15th and 16th BIMSTEC ministerial level meeting reports.

Following this, BIMSTEC secretary Mr. Shahidul Silam read and submitted the BIMSTEC cooperative work report of

member countries.

President U Win Myint and heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries then attended and observed the foreign ministers of BIMSTEC member countries signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Establishment of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection.

After the signing of the MoU, heads of states and heads of governments of BIMSTEC member countries approved and announced the 4th BIMSTEC Summit meeting declaration.

Nepali Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli then handed over the duty of BIMSTEC chair to Sri Lanka Prime Minister Mr. Maithripala



Signing Ceremony for BIMSTEC MOU on Grid interconnection being convened in Kathmandu, Nepal yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Win Myint greets with Nepali Prime Minister Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli at closing of BIMSTEC Summit. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Win Myint and the First Lady are welcomed by officials at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**



President U Win Myint, other leaders of BIMSTEC member countries and officials posing for a documentary photo at BIMSTEC yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Sirisena after which the Nepalese Prime Minister delivered a concluding speech. After this, President U Win Myint posed for commemorative photos with heads of states, heads of governments, foreign ministers of BIMSTEC member countries and officials.

After the event, President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party left Soaltee Crown Plaza Hotel by motorcade and arrived at the Kathmandu Tribhuvan International Airport and departed for Myanmar. They were seen off by Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Ishwor Pokhrel, Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal Thiri Pyanchi U Tun Nay Lin and Chief of Protocol Mr. Deepak Adhikari of the Nepalese For-

eign Ministry and officials.

President U Win Myint, First Lady Daw Cho Cho and party arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw at 7:30 p.m. and were welcomed at the Nay Pyi Taw International Airport by Vice Presidents U Myint Swe and U Henry Van Thio, Tatmadaw Deputy Commander-in-chief Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Union Minister for Transport and Communication U Thant Sin Maung, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr. Myo Aung, Nay Pyi Taw Command commander Maj-Gen Myint Maw, Deputy Minister U Min Thu, and charge d'affaires of the Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Mr. Raju K.C and officials. — Myanmar News Agency ■

Rakhine State Chief Minister meets Independent Commission of Enquiry

RAKHINE State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu and members of the Rakhine State cabinet met with Chairperson of the Independent Commission of Enquiry Ambassador Rosario Manalo and members at the Sittway Airport after the commission tour to Maungtaw, Rakhine State, yesterday.

At the meeting Chief Minister U Nyi Pu said he thanked the commission for the visit to Rakhine, expressing his hope that the chairperson and members of the commission would satisfy the tour as they enjoy environment, climate and historic cultural areas.

He continued to say that the leaders of the State, the government and people of the Rakhine State are very sorry for the conflicts happened unexpectedly in the state and the commission would see the truth as it observed the true situation



Rakhine State government holds meeting with Independent Commission of Enquiry in Sittway.

PHOTO: MIN HTET

of the Rakhine issue.

The Chief Minister also expressed his hope that Rakhine State would see better future as the government making its best for the state, adding that the trip

of the Independent Commission of Enquiry would be supportive for the development of Rakhine State.

Afterwards, an official of the Rakhine State Government gave

presentation on terrorist attacks by ARSA including conflicts in 2017, current preparedness for repatriation of displaced people.

Afterwards, Ambassador Rosario Manalo, Chairperson

of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, expressed thanks to the Chief Minister and officials for explaining the situation of issue in Maungtaw.

She said the commission was very happy and satisfied with the tour as they could see the situation on the ground with transparency and meet the local people.

On behalf of the commission, Mrs. Rosario Manalo pledged to work with fair and without bias.

Afterwards, Dr. Aung Tun Thet, Chief Coordinator of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance and Resettlement and Development in Rakhine State explained the works of the UEHRD.

Following the meeting, the chairperson and members of the commission left Sittway. Maung Sein Lwin.—Maung Sein Lwin (Myanma Alinn) ■

Independent Commission of Enquiry visits Maungtaw, Rakhine State

INDEPENDENT Commission of Enquiry visited Maungtaw, Rakhine State, yesterday and met with and local people and authorities.

Ambassador Mrs. Rosario Manalo, Chairperson of the Independent Commission of Enquiry, and members U Mya Thein, Ambassador Kenzo Oshima and Prof. Dr. Aung Tun Thet left Yangon yesterday morning and arrived Sittway at 8 am.

The delegation, accompanied by Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Soe Aung, Rakhine State Social Affairs Minister Dr. Chan Thar and officials, flew to Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre by helicopter.

At the centre, In-charge of the centre U Htay Maung explained works related with repatriation and Chairperson Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members of the commission raised questions.

Afterwards, the delegation met with local people at the Office of Nga Khu Ya Village Administration and questioned about their livelihood.

Following the meeting, the delegation visited Kaing Gyi (Mro) Village, Shwe Zar Village and Pann Taw Pyin Village and met with local villagers cordially.

During the visits to villages, they witnessed the development works and also discussed with local authorities for the livelihood of the villagers.

Afterwards, the Chairperson of the ICOE and members held talks with local authorities led by Maungtaw District Deputy commissioner U Ye Htut and departmental officials in the district over socio economy, transportation and regional development tasks in the district.—Maung Sein Lwin ■



Ambassador Mrs. Rosario Manalo meets with local people in Maungtaw, Rakhine State yesterday.



Chairperson Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members meeting with officials at Nga Khu Ya Reception Centre at Nga Khu Ya Village.



Chairperson Mrs. Rosario Manalo and members of the Independent Commission of Enquiry meeting with local people during their field visits in Maungtaw yesterday.

UN Security Council held open briefing on “The situation in Myanmar”

THE United Nations Security Council held an open briefing on “The situation in Myanmar” on 28 August 2018 at 3:00 p.m under the presidency of the United Kingdom. The briefing was chaired by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations. United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres, Associate Administrator of UNDP Mr. Tegegnework Gettu, UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Ms. Cate Blanchett briefed the Council. All members of the Council took part in the discussion.

