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# THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Saturday, 17 March 2018

## State Counsellor leaves for Sydney

### Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to attend ASEAN-Australia Special Summit

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left for Sydney, Australia yesterday to attend the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit at the invitation of the Hon. Malcolm Turnbull MP, Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The State Counsellor was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by Yangon Re-

gion Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Yangon Mayor U Maung Maung Soe, Charge d'Affaires of the Australian Embassy Mr. Jeremy Peter Kruse and other officials.

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is accompanied by Union Minister for International Cooperation U Kyaw Tin and departmental officials.—MNA ■



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi arrives at Yangon International Airport on her way to Sydney yesterday to pay an official visit and to attend the ASEAN-Australia Special Summit. **PHOTO: MNA**

## 136 villages in Rakhine to be supplied with water

AUTHORITIES in Rakhine State have made arrangements to supply water to 136 villages that could face a shortage of water this summer.

"We have earmarked 6 million gallons of water to supply to the villages", said U Nay Htet Shein, Director of Rakhine State Rural Development Department.

Department officials visited the villagers recently and distributed hotline telephone

numbers to the villages so that they can carry out quick responses to solve the water crisis when it occurs.

"Once they contact us, we will supply water to them. So far, no village has contacted us," he said. The villages suffered a drought last summer.

Lakes on which the villagers relied upon for drinking water dried up last summer.

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## 'BANK OF THE YEAR IN MYANMAR 2017'

Awarded by Financial Times (The Banker)



## Pyithu Hluttaw

## MPs debate Mandalay University upgrade, illegal tuitions, bank erosion

Aye Aye Thant  
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

THE 29<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the seventh regular session of the second Pyithu Hluttaw was held at the Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning.

Dr. U Hla Moe of Aungmyathazan constituency raised a question on the plan to upgrade Mandalay University, so it can provide high-level education and become a center for research.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun said buildings that needed major renovations, as well as those where new modern teaching rooms, laboratories and research rooms could be constructed, were being earmarked in stages.

The organisational structure of the university has been redrawn, and once this is approved, new subjects that can help create job opportunities and develop the socio-economic conditions of the people will be introduced. Also, the university's cooperation with foreign universities will be expanded. At the moment, memorandums of



Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun. **PHOTO: MNA**

understanding have been signed with 33 international universities and organisations in the areas of teaching and research. Furthermore, arrangements are being made for foreign teachers and students to attend classes, and for local students to attend international seminars, workshops and conferences.

A committee has been formed to systematically upgrade Mandalay University, and projects for this purpose are being planned, explained the Deputy Minister.

U Min Thine of Bogale constituency complained about the illegal tuition centres at schools in



Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun. **PHOTO: MNA**

the Ayeyawady Region, and asked the government if there were plans to tackle these activities.

Deputy Minister for Education U Win Maw Tun replied that some 35 schools were being upgraded during the 2017-2018 academic year in the Ayeyawady Region.

As the Ayeyawady Region is a water-filled location and difficult to access, it is important to create educational opportunities for the children living there. Schools must have their own land, and if they have their own buildings, an application to operate a self-reliance primary school can be made to the

township education head office, he said.

The Ministry of Education is providing the necessary cooperation towards this end. Only if it is registered as a self-reliance primary school can it be upgraded, with the recommendation of the state-region government. If tuitions are being given to the schools without going through the proper steps, the relevant state-region, district and township education offices will take appropriate actions, according to the laws, rules and regulations, explained the Deputy Minister.

Next, Daw Cho Cho of Ot-twin constituency asked if there was a plan to use local materials, such as bamboo and wooden poles, to prevent erosion of the banks caused by the Sittaung River and Khabaung creek. Deputy Minister for Transport and Communications U Tha Oo replied that such local materials were used to prevent bank erosion caused along the Sittaung River from the 2014-2015 fiscal year (FY) until the 2016-2017 FY, with funds provided by the Bago Region government at five

locations. Although this can be termed a success, there are limitations and weaknesses in this method. It was found that this was suitable for small creeks, but it is not feasible to apply the same method in large rivers and deep water bodies, explained the Deputy Minister.

At the meeting yesterday, Deputy Minister for Information U Aung Hla Tun submitted to the Hluttaw a bill amending the television and broadcasting law.

Bill Committee member U Sai Pho Myat then read the committee's report on their findings and assessment of the bill, after which Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint requested that those Hluttaw representatives who wanted to table the amendment motion must submit their names.

Following this, an amendment motion submitted on the science, technology and innovation bill, confirmed and sent with an amendment by the Amyotha Hluttaw, was read by the bill committee. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U Win Myint announced the Hluttaw's agreement and confirmation of the entire bill. ■

## Amyotha Hluttaw

## Amyotha Hluttaw discusses electricity supply, road repair work

Myo Thu Hein,  
Hmwe Kyu Zin  
(MYANMAR NEWS AGENCY)

The 29<sup>th</sup>-day meeting of the seventh session of the second Amyotha Hluttaw was held yesterday, in which Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing answered two asterisk-marked questions during the meeting.

Replying to the first question posed by U Maung Maung Latt of the Sagaing Region constituency (9) on the plan to provide electricity to the four wards in Khampat Town, Tamu District, Sagaing Region, the Deputy Minister said the town was 55 miles from the Kalay 230-KV main substation, and some 35 miles from the Tamu 230-KV main substation, which is being planned. It is more convenient to distribute electricity to Khampat Town from the Tamu 230/66-KV main substation, and the ministry is planning to build this main substation, said the Deputy Minister.

The funds for the construction of the Kalay-Tamu power line



Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing. **Photo: MNA**

and Tamu main substation have been earmarked in the 2019-2020 fiscal year budget, and the distribution of electricity to Khampat Town will be carried out only after the construction of this power line and the main substation, said the Deputy Minister.

The second question was raised by Dr. Mya Thaung of the Bago Region constituency (7) on the plan to repair the damaged Nyaungpintha-Seimtgvi road in Pyu Township, Bago Region. The Deputy Minister said that Myat Eindre, a private company, had

been chosen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation to conduct agricultural work in some areas of Pyu Township, Bago Region, in 2013.

This company used the Nyaungpintha-Seimtgvi road to transport construction materials and heavy machinery, which damaged the road. In a letter dated 11 September 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation was requested to repair the damage.

On inspecting the road repair work, it was found that holes and pits were simply filled-in with earth. The ministry ordered the company to repair the road properly and, currently, the company is conducting the repair work, said the Deputy Minister.

Next, the Amyotha Hluttaw committee member for Local International Non-Government Organisations Committee, U Tin Aung Htun of the Magway Region constituency (5), read and submitted the committee's work report to the Hluttaw, and the Amyotha Hluttaw speaker requested that those Hluttaw

representatives interested in discussing the report should submit their names.

Later, Amyotha Hluttaw Public Complaints Committee member U Khin Myo Win of the Taninthayi Region constituency (12) read and submitted the committee's work report. From 2 March 2016 to 31 January 2018, the committee received 5,212 letters with complaints.

A total of 91 case files were sent to relevant organisations, of which 44 cases were received back, while 47 cases remain outstanding. Some 195 cases were sent to relevant ministries, of which 84 cases were received back, while 111 cases are outstanding. A total of 357 cases were sent to states and regional governments, of which 87 cases were received back, while 270 cases are outstanding.

During the two-year period of the Hluttaw, the committee, with the permission of the Amyotha Hluttaw speaker, had responded through letters to 247 complainants. Some 655 complaints related to farmlands, while other

land confiscations were assessed. According to guidelines, the complaints were transferred to the Central Committee for Scrutinising Confiscated Farmlands and Other Land, chaired by Vice President U Henry Van Thio. The report recommended all relevant entities, along with the committee, to resolve the complaints, according to the laws, rules and regulations. Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than then asked the Hluttaw representatives who wished to discuss the report to register themselves.

Amyotha Hluttaw Mineral, Natural Resources Environmental Conservation Committee member Daw Shah Mu of Kayah State constituency (5) read and submitted the committee's work report. The report suggested providing equal opportunities, according to the law, to nationals seeking employment. The committee was formed according to the law and had overseen the government and budget assessment works, in accordance with the Hluttaw law and rules, said Daw Shah Mu. ■



# VP U Henry Van Thio in Tachilek

VICE President U Henry Van Thio yesterday inspected an international inland port in Wanpon, the Tachilek trade station and preventive works being done on Mae Hong river bank erosion.

U Henry Van Thio, who is also Chairman of the Central Committee for the Development of the National Tourism Industry (CCDNTI), together with Shan State Chief Minister Dr. Linn Htut, Deputy Ministers Rear Admiral Myint Nwe and Maj-Gen Than Htut, Permanent Secretaries and officials arrived in Shan State for a travel business development meeting held in Shwe Buthi Hotel in Tachilek yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Director U Htin Aung Naing from the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism of Shan State explained about the status of hotels and motels opened, issuing of hotel and tourism licenses, permissions granted for tourist entry, status of local and foreign tourist entering Tachilek, tour areas and tour voyages available for visitors.

Officials from associations of hotel business owners, travel business owners, tour guides, and a committee to control and manage car/bus lines raised questions that were answered by Ministry of Hotels and Tourism Permanent Secretary U Yi Mon and Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population Permanent Secretary U Myint Kyaing.

Commenting on the matters raised, Vice President U Henry Van Thio spoke of the important role played by the hotel and tourism sector on Myanmar.

"There are two parts in the development of the hotel and tourism sector. A part played by state government, hotel business owners and local people, and another part played by the Union government providing support. The key is cooperation between departments, business owners and local people. With the aim toward benefiting the country and the region, the part to be supported by the Union government will be provided in the best possible way", said the Vice President.

The Vice President and party then went to Tachilek town public service one stop shop and inspected the services provided to the public. The Vice President provided cash support to the staff on duty and then toured the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship



Vice President U Henry Van Thio is welcomed by Akha ethnic women as he arrives in Hokyin Village (Akha village). **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Henry Van Thio meets youths of border area ethnic national development training school in Kengtung. **PHOTO: MNA**



Vice President U Henry Van Thio inspects works to prevent the bank erosion of Maehoung Creek. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Bridge (1).

