

NATIONAL

Permanent Representative to UN delivers rebuttal statements on reports of Special Rapporteur on Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar

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Thursday, 25 October 2018

Pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw crowded with people on Thadingyut Full Moon Day

PEOPLE celebrated the end of the three-month Buddhist Rain Retreat on the Thadingyut Full Moon Day yesterday donating

offertories to Members of the Sangha and offering lights at pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw. During the daytime, peo-

ple donated rice to monks and nuns, charity food to pilgrims, recited Dhammacakka, Paritas and Pathana, took the

Precepts, and paid respects to elders.

At night, Buddhist devotees offered candle lights at

pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw and also enjoyed the Thadingyut festival.

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Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker attends ceremony to donate dry ration to Members of the Sangha in Myawady

AMYOTHA HLUTTAW Speaker Mann Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi attended a ceremony to donate dry rations including rice and offertories to members of the Sangha in Myawady yesterday.

The ceremony was held at the Shwe Myin Wun Pagoda in Myawady Township, Kayin State, marking the full moon day of Thadingyut and end of the three-month Rain Retreat of Buddhist monks.

First, Myawady District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung, officials, donors and well-wishers offered "soon" (day meal) to monks at the Sasana Beikman building.

Then, a Paravana of rite of members of the Sangha was followed at the ordination hall of Phayar Gyi Monastery.

Next, the Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker and his family donated offertories to 3,079 monks, nuns and novices from 332 monasteries in Myawady District on the platform and passageway of Shwe Myin Wun Pagoda. The regional regiment's high ranking officers and families, departmental of-



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mann Win Khaing Than and wife Daw Nant Kyin Kyi donate offertories to a monk in Myawady yesterday. PHOTO: HTAIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)

officials and families from districts and townships, political parties, members of

the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, social and religious organiza-

tions, members of the Myanmar Red Cross Society, members of the local fire brigade,

donors and local people also gave offertories.—Htain Lin Aung (IPRD)

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Abhidhamma Day celebrated at pagodas on Thadingyut Full Moon Day

PEOPLE celebrated the end of the Buddhist Rain Retreat, a holy period for Buddhists, on the full moon of Thadingyut yesterday, and pagodas across Myanmar were packed with devotees.

The full moon day of Thadingyut is also the Significant and Noble Day of Abhidhamma Day, marking the day when the Buddha descended from a celestial abode after preaching Abhidhamma (Ultimate Truth) for three months to His deceased mother who was re-born in the celestial abode.

A ceremony to mark the Abhidhamma Day was held at the Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday with several activities since early morning.

At night, 50,000 oil lamps were lighted up by religious associations and devotees at the Shwedagon Pagoda.

Similarly, people celebrated the Abhidhamma Day and the Thadingyut festival at the Sule Pagoda and religious associations will offer 50,000 oil lamps for three days.

Religious associations and people offered lights, food and flowers and recited religious verses celebrating the Abhidhamma Day since early morning yesterday at Maha



Buddhist devotees are seen at the Shwedagon Pagoda on the Abhidhamma Day yesterday. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

Wizaya Pagoda, Thiri Mingalar Kaba Aye Pagoda, Shwe Phone Pwint Pagoda and Botahtaung Pagoda in Yangon.

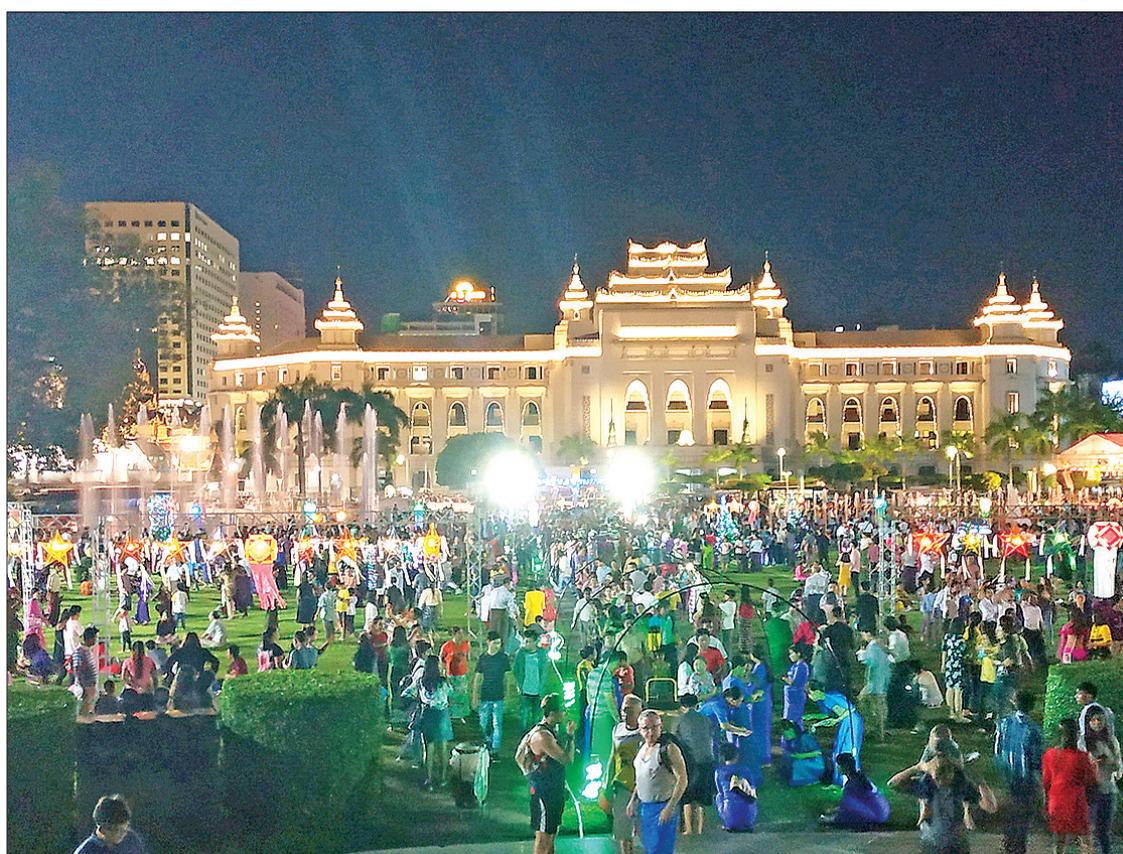
On this auspicious day, Buddhists perform meritorious deeds at the pagodas and monasteries across the country.

People are enjoying the three-day holiday, visiting pagodas, donating alms to the Members of the Sangha, offering candle lights and paying respects to elders.

Buildings are illuminated at night.—Yi Yi Myint ■



Monks and novices light candles on the night of the Thadingyut Full Moon at the Shwedagon Pagoda yesterday. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**



People take part in a Thadingyut Festival celebration in front of Yangon City Hall. **PHOTO: TIN SOE (MYANMA ALINN)**



People take part in a Thadingyut Festival celebration in Yangon. **PHOTO: TIN SOE (MYANMA ALINN)**

Three objectives of the State Government

(Government Mission)

- (1) Ensuring the rule of law and promoting socio-economic development;
- (2) National reconciliation and internal peace; and,
- (3) Amending the Constitution, which is the basic foundation for building a Democratic Federal Union.

(Excerpt from the report on the current work of the government, delivered at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 19 September 2018)



Devotees fill the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw on full moon day of Thadingyut. **PHOTO: MNA**

Uppatasanti Pagoda marks 10th Abhidhamma Day Ceremony in Nay Pyi Taw



Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko and wife donate an offering to a Sayadaw at the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

Pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw crowded with people on Thadingyut Full Moon Day

FROM PAGE-1

Nine thousand lights festival was held at the Uppatasanti Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area and crowded with pilgrims.

The Centenary of the conveyance of the 28 Buddha Images for public obeisance in Pyinmana and the Centenary of the Pyinmana Thadingyut Lights Festival were grandly held around the Shan Kan in Pyinmana Town. Shwe Lat Hla (Yan Aung Myin) Pagoda, Datusaya Pagoda, Sansara Nyein Aye Pagoda, Koe Khan Gyi Pagoda, Maha That Kya YanThi Pagoda and Thatta Thattaha Maha Bodhi Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area are crowded with people at night.— MNA



Monks and people set off a hot air balloon on the night of the Thadingyut full moon day. **PHOTO: MNA**

A ceremony was held at the Uppatasanti Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw, yesterday morning for 10th Abhidhamma Day ceremony, the successful conclusion of the 107th non-stop recitation of Pa Htan (Patthana) and the 1st Tripitaka puja ceremony.

Pagoda Ovadacariya Sayadaws and members of the Sanghas led by State Ovadacariya Pyinmana Maha Visutarama Zaygon Monastery Presiding Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Bhaddantaka Vihara, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and wife, Union Attorney General U Tun Tun Oo and wife, Deputy Minister U Kyi Min, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, the Deputy Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and their spouses, donors and departmental of-

ficials.

Next, the ceremony attendees took the Nine Precepts from Ovadacariya (patron) Sayadaw of the Uppatasanti Pagoda Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maharattha Guru Bhaddantaka Vihara, and they listened to the Sanghas reciting Parittas.

Afterwards, the Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko and officials offered offertories to the Sayadaw and sanghas and offered “soon”, a day meal, to the Sayadaw and Sanghas.

As the day was the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut, devotees flock to pagodas in Nay Pyi Taw Council area and many religious organizations recited Dhammacakka Sutta and chanted religious verses while offering oil lamps before the images of the pagodas.— MNA

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Yangon cyclists peddle to mark World Polio Day 2018

CYCLISTS participated in the 'Ride to End Polio' cycling event held near Kandawgyi Lake in Yangon yesterday to mark World Polio Day 2018.

Attending the event were Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein, Deputy Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Mya Lay Sein and Yangon Region Social Affairs Minister U Naing Ngan Lin. Hundreds of people took part in the cycling event which commemorates the 6th annual World Polio Day 2018.

Myanmar reported the last instance of the polio virus in May 2007. The polio virus, which is transmitted via human excrement, attacks the nervous system and "can cause irreversible paralysis within hours". Young children are the most vulnerable.