According to Article 37 of the rules of procedures of the Security Council, as countries concerned, Myanmar and Bangladesh were also invited to deliver statement at the briefing. At the briefing, Permanent Representative of Myanmar, Ambassador U Hau Do Suan, participated and delivered a statement. Some salient points of his statement are as follows:

- At the outset, please allow me to pay tribute to the late Dr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations who had contributed tremendously toward our efforts to find lasting solutions to the problems that were jeopardizing peace and progress in Rakhine State.
- We should learn from his way of solving conflicts in a peaceful manner with a constructive and caring approach.
- An Advisory Commission on the Rakhine State headed by Dr. Kofi Annan was established on 5 September 2016. Barely a month later, a religious extremist terrorist group called Aka Mul Mujahidin (later became Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army-ARSA) launched its first attack on three Border Police posts in northern Rakhine State on 9 October 2016. The attack was premeditated and well organized, causing death of 13 security personnel and other civilians.
- The Advisory Commission submitted its interim report on 16 March 2017 which addressed some of the most urgent challenges facing the state including the immediate security concerns following October terrorist attack of police posts.
- On 24 August 2017, the Rakhine Advisory Commission presented its final report including 88 recommendations to the Government of Myanmar. We welcomed the report and decided to carry on the task to implement the recommendations in good faith to the fullest extent, within the shortest timeframe possible, and consonant with the situation on the ground.
- In the early hour of 25 August 2017, just a few hours after Mr. Kofi Annan handed his final report, ARSA launched premeditated, well planned and coordinated simultaneous armed attacks on 30 Border Guard posts and one army Battalion headquarters in northern Rakhine. The attacks caused death of dozens of security personnel as well as many innocent civilians. ARSA has also brutally killed over 250 non-Muslims ethnic minorities in northern Rakhine since October 2016. On 25 August 2017, ARSA massacred a hundred Hindus, which was well documented.
- The ARSA attacks triggered predictable and logical response of Myanmar security forces to protect the life and property of every citizen, resulting in the subsequent mass displacement of people.
- These are plain facts and nothing but the truth. These events were well planned and executed with the support of foreign terrorist organizations.
- The present grave humanitarian problem and the untold suffering of the innocent civilian people of all communities in Rakhine State were carefully



Myanmar Ambassador U Hau Do Suan

- calculated, instigated and created by ARSA.
- Their objective was to undermine Myanmar Government's commitment and efforts to find lasting solution through the speedy implementation of the Commission's recommendations and to elicit maximum international pressure on Myanmar to achieve their political goals.
- We share deep sympathy and concern for all displaced persons, friends, especially women and children. We believe that we will be able to solve the issue with our neighbor Bangladesh if we work together amicably in the spirit of good neighbourliness.
- According to the Agreement on physical arrangement for repatriation, the process of repatriation was scheduled to have commenced on 23 January 2018.
- In line with these bilateral agreements, Myanmar made arrangements with momentum for the repatriation of verified displaced persons. We have been ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees since 23 January.
- We call on Bangladesh to fulfill its obligations in accordance with the bilateral agreements, to allow without delay, the return of verified persons who consented to return to Rakhine voluntarily.
- Another important issue is the systematic repatriation of displaced persons staying on the borderline. Since occupying the areas 150 feet from the international border line is unlawful, these people put themselves unwittingly in a situation that can affect stability of the two bordering countries. It is highly possible that the areas become an ARSA terrorist foothold. In this regard, we have requested Bangladesh authorities not to provide them any assistance from their side of the border; instead we are now arranging to provide humanitarian assistance for them from Myanmar side.
- Moreover, the Government of Myanmar also signed an MoU with the UNDP and the UNHCR to assist speedy and efficient resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. We have already mapped out potential resettlement sites. On 7 August, UN officials have been granted access to 23 villages in 13 village tracts, selected for the first phase of assessment programme. An additional three village tracts have also been marked out for the resettlement of IDPs residing near the borderline. We urge the UN team to start the assessment programme as soon as possible.
- The Government continues to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission in earnest. 81 out of 88 recommendations have been implemented or under implementation.

In the process of implementation, the Government attaches great importance to the advice and opinion of the Advisory Board chaired by Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand.

- We recognize the crucial role of the United Nations in addressing the issue of Rakhine and, the present humanitarian crisis in particular. We facilitated the visit of Security Council members and representative of neighbouring countries and the ASEAN chair in April this year. We welcomed appointment of Ambassador Christine Burgener as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.
- Let me now turn to the question of accountability. The Government of Myanmar has made its position very clear that it will not condone any human rights abuse. Action will be taken against anyone if there is sufficient evidence. In this regard, the Government has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry, led by Ambassador Rosario Manalo, an eminent diplomat with rich experience in the field of human rights. The Commission also includes Ambassador Kenzo Oshima, another prominent diplomat, and two highly respected members of Myanmar.
- The Commission is tasked to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues following the terrorist attacks with a view to seeking accountability and reconciliation, and to formulate recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure peace and stability in Rakhine State. The Commission will submit its report to the President of Myanmar within a year, including its recommendations prepared on the basis of the outcomes of its investigation.
- The Government of Myanmar will provide protection to all those who are in contact with ICOE, particularly victims and witnesses. The Commission will conduct its mandate in the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity.
- With regard to the allegation of atrocity crimes committed by Myanmar security forces as contained in the recent report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, I would like to reiterate that we did not accept the mandate of the Mission because we have our concern about the Mission's impartiality.
- Besides, I have serious doubt on the intention of the timing of the release of the report.
- The challenges we are facing today in Rakhine State is formidable. We shall not let these challenges derail our ultimate goal of democratic nation building.
- While the primary responsibility to address the situation in Rakhine rests with the Government and people of Myanmar, objective, positive and constructive contribution and support of the international community is crucial for the success of Myanmar's national efforts.
- This is not the time for exploiting the plight of innocent people particularly women and children, from Rakhine for self-interest and political grandstanding. This is the time to act, to show our genuine concern by taking practical steps.
- We should make important policy decisions based on facts and full understanding of the issues at hand. We should view this complex issue from a broader perspective.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
Dated 30 August 2018

Active cooperation under the BIMSTEC framework is a must to fight terrorism and trans-national crime

MYANMAR took responsibility as a lead country of BIMSTEC Sub-group on Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals and hosted several meetings under the BIMSTEC counter-terrorism and transnational crime framework.

Myanmar has been encountering the scourge of terrorism. The danger of terrorist activities, which was the initial cause of events leading to the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine, remains real and present today.

Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to peace and security in the world today

Terrorism should not be condoned in any form for any reason. We condemn all human rights violations and violence.

“

THE
SITUATION
THAT WE FACE
TODAY IS DUE
TO TERRORISM
AND IS NOT
BASED ON
RELIGION.

Myanmar is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. It is home to 135 officially recognized ethnic groups, each with its own distinctive culture and adherence to a variety of religious beliefs, including Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism. These religious groups have been living in harmony throughout our history.

The situation that we face today is due to terrorism and is not based on religion.

Therefore, Myanmar attaches great importance to the issues of terrorism and trans-national crime, and assures its continued active cooperation under

the BIMSTEC framework.

On 5th July 2016, Myanmar deposited its Instrument of Ratification of the BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, which was signed in 2009.

BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs Meeting is one of the key components of the BIMSTEC's security cooperation, which provides platforms for strategic dialogue and practical cooperation for the BIMSTEC counter terrorism sector.

All regional countries are urged to work in unison and solidarity to strengthen the group and to shape a more equitable and better world in order to realize lasting peace, social justice and to achieve sustainable development.