Afterwards, the Vice President and party visited the women's household and vocational training school operated by the Ministry of Border Affairs, Education and Training Department, where he met Shan State (east) district head Daw Nan San Phu Hlaung.

After the briefing, the Vice President met cordially with the trainees and inspected the school.

The Vice President and party then went to visit the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge (2).

Following this, the Vice President and party arrived at the international inland port (Wanpon). The Vice President

said Wanpon international port is in a central place between Lao and China, and thus should implement and complete the project quickly. The Vice President also coordinated the land requirement for expanding the project and setting up voyages/trips to accommodate foreign travellers.

The Vice President and party also inspected the bank erosion work conducted between BRP-15 and BRP-16 in Tachilek Township, Golden Triangle region.

While inspecting the work, the Vice President spoke of completing the 1,000 ft. long rock-lined retaining wall during the open season, built up to full quality to have a durable and long lasting embankment and to conduct the

necessary calculations to construct an additional 100 ft. above the present one and another one 650 ft. below it.

In the afternoon, the Vice President and party arrived at Tachilek trade station (Mae Yang), where they were met by station official director U Min Aung Aye.

The Vice President remarked on increasing the trade volume in the same way as other border trade stations. The Vice President also commented on finding markets for value-added agricultural products, supporting development of small and medium enterprises and to plant cash crops like coffee in rubber plantations.

From there, the Vice Presi-

dent and party left for Kengtung town by car and cordially greeted the local ethnic nationals upon arrival to Hokyin (Akha village), Kengtung town. The Vice President also observed the traditional handicraft works and provided cash support.

The Vice President and party then reached the border area ethnic national development training school in Kengtung town, where Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Than Htut and District Head Daw Nan San Phu Hlaung gave a briefing about the status and future works of the school.

Afterwards, the Vice President provided cash support to the students and then inspected the school.—Myanmar News Agency



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# British tour group visits Myanmar in vehicles

A large number of tourists are visiting Myanmar, after entering the country through international and cross-border gateways, to visit Myanmar's unique natural locations, along with eco-tourism and archaeological sites.

Tourists are arriving by air, sea and road. Moreover, tourists are also coming to Myanmar in vehicles, motor-bikes and bicycles to observe its many traditions, customs and lifestyles.

Some 39 British citizens visited Myanmar in 18 vehicles, when crossing over the Myawady border gate.

Their travel itinerary was arranged by Essence of Myanmar Travels and Tours Co.,Ltd, under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism. Their trip started on 20 February and ended 28 Feb-



Tourists are visiting Myanmar by old fashioned vehicles near a cross-border gateway. **PHOTO: SUPPLIED**

ruary. Their travel route included Myawady, Hpa-an, Bago, Nay Pyi Taw, Magway, Bagan, Kalaw, Inle, Nyaung Shwe, Taunggyi, Namhsam, Kengtung and Tachilek. The

British tourists left the country on 28 February and headed to Thailand, crossing at the Tachilek border gate.

A culture-based tourism in-

dustry is now active in Myanmar, through which tourists can observe the traditions and culture of the country's ethnic people. —GNLM ■

## Yangon Region government grants permission for 95 pandals during Yangon

THE Yangon Region government has approved the construction of 95 pandals for the Yangon water festival, said U Hla Min, assistant head of the Public Relations and Information Department, Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC).

The water festival will house 35 entertainment stages and 60 pavilions housing water-throwing and dance performances in the Yangon City.

Some 21 pandals will be constructed on Wayzayandar

road, six pandals on Parami road, two pandals on Mindama road, 10 pandals on Kyaik Waing pagoda road, 16 pandals on Pyay road, four pandals on University Avenue road, two pandals on Hsetmu-1 road and four pandals on Bogyoke road.

Moreover, the regional government has also approved the construction of six pandals on Anawratha road, four pandals on Maha Bandula road, three pandals on Merchant road, six pandals on upper and lower Pazundaung road, one

pandal on Thanthumar road and 10 pandals on Kyimyin-daing road.

The application forms seeking approvals for the pandals in Yangon must be submitted not later than 25 March to the Engineering Department (Roads/Bridges), along with the recommendation of the township General Administration Department. The application form can be obtained free of charge from the YCDC Engineering Department (Roads/Bridges). —GNLM ■

## Hotel rooms around Ngapali beach fully booked for water festival

Hotels in the vicinity of Ngapali beach are nearly fully booked for the upcoming water festival, said an official from the local training agency. "Travellers are planning to visit Ngapali beach in large numbers during the water festival, but most of the hotels are fully booked. Therefore, they are looking for accommodations in Thandwe Town," said a traveller.

"Hotels rooms near the Ngwe Saung and Chaung Tha beaches are also fully booked. The room tariffs of hotels close to the sea in Ngapali are high. So people are booking rooms in Thandwe. By the end of this month, all hotels will be fully booked," said U Tun Kyaw, owner of Ngwe Yeiktha guesthouse in Thandwe.

Room prices at hotels near Ngapali beach are now costing between Ks25,000 and Ks 50,000 per night. Most of the hotels are fully booked. However, those costing more than Ks100,000 per night are available.

Although there were few visitors to Ngapali beach during previous water festivals, more have been flocking to the destination since 2015, according to travel and tour agencies. —GNLM ■

## Sewage treatment equipment to be installed in Yangon Region downtown

SEWAGE treatment equipment will be installed in six downtown townships of the Yangon Region, said Yangon Region Mayor U Maung Maung Soe.

While responding to a question posed by the Pabedan Township constituency representative in the Hluttaw, the Yangon Region mayor said the government and Japan's Sumitomo company have signed a memorandum of understanding on 26 July 2017 to conduct a detailed analysis to install sewage treatment equipment in the back alleys of downtown in the Yan-

gon Region.

"We will try to implement the project as soon as possible. Having expanded the project to cover at least half the population by 2040, we have already designed a master plan with the assistance of JICA to establish the sewage treatment plant zones," he said.

"The construction of the sewage treatment plants is the first priority. We have already discussed the construction of the sewage treatment plants with foreign countries to seek financial and technical assis-

tance," he added. A network of cast-iron tunnels and pipes have been supporting the city's downtown area since 1888. Waste-water treatment systems are present in six downtown townships — Kyauktada, Lanmadaw, Latha, Pazundaung, Botahtaung and Pabedan. However, they are old, with some of them constructed decades ago.

There are 175 back alleys, 35 sewage-pumping machines, 2014 sewage ponds and 157,000 ft long pipes, but repairing them will depend on the government's budget. —GNLM ■





A worker selects fish at the Nyaungtan Jetty in Yangon. PHOTO: GNLM/PHOE KHWAR

## Negotiation meeting held on export of Myanmar fishing products to Saudi Arabia

May Thet Hnin

A negotiation meeting is being held with officials from the Saudi Arabian Embassy over Saudi Arabia's suspension of fish imports from Myanmar, which will take effect from 1 April.

Myanmar's Deputy Minister for Commerce met with economic counsellor Hussam Mustafa Luqman Tambusi of the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Nay Pyi Taw on 8 March.

The negotiation meeting is being conducted after the Myanmar Fishery Federation (MFF) requested the government to resolve Saudi Arabia's ban on fish imports from Myanmar during the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting between the Vice President and entrepreneurs held on 7 March at the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Saudi Arabia has temporarily suspended fish and

prawn imports from Myanmar, according to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) announcement, following the detection of two prawn diseases. At the beginning of 2017, OIE detected white tail disease (WTD) or macrobrachium rosenbergii in freshwater prawns bred in Myanmar.

"This prawn disease occurred in the beginning of 2017. We have already informed OIE that the disease was not found in freshwater prawns this year. This disease is not infectious. If Saudi Arabia suspects a prawn disease, we will not export prawns. However, we request that Myanmar be allowed to continue with its fish exports," said U Win Kyaing, General Secretary of MFF.

The economic counsellor said he would raise this issue with the Saudi Arabian government though the Ambassador. Myanmar can also visit Saudi

Arabia to discuss the matter with the government ministry concerned, and discussions can also be held between the representatives of the two WTO member countries, added the economic counsellor.

Myanmar exports farmed fish to Saudi Arabia, which accounts for 30 per cent of its farm-raised fish exports and 40 per cent of rohu exports.

"Fish breeders will face difficulties if Saudi Arabia suspends fish and prawn imports from Myanmar. Some fish farmers may even have to close business," said U Win Kyaing.

A government-to-government meeting was held for the first time. Later on, more negotiations will be held.

There are some 480,000 acres of fish and prawn breeding farms across the county, and Myanmar has earned US\$647 million through its fishery products as of March. ■

## Illegal fish farming lakes to get legal status soon

May Thet Hnin

FARMERS using farmlands for other purposes than agriculture, such as fish farming, will now be granted permits to dig lakes on payment of reasonable fines.

Infertile farmlands, only designated to grow crops, cannot be used for other business purposes, according to Section 30 of the 2012 Farmland Law. "Union Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Thu has informed us that the ministry will make such fishing lakes legal soon," said U Win Kyaing, General Secretary of Myanmar Fishery Federation.

The ministry is yet to decide the amount of the fine. Of the 480,000 acres of fish and prawn farming acres in the country, only 108,000 acres are authorised to practise fish farming, while the remaining farms are considered illegitimate breeding businesses.

"Owing to the farmland law, fish and prawn farmers face

several problems. Additionally, they cannot get access to private bank loans by putting up their fishing lakes as collateral, as they are not legitimate under the existing law. Although this problem was pointed out to the previous government, it was rejected. The incumbent government has handled this problem well, satisfying the illegal fish farmers," said U Win Kyaing.

Section 30 of the 2012 Farmland Law states that if a farmland can be used for other purposes in a certain situation, the land can be used with the approval or recommendation of the state and region land management commissions.

Once the farmlands are granted approvals to be used for other purposes under Section 30, the central land management commission can confiscate these farmlands if owners fail to run the business in the prescribed term or manner within six months from the approved date. ■

## Singapore makes highest investments in hotels, commercial complexes

SINGAPORE brought in foreign investments worth US\$1.79 billion into hotels and commercial complexes, followed by Thailand with \$446 million, according to statistics provided by the hotels and tourism ministry.

