

NATIONAL

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers "Soon" to Lao Buddhist delegation in Nay Pyi Taw

PAGE-10

NATIONAL

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting

PAGE-7

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State Counsellor attends K-Wind Soul Beat in Nay Pyi Taw

ROK Embassy commemorates 70th Anniversary of Independence of Myanmar in 2018 and 30th Anniversary of ROK-ASEAN Dialogue Relations in 2019.



State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Union ministers and their wives, and the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and wife enjoy the Korean traditional performance titled "K-Wind Soul Beat" at the MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

STATE Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi attended a Korean traditional performance titled "K-Wind Soul Beat" at the MICC-II in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The performance was conducted in commemoration of

the 70th Anniversary of Independence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the 30th Anniversary of the ROK-ASEAN Dialogue Relations in 2019.

The performance was also attended by Union ministers and their wives, Chairman of the Nay

Pyi Taw Council and his wife, senior military officers, deputy ministers, Hluttaw representatives, departmental officials, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar and embassy staff and officials and staff of the ministries.

The State Counsellor was welcomed by Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Myanmar Mr. Lee Sang-hwa and wife.

Before the concert, the Korean Ambassador extended greetings.

Afterwards, the State Coun-

sellor, Union Ministers, the chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council, the Ambassador of Korea and wife posed for documentary photos.

Following this, they enjoyed the traditional performance of Korean artistes. —MNA ■

Vice President U Myint Swe addresses opening ceremony of e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw

VICE PRESIDENT U Myint Swe who is the e-Government Steering Committee Chairman addressed the opening ceremony of the e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018

(Nay Pyi Taw) held at the Myanmar International Convention Center-II (MICC-II) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Present at the event were Union Ministers, Union Audi-

tor General, Union Civil Service Board Chairman, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman, State and Region Chief Ministers, Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman, Myanmar Nation-

al Human Rights Commission Chairman, Deputy Ministers, State and Regions ministers, Hluttaw representatives, ambassadors and diplomats from foreign embassies in Myanmar,

patrons, chairman and members of Myanmar Computer Federation, experts and technicians, departmental officials and invited guests.

SEE PAGE-3

INSIDE TODAY

NATIONAL

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives PRC NPC Ethnic Affairs Committee Vice Chairman

PAGE-7



LOCAL NEWS

MNA training aircraft's wheel collapses on landing at Mawlamyine airport

PAGE-4



NATIONAL

ASEAN Secretariat, AHA Centre to help in receiving returnees

PAGE-10



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

THE sixth-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth regular session was held at Pyithu Hluttaw meeting hall in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning where asterisk-marked questions were asked, a motion tabled, a report read, a bill decided upon and approved.

Question and answer session

The first question about distribution of electricity to Tamu Township through the national power grid was raised by U Naing Naing Win of Tamu constituency and answered by Deputy Minister for Electricity and Energy Dr. Tun Naing who first remarked that the reply will be for his ministry as well as in coordination with Sagaing Region government. The Deputy Minister said that to provide electricity to Tamu Township from the national grid, a 90 miles long Kalay-Tamu 230 KV power line and a 230 KV sub-station in Tamu Town had to be constructed. This project is included in the Ministry's Master Plan and starting from fiscal year 2017-2018, annual fund included an allocation for the project. But due to limited fund and budget had to be allocated for ongoing projects, this project couldn't be started to date.

The funding requirement for the project will be Ks 107 billion or US\$ 66.6 million in foreign currency. The project is included in Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan and a proposal had been made to Ministry of Planning and Finance to conduct this project under \$ 130 million loan from



Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat. PHOTO: MNA

India said the Deputy Minister:

On the matter of electricity distribution, U Nay Myo Htet of Kyauktada constituency also raised a question about plan to replace power lines with insulated lines according to SAC (Services Accounting Codes) as there were cases of electrocution from power line that were unprotected. Deputy Minister Dr. Tun Naing said that in eastern Yangon District, 34.224 miles of unprotected ACSR (Aluminium-conductor steel-reinforced cable) line were being replaced by SAC insulated lines while 40.89 miles of 400 volt HDBC (Hard Drawn Bare Copper) wire were being replaced with insulated ABC (Aerial bundled cable) wires. Similar works were also conducted in Yangon west, south and north districts said the Deputy Minister.

In places where replacement is not made yet, measures such as installing dampers, spacers and earths were conducted township wise added the Deputy Minister.

To prevent dangers of electrocution, outdated and worn out

400 volt power lines need to be replaced with about 500 miles of ABC lines for which tenders were being called and works will be conducted in fiscal year 2018-2019 explained the Deputy Minister.

Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation U Hla Kyaw then responded to questions raised by Daw Aye Mya Mya Myo of Kyauktan constituency on measures put in place to prevent misuse and abuse of lands managed by the union government and arrangements for distributing silted lands to farmers for irrigation.

On the matter of whether there is a plan to utilize water from Winphanon Dam in Mon State to provide water to Thanbyuzayat Town about 10 miles from the dam and then on to Kyaikhami town about 15 miles further raised by U Nyan Hein of Thanbyuzayat constituency, Deputy Minister U Hla Kyaw replied that this is a massive work that would cost very much. As such, Mon State government, state development affairs committee and

the ministry is coordinating to obtain a loan from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). During fiscal year 2018-2019 to fiscal year 2020-2021 consultants will conduct site visits and draw up designs. Tender will be called in fiscal year 2018-2019 to conduct design works while tender for construction work will be called in fiscal year 2019-2020 explained the Deputy Minister.

Similarly questions raised by Daw Khin Than Nu of Mindon constituency, Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathedaung constituency and U Sai Oo Kham of Hsenwi constituency were answered by Deputy Ministers.

Motion urging Union Government to value add agri and livestock sector raw products

Following the question and answer session, Daw Cho Cho of Ottwin constituency tabled a motion urging the Union Government to value add raw materials produced from agriculture and livestock breeding sector and expand into international market. She also explained about the reason for tabling the motion. The motion was supported by U Tin Htwe of Waw constituency.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced the Hluttaw's consensus to discuss the motion after obtaining the decision of the Hluttaw and announced further for Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the motion to register their names.

Reading of Economic and Financial Development Com-

mittee Report

Next Pyithu Hluttaw Economic and Financial Development Committee report was read by committee member Dr. Kyi Moh Moh Lwin.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker U T Khun Myat announced for Hluttaw representatives who wish to discuss the report to enroll their names.

Hluttaw approves bill on farmer rights

Later Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced the Hluttaw's approval of a Bill amending the Law of Protection of the Farmer Rights and Enhancement of their Benefits a Second Time sent by Amyotha Hluttaw with amendments after obtaining the Hluttaw's decision.

As the bill was approved according to the approval by Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee and not as amended by the Amyotha Hluttaw, Bill Committee member U Htay Ngwe then tabled a motion for the matter to be submitted and discussed at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw because the two Hluttaws were in disagreement over the bill.

Afterwards Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker announced that the matter will be submitted to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw in order to discuss the disagreements between the two Hluttaws.

The seventh-day meeting of the Second Pyithu Hluttaw's tenth regular session will be held today it is learnt. – Aye Aye Thant (MNA)

(Translated by Zaw Min)

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

THE tenth regular session of the Second Amyotha Hluttaw held its sixth-day meeting at the Amyotha Hluttaw's meeting hall yesterday morning. At the meeting asterisk-marked questions were answered, a report was read, and an amendment motion on a bill was tabled and discussed.

Asterisk-marked questions

During the session for asterisk-marked questions, U Wai Sein Aung of Rakhine State constituency 1, U Hla Myint alias U Hla Myint Than of Mon State constituency 11, U Mya Min Swe of Magway Region constituency 9, and Dr. Zaw Lin Htut of Mon State constituency 9 raised queries on the health sector. Their questions were answered by the Deputy Minister for Health and



Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker Mahn Win Khaing Than. PHOTO: MNA

Sports, Dr. Mya Lay Sein.

U Wai Sein Aung of Rakhine State constituency 1 asked the government about its plans to appoint specialist doctors, assistant doctors, and nurses at the vacant 500-bed general hospital in Sitway, Rakhine State. Dr. Mya Lay

Sein replied that arrangements were being made to appoint assistant doctors to the hospital in the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year. To fill vacancies for nurses, promotions are being processed so duties can be assigned in December 2018, Dr. Mya Lay Sein said.

U Hla Myint of Mon State constituency 11 asked the government about its plans to construct wards for patients and a housing complex for staff at the Theinzayat Station Hospital in Kyaikto Township, Mon State, in 2018-2019 FY. Dr. Mya Lay Sein said funds will be alloted for construction of a one-storey patient ward in the hospital in 2019-2020 FY.

U Mya Min Swe of Magway Region constituency 9 asked whether the government plans to appoint more township medical officers. Dr. Mya Lay Sein replied that vacant positions will be filled to meet the requirements in the region. Afterwards, Dr. Mya Lay Sein replied to a question raised by Dr. Zaw Lin Htut of Mon State Constituency 9 about

the reconstruction of a people's hospital in Thaton District.

Later, Daw Thiri Yadana of Mon State constituency 12 asked if the government plans to build relief housing that can accommodate 1,000 people, with provisions for a power generator, rest rooms, and a pool. The Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, U Soe Aung, replied that the Chairman of the National Natural Disaster Management Committee had granted permission for construction of a multi-purpose shelter in Belin Township in Mon State.

The Ministry has asked the state government to provide a cost estimate at the earliest, he said adding, a power generator will be supplied for the shelter.

SEE PAGE-7

Vice President U Myint Swe addresses opening ceremony of e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw

FROM PAGE-1

In his address to the event Vice President U Myint Swe said that in order to successfully implement an e-Government system an e-Government Steering Committee led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as patron had been formed with five objectives. Furthermore for the Steering Committee to implement its works successfully e-Government work committee, e-ID system work committee and eight sub-committees had been formed and works conducted.

e-Government is a Government that uses ICT (information and communications technology) to speed up the works and decisions of the Government, enable Government works to be effective and more widely available in providing better and improved services towards fulfilling the requirements of the people transparently and speedily.