It is important to focus on resolving the situation, not inflaming the situation and on helping Myanmar in bringing the communities together instead of driving them further apart.

Injustice, unfairness and inequalities of the current world order, the monopolization of the news media by the rich and powerful and unbalanced reporting and spread of fake news could negatively influence policy decisions to the peril of less developed or weaker countries whose views and narratives are faced with suppression.

Hence, we, members of the BIMSTEC group must undertake concerted multilateral efforts to respond effectively against the emerging transnational and multifaceted nature of terrorism.

Private sector should be encouraged to boost productivity

By Khin Yadana

In order to develop a market-oriented economy, co-operation plays a vital role in the economic growth and overall development of a nation. With an aim for the emergence of a market-oriented economy and enhancing socio-economic life of the people, a round-table discussion by officials concerned from the Ministry of Commerce was held at MRTV in Nay Pyi Taw on August 9. Following are discussions made by U Toe Aung Myint, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, U Myint Lwin, Director General of the Consumer Affairs Department, and U Aung Naing Oo, owner of Chit San livestock breeding farm in Sin Phyu Kyun Township.



U Toe Aung Myint



U Myint Lwin



U Aung Naing Oo

Q: Could you explain the trading conditions in Myanmar?

Permanent Secretary U Toe Aung Myint: Many countries, including ASEAN countries, have thrived in their trading business. Regarding the arrangements made by the trading sector, I would like to describe the situation with figures. In order to become a developed state, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) should support economic development. Another thing to note is that trading is one of the tools for development. Besides these two points, I am going to present some of the reviews done by experts in 2015.

According to statistics conducted in 2015, the trading volume of our country reached 12 billion, but per capita export is US\$250. Compared to our country, Cambodia is making an effort to leave the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, and its per capita export is US\$783, that is three times higher than us. Although Laos is the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia region, its per capita export is more than US\$500, that is two times higher than our country.

Vietnam was unified again after a civil war broke out; later, they managed to stabilize their economic conditions, which can now be witnessed in Vietnam's current economy. They have even come here to make investments in Myanmar's hotel projects and telecom sectors.

As for per capita export, Vietnam stands at US\$1,890 and Thailand US\$4,000, respectively. What I want to say is that the economy of our country will be boosted if we can export as much as we can.

According to available data, per capita export of ASEAN countries has reached US\$2300. Among Asian countries, Brunei is a rich country with its natural resources and a strategic location in the region. Singapore is also one of the richest countries in the region and its per capita export is over US\$90,000.

If we compare with these countries, some of them are not endowed with natural resources like us, but they are rich in human resources development that can enhance their trading sectors. Here in our country, what matters most is the ability to conduct negotiations in order to boost trading, and that is of great importance. Other points are that it is essential to be well-versed in the nature of markets, procedures and directives. When we discuss with our neighboring countries, such as Vietnam and Thailand, we set up trade negotiation departments, comprised of youth experts and specialists in different fields and backgrounds. For instance, if they want to make discussions in Myanmar, they study in detail regarding the ground situations, trading conditions and what sectors they can penetrate in the market. Thus, if we are going to amend the way we do things, it is of vi-

tal importance to create human resources development so that we can efficiently conduct trade negotiations in Myanmar.

Now that we have formed the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization, we need to send our representatives to find out new markets and try to negotiate based on the requirements of the market. We should promote private sector development. As you can see, there are changes nowadays, and in due

Moreover, we need to conduct educational talks for private sectors, aiming to disseminate relevant news and information.

Cooperation is needed between business organizations and commodity exchanges in the region. We have already formed the Department of Consumer Affairs in many states and regions of the country. These are the plans and reformations that the ministry has envisioned.

“

We should promote private-sector development ...

Moreover we need to conduct educative talks for the private sectors, aiming to disseminate relevant news and information.

course, we will be witnessing many transformations from a planned economy to a market economy. But there are still some requirements to change into a market economy. On our part, we will have to regulate the practices and make the processes smooth and successful.

Q: Could you elaborate on arrangements made to protect consumer interests, and what are the purposes of issuing an announcement regarding product labeling requirements to be written in the Myanmar language?

Director General U Myint Lwin:

As for our department, efforts are being made to relax and improve the policies and regulations, aiming to achieve the customers' best interests. Plans are underway to conduct educative talks for the public in order to broaden their outlook and knowledge. Also we are dealing with all customer complaints within the framework of our laws.

The Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Ministry of Commerce, was established in 2014. It has opened an online complaint section on its website, so people can express their grievances and dissatisfaction about products and services faster. With the aim of protecting consumer rights, speedy action was taken against several online complaints that the department has received.

By implementing consumer protection, on one side the public will benefit from more consumer protection opportunities, while on the other side, the standard of production, sales and services will be raised enhancing the economic development of the country. The Ministry of Commerce has tried to implement consumer protection more widely. In conducting this, consumer dispute resolution groups were formed, according to law, at state/region and district levels. Consumer complaint centres were also opened, complaints are accepted and solutions worked out.

With regards to product

labeling requirements needed to write in Myanmar language, I want to say that Myanmar is one of the ASEAN member states, and a member of ASEAN Consumer Protection Committee (ACC) member as well. It is important that we build trust with our consumers so that we can extend our trade beyond our borders.

Q: We heard that the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has recorded the motion of banning export of cattle that are used in seasonal cultivation. Could you share your opinion regarding this matter?

U Aung Naing Oo, livestock breeding farm owner: Personally, I work as a cultivator and cattle breeder, so I can say something about the export of cattle. In my opinion, the export of cattle was mainly due to the needs of the cultivators and cattle breeders. What they need is a market for trading their cattle that are no longer in use in their farming. Because of the ban, cattle breeders now have less options for buying and selling cattle, other than breeding them. As a result, they either have to keep the cattle that they are not using anymore or try to sell them. I think authorities concerned should find more effective ways and means to achieve the socio-economic development of cattle breeders and others.

Translated by
Win Ko Ko Aung

FFM's Report of 27 August 2018 will only serve to create further divisions and mistrust in Rakhine State and the entire country: MOFA

Press Release

The Human Rights Council established the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IFFM) in March 2017. At the time, the Government of Myanmar rejected the IFFM and made clear that it would not be able to accept the results of its findings. Its establishment, composition and mandate, raised serious and genuine concerns that it would lack impartiality and hinder the Government's own efforts to find long-term solutions to the situation in Rakhine State.

The Report which was issued by the IFFM on 27 August 2018 has only served to strengthen the Government's concerns. Not only is this Report detrimental to social cohesion in Rakhine State, it also undermines the Government's own efforts to bring peace, national reconciliation and development to the entire country.

Since taking office, the Government of Myanmar has been striving to resolve the complex challenges in Rakhine State. In line with the Government's commitment to accountability and the rule of law, the Independent Commission of Enquiry was established on 30 July 2018 to investigate allegations of human rights violations and related issues.