The Ministry of Health and Sports responded very strongly to the prevention



Yangon Region Chief Minister U Phyo Min Thein attends the cycling event to mark World Polio Day 2018 in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

of the virus by implementing Sub-National Immunization Day (SNID)/ National Immunization Day (NID) rounds to prevent

the virus spreading further into other states and regions.

World Polio Day is celebrated on 24 October to commemo-

rate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis.—**MNA** ■

Free medical care given at Thandwe People's Hospital

A medical team led by professors and specialists are providing free medical services at Thandwe People's Hospital from 23 to 25 October 2018.

The free treatment project was jointly conducted by the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Rakhine State Government. The medical team comprising of 30 professors, surgeons and doctors from Yangon Region and 30 staff from Rakhine State Public Health Department performed the free medical care.

The medicines and medi-

cal equipment were supported and provided by Rakhine State Government. On 23 October, about 1,500 patients received free medical treatment. Zee Kyaung Thar Construction Company also provided lunch boxes to the patients, said Dr. Kyaw Naing Win, Superintendent of Thandwe District People's Hospital.

Rakhine State Social Affairs Minister Dr. Chan Thar visited and encouraged the patients while the free treatment were conducted.—Phyo Wai Lin (IPRD) ■



A patient receives medical check-up at Thandwe People's Hospital in Thandwe Township. **PHOTO: PHYO WAI LIN (IPRD)**

CRIME NEWS

Bus overturns in Kyonpyaw, kills one, injures 29

A passenger bus, owned by Pyon Pan Thayar bus line, en route to Yangon from Kyonpyaw and driven by Soe Htet, overturned outside of Kyonpyaw Town yesterday, leaving one dead and 29 passengers injured.

According to investigations, the passenger bus tried to avoid a motorbike coming from the other side of the road and overturned. The bus was

damaged badly. A female passenger succumbed to the injuries at the scene while 12 passengers were seriously injured and 17 passengers sustained minor injuries.

At present, they are undergoing medical treatment at Kyonpyaw Hospital.

The reckless driver has been charged under section 304 (A), 338 and 337 of the Penal Code.—Min Zaw Oo (Yekyi) ■

Customs Department seizes illegal goods in Yaypu, Mayanchaung checkpoints

THE Customs Department has reportedly seized illegal jade stones at Yaypu checkpoint on 23 October.

A combined team comprising of officers and staff from the Customs Department stopped two AD Van cars and a Nissan Wingroad car at Yaypu checkpoint and found illegal jade pieces weighing 1,164 kilograms which were hidden beneath boxes of juice and soaps.

The combined team seized a total of Ks 94.2 million worth

of illegal jade and the three vehicles, according to Customs Department.

Yaypu and Mayanchaung checkpoints were reopened on 1 March to control illegal goods. On 23 October, Yaypu checkpoint seized the illegal goods worth Ks 94.6 million in seven cases.

There were 451 exported vehicles and 305 imported vehicles along Mandalay-Muse Pyidaungsu road on 23 October.—IPRD ■

Puma Energy JV expands \$10 mln capital for aviation fuel services in Myanmar

By Nyein Nyein

NATIONAL Energy Puma Aviation Services Company, which is joint venture between Singapore-based Puma Energy and Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprises under the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, made capital expansion of over US\$10.204 million in aviation fuel import, storage and distribution businesses, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

“The government holds more shares in this joint venture”, said U Than Aung Kyaw, Deputy Director-General of DICA.

The company will execute aviation fuel import, storage and distribution business in Thanlyin Liquefied Petroleum Gas terminal. The JV was permitted on 26 March 2016, with a capital of \$106.02 million, said U Kyaw Win Tun, Director of DICA.

They need to seek approv-

al from the Ministry of Electricity and Energy, according to DICA.

Previously, the Ministry of Electricity and Energy wholly executed aviation fuel import, storage and distribution business and soon after invited foreign investors to set up a JV in 2014.

The foreign direct investments of \$31.847 million including expansion of capital flowed into the country during the first two weeks of October, according to figures from DICA.

Six foreign enterprises received endorsements with capital of \$17.92 million at the Myanmar Investment Commission meeting (17/2018) held on 12 October. Those foreign enterprises were approved endorsements by Myanmar Investment Commission and the respective investment committees of Yangon and Taninthayi Regions and Kachin State. They are Myanmar Shoe Dynasty Co. Ltd

for manufacturing of shoes on Cutting-Making-Packaging basis, Frontier Pte. Ltd for wholesale and retail business on IT products, Mandolis Co. Ltd for bungalow and restaurant services, Myantex Industrial Co. Ltd for CMP garment, LF Packaging (Myanmar) Ltd for manufacturing and export of rubber-wood sown timber by using local rubber wood on contract manufacturing process basis, and Kachin Tain Hu Co. Ltd for cultivation, production and exportation of international quality Brazil banana.

The other three existing companies raising their capital are \$10.2 million by National Energy Puma Aviation Services Co. Ltd for aviation fuel service, \$3 million by Myanmar Recycle Company Limited for manufacturing and sales of waste recycled products and \$0.72 million by CMF Myanmar Co. Ltd for manufacturing of all kinds of bag on CMP Basis. ■

Six-month interim FY sees 130,000 cattle export

MYANMAR exported about 130,000 cattle to neighboring countries through border gates during the six months from April to September 2018 interim financial year, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Authorities granted permission to businessmen to legally export cattle to Bangladesh, China and Thailand under the border trade system with recommendations from the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation.

According to a cattle census, there are about 11.5 million cattle in Myanmar out of which about 700,000 cattle can be exported, according to the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department.

Authorities have permitted the export of live cattle since 2017

and Myanmar exported 130,000 head of cattle during the six months from April to September 2018, generating revenue of over US\$170 million, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

In Muse border gate, the price of a live cow is between Ks1.7 million and Ks2.1 million while live buffalo is sold for between Ks2.1 million and 2.2 million. According to a local farmer, the price of cattle rose after authorities permitted the legal export of live cattle.

At the moment, 490 local cattle, 295 dairy cows, 160 buffalos, 150 goats and 1,128 pigs are raised in Hlinethaya livestock breeding zone. Country wide, over 174,000 buffalo, 700,000 cows, 130,000 goats, 1,400,000 pigs, 48,000,000 chickens and 4,100,000 ducks were raised.—Zwe ■

Career fair to be held in Mandalay next month

ORGANIZED by JobNet.com.mm, an online jobs and career website, a career fair is scheduled to take place at Hilton Hotel in Mandalay on 10 November this year, featuring a wide variety of businesses.

About 20 local and foreign companies will be seeking new employees through this event with hundreds of vacancies, including Huawei International telecom company, Coca Cola worldwide beverage company, CDSG a prominent conglomerate, Wall Street and Auston, the education consultancies, KEB Hana microfinance company, Success Property, a real estate management company, and MEGA, one of Myanmar biggest medical products distributor.

The event is expected to help job seekers find out which profes-

sions fit their personality.

Last year, around 4,000 job seekers attended the job fair, with the event organizers saying that more job hunters are expected to visit this year's event.

Currently there are many job opportunities in sales, marketing, travel tourism, IT and banking, according to one businessman. Despite high demands for staff, local companies are experiencing a scarcity of skilled workers as well as a salary negotiation problem with experienced workers, he added.

Interested job seekers from Upper Myanmar may join the fair free of charge. They are urged to bring a curriculum vitae. Registration for the event is available starting on 19 October through www.jobnet.com.mm.

—GNLM ■



Security guards stand near a tanker carrying aviation fuel during the opening ceremony of Puma Energy fuel storage facility at Myanmar International Terminal Thilawa outside Yangon on 6 May 2017.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Exports via Muse border increase by almost \$70 mln this FY

MYANMAR'S export to China through the Muse 105th mile trade zone over the first 12 days of this fiscal year, topped US\$112 million, increasing by \$69.3 million from this time last year when the bilateral export was over \$43 million, the Ministry of Commerce reported.

Between 1 and 12 October, Myanmar imported commodities

from its neighbouring country amounting to \$42.9 million, which saw a slight increase in value by \$7.8 million in comparison with the same period in the last 2017-2018 FY.

China-Myanmar border trade is conducted mainly through five land border gates, including the Muse, Lwejel, Kanpikete, Chinshwehaw and

Kengtung gates, in which the Muse gate, the major trading point, sees the largest volume and value in terms of border trade.

During the period, exports and imports from all China-Myanmar border points totalled \$168.9 million, involving \$2.2 million from Lwejel, \$10.3 million from the Chinshwehaw, \$1.9 million

from Kanpikete and \$0.017 million from the Kengtung gate.

Usually, Myanmar exports agricultural, marine and forest ryproducts, minerals and manufactured goods to China. Eel, crab, watermelon, mango, rice and live cattle are popular items at Sino-Myanmar borders.

The country normally imports consumer goods, raw ma-

terials, construction equipment, automobiles, motorbikes and capital goods from the world's most populous country.

As a top investor, China's new investment in Myanmar at the end of September this year reached over \$300 million from 28 projects. Its investment in the last 2017-2018 FY was \$1.395 billion in total.—Shwe Khine ■

The present reports of the FFM and the Special Rapporteur are not contributing to building peace, harmony, national reconciliation and development in Rakhine State: Permanent Representative to UN

Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Ambassador U Hau Do Suan delivers rebuttal Statements on the reports of Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar and the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar

Nay Pyi Taw, 25 October

THE Third Committee of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly held two special procedure sessions on Myanmar at the UN Headquarters in New York, the United States on 23 October 2018. During the sessions, Ms. Yanghee Lee, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar and Mr. Marzuki Darusman, Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar made presentation on their reports respectively. Ambassador U Hau Do Suan, Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations delivered rebuttal statements in response to their briefings.

In response to the Special Rapporteur's remarks, Permanent Representative Ambassador U Hau Do Suan explained that Myanmar persistently opposes country specific mandates which run contrary to the principles of non-selectivity and non-politicization in addressing human rights and has all along extended cooperation to the successive special rapporteurs on Myanmar in line with Myanmar's policy to cooperate with the UN. Although Myanmar hoped that an independent Special Rapporteur would come up with a balanced report, the Special Rapporteur continues her negative and unconstructive criticisms and allegations based on unverified information, neglecting the government's relentless efforts to bringing national reconciliation and peace, rule of law, and sustainable development for the people of Myanmar. The Government wonders whether or not the Special Rapporteur has the genuine desire to help solve the problems.