The reason for implementing e-Government is to have efficient and speedy communications between the Government and the public servants, Government and private business persons and the government departments. e-Government has the ability to transform a developing country into a developed country and plays an important role for sustainable development and reducing poverty. Furthermore e-Government is one of the Development Indicators to measure the development of a country.

e-Government development of countries are measured by the United Nations' three e-Gov-



Vice President U Myint Swe delivers the speech at the opening ceremony of e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO MNA**

ernment Development Indexes which are Online Service Index, Telecommunication Index and Human Capital Index. Looking at Myanmar's e-Government Index, in 2016 it stood at 169 out of 193 and in 2018, it rises to 157.

ICT development is required to be used as a driving force for our country to catch up with other developed countries and to have socio-economic development. In Myanmar also, it can be seen that businesses are using ICT technology to raise the production and service capacities.

The basic infrastructures and network linkages between ministries were established to successfully implement e-Government. A National Web Portal was also established in September. To store data and information of ministries securely and safely, arrangements were made

to establish a government data center and specialized technical courses were also being conducted. Some laws required for e-Government were enacted and arrangements were made to draw up and enact a Cyber Law, said the Vice President.

Implementing e-Government requires taking examples and experience of some countries. Similarities can be seen in countries with top-notch e-Governments. First, the Union level, region and state level and regional level governments are using a single National Web Portal to provide services. Second, Action Plans were drawn up based on data and information collected yearly. Next, these were prioritized during the implementation of people centered services desired by the people. Third is using of Digital Identity systems in conducting the works. Therefore our country should also study the good examples and practices of other countries and use the best methods and systems that are nearest to our requirements.

There must be an Open Government first to have a successful e-Government. An Open Government is a government that provides data and information that the citizens have the right to know. It encourages the people's participation in drawing up policies for the people. In addition to this, added benefits such as creating job opportunities and providing support to businesses will be automatically achieved when people know and use data and information related to them. Second, there must be a

Competent Government. That is why the Government is making it a priority to raise the capacity and quality of the public servants. Third is to share and use news and information. Work efficiency improves when information is shared and distributed as required within government departments and there will be more cooperation among the government departments. Required polices are to be set and enacted so that there is no breach in security when information and data are shared.

Fourth is to become a Service-Oriented Government. To provide good and effective service to the people, priority must be given on enabling the people to use it with confidence and ease. One-Stop Services are to be implemented so that all works can be done at a single place.

Fifth point for e-Government sector development is the requirement of the country's ICT Industry sector to develop. Only then can dependent on foreign sources for software, hardware and technology can be reduced gradually creating job opportunities for the people.

Today's event is about a conference and exhibition that is vital for implementing e-Government in Myanmar. At the conference, matters of vital importance for the country and people in e-Government implementing works will be shared and discussed. In addition to this, it would be very useful as ICT exhibits are included where e-Government systems and technologies can be studied. It is strongly believed that

the conference will bring forth forces, methods and solutions to continue future works in a sustained momentum.

Many thanks is owed to the e-Government Steering Committee, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Myanmar Computer Federation and association for putting their best efforts toward successfully organizing the event. It is also believed that all understand the e-Government Visions for a successful e-Government system and work towards it. Therefore, union level, state and region level, district level, township level and village level public servants, computer associations, business persons, technicians, experts and citizens are urged to work together towards a successful e-Government system, said the Vice President.

Next e-Government Steering Committee Vice-Chairman Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung explained about the status of works conducted to implement the e-Government system successfully and establishment of ICT infrastructures.

Afterwards Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF) Chairman U Khun Oo delivered a message of greetings followed by screening of a video documentary on works conducted for ICT sector development.

Later e-Government Steering Committee Vice-Chairmen Union Minister U Thaung Tun and U Thant Sin Maung, MCF Chairman U Khun Oo, Huawei Co., Ltd. CEO Mr. Liman Zhang and Ease Net Co., Ltd CEO U Kyaw Moe Naing cut the ceremonial ribbon to open the e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 (Nay Pyi Taw).

Vice President U Myint Swe and attendees then posed for a commemorative group photo and visited the exhibits displayed to commemorate the e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 (Nay Pyi Taw).

Later in the afternoon the second part of the ceremony was held where talks under the titles of "Road to Digital Myanmar" and "Technology Perspectives" were conducted.

The e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 (Nay Pyi Taw) will be held until 28 November, it is learnt. — MNA

(Translated by Zaw Min)



Vice President U Myint Swe inspects the exhibition at e-Government Conference and ICT Exhibition 2018 in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

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

MNA training aircraft's wheel collapses on landing at Mawlamyine airport

THE front wheel of a Myanmar National Airlines training aircraft collapsed on touching the tarmac at the Mawlamyine Airport yesterday. Pilots and crew on board the craft escaped injury. The accident is reportedly the first of its kind at the airport.

The XY AMB took off

from the Yangon International Airport at 8:47 am and landed at the Mawlamyine Airport at 9:20 am. Five pilots and four cabin crew were on board the aircraft, said Mawlamyine Airport Manager U Hla Oo.—Mawlamyine District IPRD

(Translated by JT)



PHOTO: MAWLAMYINE DISTRICT IPRD

DFID, WWF announce \$2.4 mln investment in Myanmar to support sustainable rubber production globally

THE DaNa Facility, a UK Government Department for International Development (DFID) funded programme, and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the world's leading independent conservation organisation, yesterday announced a joint investment of over US\$2.4 million in an innovative project in rubber production in Taninthayi Region.

The project, focused on supporting environmentally, socially, and commercially sustainable rubber production in Taninthayi, Myanmar, has a long-term goal that the region, as part of the WWF initiative, provides a replicable business model in sustainable and traceable rubber.

Speaking at the launch Tom Coward, Team Leader of the Inclusive Growth and Livelihoods Unit for DFID in Myanmar, said: "It is exciting to be launching this project with WWF and to see the significant transformative potential of producing rubber sustainably in Myanmar.

With Myanmar the seventh largest rubber producer in the world, this project has huge potential to improve the livelihoods of poor farmers, while also pro-

moting the feasibility and profitability of 'zero deforestation' sustainable rubber."

The project will be implemented in partnership with Dawei Golden Land Co Ltd (DGL), established in 2017 by the Taninthayi Rubber Planters and Producers Association (TRPPA), a proactive actor in the sector determined to break the cycle of low quality and low

"Rubber production in Myanmar has caused deforestation and displaced communities from their customary land. A shift towards sustainable rubber production will ensure that there is no further deforestation, no land grabbing, and no human rights violations."

The project will work with 250 smallholder producers to increase their income by up to 30%

mar targeted to export 170,000 tons of rubber this fiscal year 2018-2019, according to Myanmar Rubber Planters and Producers Association (MRPPA).

There are over 1.63 million acres of rubber plantations across the country and 700,000 acres can produce latex. The number of production areages will increase up to 800,000 in coming season, and so we have increased the export volume, according to the MRPPA.

China constitutes 70 per cent of Myanmar's rubber export, which also goes to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, South Korea, India and Japan. Myanmar's rubber is primarily grown in Mon and Kayin states and Yangon, Bago and Taninthayi regions. About 150,000 tons of rubber were shipped to foreign markets last fiscal year.

Myanmar is the world's seventh largest producer of rubber and rubber is one of the country's biggest exports. Yet, the sector is stuck in a cycle of low yields, poor processing, low quality products, and low pricing, making Myanmar dependent on the cut-price market. —GNLM

A shift towards sustainable rubber production will ensure that there is no further deforestation, no land grabbing, and no human rights violations.

priced rubber. TRPPA have invested over \$1 million in building a new rubber factory that enables high quality rubber to be produced at a scale attractive to premium buyers. The project will also support the export of zero deforestation rubber produced through direct links to sustainable international markets.

Also speaking today Gaurav Gupta, Programme Manager from WWF Myanmar said:

through training in sustainable rubber agroforestry practices. By selling latex directly to the factory for processing, the project hopes to help an additional 2,500 smallholder producers save around 50% of their labour-production time with no loss of income.

The new sustainable rubber factory will also create another 250 new full-time jobs, 60% of which will be for women. Myan-

Authorities release six-foot-long crocodile in Mon State

OFFICIALS From the Department of Forestry and Fishries Department released a crocodile back to its habitat yesterday, two days after the reptile was seized by fishermen in the Khawza Creek in Makyi Village, Ye Township.

The six-foot long croco-

dile got caught in a fishing net on 25 November. Fishermen seized it and handed it to Ye Township's Forest Department on 26 November. The crocodile was released into the Kyaukmi Creek in Ye Township yesterday.—Township IPRD

(Translated by JT)



PHOTO: TOWNSHIP IPRD

Foreign trade reaches \$2,565 mln in October

MYANMAR'S foreign trade totalled US\$2,565 million in October this year, with exports valued at \$1,063 million and imports pegged at \$1,502 million. The value of trade increased by \$215 million from the same period last year. The value of exports rose by \$123 million and imports rose by \$92 million.

During the same period last year, the value of trade stood at \$2,350 million, with exports worth \$940 million and imports worth \$1,410 million.

The following table shows Myanmar's exports this year compared with the same period last year:

(US\$ million)

No.	Sector	2018-2019 (October)	2017-2018 (October)	Comparison (+/-)
1	Agricultural products	195.989	171.065	24.924
2	Animals products	38.484	3.733	34.751
3	Marine products	75.170	64.214	10.956
4	Mineral products	97.119	172.314	-75.195
5	Forest products	17.329	17.694	-0.365
6	Manufactured goods	533.247	421.138	112.109
7	Other products	106.166	90.793	15.373
	Total	1063.504	940.951	122.553

The following table shows Myanmar's imports this year compared with the same period last year:

(US\$ million)

No.	Sector	2018-2019 FY (October)	2017-2018 FY (October)	Comparison (+)/(-)
1	Investment Products	479.792	436.873	42.919
2	Raw Materials	651.618	631.795	19.823
3	Articles of use	370.538	341.157	29.381
	Total	1501.948	1409.825	92.123

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Myanmar-Bangladesh trade up by \$180 mln

TRADE between Myanmar and Bangladesh from April to September this year exceeded US\$240 million, a significant increase of nearly \$180 million from the same period last year, according to monthly data issued by the Ministry of Commerce.

In bilateral trade, Myanmar's exports exceed imports.