Singapore invested in 29 hotels and apartments, while Thailand invested in 11 hotels and apartments.

Some 56 foreign projects of hotels and commercial complexes with an estimated capital of some \$3.08 billion were registered by the hotels and tourism

ministry, with some 33 buildings completed, 11 under construction and 12 granted permits by the Myanmar Investment Commission.

Viet Nam, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg and UAE also invested in hotels and commercial complexes in the country.

Singapore has made foreign investments worth \$1.8 billion in Myanmar, with 35 projects as of January of the current fiscal year. — Ko Khant ■

## Rice, broken rice exports bring in nearly US\$1 billion this fiscal year

THE value of rice and broken rice exports reached nearly US\$1 billion this fiscal year, according to a report in the Myawady Daily yesterday.

Some 2.6 million metric tonnes of rice are exported to 57 foreign countries, while some 568,357 metric tonnes of broken rice are exported to 33 foreign countries, totalling 3.18 million metric tonnes.

Further, about 1.6 million metric tonnes of rice and broken rice, worth more than \$550 million, were exported across the nation's border gates.

Another 1.5 million metric tonnes of rice and broken rice were exported to international markets, with their export value estimated at \$440 million.

Myanmar is among the

top 10 rice producing countries in the world. However, the country's rice industry is facing numerous challenges, such as in the areas of pedigree, high input costs, logistics planning, the high cost of transport and transaction, and a lack of advanced growing methods and agro-machinery, in addition to erratic weather problems. — GNLM ■

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## Documentary on Rakhine State discussed

A MEETING to shoot a documentary on Rakhine State's beauty, the richness of natural resources, and the simple, honest and friendly ethnic Rakhine nationals was held in the meeting hall of Myanma Radio and Television on Pyay Road in Yangon.

At the meeting, Union Minister for Information Dr. Pe Myint spoke of the beauty of the Rakhine coastal area.

The Rakhine State is geographically diverse, with both mountain ranges and a sea. Mrauk U, Buthidaung and Maungdaw are open plains where the land is fertile for agriculture. Ethnic Rakhine nationals, like other ethnic nationals of the country, are a lovely people with their own cultures. The documentary movie is to depict these facts, said the Union Minister.

Furthermore, the movie should also show the similarity and sameness of Rakhine ethnic nationals with other ethnic nationals such as Kachin, Kayin and Kayah. This is the main aim and it should also be created artistically, he said.

In addition to being an epic movie, the film should be shot like a documentary, the Union Minister said. In Rakhine State, there are ethnic nationals Mro, Khami, Daingnet and Thet in addition to ethnic Rakhine nationals.

The Union Minister spoke of the desire to shoot a documentary depicting life, culture and tradition of the ethnic people in Rakhine State for posterity.

Permanent Secretary U Myo Myint Maung, Information and Public Relations Department Director-General U Ye Na-



Union Minister Dr. Pe Myint addresses the meeting on shooting ethnic people in Rakhine. PHOTO: MNA

ing, Myanmar Motion Picture Organization patrons Baji Soe Moe and U Aung Lwin, chairman U Zin Wine, Shwe Than Lwin Media Company Limited chairman U Kyaw Win, Forever Group CEO U Win Maw, Mingalar Company Limited manager U Saw Lwin, script writer U Nyein Min, director Zinyaw Maung Maung, actor Nay Htat Lin and participants in attend-

ance discussed their respective sectors.

The movie plans to show the beauty of locations like Mrauk U, Ngapali, Alethankyaw, Sit-tway and other well-known places, the simplicity and honesty of ethnic Rakhine nationals, how Khami, Daingnet, Mro, Thet nationals live together, their struggle for livelihoods due to lagging behind in development,

how the geographical location of Rakhine State could support its development, reconstruction works conducted by ethnic nationals from all over the country after Maungdaw affairs, and conduct of the youth volunteers and works of the Union Enterprise for Humanitarian Assistance, Resettlement and Development in Rakhine (UEHRD). —Myanmar News Agency ■



## Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives US diplomat

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U T Khun Myat received the United States Embassy's Deputy Head Mr. George Sibley yesterday at the Pyithu Hluttaw in

Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they discussed matters relating to bilateral friendship and cooperation, the Parliamentary Resource Centre

that is cooperating with the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) on Hluttaw Development and Hluttaw legislative matters. — Myanmar News Agency ■

## Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (40/2018) Inaugurates

The Inauguration Ceremony of the Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (40/2018) conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was held at Wunzinmyintzar Hall of the Ministry in Yangon at 10:00 a.m. yesterday, with an opening remarks delivered by U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation.

Present on the occasion were retired Myanmar Ambassadors, Directors-General and responsible officials of the departments under the Ministry, senior diplomats, professors and instructors as well as trainees.

The 12-week long course comprises the subjects related to the diplomacy, negotiation skills,

international law, international conferencing, international relations and economics. Basic Diplomatic Skills Course runs annually for those who have to engage in international relations from private and public sectors, young graduates and those who want to learn more on those subjects.— Myanmar News Agency ■



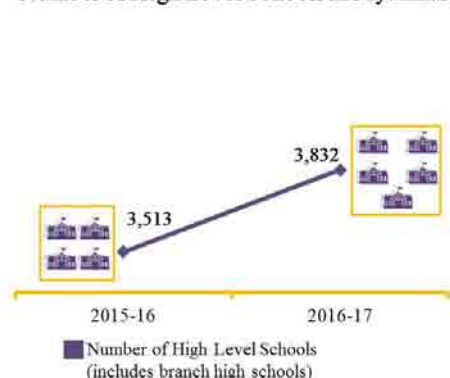
## Independent media visits Rakhine

An independent media delegation including journalists from local and foreign media agencies arrived in Sittway yesterday afternoon to cover developments in Rakhine State.

They will cover ground reports on readiness for repatriation and resettlement for returnees.

The 16-member delegation is comprised of journalists from Nikkei, Kyodo, Asahi Shimbun, NHK, Nippon TV, TV Asahi, Zee TV, Agence France-Presse, CNA, Der Spiegel (Germany), Russian TV, MRTV, MITV and MNA. The trip was arranged by the Ministry of Information. —Thura Zaw ■

Number of High Level Schools in Myanmar



Source: Ministry of Education  
Information Unit: Central Statistical Organization



## Union Minister U Kyaw Tint Swe receives Norwegian State Secretary Foreign Minister

UNION Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe received Ms Marianne Hagen, Norwegian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, yesterday at the meeting hall of the State Counsellor's Office in Nay Pyi Taw.

During the meeting, they exchanged views and discussed Rakhine State affairs, the peace process and humanitarian assistance.—Myanmar News Agency ■



Union Minister for the Office of the State Counsellor U Kyaw Tint Swe welcomes Ms Marianne Hagen, Norwegian State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, yesterday in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

## 136 villages in Rakhine to be supplied with water

### FROM PAGE-1

Every township in Rakhine State has a water purifier, and mobile water purifiers are also ready to supply water to the villagers.

“Rural Development Department is working for supplying water to rural areas and the department is also working together with UNICEF and Japanese International Cooperation Agency-JICA,” said U Nay Htet Shein.

Currently, the Rural Development Department and UNICEF are installing water supply pipes with water purifying systems to homes in vil-

lages.

The department spent more than Ks1 billion from the Union budget on 126 water supply projects in 128 villages in Rakhine State in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. The projects includes 52 tube wells, 71 lakes, one water supply facility from a spring and two other projects.

More than Ks205 million was spent on 52 water facilities including sinking tube wells and lake upgrades in the 2017-2018 fiscal year. More than Ks240 million funded by the State were spent on building 44 water facilities in the same fiscal year.—Kyaw Thu Htet ■



Water supply system is installed in villages in Rakhine. **PHOTO: HAN LIN NAING**



Students return home after sitting for the matriculation examination in Maungtau, Rakhine. **PHOTO: MNA**

## Matriculation examination in Maungtau concludes

THE MATRICULATION examination at three examination centres in Maungtau area was concluded successfully yesterday.

The examination started on 7 March 2018, with the last paper on history concluding yesterday. The three examination centres were Basic Education High School (B.E.H.S) (1) in eastern Maungtau, B.E.H.S (1) in western Maungtau and B.E.H.S (2) in Maungtau.

“Students took the examination at all the three centres peacefully. The Myanmar Police Force and officials from the related ministries, as well as parents, guarded the students outside the centres. On the compound,

teachers and officials from the education department took full responsibility for the security of the students. Nurses and medical officers were also assigned duty near the examination centres to provide immediate healthcare assistance in case of an emergency.

“No unusual cases were reported during the examinations, and they were held without problems in Maungtau,” said U Khin Aung, head of the Maungtau Township Education Department.

Some 189 of the 690 registered students were marked absent on the first day of the examination. On the second day,

some 213 were marked absent, while some 666 registered students were allowed to sit for the English paper examination. A total of 231 students from the 648 permitted students were absent for the mathematics examination. Some 600 students sat for the chemistry test paper, while 225 students were absent. Some 227 students were recorded absent for the physics paper examination, while 597 students sat for the test. Some 633 students were confirmed present for the biology and economics test papers, while 246 were absent. Forty students took the geography and history subject tests, but 15 were absent. —Kyaw Thu Win/Aye Min Thu ■

## Myanmar-Bangladesh commanders meeting

A Myanmar-Bangladesh battalion commander-level meeting was held in a briefing hall on the Myanmar side near the Myanmar-Bangladesh friendship (Taungpyo Letwe entry/exit) border bridge at border post 31/1 yesterday.

At the meeting, matters relating to movement and activities of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) extremist terrorist group, an ethnic Mro national from Myanmar wounded by a landmine between mile post 55/56 on the



The meeting between two border guard forces of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Photo: Information Committee

Bangladesh side, occurrences along the border between the two countries, people living near the border line, transfer of five Bangladeshis who drifted into Myanmar territorial waters af-

ter their boat broke down, arrangements to conduct joint patrols and exchange of news and information in a timely manner were discussed, it is learnt.—Myanmar News Agency ■



# Preparedness can reduce impact of disasters

MYANMAR is an earthquake-prone country due to its geographical location and weather conditions. It is crystal clear that if we do not ready ourselves to handle an earthquake, it may cause undue damage and casualties.