He added that Myanmar had extended its full cooperation to Prof. Lee, allowing her visits to Myanmar 6 times since her assumption of the post in 2014 until December 2017. However, she had gone far beyond her mandate resulting in public resentment against her. The Government, therefore, had no choice, but to have suspended cooperation with her, requesting the UN for

replacement of the Special Rapporteur.

The Permanent Representative stressed that in demonstration of its continuing desire to cooperate with the United Nations, Myanmar welcomed the appointment of Secretary-General's Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener and has already given its consent to opening of her office in Nay Pyi Taw during her first visit to Myanmar. The Government has also facilitated her third visit to Myanmar from 10-20 October, in a period of 5 months since she took up her position in May 2018. In her end of mission statement on 20 October, the Special Envoy highlighted accountability and inclusive dialogue as the two important pillars for national reconciliation in Myanmar. She said ultimately, only peace and genuine political dialogue can address these problems. She stressed the need for patience and more trust building, and offered herself to help advance the peace process toward a "home grown solution". Myanmar welcomes the statement and fully concurs with her that to find a sustainable answer to the deep rooted, multi-faceted problems of Myanmar, there is no quick fix and require patience, mutual trust and political solution. Forced imposition of external political agenda will only impact negatively on the current complex situation and affect democratic transition process. The Government is also working closely with the United Nations on issues of concerns relating to human rights, particularly with the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and for Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Permanent Representative Ambassador U Hau Do Suan highlighted that the democratic government of Myanmar is convinced that lasting peace will be possible only when a democratic federal union is established by political means and ending of ethnic strife and armed conflicts is essential to realize this objective. The government



Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Ambassador U Hau Do Suan. **PHOTO: MOFA**

is, therefore, holding the Union Peace Conferences-21st Century Panglong to reach agreement on the fundamental principles for a democratic federal union. The three sessions of the Peace Conference held so far have adopted fifty-one fundamental principles which will become part of the Union Peace Accord.

Addressing the issues in Rakhine State is fundamental part

of 6000 displaced persons in the near future.

During the high level week of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly, an informal meeting was held among China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. The Secretary-General was invited and present at the meeting. The meeting reached a three-point consensus on resolving the issue of displaced persons. As a result of the consensus, the third meeting of the Joint Working Group will be held on 29-30 October in Dhaka.

The Permanent Representative said that the Government highly appreciates the assistance and cooperation rendered by our fellow ASEAN countries and other neighbouring countries including China, India and Japan for the resettlement and rehabilitation of the returnees. Myanmar has been continuing its close cooperation with the UN and also has been implementing 81 out of 88 recommendations submitted by the Advisory Commission.

"Forced imposition of external political agenda will only impact negatively on the current complex situation and affect democratic transition process."

Permanent Representative to UN

of building peace, national reconciliation, security and governance in Myanmar. The Government of Myanmar is now undertaking with high priority, preparation of necessary conducive conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified repatriation of the people who had fled to Bangladesh. In accord with the bilateral agreements and arrangements with Bangladesh, Myanmar has been ready to receive the first batch of verified returnees since January this year. We welcome recent statement made by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Ali that Bangladesh will repatriate the first batch

Regarding the accountability in Rakhine, the Government of Myanmar has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE) and the Commission will submit its report within a year. In Rakhine State, hundreds of new jobs and opportunities have been created for local people through public-private partnerships in recent years.

The Permanent Representative emphasized that the greatest strength of a democratic transition is the unity, determination and active participation of the people under the leadership of State Counsellor Daw Aung San

Suu Kyi. The international community can best assist Myanmar in realizing its democratic nation building by rendering constructive contribution towards Myanmar's endeavours based on understanding and mutual respect.

In response to the briefing made by the Chairperson of the Independent International Fact-finding Mission on Myanmar, Permanent Representative Ambassador U Hau Do Suan explained that when the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) on Myanmar was established by the Human Rights Council in March 2017, Myanmar had objected the Mission because of its serious concerns particularly about the advisability of its establishment and the mandate of the Mission. We are also concerned that release of the report based on narratives and not on hard evidence will only serve to inflame tensions further and potentially hinder the Government's efforts to create much needed social cohesion in Rakhine State. The sincerity of the FFM is also questionable. The methodology of its investigation is also flawed.

The Permanent Representative stressed that the Government has repeatedly explained the fact that the current humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State was ignited by the unprovoked and premeditated attacks against 30 police outposts and a military battalion headquarters by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) terrorist group in August 2017. The ARSA terrorists had massacred security personnel and hundreds of innocent civilians including a hundred of Hindu villagers, other ethnic minorities and pro-government Muslims. The atrocities perpetrated by ARSA had made thousands of innocent ethnic population fled their villages to the other parts of Rakhine State. Likewise, it created a massive exodus of Muslims to the neighbouring country. It is crucial to bear in mind that the present crisis affected not only the Muslim community.

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Mandalay celebrates Abhidhamma Day on Full Moon of Thadingyut



Devotees offer donations to nuns on Full Moon Day of Thadingyut. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (SUB PRINTING HOUSE)**

TEN thousand lights festivals were held at Maha Muni Buddha Image, Kyauktawgyi Buddha Temple and Mandalay Hill's Pagoda yesterday at the night of Thadingyut full moon in Mandalay.

The lighting at the pagodas in the town also marked the traditional cultural expression.

The seventh month in Myanmar Lunar calendar corresponds to the Day of the Lord Buddha delivered Abhidhamma to His deceased mother at Ta-

vatisa. Pagodas in Mandalay yesterday were packed with devotees offering flowers, water and lights, and taking Precepts.

On this auspicious day of Thadingyut full moon, Buddhists mostly went to the Maha Muni Buddha Image in the early morning to pay homage, offering flowers, water and lights, and also visited other famous pagodas including the Jade Pagoda and the Sacred Tooth Relic Pagoda.

Buddhist religious build-

ings (Dhamma Yone) in downtown Mandalay were filled with people to receive Precepts from the monks and wellwishers donated food charity to people, rice and offertories to the Members of Sangha and nuns on the streets in Mandalay.

The three pagodas at the foot of Mandalay Hill, Kyauktawgyi, Sandamuni and Kuthodaw pagodas were crowded with festival goers. —Min Htet Aung (Sub printing house)■

The present reports of the FFM and the Special Rapporteur are not contributing to ...

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When we talk about human rights, we should look at human rights of both communities. We are dismayed by the fact that the Mission has deliberately and glaringly discounted ARSA terrorist atrocities which could even be interpreted by many as justifying or condoning the act of Muslim extremist terrorists.

The Permanent Representative has reiterated the Government's strong commitment to accountability for human rights violations in Rakhine or in any other place in the country. The Government will take action against any perpetrators where there is sufficient evidence.

In this regard, the Government has established an Independent Commission of Enquiry (ICOE). The Commission will conduct its mandate in the principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity, and will submit its report within a year. In fact, legal actions had been taken against military and police officers and civilians who were found to be in breach of standard

operating procedures and rules of engagement following the Inn Din incident.

The Government of Myanmar has resolutely rejected the ICC's ruling of 6 September 2018 in connection with Rakhine State. Myanmar is not a party to the Rome Statute and the Court has no jurisdiction over Myanmar whatsoever. All countries should be concerned by the recent decision of the International Criminal Court and the various precedents that the Court may be setting by this recent ruling as well as by the way in which it was made. This is a stark warning to all countries particularly to the developing ones.

The Myanmar delegation has categorically rejected inference of "genocidal intent" on the legitimate counter terrorist actions by the security forces in Rakhine. The conclusion is made on unverified circumstantial evidences which has no sound legal proof. Putting accountability above all else without regard to other positive developments is a dangerous attempt that will face

utter failure. The present reports of the FFM and the Special Rapporteur are not contributing to building peace, harmony, national reconciliation and development in Rakhine State.

The Permanent Representative pointed out that Mr. Marzuki has said "Patience will not help Myanmar's democratization, it will only help those that seek to derail it". But, the opposite is true. It is not by revolution that we are building democracy. Our leader State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has chosen a peaceful path through national reconciliation and national consensus which requires tremendous patience and political wisdom.

Special Envoy Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener has also stressed the need for patience and more trust building, and the Government concurs fully with the Special Envoy. This is the way to lead us to realizing our ultimate national goal of building a truly democratic federal union, according to the statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.—MNA

Union Minister for Defence departs for China to attend 8th Xiangshan Forum

UNION Minister for Defence Lt-Gen Sein Win and his entourage left for China by air yesterday morning to attend the 8th Xiangshan Forum to be held there.

The Union Minister is ac-

companied by Director-General Colonel Nyein Chan from the International and Internal Affairs Department under the Ministry of Defence and other officials. —MNA ■

Rakhine Chief Minister visits free health care at Thandwe Hospital



Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu, second from right, observes a surgery in progress at Thandwe Hospital. **PHOTO: TIN TUN (IPRD)**

UNDER the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Rakhine State Government, Thandwe District People's Hospital in Rakhine State is giving free medical treatments to patients till 25 October (today) with the efforts of 60 specialists and surgeons.

Rakhine State Chief Minister U Nyi Pu went and observed the hospital on Tuesday.

First, the Union Minister met and gave encouragement to patients receiving treatments at the hospital and then visited the operation room.

The hospital has already given medical care with surgeries to over 100 patients and also gave ordinary treatments to 1,800 patients till 24 October, according to an official.—Tin Tun (IPRD)■

Forty-eight admitted to hospital after food poisoning in Layhmyatnar, Ayeyawady Region

Over 48 people in a village in Layhmyatnar Township were hospitalized after consuming charity food of fried noodles and amomum herb soup yesterday.

They were rushed to Laymyethna Tsp People's Hospital in the afternoon.

Hospital source said the patients suffered food poisoning.