The Government of Myanmar regrets that the IFFM's Report of 27 August 2018 will only serve to create further divisions and mistrust in Rakhine State and the entire country. However, despite the complex challenges that we face, the Government will continue with its unwavering commitment to work towards peace, national reconciliation, development and democracy for all the people of Myanmar.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Nay Pyi Taw
31 August 2018



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.

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Roundtable discussion on reviewing framework for political dialogue continues, role of secretariat group to be reviewed



Roundtable discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue being convened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: AYE THAN/MNA**

A roundtable discussion on reviewing the framework for political dialogue with Government, Hluttaw and Tatmadaw groups continued at the National Reconciliation and Peace Center in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

"When we reviewed the number of agreements gained at the second and third Union Peace Conference-21st Century Panglong, it was found that the secretariat group strongly cooperated in the second session but their cooperation was weak in the third session. So, we all agreed to review the role of the secretariat group and to amend its organizational setup," said U Zaw Htay, Secretary of the Union Peace Dialogue Joint Committee.

The discussion of the

group of the Government, Hluttaw and the Tatmadaw focused on situation of political dialogue, organizational setup and framework for political dialogue, reviewing current political process and obstacles.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi gave instruction to the peace makers to draw an effective framework taking experiences and lessons gained at the second and third sessions of the conference, according to U Zaw Htay.

In accordance with the instruction, political parties, ethnic armed organizations and the groups of the Government, the Tatmadaw and the Hluttaw are reviewing the framework for political dialogues, organizational setup, Terms of Reference (TOR) and Standard

Operating Procedure (SOP).

On the first day of the roundtable discussion, Prof. Christina Murray, an international expert on federalism, shared her experiences of participating in political discussions in South Africa, Kenya and Yemen.

The participants of the group discussion also agreed to make the Terms of Reference and Standard Operating Procedure more effective.

"Another point we discussed is the fact that we got the papers submitted by groups and from political dialogues only at the conference and it brought us obstacles to political dialogue. So, we discussed how we can solve the problems we faced," said U Zaw Htay.

U Jimmy, a representa-

tive of the 88 Generation Peace and Open Society, who is also participating in the discussion said majority of the participants preferred the current organization setup rather than amending or adding to it.

"But, the current organizational setup needed to be upgraded to become more effective. To achieve this, the capability of the secretariat group and work committee should be promoted as from the national-level political dialogues," he said.

U Yi Mon (a) Maung Tin Thit, who is participating in the discussion, representing the Hluttaw, stressed the need to have willingness to achieve agreements which have not yet been discussed at the Union Peace Conference. — Zaw Zin

High timber prices force villagers to turn to toddy palm wood

TODDY palm wood is more and more used in village houses in NyaungU District, Mandalay Region during the last two decades, substituting for other expensive hardwoods.

U Hmat Sein, an owner of toddy palm trees in Legwa Village, Kyaukpadaung Township, said that toddy climbing business is low due to scarcity of toddy palm climbers as well as a decline in prices of toddy leaves and jaggery (toddy palm candy). Some owners have halted the operation of this kind of business and sold off their toddy palm trees. The price of toddy palm wood is cheaper than that of hardwood in the local market. High tim-

ber prices have forced people to turn to toddy palm wood.

U San Maung from Ohnhnechaung Village in Letpanchepaw Village-tract, NyaungU Township, said that actually he wanted to build a wooden house instead of a house of toddy palm wood. However, he was not able to construct a wooden house because of the increase in prices of hardwoods. For the time being, the price of toddy palm trees has also increased to Ks30,000 from Ks8,000 per tree due to its high demand. Builders normally used seven toddy palm trees to construct a house with four posts on the facade. Palm trees that are



A farmer cutting toddy palm wood to be used as raw materials for a building in his village. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

around 45 years can have their parts used as building materials. In the village, palm trees

that over 50 years are more marketable.—Ko Htain (Nga-thayouk) ■

Agricultural export reaches over \$1billion

EXPORT of agricultural products reached US\$1.071 billion since this April, recording a decrease in value by over \$170 million from this time last year, when the export of the same was \$1.242 billion, according to trade authorities.

Marketable agro products include rice, beans and pulses, melons, mangoes, coffee beans, avocados, corns and other fruits and vegetables, as well as herbal plants.

Between 1 April and 24 August this year, the country earned \$6.643 billion from overall export of local goods, consisting of agricultural, animal, forest and aquaculture products, minerals, manufactured goods and other miscel-

laneous products, registering an increase in value by \$1.610 billion, as against the same period in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

This year saw an increase in value of export products apart from agricultural commodities and forest-based products.

Myanmar conducts trade mainly with ASEAN member countries, East Asian nations, some European and African states. It delivers goods principally through maritime routes.

The government is making sustained efforts to boost the country's exports in each sector, as part of its strategic economic development plan.—
Khine Khant ■



Farmers plant rice seedlings in a rice field in a village during the rainy season in Myanmar. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Myanmar's overseas trade exceeds \$14 billion, \$1 billion in trade deficit

THE total value of external trade between Myanmar and partner countries in nearly five months totalled US\$14.383 billion, with a trade deficit of more than \$1 billion, according to the latest trade figures issued by the Ministry of Commerce on 31 August.

From 1 April through 24 August this year, the country exported \$6.643 billion worth of domestic products and imported foreign commodities with a value of \$7.740 billion. This year saw an increase in value of both export and imports, compared with last year.

At this time last year, the country's external trade was valued at \$12.287 billion, comprising \$5.032 billion in exports and \$7.255 billion in imports, resulting in a

trade deficit of \$2.2 billion. Trade deficit this year declined by half in comparison with that of the same period in the last year.

The data showed that the country's international trade included over \$11 billion from non-border trade and \$3.274 billion from border trade.

In the last 2017-2018 fiscal year, the country suffered a trade deficit of more than \$3.97 billion, decreasing by over \$1 billion matched against that of the trade deficit of \$5.2 billion in the previous 2016-2017 FY, according to the annual trade report.

Efforts have been made by trade authorities to reduce the trade gap by boosting domestic production in anticipation of healthy exports.—Swe Nyein ■

Myanmar-Indonesia trade up by \$58 million in three months

MYANMAR-Indonesia trade topped US\$267 million in the first half of the current interim fiscal period commencing this April, increasing by \$58.6 million, as against the same time last year, when the bilateral trade was \$208 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Myanmar's imports always outdo its exports in bilateral trade with the Republic of Indonesia. Between April and June this year, Myanmar's export to the Southeast Asian country totalled \$35.45 million, while its imports exceeded \$230 million.

This year saw an increase

in value of both export and import in Myanmar-Indonesia trade. When compared with the previous fiscal year, exports between the two countries increased by \$6.5 million, with bilateral imports up by \$52 million.