Efforts are being made to disseminate knowledge on earthquake hazards among the people.

Earthquake preparedness should be intensified in cities such as Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon, Mandalay and Bago, which all lie along the Sagaing Fault. Care and alertness is critically needed, especially in big cities.

Quick response teams should be formed in the cities.

It is difficult to say whether tremors will follow a strong earthquake. Tremors do not emanate from the same fault as an earthquake. Tremors come from other faults, so it is difficult to relate one to the other.

The Myanmar Earthquake committee made studies of the interior of the Kabaw Fault in concert with international experts.

The Chauk Earthquake in August 2016 did not ruin buildings apart from the many religious pagodas and stupas, which are buildings of great importance. There used to be strong earthquakes in Myanmar about once in a century.

The Myanmar Earthquake Committee assessed that a Bago earthquake is expected in about 80 to 100 years.

To monitor earthquakes and alleviate earthquake-related danger, the Kabar-Aye Earthquake Observatory Centre was set up in 1961, the Mandalay centre in 1966, the Sittwe center in 1984 and the Dawei centre in 1985.

After a big earthquake, there can be dangerous tremors, risk of fire and damages to dams, the possibility of volcano eruptions, landslides and tsunamis.

As part of the preparedness, it is important to carry out earthquake drills for ensuring an immediate emergency response which includes creating a precise and strong system.

The readiness for effective action, administrative management and prevention of earthquake hazards are as important as tackling the aftermath of an earthquake.

These processes were related to protecting human life and property, and if the country suffered a disaster, effective connections and organizations would play a vital role.

Effective response is needed for the implementation process. At the same time, we should not forget that the media also plays an important role in raising awareness of preparedness for earthquakes.

The most important is that the ministries concerned are to join hands for preparedness to be able to reduce the impacts of the unpredictable disasters. ■

# Myanmar, China launch oceanographic project

Dr. Zaw Min Aung  
(Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

SOME 72 per cent of Earth is covered in water and one-third of the world's population lives in "water-stressed" countries, defined as a country's ratio of water consumption to water availability. Moreover, there is much more freshwater stored in the ground than there is in liquid form on the surface.

The earth is the only known water planet. More than 17 per cent of the protein in our diet comes from the ocean, and nearly half of the human population lives within 60 miles of the coast. At least 90 per cent of international trade is transported by sea and the ocean absorbs about 92 per cent of the solar energy reaching the Earth's surface.

**Natural capital**

The natural capital provided by the ocean belongs to everyone and must be protected.

ed. It boils down to three basics: food, water and a livable habitat. The ocean is responsible for a stable climate that provides a livable habitat. Water vapor from evaporation provides the precipitation that allows food to grow and water to drink. From the ocean currents to weather patterns and the climate, the ocean is indispensable to life in the water or on land. The ocean is at the foundation of the natural capital that supports life on Earth.

Today the oceans in the world are under threat and the global ocean is largely without laws or international protections. It is being depleted, polluted and staked out by nations laying claim to marine resources. High tides and storm surges riding on ever-higher seas are more dangerous to people and coastal infrastructure. Natural protections against damaging storm surges are increasingly threatened.

**Myanmar geography**

Myanmar is bordered by



Officials takes a documentary photo in front of the Xiang Yang Hong 03 Ship.

India, Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal to west, China to the northeast, Laos and Thailand to east, and the Andaman Sea to the south. Myanmar covers 676,578 square kilometers (261,228 square miles), which is roughly the same size of Texas or Britain and France combined.

Strategically, Myanmar is located near major Indian Ocean shipping lanes and is sandwiched between two of the world's great superpowers, India and China. It embraces 653,508 square kilometers of land and 23,070 square kilometers of water. It has a total of 5,876 kilometers of land boundaries: 193 kilometers with Bangladesh; 2,185 kilometers with China; 1,463 kilometers with India; 235 kilometers with Laos;

and 1,800 kilometers with Thailand. It has 1,930 kilometers of coastline on the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea.

Myanmar looks like a diamond-shaped kite with a tail hanging off the southeast corner. From the peak of the kite in the north to the southern end of its tail, the country extends 1,275 miles. At its broadest extent from east to west, it measures approximately 580 miles.

Myanmar-China launches joint oceanographic research

The Chinese research vessel Xiang Yang Hong 03, carrying a team of scientists, arrived at the Thilawa Sea Port to jointly conduct oceanographic research with Myanmar experts.

This cooperation aims at contributing to better understanding on regional variations in response to climate change and to support marine ecological protection in Myanmar's waters. During the three-day winter cruise, observations were carried out to study oceanography, marine chemistry and marine biology using the research vessel.

The research work was conducted with five representatives from the Ministries of Defence, Agriculture, Livestock Breeding and Irrigation, Transport and Communication and Education.

**Rise of the sea level**

A rise of the sea level can mean that saltwater intrudes into groundwater drinking supplies, contaminates irrigation supplies, or overruns agricultural

fields. Low-lying, gently sloping coastal areas are particularly vulnerable to contamination of freshwater supplies.

A sea level rise is usually attributed to global climate change by thermal expansion of the water in the oceans and by melting of ice sheets and glaciers on land.

When sea levels rise rapidly, even a small increase can have devastating effects on coastal habitats. As seawater reaches farther inland, it can cause destructive erosion, wetland flooding, aquifer and agricultural soil contamination, and lost habitat for fish, birds, and plants.

The sea level can rise by two different mechanisms with respect to climate change. First, as the oceans warm due to an increasing global temperature, seawater expands — taking up more space in the ocean basin and causing a rise in water level. The second mechanism is the melting of ice over land, which then adds water to the ocean.

**Climate Change**

Climate change is a change of weather patterns when that change lasts for an extended period of time and it can refer to a change in average weather conditions. Climate change is caused by factors such as biotic processes, variations in solar radiation received by Earth, plate tectonics, and volcanic eruptions. Certain human activities have been identified as primary causes of ongoing climate change, often referred to as global warming.

## The natural greenhouse effect

The greenhouse effect is a warming of the earth's surface and lower atmosphere caused by substances such as carbon dioxide and water vapor, which let the sun's energy through to the ground but impede the passage of energy from the earth back into space. Energy emitted from the sun is concentrated in a region of short wavelengths including visible light. Much of the solar radiation is absorbed at the earth's surface, causing the surface and the lower parts of the atmosphere to warm.

**Global Warming**

Due to global warming, temperatures have been increasing year after year all over the world, and scientists everywhere are greatly concerned. People are well aware of the consequences such as drought, storms and heavy rainfall. Global warming is likely to be the greatest cause of species extinctions this century.

**Possible Solutions**

There are solutions that can reduce global warming and other related disasters. As all these adverse effects are brought on by human beings, they have a responsibility to control them and restore a normal balance. As for the governments and citizens, concerted efforts should be made to move forward to implement the global warming solutions. ■

Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung  
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# South-East Asian countries commit end TB

TRACKING progress to eliminate tuberculosis, member countries of the WHO South-East Asia Region yesterday committed to further intensifying efforts to ensure rapid and concrete progress to end tuberculosis (TB) by 2030.

In a statement adopted at the Delhi End TB Summit, member countries unanimously agreed to actualising and intensifying essential actions agreed to in the Delhi Call to Action, which was adopted in March last year to accelerate efforts to End TB in the Region, host to one-fourth of the global population but a disproportionate 46 per cent of the global TB burden.

"Progress against TB in this region will have a major impact on the progress globally," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization. "Too much is at stake, we cannot afford to fail. We must remember that the war against TB will be won in communities. It will be won by nurses, doctors, community health workers and others at the frontlines. We must give them the resources they need to find every last person with TB, to diagnose them, to treat them, and to cure them," he said.

Welcoming the statement, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia, said, "it gives shape to our momentum and aspirations, and does so by setting out a series of strategic priorities which include establishing strong leadership of TB programmes at the national level; increasing budgetary and human resource allocations to TB programmes from domestic and global sources; enabling each and every TB patient to access the best possible care available; and supplementing medical care for TB with social and financial protection."

The member countries committed to increasing budgetary and human resource allocations by governments as well as by their global, domestic and other partners so as to ensure that national TB plans are fully funded.

They also committed to universal access to comprehensive, integrated TB care and prevention services, to achieve universal health coverage as committed to in the Sustainable Development Goals, by enabling the best possible care to each and every person, including migrants, the aged and other high-risk populations, living with any form of TB including drug-resistant TB and TB-HIV co-infections.

Hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, the World Health Organization and the Stop TB Partnership, the Delhi End TB Summit 2018 was inaugurated yesterday by the Prime Minister of India, Mr Narendra Modi.

The Stop TB Partnership's Executive Director, Dr Lucica Ditiu, and the Global Fund's Executive Director, Mr Peter Sands, are among the prominent health leaders attending the week-long meeting. The health ministers of a number of countries including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Kazakhstan and Peru are also participating. ■



Researchers are conducting their combined works in the Myanmar Specail Economic Zone.



# Shell, ENI accused of negligence over Nigeria oil spills

LAGOS— Nigeria was on Friday urged to re-open investigations into 89 oil spills in its southern delta region, after claims that Shell and ENI misreported the causes.

Rights group Amnesty International said there were “reasonable doubts” about how the spills happened, suggesting corrosion rather than oil theft were behind the pollution.

A total of 46 spills came from pipelines operated by Shell’s local subsidiary, the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria, and 43 from ENI’s Nigerian Agip Oil Company, it added.

The call was made after crowd-sourced analysis of the companies’ publicly available documents on pipeline failures in the Niger Delta in the last seven years to December 2017.

Activists who pored over reports found that since Shell began publishing details in January 2011, it had 1,010 spills amounting to 110,535 barrels or 17.5 million



The Nigerian region of Ogoniland has experienced a spike in oil spills in recent years. **PHOTO: AFP**

litres of crude. ENI had 820 spills – the equivalent of 26,286 barrels or 4.1 million litres of oil – since it made its reports public in 2014.

The companies blamed “third party interference” – either

sabotage of pipelines by militants or the theft of crude known locally as “bunkering” – for most of the spills.