The food poisoning was reportedly a result of eating the fried noodles, containing carrots, cabbage and pork,

together with the amomum herb soup cooked with ham broth and black pepper, along with pickled onions and cucumber.

The amomum herb (scientific name *Amomum corynolobum*) known locally as 'gon min' is a type of spice plant used in seasoning.

Patients are currently under the treatment of Township Medical officer Dr. Su Su Hlaing and medical staff. No deaths have been reported.—Tun Zaw Tun (Myanmar Sar)■

What is good economic vision?

THE economic development of a country requires many considerations and one of them is the idea for sustainability, which focuses not on immediate benefits but rather a vision for favorable long-term interests.

Which is why, in giving consideration for sustainable development we must remember to work towards projects with long-term visions and funding in ventures for economic benefits in the long run, or in other words, responsible investment.

When we try to answer whether someone has economic vision or not, we also need to ask if we can see and evaluate the long-term economic benefits for a venture.

While this is a crucial skill for businesses and entrepreneurs, the same can be said for key political leaders to have a keen economic sense.

A nation's economy cannot develop as long as its stakeholders cast nets where fish bubble and look no further than the

“

This is why no matter how much domestic and foreign investments are sorely needed for economic development, we need to make sure they are responsible investments for the future as well.

wealthy can hardly be said to be an economic vision in any sense. The types of economic plans we ought to welcome are those that visualize future potential hardships and at the same time devise ways to avoid them.

This is why no matter how much domestic and foreign investments are sorely needed for economic development, we need to make sure they are responsible investments for the future as well.

The projects and plans implemented today should have a positive beneficial effect for the next generation to come in the next ten years or so.

This is the proper mature outlook that considers public interest for long-term sustainable economic development.

width of their eyelashes when conducting business. Even worse is a system of bribery and corruption; a further impediment to economic success.

The short-sighted schemes for economic development in the past have resulted in a waste of acres of forests and dissipation of natural resources by businesses, the effects of which is evidently felt by the citizens of today.

People in suburbs and rural settlements now have no where to escape to nor clear fields to take temporary shelter in should an unexpected natural disaster strike. In fact, it has reached a worrying state for the majority of the people living in such townships.

There's no arguing that having access to basic necessities is important. However, the idea of attaining wealth for the sake of being

Roundtable Discussions on Financing for Development of Agricultural Sector and SMEs Sector in Myanmar (Part-2)

By Shin Min and Hmwe Kyu, Photo: Aye Than

Continued from previous article covered on 22 October

U Min Thu: The MEB Two-Step Loan has started since April 2018. Up till now, a total of 138 farmers and business people have already taken out the loans. The plan covers 32 townships in 10 regions and states. Under the scheme 1500 millions Kyats were provided and more financing for the pipeline. With the approval of the ministry, a survey is underway with arrangements between the Myanma Insurance and a Singaporean company to launch insurance scheme on buffaloes and cows. Microchips are attached to the animals and the survey is going on. If the project is successful, loans would be given out on the guarantee of the animals and the risk of bad debt with the bank would not be there. If this project could be realized, the financing could be fulfilled and the animal breeding industry would be developed. The scheme would be beneficial to the farmers, the bank, and the state; and therefore we are expecting very much.

Low interest loan

Our bank is trying to raise funds for adequate lending. Starting from this year, we have asked the farmers to save one percent of the total loan that they have taken out. For example, when we are giving out (2000) billion Kyats loan at least the saving might remain (20) billion Kyats in each year. This is the way to raise the deposits in the bank. Similarly like JICA, we are planning to get soft loans from international organizations. Another way is to cooperate with the local and foreign banks and international organizations. If we could realize this plan, we would be able to rely less on the MEB. We believe that we could be able to stand on our own, and then become a bank that could finance the agriculture and breeding industry. The farmers as well as agro-based business people may contact the Branch Bank of Myanmar

the SMEs. We take loans from the JICA of Japan. These loans were being systematically handled through the financial organizations and monetary organizations. We have disbursed through six banks in financial institutions in the Phase (1). The Phase (1) has been completed with the total amount of 69 billion Kyats, and that the Phase (2) is coming on its way. Before starting the next loans, we would evaluate and assessed whether the SME loans are cost effective or otherwise in broad aspect. In the first Phase, we have a low level of experience. Due to the lack of experience, six banks in financial institutions based in the regions and states have given out loans to their associates and closer organizations and companies. At the same time, they have mainly chosen less risky SMEs and companies that could provide guarantees to avoid bad debts.

In the work process, the Myanma Economic Bank has acted as Executing Agency and systematically chosen the Participating Financial Institutions, and given out loans to



Agriculture Development Bank and get the appropriate loans.

Moderator: Please explain about the SME sector being financed by the Myanma Economic Bank so far. What is the future plans regarding the loans.

U Win Naing Oo: Since our bank is State-owned bank, we are financing the SMEs. Financing under the SME Two-Step Loan has started in 2015 and that 2017-2018 has witnessed the completion of Phase-1. In the Phase-1, the loans are being handed out to export - oriented businesses in accordance with the SME law which is in line with the development of the State.

In the work process, the Myanma Economic Bank has acted as Executing Agency and systematically chosen the Participating Financial Institutions, and given out loans to

the SMEs. We take loans from the JICA of Japan. These loans were being systematically handled through the financial organizations and monetary organizations. We have disbursed through six banks in financial institutions in the Phase (1). The Phase (1) has been completed with the total amount of 69 billion Kyats, and that the Phase (2) is coming on its way. Before starting the next loans, we would evaluate and assessed whether the SME loans are cost effective or otherwise in broad aspect. In the first Phase, we have a low level of experience. Due to the lack of experience, six banks in financial institutions based in the regions and states have given out loans to their associates and closer organizations and companies. At the same time, they have mainly chosen less risky SMEs and companies that could provide guarantees to avoid bad debts.

The loans are being facilitated in larger towns of the regions. Yangon, Mandalay and Ayeyawady regions enjoyed most of the loans, and the remaining regions and states have not been covered so far. It is therefore, plans are underway to provide financial supports to other regions and states at the Phase-2 on a broader scale. In the first Phase, the majority of SMEs that received the loans were money lending business that has been functioning well. At that time the new startup businesses have missed the opportunities to get the loans, but they would be financed for the second Phase.

Inadequate guarantees

In accordance with the nature of banking procedure, the new startup businesses were deprived of as they are still in uncertain situation. On the other hand, priority has been given to the businesses

that could deposit guarantees. Most of the SMEs are not in a position to provide guarantees. At the second Phase, broader aspect would be applied to provide loans. The Phase-2 is being approved by the government and the Hluttaw, and therefore, loans could now be delivered.

In the Phase-2, the amount to be financed would be tripled than the Phase -1, amounting to 180 billion Kyats. The selections would be made among the experienced branch banks and those Participating Financial Institutions that have networks to handle the matters. One special factor was that in the Phase-1, the Myanma Economic Bank had never acted as the Participating Financial Institutions - PFI in the direct financing tasks to the SMEs. In the Phase-1, it remained as Executing Agency for project controlling. In the Phase-2, it would become Participating Financial Institution, and have planned to deliver

loans to the SMEs. It is due to the reason that there are over 330 branch banks in the whole country, and that we are serving loan disbursement through the branch banks. All the branch banks have the banking experiences for many years. By taking this strength and expertise, we would participate in the financing tasks as the Participating Financial Institutions - PFI in the regions and that states so as to serve effectively in the project.

In the Phase-2, we have the objectives to offer financing in a broader approach in the regions and the states than the Phase-1. We intend to provide loans to new startup businesses. If and when the SMEs have no adequate guarantee, then we would negotiate with the Myanma Insurance in securing the "Credit Guarantee Insurance" system and would provide loans in broader sense.

Coordinator: Kindly explain the tasks of the Agriculture Mechanization Department in the agriculture development program in the context of the JICA Two-Step Loan, including the future tasks.

U Khun Aye Naing: As our task is to transform Myanmar's agriculture into agriculture mechanization, we have two tasks namely the application of more agricultural machinery and the elevation and enhancement of land utilization. Both the tasks need financial aids. We are indeed very happy on behalf of the farmers to have the chance to converse with the financial aid agencies and organizations. When the farmers gain possession of the agriculture machinery, they are a bit scared in handling new devices. On our part, we trained and showed them the way how to apply practically on the machinery with safe methods without harm or danger.

Translated by UMT (Ahlon)



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued on Wednesday 24 October 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24)hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin and Chin states, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Lower Sagaing and Magway regions, Northern Shan and Rakhine states, scattered in Upper Sagaing and Mandalay regions, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Bago Region, Kayin and Mon states and widespread in the remaining regions and states. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Kungyangon (2.95) inches, Patheingyi (2.72)inches, Pyay and Loikaw (1.49)inches each, Pyawon (1.14)inches and Kawkaikay (1.10)inches.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and a few cloud elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF 25 October 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Taninthayi Region and Eastern Shan, fairly widespread in Bago, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Southern Shan, Kayin and Mon states, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, Upper Sagaing Region, Kachin, Northern Shan and Kayah states and isolated in the remaining regions and states. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4 - 7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Continuation of fairly widespread rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region, Kayin and Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2018: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 25 October 2018: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Invitation to young writers for Sunday Special

The Global New Light of Myanmar is accepting submissions of poetry, opinion, articles, essays and short stories from young people for its weekly Sunday Next Generation Platform. Interested candidates can send their work to the **Global New Light of Myanmar** at No. 150, Nga Htat Kyee Pagoda Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, in person, or by email to ce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com with the following information: (1) Sector you wish to be included in (poetry, opinion, etc.), (2) Own name and (if different) your penname, (3) Your level of education, (4) Name of your School/College/University, (5) A written note of declaration that the submitted piece is your original work and has not been submitted to any other news or magazine publishing houses, (6) A color photo of the submitter, (7) Copy of your NRC card, (8) Contact information (email address, mobile number, etc.). - Editorial Department, The Global New Light of Myanmar



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Teen killed as Guinea police fire tear gas on banned demo

CONAKRY, (Guinea) — A teenager was killed on Tuesday as Guinean police clashed with youths in the capital Conakry and the opposition leader claimed his car was shot at during a banned rally over disputed elections.