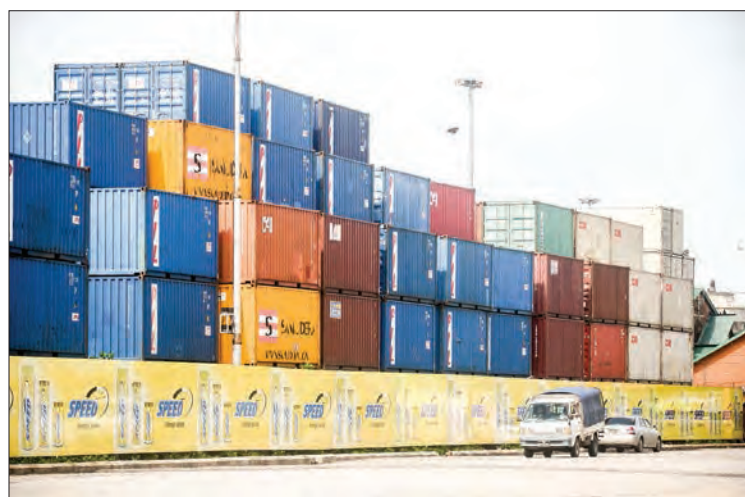
Myanmar's export to the ASEAN member state covers agricultural, aquaculture products and other miscellaneous items. Normally, its import consists of medicine, paper, palm oil, steel, tobacco, rubber and other products.

The bilateral trade with Indonesia reached its peak of \$1.025 billion in the last 2017-2018 financial year, according

to the annual statistical reports of the commerce ministry.

The data shows that Myanmar-Indonesia trade was \$827 million in the 2016-2017 FY; \$741 million in the 2015-2016 FY, \$636 million in the 2014-2015 FY, over \$490 million in the 2013-2014 FY, \$226 million in the 2012-2013 FY and \$472 million in the 2011-2012 FY.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Indonesia's investment in Myanmar in the last 2017-2018 fiscal year was \$9.8 million. The country received no new Indonesian investment so far this year.—Shwe Khine ■



External trade between Myanmar and foreign countries within five months reached over US\$14 billion. PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR

Consumer goods import up by \$225 million as of mid-August

IMPORT of capital goods amounted to US\$1.94 billion from 1 April to 17 August 2018 in the six-month interim period prior to next fiscal year 2018-2019, which is an increase of \$225 million compared to that in similar period of last FY 2017-2018, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

In the similar period dur-

ing last FY, \$1.7 billion worth of import was seen.

Consumer products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and palm oil are imported. The private sector showed an income increase of \$283 million against last FY, whereas the public sector saw a decrease of \$57.6 million.

Intermediate goods make up most of the imports, with

petroleum products and plastic raw materials being the main import items. The import value of raw materials is up by \$130 million against last FY.

Additionally, capital goods such as auto parts, vehicles, machines, steel and airplane parts are also flowing into the market, showing an increase of \$65 million against last FY.—Ko Khant ■

Myanmar delegation continues study tour of film and video arts in Republic of Korea



Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint and officials from DMC Hi-Tech Industry Center posing for a documentary photo yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

A Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint continue tour in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, to observe arts of films and video yesterday.

The Union Minister and party arrived Seoul in the afternoon and met with education, culture, sports and travel work committee chairman and party in the parliament of Republic of Korea and explained the purpose of the visit by the Myanmar delegation,

discussed possibility of cooperating in all sectors of films and arts and investing in Myanmar.

The Myanmar delegation met with SEOUL Film Commission at DMC Hi-Tech Industry Center.

The commission is an institution which is providing one stop services for producing local and foreign films and have provided its services to more than 2,000 films starting from 2002.

With the support of the government, businesses and organisations, it is providing film production services and explained about how the Republic of Korea's film sector developed through proper establishment of a democracy system, free creation of film art works and enthusiastic investment of businesses. Union Minister and officials raised questions and held discussions. —Myanmar News Agency



Third Session of the Political Consultations between Myanmar and Brazil being convened in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

Myanmar, Brazil hold 3rd session of Political Consultations in Nay Pyi Taw

THE Third Session of the Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Brazil was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 August 2018 at 11:00hrs. The meeting was co-chaired by U Myint Thu, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and H.E. Mr. Henrique da Silveira Sardinha Pinto, Vice

Minister for Asia and Pacific, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

In the meeting, they discussed and exchanged views on political and economic developments in Myanmar and Brazil, trade relations, energy, agriculture, livestock and fisheries, environment, academic, consular matters, regional and multilateral issues and others matters of mutual interests. Permanent Secretary U Myint Thu

hosted a lunch to the Brazilian delegation.

The Third Session of the Political Consultations was attended by senior government officials from relevant Ministries from Myanmar side, and H.E. Antonio J.M. de Souza e Silva, Brazilian Ambassador to Myanmar; Ambassador Maria Izabel Vieira, Director-General for East Asia of Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials from the Embassy of Brazil.—MNA

Announcement on sending ballots to overseas eligible voters for advanced voting

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 August

1. THE Union Election Commission-UEC will take measures to send ballots in envelopes to embassies concerned through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in timely manner for overseas eligible voters who asked the ballots for advanced voting as they applied the ballots with Form-15. Hence, those who are responsible personnel from the township sub-election commissions will sign and stamp seals of respective sub-commission on the advanced ballots at the office of Union Election Commission and will hand over them to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as from 4th September 2018.

2. Therefore, representatives of the political parties, candidates for Hluttaw representatives, local and foreign election observers and media are invited to observe the work.

Union Election Commission

Seventy-five children discharged from Tatmadaw

THE UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children issued a statement yesterday welcoming the release of 75 children and young people who were recruited by Tatmadaw.

Since June 2012, when the Myanmar government signed a Joint Action Plan with the United Nations to prevent recruitment and use of children in the Tatmadaw, 924 children and young people have been released.

In the statement, CTFMR said it welcomed this latest discharge as 'one more positive development in the Government's effort to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children within the Tatmadaw.

The CTFMR commends the Government for steps taken to reinforce age assessment procedures within the centralized military recruitment process and encourages the further roll

out of this important prevention mechanism.

Since the signature of the Joint Action Plan, other important actions have been taken: notably the signature of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in 2015 (still requires ratification) and in 2017, the signature of the Paris Principles for the reintegration of children who have been associated with armed groups or forces, into civilian life, said the statement.

During the recent visit of Ms Virginia Gamba, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC) to Myanmar in May 2018, she met with high-level officials from relevant Government Ministries, the Tatmadaw, as well as representatives from three listed armed groups out of seven.—Myanmar News Agency



UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) on Grave Violations against Children issued a statement yesterday. **PHOTO:MNA**

London Film Festival champions female directors

LONDON — The London Film Festival said Thursday it was championing female directors, as half of the official competition films were made by women.