**- ‘Insult to injury’ -**

But Amnesty’s business and

human rights researcher Mark Dummett said the companies’ claims to be doing all they can to prevent spills were at odds with the analysis.

“(Researchers) found that

the companies often ignore reports of oil spills for months on end – on one occasion ENI took more than a year to respond,” he said in a statement.

“The Niger Delta is one of the most polluted places on Earth and it beggars belief that the companies responsible are still displaying this level of negligence.

“Adding insult to injury is the fact that Shell and ENI seem to be publishing unreliable information about the cause of extent of spills,” he added, accusing both firms of “recklessness”.

Allegations about misreporting, including under-estimating the amount of oil spilled, are significant as they could affect claims for compensation for local communities.

In January 2015, Shell agreed to pay £55 million (\$77 million, 62 million euros) in compensation to more than 15,500 people affected by oil spills in the Ogoniland area of Rivers state.—AFP ■

## Global biodiversity ‘crisis’ to be assessed at major summit

PARIS— Earth is enduring a mass species extinction, scientists say – the first since the demise of the dinosaurs and only the sixth in half-a-billion years.

The reason? Humanity’s voracious consumption, and wanton destruction, of the very gifts of nature that keep us alive.

Starting Saturday, a comprehensive, global appraisal of the damage, and what can be done to reverse it, will be conducted in Colombia.

“The science is clear: biodiversity is in crisis globally,” WWF director general Marco Lambertini told AFP ahead of a crucial meeting of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

“We depend on biodiversity for the food we eat, the water we drink, the clean air we breathe, the stability of weather patterns, and yet our actions are pushing nature’s ability to sustain us to the brink.”

Scientists and government envoys will gather as the 128-member IPBES to dot the i’s and cross the t’s on five monumental assessment reports designed to inform global policymaking into the future.

Compiled over the last three years, the reports will provide

the most up-to-date picture of the health of the world’s plants, animals and soil.

The diagnosis will be unveiled in two parts at the summit in Colombia’s second-largest city, Medellin.

First, on 23 March, the IPBES will simultaneously release separate assessments for the four regions into which it has divided the world – the Americas, Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Europe and Central Asia.

A fifth report, due 26 March, will focus on the global state of soil, which is fast being degraded through pollution, forest-destruction, mining, and unsustainable farming methods that deplete its nutrients.

**- 600 volunteers, 10,000 reports -**

Altogether, the evaluations took 600 volunteer scientists three years to complete, synthesising data extracted from about 10,000 scientific publications.

The end product covers the entire Earth apart from Antarctica and the open oceans – those waters beyond national jurisdiction.

Meeting host Colombia claims to boast the world’s largest variety of birds and orchids and is second only to Brazil in terms of overall species diversity.

Paradoxically, decades of conflict have preserved fragile habitats in no-go zones in the country, whose mountainous topography supports 311 different ecosystems.

But 1,200 Colombian species are listed as threatened, due partly to pollution and forest-destruction caused by illicit drug production.

More than just a portrayal of doom and gloom, the latest assessments will include projections for future recovery or decline, and “suggestions for action,” IPBES executive secretary Anne Larigauderie told AFP.

The expert panel, she explained, had compiled five assessment reports, each about 600-900 pages long.

Each of these was then condensed into a 20-30 page “summary for policymakers”.

These summaries must be officially adopted in Medellin before being sent to IPBES member states to guide policymaking in areas that affect biodiversity – everything from transport and infrastructure to farming, water management and education.

The reports are not prescriptive, but “we hope that this will help inform policy decisions to stem the loss of biodiversity and the fundamental services it



Orangutans in Borneo are just one of the world’s many threatened species as Earth faces a biodiversity crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

provides us with,” chief scientist Tom Brooks of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature told AFP.

**- Word by word -**

After opening formalities on Saturday evening, delegates will hunker down for days of intense, “word-by-word” negotiations on the five summary documents.

The drafts in their current form will be put to a joint IPBES meeting on Sunday, after which delegates will meet in five groups – one for each report.

Governments will have a final chance to request changes to the wording of the summaries. If the scientific authors disagree,

a compromise must be found through negotiation.

“It is likely that there would be quite a few discussions,” said Larigauderie.

“It may be that there are some countries that might not be satisfied by what the report says about the state of their biodiversity.”

Any changes to the summaries adopted in Medellin will be incorporated into the full reports, which will be published only after the conference in the six official UN languages.

The whole process has cost about \$5 million (four million euros).—AFP ■



# Study challenges 'healthy but obese' theory

PARIS — Being overweight or obese does pose a risk of heart disease, despite claims to the contrary, a study of nearly 300,000 British adults suggested Friday.

While it is generally accepted that being overweight increases a person's disease risk, some researchers have recently suggested that carrying extra weight does not actually boost death rates for some, particularly the elderly.

A number have even suggested that being overweight may protect against disease, a claim dubbed the "obesity paradox."

But the latest study, published in the *European Heart Journal*, said there is no paradox.

It looked at 296,535 people aged 40-69 who enrolled in an ongoing health study in the United Kingdom between 2006 and 2010.

For the latest analysis, data on the participants — all of "white European descent" — was available until 2015.

All were healthy when they first enrolled.

The researchers noted the participants' Body Mass Index (BMI) — a ratio of weight-to-height squared used to determine whether a person falls in a

healthy weight range.

They then tracked who went on to develop CVD — which includes heart attack, stroke or high blood pressure.

The World Health Organization considers someone with a BMI of 25 kg/m<sup>2</sup> as overweight, and 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or higher as obese.

The research team found that CVD risk increased beyond a BMI of 22-23 kg/m<sup>2</sup>.

"Furthermore, the risk also increases steadily the more fat a person carries around their waist," said a press statement summarising the findings.—AFP ■



European Heart Journal study says being overweight or obese poses a risk of heart disease. PHOTO: AFP

## Chinese women's status boosted by improved laws, policies, envoy tells UN

UNITED NATIONS — Improved laws and policies have enhanced women's status and welfare in China, especially in the rural areas, a Chinese envoy told a United Nations (UN) meeting on women Thursday.

"Our mechanism for gender-related assessment of laws, regulations and policies has further improved, and the system of conducting interviews to ensure equal employment for women has been

incorporated in local legislation," Wu Haitao, China's deputy permanent representative to the UN, said at the general debate of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Of the representatives elected at the beginning of this year to the 13<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress, China's national legislature, women constitute 24.9 per cent. Female members make up 20.39 per

cent of the 13th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the top political advisory panel, an increase of 2.55 per cent over the last session.

"The number of rural women living in poverty has decreased drastically and more rural women now enjoy social security benefits such as basic pension scheme and new rural cooperative medical scheme," Wu said.—Xinhua ■

## 'Superman' retires: Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing to step down

Hong Kong's richest man Li Ka-shing was dubbed Superman for his business acumen. PHOTO: AFP



HONG KONG — Hong Kong's richest man, Li Ka-shing, has finally stepped down from his business empire at the age of 89, as one of the world's most storied tycoons brings his career to a close almost 70 years after founding his first company.

Li spent decades making his name in Hong Kong and around the world at the helm of a prosperous conglomerate that covered sectors from container ports to telecommunications, with his business moves setting market trends.

Nicknamed "Superman" for his business acumen, Li's companies are part of the fabric of Hong Kong life, providing everything from internet services to supermarket chains.

His decisions have the potential to affect property and utility prices for the city's seven million residents as investors hang on his every word.

Li was born in 1928 in the mainland Chinese city of Chaozhou.

He and his family fled to neighbouring Hong Kong during the Sino-Japanese War — Li recalled bombs being dropped on his hometown when he was in primary school in an interview with *Forbes Magazine* in 2012.

He first started his own business in 1950 manufacturing plastic flowers, calling the company Cheung Kong after China's Yangtze River.

But after diversifying into property he saw large profits in the 1960s and in the following decades his businesses reached into many sectors of Hong Kong.

His firm has a longstanding interest in overseas markets, making investments in the Canadian property and energy sectors in the 1980s. He has been offloading major property investments in China after investing heavily there in the 1990s, in a move seen as part of a quest for stability for his vast empire and a sign of diminishing confidence as China's formerly stratospheric growth rates cool.

- 'Everyone has a goal' -

He has also sought to trim his Hong Kong assets and his CK Asset Holdings sold its stake in the Center skyscraper — one of the jewels in the crown of his property portfolio in the city — in November for a record HK\$40.2 billion (\$5.2 billion).

Analysts said the deal showed CK Asset's move to diversify out of real estate as it expands into infrastructure and energy.—AFP ■

## Trump to oust national security advisor HR McMaster

WASHINGTON — US President Donald Trump has decided to sack National Security Advisor HR McMaster, in what would be the latest in a string of high-profile White House departures, *The Washington Post* reported Thursday.

The newspaper said that Trump is discussing potential replacements for McMaster, but is willing to take his time because he wants to avoid humiliating him as well as to have a successor ready.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said that there were no changes at the National Security Council, a response that avoided the issue of whether any were being planned.

"Just spoke to @POTUS and Gen. H.R. McMaster - contrary to reports they have a good working relationship and there are no changes at the NSC," Sanders wrote on Twitter.

The Post said that some in the White House were hesitant



The Washington Post reports that President Donald Trump has decided to fire White House National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster. PHOTO: AFP

to remove McMaster until he had "a promotion to four-star rank or other comfortable landing spot."

While Trump reportedly wants to avoid humiliating McMaster, that did not appear to have been a particularly high priority when he removed secretary of state Rex Tillerson two days ago, a move he announced on Twitter.

A top aide said Tillerson did not speak to the president before his firing was announced and was not given a reason for his dismissal.

Tillerson's sacking came less than two weeks after Trump's top economic advisor Gary Cohn quit in protest against the president's decision to levy tariffs on imported steel and aluminum.—AFP ■



## Footbridge collapses in Miami, killing four

MIAMI — A newly installed pedestrian bridge over a major road in Miami collapsed on Thursday, killing four people and trapping multiple cars below.

The walkway, which connected Florida International University to a student housing area, went up less than a week ago but was not yet operational.