Mamadou Samba Diallo, an 18-year-old apprentice plumber, died after being shot by security forces, his uncle Cellou Binani Diallo, a news photographer who works for several organisations including AFP, said.

“My nephew was shot by soldiers in the Cosa suburb. The moment they shot him, he fell and they surrounded him and

kicked him,” he said.

“When they were sure he was dead, they got on their pick-up truck and continued on their way,” Diallo said.

Opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo denounced “yet another death from the bullets of the security forces,” adding that 97 demonstrators had been killed since 2010 when President Alpha Conde came to power.

“They wanted to assassinate me. The bullet passed between my driver and myself. My driver was wounded,” Diallo said, alleging his vehicle was hit by a police bullet as he was on his way to the protest.

After demonstrators tried to block traffic in Cosa, they lobbed stones in clashes with police who responded with tear gas, an AFP reporter said.

Tensions have been high in the poor West African country since the death on 16 October of a protester during a two-day campaign aimed at bringing Conakry to a standstill.

Opposition leader Diallo, a former prime minister and key opponent of President Conde, accused the gendarmerie of targeting his vehicle.

AFP could not immediately confirm police had fired live rounds. The police meanwhile rejected the allegation.—AFP ■

Taliban bomb maker, wife, two kids killed in blast: Afghan police

MAIMANA (Afghanistan)— A Taliban bomb maker, his wife and two children were killed as his device exploded prematurely in his home in Afghanistan’s northern Faryab province on Monday, provincial police spokesman Abdul Karim Yurash said on Wednesday.

“A Taliban mine maker Mullah Sadrudin was making a mine

in his home in Garzewan district on Monday evening but the device exploded suddenly killing himself, his wife and two of his children on the spot,” Yurash told Xinhua.

The two children killed were five and eight years old respectively.

The bomb had been intended to be used as a roadside bomb to

target security convoys in the restive province, the official said via telephone from provincial capital Maimana.

Taliban militants, who are in control of parts of Faryab province and largely relying on suicide and roadside bombing, have not commented.—Xinhua ■

‘Thousands’ of Senegalese fishermen have vanished: Greenpeace

DAKAR, (Senegal) — Campaign group Greenpeace urged Senegal on Tuesday to boost security for hard-pressed fishermen, saying “thousands” have disappeared at sea in recent years.

“At least 226 people have officially disappeared or lost their lives” in the past two years,

Greenpeace Senior Oceans Campaign Manager Ibrahima Cisse told a press conference in Dakar.

The real number however “goes well beyond that. In fact, thousands are lost at sea,” he added.

Because many informal

fishermen do not register with the authorities, official statistics are incomplete, he explained.

Competing with industrial fishing boats, with which their small craft sometimes collide, many fishermen search for fish far from the Senegalese coast, often in waters belonging to neighbouring Mauritania.

Bad weather and mechanical breakdowns are other major reasons why fishermen disappear, according to some who participated in the press briefing.

Abdourahmane Faye, who represented fishermen from Rufisque, near Dakar, urged the government to install equipment to locate boats, often just large canoes, that were in trouble.

Cisse said fishermen should be provided with life vests, be registered, and be covered by a national surveillance and rescue network.—AFP ■



Many fishermen are forced to go far from the Senegalese coast, often in waters belonging to neighbouring Mauritania. PHOTO: AFP



“We need a national transitional authority so that we resolve this crisis,” said Zimbabwe’s main opposition leader Nelson Chamisa. PHOTO: AFP

Zimbabwe opposition calls for ‘transitional’ govt to fix crisis

HARARE, (Zimbabwe) — Zimbabwe’s main opposition leader Nelson Chamisa called on Tuesday for a transitional government to resolve the worsening economic and political crisis engulfing the country.

A foreign currency shortage in recent weeks has sparked the worst economic crisis with supplies of fuel, food and pharmaceuticals drying up.

“The first thing is for this nation to go on a path of a political dialogue,” said Chamisa, 40, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, who claims to have won the 30 July presidential election.

“We need a national transitional authority so that we resolve this crisis,” he told reporters in the capital Harare.

Chamisa, who lost the vote to President Emmerson Mnangagwa, said he had met religious leaders pushing for a political dialogue between the opposition and the president.

“We are ready to discuss,” he said, while adding that he would not be a fig leaf for Mnangagwa’s government.

“We will ultimately discuss and resolve our national issues as a country,” he said, “(but) we are not ready to be forced (to) legitimise the illegitimate”.

“Our people are suffering. This economic decay is common to all,” he said.

The current shortages and price hikes have not been seen since the 2008 economic and

financial crisis spiralled into hyperinflation.

Prices for many staples have more than doubled in less than a month.

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has suspended four top managers accused of fuelling the black market trade in US dollars, state media reported on Tuesday.

Their suspensions on Monday followed allegations that they were supplying illicit currency dealers with illegal allocations of hard currency and dollar-pegged local bond notes, the government-run Herald daily reported.

The deepening economic crisis comes just months after Mnangagwa won elections following a brief military takeover that ousted former president Robert Mugabe last year.

“The situation in the hospitals is so shocking,” Chamisa said.

“Our hospitals are sick. Sick hospitals can’t attend to sick people. Our people are dying from preventable diseases such as cholera.”

At least 50 people have died of cholera since September.

“There is an absence of leadership. The nation is orphaned, the nation is parentless,” Chamisa said.

A commission of inquiry is currently investigating the death of six people in post-election violence after soldiers opened fire on protesters who accused officials of delaying poll results.—AFP ■

Explosive device found at NY home of billionaire Soros

NEW YORK (United States)—The FBI on Tuesday was investigating an explosive device found in the mailbox at the New York home of US billionaire and liberal donor George Soros, a target of right-wing groups, officials confirmed.

An employee of the residence in Bedford, north of Manhattan, found the suspicious package in the mailbox on Monday afternoon, opened it and found what appeared to be an explosive device, Bedford police said.

"The employee placed the package in a wooded area and called the Bedford police," the local police department said in a statement.

Soros was not at home at the time and bomb squad technicians defused the device, said police in Bedford, a wealthy enclave that is home to a string of the rich and famous within easy commute of Manhattan.

An "extensive investigation"

has been opened and the case has been turned over to the Joint Terrorism Task Force Division of the FBI, police said.

"We are conducting an investigation at and around a residence in Bedford," the FBI's New York field office said on Twitter. "There is no threat to public safety, and we have no further comment at this time."

Born to a Jewish family in Hungary, the 88-year-old hedge fund tycoon has an estimated net worth of \$8.3 billion, making him one of the world's richest men, according to *Forbes* magazine.

In 1992, the Wall Street trader became known as "the man who broke the bank of England" when his aggressive speculation against sterling sent it crashing out of the European exchange mechanism.

He has given away billions to his Open Society Foundations, which promote freedom of expression, justice and equality, and



George Soros. An explosive device was left in the mailbox at billionaire investor George Soros' New York home. PHOTO: AFP

which counter discrimination, focusing in part on Central and Eastern Europe.

The organization on Tuesday condemned the "hateful rhetoric that dominates politics in the United States and so many countries around the world," noting it "breeds extremism and violence."

"In this climate of fear, falsehoods, and rising authoritarianism, just voicing your views can draw death threats," it said, adding that Soros "deplores violence of any kind and urges politicians across the political spectrum to tone down their rhetoric."

Earlier this month US President Donald Trump accused So-

ros of paying demonstrators to protest against the nomination of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, who was accused of attempted rape in high school.

Soros supported Trump's Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US election and has been accused by nationalists the world over of sponsoring protests and seeking to push a liberal, multicultural agenda.

Roseanne Barr, the US actress sacked from the revival of her eponymous sitcom for sending a racist tweet about a former Barack Obama aide, called Soros a Nazi earlier this year before later apologizing. — AFP ■

UN committee slams French 'burqa ban' for 'violating' rights

GENEVA (Switzerland)—The UN Human Rights Committee on Tuesday criticised France's so-called burqa ban, saying the law "violated" the rights of two women who were fined for wearing full-face veils in public.

The committee called for the women to be compensated and for a review of the 2010 law that forbids people from publicly wearing clothing that conceals their face.

"The French law disproportionately harmed the petitioners' right to manifest their religious beliefs," the committee said in a statement.

It added it was not convinced by France's claim that the ban was necessary for security and social reasons. The two French women were convicted in 2012 for wearing the niqab, a veil with a slit for the eyes.

"The ban, rather than protecting fully veiled women, could have the opposite effect of confining them to their homes, impeding their access to pub-

lic services and marginalising them," the committee said.

Responding to the criticism, the French foreign ministry said covering one's face was "incompatible with the principle of fraternity and the basic values of a democratic and open society".

The ministry noted that the European Court of Human Rights had found the ban did not violate niqab wearers' religious freedom, and said it would argue its position in a report to the UN committee on the law.

'Too sweeping'

The UN committee, which is made up of independent experts, ensures countries stick to their human rights commitments but does not have enforcement powers. It said the French ban was "too sweeping" but that governments could still make people show their faces in specific circumstances.

The decision reignites a debate that has raged in France for years over Muslim headwear and other religious clothing.

The debate has regularly pitted supporters of France's secular constitution against those who argue for religious freedoms.

The 2010 law had strong public support when brought in under former president Nicolas Sarkozy, but many said it targeted a tiny minority of Muslim women in France who wear full-face veils.

Condemned by critics for pandering to far-right voters but backed by many women's rights activists, the law made France the first European country to ban garments that cover the face.

An estimated five million Muslims live in France and women who ignore the ban can be fined up to 150 euros (\$170).

"The vast majority of cases where people have been stopped for checks and have been condemned to fines... have been women wearing the niqab," committee member Ilze Brands-Kehris told AFP.

"In the context of fewer

than 2,000 women wearing the full-face veil in France... (the law has) a vast disproportionate effect on those women." Other EU countries, including Denmark, Austria and Belgium, have also implemented similar full-face veil bans.

'Oppression of women'

The committee's stance contrasts with a 2014 European Court of Human Rights ruling which upheld the French ban.

The court found that France was justified in introducing the ban in the interests of social cohesion as it was "not expressly based on the religious connotation of the clothing".