During the six-month period from April to September, Myanmar exported \$230 million worth of domestic products to Bangladesh and imported goods amounting to \$17.8 million from the South Asian country. Compared with the same period last year, the value of exports between the two countries rose by nearly \$176 million, while imports increased slightly by \$2 million.

For the same period last year, the total trade between the two countries was valued at \$63.813 million, with \$53.556 million in exports and \$10.257 million in imports.

Myanmar exports goods to Bangladesh through both maritime and land routes. The bilateral border trade is conducted

mainly through the Sittway and Maungtaw points of entry.

The products traded between the two countries include bamboos, ginger, peanuts, salt-water prawns and fish, dried plums, garlic, rice, mung beans, blankets, candy, plum jam, footwear, frozen foods, chemicals, leather, jute products, tobacco, plastics, wood, knitwear, and beverages.

The country's total trade with Bangladesh reached its peak of \$192 million in the last 2017-2018 FY. According to data from the Commerce Ministry, the bilateral border trade stood at nearly \$44 million in the FY2016-2017, \$33 million in the FY2015-2016, \$39 million in the FY2014-2015, \$75 million in the FY2013-2014, \$42 million in the FY2012-2013, and \$84 million in the FY2011-2012.

According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration, this year saw no new investments from Bangladesh. Last year, Myanmar received \$1.5 million in investments from its neighbor.—Swe Nyein ■ (Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Growers in Kyaukse get good prices for sesame



PHOTO: THET MAUNG

SESAME growers from Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Region, said they have continued to make a good profit this harvest season. This year, sesame growers were facing losses due to a poor harvest caused by bad weather. However, a growing demand has helped fetch a good price for the crop.

Sesame is mainly grown in the wet season. Growers in Kyaukse Township chiefly culti-

vate black and white sesame. At present, a basket of black sesame is fetching Ks80,000, while a basket of white sesame is fetching Ks60,000 in the domestic market, said U Soe Naing, a sesame grower from Yebawgyi Village.

The price of sesame seeds has increased this year compared from previous years, he added.

Sesame seeds, counted among profitable export products, are widely consumed not

only in Myanmar, but also in other countries. Sesame seeds are mostly used as a garnish, as an ingredient in some foods, and a snack on their own. A popular sesame product is sesame oil, which is an edible vegetable oil derived from sesame seeds. Due to its health benefits, sesame oil is also used in traditional medicine.—Thet Maung

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Gov't to implement five-year project under National Plan of Action on Nutrition

MYANMAR will implement a five-year project from 2018-2019 FY to 2022-2023 FY under the Multi-sectoral National Plan of Action on Nutrition (MS-NPAN) at a cost of Ks929 billion.

The five-year project was announced at the first meeting of the National level leading Committee on Promoting Nutrition in Myanmar and Development Assistance Coordination Unit (DACU), which was held on 26 November at the Novotel hotel in Yangon.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister for Health and Sports Dr. Myint Htwe, officials from the ministries of agriculture, livestock and irrigation; education; and social welfare, relief, and resettlement, donor organizations, UN organizations, and other social organizations

promoting nutrition.

The MS-NPAN was drawn to address the problem of malnutrition in Myanmar. Its main aim is to reduce malnutrition among mothers, children, and adolescent girls. As part of the plan, a Nutrition Sector Coordination Group was formed in January 2017 under the DACU.

The MS-NPAN covers six sectors which were chosen on the basis of discussions. Under the five-year project, funds will be allotted for four sectors - the Ministry of Health and Sports (Ks285 billion), the Ministry of Education (Ks204 billion), the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation (Ks197 billion), and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement (Ks225 billion).—Nyein Nyein. (Translated by Hay Mar)

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Office of the President

Press Release No. 25/2018

4th Waning of Tazaungmone, 1380 ME
(26 November 2018)

Additional statistical bulletin on drug seizures, acting on information

1. In order to prevent and eradicate the dangers of narcotic drugs and psychotropic drugs, the Office of the President has formed the **Drug Activity Special Complaint Department** on 26 June 2018 to systematically accept and respond to reports on drug abuses and other related cases from the general public.
2. With orders from the Office of the President, the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department relayed information on reports on drug-related offenses up to 24 November 2018 to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take action, as displayed below:

No	Nature of report	Details on seizure and legal action taken
1	Information received of sales of illegal drugs by U Kyaw Aye living in Ma Mhone Kine Village, Indawgyi Area, Mohnyin Tsp, Kachin State.	On 18-11-2018, police searched U Kyaw Aye's house Ma Mhone Kine Village, Indawgyi Area, Mohnyin Tsp. Police discovered U Kyaw Aye, 65, and Maung Tu, 57, together with opium blocks, heroin, raw opium and pink psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened with NaMaSa (Lonton) MaYa(Pa) 80/2018 under Section 16-C/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
2	Information received of sales of illegal drugs in Ahlone Ward, Monywa Tsp, Sagaing Region.	On 18-11-2018, police were patrolling on the road of Monywa-YeU, one motorcycle driven by Nyo Min Tun from Budalin Tsp to Monywa Tsp was stopped for investigation. Police discovered Nyo Min Tun, 32, together with heroin. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Monywa) MaYa(Pa) 18/2018 under Section 16-C/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Further investigation led to the search at Phoe Lyune's house. Police arrested Phoe Lyune, 41, together with heroin. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Monywa) MaYa(Pa) 19/2018 under Section 16-C of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
3	Information received of Aung Nge from Yengangyi Village, Bokpyin Tsp, Taninthayi Region, selling illegal drugs.	On 24-11-2018, police searched Aung Nge's house in Yengangyi Village, Bokpyin Tsp. Police didn't find him but police discovered his wife, Ma Le Le Win, 43, together with WY psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened against two suspects with MaMaSa (Bokpyin) MaYa(Pa) 42/2018 under Section 19-A/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Further investigation led to the search at Than Pe's house in Yengangyi Village. Police arrested Than Pe, 57, together with WY psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Bokpyin) MaYa(Pa) 43/2018 under Section 19-A/20-A of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
4	Information received of selling illegal drugs to Night Clubs, EDM shows, Fashion events and Miss Universe shows in Mandalay Tsp, Mandalay Region selling illegal drugs.	On 23-11-2018, police searched at Room 205 of Hotel Apex in 35 th Street, between 58 th and 59 th street, where EDM show organizers sojourned then police found Thuta Thantzin (a) Dj Funkey, 20, together with Ecstasy. A case has been opened with NaMaSa(3) (Chanayethazan) MaYa(Pa) 13/2018 under Section 16-C of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
5	Information received of Kalar and his wife, Yupar (a) Kafe from Sintngu Ward, Insein Tsp, Yangon Region selling illegal drugs.	On 24-11-2018, police searched Kalar's house Police didn't find him but police discovered his wife, Ei Nandar Phyo (a) Yupar (a) Kafe, 27, together with WY psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Insein) MaYa (Pa) 164/2018 under Section 19-A/20-A/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
6	Information received of selling illegal drugs on hill in Group (10), Ward 4, Kutkai Tsp, Shan State (North).	So far 24 cases have been opened as of last weeks, 21 men and three women have been arrested with heroin and stimulant tablets. On 18-11-2018, police were patrolling in Ward 4, Kutkai Tsp, Sai Lauk Kham, 35, from Mawhit Village, Narwine Village-tract, was arrested with heroin. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Kutkai) MaYa (Pa) 130/2018 under Section 19-A of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

7	Information received of Myint Oo from Ward 2, Nyaungpintha Village, Yaksawk Tsp, Shan State selling illegal drugs.	On 18-11-2018, police searched Myint Oo's house in Ward 2, Nyaungpintha Village, Yaksawk Tsp. Police discovered Myint Oo, 48, together with WY psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened with MaMaSa (Yaksawk) MaYa(Pa) 55/2018 under Section 16-C of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
8	Information received of Daw Aye Nyunt from Myo Kone Ward, Yaksawk Tsp, Shan State selling illegal drugs.	On 20-11-2018, police searched Daw Aye Nyunt's house in Myo Kone Ward, Yaksawk Tsp. Police discovered her nephew, Aung Htet Naing (a) Gugu, 16, together with WY psychotropic tablets. A case has been opened against two suspects with MaMaSa (Yaksawk) MaYa(Pa) 57/2018 under Section 19-A/20-A/21 of the Anti-Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

3. Out of the information sent to the Ministry of Home Affairs, so far 399 cases have been opened as of 24-11-2018, and 518 men and 98 women have been arrested with seizures of 5,430.36 g of heroin, 25.01 g of ICE, 38,459.41 g of opium, 329.6 g of low-quality opium, 12,263.28 g of opium powder, 7,273.99 g of speciosa, 179,938 stimulant tablets, 3,696.03 g of marijuana, 0.1 liters of opium tincture, 227.4 g of opium blocks, 60 g of poppy seeds, 1.65 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 0.001g of crushed Ecstasy, 12 firearms, 194 different bullets, and one grenade. Efforts for fighting the drug trafficking has been stepped up and the ministry will report on further exposed cases.
4. In addition to the investigations and arrests conducted on drug related complaints mentioned above, the Tatmadaw and Myanmar Police Force have also carried out separate investigations on drug complaints, search and arrests at border gates, and searches of vehicles acting upon given information.
During the previous week, multiple arrests were made in the border regions and joint-surveillance gates. In Yanpu Ward, Myitkyina Tsp, Kachin State, two men were arrested with 1,800 stimulant tablets. In Loilinkan Village, Namhkam Tsp, Shan State, on the road of Monewi-Namhkam, one motorcycle was stopped for investigation then one man was arrested with 3,000 stimulant tablets, 77 g of heroin and one motorcycle. In Aung Myinttar Ward, Namhkam Tsp, one man was arrested with 3,600 stimulant tablets. In Ward 5, Karli Sub-tsp, Kunhing Tsp, six men were arrested with 2,606 stimulant tablets, 58 g of heroin and three motorcycles. Further investigation led to the arrest of another man with 6,570 stimulant tablets and 110 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder. In Tawann (2) Village, Kengtung Tsp, on the road to the village, one man was arrested with 10,000 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle. In Hsipaw Tsp, Konemone Village, six men were arrested with 12,184 stimulant tablets, 34.136 g of heroin and 16 g of raw opium. Further investigation led to the search at a house in Kaunghine Village, the suspect ran away and escaped then police discovered 142.72 g of heroin and 1,800 stimulant tablets. In Khamnar Village, Mongkai Tsp, on the road of Mongkai-Laikha, a Wish car was stopped investigation then one man was arrested with 251.9 g of heroin, 190 stimulant tablets, and one car.
Near Nantsho Creek, Ward 12, Lashio Tsp, two men were arrested with 1,509 stimulant tablets. Near Nanchin (North Village), Pinlaung Tsp, one man was arrested with 1,760 stimulant tablets. In Hangan Village, Ye Tsp, Mon State, one man was arrested with 24,800 g of speciosa and one liter of opium tincture. At toll gate of Yogo Village, Mawlamyine Tsp, a DYNA car was stopped for investigation then one man was arrested with 12,500 g of speciosa and one car.
In Sittway Tsp, Rakhine State, a Kluger car in landing craft shipped Yaychanpyin Port to Angumaw Village, Yathedaung Tsp was searched for investigation then one man was arrested with 620,000 stimulant tablets and one car. In Setyonesu Ward, one woman was arrested with 100 stimulant tablets. Ywarthintkay (5) Ward, Maungtaw Tsp, two men were arrested with 115 stimulant tablets. In Kyatyoepeyin Village, one man was arrested with 9,000 stimulant tablets. Further investigation led to the seizure of 35,000 stimulant tablets in the convict's house. In Zeepinchaung