"We have located up to four victims. Four deceased," Miami-Dade Fire Chief Dave Downey told a news conference.

Crews worked into the night at the scene of the disaster. Maurice Kemp, the area's deputy mayor, said the search for survivors had not been abandoned.

"Miami-Dade county and our partner agencies... have been working feverishly in the search and rescue mode to ascertain how many victims there



Police block a road near a newly installed pedestrian bridge that collapsed in Miami. **PHOTO: AFP**

are and rescue as many as we can," Kemp told journalists.

Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Division Chief Paul Estopinan said at least eight cars were trapped when the 950-ton (tonne) concrete bridge suddenly gave way.

Police detective Juan Carlos Llera said, "it sounded like an explosion. A huge bang."

"It looks like a disaster area. It looks literally like a bomb went off," Llera told AFP.

The bridge was suspended from cables that

were determined to have loosened. While they were being tightened, the span collapsed, Florida Senator Marco Rubio wrote on Twitter.

The bridge had only been installed on Saturday, ahead of its planned opening in 2019.—AFP■

## Death toll in India forest fire rises to 14

NEW DELHI—The death toll in a forest fire in southern state of Tamil Nadu has risen to 14, with some of the critically injured trekkers succumbing to their burn injuries at the hospital in the past 24 hours, police said Friday.

The massive fire broke out late Sunday evening when a group of nearly 40 people, mostly college students, went trekking in Kurangini hills in Tamil Nadu's Theni district, some 540 km from the state capital of Chennai.

While 10 people - seven women and three men - initially died in the fire, 30 others were rescued by Indian Air Force. "Of those rescued, some sustained

severe burns. Four of them have so far died during treatment at a government hospital," a senior police official said.

Police have already arrested a 30-year-old tour guide in connection with the fire. "The tour guide led the trekking group to the forest. He is being interrogated. Preliminary probe suggests that the trekking group did not obtain required permission from the authorities," he said.

A probe is underway to ascertain the cause of the fire.

"We will try to fix responsibility as soon as the investigation is over. Anyone guilty will not be spared," the official added. — Xinhua■

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY.NO. ( 1082 S/N )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KUO HSIUNG VOY.NO. ( 1082 S/N ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY.NO. ( - )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V HUNSA BHUM VOY.NO. ( - ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T/ A.I.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 REGIONAL CONTAINER  
LINE.**

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V NACC POROS VOY.NO. ( 42 )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V NACC POROS VOY.NO. ( 42 ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MITT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S MERIDIAN SHIPPING  
AGENCIES PTE LTD.**

Phone No: 2301928

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY.NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V XETHA BHUM VOY.NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-3-2018 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.

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT  
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY  
AGENT FOR: M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER  
LINES**

Phone No: 2301185

### The Republic of Myanmar Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population Social Security Board Open Tenders Invitation for developing and implementation of Social Security Information System

1. Social Security Board (SSB) wants to acquire a comprehensive Social Security Information System in Myanmar Kyats. Any interested domestic, international or joint-venture companies are eligible to submit the tender proposal.
2. The project is to deliver an integrated solution comprises of the followings:

- Data center implementation
- Development and implementation of SSB core business processes such as employee/employer registration process, contribution collection process, benefits provision process, claims management process, medical services provision process and e-Money services, etc.
- Setting up and operate the SSB smart card printing processes
- Implementation of software packages such as accounting, human resource management, hospital management, and building and inventory maintenance, among others.

3. The tender forms including Terms of Reference and Tender Discipline can be purchased at the Administrative Department, Social Security Board (Head Office), No (OU- 77), corner of Thiriyadanar and Naykyar (8) Street, Ottarahiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar during office hours starting from 19-3-2018 to 28-3-2018.
4. The closing time to submit tender proposal is 16:30 pm on May 11, 2018 at the above mentioned address. Any tender submitted after the closing time will not be considered.
5. For further information, please visit the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population website <http://www.mol.gov.mm> and inquiry the following address within office hour:

- Information and Communication Department, Social Security Board, Nay Pyi Taw
- Phone - 067-3417925, 3417951, 3417952
- Fax - 067-3417926

Tender Invitation and Appraisal Committee  
Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population



# Thousands flee Syria rebel enclave after month-long bombardment

GHOUTA — Thousands of civilians poured out of Eastern Ghouta on Thursday after a month-long bombardment brought the Syrian regime closer to recapturing the devastated rebel enclave outside Damascus.

Defying expectations and calls to step down, Syria's President Bashar al-Assad was strengthening his grip on power as the conflict entered its eighth year.

His troops advanced in a ferocious assault on Ghouta, once the opposition's main bastion on the outskirts of the capital.

A war monitor said regime forces now control 70 per cent of the area, splitting the remaining rebel territory into three shrinking pockets.

After a fierce air and ground assault, regime

forces on Thursday captured Hammuriyeh town, in an isolated southern part of Ghouta.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitor, said rebels later launched a counter-attack and regained parts of the town, killing 14 regime fighters.

Elsewhere, however, it said the regime overran Al-Rihan town in an assault led by Russian officers and advisers. The regime's advance into Hammuriyeh had punched a corridor through the town into government-controlled territory.

Streams of women and children escaped through that corridor on Thursday, carrying plastic bags stuffed with clothes and pushing strollers piled high with suitcases and rugs.

They reached a re-

gime checkpoint in Adra district, where ambulances and large green buses waited to take them to temporary shelters.

**- 'Largest displacement'**

The Observatory said nearly 20,000 people fled the enclave in 24 hours before the flow stopped on Thursday evening.

It called the exodus "the largest displacement since the beginning of the assault on Ghouta."

The United Nations said it was trying to determine how many people have left the enclave.

"The UN has not observed the evacuations, but is visiting collective shelters where some of the evacuees are arriving," a UN spokesman said.

Eastern Ghouta had been the main rebel bastion on the outskirts of Damas-



Syrians fleeing rebel-held Eastern Ghouta arrive at a regime checkpoint on the outskirts of Damascus on 15 March 2018. **PHOTO: AFP**

cus since 2012 and came under a devastating regime siege the following year.

That left the area's roughly 400,000 residents struggling to secure food and hospitals crippled by shortages of medicine and

equipment.

On Thursday, a joint convoy of food supplies for some 26,000 people entered Douma, the largest town in Ghouta and part of a separate rebel-controlled pocket.

"This is just a little of what these families need," said the International Committee of the Red Cross, which delivered the aid alongside the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and the UN.—AFP ■

## Philippine troops kill 2 Abu Sayyaf terrorists

MANILA— At least two terrorists have been killed as troops fought an undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf Group fighters (ASG) in southern Philippine jungles of Sulu, an army general said on Friday.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, commander of the military's Joint Task Force Sulu, said in a statement that fighting broke out around noon on Thursday in a village in Patikul town, a known lair of Abu Sayyaf Group.

He said Thursday's firefight last almost an hour with two Abu Sayyaf Group terrorists killed.

Sobejana said the militants were part of the ASG gunmen that clashed with troops on Tuesday in another village in Patikul town. At least five ASG militants were killed and six soldiers wounded in Tuesday's clash, according to the military. The military said the ASG is still holding more than a dozen hostages.—Xinhua ■

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SEOUL VOY.NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SEOUL VOY.NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T / M.I.P 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 MCC TRANSPORT  
(S'PORE) PTE LTD**

Phone No: 2301185

### CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V SIMA PERFECT VOY.NO. ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SIMA PERFECT VOY.NO. ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 18-3-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT 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 GLODEN SEA  
SHIPPING LINE**

Phone No: 2301185

Hotline Ph: 09-74424114

### INVITATION FOR PRICE QUOTATIONS

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received financing from the International Development Association (IDA) towards the cost of the National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP). The IDA N° of the financing agreement is N° H814MM. The Department of Rural Development (DRD) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, in its role as implementing agency of the NCDDP, intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this financing towards eligible payments under the Purchase Order/Contract for the following packages.DRD now invites eligible suppliers to express their interest in supplying the following items:

**Reference Number: G 112, G 113 and G 114**

Reference No.	Lot No	Description	Quantity (Number)
G 112	1	Tile Stones and Plaques with completed Sub-Project Information	11,732
G 113	1	T-shirts with the logo and text of the NCDD Project	145,980
G 114	1	Caps with the logo and text of the NCDD Project	57,918

Expressions of Interest on Quotation must be submitted in a written form to the email address below and clearly indicate the reference number above. The invitation to quote will be distribute on the needs of DRD. Eligible suppliershaving expressed interest will receive anINVITATION TO QUOTE (ITQ).Sealed Quotations will be submitted to the address by corresponding **date and time as stated in each package**, after which no Quotations will be accepted.

The goods will be contracted in lot-by-lot basis. Suppliers will be selected following the Shopping Methodas per the "Guidelines for Procurement of Goods, Works and non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits& Grants by World Bank Borrowers" dated January 2011.

Please submit your Expression of Interest for receiving the Invitation to Quote (ITQ) to:U KyawSoe, Deputy Director General, Department of Rural Development, Office No.(14), Nay Pyi Taw.For detailed information please contact U KyawSwaAung, Director, Procurement and Logistic Section, Mobile phone 0943434333 or office phone 067409071/ Email: [unioncddprocurement@gmail.com](mailto:unioncddprocurement@gmail.com). Please indicate your e-mail address as only electronic copies of the ITQ will be send as well as introduce your company name and contact number to communicate with you.For more information on the NCDD Project please also visit Website: [www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org](http://www.cdd.drdmyanmar.org).



## Australian paraplegic aims to be first to reach Everest under own power

KATHMANDU — A wheelchair-bound Australian is aiming to become the first paraplegic to reach Everest base camp unaided, a breathless trek he reckons he will make mostly on his hands.

Scott Doolan, 28, sets out Friday for Mount Everest's base camp, which lies 5,364 metres (17,598 feet) above sea level and is traditionally only accessible on foot or by helicopter. He is out to prove that it is also accessible to wheelchair users.

Doolan will be using a specially designed wheelchair with mountain bike wheels when the trails allow, but thinks he will mostly be on his hands with a friend holding his legs in a move he's dubbed "wheelbarrowing".