In August, the committee also criticised France over the 2008 sacking of a employee worker who refused to remove her veil at work, arguing it interfered with her right to express her religion. The so-called Baby Loup case, named after the nursery, had already faced multiple legal battles in the French courts. — AFP ■

Brief in News

Security scare briefly locks down US nuclear weapons facility

CHICAGO (United States)—Employees at the United States' primary nuclear weapons facility were briefly told to "shelter in place" on Tuesday, when a suspicious vehicle in a parking lot triggered an emergency response.

The incident at the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas occurred just before noon (1800 GMT), when a routine inspection identified "a potential concern with a vehicle," the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) said in a statement. "As a precaution, all employees were sheltered in place." Police were called and authorities closed roads around the facility for about an hour while officials investigated.

"After searching the vehicle, it was determined there were no prohibited items or explosives, and the emergency event was resolved without incident," the NNSA said. —AFP ■

Hurricane Willa makes landfall in Mexico

MAZATLÁN (Mexico)—Hurricane Willa made landfall in Mexico Tuesday, lashing the Pacific coast with powerful wind, heavy rain and what forecasters warned was "extremely dangerous" storm surge.

"The eye of Hurricane Willa is now over the coastline near the town of Escuinapa, Sinaloa," Mexico's National Meteorological Service said on Twitter. The powerful storm, which was a maximum Category 5 hurricane on Monday, had weakened to Category 3 as it moved toward land. But forecasters warned it still had the potential to unleash deadly flooding and landslides. —AFP ■

Canadian rapper dies after falling from plane

OTTAWA (Canada) — A Canadian rapper died after falling from the wing of a flying plane he was walking on during a music video shoot, his management team said.

Jon James, 33, died instantly in the "wing-walking" accident in Vernon, British Columbia, on Saturday, according to a statement. —AFP ■

Vietnamese party chief elected country's president

HANOI — Nguyen Phu Trong, general secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam Central Committee (CPVCC), on Tuesday was elected president of Viet Nam at the ongoing sixth session of the 14th National Assembly of Viet Nam, the country's top legislature, Viet Nam News Agency reported.

After being elected president, Trong on Tuesday afternoon took the oath, which was broadcast live by Viet Nam's national television VTV and Voice of Viet Nam.

Trong said he was both happy and worried. "I am happy because I have been trusted and loved by the National Assembly and assigned tasks. I am worried about how to fulfil the heavy tasks before the country," he said when taking the oath.

Trong, born in 1944, holds a PhD in politics with specific field of party construction.

He has been a member of the CPVCC's Political Bureau since 1997. He served as chairman of the National Assembly from 2006 to 2011.



Viet Nam's newly elected President Nguyen Phu Trong (c, front) takes the oath of allegiance to the Constitution at the Parliament House in Hanoi, capital of Viet Nam on 23 October, 2018. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Trong was elected CPVCC general secretary in 2011, and re-elected general secretary in 2016. On 23 September, two days after Vietnamese former president Tran Dai Quang passed way, Vice President Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh became acting president.—Xinhua ■

Driverless hover-taxis to take off in Singapore

SINGAPORE (Singapore) — Test flights of a driverless hover-taxi will take place in Singapore next year, a German aviation firm said, the latest innovation to offer an escape from Asia's monster traffic jams.

Millions of commuters in the region's cities have to contend with chronic gridlock every day, sparking a race to develop new ways to avoid the snarl-ups.

While the developed city-state of Singapore does not suffer major congestion, it is seen as a perfect test-bed for new technologies due to its compact size and openness to innovation.

German firm Volocopter said Tuesday it will conduct the test flights in Singapore in the second half of next year with the support of the government.

Resembling a helicopter, Volocopter's electric air taxis take off and land vertically. They are based on drone technology and can fly two people for around 30 kilometres (19 miles), the firm said in a statement.

The Singapore tests follow a public demonstration in Dubai last year.

"The Volocopter is designed specifically for inner city missions," Volocopter said in a statement, adding it can withstand minor turbulence around skyscrapers, allowing for smooth rides.

"It is so quiet that at a flight height of 100 metres (330 feet), it cannot be heard over the typical background noise of a city."

A company spokeswoman said the Volocopter can be controlled by a pilot using a joystick, or remotely from the ground.

Apart from the test flights, Volocopter will also set up a product design and engineering centre in Singapore to support its expansion plans.

Volocopter said they are getting ready to roll out their first fixed routes in cities.

The hover-taxis will complement helicopter-hailing services which are already taking off in some cities to beat traffic jams.—AFP ■

Japan trying to confirm if man freed in Syria is journalist Yasuda

TOKYO — Japan on Wednesday sought to verify whether a man released in Syria and now in Turkey is freelance journalist Jumpei Yasuda, who went missing in the war-torn country in 2015.

The government wants to confirm whether the man is Yasuda "as soon as possible," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told reporters at his office in the morning.

The 44-year-old was apparently taken captive by a militant group after entering Syria to cover the civil war. Japan was informed by Qatar on Tuesday night that a man believed to be the journalist was released and is now at an immigration facility in the southern Turkish

city of Antakya. The Japanese government has sent officials at its embassy in Ankara to the immigration facility to verify the man's identity and health condition, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said.

The top government spokesman said on Wednesday morning the officials have already arrived in the city and that confirmation of whether the man is Yasuda will be known after 3 pm Japan time.

Suga denied that the government has paid ransom for the release of Yasuda. Although it is not immediately known how the man was released, Qatar, which has some influence with Syrian

rebel groups, appeared to have brokered the negotiations.

The spokesman said the government had called for cooperation from Qatar and Turkey for the rescue of Yasuda and Abe expressed Tokyo's gratitude for the two countries' efforts. But Suga did not elaborate further on their roles, citing the sensitive nature of the matter.

After he went missing, footage apparently of Yasuda reading out an English message to his family and the Japanese public was posted online in March 2016. A Syrian man who uploaded the video told Kyodo News he had received it from a go-between for the al-Qaida-linked Nusra Front.

In May the same year, an image surfaced of what appeared to be a bearded Yasuda holding a sign bearing a handwritten message in Japanese saying, "Please help. This is the last chance. Yasuda Jumpei."

Multiple video recordings showing a person believed to be Yasuda were also posted online in July this year.

The militant group was believed to have been in contact with the Japanese government to seek ransom negotiations. While Yasuda was believed to be in the hands of the Nusra Front, some information suggested he was handed over to a splinter organization.—Kyodo News ■

Suzuki Motor to boost exports from Indonesia by 45% up to 2022

JAKARTA — Japanese automaker Suzuki Motor Corp plans to increase automobile and motorcycle exports from Indonesia, making the country its third largest production base after India and Japan.

Its local subsidiary PT Suzuki Indomobil Motor aims at annual exports worth 11.3 trillion rupiah (\$744 million) in 2022, up

45 per cent from 7.8 trillion rupiah in 2017, Seiji Itayama, the subsidiary's president, said on Monday.

"To achieve the target, we will push forward investment in human resources and equipment," he said.

The local unit plans to integrate all its production in the country into its main factory in Bekasi Regency, West Java Prov-

ince. Suzuki's exports from Indonesia have accounted for more than 30 per cent of local sales since 2016.

Itayama said the company will maintain that level, which is much higher than in Japan, where it is about 20 per cent, and in India where it is less than 10 per cent. Suzuki Indomobil Motor is exporting the fully remodeled

Ertiga multipurpose vehicle and the Nex II scooter.

The all-new seven-seater MPV was released in Indonesia in April.

Last month, the subsidiary began exporting the Ertiga 2018 model to the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries as well as Mexico and Chile.—Kyodo News ■

Brazil's Amazon at risk if Bolsonaro wins presidency: ecologists

RIO DE JANEIRO (Brazil) Promises by Brazil's far-right presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro and his entourage bode badly for the future of the Amazon—called the “lungs of the planet”—if he wins, environmentalists warn.

The candidate is seen as pliant to the powerful agrobusiness lobby in his country known for putting profit ahead of preservation. One of his most controversial campaign pledges is to merge the agriculture and environ-

ment ministries into one.

“Let us be clear: the future ministry will come from the productive sector. We won't have any more fights over this,” Bolsonaro, who vows to boost Brazil's fragile economy, told a media conference four days after winning the October 7 first-round in the presidential race.

“If he's elected, that will be the beginning of the end for the Amazon,” his leftist rival in Sunday's run-off, Fernando Haddad, said last week. Geraldo

Monteiro, a political science professor at Rio de Janeiro State University, said: “As he's backed by the agrobusiness lobby in congress, which is really strong, Bolsonaro virtually wants to make the environment serve the interests of agrobusiness.”

Winding the clock back

Bolsonaro has also several times evoked studies to build hydroelectric power stations in the Amazon, which implies the construction of massive dams that would greatly impact



An aerial view of deforestation in the Western Amazon region of Brazil. PHOTO: AFP

water courses and require communities to be moved.

That issue has long been a contentious one between Brazilian authorities and indigenous tribes—particularly over one project already under construction, Belo Monte, which when finished will be the third-biggest dam in

the world. In February, the hard-right candidate said that, if elected, he would not give up “one centimeter more” of land to indigenous communities claiming traditional land. His aim is to end what he sees as “Shiite ecologist activism,” where “Shiite” to him means radicalism, with no religious

connotation.

In August, while visiting Roraima state within the vast Amazon, the longterm congressman railed against “Shiite control” over the public environmental agencies ICMBio and IBAMA, saying they “hurt those who want to produce.”—AFP ■

'Himalayan Viagra' under threat from climate change: researchers

WASHINGTON (United States) — A prized caterpillar fungus that is more valuable than gold and is nicknamed “Himalayan Viagra” in Asia, where it is seen as a wonder drug, is becoming harder to find due to climate change, researchers said on Monday. People in China and Nepal have been killed in clashes over the years over the elusive fungus “yarchagumba,” known formally as *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*. Although it has no scientifically proven benefits, people who boil yarchagumba in water to make tea or add it to soups and stews believe it cures everything from impotence to cancer.