Village (North), while securities were searching area, three men ran away. When securities went and checked the surrounding, one bag with 69,740 stimulant tablets was found in the bush. In Aungba Model Village, Kawthoung Tsp, Taninthayi Region, one man was arrested with 1,130 stimulant tablets and 40 g of powder of speciosa. In Kantaw Village, Bokpyin Tsp, four men were arrested with 1,603 stimulant tablets. Between Tariban Village and Boamkam Village, Tamu Tsp, on the road of Tamu-Kalay, one motorcycle was stopped for investigation then one man was arrested with 950 stimulant tablets and one motorcycle. In Kyawinn Village, Katha Tsp, one man was arrested with 1,600 stimulant tablets and 92 g of heroin. In Yinmapin Village, Thazi Tsp, Mandalay Region, on the road of Taunggyi-Meiktila, one Mark-X car was stopped for investigation then three men were arrested with 10,026 stimulant tablets and one car. At 16 Mile Checkpoint, two men were arrested with 50,000 stimulant tablets from an Express car driven from Lashio to Yangon. In Haymamarla Taung Ward, Mahaaungmye Tsp, one man was arrested with 29 stimulant tablets, 13 tablets of Ecstasy. In Linlune Taung Ward, Sangyoung Tsp, Yangon Region, one man was arrested with three tablets of Ecstasy. In Ward 10, Hline Tsp, on the road of Damayone, a stopped Probox car was searched then two men from the car were arrested with one stimulant tablets, 0.02 g of heroin, three bottles of Diazepam injection and one car.

There have been 200 cases being opened between 18-11-2018 and 24-11-2018, and 256 men and 29 women have been arrested. Seizures were made of 1,125.89 g of heroin, 67.75 g of ICE, 706 g of opium, 16131.2 g of speciosa powder, 45,425 g of speciosa, 859,411 stimulant tablets, 176 g of crushed stimulant tablet powder, 151.58 g of marijuana, 20 g of opium blocks, one liter of opium tincture, 16 tablets of Ecstasy and three bottles of Diazepam injection.

5. To seize further drugs and to arrest drugs dealers, people are urged to inform the Ministry of Home Affairs, region and state governments and to inform huge cases of drug trafficking and other suspicious cases directly to the Drug Activity Special Complaint Department of the Office of the President via following contact numbers:

Contacts

Auto telephone No. — 067-590200
Fax Phone No. — 067-590233
Email Address — antinarcotics@presidentoffice.gov.mm

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives PRC NPC Ethnic Affairs Committee Vice Chairman



Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein holds talks with Mr. Tondrub Wangben in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

PYITHU Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein received People's Republic of China (PRC) National People's Congress (NPC) Ethnic Affairs Committee Vice Chairman Mr. Tondrub Wangben and party at Hluttaw building in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

The meeting was attended by Pyithu Hluttaw Ethnic Affairs and Internal Peace Implementation Committee Chairman U Khun Maung Thaug, Secretary U Inn Hton Khar Naw Sam and officials from Pyithu Hluttaw Office.

At the meeting, Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein first said that China-Myanmar paukphaw relation will be raised to that of all round strategic partner relationship. China's help and assistance to Myanmar on internal peace and ethnic national unity works are much appreciated as internal peace and unity is very important for a country's development. The Government and Hluttaw had enacted laws to protect the rights of the ethnic

nationals and an ethnic affairs ministry was established to implement and maintain equality, culture and traditions of ethnic nationals. Similarly, if China support and assist Myanmar's works for internal peace, national reconciliation and establishment of a federal democracy system, the works of internal peace and unity of ethnic nationals sector will be quick and effective, said the deputy Speaker.

In return PRC NPC Ethnic Affairs Committee Vice Chairman said China and Myanmar are quite similar in political history because both had many ethnic nationals living together. Stability and unity is crucial for a country's development and thus China had placed much emphasis on ethnic national rights, equality and cultural traditions. As Myanmar is striving for the rights of ethnic nationals and unity to achieve peace, China will share its experience and provide assistance said the Vice Chairman. —MNA
(Translated by Thandar Aung)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee holds meeting



Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Tun Tun Hein addresses the meeting of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee in Nay Pyi Taw. **PHOTO: MNA**

THE Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Joint Bill Committee held a meeting over an amendment bill to Sea Customs Act and Tax Management Bill, sent by Union Government at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Building D, second floor meeting hall yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker, Joint Bill Commit-

tee and Joint Public Accounts Committee Chairman U Tun Aung @ U Tun Tun Hein, deputy chairmen, secretaries, joint secretary and committee members from Joint Bill Committee and Joint Public Accounts Committee, Banks and Financial Development Committee Chairman and Secretary, Hluttaw representatives who had discussed

the two bills at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw's Legal Affairs and Special Cases Assessment Commission members, officials from Ministry of Finance and Planning, Union Attorney General Office and Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Office. —MNA

(Translated by Thandar Aung)

Second Amyotha Hluttaw's tenth regular session...

FROM PAGE-2

Naw Hla Hla Soe of Yangon Region constituency 10 asked the government about the status of the Prevention and Protection of Violence against Women Bill. U Soe Aung replied that the process of drafting the bill has been on since 2014, and a bill committee, leading committee, technical advisory committee, and work committee have been formed for the purpose of drafting the bill. The bill has been sent to the Union Attorney General's

Office, and the government is cooperating with relevant departments and organizations to enact it into law in 2019, he added. Afterwards, Bill Committee member Brig-Gen Tint Lwin read out the Consumer Protection Bill sent by the Pyithu Hluttaw with amendments.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker asked Hluttaw representatives who want to discuss the motion to register their names.

The Hluttaw also conducted

a discussion on the bill amending the Settlement of Labour Disputes Law, for the second time, sent by Amyotha Hluttaw with approval. Daw Ei Ei Pyone of Ayeyawady Region constituency 8 and Dr. Khin Ma Gyi of Kachin State constituency 8 participated in the discussion.

The Amyotha Hluttaw Speaker concluded the meeting, with an announcement for further discussions on the bill on 28 November: — Mawsi (MNA)
(Translated by Win Ko Ko Aung)

Awakening national pride through sports

MORE than 2,000 athletes from 11 countries will compete in the 19th ASEAN University Games in Myanmar from 10 to 19 December this year.

The athletes will come here in pursuit of their own dreams and the chance to represent their respective countries. For the spectators and supporters from participating countries, the games will be a chance to cheer for their country men and women.

For the athletes themselves, national pride will be a powerful motivator.

While the ASEAN University Games aim to promote friendship between youths of member countries, produce outstanding athletes, and create opportunities for cultural exchange among ASEAN university students through sports, they also serve to stoke national pride.

Today, sports is considered an effective diplomatic channel and success in games can help add to a country's image and dignity.

Therefore, the committees and sub-committees in charge of hosting the games and athletes must work to ensure a peaceful competition and promote the image and dignity of the host country.

We hope that by competing in the 19th ASEAN University Games, our athletes will bring international

attention to the plight of our people, our dreams, our dignity, and our hospitality.

Athletes understand that how they conduct themselves at the games will reflect on their country.

Therefore, participating in the games is a great way and a good chance for them to show respect for their country.

Success in sports is a matter of pride for any nation. Therefore, our committees are making preparations so teams can participate in all games and win the games fairly. The AUG have been held every two years since 1981. Myanmar participated in the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th games.

For athletes from 11 ASEAN countries, the best they can do is to do their best at the games as the eyes of their nations will be upon them.

Let the ASEAN University Games foster unity and friendship among the 11 participating nations.



El Niño: 75-80% chance of extreme weather phenomenon in next three months, World Meteorological Organisation warns

UN agency predicts incoming event that has previously been linked to droughts, flooding and coral die-offs

By World Meteorological Organization

THERE is a 75-80% chance of an El Niño developing by February 2019, although it is not expected to be a strong event, according to the latest update from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Sea surface temperatures are already at weak El Niño levels in part of the tropical Pacific, although the corresponding atmospheric patterns have not yet materialized.

WMO accompanied the El Niño Update with a global seasonal climate update, which indicated that precipitation patterns predicted for December-February resemble those normally associated with El Niño. In some regions the precipitation response has been weak, however, or not in keeping with those typically associated with El Niño.

The El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a naturally occurring phenomenon involving fluctuations of ocean surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, coupled with changes in the overlying atmospheric circulation. It has a major influence on weather and climate patterns over many parts of the world.

Sea surface temperatures in the east-central tropical Pacific have been at weak El Niño levels since October 2018. However, the atmosphere has not yet responded to this additional warmth, and the upper



PHOTO: GNLM

level winds, cloud and sea level pressure patterns do not yet reflect typical El Niño features.