Around 38 per cent of the movies screened across the whole festival are directed by women, up from 24 per cent last year.

The 62nd London Film Festival, which runs from 10 to 21 October, features 225 movies from 77 different countries.

It will showcase films including the world premiere of Peter Jackson's "They Shall Not Grow Old", marking the centenary of the end of World War I.

The film features restored

and hand-coloured archive footage, bringing to life the realities of death and survival in the trenches. The festival kicks off on the red carpet with the European premiere of Oscar-winning director Steve McQueen's "Widows", starring Viola Davis, Liam Neeson and Colin Farrell. "Can You Ever Forgive Me?" by director Marielle Heller, a darkly humorous biopic about an audacious literary forger, starring Melissa McCarthy and Richard E. Grant, gets a headline gala screening.

"Capernaum" by Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki, the Cannes Film Festival's Jury Prize winner which depicts a journey into subterranean areas of Beirut, gets the Debate Gala screening slot. The world premiere of "Stan and Ollie", about the Laurel and Hardy double-act's 1953 UK tour, closes the festival, which is run by the British Film Institute (BFI).—AFP ■



Lebanese director and actress Nadine Labaki (L), who won the Jury Prize at the Cannes film festival, will present her award-winning film "Capernaum" at the London festival which is championing female directors this year. **PHOTO: AFP**

Detroit hosts star-studded funeral for Aretha Franklin

DETROIT (United States) — Detroit will bid a final goodbye to US music icon Aretha Franklin at her star-studded funeral on Friday, her family to be joined by political dignitaries and music royalty in celebrating her life.

The 76-year-old singer, beloved by millions around the world, died of cancer on 16 August, closing the curtain on a glittering six-decade career that made her one of America's most celebrated artists.

Former president Bill Clinton and Smokey Robinson are among those due to address her six-hour, invitation-only funeral at the Greater Grace Temple. Stevie Wonder and Ariana Grande are to lead musical tributes.

The service is for family and friends only, meaning that members of the public will have to watch online or on a giant screen reportedly being erected near the church. The formal part of the service is to begin at 10am (1400 GMT) in her Michigan hometown.

Franklin won 18 Grammy awards and was feted for her

civil rights work, raising money for the cause and uplifting activists with her anthems.

She influenced generations of female singers from the late Whitney Houston to Beyonce, with unforgettable hits including "Respect" (1967), "Natural Woman" (1968) and "I Say a Little Prayer" (1968).

"I think it's going to be a very upbeat service. I think it's going to be a very jubilant service," Bishop Charles Ellis, the officiating pastor, told AFP this week.

The daughter of a prominent Baptist preacher and civil

rights activist, Franklin sang at the funeral of Martin Luther King Jr., as well as the inaugurations of presidents Clinton and Barack Obama.

She was awarded America's highest civilian honor by George W. Bush in 2005. Letters from Bush and Obama are expected to be read at the funeral.

After the service, she will make her final journey in the same ivory 1940 Cadillac LaSalle that transported the body of her father in 1984, and that of civil rights icon Rosa Parks in 2005. —AFP ■



Detroit hosts star-studded funeral for Aretha Franklin. **PHOTO: AFP**



Evans Nguni's work includes jewellery but also large pieces of art, made from discarded items. **PHOTO: AFP**

In Kenya, rubbish reborn as art

NAIROBI — In a room that is both home and studio, Evans Nguni works on a sculpture, a fantastical fish fabricated from found objects: wooden spoons, broken scissors and an old machete. Long before upcycling became a hipster mantra, Nguni turned his Nairobi apartment into a workshop, and junk into art, his choice of artistic expression echoing a necessary developing world culture of re-use.

After trying his hand at painting and graphic design, Nguni became a "junk artist" as an act of reciprocity and community.

"My goal is to have an impact on society, from the ground where I live to everybody that comes in contact with my art," he says.

Sometimes he forages for raw materials himself, sometimes his neighbours bring him items, sometimes buyers hand over bits and pieces.

People "end up seeing my work, they relate to it, so they take part by giving me stuff that I can use," he says.

Rubbish, resurrected

The artist's imprint is clear on the roof of the four-storey apartment building where he lives in the north of the Kenyan capital: reclaimed art is scattered about, a strip curtain made from hundreds of buttons leads inside.

To live from his art, Nguni makes and sells everything from small items of jewellery, to large pieces of art. Wire pendants, earrings and bracelets sell for \$5-20 (4-17 euros) while bigger works and sculptures cost hundreds.

"Mostly it is the Kenyans that buy from me, especially the jewellery," he says, of his clientele, who visit him at home.

He takes out a brooch from a paper bag. It consists of a two-euro coin hanging from a golden wire, with beads and a miniature Eiffel Tower. These are quick to produce and Nguni can make

them in a matter of hours, but sculptures can take several days.

Nguni imagines himself resurrecting unwanted objects, and is constantly on the lookout, whether wandering downtown or scouring a rubbish dump.

"I collect them from different areas, I collect them from the ground even when I am walking in town, I get them from friends as donations or from my customers. "I also have a landfill where I go to collect, even around here I have a place where I collect," says the 29-year-old.

Closest by is an informal dump spilling across a dirt road between a pair of buildings near to his home. Here, Nguni salvages discarded plastic toys and tin cans, leaving with his arms full.

"I am collecting whatever material I find... This is part of a motorcycle, so, by the look of this, it will end up as a very amazing sculpture," he says, with an enthusiastic smile, weighing the dented metal in his hands.

Give things a second chance

Determined by the random chance of what Nguni finds, his sculptures have a sometimes surreal style.

"All my life I have been that kid that loves collecting stuff but it never blossomed until I went to campus where we started creating artwork from unconventional materials," says Nguni, who studied painting at Nairobi's Kenyatta University. "I started adding things into my paintings, like buttons and cutouts from clothes, so that evolved into full collages entirely made from found objects."

As an example, he reaches for a peacock, its body made entirely from strips of old leather belts with cutlery for a train.

Recycling has become such a core element of Nguni's life and work that he can't but anthropomorphise the components of his art.—AFP ■

Top trends at Berlin's IFA tech fair

BERLIN — Europe's biggest tech fair, Berlin's IFA, opens its doors Friday with a flood of new product launches. Here are some of the top trends making waves along the aisles:

Future TV: higher resolution, bigger screens

With four times as many pixels as today's 4K ultra-high-definition (UHD) screens, the latest 8K TV sets have the potential to wow — but the first compatible content will only reach viewers in 2020 with the Japan Winter Olympics. In the meantime, Europeans are buying bigger and bigger TVs, hitting an average of 50 inches last year. And wireless or wifi connectivity is moving from the “nice-to-have” to the “must-have” column, with many sets offering on-demand video that users can launch via voice command.