It is “one of the world's most valuable biological commodities, providing a crucial source of income for hundreds of thousands of collectors,” said the report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a peer-reviewed US journal. In recent decades, the fungus has skyrocketed in popularity and prices have soared — it can fetch up to three times the price of gold in Beijing, researchers say. While many have suspected overharvesting was the reason for its scarcity, researchers wanted to find out more. So they interviewed around four dozen harvesters, collectors and traders of the prized fungus.

They also examined previously published scientific literature, including interviews with more than 800 people in Nepal, Bhutan, India and China, in order to understand its apparent decline. Weather patterns, geographic factors and environmental conditions were also analyzed to create a map of yarchagumba production in the region.

“Using data spanning nearly two decades and four countries, (we) revealed that caterpillar fungus production is declining throughout much of its range,” said the report. The finding “is important because it calls attention to how highly valuable species, like caterpillar fungus, are susceptible not only to overharvesting, as is often the focus, but also to climate change,” lead study author Kelly Hopping told AFP.

“This means that even if people start reducing the amount that they harvest, production will likely continue to dwindle as a result of ongoing climate change,” said Hopping, who conducted the work while a postdoctoral research fellow at Stanford University and is currently assistant professor in Human-Environment Systems at Boise State University.—AFP ■

Plastics have entered human food chain, study shows

PARIS (France)—Bits of plastic have been detected in the faeces of people in Europe, Russia and Japan, according to research claiming to show for the

first time the widespread presence of plastics in the human food chain.

All eight volunteers in a small pilot study were found to have passed sev-

eral types of plastic, with an average of 20 micro-particles per 10 grams of stool, researchers reported on Tuesday at a gastroenterology congress in Vienna.

The scientists speculated that the tiny specks—ranging in size from 50 to 500 micrometres—may have been ingested via seafood, food wrapping, dust or plastic bottles. A human hair is roughly 50 to 100 micrometres in width.

“In our laboratory, we were able to detect nine different types of plastics,” said Bettina Liebmann, a researcher at the Federal Environment Agency, which analysed the samples. The two most common were polypropylene (PP)—found in bottle caps, rope and strapping—and polyethylene terephthalate (PET), present in drinking bottles and textile fibres.—AFP ■



Global plastic production has grown to more than 400 million tonnes a year, and an estimated two to five percent of it winds up in the ocean. PHOTO: AFP

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0108N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V KOTA HADIAH VOY. NO. (KHAD 0108N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-10-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T./A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (031 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V PATHEIN STAR VOY. NO. (031 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-10-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of 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 CONTINENTAL SHIPPING
LINE PTE LTD

Phone No: 2301185

Kanye West donates to little-known Chicago mayoral candidate

CHICAGO—Kanye West made a five-figure donation on Monday to a little-known candidate running to become the mayor of his hometown Chicago, days after she was endorsed by fellow hip hop star Chance the Rapper.

Kanye gave \$73,540 to the campaign of Amara Enyia, who wants to be the first black woman to lead America's third largest city. The amount is the exact figure state election officials fined Enyia's campaign for a technical violation connected to an unsuccessful 2015 mayoral run.

"The Amara Enyia campaign thanks Chicago native Kanye West for his generous action," the campaign said in a short statement. "The \$73,540 debt to the Illinois State Board of Elections has been paid in full."

Chance, who is also a Chicago



US rapper Kanye West, pictured meeting President Donald Trump in the White House on 11 October, 2018, is backing a candidate vying to be the first black woman to run Chicago. **PHOTO: AFP**

go native and an outspoken activist in the city, last week endorsed Enyia — immediately raising her profile among a crowded field of contenders that includes a former Obama White House chief

of staff. Current mayor Rahm Emanuel last month announced he would not run for a third term in the 26 February election.

"I wanted to be behind the person that I believe can make

a change," Chance told a news conference on Tuesday last week.

When asked if he would financially support Enyia, he joked: "I haven't yet, but we'll see. I've got a lot of money."—AFP ■

I have too much 'life experience', says Julia Roberts

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood star Julia Roberts believes she has too much 'life experience' to star in romantic comedies.

The 50-year-old actor, who previously appeared in iconic films such as "Pretty Woman" and "Notting Hill", has revealed she is unlikely to star in any more rom-coms because she cannot convincingly play a naive character. "There came a point in my career where people thought I had turned on romantic comedies, which I love them, I love to be in them, I love to watch them. But sometimes, they just don't work at a certain point of life experience. It's not about age, it's just about what people know that you know," Roberts told Entertainment Tonight.—AFP ■

Buffaloes plough through annual Thai racing festival

CHONBURI (Thailand)—Several hefty buffaloes thunder down a dirt track in eastern Thailand, kicking up dust as they are urged toward the finish line by whip-wielding jockeys perched on their backs.

It's a display of strength and agility from the riders, who risk life and limb in their bid for glory—and a top prize of 8,000 baht (US\$240).

The race is the highlight of the annual week-long buffalo festival held in the coastal town of Chonburi which is now into its 147th year.

Buffalo trainer Pongsak

Khanngern, 44, has entered two of his animals into the contest.

"I have trained them for months and I am confident that one of them will win," he said.

The decades-old tradition started as a way for farmers to blow off steam during the slow moments of an arduous rice-planting season, and over time many superstitions developed around it.

If a buffalo fell sick for example, farmers would pray to the spirits of their ancestors to heal it; if the animal recovered, a race would be offered in thanks.

On Tuesday, some 500 buffa-

loes were competing.

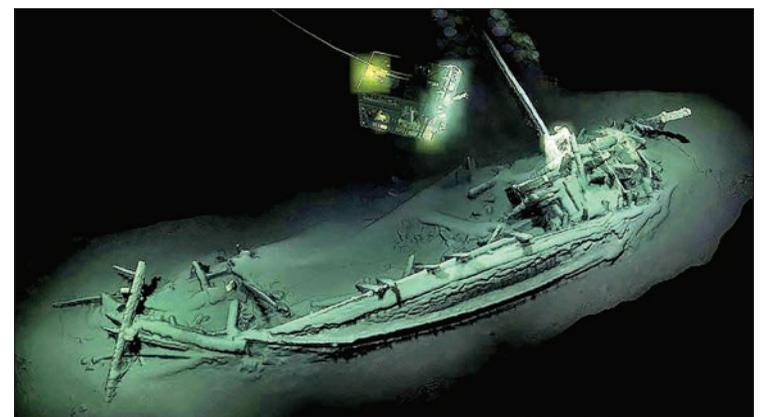
"There are many youngsters attending and (a lot of) interest in this event," mayor Chutharut Parinwachirapud said of the crowds, which numbered in the thousands at the festival.

For centuries, these gentle giants were of immense practical importance—ploughing the fields, providing transport, and even defending villages in times of conflict.

But as farming became mechanised, buffaloes have taken on a symbolic role, acting as a reminder of Thailand's farming tradition.—AFP ■



Jockeys ride buffaloes during the annual buffalo races in Chon Buri on 23 October, 2018. **PHOTO:AFP**



The 75ft shipwreck was been found lying whole with its mast, rudders and rowing benches after more than 2,400 years. **PHOTO: AFP**

World's oldest intact shipwreck found in Black Sea

LONDON (United Kingdom) — An ancient Greek trading ship dating back more than 2,400 years has been found virtually intact at the bottom of the Black Sea, researchers said on Tuesday. The vessel is one of more than 60 shipwrecks identified by the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project including Roman ships and a 17th-century Cossack raiding fleet.

During the three-year project, researchers used specialist remote deep-water camera systems previously used in offshore oil and gas exploration to map the sea floor.

"A small piece of the vessel has been carbon dated and it is confirmed as the oldest intact shipwreck known to mankind," the project said in a statement.

The ship, which is lying on its side with its mast and rud-

ders intact, was dated back to 400 BC — a time when the Black Sea was a trading hub filled with Greek colonies.

The team said the vessel, previously only seen in an intact state on the side of ancient Greek pottery, was found at a depth of more than 2,000 metres (6,500 feet). The water at that depth is oxygen-free, meaning that organic material can be preserved for thousands of years.

"A ship, surviving intact, from the Classical world, lying in over 2km of water, is something I would never have believed possible," said Professor Jon Adams from the University of Southampton in southern England, the project's main investigator.

"This will change our understanding of shipbuilding and seafaring in the ancient world," he said.—AFP ■

New drug slashes death rates among drug-resistant TB patients: scientists

PARIS(France)—A new treatment for a deadly drug-resistant strain of tuberculosis can cure more than 90 per cent of sufferers, according to a landmark clinical trial whose results were revealed exclusively to AFP.

Doctors in Belarus—a country with one of the world’s highest rates of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis—treated 181 patients with the new drug, bedaquiline, in combination with other antibiotics.

Of these, 168—93 per cent—were cured, compared to just over half of people treated with existing drugs, according to the

study results.

The success rate was largely replicated in bedaquiline trials in other countries in eastern Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia, according to trial abstracts due to be unveiled at a major tuberculosis conference later this week, but showed to AFP beforehand.

“The results from this study... that newer drugs like bedaquiline can cure and are game changers for people living with multidrug-resistant and extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis,” Paula Fujiwara, scientific director of The International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung



Tuberculosis killed at least 1.7 million people in 2017, according to the World Health Organization, making the airborne infection the world’s deadliest infectious disease. **PHOTO: AFP**

Disease commented on the findings.

She was not involved in the research.

Tuberculosis killed at least 1.7 million people in 2017, according to the World Health Or-

ganization, making the airborne infection the world’s deadliest infectious disease.

It kills more than three times as many people as malaria every year.

Despite the huge death toll,

tuberculosis received roughly a tenth of the global research funding that goes to HIV/AIDS.

Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is immune to two of the antibacterial drugs most commonly used to treat the disease.—AFP ■

Failed launch of Soyuz-FG did not pause probe into hole in Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft

MOSCOW—The special commission investigating the origin of the hole in the hull of the manned spacecraft Soyuz MS-09, attached to the International Space Station, keeps working in the original mode. The failed launch of the Soyuz-FG rocket on 11 October by no means affected its activities, the press-service of the space corporation Roscosmos told TASS on Monday. “The panel of inquiry into the affair on the manned spacecraft Soyuz MS-09 keeps working. It is now waiting for the results of a spacewalk (and detained examination of the hole in the hull - TASS). Its date will be determined after 30 October,” Roscosmos said.