Model forecasts suggest that this will change within the coming month or two. The chance of a full-fledged El Niño between December 2018 - February 2019 is estimated to be about 75-80%, and about 60% for it to continue through February-April 2019. Model predictions of the strength of the El Niño range from just a warm-neutral condition through

to a moderate strength El Niño event, with sea surface temperatures peaking at approximately 0.8 to 1.2 degrees Celsius above average.

The chance for a strong event (sea surface temperatures in the east-central tropical Pacific rising to at least 1.5 degrees Celsius above average) is currently low.

"The forecast El Niño is not expected to be as powerful as the event in 2015-2016, which was linked with droughts, flooding and coral bleaching in different parts of the world.

Even so, it can still significantly affect rainfall and temperature patterns in many regions, with important consequences to agricultural and food security sectors, and for management of water resources and public health, and it may combine with long-term climate change to boost 2019 global temperatures," said Maxx Dilley, director of WMO's Climate Prediction and Adaptation branch.

Scientific progress on the

mate update for December 2018 through February 2019 is based on an ensemble of global prediction models run by WMO-accredited centres around the world. It is currently in a trial phase.

A tilt of the odds towards above-normal surface-air temperature is forecast in most of Asia, Europe, North America, the Caribbean, Africa, Australia, the Indonesian archipelago, and South America. Exceptions include portions of mainly southern South America, much of southeastern North America, parts of northwestern Europe and part of south-central Asia. Most of the regions with above-normal tendencies also saw above-normal temperatures during August-October 2018.

An enhanced probability of below-normal precipitation is predicted in the Caribbean, central America, part of northern South America, the offshore islands of southeast Asia, the southern part of the Indonesian archipelago, some south Pacific islands, portions of southwest Africa and eastern equatorial Africa, subtropical southwest coastal South America and southern South America.

Above-normal precipitation is favoured in part of southern North America, part of southwest South America, part of northwest North America, central and northern Asia, part of southwest Asia, part of the eastern Maritime Continent, and part of Europe. Near-normal precipitation is favoured in parts of interior northern tropical Africa.

These global forecasts provide predictions of large-scale patterns, which need to be further calibrated and optimized to derive regional and national scale forecasts. WMO Regional Climate Centres, Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOFs) and National Meteorological and Hydrological Services carry out these tasks to provide more detailed outlooks.

"The forecast El Niño is not expected to be as powerful as the event in 2015-2016, which was linked with droughts, flooding and coral bleaching in different parts of the world.

understanding and modelling of ENSO, underpinned by major observational programmes and coordinated research initiatives, has improved operational monitoring and prediction capabilities, helping society to prepare for associated hazards such as heavy rains, floods and drought.

WMO's update is based on forecast models and expert interpretation from around the world. It is used by planners within the United Nations sys-

tem, and complements information issued by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and WMO Regional Climate Centres as a source of information for country-level decision-making by disaster managers, for planning in climate-sensitive sectors, and by governments.

Global seasonal climate update
WMO's global seasonal cli-



Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued on Tuesday 27 November 2018)

SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECORDED AT 09:30 hrs MST: During the past (24) hours, rain or thundershowers has been isolated in Mon State. Weather has been partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region, Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Kayin states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below November average temperature in Yangon Region, (Eastern and Northern)Shan and Rakhine states, (2°C) below November average temperatures in Sagaing, Magway and Ayeyawady regions and about November average temperature in the remaining regions and states. The significant night temperatures were (0°C) in Haka, (4°C) each in Heho and Ramthlo, (5°C) in Hsipaw, (6°C) in Tiddim and (8°C) each in Putao, Naungcho, Lolain, Matupi and Mogok.

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy over the Southwest Bay and generally fair over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL MORNING OF 28 November 2018: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Taninthayi Region and Mon State. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Southern Shan, Kayah and Kayin states and generally fair in the remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (3-5) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Taninthayi Region.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 November 2018: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 November 2018: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 28 November 2018: Generally fair weather.

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

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing offers “Soon” to Lao Buddhist delegation

SENIOR General Min Aung Hlaing offered soon “a day meal” to a Laotian Buddhist delegation led by Venerable Bounma Simmaphon at the Aureum Palace Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the invitation of Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing during his visit to Laos, the delegation of the Laotian Buddhist monks is paying a visit to Myanmar from 26 to 30 November to promote Buddhism and friendship between Laos and Myanmar.

At the luncheon, Venerable Bounma Simmaphon expressed delight for inviting the Members of the Sangha from Laos, pledging to promote the Sasana and promoting friendship between the peoples of the two countries.

Venerable Bounma Simmaphon presented Buddha images

to the Commander-in-Chief and wife as Dhamma gifts.

Mr. Chanthavong Seneamatmontry, Deputy Chief of Lao Front for National Construction and member of the delegation, and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing exchanged gifts.

The Laotian delegation met with the Chairman and members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee in Yangon on 26th November.

The visiting Buddhist delegation visited Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon in the morning and visited the Uppatathati Pagoda in Nay Pyi Taw in the evening.

They will visit Bagan, Mandalay and Kengtung during their visit, according to the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services. — MNA

(Translation by Myat Thandar Aung)



Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presents gifts to Venerable Bounma Simmaphon. PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE DEFENCE SERVICE



Representatives from ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) hold a meeting with officials. PHOTO: MNA

Representatives from ASEAN Secretariat and AHA Centre to help in receiving returnees

33rd ASEAN Summit held in Singapore from 11 to 15 November decided and approved ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) to assess and evaluate requirements and work together and help in receiving returnees who were displaced from Rakhine State.

As per the decision, representatives of ASEAN Secretariat Dr. Sithu Pe Thein and Ms. Annisa Nurul Wahidah, AHA Centre representatives Mr. Armel Capili and Mr. Janggam Adhityawarma arrived Myanmar on 23 November and met with Disaster Management Department Director General and officials.

On 23, 24 and 25 November preliminary coordination meeting with personnel from Disaster Management Department was held and discussed about representatives from ASEAN Secretariat and AHA Centre observing the returnees receiving works, provide necessary cooperation and help and evaluate requirements.

From 27 to 30 November two representatives from ASEAN Secretariat accompanied by officials from Disaster Management Department will conduct a preliminary study visit to reception centres in Rakhine State Maung-taw town. — MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Min)

Local, foreign media group gather news on stability, preparedness of Maungtaw District

A MEDIA TEAM comprised of journalists from eight domestic and foreign media agencies travelled from Sittway to A Ngu Maw port in Yathedaung Township, Rakhine State yesterday. From there they travelled to Indin Village and observed the education, healthcare and businesses operating normally.

The media group asked the local people about their experiences during the terrorist attacks, the current state of stability in the area and the village's socio-economic status. The media group also interviewed Maung-taw District Administrator U Soe Aung who explained about the ARSA terrorist group's attacks, the stability and rule of law in the district, repatriation of returnees and rehabilitation in the district.

U Soe Aung said Myanmar's side has been ready for accepting returnees since 23 January this year. He said no returnee came back on 15 November, the day agreed by both Myanmar and Bangladesh to repatriate returnees. He said Bangladesh did not notify the reason no returnees came back.

He said they would first review the returnees with the list sent by Bangladesh and then issue the National Verification Cards, perform medical examinations and send them to Hla Phoe Khaung Reception Centre for temporary accommodations.

He said the returnees will be provided with rice, cooking oil, lentils, salt and a daily wage of Ks1,000. He said the returnees will be provided with the materials to rebuild their houses in their village of origin and they will be reimbursed with the local daily wages for their participation in the construction process.

The media group then travelled to Hla Phoe Khaung Reception Centre and observed the housings for returnees, wells, toilets, medical centers, playgrounds for children, women's lodgings, the assembled board houses donated by China, and temporary classrooms.

The media group interviewed the centre's director, U Soe Shwe Aung, and asked about the centre's readiness for repatriation and accommodating re-

turnees.

The media group travelled to Shwe Zar Village in the evening and observed the Rakhine, Hindu and Muslim communities peacefully coexisting and the village's social, economic and education processes.

Local and foreign media agencies have been sent to Rakhine State to gather news 6 times during the emergency period, once with arrangements from the Ministry of Defence, 6 times from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once from the Union government, once from the Myanmar Press Council, and 14 times on the advice of the Committee for Implementation of Recommendations on Rakhine State, which recommended two media trips a month to Rakhine State. — MNA (Translated by Zaw Htet Oo) ■



Local and foreign media visit Hla Phoe Khaung Reception Centre in Maungtaw Township. PHOTO: MNA

Trainees of CSO visit UEC office in Nay Pyi Taw

A DELEGATION from the civil society organization-NEI based in Mon State visited the Union Election Commission in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

At the meeting with 54 trainees and nine staff of NEI, UEC Chairman U Hla Thein explained the responsibility of the commission, expressed the UEC's commitment to holding a free and fair election in 2020.

Elections are the basic foundation of a democratic country where the Hluttaw representatives for the administrative, legislative and judiciary sectors are

elected according to the people's wish. As such, the work process are being conducted fairly and transparently with basic five norms. Everyone related to the election needs to carry out his/her work dutifully and truthfully, said the UEC chairman.

Each level of the election sub-commission is responsible for conducting the election work process according to the assigned duties and responsibilities.

The commission is carrying out its duties dividing the election processes into three periods: pre election period, election period



Union Election Commission Chairman U Hla Thein meeting with trainees of NEI civil service organization at the UEC Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

and post election period. The trainees need to have required capacity as they would have to contribute their works to the

country in the future, said U Hla Thein. The trainees also raised questions at the meeting.

The meeting came to

an end with concluding remarks by the UEC Chairman. —MNA ■ (Translated by Myat Thandar Aung)

Myanmar Investment Commission's work in September and October 2018

MYANMAR Investment Commission is permitting local and foreign investments, according to Myanmar Investment Law.

Myanmar Investment Commission had permitted in September 2018 total foreign investment, including increased investment, valued at US\$455.429 million, and

in October 2018 total foreign investment, including increased investment, valued at US\$37.492 million.

Foreign investments permitted during September and October of 2018 are as follows:

Sr.	Sector	September		November	
		No. of investments	Capital US\$ million	No. of investments	Capital US\$ million
1	Transportation and communications sector	1	44.110		
2	Industrial sector	13	210.034	4	13.567
3	Electricity sector	1	92.680		
4	Housing and building construction sector	1	84.800		
5	Animal husbandry and fishery sector	1	14.567	1	3.182
6	Other service sector	3	9.238	2	10.340
7	Agricultural sector		-	1	0.199
8	Oil and natural gas sector		-		10.204
Total		20	455.429	8	37.492

*Increase in the investment was included in the investment amount.