Earphones get cuddly

Many of the bulky head-

phones that dominated audio over the past decade have shed wires in favour of Bluetooth connections in the past two years.

And as listeners increasingly opt for smaller earbuds for everyday use, headsets are evolving to fit new niches — like integration in soft neckbands that won't bother users as they drift off to sleep while bingeing on podcasts.

For shared sounds, TV-connected sound bars or multi-room speaker set-ups sport fewer and fewer buttons as voice commands become the control scheme of choice.

Laptop or tablet? Why choose?

While ever-lighter and thinner laptops are a constant feature of tech shows, the real action at IFA is elsewhere.

High dynamic range (HDR) monitors increasingly offer gamers and other power users more true-to-life images on their desk-

top computers, while “convertible” PCs — useable as either laptop or tablet — are increasingly popular for travel.

As for “classic” tablets, sales fell some 18 per cent last year according to IFA organisers.

Wearables quit the gym

After a 2017 that saw wearable gadgets for monitoring fitness take off, this year they're increasingly present elsewhere, for example as trackers on the wrists of children or the elderly.

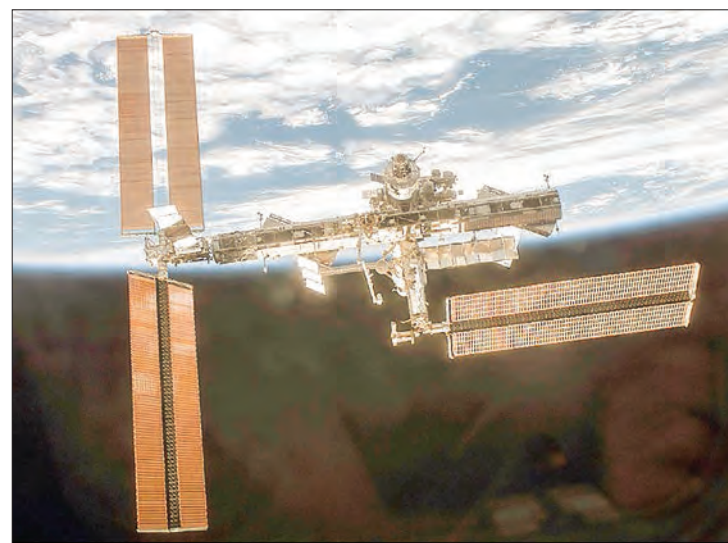
But authorities in some countries are leery of such developments.

Last November, Germany banned a smartwatch aimed at children that allowed parents to remotely activate a microphone to listen in on the playground.

Smog alert

White goods buyers are increasingly convinced that “big is beautiful,” according to Norbert Herzog of consumer research firm GfK, opting for roomier fridges and ovens and higher-capacity washing machines.

Elsewhere in the home, cordless vacuum cleaners are gaining ground, making up some 40 per cent of global sales of small home appliances. Devices from dishwashers to lightbulbs can be networked and controlled remotely by voice commands. And global demand for air purifiers is rising, stoked by health-conscious Chinese consumers worried about pollution in the country's smog-choked cities. —AFP ■



There was an abnormal pressure drop at the International Space Station, pictured 2007, due to a micro fracture, likely from a micrometeorite. **PHOTO: AFP**

Space station reports ‘leak’, crew not in danger

MOSCOW — The International Space Station crew on Thursday was repairing a small “leak” most likely caused by a collision with a small meteorite, the head of the Russian space agency said, adding the incident presented no danger.

“Overnight and in the morning there was an abnormal situation — a pressure drop, an oxygen leak at the station,” Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

“A micro fracture was found, most likely it is damage from the outside. The design engineers believe it is the result of a micrometeorite,” he said.

He said the fracture was found on the Soyuz ship that brought astronauts to the ISS in June for a six-month mission

and is currently docked with the space station. The fracture will be patched from the inside, he said.

NASA confirmed the problem, saying it consisted of a “minute pressure leak” and that the crew was repairing it.

“The leak has been isolated to a hole about two millimetres in diameter” and slowed through application of thermoresistant tape, but a more permanent solution was in development.

Six men are currently orbiting Earth aboard the ISS, including NASA astronauts Drew Feustel, Ricky Arnold and Serena Aunon, as well as Alexander Gerst of the European Space Agency and two Russian cosmonauts — Oleg Artemyev and Sergei Prokopyev. —AFP ■



Smart refrigerators like this Samsung model are likely to be among the products on display at IFA tech trade fair in Berlin. **PHOTO: AFP**

Global warming will make insects hungrier, eating up key crops: study

TAMPA (United States) — Researchers have found a new way that global warming is bad for the planet: more hungry bugs.

Rising temperatures will stimulate insects' appetites — and make some prone to reproducing more quickly — spelling danger for key staples like wheat, corn and rice which feed billions of people, researchers said Thursday.

And since these three crops account for 42 per cent of the calories people eat worldwide, any uptick in scarcity could give rise to food insecurity and conflict, particularly in poorer parts of the globe. “When it gets warmer, pest metabolism increases,” said Scott Merrill, a researcher at the University of Vermont and co-author of the study in the journal *Science*.

“And when pest metabolism

increases, insect pests eat more food, which is not good for crops.”

Prior studies have already warned of climate change's harmful effects on food staples, whether by making water scarce for irrigation or sapping nutritious content from cereal grains.

The latest study adds to that body of research by focusing on the boosted appetites of pests like aphids and borers.

To find out just how bad it could get, researchers ran simulations to track temperature-driven changes in metabolism and growth rates for 38 insect species from different latitudes.

Results varied by region, with cooler zones more likely to see a boost in voracious pests, and tropical areas expected to see some relief.

Overall, “global yield losses of these grains are projected to

increase by 10 to 25 per cent per degree of global mean surface warming,” said the report.

“In France or the northern United States, most of those insects will have a faster population growth if the temperature warms up a bit,” lead author Curtis Deutsch told AFP.

“In Brazil or Vietnam or a very warm place, then it might be the opposite,” said Deutsch, a researcher at the University of Washington.

France stands to lose about 9.4 per cent of its maize to pests in a world that is 2 C warmer, compared to about 6.6 per cent of yield losses today due to pests.

In Europe, currently the most productive wheat producing region in the world, annual pest-induced yield losses could reach 16 million tons.