"I jump out of my chair and my mate Matt, he'll grab me and hold my ankles and I basically walk on my hands," he said, explaining a technique that's similar to the wheelbarrow race of school sports days. Doolan has spent the last eight months training for the trek, doing daily cardiovascular and strength training.

He also spent time in Australia's Blue Mountains to get some experience on trails, wearing a mask that limits oxygen flow in a bid to replicate the high al-



Australian Scott Doolan will be using a specially designed wheelchair with mountain bike wheels. **PHOTO: AFP**

titude conditions that await him in the Himalayas.

The dramatic trek to Everest base camp begins from Lukla -- 140 kilometres (86 miles) east of Kathmandu -- and follows an ancient trading route that once linked Nepal and Tibet, taking hikers over a soaring pass before dropping down into the lush Khumjung valley.

A series of narrow suspension bridges criss-cross the river that runs along the valley floor, before the route climbs sharply towards the base of Mount Everest.

Along the route there are steps and narrow paths hewn into the valley wall, forcing hikers to clamber over rocks and occasionally trek in snow or mud, all at an altitude where limited oxygen can cause headaches and nausea, and if left untreated a potentially fatal build-up of fluid in the lungs.

"I have no idea what it's going to be like. Obviously there are going to be parts when I can't physically go in a wheelchair so I'm going to get out and use my hands. That will probably be the most challenging of it all," Doolan said.

"Hopefully I don't get altitude sickness."

**- 'Rise above it' -**

Every year, Everest's base camp is transformed into a nylon tent city of around 1,500 people for two months starting in April, when climbers descend on the mountain with the sole aim of reaching its summit.

Meanwhile, around 5,000 trekkers a year take the eight to 10 days to trek to the base of the world's highest peak, according to figures from Nepal's tourism department. Doolan expects to take about twice as long and will

then have to retrace his route back to Lukla. Doolan has been confined to a wheelchair since he was 17 when he broke his spine in a motorcycle accident.

An athletic teenager, it took him a few years to get back to the gym after the accident, but once he did, it helped him come to terms with his disability, he said.

And then he met Matt Laycock, founder of the Apexgen clothing brand, which has a philanthropic mission that aims to build awareness of mental health and disability under the tagline "Rise above it".

It was Laycock who came up with the idea that Doolan should try to become the first paraplegic to get to Everest's base camp mostly under his own power. The company is backing the trip, which has cost Aus\$70,000 (US\$54,400) including Aus\$15,000 for Doolan's custom wheelchair.

Laycock pitched the idea to him over coffee -- and Doolan initially said no. But a few weeks later he came round to the idea.

"Anything you set your mind to you can achieve it. That's what I've learned so far. Your mind is your only limitation," said Doolan of the precipitous challenge awaiting him. —AFP ■

## Celebrated Portuguese luthiers face end of the line

PORTO — Surrounded by planers and other woodworking tools, Joaquim Capela carefully sculpts a new bridge for a violin at a tiny workshop in northern Portugal as it drizzles outside.

Capela, 51, is a third-generation luthier, whose family's prize-winning instruments have been sought after for nearly a century by top musicians around the world, such as the late Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovich.

But he is set to be the last since his 22-year-old son Tiago has no desire to continue the family business, preferring instead to become a surgeon.

The musical instruments "mean a lot to us but it's nothing compared to a son doing what he loves," says Capela, as he holds up the finished bridge, which supports the strings and transmits their vibrations to the body of a violin.

"If he is happy, that is what counts for me. If I am like my father, I still have at least another 30 years to make instruments."

Seated nearby, his father



Portuguese luthier Joaquim Capela (r) works with his father Antonio in their northern Portugal workshop in Anta, near Porto. **PHOTO: AFP**

Antonio Capela, 85, quietly goes about changing the strings and turning the pegs of a cello at the workshop in Anta, a picturesque town that is home to around 10,000 people near Porto, Portugal's second-largest city.

"Aside from the two or three days of the year when I have my usual cold, I never stop working, even on weekends," he says in a soft voice.

**- 'Many orders' -**

It takes on average about two

and a half months for the Capelas to make a new string instrument, which sells for at least 3,000 euros (\$3,700).

"We have so many orders that it takes us generally two years to honour them," says Joaquim, who started learning the craft as a child.

Their story as luthiers began in 1924, when Joaquim's carpenter grandfather, Domingos Capela, agreed to repair the violin of an Italian-Brazilian musician, who

belonged to the orchestra of the neighbouring town of Espinho.

The musician was thrilled with the results and recommended Domingos to other members of the orchestra.

As time went by the Capelas started to count top musicians as their clients, among them Rostropovich, considered to be among the world's greatest cellists.

Photos of the Russian musician, who died in 2007, are proudly displayed on a wall of the Capelas' workshop, alongside violins, violas and cellos.

The Capelas in 1972 won the top four prizes in the prestigious Henryk Wieniawski international violin making competition, which is held every five years in Poland, as well as the top prize in a highly respected Japanese competition in 1989.

**- Balkan maple, Italian spruce -**

"To make a quality violin, you have to choose the wood well," says Antonio, who studied his craft in Paris and the northern Italian city of Cremona, consid-

ered to be the cradle of violin making.

The Capelas use only Balkan maple for the back of their violins and Italian spruce for the sounding board.

"They have great acoustic qualities," says Antonio, taking the first violin made by his father out of its storage case to show AFP.

The other secret of their success is the varnish they use to coat their instruments whose smell fills the workshop in Anta. The Capelas credit the varnish with giving their violins a distinctive timbre.

"In Cremona in Italy, the village of the violin, the other luthiers often ask me for the formula of my varnish, I simply answer that it is the same as theirs," says Antonio, before breaking out into a mischievous smile.

**- 'Name will last' -**

Ana Mula, a Spanish professional cellist, drove 550 kilometres (340 miles) from Madrid with her father to get her two cellos repaired by the Capelas. —AFP ■



# Impressionism's US icon Mary Cassatt finally gets her due

PARIS — There is no known record of the American artist Mary Cassatt giving Edgar Degas a good slap.

But in the half century the two were friends, there must have been times when she was tempted to take a swing at the French painter.

"I don't believe that a woman can draw that well," Degas told her in 1892, taken aback by her painting "Young Women Gathering Fruit".

On another occasion standing before one of her Japanese-style prints, he asked in disbelief, "Did you really do this?"

To top it all, Degas painted a "repulsive" portrait of his young friend -- a picture that left her so furious she painted a riposte.

The sparky relationship between the pair is at the centre of the first major retrospective of Cassatt's work in Paris.

Although Cassatt is something of a national hero and female role model in her homeland, she is little known in France, the country where she spent most of her working life as the only American member of the Impressionist movement.

But the new show at the Musee Jacquemart-Andre in the French capital finally aims to put that right.

Curator Nancy Mowll Mathews said Cassatt and Degas were the oddest of couples -- a feminist and the misogynist

who somehow became friends for life. "Degas could be awful, I mean really awful," she told AFP. "He had no filter."

"Everybody had a falling out with him eventually. He said terrible things. He was a misanthrope, and could be really cruel."

## - Wanting to be Michelangelo -

Yet when the young Mary Cassatt defied her rich Pennsylvanian parents to decamp to France to become a painter, Degas invited her to join him, Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir and the other Impressionists.

Cassatt was fiercely ambitious, Mowll Mathews said. "She wanted to be the female Michelangelo... for her paintings to hang in museums with the great artists of the past."

Such was her confidence that she deliberately chose homely models to grandstand her talent, she added.

While her women were not pretty, they were "tall and very strong and confident -- this was the image that she wanted to project of women," the curator said.

And when men patronised her, Cassatt loved proving them wrong -- producing some of the best prints of the period when others claimed that Japanese woodblock prints could not be matched in the West.



The first major retrospective of Mary Cassatt's work in Paris is at the Musee Jacquemart-Andre. PHOTO: AFP

When Degas painted a portrait of her that she found "repugnant and repulsive", she took up her brush.

She rebuked him with a self-portrait that Mowll Mathews said "swiftly corrected him. In his she is stooped over, in hers she is upright and feminine and most important of all, she is painting..."

## - Sexual tension with Degas -

The curator is still unsure what went on between them. "Is hard to say if there was sexual tension. They were both flirts."

"I think they were both quirky and shared a sense of humour, which was a humour of abuse in a way -- particularly Degas because he would say very mean things particularly to and about women."

Luckily, Cassatt -- who became so financially successful from her painting that she was

able to buy a chateau near Paris -- was thick-skinned.

"She wasn't that sensitive," Mowll Mathews said. "Their relationship worked because she thought he was funny, he thought he was funny and her family liked him. He was half-American after all and both his brothers married Americans."

After the last Impressionist exhibition in 1886, Cassatt went her own way and made the "mother and child painting her own", said Mowll Mathews.

It was a daring choice for a woman who had turned her back on motherhood.

"People could not resist saying, 'Well she didn't have any children, she never married... tut, tut.' 'So for her to continue when her private life was being dissed like this, she had to have a lot of gumption.'"

The competition was also fierce from Paul Gauguin, Mau-

rice Denis and many others.

"Most of the other mother and child specialists of the time, and they were many, have no great place in art history now, but she does," Mowll Mathews said.

Beyond her own work, one of Cassatt's greatest legacies was as an evangelist for Impressionism in the US, where the movement had a more lasting impact on the public and collectors thanks to her than in France, said the show's co-curator Pierre Curie.

There she was a celebrity in her own lifetime, organising a show of work by herself, Degas and several Old Masters in New York to raise money for the suffragette movement.

"The message she was sending," said Mowll Mathews, "was that in 1915 men and women were equal and both were the heirs of the great art of the past." —AFP ■

# King of spectacle Balich puts Sistine Chapel on stage

ROME — The producer of the Rio Olympics opening ceremony, Marco Balich, is used to making flashy spectacles, but entering into the artistic world of Michelangelo and his frescos of creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel may be his most ambitious project yet.

Described as "artainment", Balich's show, which premiered on Thursday, aims to take a new audience inside the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, one of Rome's most famous sites that is so swamped by camera-clicking

tourists it can hardly be fully appreciated.