Myanmar Investment Commission had permitted in September 2018 a total Myanmar national investment totals Ks 98,929.457 million and in October 2018 a total Myanmar national investment totals Ks 42,189.624 million. Myanmar national investments permitted during September and October 2018 are as follow.

Sr.	Sector	September		October	
		No. of investments	Capital Kyat million	No. of investments	Capital Kyat million
1	Transportation and communications sector	1	5,000.000		
2	Industrial sector	5	8,226.105	7	7,916.943
3	Hotel and tourism sector	4	13,040.000	6	21,687.481
4	Electricity sector	1	9,569.310		
5	Other service sector	20	63,094.042	5	12,585.200
Total		31	98,929.457	18	42,189.624

*Increase in the investment was included in the investment amount.

Increased number of jobs created by foreign investment during September and October of 2018 are as follow.

Sr.	Sector	No. of jobs created for local workers	
		September	October
1	Animal husbandry and fishery sector	142	16
2	Industrial sector	7,213	3,264
3	Electricity sector	36	
4	Transport and communications sector	148	

5	Oil and natural gas sector		102
6	Housing and building construction sector	135	
7	Agricultural sector		111
8	Other service sector	122	73
Total		7,796	3,566

Increased number of jobs created by Myanmar Nationals investment during September and October of 2018 are as follow.

Sr.	Sector	No. of jobs created for local workers	
		September	October
1	Electricity sector	20	
2	Industrial sector	879	791
3	Hotel and tourism sector	285	308
4	Transport and communications sector	89	
5	Other service sector	669	400
Total		1,942	1,499

External trade tops \$4 bln, trade deficit stands at \$530 mln

MYANMAR'S external trade between 1 October and 16 November this year totalled US\$4.257 billion, up by over \$647 million compared with the same period in the last 2017-2018 Fiscal Year, the Ministry of Commerce reported on Monday.

Over the first 47 days of the present 2018-2019 FY, Myanmar exported \$1.864 billion worth of goods to other countries, while the value of its imports stood at almost \$2.4 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of nearly \$530 million. The trade deficit has declined by over \$180 million from the same period last year, when Myanmar recorded a deficit of \$712 million.

Myanmar conducts foreign trade principally by sea. Between 1 October and 16 November, the country's interna-

tional trade by sea amounted to \$3.183 billion, while its external border trade was valued at \$1.074 billion. When compared with the same time last year, the country's non-border trade rose by over \$400 million, while border trade increased by over \$200 million.

Myanmar exports seven main groups of commodities, consisting of agricultural, forest, marine and animal products, minerals, manufactured products and other miscellaneous items. It usually imports three major categories of commodities, covering capital goods, intermediate products, and consumer goods. —Khine Khant

(Translated by Khaing Thanda Lwin)

Korean wrestling added to UNESCO's intangible heritage list

SEOUL — Traditional Korean wrestling was recognized Monday as an “intangible cultural heritage of humanity” by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, after being jointly nominated by North and South Korea for listing.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in hailed the decision made by UNESCO'S Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in Mauritius, saying, “This is the first time that the South and the North have listed an intangible cultural heritage together.”

“As such, it will be much easier to spread the originality of Korean traditional culture worldwide if the South and the North work together,” he added.

The two Koreas separately nominated the sport — known

as “ssireum” in the South and “ssirum” in the North — for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016 and 2017, respectively.

The two bids were combined into one after a historic inter-Korean summit in April.

Unlike martial arts involving kicking or striking, Korean wrestling involves two opponents gripping each other by waist belts and deploying various techniques to send each other to the ground within a circular, sand-covered ring.

According to South Korea's nomination form, “The great attraction of ssireum lies in the thrill of the diverse actions — grappling, pushing, throwing, and turning — that all take place within a split second.”

“When a smaller player

throws a much larger competitor, evoking a ‘David and Goliath’ event, the excitement of the audience is redoubled,” it says.

The winner of the final game is typically awarded an ox, symbolizing agricultural abundance, and parades around the neighborhood riding the animal in celebration.

Ssireum is enjoyed by all Korea people regardless of differences in social status, region, gender, or age, and serves “as a symbol of Korean traditional sports and of Korean cultural identity,” it says.

The UNESCO committee also recognized that the sport has the social function “enhancing community solidarity and collaboration,” while also offering “a means of improving mental and physical health.”

—Kyodo News ■



Spectators cheer for the winner of the open category at North Korea's national ssireum wrestling championships in Pyongyang on 17 September, 2015. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Cafe opens with robot waiters remotely controlled by disabled people

TOKYO — A cafe featuring robot waiters remotely controlled from home by people with severe physical disabilities opened Monday in Tokyo's Minato Ward.

Five robots, 1.2 metres tall, controlled by disabled people with conditions such as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a form of motor neuron disease, took orders and served food at the cafe that opened on a trial basis.

The cafe, which will be open until 7 December, deploys OriHime-D robots that transmit

video footage and audio via the internet, allowing their controllers to direct them from home via tablets or computers.

“(The robots) enable physical work and social participation,” Kentaro Yoshifuji, CEO of Ory Lab Inc., the developer of the robot and one of the three organizers of the cafe, said at a press conference.

Ten people will work shifts for 1,000 yen (\$8.8) per hour.

The three entities, including the Nippon Foundation

and ANA Holdings Inc., aim to launch a permanent cafe by the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

The organizers said Monday they have also formed a partnership to further promote employment assistance for disabled people by utilizing remotely controlled robots.

“(Avatar robots) have potential...for transportation and communication,” ANA Holdings chairman Shinichiro Ito said. —Kyodo News ■



OriHime-D humanoid robots remotely controlled from home by workers with severe physical disabilities serve customers at a cafe set up in Tokyo on 26 November 2018. The cafe runs through 7 December on a trial basis. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Stage set for fresh Australia election in May

SYDNEY — Australia is set for a May election showdown after the prime minister Tuesday announced a budget date in the new year and his weakened liberal party staggers on following another defection.

Scott Morrison announced a new national spending plan for 2 April, promised a fiscal surplus and hailed his party's custodianship of a booming economy in remarks effectively firing the starter's gun for the 2019 election campaign.

Parliamentary budget rules and constitutional provisions about the length of campaigns mean the election will now almost certainly take place in early to mid-May. On Tuesday, Liberal MP Julia Banks — who had earlier complained of party bullying and is an ally of ousted former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull — delivered Morrison a hammer blow, quitting the party to become an independent.

The defection put the ruling conservative Liberal Party two members short of a parliamentary majority.

With his government in the minority and his party riven by divisions between moderates and the hard right, the prime minister faces an uphill struggle to keep his job. A weekend parliamentary election in Victoria — the state that encompasses Melbourne — saw the Liberal Party vote shrink

to historically low levels.

This, just weeks after the party lost a Federal parliamentary by-election in a Sydney suburb that has been solidly Liberal since the constituency was created at the founding of the country.

Morrison has struggled to keep his party together since Liberal ideological firebrands ousted centrist leader Malcolm Turnbull as prime minister last August.

Since then, persistent backbiting and stinging electoral defeats have created the sense of a government in disarray, even as Morrison has tried to take the fight to the opposition Labour Party. Banks cited Turnbull's removal as the catalyst for her decision to become an independent.

“Led by members of the reactionary right wing, the coup was aided by many MPs trading their vote for a leadership change in exchange for their individual promotion, preselection endorsements or silence,” she told parliament.

She accused both the Liberal and Labour parties of being focused on “political point scoring” rather than “timely, practical, sensible decisions on matters which Australians care about”.

With each defection the odds of Morrison being ousted in a vote of no confidence increase.

Meanwhile recriminations within the Liberal Party continued behind closed doors.—AFP ■

New Zealand rescuers save six stranded whales

WELLINGTON (New Zealand) — Six beached whales were successfully refloated off New Zealand Tuesday, rescuers said, after a spate of mass strandings in recent days that resulted in the deaths of dozens of marine mammals.

Wildlife rangers and volunteers used pontoons to float the killer pygmy whales — part of a group of 12 found beached in the country's far north on Sunday — and take them about 400 metres (437 yards) offshore.

"We are hopeful that the six whales that have been refloated will remain at sea," the Department of Conservation (DOC) department said in a statement, adding that another two whales were euthanised after continually restranding.

Two of the pod were already dead, and two



This handout photo taken and released on 26 November, 2018 from the New Zealand Department of Conservation shows dead pilot whales on a remote beach on Stewart Island in the far south of New Zealand. Up to 145 pilot whales have died in a mass stranding on a remote part of a small New Zealand island, authorities said on 26 November.

PHOTO: AFP

more died after being found by rescuers on the North Island's west coast, with the remaining eight transported by truck to the east coast on Monday, where sea conditions were calmer.

The survival of even

part of the pod was a rare success for DOC as it struggled to deal with four separate strandings in quick succession, including a sperm whale and a pygmy sperm whale in separate incidents on the North Island coast.

By far the largest was when up to 145 pilot whales were found late Saturday washed up on Stewart Island, 30 kilometres (19 miles) off the southern coast of the South Island.

Half the animals were already dead and the rest

were put down because there was no chance of rescuing them from the remote location

US travel blogger Liz Carlson was among a group of hikers on Stewart Island that found the whales and she described her frustration at being unable to help the huge sea creatures.

"When we realised the horror of what we were seeing, we dropped everything and ran straight into the water," she posted on social media. "Desperately we grabbed their tails

and pushed and yelled, before we got hammered by them thrashing around.

"It was useless — they were so big and heavy and the realisation we could do nothing to save them was the worst feeling I've ever experienced."

The reason whales and dolphins strand is not fully understood but factors can include sickness, navigational error, geographical features, the presence of predators, and extreme weather.

—AFP ■

Receding Malawi lake lays bare cost of climate change

ZOMBA (Malawi) — Just four months ago, the fishing harbour at Kachulu on the western shores of Lake Chilwa in Malawi was bustling with fishermen and traders haggling over the catch of the day.