The inquiry into the causes of the hole in the hull of the Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft consists of specialists from the state-run corporation Roscosmos, the space rocket corporation Energia and TsNIIMash. The hole might have

been caused by external factors (the impact of a meteorite or space debris, faulty workmanship or deliberate mechanical impact.

Hole in Soyuz MS-09

On 30 August, a drop in air pressure occurred on board the ISS. The crew identified a two-millimetre hole in the hull of the Soyuz MS-09 spacecraft attached to the ISS. In the evening of the same day it was patched with several layers of epoxy resin. The pressure returned to normal.

Originally, a spacewalk for examining the outer surface of Soyuz MS-09 was scheduled for 15 November. Roscosmos chief Dmitry Rogozin said that Russian cosmonauts would remove part of the anti-meteorite protective cover and examine the hole from the outside. The failed launch of the Soyuz-FG rocket on 11 October delayed the spacewalk.—Tass ■



The panel is waiting for the results of a spacewalk and the examination of the hole in the hull, be determined after 30 October. **PHOTO: TASS**

‘Dinosaur country’: fossil hunters’ South African paradise

ROSENDAL (South Africa)—The sun rises over the South African bush as scientists laden with backpacks climb a hillside.

They get down to work, carving into two immense blocks of stone that have concealed the secrets of an ancestor of modern-day crocodiles for some 200 million years. Jonah Choiniere and his team from Johannesburg’s Witwatersrand University had tracked the reptile from another age for three years.

The search brought them to a stretch of farmland in the central town of Rosendal, where they are surrounded by cattle and impalas. “In 2015, one of my students just saw a few (fossilised) bones coming out,” said Choiniere, his shirt sticking to sweat from the morning’s hike. “We started to excavate it and we brought it back to the lab and it turned out to be a hip of a species we’ve never seen before,” said the palaeontologist, who is originally from the United States.

The delicate excavation process at the site is grindingly slow and continues today. Before being extracted, the stone surrounding a fossil is carefully enveloped in a protective layer of plaster.

After five hours of drying time, the stone is chiselled free, lifted by three strong people, and then transported by road nearly 300 kilometres (185 miles) to Johannesburg into the expert hands

of Wilfred Bilankulu.

“My job is to make the fossils visible,” said the former fine arts student. “I’m taking off the jacket that has been put in place around the fossil, and after I prepare them using dental tools.”

Rare specimen

The herculean task will take between eight and 12 months. A similar amount of time will be needed to meticulously examine, compare and describe the find.

Choiniere expected a bountiful haul even before he had the discovery in hand. “This is a pretty good harvest for us. We didn’t know what to expect when we came into this quarry... I can say it’s much better than what we were expecting, very promising,” he said. Given the bones already uncovered, Choiniere’s research student Rick Tolchard can barely hide his excitement. He knows he is in the presence of a rare specimen, the improbable forefather of the crocodile family which today stalks African waterways.

“Two hundred and fifty to 200 million years ago, these animals were the dominant land carnivores and they were found all over the world... (but) in South Africa we don’t have a record of them,” he said. “Some of them were, I imagine, sort of like a crocodile crossed with a lion, a very large quadrupedal, legs under the body, with these massive big jaws—a

very intimidating animal.

“The one here would have stood on his hind legs, it would have looked more like a theropod dinosaur, almost like a raptor.”

In recent years, South Africa has become a top destination for dinosaur hunters.

Just an hour’s drive from the Rosendal farm, Choiniere’s team has already unearthed fossils belonging to a newly discovered type of dinosaur that roamed the earth 200 million years ago.

‘Giant thunderclap at dawn’

Measuring four metres (13 feet) to the shoulder and weighing 12 tonnes—twice the weight of a modern elephant—the giant herbivore known in the local Sesotho language as Ledumahadi mafube (“a giant thunderclap at dawn”) shook up the family tree of extinct monsters. Choiniere said it could well be “the first of the true giants”. The beast is a forerunner of the 60-tonne sauropods familiar from Steven Spielberg’s blockbuster “Jurassic Park” series.

Experts say the southern tip of Africa is an ideal place to study the transition between the Triassic and Jurassic periods, when mass extinction events shaped the evolution of the planet.

“One of the reasons is that about 66 per cent of the surface of South Africa has fossils on it—there are a lot of fossil-bearing areas,” Choiniere said.—AFP ■

Myanmar Futsal to participate in 2018 ASEAN Futsal Championship in Indonesia

MYANMAR Futsal squad is going to participate in ASEAN Futsal Championship for 2018, said a source of Myanmar Football Federation (MFF).

The ASEAN Futsal Championship also known as the AFF Futsal Championship organized by the ASEAN Football Federation will be showcased in Jog-

jakarta, Indonesia from 3 to 11 November. Eight teams from eight countries are taking part in the Futsal championship.

The Futsal championship was divided into two groups. The group-A is comprised of Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia while the group-B is made up of Thailand, Viet Nam, Brunei and Timor Leste.

As part of preparation for participating in the AFF Futsal Championship, Myanmar went on a friendly tour to China, took part in Jimo International Friendly Futsal Cup at Zhongliao Lohas Park Sports Center in Qingdao from 16 to 19 October and secured the third-place prize. —Htut Htut (Twantay) ■



Myanmar Futsal players had a group photo together with coaches and managers in China. PHOTO: MFF

AFC 'B' license coaching course to be conducted on 30 October

JOINTLY-organized by Myanmar Football Federation (MFF) and Asian Football Confederation (AFC), AFC 'B' license coaching course will be conducted from 30 October to 18 November, reported the Myanmar Football Federation. A total of 23 trainees are attending the license coaching course recognized by the AFC. The Cambodian instructor will act the course as a trainer cum a lecturer.

Most of women's coaches

and former selected players are attending the course. Those who are attending the course are Whet Zar Cam, Aung Kyaw Phyo, Khin Maung Htay, Zaw Jon Pari Nan, Myo Aung, Thet Paing Soe, Myo Tun, Tun Lin Aung, Zaw Lin Aung, Yan Myo Aung, Zarni Tun, Yin Min Aung, Tin Tun, Tun Tun Oo, Myo Zaw Oo, Kyaw Min Min Naing, Chan Chan, Than Than Htwe, Mo Moe Wah, San San Maw, Aye Aye Mar, Zarli Win and Thuza Htwe. —Htut Htut (Twantay) ■

Yangon Utd agrees with goalie Kyaw Zin Htet and forward Ei Soe about contract extension

YANGON UNITED FC, champions of both Myanmar National League and General Aung San Knock-out Shield for the 2018 football season, agreed with goalie Kyaw Zin Htet and forward Ei Soe about a contract extension in principles, said a source close to Yangon United. The contracts of both the goalie and the forward will expire at the end of this football season.

Goalie Kyaw Zin Htet moved to Yangon United from Zwegabin United in 2017 and showed his best form in the two consecutive years. He played an important role in an effort to achieve both cups in the 2018 football season.

For that reason Yangon United approached him for extending contract with him. Forward Ei Soe advanced Yangon senior club from the junior one. Yangon Utd will negotiate with him for the contract extension when he returns from the international friendly tour.

Yangon Utd will finalize the contract signing with both players. Yangon Utd will have to field new signing players to further strengthen the squad as it is to defend both local cups and participate in Asian Champion League and AFC Cup in the upcoming football season.—Htut Htut (Twantay) ■

Ronaldo helps Juve sink Man Utd as Real Madrid win but fail to convince

PARIS (France)—Cristiano Ronaldo marked his return to Old Trafford with a victory as Juventus beat Manchester United 1-0 in the Champions League on Tuesday, while under-pressure Real Madrid got back to winning ways. Julen Lopetegui's days as Madrid coach still look numbered despite seeing the reigning European champions beat Viktoria Plzen on a night in which both Bayern Munich and Manchester City won on the road.

It is just one win in seven matches now for Jose Mourinho's United after they went down to defeat against an accomplished Juventus, who were worthy victors.

After facing uncomfortable questions on the eve of the game over rape allegations made against him in the United States, Ronaldo played his part on the field for Juve back at the ground where he was once idolised.

He played a key role in the winner as it was his cross, aimed at Juan Cuadrado, which ended up falling for Paulo Dybala to tuck home in the 17th minute.

Ronaldo also forced a superb save from David de Gea, while Paul Pogba struck the post for United, who drew another blank at home in Europe after a 0-0 draw with Valencia three weeks ago. Juventus have maximum points after three games in Group H, and host Mourinho's side in Turin next.

"Juventus is a different level of quality, I have to be honest. A level of quality, stability, experience, know-how," Mourinho conceded. "I have no complaints with my boys. I have a positive feeling for their effort."

The good news for United is that they remain second in the group after Valencia were held to a 1-1 draw by Young Boys in Switzerland.

Michy Batshuayi put the Spaniards ahead, but Guillaume Hoarau's second-half penalty gave Young Boys their first point.—AFP ■



Floyd Mayweather (right) throws a right at Manny Pacquiao during their 2015 megafight in Las Vegas. PHOTO: AFP

Mayweather rematch closer as Pacquiao signs to face 'top PBC fighters'

LAS VEGAS—A potential blockbuster rematch between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather moved a step closer as the Filipino icon confirmed he has signed with Al Haymon's Premier Boxing Champions (PBC). Eight-weight world champion Pacquiao said he would close out his storied career by facing "top PBC fighters" in announcing late Monday the tie-up with influential Mayweather adviser Haymon's organisation. "My team will work closely with Al Haymon for the remainder of my career to deliver the most anticipated fights with the top PBC fighters," Pacquiao said in a statement. "Those are the fights the fans want to see and the ones I want to have to close out my career," he added. Pacquiao said last week that he was "90 per cent" sure a bout with former four-division world champion Adrien Broner would happen in January, possibly in Las Vegas.—AFP ■



Juventus' Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo is pictured during the Champions League group H football match between Manchester United and Juventus at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, on 23 October, 2018. PHOTO: AFP