Balich has taken over Rome's former symphony hall in the hope of giving the art masterpiece back to the people of the eternal city.

"Rome is the only major European capital that doesn't have a permanent show about its own history," Balich told AFP.

Using the techniques learned during his Olympic experiences he makes audiences feel as if they are sitting in the middle of the iconic chapel.

## - 'Beauty is everything' -

High definition photographs provided by the Vatican Museums are projected onto the stage, walls and ceiling of the hall, which have been covered with canvases.

Adam and Eve frolic in front of a close-up of a fresco of the Garden of Eden with plants climbing the walls toward the ceiling, while Noah's Ark heaves in a stormy deluge that soaks actors on stage.

"We've tried to apply the language and technology of the Olympics to a pillar of humanity," says Balich.

The show starts with blocks of rough marble sliding mysteriously around the stage, before Michelangelo appears revolving around the unhewn rocks, evoking "beauty" until a sculpture emerges from the grey mass.

"Everything is in there," Balich says. "I seek beauty, the beauty is everything. It is my obsession."

Next comes Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484), who had called upon the great artists of his time like Perugino, Botticelli or Ghirlandaio, to paint and restore an old

medieval chapel that would eventually be named after him.

Then in 1508 Michelangelo is summoned from his hometown of Florence to paint the ceiling of what we now call the Sistine Chapel, at the request of Pope Julius II (1503-1513).

Just 30 years old and up to that point a sculptor, he recoils at the madness of having to paint one thousand square-metres -- 500 hundred days work -- despite having no knowledge of fresco painting techniques. —AFP ■



## Myanmar attendees recognised in FIFA'S Hanoi conference

KyawZin Lin

MYANMAR representatives who attended the TMS Conference Hanoi 2018 were recognised for their excellence, according to a statement on Myanmar Football Federation website.

The TMS Conference Hanoi 2018, held on 14-15 March in Hanoi, Viet Nam, was overseen and sponsored by FIFA.

The conference was attended by football officials and executives from 15 countries including the Philippines, Bhutan, Singapore, Viet Nam, Thailand, Macau, Indonesia, Mongolia and Hong Kong. Myanmar attendees

were recognised as the best by FIFA because of their insightful questioning and well-organised answers during the conference. "We have many benefits to come here. The FIFA Transfer Matching System (TMS) is awesome for football. The system really works in each and every league of football", said U Ko Ko Thein, an MFF official. The FIFA Transfer Matching System is an on-line platform for FIFA's Member Associations to record player transfers between clubs. The introduction of the system was approved by the FIFA Congress in 2009, and was made mandatory from 1 October 2010. ■

## Silver Stars beat Mountain Lion in MNL II tourney

Kyaw Zin Lin

SILVER Stars FC trounced Mountain Lion FC by a score of 5-2 with the help of a hat trick by the Silver Stars' Nyi Nyi Aung in a Week-6 match of the MPT Myanmar National League II 2018 played at Thuwunna Stadium in Yangon yesterday.

Even though both teams languish at the bottom of the MNL II rankings, tremendous efforts were put forth by Silver Stars and Mountain Lion last night.

At the 3-minute mark, Sil-

ver Stars striker Nyi Nyi Aung scored the first goal for his team past a surprised keeper after some quick passing over the Mountain Lion defenders.

The Silver Stars did not let up and scored their second goal at the 21-minute mark by Paing Moe Wai. Mountain Lion did not give up and responded with a goal by Aung Myat Thu at the 32-minute mark.

Mountain Lion made too many mistakes in their defence line and that created great chances for the opponents.

Silver Star youth player

Naung Naung Kyaw took advantage of one of the mistakes and made the third goal for his team.

Nyi Nyi Aung scored the fourth goal for his team at the 41-minute mark.

Mountain Lion played better in the second half with a good interception. They scored their second goal at the 76-minute mark by youngster Aung Myat Thu. But with a shining attack, Nyi Nyi Aung completed his hat trick with the fifth goal for his Silver Star team at 89 minutes. ■

## England's fallen Champions League trio eye FA Cup redemption

LONDON — All three crashed out at the last 16 stage of the Champions League, but it is United's exit to Sevilla that has attracted the most stinging criticism due to manager Jose Mourinho's overly cautious approach.

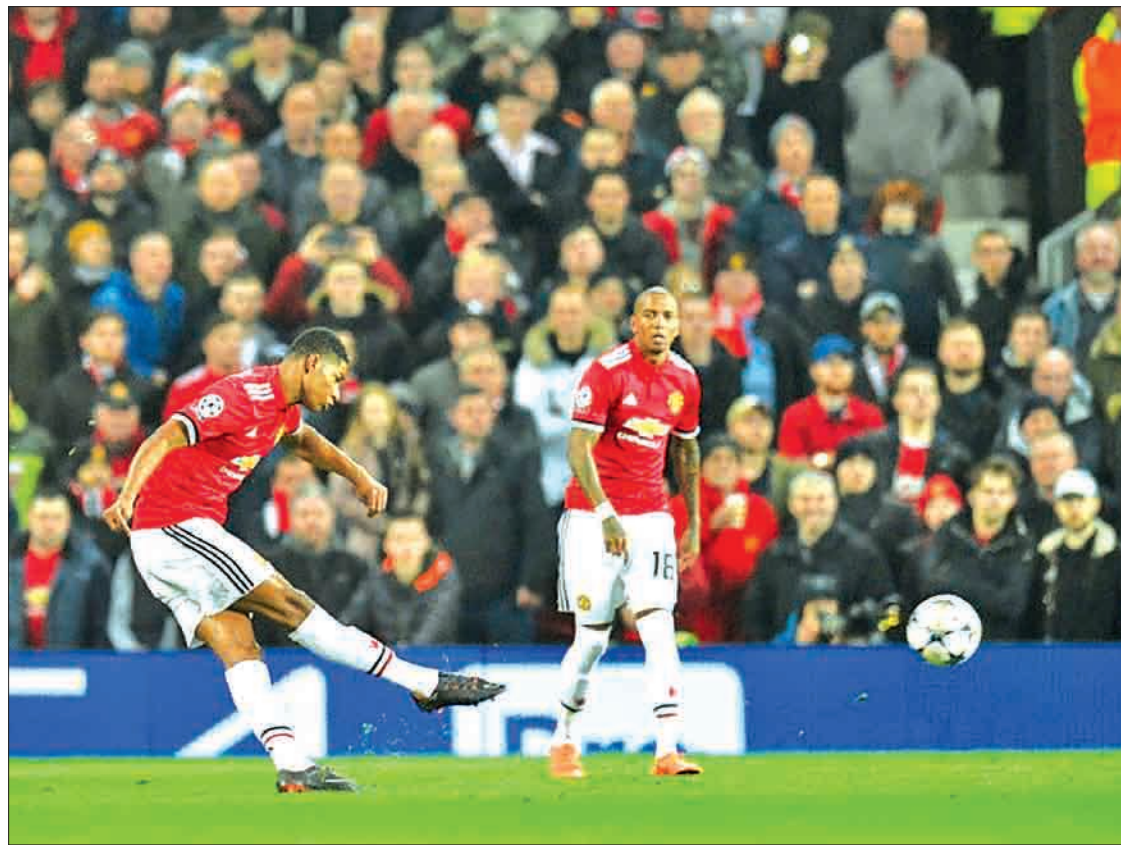
Chants of "attack, attack, attack" rained down from frustrated United fans at Old Trafford on Tuesday as doubts over Mourinho's suitability to lead a club made famous for attacking sides under European Cup winning managers Matt Busby and Alex Ferguson grow.

Despite sitting second in the Premier League, United trail local rivals Manchester City by 16 points and could even suffer the indignity of seeing City crowned champions when the sides met early next month.

In that context, victory over Brighton is a must to maintain the impression that progress is being made under Mourinho, who was handed a contract extension to 2020 as recently as January.

"We have one trophy to chase and that is the FA Cup," said United striker Romelu Lukaku, who was one of few players to emerge with any credit from the Sevilla defeat after netting his 24th goal of the season.

"We wanted to go far in the Champions League, that is what a club like Manches-



Manchester United's embarrassing Champions League exit to Sevilla has attracted the most stinging criticism due to manager Jose Mourinho's overly cautious approach. **PHOTO: AFP**

ter United needs to do and we didn't do it so we are disappointed."

Mourinho's decisions on whether to start under-performing star duo Paul Pogba and Alexis Sanchez will be heavily scrutinised.

Sanchez has been an ever-present since signing from Arsenal last month despite a string of poor performances and a meagre return of one goal in 10 appearances.

Pogba was only introduced for the final half hour on Tuesday, but did little to justify a return to the starting line-up.

Son to shine for Kane-less Spurs?

Tottenham will have to get used to life without talismanic striker Harry Kane with an ankle ligament injury ruling him out until next month.

However, the form of Son Heung-min means the England international might not

be as badly missed as feared.

Kane hobbled off with Mauricio Pochettino's men trailing 1-0 at Bournemouth last weekend, but Son inspired an emphatic response by scoring twice in a 4-1 victory to take his tally to seven goals in his last four games.

Chelsea also have little time to recover from a European hangover after being swept aside by two goals and an assist from Lionel Messi

to lose 3-0 to Barcelona on Wednesday.

Unlike United, the English champions could at least say they went down with a fight as they hit the woodwork twice and looked a more potent attacking threat with Olivier Giroud acting as a focal point rather than Eden Hazard playing as an auxiliary centre-forward.

The Frenchman is expected to keep his place on Sunday against a dangerous Leicester side who have the luxury of prioritising the Cup as they lie eighth in the Premier League, outside the race for Europe or against relegation.

In the other quarter-final Mark Hughes takes charge of Southampton for the first time hoping to avoid becoming the third-tier Wigan Athletic's fourth Premier League scalp of an amazing Cup run.

Manchester United have little time to lick their wounds from an embarrassing Champions League exit as Brighton's visit to Old Trafford in Saturday's FA Cup quarter-final represents their last realistic hope of winning a trophy this season.

However, United aren't alone in seeing the Cup as a last chance for silverware as Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea travel to Swansea and Leicester also needing to win a Wembley final on 19 May to salvage their season. —AFP ■