Today hundreds of fishing boats sit marooned on cracked, dry mud as vultures fly above

the shores of the once productive fishing zone 30 kilometres (19 miles) east of the southern African country's old capital Zomba.

Julius Nkhata, a local villager, says the increasingly dramatic seasonal dry-out of the lake — blamed by experts on man-made climate change — has dis-

placed local people and increased joblessness.

"Some of them have relocated to Lake Malawi while others have taken up temporary labour jobs in the rice schemes around here," he told AFP.

Chilwa, the country's second largest lake after Malawi, is shallow and saline and particularly

prone to seasonal variations in water level and was last so dry during a drought in 1991.

It is home to two inhabited islands and also sustains nearly 200 water-bird species.

Environmental scientist professor Sosten-Chiotha, who has studied the lake for 27 years, estimates it is now 60 per cent dry.

"Records show the lake has dried completely several times in the last 100 years... according to published literature, it was a cycle of 20 to 25 years," he said.

But Chiotha warns that rhythm has changed.

"From the 1990s, the frequency of the drying has increased and this is connected to the impacts of extreme weather events typical of climate change," he said.

One-and-a-half million people live in the areas on the Lake Chilwa basin, which is one of the most densely populated areas in southern Africa.—AFP ■



This file photo taken on 19 October, 2018 shows a young Malawian man standing among stationary engineless boats which lie idle at the dried inland Lake Chilwa's Chisi Island harbour in Zomba District, eastern Malawi, on 18 October, 2018. PHOTO: AFP

The Asahi Shimbun Japanese Leading Newspaper requirement: fluency in english, under 35 years old content of the contract will be consulted work: interpret, translate, arrange interviews 09780640884

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (003 N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V ISEACO GENESIS VOY. NO. (003 N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-11-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA LINES
Phone No: 2301185

CLAIM'S DAY NOTICE

M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1845-1846)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V MCC SHANGHAI VOY. NO. (1845-1846) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 28-11-2018 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T./T.M.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 MCC TRANSPORT (S'PORE) PTE LTD
Phone No: 2301185

In the #MeToo era, theologians publish 'Women's Bible'

GENEVA (Switzerland) — Tired of seeing their holy texts used to justify the subjugation of women, a group of feminist theologians from across the Protestant-Catholic divide have joined forces to draft "A Women's Bible".

As the #MeToo movement continues to expose sexual abuse across cultures and industries, some scholars of Christianity are clamouring for a reckoning with biblical interpretations they say have entrenched negative images of women.

The women we know from translations and interpretations of Bible texts are servants, prostitutes or saints, seen dancing for a king or kneeling to kiss Jesus' feet.

But while many feminists have called for The Bible, Christianity and religion altogether to be cast aside, an eclectic group of theologians instead insists that if interpreted properly, the Good Book can be a tool for promoting women's emancipation.

'Feminist values'

"Feminist values and reading the Bible are not incompatible," insisted Lauriane Savoy, one of two Geneva theology professors behind the push to draft "Une Bible des Femmes" ("A Women's Bible"), which was published in October.

The professor at the Theology Faculty in Geneva, which was established by the father of Calvinism himself in 1559, said the idea for the work came after she and her colleague Elisabeth Parmentier noticed how little most people knew or understood of the biblical texts.

"A lot of people thought they were completely outdated with no relevance to today's values of equality," the 33-year-old told AFP, standing under the towering sculptures of Jean Calvin and other Protestant founders on the University of Geneva campus.

In a bid to counter such notions, Savoy and Parmentier, 57, joined forces with 18 other woman theologians from a range



of countries and Christian denominations. The scholars have created a collection of texts challenging traditional interpretations of Bible scriptures that cast women characters as weak and subordinate to the men around them. Parmentier points to a passage in the Gospel of Luke, in

which Jesus visits two sisters, Martha and Mary.

"It says that Martha ensures the 'service', which has been interpreted to mean that she served the food, but the Greek word diakonia can also have other meanings, for instance it could mean she was a deacon," she pointed out. —AFP ■

of countries and Christian denominations.

which Jesus visits two sisters, Martha and Mary. "It says that Martha ensures the 'service', which has been interpreted to mean that she served the food, but the Greek word diakonia can also have other meanings, for instance it could mean she was a deacon," she pointed out. —AFP ■

'Bollywood gives opportunities to talented people'

MUMBAI — Punjabi actor-singer Jassi Gill, who made his Bollywood debut with "Happy Phirr Bhag Jayegi", says Hindi cinema believes in giving opportunities to talented artists.

"Here in Bollywood talented actors are welcomed with open arms, they are given opportunities and are respected. The success and failure of a film is not everything, it is all about talent here," Jassi told PTI.

"I get to play different kind of roles here as I do not have a set appearance," added the actor, who does not sport a turban.

Punjabi film industry, according to Jassi, is at a nascent stage and unlike Bollywood, it does not have well-established production houses.

"There is talent over there. Though they are trying out new concepts but that is done with limited budget. Here, in Bollywood, there are big production houses and producers.

"Also, Bollywood pays more money to actors than Punjabi cinema. The budget is not that much over there, so how will they pay more to actors," the actor said.

With artistes and filmmakers working in different film industries, Jassi believes it is a healthy sign for Indian cinema as the lines are blurring.

"Cinema will only grow. With this one can reach out to more audience. And as an actor you can explore and challenge yourself and at the same time show your talent to other industry people," he added.

Jassi, who is currently working on Kangana Ranaut-starrer "Panga", is grateful to Bollywood filmmakers for giving him opportunity to play different characters.

"It is not easy to get everything at the beginning. I have confidence in my ability as an artiste. I know I will have to prove myself as an actor and I am ready for all the hard work."

In "Panga", being directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, Jassi plays the role of a supportive husband to Kangana's character, a kabaddi player.

"Kangana and I share good bonding today. I am learning a lot working with her. I am glad to be working with Ashwiny and Kangana," he said.

According to Jassi, about 20-25 per cent of shoot is over and the next schedule will be in Delhi and Kolkata. —PTI ■

Jack Ma, China's richest man, is a Communist Party member

BEIJING — Jack Ma, founder of Chinese tech giant Alibaba, is among the world's richest people but he has now emerged as a member of another club: China's 89-million-strong Communist Party.

The billionaire's Communist bona fides were revealed by the People's Daily, the party's official mouthpiece, in an article praising contributors to China's development.

He is not the first nor likely the last Chinese super-rich capitalist to join the party, which

counts property titan Xu Jiayin and Wanda Group founder Wang Jianlin among its billionaire members.

But Ma's membership had not been known until now as China's richest man had previously suggested that he preferred to stay out of politics.

In Monday's article, the People's Daily said Ma was a party member who has played an important role in pushing China's Belt and Road global trade infrastructure initiative — a pet project of President

Xi Jinping.

He has also been honoured as one of the "outstanding builders of socialism with Chinese characteristics in Zhejiang Province," where Alibaba is based, the daily said.

Joining the party can be helpful to private businessmen and women in the country as they navigate a complicated business environment where the state-led economy dominates many industries and private business can be unwelcome.

Xi has renewed a push to expand the Communist Party's influence in private business, requiring any company with more than three party members to set up a party cell, or lacking numbers, join with nearby firms.

Three in four private companies already host party organisations.

"We must do a good job in the education and management of party members and guide them to play an active role," Xi told officials in Shanghai earlier this month, noting the increase in private employment and new types of employment.

Xi is pushing to further intertwine the party and business, with the latest rewrite to the rules for party organisations

published Sunday by official news agency Xinhua.

In private companies party cells should "guide and supervise the enterprise to strictly abide by national laws and regulations," the draft order says, according to Xinhua.

Ma did not reveal his Communist Party membership in paperwork filed for Alibaba's 2014 initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange. It is not known if Ma was a member at the time.

A spokeswoman for Alibaba declined to comment.

Ma — who announced in September that he would step down as head of Alibaba next year — has previously indicated he preferred to keep the Chinese state at arm's length.

"My philosophy is to be in love with the government, but never marry them," he said at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2007.

But party members must hold up their right fist and recite an oath upon joining.

"Be loyal to the party, work actively, fight for communism all one's life, always be prepared to sacrifice everything for the party and people, and never betray the party," they recite. —AFP ■



This photo taken on 26 October, 2018 shows co-founder of China's Alibaba Jack Ma gesturing as he attends an international investment conference in Johannesburg. Jack Ma, founder of Chinese tech giant Alibaba, is among the world's richest people but he has now emerged as a member of another club: China's 89-million-strong Communist Party. PHOTO: AFP

Cheers as Mars InSight spacecraft lands on Red Planet

PASADENA (United States) — Cheers and applause erupted at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory on Monday as a waist-high unmanned lander, called InSight, touched down on Mars, capping a nearly seven-year journey from design to launch to landing.

The dramatic arrival of the \$993 million spacecraft — designed to listen for quakes and tremors as a way to unveil the Red Planet's inner mysteries, how it formed billions of years ago and, by extension, how other rocky planets like Earth took shape — marked the eighth successful landing on Mars in NASA's history. "Touchdown confirmed," a mission control operator at NASA said, as pent-up anxiety and excitement surged through the room, and dozens of scientists leapt from their seats to embrace each other.

"It was intense and you could feel the emotion," said NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine, in an interview on NASA television afterward. Bridenstine also said President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence had watched on television and called to congratulate the US space agency for its hard work.

"Ultimately, the day is coming when we land humans on Mars," Bridenstine said, adding that the goal is to do so by the mid 2030s.

The vehicle appeared to be in good shape, according to the first communications received from the Martian surface.



NASA engineer and InSight project manager Tom Hoffman points to the first image upon a successful landing by the InSight spacecraft on the planet Mars from the Mission Support area in the Space Flight Operations facility at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California on 26 November 2018.

PHOTO: AFP

But as expected, the dust kicked up during the landing obscured the first picture InSight sent back, which was heavily flecked. France's Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) made the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure (SEIS) instrument, the key element for sensing quakes.

The principal investigator on the French seismometer, Philippe Lognonne, said he was "relieved and very happy" at the outcome.

"I've just received confirmation that there are no rocks in front of the lander," he told AFP.