Eleven European countries

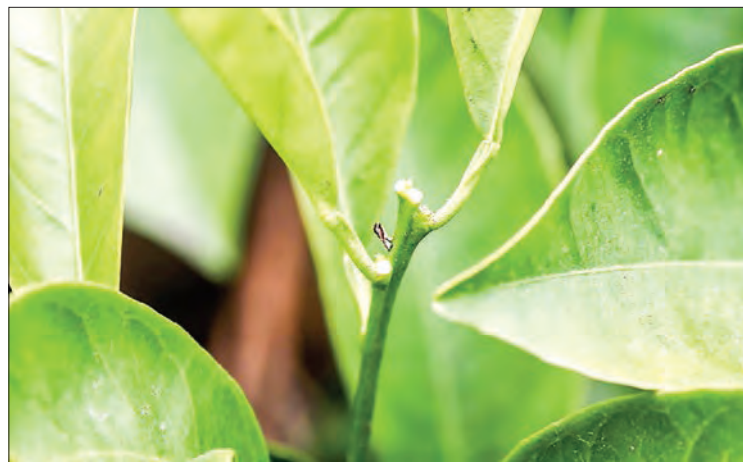
are predicted to see 75 per cent or higher losses in wheat from pests, compared to current pest damage.

In the United States, the world's largest maize producer, insect-induced maize losses could rise 40 per cent under current climate warming trajectories, meaning 20 fewer tons of maize

per year.

China, home to one-third of the world's rice production, could see losses of 27 million tons annually.

The study did not account for any anticipated increase in pesticide use, or other methods of stemming the expected crop loss.—AFP ■



Diaphorina citri, an insect that attacks citrus trees. **PHOTO: AFP**

Firmino eyes end to goal drought as Liverpool face Leicester

LIVERPOOL — Roberto Firmino will seek to end a rare goal drought when Liverpool take on Leicester although his manager Jurgen Klopp has no concerns about a drop-off in productivity.

The Brazil international has formed one of the most feared forward lines in European football over the past 12 months with Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane.

And the 26-year-old, signed for £29 million (\$38 million) from Hoffenheim three years ago, has continued his excellent form in Liverpool's 100 per cent start to the campaign — three victories and three clean sheets in as many games.

Yet despite scoring 27 times for last season, Firmino is still looking for his first goal of the new campaign even though Liverpool are the early Premier League pacesetters.

The forward has not scored in eight games for Klopp's side and in the Premier League has

one goal in his past 10 appearances, a run that dates back to March.

But Firmino's selfless running has been singled out as one of the reasons Salah looks capable of continuing the prodigious production of last season, when he scored 44 times for Klopp in all competitions.

The Liverpool boss says there is no sense of a World Cup hangover for Firmino, whose Brazil side exited the tournament at the quarter-final stage.

"He had two weeks pre-season, which is quite short for a player who needs his physical fitness as much as Roberto does but I'm completely happy," said Klopp. "After two weeks' preparation and a Brazilian holiday he is much sharper and fitter than I would have expected. It is exactly how it should be in this moment and he can improve, like we all can improve." Along with his mobility, Firmino's eye for a killer pass has not been dulled

by his exertions in Russia.

His superbly timed pass against Brighton last week played in Salah, who scored the game's only goal as Liverpool moved to the top of the Premier League

table for the first time in nearly two years.

Klopp has stressed that Liverpool need to improve despite the 1-0 win, and the German must decide whether to name an unchanged starting line-up for the fourth consecutive game at the King Power Stadium on Saturday.

Central defender Dejan Lovren, a World Cup finalist, is pushing for a return, although the impressive form of youngster Joe Gomez may mean that

the Croatian faces another afternoon on the bench at Leicester.

With Liverpool's front three select-

ing themselves, Klopp has to decide on his mid-field line-up — England's Jordan Hen-

derson has been unable to secure a starting place so far. Liverpool's defence, boosted by the arrival of Brazilian

goalkeeper Alisson, has yet to concede and has the added advantage of not having to face Jamie Vardy, who announced his retirement from the England national team this week, due to suspension. — AFP ■



Liverpool forward Roberto Firmino scored 27 goals for Liverpool in the 2017-18 season. PHOTO: AFP

Federer, Djokovic through as storm rages over umpire's Kyrgios pep-talk

NEW YORK — Roger Federer on Thursday set-up a US Open third round clash against Nick Kyrgios who found himself at the centre of an impartiality row after an umpire climbed down from his chair to tell him: "I want to help you".

Second seed and five-time champion Federer, 37, made it 18 wins in 18 second round appearances in New York by seeing off error-plagued Frenchman Benoit Paire 7-5, 6-4, 6-4.

"I think it's always tricky against Benoit, never quite the same point. Sometimes he plays

very deep in the court, then he plays up in the court," said Federer.

Also going through were Wimbledon champion and two-time US Open winner Novak Djokovic as well as Maria Sharapova, the 2006 champion in New York.

However, women's second seed Caroline Wozniacki was knocked out by Lesia Tsurenko of the Ukraine.

Kyrgios reached the third round by seeing off France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert 4-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-3, 6-0.

The match created a huge storm after respected umpire Mo-

hamed Lahyani lost patience with the under-performing 30th seed and climbed down from his chair to tell the Australian, trailing by a set and 3-0, to try harder.

"I want to help you," Lahyani could be heard saying. "This isn't you. I know that. You are great for tennis."

A furious Herbert said that Lahyani had over-stepped the mark.

"The umpire doesn't have to talk to him at all. The only thing he can tell him is pay attention, because if you continue like this, I'm going to give you a warning," said the 27-year-old,

"They can tell him from the chair. He doesn't need to go down. He doesn't need to say the words he said on the video. That is not his job. I don't think he's a coach, he's an umpire."

Kyrgios, however, played down the incident.

"He said he liked me. I'm not sure if that was encouragement," said the Australian who nevertheless won 19 of the last 25 games following Lahyani's unprecedented intervention.

"He just said that it's not a good look. I know what I was doing out there wasn't good." — AFP ■



Old pals act: Roger Federer and Benoit Paire embrace. PHOTO: AFP

First round of 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship Qualification in October

THE first round of 2019 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) U-19 Women's Championship Qualification will be held from 20 to 28 October at the playgrounds of six different host countries.

A total of 27 teams, divided into six groups, will take part in the qualification event.

Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Lebanon and Mongolia are in Group A, Thailand, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Singapore are in Group B, while Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, United Arab Emirates, Guam and Maldives are in Group C.

South Korea, Chinese Taipei, Tajikistan and Bangladesh are in Group D, Viet Nam, Jordan, Northern Mariana Islands and Malaysia are in Group E, whereas Myanmar, Iran, Palestine and Laos are in Group F.

Host countries for Group A and Group E are to be confirmed, and Thailand, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Myanmar will be the host countries for the remaining respective groups.

Of the 27 teams, eight teams will advance to the second round qualification which will be played from 22 to 30 April 2019, divided into two groups.

Four teams winning in the second round will qualify to play in the 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship.

Japan, North Korea and China, the top three of 2017, and Thailand, the host country, will automatically qualify for the Championship.

The 2019 AFC U-19 Women's Championship, played by the eight teams, will be held from 27 October to 9 November 2019 in Thailand. — K. Banana ■