And in a final crucial phase, NASA said InSight signaled to

Earth that its solar panels — twin solar arrays spanning seven feet (2.2 meters) in width — had opened and were collecting sunlight on the surface of Mars.

"The InSight team can rest a little easier tonight now that we know the spacecraft solar arrays are deployed and recharging the batteries," said Tom Hoffman, InSight's project manager.

Entry, descent, landing

The spacecraft is NASA's first to touch down on Earth's neighboring planet since the Curiosity rover arrived in 2012.

More than half of 43 attempts to reach Mars with rovers, orbit-

ers and probes by space agencies from around the world have failed.

NASA is the only space agency to have made it, and is invested in these robotic missions as a way to prepare for the first Mars-bound human explorers in the 2030s.

"We never take Mars for granted. Mars is hard," Thomas Zurbuchen, NASA associate administrator for the science mission directorate, said on Sunday.

The nail-biting entry, descent and landing phase began at 11:47 am (1940 GMT) at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, home to mission control for Mars InSight, and end-

ed one second before 1953 GMT.

A carefully orchestrated sequence — already fully preprogrammed on board the spacecraft — unfolded over the following several minutes, coined "six and a half minutes of terror."

Speeding faster than a bullet at 12,300 miles (19,800 kilometers) an hour, the heat-shielded spacecraft encountered scorching friction as it entered the Mars atmosphere.

The heat shield soared to a temperature of 2,700 Fahrenheit (about 1,500 Celsius) before it was discarded, the three landing legs deployed and the parachute popped out, easing InSight down to the Martian surface.

Goal: 3D map of inner Mars

InSight contains key instruments that were contributed by several European space agencies.

France's CNES made the SEIS instrument, while the German Aerospace Center (DLR) provided a self-hammering mole that can burrow 16 feet (five meters) into the surface — farther than any instrument before — to measure heat flow.

Spain's Centro de Astrobiología made the spacecraft's wind sensors, and three of InSight's seismic instruments were designed and built in Britain.

Other significant contributions came from the Space Research Center of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Astronika and the Swiss Institute of Technology. —AFP ■

E. coli lettuce outbreak traced to California

NEW YORK — An outbreak of E. coli linked to romaine lettuce appears to have been traced to crops in California, the US food authority said Monday.

American consumers were warned against eating the leafy salad by health officials last week.

The outbreak has caused 43 people to become sick in the US and another 22 in Canada, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

"Our investigation at this point suggests that romaine lettuce associated with the outbreak comes from areas of California that grow romaine lettuce over the summer months," the FDA said in a statement. "The outbreak appears to be related to 'end of season' romaine lettuce harvested from these areas," it said.

The harvest has now shifted to other areas and it was "critically important to have a 'clean break' in the romaine supply available to consumers in the US in order to purge the market of potentially contaminated romaine lettuce," the FDA said.

It added that the break in supply appears to have been accomplished after officials requested on 20 November that the produce be withdrawn from the market and destroyed.

On the same day — two days before the Thanksgiving holiday when Americans gather and feast together — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advised consumers not to eat any romaine lettuce and to throw away any they might have in their homes. —AFP ■

Chinese medical device manufacturers display core technologies in US

CHICAGO — About 50 Chinese medical device manufacturers displayed their core technologies and latest achievements at a high-level meeting in the radiology industry that kicked off Sunday.

The annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America, an international society of radiologists, medical physicists and other medical professionals, will run six days.

Neusoft Medical Systems Co. Ltd., one of the leading medical device manufacturers in China, put on display advanced CT, MR, PET-CT as well as other core technology components, marking its 19th consecutive year to attend the meeting.

"In recent years, China's medical device industry has

achieved development in leaps. Thanks to the application of artificial intelligence, some of the products made in China are now at world top level," said Patrick Wu, vice chairman of China Association of Medical Equipment and CEO of Neusoft Medical.

The company's products are used in over 9,000 medical institutions in over 110 countries, with its total installed capacity exceeding 30,000 units, Wu said.

"To compete with global medical equipment giants, our advantages lie in high quality, reasonable price and customer-oriented services," said Jiang Shuyin, vice president and general director of brand and public relations management center at Neusoft Medical.

MinFound Medical Systems

Co. Ltd., another medical device producer in China, also attended the annual meeting with its independently designed and produced CT equipment CURA-CT16 and ScintCareCT16, both having been granted certification by the US Food and Drug Administration.

"After spending five years in research and development, CURA-CT16 and ScintCareCT16, excellent in performance and stability, have gained widespread recognition in the world," said MinFound's CEO Jiang Haocun.

Jiang added that the company is committed to bringing positive changes to the international radiology industry and making Chinese brands influential in the world. —Xinhua ■

Time for Liverpool to show Champions League teeth away from Anfield

LONDON — Paris Saint-Germain's struggles to avoid an embarrassing group stage exit in the Champions League began when they fell victim to the aura of Anfield and Roberto Firmino's stoppage time winner for Liverpool in September.

But with the roles reversed and the Premier League side headed to the Parc des Princes on Wednesday with PSG needing to win to keep qualification for the last 16 in their own hands, the French champions can take solace in the fact Liverpool pack a far weaker punch on the road in the Champions League.

Anfield has long been credited as the extra man for the five-time European champions, but rarely has the contrast between

Liverpool's highs and lows in the Champions League been as stark as in the past few months.

Roma were reeling 5-0 down after just over an hour of last season's semi-final first leg, PSG were outclassed this season despite the narrow margin of the dramatic 3-2 victory and Red Star Belgrade were dismissed serenely 4-0 in October.

Indeed, so easily were the Serbs swept aside that concerns were raised about the growing gulf in resources between European football's elite and once great powers now relegated to also-rans by the geographical lottery that leaves them outside the continent's top five leagues.

Last season Liverpool only secured victory on the road twice

in Europe and were left hanging on for a 4-2 defeat in Rome that edged Jurgen Klopp's men through by the odd goal on aggregate. They were then beaten 3-1 by Real Madrid in the final in Kiev.

Two colossal errors by Loris Karius in that final pushed Liverpool to splash out a then world record fee for a goalkeeper in Alisson Becker as part of a £160 million (\$205 million, 181 million euros) summer spending spree that also brought in Fabinho, Naby Keita and Xherdan Shaqiri.

And while an upturn in fortunes, particularly defensively, has been seen in an unbeaten start to the Premier League season, it has not yet cured Liverpool's travel sickness in the Champions League. —AFP ■



In this file photo taken on 18 September 2018 Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (l) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian striker Neymar during the UEFA Champions League group C football match between Liverpool and Paris Saint-Germain at Anfield in Liverpool, northwest England. PHOTO: AFP

Djokovic, Nadal, Federer in year-end top three for seventh time

PARIS — Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer finished as the year-end top three for the seventh time, and the first since 2014, as the ATP World Tour published the 2018 year-end ATP Rankings on Monday.

The star trio ranked first at one stage during the year, the first time for them to make that during the same season.

Djokovic, who ended 2017 at No. 12, became the first player in history to finish No. 1 af-

ter ranking outside the top 10 in the previous season. At 31, he is also the oldest year-end world No. 1.

Five changes in top 10 can be found compared with that last year, including two newcomers, the sixth-ranked Kevin Anderson and No. 10 John Isner. Moreover, Djokovic made his way back to top 10 along with Juan Martin del Potro and Kei Nishikori.

For the first time since the ATP Rankings was introduced in 1973, players from five differ-

ent regions of the world have been represented in the top 10, including six from Europe, and one each from Africa, Asia, North America and South America.

The ATP Rankings has witnessed the year-end top 10 from 10 different countries for the second time in three years.

The ATP year-end top 10 players are Djokovic, Nadal, Federer, Alexander Zverev, del Potro, Anderson, Marin Cilic, Dominic Thiem, Nishikori and Isner. —Xinhua ■



International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach meets the press at Ajinomoto National Training Center in Tokyo on 25 November 2018. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

Bach says there is no “plan B” if 2026 bids falter

TOKYO — International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach said Tuesday that there is no “plan B” if 2026 Winter Games bids from Stockholm and three Italian cities are withdrawn, reiterating that Sapporo is not a fallback option.

Speaking exclusively to Kyodo News in Tokyo, Bach acknowledged that challenges to both bids remain, but said that the Swedish and Italian options — in Milan, Turin and Cortina — remain “excellent projects” that are in line with the IOC's cost-cutting Olympic Agenda 2020.

“We have no plan B, there is no plan B,” said Bach, 64, himself an Olympian in 1976.

“There is great use of existing facilities (in the Swedish and Italian bids), it is about traditional winter sports countries and areas and they still have to work, one way or the other, to convince everybody to come together. This we have to acknowledge,” he said.

On the prospect of Sapporo, the capital of Japan's northernmost island prefecture of Hokkaido which originally threw its hat into the 2026 ring before shifting its focus to a 2030 bid, coming to the rescue, Bach said it is not an option and that it did not come up when he spoke to Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto.

“The mayor expressed his thanks...for the sympathy that the IOC has been showing with the victims of the earthquake in Sapporo and the region and also for the understanding that we have shown. And that, under the circumstances, they did not want to follow up on 2026.”

A magnitude-6.7 earthquake rocked the southwestern part of Hokkaido including Sapporo on 6 September, killing dozens of people.

He did reiterate, however, that Sapporo confirmed its plans to bid for the 2030 Games, and that the city's intention, along with expressions of interest from other parts of the world, shows there remains a strong confidence in the “power of the Olympic Games.”

The German said, however, that the recent withdrawal of Calgary's 2026 bid after 56.4 per cent of the city's residents voted against it in a plebiscite was an expression of an anti-establishment mood, not a response to Olympic-related concerns specifically. He said that people have lost faith in authorities to make such decisions and that if governments, businesses and the sports movement all agree that hosting an Olympics is a good idea despite a lack of public support then “there must be something wrong” and they “do it because they just want to fill their pockets.” “It is just this anti-establishment wave which is existing in not only a few Western countries,” he added.

Given the adversity the 2026 bids are facing, Bach was happy to hail the successes he has witnessed and the welcome he has received since arriving in Tokyo, his first visit since 2016.

Bach was full of praise for Tokyo 2020 organizers who have already more than filled their 80,000-volunteer quota for the 2020 Games, with 44 percent of applicants being non-Japanese citizens. —Kyodo News ■